

Admonitions for the Strong (Rom. 14:13-15:3)

Having the Proper Attitude towards the Weak (vv. 13-14)

VERSE 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore (Μηκέτι οὖν ἀλλήλους κρίνωμεν· [*adv. meketi no longer + conj oun therefore + pro.acc.m.p. allelon one another + pres.act.subj.1p. krino*]), **but rather determine this** [ἀλλὰ τοῦτο κρίνατε μᾶλλον [*conj. alla + pro.acc.nt.s houtos this + aor.act.imper.2p. krino judge; “determine” + adv. mallon rather*]]-- **not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way** [τὸ μὴ τιθέναι πρόσκομμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἢ σκάνδαλον. [*neg. me + d.a/w/pres.act.infin. tethemi place, put + noun acc.nt.s. proskomma obstacle + d.a.w/noun dat.m.s. adelphos + conj. e or + noun acc.nt.s.skandalon stumbling block*]].

VERSE 14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself (οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ ὅτι οὐδὲν κοινὸν δι' ἑαυτοῦ, [*pf.act.ind.1s. oida know + conj. kai + pf.pas.ind.1s. peitho convince + prep en + noun loc.m.s. kurios + noun loc.m.s. Jesus + conj. hoti that + adj.nom.nt.s. oudeis nothing + adj.nom.nt.s. koinos common, profance, unclean + prep. dia + pro.gen.nt.s heautous itself*]); **but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean** [εἰ μὴ τῷ λογιζομένῳ τι κοινὸν εἶναι, ἐκεῖνῳ κοινόν [*part. ei w/neg. me “but” + d.a.w/pres.dep.part.dat.m.s. logizomai consider; “thinks” + pro.acc.nt.s. tis anything + aadj.acc.nt.s. koinos unclean + pres.act.infin. eimi + pro.dat.m.s. ekeinos “to him” or “to that one” + adj.nom.nt.s. koinos*]].

ANALYSIS: VERSES 13-14

1. From this point on the instructions are directed at the strong believer.
2. Love demands that the strong do not cause the weak to stumble.
3. They at all times are to be considerate of the weak.
4. Paul enjoins the strong believers in the Roman Church (the majority) to stop judging the weak.
5. Mental attitude judging is to be avoided (v. 14a).
6. Believers are not to judge the sincerity of the weak as unfit to make spiritual advancement.
7. Paul uses two terms in v. 14b to illustrate judging of the weak; the term translated “obstacle” (*proskoma*) is also used in the same context in 1 Cor. 8:9 (“But take care that this liberty of

- yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.”); and the term “stumbling block” (*skandalon*).
8. This term refers to a potential major setback for a weak believer (note Matt. 16:23; Lk. 17:1; Rom. 16:17; 1 Jn. 2:20; Rev. 2:14).
 9. So major inconsiderateness on the part of the strong can affect the weak believer’s momentum.
 10. The weak (perhaps due to their Jewish influences) considered certain foods to be inherently unclean.
 11. Under the Law certain foods (meats) were forbidden.
 12. This was not because they were inherently evil but were in violation of the ceremonial code for Jews in their dispensation.
 13. Jesus set the record straight by declaring all foods clean (Mk. 7:19).
 14. The ceremonial code of the Law has been set aside for the CA (Acts 10:11ff.).
 15. So here in v. 14a Paul asserts his own stance with respect to diet.
 16. Personally, Paul was “convinced” that no foods were inherently unclean.
 17. Eating these foods does not put the believer out of fellowship.
 18. He recognized that there were those who thought otherwise (v. 14b).
 19. Considering this fact the strong must not press the issue with the weak and insult them for their food fetish.
 20. So with regard to the weak the strong are not to bully them, ostracize them, or even judge their positive volition.

Food is not the Priority in the CWL (vv. 15-17)

VERSE 15 For if because of food your brother is hurt (εἰ γὰρ διὰ βρῶμα ὁ ἀδελφός σου λυπεῖται, [*conj. gar + part. ei if + prep dia because of + noun acc.nt.s. broma food + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. adelphos + pro.gen.s. su + pres.pass.ind.3s. lupeo grieve, injure*], **you are no longer walking according to love** (οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖς: [*adv. ouketi no longer + prep. kata + noun acc.f.s. agape + pres.act.ind.2s. peripateo walk*]).

Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died (μὴ τῷ βρώματί σου ἐκείνον ἀπόλλυε ὑπὲρ οὗ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν [*neg me + d.a.w/noun instr.nt.s. broma food + pro.gen.m.s. su + pro.acc.m.s. ekeinos “the one” + pres.act.ind.2s. apollumi destroy, ruin + prep huper for + pro.gen.m.s. hos whom + noun nom.m.s. Christ + aor.act.ind.3s. apothnesko die*]).

VERSE 16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil (μὴ βλασφημείσθω οὖν ὑμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν [*neg me + pres.pass.imper.3s. blasphemeo “spoken of as evil” + conj. oun therefore + pro.gen.m.p. su + d.a.w/adj.nom.nt.s. agathos good*]);

VERSE 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness

and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ [*conj. gar + neg. ou + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. basileia kingdom + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + noun nom.f.s. broma + conj. kai + noun nom.f.s. posis drink + conj. alla + noun nom.f.s. dikaiosune righteousness + conj. kai + noun nom.f.s. eirene peace + conj. kai + noun nom.f.s. charra joy + prep en + noun loc.nt.s pneuma spirit + adj.loc.nt.s. hagios holy*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 15-17

1. If the strong believer disregards the weakness of the weak believer the strong believer is not operating under the law of love.
2. Even though the strong is correct in his stance regarding food and drink he is wrong to violate the weakness of the weak.
3. Putting the weak under soulish distress is a sin.
4. In an extreme case the strong can be a major factor in the weak believer's spiritual downfall as per v. 15b.
5. The weak is ultimately responsible for his spiritual advancement.
6. In 1 Cor. 8:10-12 Paul gives the example of a weak believer participating in a legitimate activity for which his conscience isn't ready (also note Rom. 14:23).
7. It is one thing for the weak to know that the strong eat and drink but another if the weak engages in the activity.
8. The strong believer should not be a factor in making the weak believer stumble or be a factor in his downfall.
9. The "good" of v. 16 refers to the believer's liberty in Christ.
10. When a setback is inflicted on the weak believer by the strong believer flaunting his liberty before the weak then "the good thing is spoken of as evil."
11. Disrepute is brought on the faith and that is a bad thing.
12. If the weak believer abandons the faith due to the conduct of the strong and maligns the local church this is not a good thing.
13. We should not give those who are in reversionism a reason to speak evil of us.
14. They shouldn't do that be it is inevitable where individuals are looking for approval.
15. Food and drink should never take priority over non-essentials (cf. 1 Cor. 8:8).
16. This is the thrust of v. 17.
17. Experiential righteousness, external harmony ("peace") and +H (joy) should be paramount.
18. Insistence on our freedom in Christ at the expense of the weak works against the FHS and its fruits.
19. The kingdom of God is not about food and drink (alcohol), but about maintaining the FHS.

The Results when the Strong Apply toward the Weak (vv. 18-19)

VERSE 18 For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men (ὁ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ δουλεύων τῷ Χριστῷ εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ καὶ δόκιμος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις [*conj. gar for + prep en + pro.dat.nt.s. this + d.a.w/pres.pass.part.nom.m.s. douleuo serve + d.a.w/noun dat.m.s. Christ + adj.nom.m.s. euarestos acceptable + d.a.w/noun dat.m.s. theos + conj. kai + adj.nom.m.s. dokimos approved + d.a.w/noun instr.m.p. anthropos*]).

VERSE 19 So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another (ἄρα οὖν τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης διώκωμεν καὶ τὰ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλου [*inferential part. ara so then + conj. oun therefore + pres.act.subj.1p. dioko pursue + d.a.acc.nt.p. "the things" + d.a.w/noun noun gen.f.s. eirene peace + conj. kai + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. oikodome building up + d.a.acc.nt.p. + prep. eis + pro.acc.m.p. allelon one another*]).

Protecting the Weak (vv. 20-21)

VERSE 20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food (μὴ ἕνεκεν βρώματος κατάλυε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ [*neg. me + pres.act.imper.2s. kataluo tear down + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. ergon work + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + prep. eneka for the sake of + noun gen.nt.s. broma food*]).

All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense (πάντα μὲν καθαρὰ, ἀλλὰ κακὸν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ διὰ προσκόμματος ἐσθίουσι [*adj.nom.m.p. pas + part. men indeed + adj.nom.nt.p. katharos clean + conj. alla but + adj.nom.nt.s. kakos evil, wrong + d.a.w/noun dat.m.s. anthropos + d.a.w/pres.act.part.dat.m.s. esthio eat + conj. dia + noun gen.nt.s. proskomma that which gives offense*]).

VERSE 21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles (καλὸν τὸ μὴ φαγεῖν κρέα μηδὲ πιεῖν οἶνον μηδὲ ἐν ᾧ ὁ ἀδελφός σου προσκόπτει [*adj.nom.nt.s. kalos good + neg. me + d.a.w/aor.act.infin. esthio eat + noun acc.nt.p. kreas meat + conj. mede nor + aor.act.infin. pino drink + noun acc.m.s. oinos wine +*

conj. mede nor + prep. en “by” + pro.instr.nt.s. hos “which” + pro.gen.m.s. su + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. adelphos + pres.act.ind.3s. proskapto stumble]).

Commendation for the Strong (v. 22)

VERSE 22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God (σὺ

πίστιν [ἦν] ἔχεις κατὰ σεαυτὸν ἔχε ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. [*pro.nom.s. su + noun acc.f.s. pistis + d.a.w/pres.act.ind.2s. echo have + pres.act.imper.2s. echo + prep kata + pro.acc.m.s. seautou yourself; as...conviction” + prep. enopion before + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos]).*

Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves (μακάριος ὁ μὴ

κρίνων ἑαυτὸν ἐν ᾧ δοκιμάζει [*adj.nom.m.s. makarios happy, blessed + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. krino judge; condemn + neg. me + prep en + pro.loc.nt.s. hos + pres.act.ind.3s. dokimazo approve]).*

Guidance for the Weak (v. 23)

VERSE 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not

from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin (ὁ δὲ διακρινόμενος ἐὰν φάγη

κατακρίνεται, ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως· πᾶν δὲ ὃ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἁμαρτία ἐστίν [*conj. de but + d.a.w/pres.mid.part.nom.m.s. diakrino doubt in the middle voice + pf.pass.ind.3s. katakrino condemn + part. ean + aor.act.subj.3s. esthio eat + conj. hoti because + neg. ouk + prep. ek + noun abl.f.s. pistis + pro.nom.nt.s. pas + conj. de + pro.nom.m.s. hos + neg. ouk + prep ek + noun abl.f.s. pistis + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + noun nom.f.s. hamartia sin]).*

ANALYSIS: VERSES 18-23

1. The twofold effect when the strong apply towards those who are weak in the faith is: “acceptance to God” and “approval by men.”
2. By not holding the weak in contempt we are serving Christ.
3. And, we are maintaining a witness to those who are non believers.
4. This behavior on the part of the strong has another twofold effect: (a) external peace; (b) and edification of both the strong and the weak (v. 19).
5. It is the strong who are being addressed in v. 19.
6. External harmony is the result when the strong do not make an issue out of the non-essentials like food, drink, and days.

7. Tolerance and not placing a stumbling block before the weak eliminates discord in the local body of Christ.
8. This has a positive effect on the weak in terms of edification.
9. V. 20a restates v. 15b.
10. The work of God refers to the building up of the weak believer.
11. Treating the weak believer so as to cause that believer to stumble tears down the work of God in his life.
12. He becomes discouraged and even worse can have a serious lapse of faith.
13. V. 20b reiterates v. 14.
14. Paul once again states the proper divine viewpoint with respect to food.
15. All foods are clean and therefore no violation of Scripture occurs when consumed.
16. The man who eats is the weak believer whose conscience is such that he cannot eat and not experience guilt.
17. "Gives offense" is the result of a weak believer eating certain types of food and cannot do so with a clear conscience.
18. To serve the weak certain foods is to make him stumble.
19. Verse 21 is also directed toward the strong.
20. Here is the first mention of wine (alcohol).
21. Also, Paul uses the more specific term "meat" since this was the type of food that offended the weak in Rome (cf. v. 2).
22. In v.21b Paul exhorts believers not to do anything that makes other believers stumble taking the topic to another level.
23. The strong is addressed in v. 22.
24. While they are not to parade their freedoms before the weak they are stay firm in their convictions and liberty before God.
25. Here Paul vindicates the convictions of the strong that they have as a part of the good conscience.
26. We are not talking about personal opinions but rather those held "before God."
27. "The faith which you have" is the product of the intake of divine viewpoint on matters pertaining to food and drink and days.
28. In other words, they should not surrender their God inspired convictions.
29. Only that they should not intimidate the weak.
30. In v. 22b there is even a more forceful way of making the point that the strong are in the will of God.
31. The informed and strong believer has +H when he eats or drinks as his conscience is clear.
32. He is pronounced blessed or happy as he eats and drinks.
33. He experiences no self-condemnation "in what he approves."
34. Verse 23 is addressed to weak.
35. The weak believer who eats and violates his conscience stands in sharp to the strong believer of v. 22.
36. If the weak eats and drinks with a faulty conscience the result is guilt.
37. Guilt that is unjustified and makes him miserable.
38. Not eating "from faith" stirs up the guilt complex and violates the dictum: "whatever is not from faith is sin."
39. Apart from faith we are not pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6).

END: Romans Chapter Fourteen
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Jack M. Ballinger