

We all have weak faith when we first get saved because we are at the beginning of our spiritual journey and thereafter we may grow at different rates from other believers. Thus Christians do not always agree about our Christian liberty in areas not specifically spelled out in scripture. Paul explains how we should treat other Christians who have different convictions on what is allowed under grace.

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1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

**“Him that is weak in the faith receive [accept] ye”** – Some who is “weak in the faith” is someone who has difficulty in letting go of the superstitious beliefs they had from before coming to Christ. Such beliefs may be ingrained due to being raised in them all their life. A weak Jew may have difficulty abandoning the rites and legalistic prohibitions taught by such groups as the Pharisees. He might have trouble enjoying the freedom he has in Christ and recognizing that the OT ceremonial law has been fulfilled by Christ. A weak Gentile’s difficulty might be in recognizing that the idols he worshiped before coming to Christ were only dead statues made of stone, wood or metal, and believe that food offered to these had become tainted by sin. Paul deals with this subject in more detail in 1 Cor. 8:1-13. We should accept these weak Christians and not spurn them just because their faith hasn’t yet grown.

**“but not to doubtful [to deliberate within oneself] disputations [judgments]”** – This could better translated “not to judge his opinions.” We are to accept people with weak faith, but not for the purpose of sitting in judgment of their underdeveloped faith because they have not yet grown to the extent that we have. We can point them in the right direction but we should never influence them to violate their own conscience.

**“For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs”** – Paul uses the example of a gray area that is not specifically addressed by scripture: the eating of certain foods. The weak Jew who might eat herbs in order to avoid violating the dietary laws of the Mosaic law, while the Jew with strong faith will be able to eat anything he wants because he recognizes that the dietary laws are no longer in force. The weak Gentile may believe he has to eat herbs in order to avoid eating meats that may have been offered to idols.

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3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

**“Let not him that eateth despise [to consider as worthless or inferior] him that eateth not”** – There is the temptation for one with strong faith and eats all things to look down upon the one with weak faith and consider him foolish and inferior. However, we all had weak faith when we were first saved and it takes time for our faith to grow.

**“and let not him which eateth not judge [to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong] him that eateth”** – If Jack has strong faith and Tim has weak faith, Tim may see Jack eating things that Tim believes are forbidden. Tim may then believe that Jack is sinning but Paul says that Tim should not come to that conclusion in an area that scripture does not specifically address.

**“for God hath received him”** – Both the one with weak faith and the one with strong faith are sincerely trying to please God and thus have been received by Him. Neither have sinned in this spiritual gray area regarding foods.

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4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

**“Who art thou that judgest [to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong] another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth”** – Our brother/sister is not accountable to us and so it is not up to us to approve or disapprove of their understanding of spiritual things. It is up to God to decide if and when this person’s ideas need to be corrected. We can (and should) teach others what the Bible says but it is between them and God as to what they do with the information. Each of us has to grow at our own rate.

**“Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand”** – It’s up to God whether or not a fellow Christian stands or falls, and God will make certain that he/she does stand. God did not save us to eventually abandon us. He is able to save us when we were lost and He will continue to work on us, enabling us to stand and be accepted by Him.

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5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

**“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*”** – Paul brings up another scriptural gray area: sabbaths and religious holidays. Some Christians believe that we should treat Sunday as a sabbath, even though the Bible never says we should. Some Christians keep Saturday as the sabbath, even though Gentiles were never under any of the requirements of the Mosaic law. Other Christians believe that every day is holy unto the Lord and treat Sunday no differently than any other day of the week. The scripture does not specifically state which view is correct for us today.

**“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”** – Paul is not saying that we are to decide for ourselves what is true or how to serve God. He is referring to subjects that are not specifically addressed in scripture. We know that stealing, killing, and committing adultery are wrong because the Bible specifically declares them to be sin. However, honoring the sabbath and other ceremonial holidays from the Mosaic law, and even the first day of the week in respect for the day of Jesus’ resurrection are not clearly described as being required after the cross, particularly for Gentiles. Paul is not stating that respecting such days is right/wrong or that not respecting them is right/wrong. He is saying that we should follow our conscience (as led by the Holy Spirit) in such cases.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

**“He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*”** – Whether or not a Christian believes that Jewish religious holidays (including the sabbath) ought to be respected and celebrated, he/she are sincerely worshiping the Lord based on that belief, which is what matters.

**“He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks”** – This Christian, whom Paul refers to as one with strong faith (v. 2), believes that he is allowed to eat things that either have been offered to idols or may have forbidden under the Mosaic law. When he eats, he worships the Lord by giving God thanks for providing the food.

**“and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks”** – The one who “eats not” any foods forbidden by his conscience, does so to worship the Lord as well and gives thanks to God for providing alternatives that he can eat. Both Christians are behaving in accordance with their conscience on matters that are not specifically addressed in scripture, and the Lord blesses both.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

**“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself”** – We do not belong to ourselves, and so we are not free to live our lives in order to please ourselves, nor is the manner or timing of our death up to us.

**“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord”** – We have been bought with a price, and therefore our lives are to be lived in order to please the Lord. **1 Cor. 6:19-20** *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”* God is the One Who dictates how we live our life and when/how it will end.

**“whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's”** – Paul gives us the bottom line: We belong to the Lord and our life is to be lived for Him and He decides how long that life is.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Christ died to redeem us from our sin and He is our Lord while we are alive on this earth and He will still be our Lord when we are in heaven standing in His presence.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

**“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought [consider worthless] thy brother?”** – Paul returns to the idea of one Christian judging another (vs. 3-4). The Greek word for “judge” is the same one used in v. 3. To judge our brother is to assume the authority to be able to decide the value of that brother and his beliefs, which is something that is reserved for God alone.

**“for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ”** – None of us are ultimately accountable to another. We are accountable to Christ alone and we all will have to stand before Him to be judged. Christ will not ask for our help or advice in judging our brother.

**“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God”** – All of humanity is accountable to God, and Paul quotes from **Isa. 45:23** to prove it: *“I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”*

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

**“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”** – We don't have time to judge others because we should be preparing to give an account of ourselves to God, to be judged by Him.

**“Let us not therefore judge one another any more”** – Thus we are not to pass our own judgment on others on matters not expressly addressed in scripture and decide whether or not they measure up.

**“but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way”** – The one thing we are to judge is to determine for ourselves whether or not we are putting stumbling blocks in our brother's way. God will hold us accountable if we cause another brother to stumble in his walk with God or discourage him to the point of giving up following the Lord any more.

**Verses 14-23:** Paul continues to deal with the subject of Christian liberty, using the example of a Christian's diet as an example. We are not to allow our liberty to the eat foods that a weaker brother may consider to be forbidden as a stumbling block to that weaker brother. We do not want to damage a weaker brother's faith by eating in front of him that which he considers to be sinful, for we are not walking in love if we do so. The weaker brother may be tempted to eat the things that he considers forbidden and sin against his own conscience, for, as Paul says in v. 23, “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

**Romans 15:1-13:** Paul continues, emphasizing that our love for our brother means that we are more concerned with his spiritual welfare than we are for pleasing ourselves. We are following Christ's example if we prioritize the welfare of others over pleasing ourselves. Thus we are to show the love of Christ by accepting one another and being united in our praise for our Lord.