

Romans 14:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

Analysis

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye—Ton de asthenounta tē pistei proslambanesthe (τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει προσλαμβάνεσθε). Asthenounta (ἀσθενέω, being weak) is present participle—ongoing condition, not momentary lapse. The 'weak' are those with scrupulous consciences about disputable matters (food, holy days). Proslambanō (προσλαμβάνω, receive/welcome) means accept into fellowship, not merely tolerate. The imperative commands active hospitality despite differences on non-essential matters.

But not to doubtful disputations—Mē eis diakriseis dialogismōn (μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν, 'not for judgments of opinions'). Diakriseis (judgments/disputes) suggests critical evaluation. Dialogismōn (opinions/thoughts) refers to debatable matters, not core doctrines. Paul prohibits receiving the weak in order to argue them into the 'strong' position. Welcome them without requiring conformity on disputable matters. Unity doesn't demand uniformity on non-essentials—in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.

Historical Context

The Roman church was divided between 'strong' (likely Gentile Christians free from food laws) and 'weak' (likely Jewish Christians observing dietary restrictions and Sabbaths). After Claudius expelled Jews from Rome (AD 49, Acts 18:2), Gentile Christians dominated. When Jews returned (after AD 54), tensions arose over law-observance. Paul addresses both groups: strong must not despise the weak's

scrupulosity; weak must not judge the strong's liberty. This pattern repeats in every generation over different issues.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What are the 'disputable matters' (dialogismōn) in your church context—issues where genuine believers disagree in good conscience?
2. How do you 'receive' (proslambanesthe) believers who differ on secondary issues without requiring conformity or engaging in endless debates?
3. Are you 'strong' or 'weak' on various issues—and does your attitude toward the other group reflect Paul's counsel here?

Interlinear Text

Τὸν	δὲ	ἀσθενοῦντα	τῇ	πίστει	προσλαμβάνεσθε	μὴ
G3588	but	Him that is weak	G3588	in the faith	receive ye	not
	G1161	G770		G4102	G4355	G3361

εἰς	διακρίσεις	διαλογισμῶν
to	disputations	doubtful
G1519	G1253	G1261

Additional Cross-References

Romans 15:1 (Parallel theme): We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Romans 15:7 (Parallel theme): Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 9:22 (Parallel theme): To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

Romans 14:21 (Parallel theme): It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Isaiah 40:11 (Parallel theme): He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Isaiah 42:3 (Parallel theme): A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Job 4:3 (Parallel theme): Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

Romans 4:19 (Faith): And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

Matthew 14:31 (Faith): And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Matthew 12:20 (Parallel theme): A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.