



# Accept One Another!

(Romans 14:1–12)

God must love variety! He made us all different. Recently, I was with several ministers. One of my friends, a fellow minister, who is a person of color, was there. He is black. I am a person of color too! I am white!

Bear with me as I digress. It has been fifty years ago, I was senior in high school, when I became first white lifeguard in Broward County, on the black beach just south of Ft. Lauderdale, FL. All the guards were older. Many were married men. Trying to be polite, I asked a fellow guard what the colored people thought about some issue. I will never forget his response. He laughed, and said, “Don’t you have a color?” You are white and I am black. I worked there for five adventuresome years. It helped to put me through college. I loved the job and my fellow guards. Inwardly I can’t help but muse that today in our politeness we have come full circle, with the phrase “people of color.”

Well, I was talking to my friend about the racial unrest that was occurring at the time. We both were grieved. I told him that I had been reading a book by John Perkins, a black civil rights activist, who was a Christian minister in the 1960s. I told him that I especially liked what Perkins conveyed when he wrote, “In God’s sight, there is no white race nor black race. There is only the human race!” My black friend told me that Perkins had missed the mark. God loves diversity! Black is beautiful! White is beautiful! Brown is beautiful! If we are going to be like God, we must *celebrate* the differences and love the many-colored hues of humanity. I like that! God made us different and the difference is a good thing! It captures the major thrust of today’s passage in Romans. God loves diversity and when He imparts new life to individuals, they do not become Christian clones. We are all different. Like a score of music, one may be a bass note, another fit for an alto, or soprano; however, when we come together in harmony, what symphonic possibilities can be realized! We need to celebrate diversity in unity! In our text today, you will see that the command to accept others governs the whole passage.

Table 1. Romans 14:1–12

<p><sup>1</sup> Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. <sup>2</sup> One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. <sup>8</sup> If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.</p>	<p>Accept the weak</p> <p>Faith and food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong eats everything</li> <li>• Weak eats vegetables</li> </ul> <p>God accepts the one who eats everything</p> <p>Thoughts and days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both puts God first, and give thanks to God</li> </ul> <p>We do not live to ourselves We belong to God</p>
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Table 1 continued

<p><sup>9</sup> For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup> You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup> It is written:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">" 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' "</p> <p><sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Lord! (i.e. the Judge)</p> <p>Why are you judging</p> <p>We will all be judged</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. (Isaiah 45:23)</i></p> <p>We will have to give an account</p>
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## 1) Accept One Another Despite Differences

<sup>1</sup> *Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.* <sup>2</sup> *One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.* <sup>3</sup> *The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.* <sup>4</sup> *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

### Differences over Faith and Food

Have you ever judged a person based upon what they eat? Recently I read a *Daily Bread* article about a person who got a handle upon eating and lost a lot of weight. Not only did she lose the pounds, but she also lost a charitable disposition. She began to judge others who did not put the fork down as she once had a hard time to do. Chips, cookies, cakes, soda! They are killing themselves with junk food! Beware, if you happen to get success in any area, that you do not make it your crusade. Historically, the crusades were a blight upon the Christian church. What do you mean, aren't we to be champions for the truth? It is one thing to be a crusader (unsheathing your sword) and quite another to be a good physician of the soul and life with a heart of compassion and a good bedside manner.

When think of food, we think of diet. In Paul's day they also thought of diet, but in a different way. They did not think in terms of fattening foods or unhealthy foods as we do. They thought of "ceremonially clean" foods. Consider Daniel in the OT. He did not want to defile himself with the foods he ate in Babylon. Think of the Pharisees about ceremonially washing hands. Jesus used the occasion to talk about ceremonially clean and unclean foods. What did He say? It was not what you eat that defiles you. It is what comes out of your heart (see Mark 7:1-23).

Here in Romans, Paul speaks about the strong and the weak. Who is strong? Who is weak? What are they strong and weak in?

Table 2. The Strong and Weak of Romans 14

The Strong	The Weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are told to accept the weak</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does he accept? By not judging!</li> <li>• He eats anything</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is a Christian (he has faith)</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>"Accept him whose faith is weak"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He eats only vegetables (λάχανα) I wonder about the etymology of this word as fruits and vegetables are natural laxatives</li> </ul>

Table 2 continued

The Strong	The Weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His faith is the basis of his food choices</li> </ul> <p>“One man's faith allows him to eat everything,”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He should not look down on those who do not eat everything</li> </ul> <p>“The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God accepts the weak (whom you judge)</li> </ul> <p>for (because) <i>God has accepted him</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That God accepts the differences is the reason why the strong should not look down and judge the weak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His faith is the basis of his food choices</li> </ul> <p>“another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He should not condemn those who eat everything</li> </ul> <p>“the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God accepts the strong (whom you condemn)</li> </ul> <p>for (because) <i>God has accepted him</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That God accepts the differences is the reason why the weak should not condemn the strong</li> </ul>

The strong here are those who are not limited to Jewish dietary laws.

*God has accepted him.* <sup>4</sup> *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

The Lord will watch over both, irrespective of what they eat based upon what they passionately believe to be true.

Our Church Covenant has the following pledge:

We promise not to compromise the truths revealed to us by God in the Bible, but to adhere to the faith once delivered to the saints. With God's help, we resolve to be students of the Bible and hold fast to the essentials that are clear to all, and *to be gracious with respect to those who sincerely disagree on non-essentials not clearly made known.*

## Differences over Thoughts and Days

<sup>5</sup> *One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.*

<sup>6</sup> *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.*

<sup>7</sup> *For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.* <sup>8</sup> *If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*

This is about following the Jewish calendar (feast days: Passover, Tabernacles, Day of Atonement, a Saturday Sabbath) NOTICE—both have proper motives and a thankful heart. Both belong to the Lord (they are Christians)

## Dealing with Differences Among Christians

- Problem in Paul's Day: Diet and Calendar (Jewish traditions)
- Problem in our Day (Christian trappings)

Christian taboos: movies, cosmetics, tobacco, alcohol, card playing, dancing, fashion (long hair, mini-skirts of 1960s, Bible translations (KJV only), sports (on Sunday), music, wealth (materialism)

Martin Luther took issue with the LORD's Supper "Hoc est corpus meum" (This is my body!)

Pilgrim fathers were opposed to wedding rings, church weddings, and Christmas. Why? To them it was too Catholic.

Issues: Church music (Psalms, hymns, choruses, praise music), baptism, Lord's Supper (open or closed), millennial views (Pre, Post, A-), Calvinism vs Arminianism

## Accept One Another Because of Faith, Service, and Right Heart (Thankful)

Barnhouse illustration—minister talking about a seminary graduate, did not take a church, seldom preached, never went to prayer meetings, often missed church, spent most of his time in the library—they all agreed that he was not fit to be a minister. Not a good servant of the LORD. Then they got to talking about favorite concordances. All agreed *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* was the best. The person first discussed was—James Strong, who wrote *Strong's Concordance*. It takes all kinds of people to further God's cause, even the seemingly eccentric. God makes no mistakes.

## Accept One Another Because We Will Be Judged

<sup>9</sup> For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup> You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup> It is written:

" 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord,  
'every knee will bow before me;  
every tongue will confess to God.' "

<sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

## Closing Thought

The Connection with Romans 13 (be clothed in Christ)

**Romans 13:14** Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

**Romans 14:1** Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.

Do you see the connection? We are to accept others as Christ accepted us and others. He was a friend of publicans and sinners. Kind to all.

The greatest demonstration of His love was the cross!

*Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living (Rom 14:9)*