

Ladies Bible Study

Week 21

(Week 20 in your lessons)



March 10, 2026

Romans 14:1 says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."

Paul opens this chapter _____ the case of the believer who is weak in the faith. The Greek phrase translated "the faith" as used in this context, obviously refers to the truth of the Gospel, the body of doctrine which was revealed unto the Apostle Paul. The Greek word rendered "weak" speaks of one who is infirm, sick and feeble with respect to the Word of God given to the Church. This lack of comprehension of the faith may be due to the lack of time to become established, lack of mental ability to grasp the Truth, or slothfulness. Whatever the reason may be for a person being weak in the faith, Paul says, "receive ye," i.e., take him to yourselves, include him in your fellowship, welcome him. Paul uses this same verb in the 15th chapter, where he says, "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (15:7). There is no room for discrimination in the body of Christ – all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

Believers are not to receive those weak in the faith "to doubtful disputations." In other words, our motive for receiving a weak believer should not be for "discerning," distinguishing and judging that which is involved in his "reasonings," disputing and scruples.



Since Paul always uses this word with evil connotations, the _____ is that we are not to get involved with such reasonings and disputing because they are intrinsically evil (Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 3:20; Phil. 2:14; 1 Tim. 2:8).

Verse 2 goes on to say, "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs."

A more complete, alternative translation of this verse would be as follows: On the one hand, one believes he may eat all things, and on the other hand, the weak one eats herbs. The latter translation points out more clearly the difference between these two believers who are to receive each other.

Now let us look at the literal translation, "For one believeth that he may eat all things." The thought here is that the one who understands the faith, who is knowledgeable in the Grace Truth given to the Church, believes that he has the right to eat all things. Paul corroborates this truth in First Corinthians 8:8, where he says, "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse."

The all-important thing in this dispensation of Grace is our spiritual relationship with God in Jesus Christ, which has nothing to do with food and drink (Col. 2:16-17). The statement that "who is weak, eateth herbs" suggests that he was a vegetarian. This person is referred to as being weak due to his lack of understanding of the Truth of the Mystery given to the Church. Did he misinterpret this Truth and as a result become a vegetarian, or did he carry his vegetarian lifestyle over into Christianity? Whatever the case, _____ developed between the carnivorous and vegetarian believers, between the strong and weak believers, and Paul is endeavoring to resolve the issue in this chapter.



Christian liberty is a priceless possession. Legitimately used it is an ever-flowing source of spiritual joy and power. But it can be used "as an occasion to the flesh" (Gal. 5:13), with pride taking the place of the love it should generate. Thus the Apostle admonishes the brother who eats all things not to despise the brother who does not - the brother who refuses to partake of certain foods because he feels that this will displease God. On the other hand, the brother who does not feel at liberty to eat all things may consider himself more _____ in his Christian conduct than the brother who does feel at liberty to do so and he may pride himself for this and tend to judge his brother for his "irresponsibility." This can soon become phariseeism. Hence for him the Apostle has an even stronger admonition in verse 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."

First, Paul orders the one who believes that he can eat everything not to despise the one who does not eat everything, particularly, meat. This means that he is not to make light of or treat with contempt or scorn the herb eating vegetarian. The implication is that the knowledgeable believer, who understands the freedom he has in Christ, may be prone to despise weak believers who are ignorant of their freedom in Christ (Gal. 5:1, 13).

Second, Paul commands the one not eating not to judge the one eating. This means that he is not to censor, to call to account, nor to pass judgment on the one eating all things. This judgment is often the expression of a critical, fault-finding and censorial frame of mind. Paul takes a hard line against this critical form of judging in his epistles. In First Corinthians 4:5 he says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."



The declaration that "God hath received him," as used in this verse, specifically refers to the eating, _____ believer, but it also readily applies to the non-eating, weak believer. A believer's dietary habits, whether he is carnivorous or vegetarian, have nothing to do with his spiritual relation to God. The thing that really counts is the elimination of contempt for and judgment of one another. We should leave each believer with God who has received him.

We then read in verse 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."

With the question "Who are you?" Paul directly confronts the spiritually weak vegetarian. The thought is: who do you think that you are, you who have taken it upon yourself to judge God's servant? This is a strong, verbal slap at the critical, weak believer who is judging the knowledgeable believer for exercising his freedom in Christ (Heb. 5:11-13).

The point Paul is making is that the weak believer has no business judging the servant (household servant) who belongs to another, i.e., to the Lord. Paul says that the servant "to his own master he stands or falls." This means that the servant's responsibility is limited to his own master; with respect to him he is either doing a good or bad job; his master alone determines. No one has the right to stick his judgmental nose into the master/servant relationship. The weak believer, with this incessant judging, is entirely out of place.

The last half of this verse is a closely knit whole. It deals with the relationship between the Lord God and believers, i.e., His servants. Speaking of the aforementioned believer, Paul says, "and he will be made to stand."



This means that in the future he will be _____ to stand by means of a power outside of himself. The last part of this sentence clearly declares that God is the external power who will enable the believer to stand; hence, He is the one who establishes him.

Finally, Paul says with reference to the one being judged, that "the Lord is able to make him stand." The thought is that the Lord is "able," powerful and mighty "to make him stand."

Now I personally believe that this verse could go either way. My answer to the question asked in your lesson this week....the question "who is the you?" was the mature believer. Neither the weak or the mature believer has any business judging the other.

Romans 14:5 – "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

This verse suggests that the early Roman believers differed on the importance of various days. On the one hand, one man esteemed a given day above other days, and on the other hand, another man regarded every day alike. Having said that, there are believers who have different _____ toward days, some holding that there are special days and others saying that all days are the same, Paul's answer is, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." According to Colossians 4:12, Epaphras prayed that God would fully convince the Colossians in all His will. God is the one who fully convinces the individual minds of believers regarding His will. As believers have differences involving days, etc., which probably involved mixing stipulations of the Mosaic Law with Grace, Paul is commanding them to let God the Holy Spirit fully convince their minds on the issue.



We need to keep in mind that when Paul wrote the Book of Romans there was no New Testament canon of Scripture to guide believers in various details. During this time God, the Holy Spirit, spoke through New Testament prophets, complementing and conforming to the Truth of the Mystery revealed to the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 12:28; 14:29-32).

When the New Testament epistles were written, such as the Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians, which give a comprehensive understanding of Church Truth, the New Testament prophets were _____ by the written Word of God. Now God tells us through His Word that the Jewish Sabbath passed away with the Mosaic Law, and according to the custom of the early believers, we assemble to study the Word and to worship God on the first day of the week, the Lord's day.

Romans 14:6 – “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.”

“Regardeth” conveys the idea of thinking, considering and observing. In the light of the preceding verse, the thought here is apparently that the one who has certain thoughts, considerations and observations about various days, has these to the Lord; i.e., the Lord is the object of his frame of mind.

With reference to verses 2-3, Paul says that “he that eateth, eateth to the Lord.”

Now how does Paul know that he eats to the Lord? Because of the following statement, “and giveth God thanks.” If he was not eating to the Lord, and for the Lord's glory, he would not give thanks, but since he does give thanks it proves that he is eating to the Lord.



Maybe the herb eating vegetarian judges him for what he is eating, but Paul says that the important thing is that he is eating to the Lord, for His glory.

Also, with reference to verses 2-3, Paul says that, "he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not." The vegetarian's not eating of meat is to the Lord; i.e., the reason he refuses to eat meat is because he believes it pleases the Lord. Now how does Paul know that his not eating meat is to the Lord? Because he "giveth God thanks." Keep in mind, this non-eating believer is designated as being weak; he does not understand the _____ he has in Christ under Grace.

Romans 14:7 – "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

In the context before us Paul is exclusively speaking of believers, some strong and some weak. He says that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." In the preceding verse he pointed out that regardless of whether a believer is carnivorous or vegetarian, the intention of his eating habits is for the Lord's glory. In this verse Paul projects far beyond the fact that our eating habits are to be to the Lord - He is to be the object of our living. None of us believers are to live for ourselves; i.e., the reason for our existence is not found in ourselves. Paul expresses the same thought in Galatians 2:20, where he says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." We in ourselves do not have a sufficient reason for living unto ourselves, for, if any good may be found in us, it is the gift of God and He should be given credit and glory for it (3:9-18, 23; 7:14, 18; Eph. 2:8-9).



Furthermore, continuing to speak of believers, Paul says that no one dies to himself. In view of the future resurrection, when believers die, they are referred to as having been put to _____, not as being dead. The Greek in this verse means that someone other than themselves put them to sleep, namely, God (1 Thess. 4:13-15). This indicates that God is the one who determines our days in this flesh and blood body (John 21:18-19, 21-23). As those who belong to the Lord, He puts us to sleep to and for Himself, that we may be with Him now (Phil. 1:23), and in the future, in resurrection-body form (Phil. 4:20-21).

Romans 14:8 – “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.”

In interpreting this verse let us first look at the last clause, namely, that “we are the Lord's.” Paul indicates that we believers belong to and are owned by the Lord. Once we establish the premise that all believers are the Lord's property (1 Cor. 6:19-20), then it logically follows that He should be the object of both our living and dying. This was true in Paul's life - he did not count his own life valuable to himself as he fearlessly fulfilled the ministry which the Lord gave to him (Acts 20:24).

Since the Lord owns us, it follows that if we may be living, then we live unto or with the Lord. This verse emphasizes the nature of our relationship with the Lord, namely, that if we may be living believers it is a foregone conclusion that we will be living unto or with the Lord. This speaks of our inseparable identity with Christ in life and living (1 John 5:12).



Next, we observe that "whether we die, we die unto the Lord." Again we are forced back to the basic premise that we believers are owned by the Lord. He owns us while we are living, and He owns us when we die, i.e., during the time our bodies sleep, waiting for their glorified form (1 Cor. 15:51-54). This is not a time of _____ but of body-sleeping, during which interlude we, as spiritual beings, will be with Christ in the heavenlies (2 Cor. 5:6-9; Phil. 1:23).

"Soul sleep" is a belief that after a person dies his or her soul "sleeps" until the resurrection and final judgment. The concept of soul sleep is not biblical.

It's true that, in some places, the Bible speaks of those who have died as being asleep. Daniel 12:2 describes the resurrection as the time when "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." The New Testament speaks of believers who are "asleep" in Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 15:6, Paul speaks of those who are "still living," in contrast to those who have "fallen asleep" (see also verses 18 and 20). Luke relates the death of Stephen with the words, "He fell asleep" (Acts 7:60), much the same as how Jesus describes Lazarus in John 11:11 and Jairus's daughter in Luke 8:52. So, for those who expect a resurrection, sleep is a metaphor for death.

Death is a "sleep" for the believer because it is temporary; the resurrection is the "awakening." But what exactly is it that sleeps, and what is awakened? It is the body, not the soul. A body, when dead, appears to be resting in sleep, and that gives rise to the metaphorical usage of sleep. But the soul does not sleep. The moment we experience physical death, our souls are transferred to a different place. For believers, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23). For unbelievers, death means everlasting punishment in hell (Luke 16:22-23).



Until the final resurrection, there is a temporary heaven—paradise (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4)—and a temporary hell—Hades (Revelation 1:18; 20:13–14). According to Jesus’ account in Luke 16:19–31, neither in paradise nor in Hades are people sleeping. The three individuals in Jesus’ story—Lazarus, Abraham, and the rich man—are quite conscious and active in the afterlife, prior to the resurrection.

Moses and Elijah were not “sleeping” when they appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Far from it. They were “talking with Jesus” (Matthew 17:3). Luke gives some additional detail, relating the subject of their conversation: “They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31).

In Revelation 6, John sees “the souls of those who had been slain” in heaven (verse 9). These souls are not sleeping; rather, they are crying out “in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’” (verse 10). They are given white robes and “told to wait a little longer” (verse 11). Nothing in this heavenly scene hints at a state of unconsciousness, oblivion, or sleep prior to the resurrection. The souls in heaven are wide awake.

Still, it can be said that a person’s body is “sleeping” while his soul is in paradise or Hades. And that is just how the Bible pictures it. At the resurrection, the body is “awakened” and transformed into the everlasting body a person will possess forever, whether in heaven or hell. The redeemed, made righteous by the blood of Christ, will inhabit the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1). The unredeemed, who remain in their sin, will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15).

Present-day advocates of the doctrine of soul sleep include Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christadelphians, and some others.



Paul briefly summarizes in the following words what he has said: " whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." When Jesus Christ was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) on Calvary's Cross, He redeemed and bought us for an eternal _____, which includes our present physical life plus our future existence beyond what is commonly called death (2 Cor. 5:21). Since He has purchased us with His own precious Blood for eternity, then we belong to Him and are in his custody forever, and neither life nor death can separate us from Him (8:38).

That should make us want to live for Him and worship Him all the days of our lives!



