

"Take Heed to Yourself"

Romans 14:1-12

Sept. 25, 2022

**I. The Point of Contention Between the "Weak" and the "Strong"**

- A. Two opposing contingents had emerged in the church at Rome: the "Weak" and the "Strong".
- B. The "Weak" were Jews who had converted to Christianity.
  - 1. They still felt compelled to obey the Old Testament's laws regarding clean/unclean food/drink and the keeping of various feast days.
  - 2. They felt this way even though they knew that Jesus had technically brought such requirements to an end (Mark 7:19; 1 Tim. 4:4; Col. 2:16-17).
- C. The "Strong", most of whom were Gentiles, were those who did not see the need to keep those earlier Old Testament requirements.
- D. Application:
  - 1. There's no situation today that directly mirrors the one in Rom. 14.
  - 2. Still, there are many matters in which some believers are more permissive than others.
  - 3. And our reactions to those who differ from us are often the same as the reactions of those in the church in Rome.

**II. The Duties of the "Weak"**

- A. Do not pass judgment over the "Strong" – don't write them off as hopelessly and dangerously immature and unworthy of fellowship.
- B. Why not pass judgment over the "Strong" in this way:
  - 1. God had already accepted them.
  - 2. They are Christ's servants (as were the "Weak").
  - 3. The "Weak" would one day appear before Christ's judgment seat and give an account of their *own* lives, not the lives of the "Strong". →
- C. Application:
  - 1. In particular situations today, we can be surprised by the permissiveness of other Christians.

2. We must flee the temptation to write-off our brothers and sisters who feel freer than we do about a certain behavior.

### **III. The Duties of the Strong**

- A. Welcome the “Weak” – though not so you can pound them with your own opinions.
- B. Don’t despise the “Weak”
  1. Don’t let yourself become so annoyed that you avoid them altogether.
  2. Don’t entertain thoughts that would label the “Weak” as legalistic or Pharisaical.
- C. Why not despise the Weak? For the same reasons Paul told them to not pass judgment over the “Strong”. (See II.B)
- D. Application:
  1. We sometimes find ourselves sharing a church with those who might have stricter notions of Christian obedience than we do.
  2. Yet we must flee from the temptation to write them off as moralistic and unworthy of our fellowship.

**Summary Phrase:** Stop worrying about others and take heed to *yourself!*