

## Romans

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Romans 14:1-6



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Vss. 1-3

- The church in Rome was similar to many of our churches today in that there were people constantly coming and going. Roman society too could be very transient. So as new people came into the church they came in different levels of discipleship and faith. Some coming out of Jewish traditions were still hanging on to the old way of living by works and not by grace. So as the church would gather regularly for meals together, some would not eat meat that came from animals sacrificed to idols and because there was no way to know where it came from, would only eat vegetables. Additionally, they would still hold to the strict Sabbath laws and various feast days, as well as which day worship would be.
- Paul calls them “weak in faith” because they have not found true freedom in Christ, but are still living by legalistic “do’s and don’ts”. Legalism is lived out by ones own moral strength as the Pharisees tried to do, but it is always doomed to fail. Salvation is not earned by checking the right boxes. We are saved by faith through God’s grace. The moral life we live, we live in Christ and by His power in us, not by our own moral strength.
- The major reason it is doomed to fail is that such a life ultimately ends up working *against* the Way of Christ. Specifically, Paul calls out being judgmental of one another, either from those who are stronger looking down their noses at those who are weaker or those who are weaker (and very legalistic) looking down their noses at those they feel lack moral strength and discipline. Either way it becomes divisive in the church and works against Christ’s command to love one another.

Vss. 4-6

- So we are to welcome the stranger and welcome one another with grace and patience and love. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are all on the journey with Him and we are on different places in the journey. To use one of Paul’s common metaphors, just as some people mature physically earlier than others, so too do we mature at different rates spiritually.

- What's more, is that we need to remember to whom we are responsible to, who our Master is. We have been bought with a price and as such are bond servants of Jesus Christ. He is our Master. We are His servants. As **His** servants we are ultimately accountable to Him and Him alone. No matter how weak or immature our faith may be, if we are earnestly living for Christ, He will help us stand, empower us to move forward, and grow in our faith.
- The problem comes when we come to the fine line between being judgmental and calling out heresy and apostasy. There are people who are very earnest, very sincere in their faith, but they are sincerely wrong. When one's beliefs and actions do not align with Scripture, then again they should be corrected with that same grace, patience, and love.
- Within the Body of Christ there are a variety of places where people in good faith can agree to disagree and hold different viewpoints that do not contradict Scripture. We may disagree over diet or days, over the KJV or the NIV, but questions and lives that deny the Trinity, the truthfulness of Scripture, and the commands of Christ to love one another and to evangelize the world are not to be tolerated in the Body of Christ, otherwise we damage the church's witness and bring shame to the Kingdom.