

# Romans 14:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

## Analysis

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**For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs**—Hos men pisteuei phagein panta, ho de asthenōn lachana esthiei (ὅς μὲν πιστεύει φαγεῖν πάντα, ὁ δὲ ἀσθενῶν λάχανα ἐσθίει). Pisteuei (believes/is persuaded) indicates conscience conviction, not mere opinion. The 'strong' believer is persuaded (pisteuei phagein panta, believes to eat all things)—convinced that foods don't defile (Mark 7:18-19). The 'weak' (asthenōn) eats only lachana (vegetables/herbs), avoiding meat possibly offered to idols or not kosher.

Paul doesn't adjudicate who's correct (though 14:14, 20 reveal his position). The issue isn't truth but how to handle conscience differences in the body. Both eat 'unto the Lord' (v. 6) from sincere conviction. The problem arises when strong despise weak as legalistic, or weak judge strong as licentious. Paul protects both conscience and unity—don't violate your conscience, don't force others to violate theirs, don't fracture fellowship over disputable matters.

## Historical Context

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Meat sold in Roman markets was often from pagan temple sacrifices (1 Corinthians 8-10). Some Christians avoided all meat to ensure purity. Jewish Christians maintained kosher laws, considering Gentile food practices defiling. Paul navigates between extreme positions: legalists who made food laws salvific, and libertines who flaunted freedom destructively. His principle: truth with love. Strong are right theologically (all foods clean, Mark 7:19) but wrong to destroy

weak believers (v. 15, 20). Weak are bound by conscience, which must not be violated (v. 23).

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What modern equivalents exist to the meat-eating controversy—alcohol, entertainment, political positions, worship styles?
2. How do you distinguish between 'disputable matters' (where conscience governs) and essential doctrines (where conformity to truth is required)?
3. Are you more prone to despise the 'weak' for scrupulosity or judge the 'strong' for license—and how does Paul's teaching correct you?

## Interlinear Text

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|---------------|-------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-------|---------------|-------------|
| ὅς            | μὲν   | πιστεύει  | φαγεῖν          | πάντα      | ο     | δὲ            | ἀσθενῶν     |
| one           | For   | believeth | that he may eat | all things | G3588 | another       | who is weak |
| G3739         | G3303 | G4100     | G5315           | G3956      |       | G1161         | G770        |
| <b>λάχανα</b> |       |           |                 |            |       | <b>ἐσθίει</b> |             |
|               |       |           |                 |            |       | <b>herbs</b>  |             |
|               |       |           |                 |            |       | <b>eateth</b> |             |
|               |       |           |                 |            |       | G3001         |             |
|               |       |           |                 |            |       | G2068         |             |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 15:17** (Parallel theme): Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

**Romans 14:14** (Parallel theme): I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

**1 Timothy 4:4** (Parallel theme): For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

**Hebrews 13:9** (Parallel theme): Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

**Genesis 9:3** (Parallel theme): Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

**Hebrews 9:10** (Parallel theme): Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

**1 Corinthians 10:25** (Parallel theme): Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:

**Galatians 2:12** (Parallel theme): For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

**Titus 1:15** (Faith): Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

**Daniel 1:12** (Parallel theme): Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.