

Bible Studies

The weak and the strong



Read Romans 14v1-15v2, 1 Corinthians 8v1-13, 1 Corinthians 10v23-11v1.
We have seen that there are going to be differences about, what Paul calls, disputable matters. We have also seen that not everyone agrees on what is disputable! Paul does not write to us to teach us what is disputable, but to explain how we should behave.

According to each of these passages how should we behave?

Romans 14v1	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Romans 14v3	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Romans 14v13	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Romans 14v16	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Romans 14v19	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Romans 14v20	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Romans 15v1-2	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

What does Paul say our attitude is to be? Romans 15v2-3a 1 Cor 11v33-12v1

Why must the strong not judge the weak?

Can any action motivated by pride be godly?

What does Paul want us to avoid?

Romans 14v13	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	1 Cor 8v9
Romans 14v15a	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
Romans 14v15b	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	1 Cor 8v11
1 Corinthians 8v13	<input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	

We have interpreted this passage to say that we must do nothing another believer will disagree with or take offense at. **Is this what the passage says?**

The issue here is not whether someone will object to my actions, but whether someone will be harmed by my actions. There is a big difference between the two. As someone once pointed out, *some of our weaker brethren are as hard as nails.*



Am I free to exercise my freedom, if someone is likely to strongly disagree with what I do?

Am I free to exercise my freedom, if someone is likely to be harmed by what I do?



Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling-block to the weak. 1 Corinthians 8:9

If we act in a way that will harm another person, then our actions are wrong.



So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall. 1 Corinthians 8:11

Who are the strong and the weak?

We automatically think of ourselves as 'the strong', and those who disagree with us as 'the weak'. Think again, in different areas of our lives, we probably have a claim on both titles.

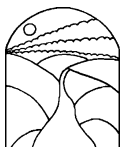


Read 1 Corinthians 8v4-8

Who is the weak brother, who is the strong brother?

What is the difference between them

The weak brother has strong convictions about things that are not clearly taught as sin in the scriptures. You would have to say the difference is to do with knowledge, understanding and maturity. The danger is that the weak brother will follow the example of the strong brother and do something that he thinks of as wrong. This may lead him into excess, temptation and sin.





Read 1 Corinthians 8v1-3
How do love and knowledge conflict?
Which one is more important?

For example: a believer goes night clubbing, it's not a problem for him, he knows the temptations and he knows they have no hold on him. But another Christian sees him and think, It's ok to go this as a believer, so he goes partying, he cannot cope with the temptations and he does not have the maturity to know where to draw the line, he ends up stoned.

Are you your brothers keeper?



For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. Romans 14:7
What do you think this means?

For even Christ did not please himself. Romans 15:3
What does this mean and how does it apply to us?



All of us have weakness, areas where we are susceptible to temptation. In these areas, we are the 'weaker brother'. We have to be aware of the dangers of stumbling.
How should we behave in such situations?

We may not be open to temptation in a given area, but we have to be careful we do not put *temptation in the way of sinners*. Paul also warns us *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. 1 Corinthians 10v12*

If you boast about your lotto win, to a person who has a problem with gambling, **what effect is it likely to have on him?**

What did Jesus say about doing things that make your brother sin? Mark 9v42

What do you do about areas where you know you are open to temptation?

Does this mean you weakness has to control everyone around you?

If I know that (for example) going to a rugby game on Sunday afternoon, is going to upset, Mrs Brown who firmly believes that you should only read the Bible and pray on Sunday.

What is going to happen? What should I do? Should I go?

Will she be offended, or will she be caused to stumble?

We have to learn not to offend but we also have to learn not to be offended.



What obligation do the strong have to the weak?
What obligation do the weak have to the strong?

At the same time, Paul maintains the right of the strong to exercise their freedom.
For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? 1 Corinthians 10:29-30
 But he also says:

Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall. 1 Corinthians 8:13



How do you reconcile these positions?
What is more important, your freedom of someone falling?
How do you maintain your freedom while being considerate of others?
How do you act in Love?

He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. Romans 14:6

What does unto the Lord mean?

We all have rights, (you may have noticed Paul deals with this issue at the same time as he deals with his rights as an apostle). Sometimes these rights clash, (right to freedom, the right not to be lead into sin) The Bible makes it clear, that Christ laid down his rights for us. As believers we need to be prepared to lay down our rights for the good of others and in obedience to God. Incredible blessing comes from laying down these rights.



For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Romans 14:17
What does this mean?



Things that Paul considered important;
 Being free and exercising freedom. No making anyone stumble
 Acting in love and consideration Following Christ's example
 Glorifying God

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According to each of these passages how should we behave?

Romans 14v1	Accept Don't judge
Romans 14v3	Not look down Not condemn
Romans 14v13	No stumbling block or obstacle
Romans 14v16	Consider good to be spoken evil of
Romans 14v19	act for peace
Romans 14v20	not destroy God's work sake of food
Romans 15v1-2	Consider others

What does Paul say our attitude is to be? Romans 15v2-3a 1 Cor 11v33-12v1

Why must the strong not judge the weak?

Can any action motivated by pride be godly?

What does Paul want us to avoid?

Romans 14v13	stumble	1 Cor 8v9
Romans 14v15a	distress	
Romans 14v15b	destroy	1 Cor 8v11
1 Corinthians 8v13	Fall into sin	

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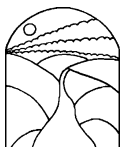


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