

Should Christians Judge One Another? Rom 14:1-12, p1

What is the context for chapter 14?

Paul has spent chapters 1-8 on doctrine and 9-11 on God's election and salvation of Jews and Gentiles. Chapter 12:1-2 develops a Christian mind; 12:3-8 develops a right estimate of oneself, others, and the need to encourage others; 12:9-13 is a call to love one another; 13:1-7 are questions of church and state; 13:8-14 deals with proper conduct in light of Christ's return; 14:1-15:13 treats the issues of how Christians are to accept and support one another when they do not think or behave as is thought that they should.

How Should Believers Treat Each Other's Differences?

1. Paul's overall plea (14:1-15:13) is for **unity within the body of Christ**.
 - a. Note 13:8-14 **Love fulfills all the law**
 - b. Note 14:1; 15:7 **"Receive (welcome) one another"**
 - c. Note 14:13; 14:19; 15:5, 7 **Four of the many one another commands**
2. Recognize within any body there will be **weak and strong believers**.
 - a. Weak in the faith are those who do not **doubt** their faith in Christ.
 - b. Weak in the faith are those who doubt the **truth** that their faith in Christ implies freedom from certain rituals. What their faith allows and prohibits. (See Gal 5:1)
 - c. Strong in the faith are those who are able to **exercise** their faith in all matters of religious rituals, knowing God's truth and grace.
 - d. Paul wishes all to be **strong for "weak" is a negative term**. (15:1)
3. Neither group (weak/strong) are to **insist on their way**.
 - a. Strong should not **despise the weak**.
 - b. Weak should not **judge the strong**.
 - c. God has **welcomed both, for He is their Judge**.