

WEAK IN THE FAITH

RECEIVING THE WEAKER BROTHER

*“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye,
but not to doubtful disputations.”*

~ Romans 14:1

1. A Church Problem

- a. An important instruction from Paul in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8
- b. A failure here leads to divisiveness and ecumenical compromise
- c. Can we agree that church should be a place of strength and growth
- d. Paul instructs to receive the weak, and follow after peace – Rom 14:1, 19
- e. Who is the weaker brother? How do we react to them?

2. Weak in the Faith

- a. We all start out weak, and we all are continuing to grow
- b. It is no insult to be weak, just as it is no insult to the gym to be fat
- c. Weakness = lack of fortitude, strength; thin, soft, fragile, infirmed
- d. It manifests in lack of conviction, ability, discernment, spiritual discipline
- e. *“weak in the faith”* – Ro 14:1 – not weak toward faith, weak in the flesh (Ro 8:3), weak in the world, not weak physically, mentally, emotionally, financially
- f. *“Weak in the faith”* are saved people (14:6-8); but lack the strength of right doctrine
- g. Weakness in the faith comes from newness, lack of study, prayer, church ministry

3. Weak vs. Wrong

- a. We are not talking about teachers of wrong doctrine, sins of the flesh.
- b. Rom 14 and 1 Cor 8 talk about behaviors that are not sins, but show weakness
- c. Baptists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals are weak in right division, grace (if saved!)
- d. Grace believers can be weak, too (Bereans weak on Bible issue, Prophecy vs. Mystery)
- e. If you are weak, you can grow. If you are wrong, you cannot.
- f. Do we receive the weak? Yes, but we should not let them build w/o supervision!

4. Strong in Faith

- a. Conviction and strength are often misinterpreted as a bad attitude. Strength is not...
 - i. Boldness - 1 Cor 5:6 “glorying is not good”; Tradition – Col 2:8
 - ii. Stubbornness – a characteristic of unbelief - Rom 2:5, Acts 7:51, 1 Cor 2:14
 - iii. Authority(status) – Gal 2:6,11; 5:7-8; Education – Titus 1:9-11; 1 Co 1:26, 2:4
- b. It has to do with belief and persuasion in God’s word - Rom 4:20, 10:17
- c. It requires understanding of grace doctrine – Eph 3:16; Col 1:11, 2 Ti 2:1
- d. It comes from Christ – Phil 4:13; 2 Cor 12:9-11; Eph 6:10

5. How to Strengthen

- a. The weak will judge behavior, the strong will despise people
- b. The strong are right to judge doctrine, the weak are right to despise sin
- c. First, you must love them to speak the truth – Eph 4:15; Gal 4:9-11; Gal 4:16
- d. Second, you must be willing to restrict your liberty til they grow – Ro 14:13-16
- e. The strong bear the infirmities of the weak to edification – Rom 15:1-2