

Romans 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth—Ho esthiōn ton mē esthionta mē exoutheneō, ho de mē esthiōn ton esthionta mē krinetō (ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενέτω, ὁ δὲ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω). Two equal and opposite errors: exoutheneō (ἐξουθενέω, despise/look down on) and krinō (κρίνω, judge/condemn). The strong despise the weak as immature, bound, legalistic. The weak judge the strong as worldly, carnal, compromised.

For God hath received him—Ho theos gar auton proselabeto (ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο). The aorist proselabeto (received) points to God's definitive acceptance at conversion. If God has welcomed both into His family, who are you to reject your brother over dietary choices? This appeals to divine acceptance as the ground of mutual acceptance. God's welcome transcends our preferences—those God receives, we must receive (15:7). Unity is grounded in common salvation, not uniformity in disputable matters.

Historical Context

Paul addresses both groups' sins: strong despise (pride, elitism, contempt for 'lesser' believers), weak judge (legalism, self-righteousness, condemnation of freedom). Both attitudes fracture the body. Early church councils (Acts 15, Galatians 2) navigated Jew-Gentile tensions over law. Paul's solution isn't

compromise but mutual forbearance grounded in the gospel—we're all saved by grace, not dietary conformity. This framework applies to every generation's divisive issues: worship styles, alcohol, entertainment, politics.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Do you tend toward the strong's sin (despising *exoutheneō* those with stricter consciences) or the weak's sin (judging *krinō* those with more liberty)?
2. How does God's acceptance of both groups (*ho theos proselabeto*) obligate you to receive those who differ on disputable matters?
3. What specific actions would demonstrate receiving others without despising or judging them over secondary issues?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	ἐσθίοντα	τὸν	μὴ	ἐσθίοντα	μὴ	ἐξουθενεῖτω	καὶ
G3588	him that eateth	G3588	not	him that eateth	not	Let	and
	G2068		G3361	G2068	G3361	G1848	G2532

ὁ	μὴ	ἐσθίοντα	τὸν	ἐσθίοντα	μὴ	κρινέτω	ὁ
G3588	not	him that eateth	G3588	him that eateth	not	judge	G3588
	G3361	G2068		G2068	G3361	G2919	

θεὸς	γὰρ	αὐτὸν	προσελάβετο
God	for	him	hath received
G2316	G1063	G846	G4355

Additional Cross-References

Romans 14:10 (Judgment): 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.

Luke 18:9 (Parallel theme): And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Acts 10:34 (References God): Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Romans 14:13 (Judgment): 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.

Romans 14:15 (Parallel theme): But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

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.

Matthew 18:10 (Parallel theme): Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Acts 10:44 (Parallel theme): While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Zechariah 4:10 (Parallel theme): For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Matthew 9:14 (Parallel theme): Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?