

Two main categories of people are under discussion in Romans 14: The **WEAK** (*EAT ONLY VEGETABLES) and the **STRONG** (*BELIEVE THEY CAN EAT EVERYTHING).

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WEAK & STRONG ...

- The deciding factor between the person who is weak in faith and the person who is strong in faith is **what each person believes is allowable before or honoring to God**. One person's faith allows only vegetables. The other person believes he can eat everything.
- The person who is weak in faith struggles to accept the legitimacy of New Testament teaching over their convictions.
- This person is often under the influence of outside sources—proponents of their view, books, research, etc.—which eventually shift them away from a biblical directive.
- The person who is weak in faith struggles to escape his past, whether a Jewish believer who cannot bring himself to part from Old Testament authority, a Greek believer who cannot distance himself from the pagan rites and rituals from which he escaped, or more applicable today, the person who cannot leave the do's and don'ts of early religious training or other influences for freedom in Jesus Christ.
- The person who is strong in faith more readily believes and accepts this "new" teaching, i.e. the biblical instruction that comes to believers in Christ in the New Testament. They more easily shake off the past and embrace this new way of living.



OUR PRIDE: A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER ...

- **Falling prey to pride is probably the main temptation for both categories of people.** When pride takes over, people in both groups think that they are spiritually elite. Pride causes the one weak in faith to become a legalistic judge, and pride causes the one who believes and eats everything to become a spiritual snob.
- **The Judge:** When the one who is "weak in faith" falls to pride, he attempts to justify his convictions (opinions) with Scripture. He becomes confused as to his Scriptural directive—the authoritative teaching of the word of God. This "weak person" often becomes an outspoken critic (in the name of God of course) of those who disagree. The person who is weak in faith and falls prey to pride ultimately struggles with truth-telling. Determined to prove a point he will make the Bible his instrument of truth.
- **The Snob:** The one who "believes he may eat anything" may also struggle with pride. Falling prey to pride he becomes a spiritual snob (despiser) and loses interest in maintaining a Scriptural directive. The snob isn't as concerned with a biblical connection. because "he knows." He is, after all, "free" in Christ. But if his concept of Christian liberty is no longer firmly rooted in Scripture, then his freedom is ill-conceived. Also, he disdains those who "just don't get it."
- The person who is in right relationship with God, however, whether of weak or strong, makes sure that they are accountable before God and his word.

AN OPTION: ACCOUNTABILITY **NOW COMBATS OUR PRIDE ...**

- Live our lives **FULLY ACCOUNTABLE BEFORE GOD **NOW!****
- **Welcome** those who have different convictions because God has welcomed them, 14:1, 14:3.
- **Neither despise nor judge** those who disagree, 14:3.
- **Do not usurp God's authority** over his servant, 14:4.
- **Know** that God will uphold ALL his servants, 14:4.
- **Be fully convinced** that we are doing what we should be doing, 14:5.
- Whatever we do, **honor** the Lord and **give thanks** to God, 14:6.
- Determine to **live to the Lord** not to ourselves, 14:7-8.
- **Know** that we are the Lord's, 14:8b-9.
- Live **NOW** knowing that we shall stand before God and give an account of **OUR** lives, 14:10-12.

An Outline of Romans 14:1-12 ...

- (1) The Apostle Paul calls us to welcome each other but not with the purpose of quarreling over matters of conscience, 14:1-3.
- (2) The Apostle Paul calls us to examine who we think we are that we can judge God's servants, 14:4-9.
- (3) The Apostle Paul calls us to examine our motives and to be more concerned with our accountability before God than the spirituality of others, 14:10-12.