



ROMANS

Lesson 13: The Strong Believer and the Weak Believer

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Romans Chapter 14 contains Paul's well known admonition to strong believers instructing them not to cause weaker Jewish Christians to struggle with the freedom the Gentile believers were exercising in Christ. This chapter is similar to 1st Corinthians 8 which deals with the specific issue of whether to eat meat offered to idols and its effect on some Christians.

CENTRAL QUESTION

What obligation does a strong believer have toward a weak believer?

ROMANS CHAPTER 14 (NLT)

Be patient with those who are weak in the faith (14:1-2)

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ²One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.

Don't criticize other people (14:3-4)

The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Tolerate legitimate views that are different from yours (14:5-6)

One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Keep your life centered on the Lord (14:7-9)

For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he

might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

Be careful how we treat fellow believers (14:10-12)

You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.'" ¹²So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. Do not cause another to stumble.

Be tolerant of different but reasonable personal convictions (14:13-19)

Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. ¹⁹Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Be sensitive to those who are weak in the faith (14:20-23)

Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. ²²So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the main problem Paul was addressing in this chapter? (see <https://www.gotquestions.org/disputable-matters.html>).



2. In this chapter Paul defines the weak as (circle the best answer).
 - a) Physically weak or sick
 - b) A sensitive Christian who lacks freedom of conscience
 - c) Someone who is wrong

3. Paul calls diet (food and drink) and the day of worship disputable matters (verses 1, 5). Circle the top-three things on the list below that you think modern Christians may have the most differing opinions about.
 - a) Smoking
 - b) Alcohol
 - c) Swearing
 - d) Movies
 - e) Eating red meat
 - f) Abortion
 - g) Political leaders
 - h) Style of worship

4. Verse 13 refers to strong believer's attitudes (don't pass judgment) as well as actions (don't put stumbling blocks in a brother's way). What reasons does he give in the following verses?
 - a) Verses 14-16: _____
 - b) Verses 17-21: _____

5. What is Paul's final advice regarding these disputable matters?

SUMMARY

"You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'-- but not everything is _____.
You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'-- but not everything is _____.
Don't be concerned for your own good but for the _____."
(1 Cor. 10:23-24 NLT)

Sources used in this study

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