



# A Sharp Disagreement

Acts 15.36-41,  
CB NT p. 237

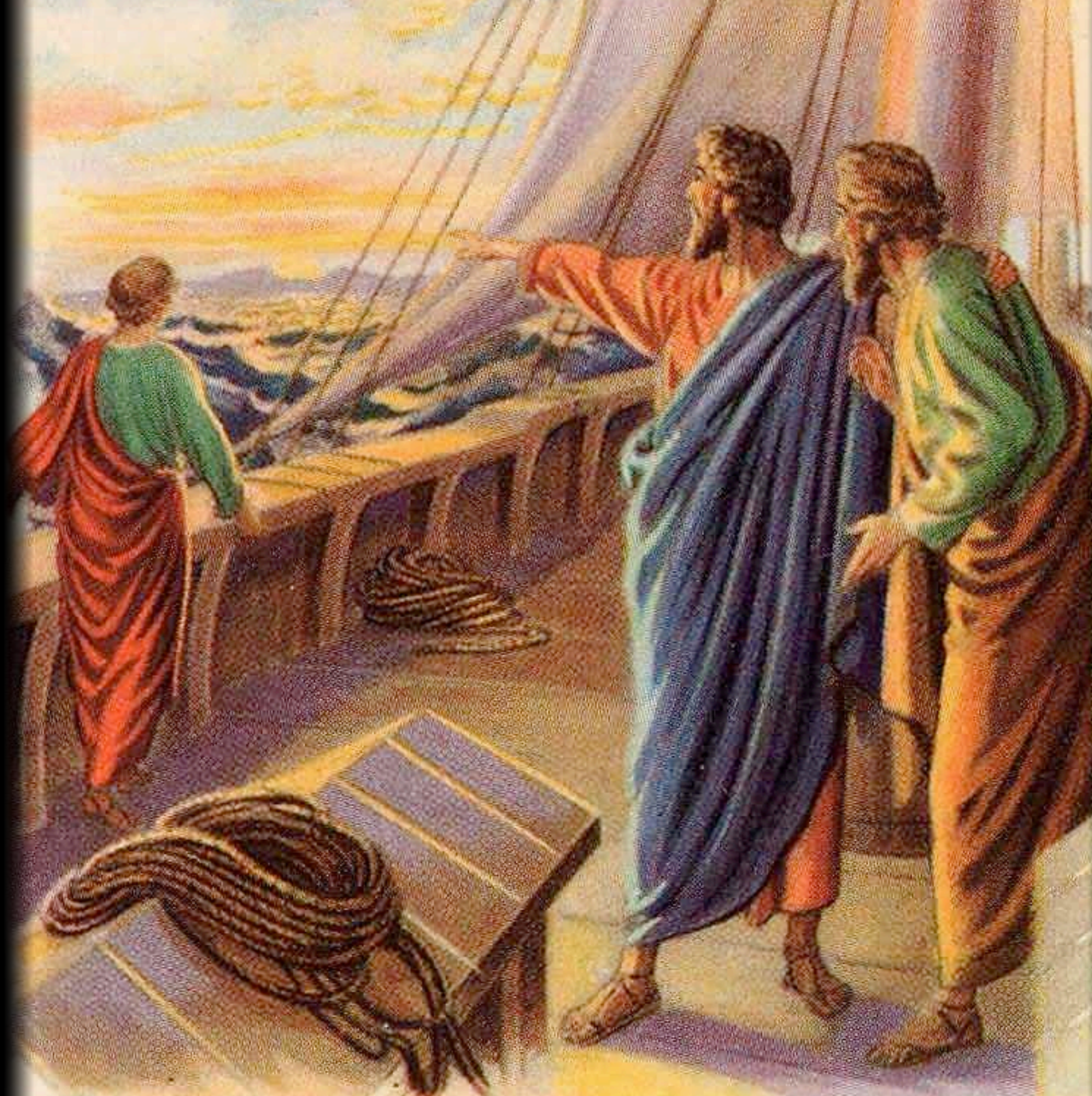
Acts 15.36-41

Barnabas and Paul have a great relationship!

But there came a day when they went their separate ways. So sad.

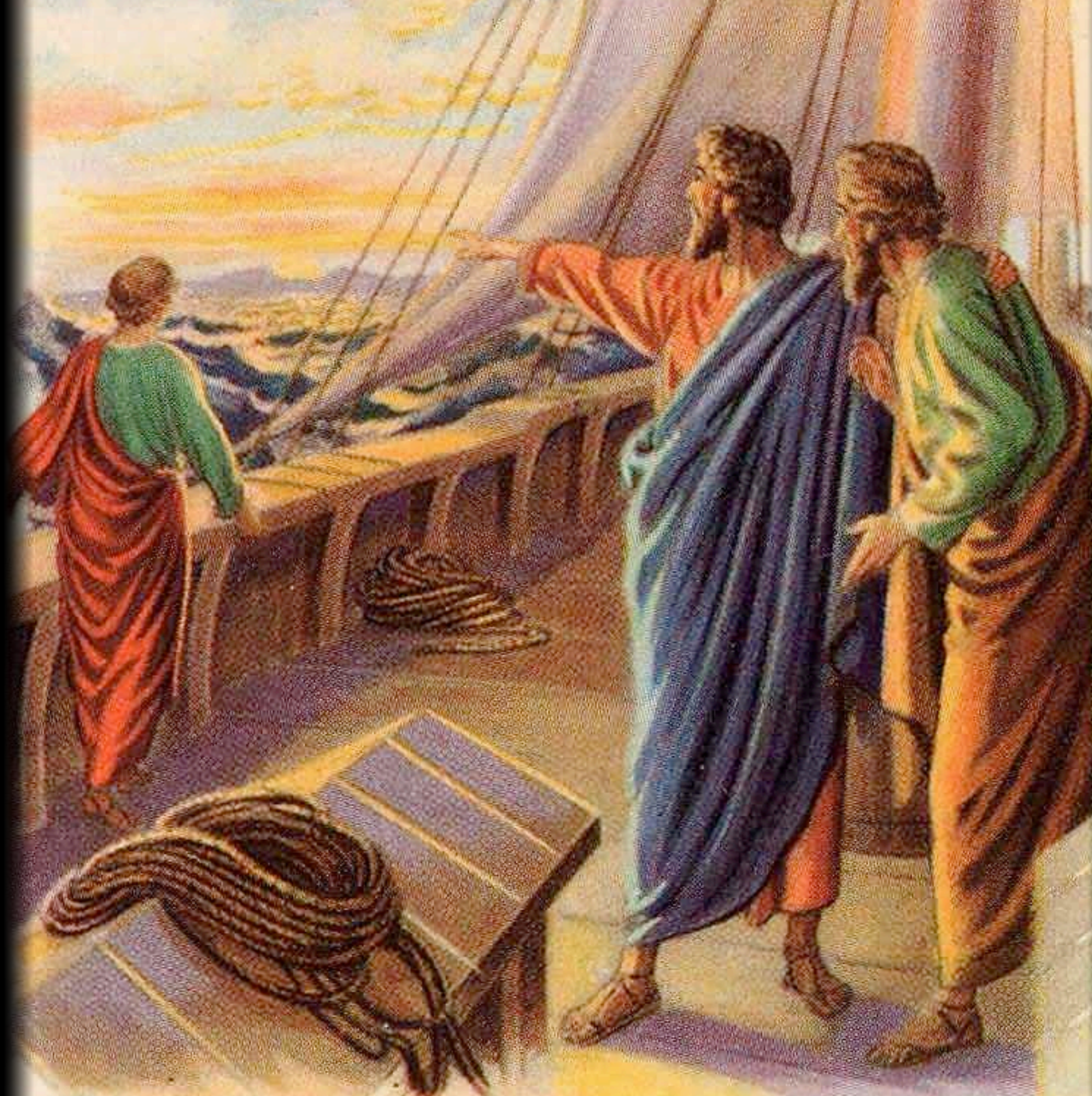
**But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.**

**Acts 9.27,  
CB NT p. 224**



**So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.**

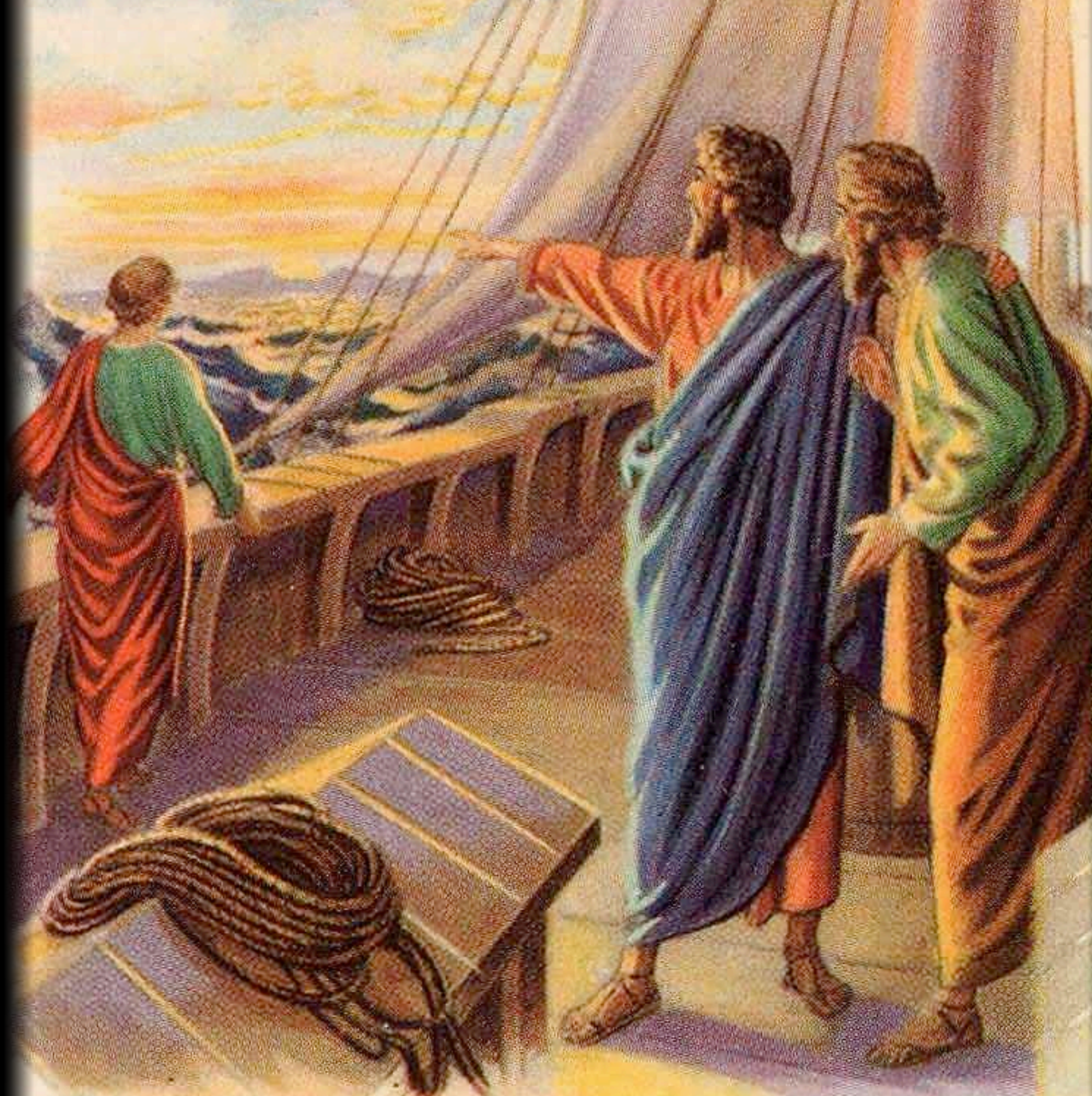
**Acts 11.25-26,  
CB NT p. 229**



Acts 11:22-26: The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. [23] When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, [24] for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. [25] So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, [26] and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

**The Holy Spirit said,  
“Set apart for me  
Barnabas and Saul for  
the work to which I  
have called them.” Then  
after fasting and  
praying they laid their  
hands on them and sent  
them off.**

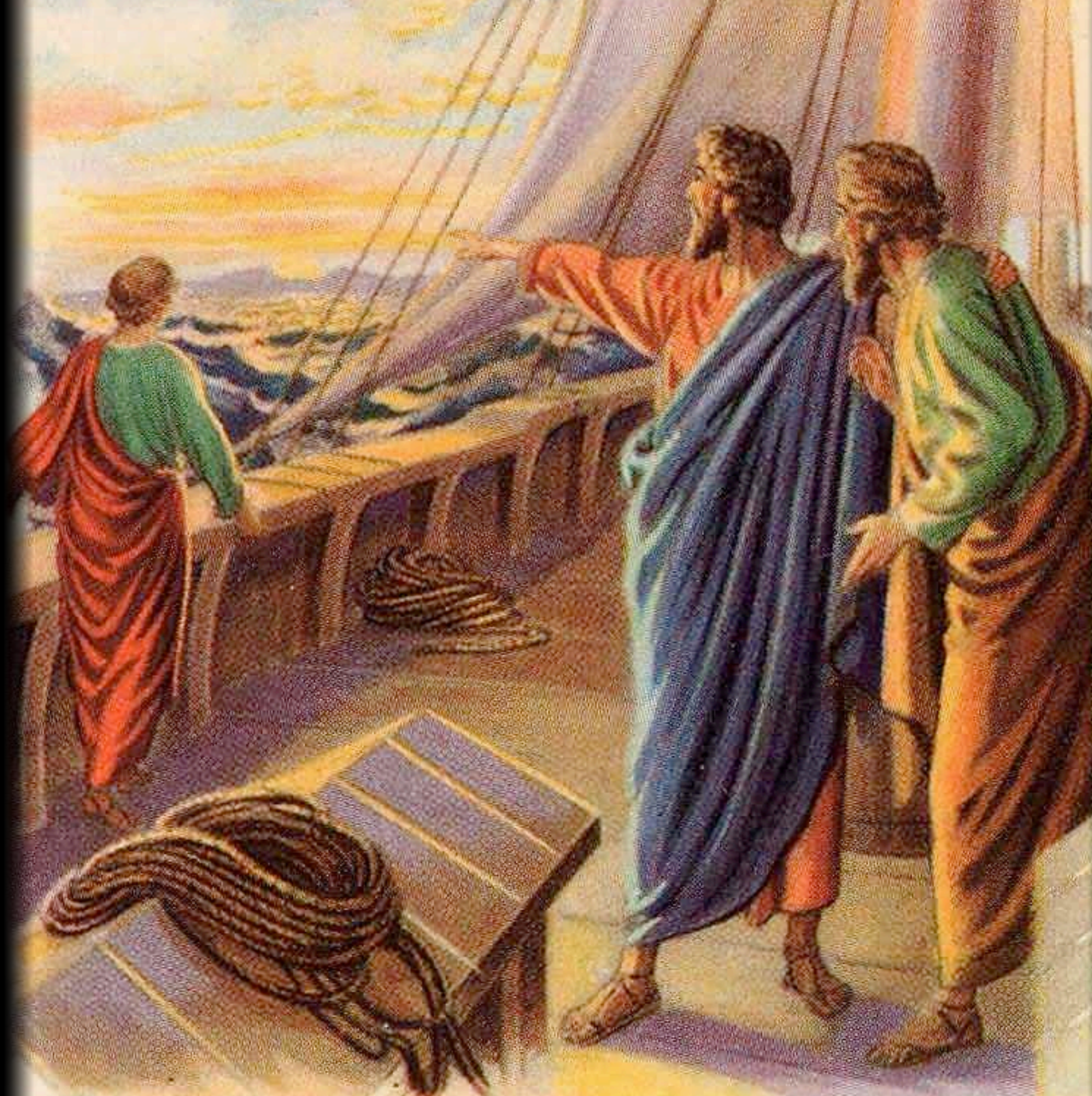
**Acts 13.2-3,  
CB NT p. 231**



Acts 13:1-3: Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [3] Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

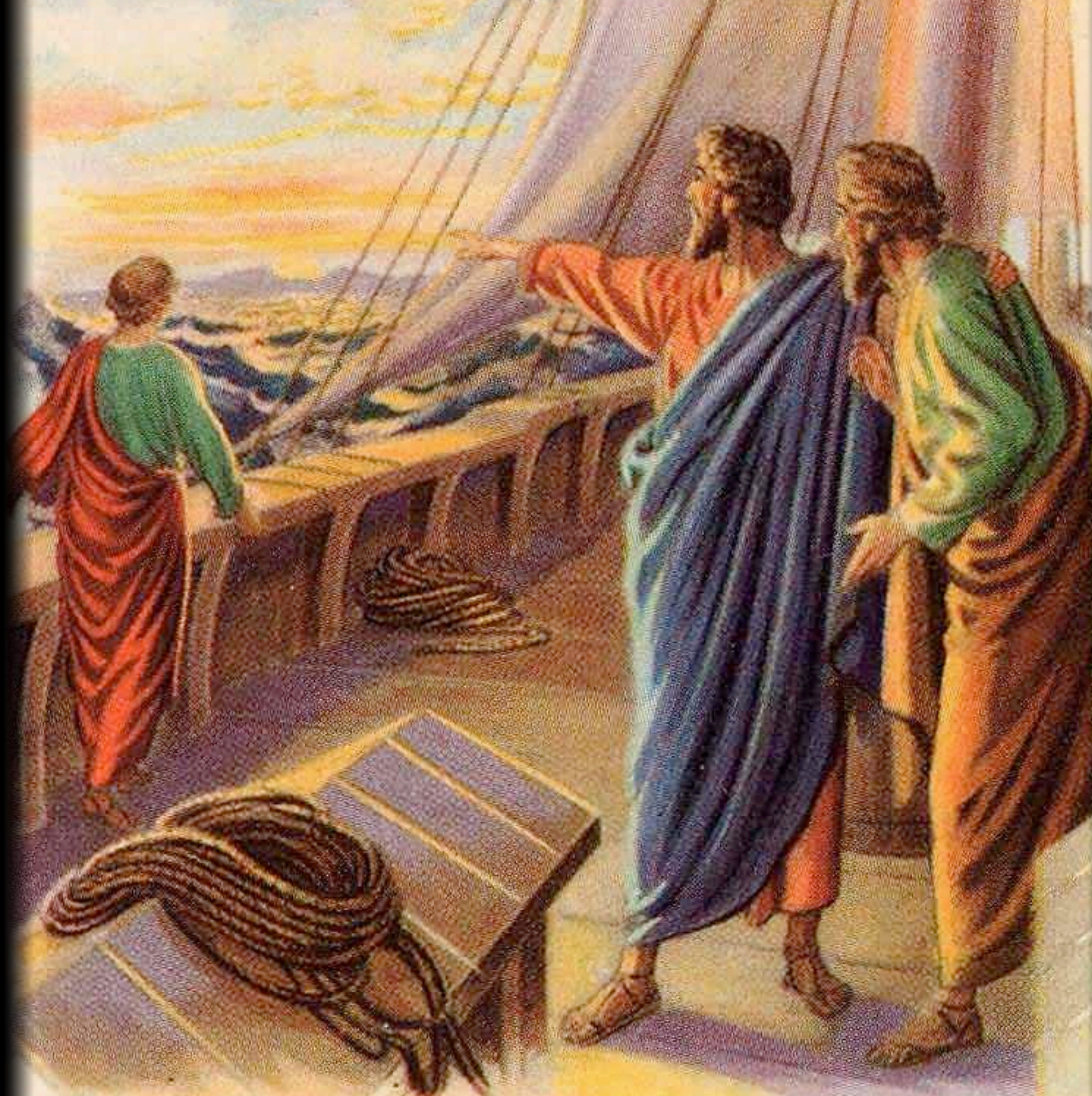
**And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they remained no little time with the disciples.**

**Acts 14.27-28,  
CB NT p. 235**



**And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.**

**Acts 15.2,  
CB NT p. 235**



[2] And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.  
(Acts 15:2 ESV)

“Let us return and visit the brothers in every city ... and see how they are.”



Let's take  
John Mark  
with us.



John  
Mark



And he suggested that they take with them John Mark.





No way,  
he left us and  
didn't go with us  
to work.

Paul doesn't want to take John Mark with them.



No way,  
he left us and  
didn't go with us  
to work.

“Thought  
best”

Key expression is “Paul thought best” (think meet, fit, right; worthy, deserving)  
In Paul's opinion, because John Mark and left them and not continued, he shouldn't go again.  
Unreliable? Immature?



John  
Mark



Barnabas being an encourager, obviously was willing to give John Mark a second chance.

But they could not agree.



John  
Mark

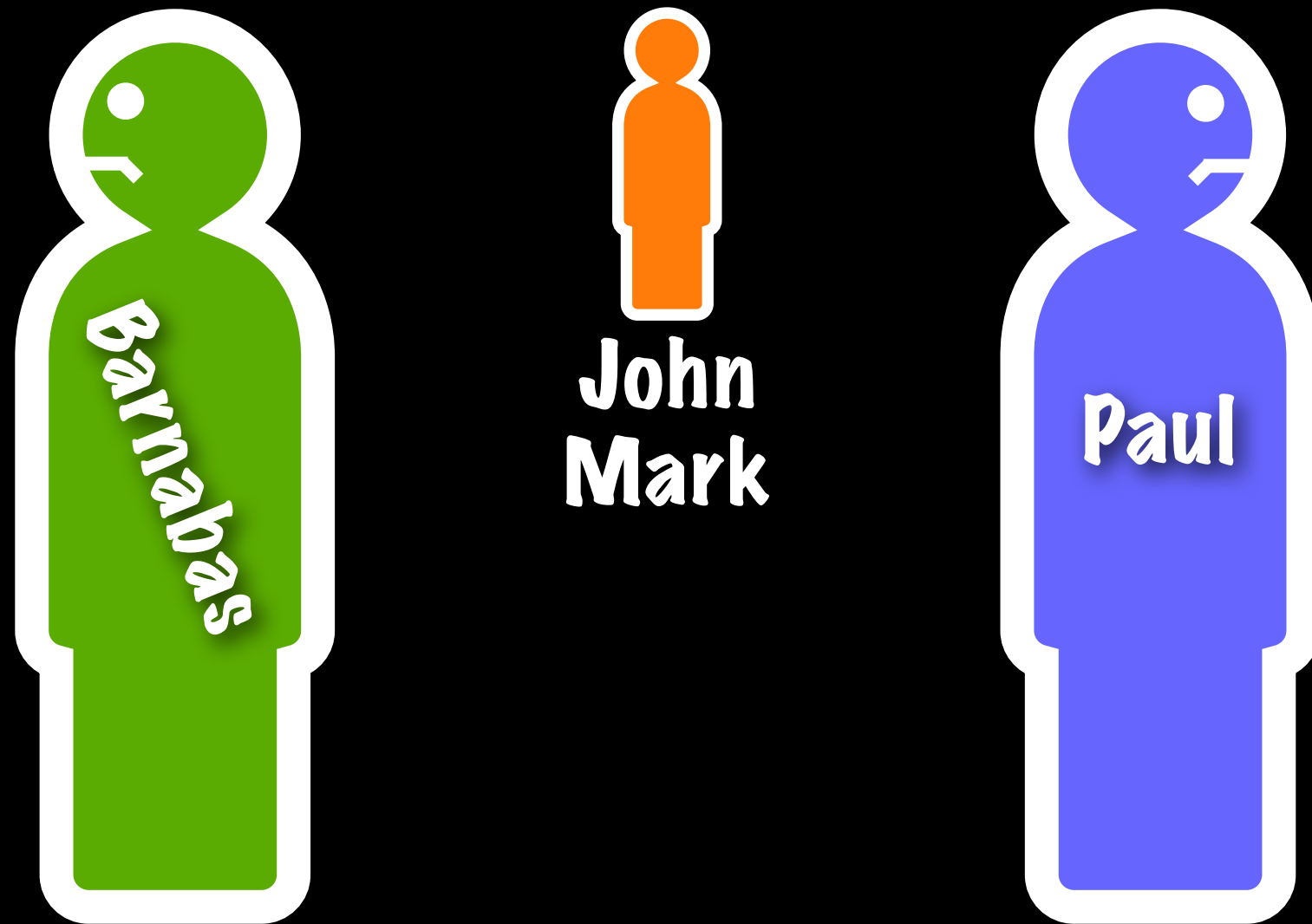


**"sharp  
disagreement"**

There was a sharp disagreement between them.

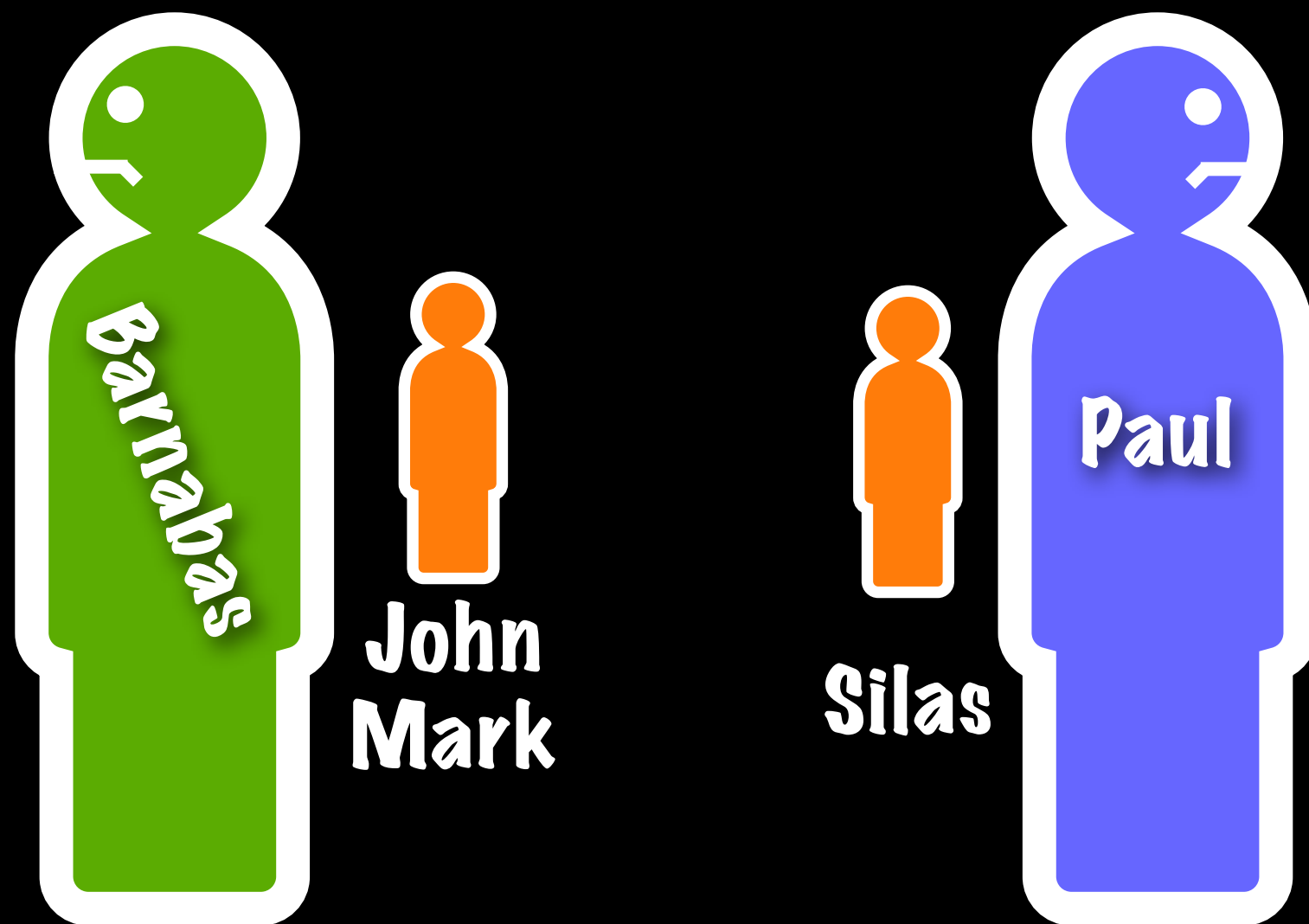
"inciting, irritation"

(Used by Paul in 1 Cor. 13.5: "love does not let itself be provoked.")



**“so that they separated from each other”**

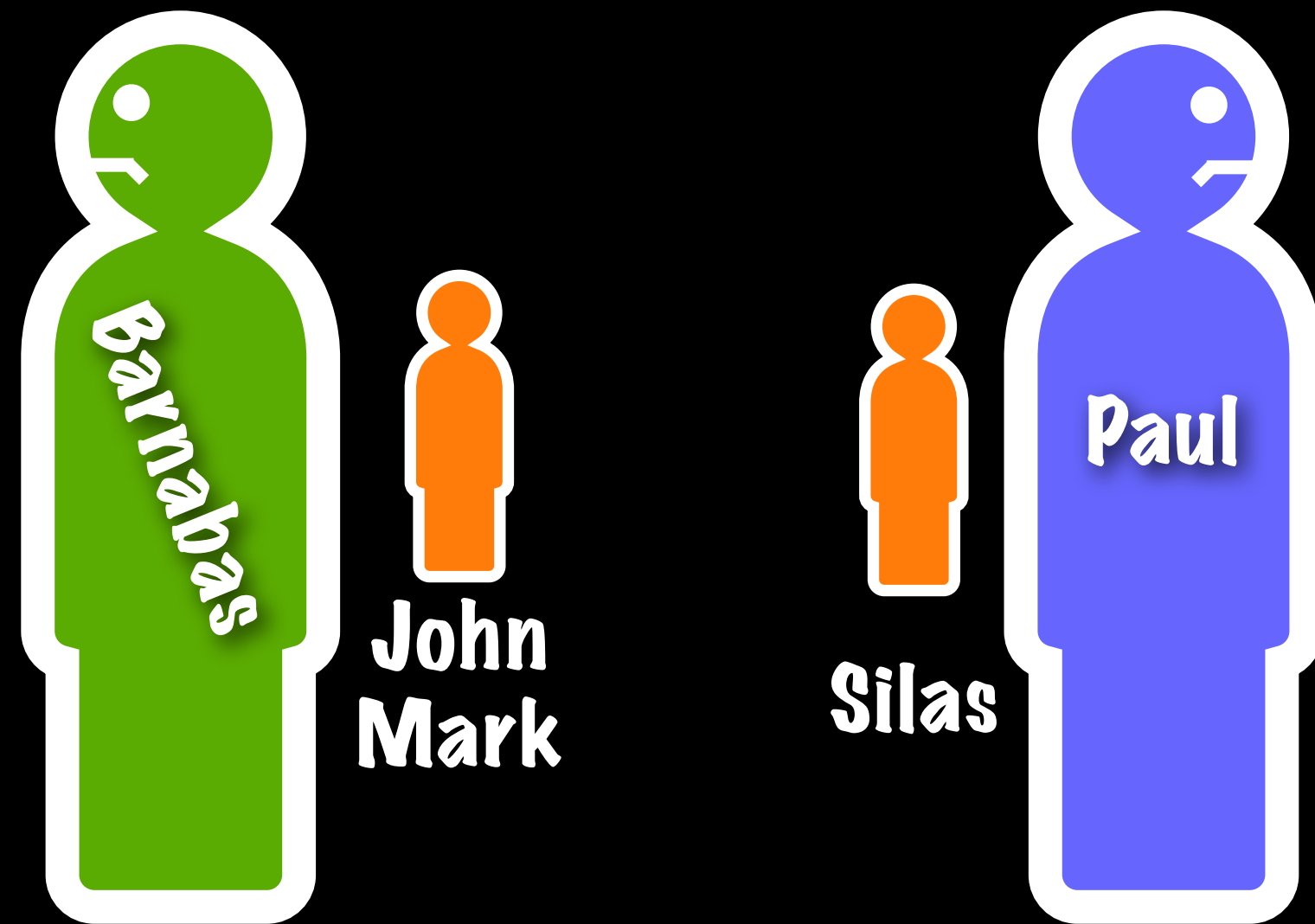
So they separated from each other.



**“so that they separated from each other”**

John Mark went with Barnabas

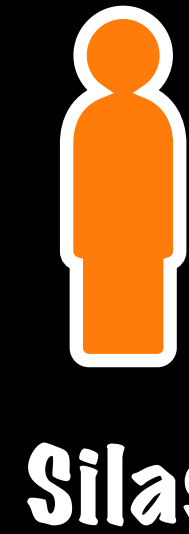
Paul took Silas



**“so that they separated from each other”**

They went two different directions.

Who was right?  
Who was wrong?



Was this sinful?

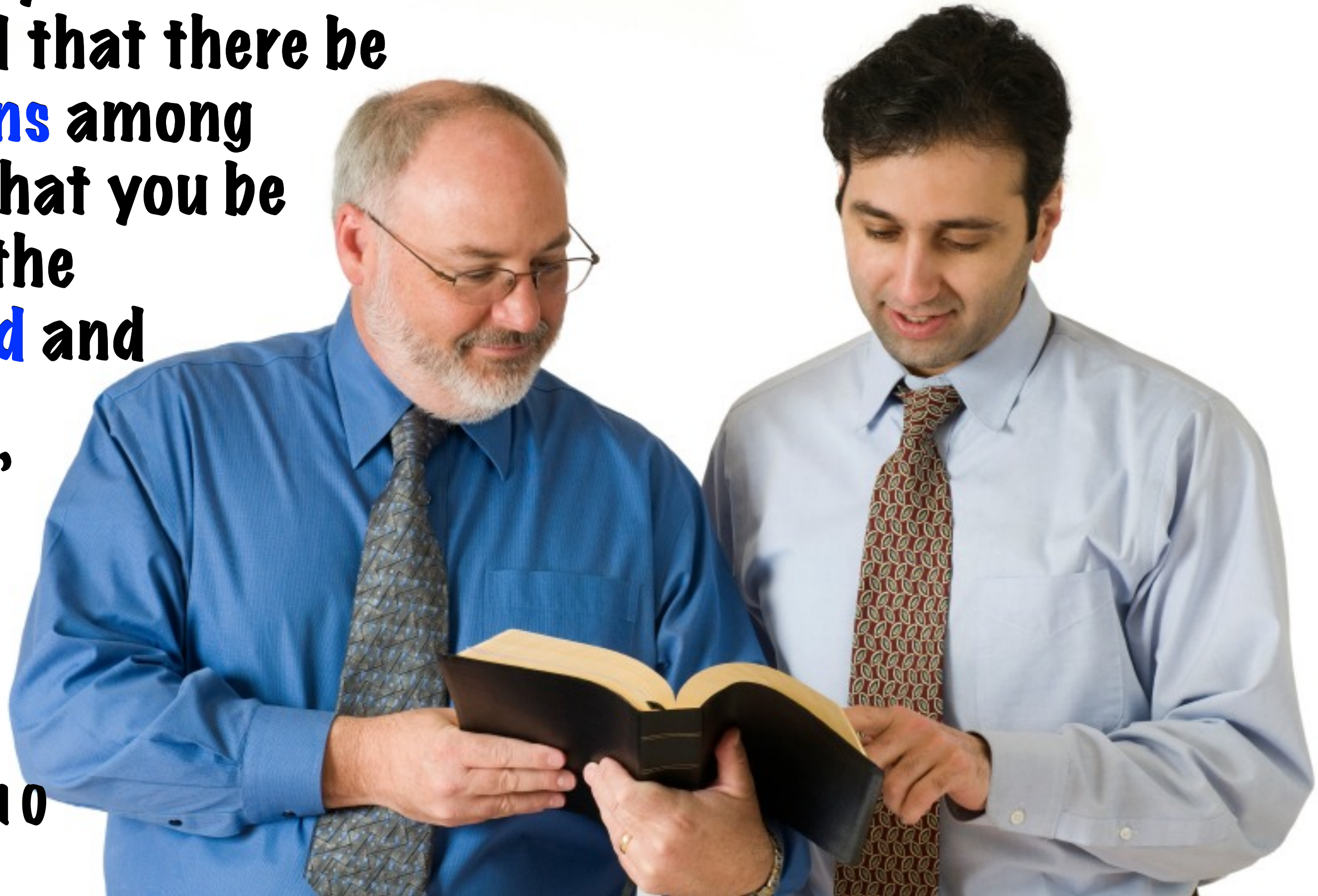
Who was right? Who was wrong?

Was this sinful?

Or was this just opinion? Was this the best way to handle the situation?



**“that all of you  
agree, and that there be  
no divisions among  
you, but that you be  
united in the  
same mind and  
the same  
judgment.”**

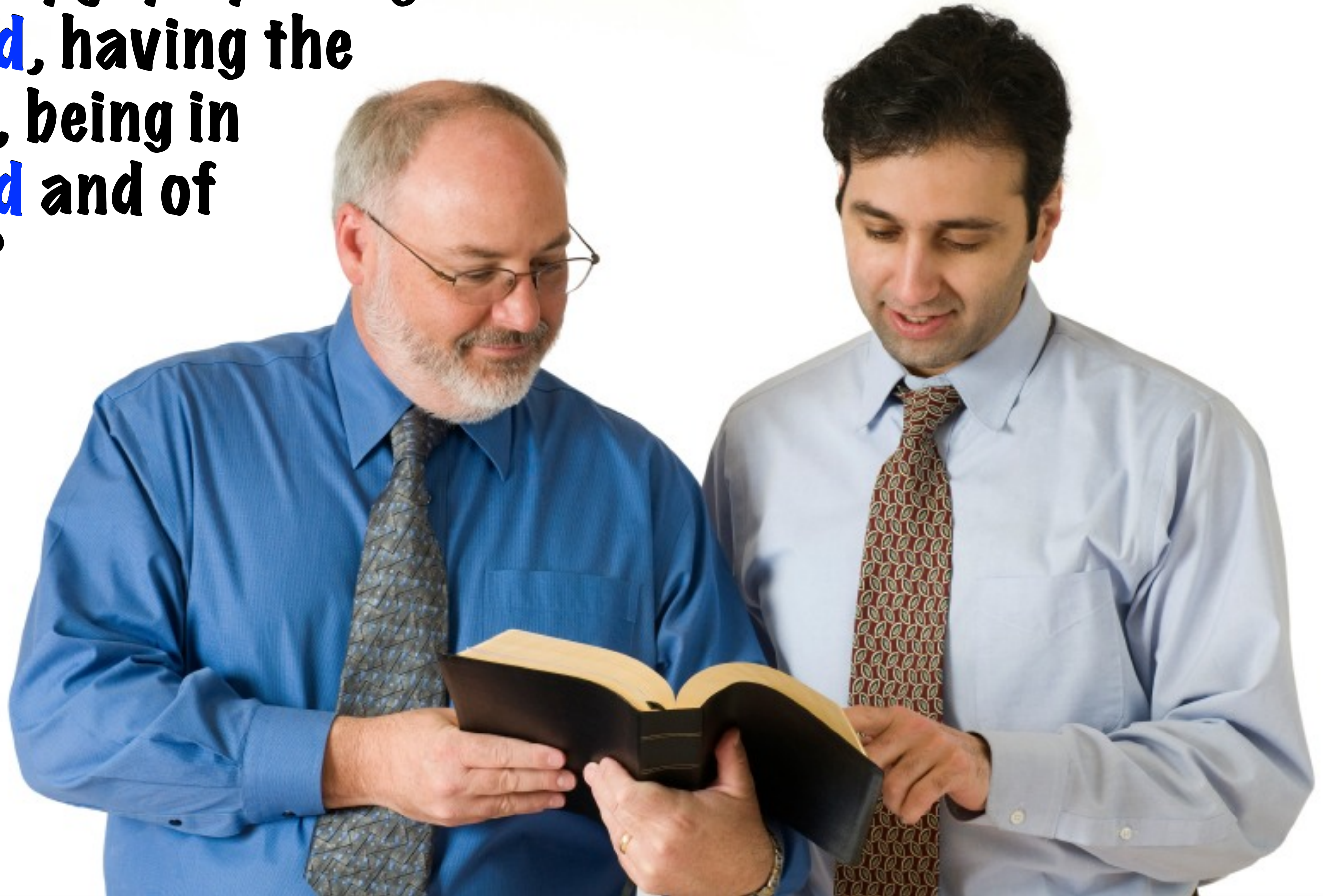


**1 Corinthians 1.10  
CB NT p. 289**

This is the same Paul that wrote to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 1:10-11: I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. [11] For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

**“complete my joy by being of the  
same mind, having the  
same love, being in  
full accord and of  
one mind”**



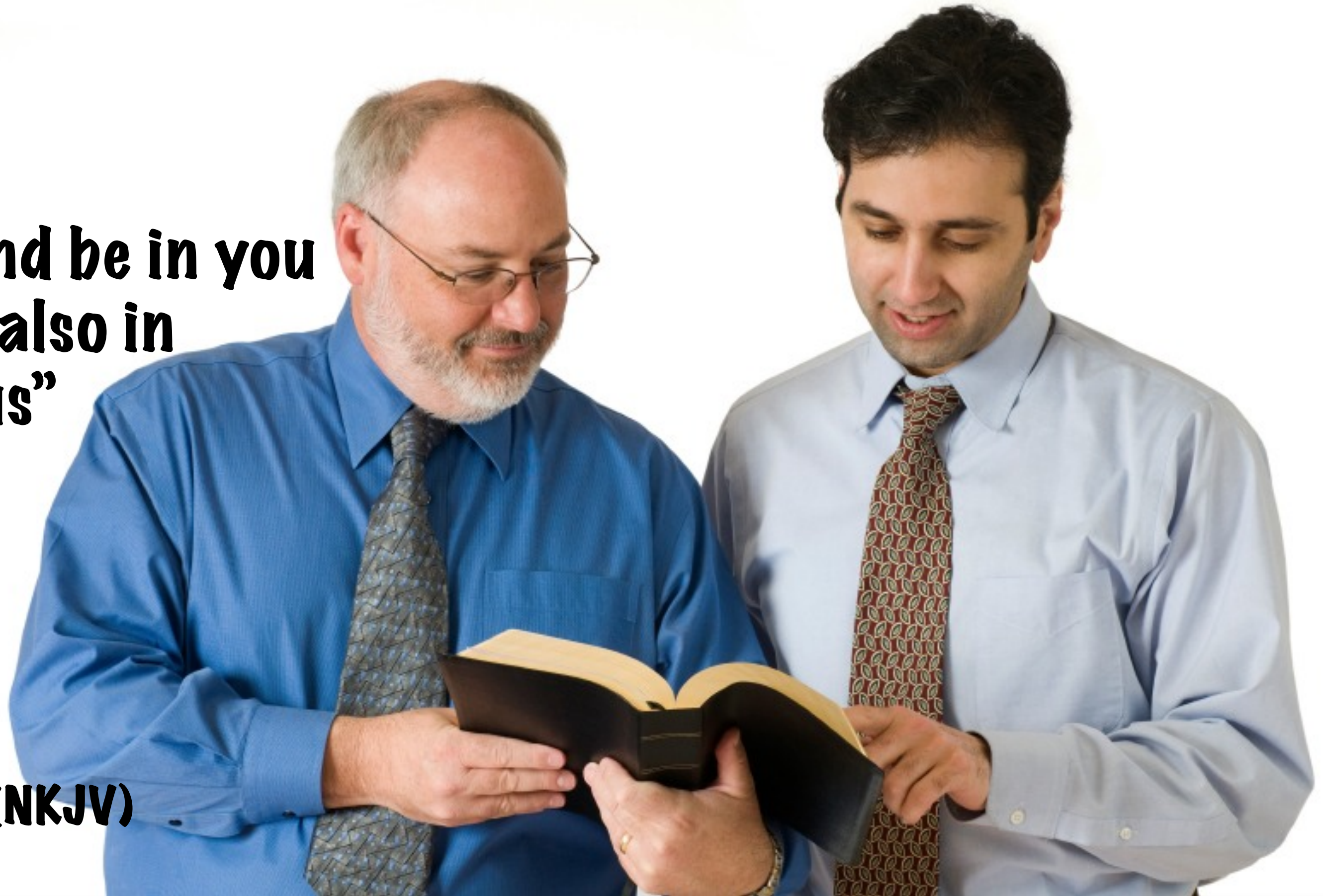
**Philippians 2.2  
CB NT p. 345**

Philippians 2:2: complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**

**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

Phil. 2.5: Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ  
Jesus



**complete  
doctrinal  
agreement?**

**OR**

**attitude of  
serving?**

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**



**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

What did Paul mean by having the mind of Christ?

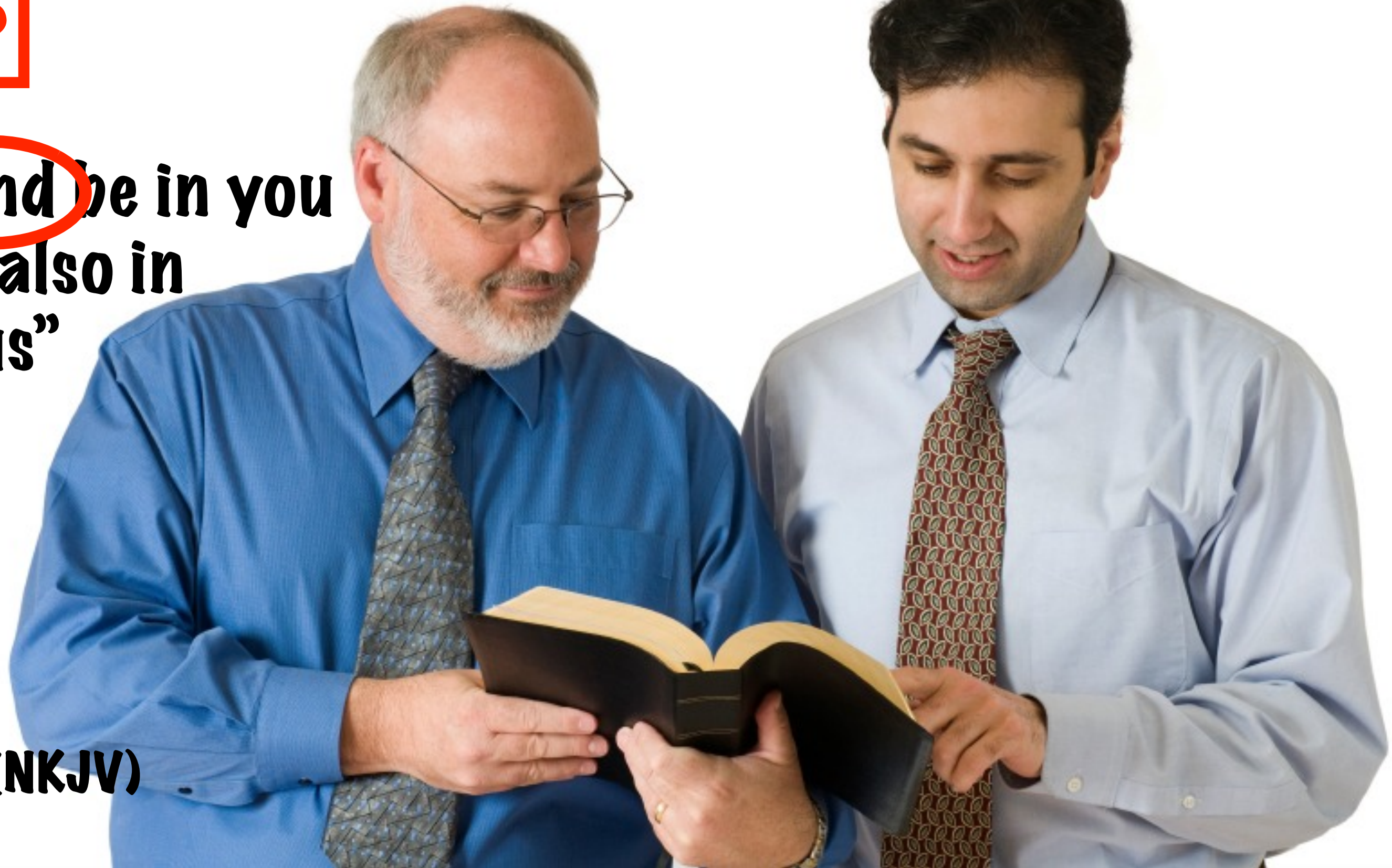
Complete doctrinal agreement? Are we supposed to have a uniform faith?

Or is he speaking of an attitude of serving?

**complete  
doctrinal  
agreement?**

**—No 1. foods and days (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8)**

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**



**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

Not doctrinal agreement because...

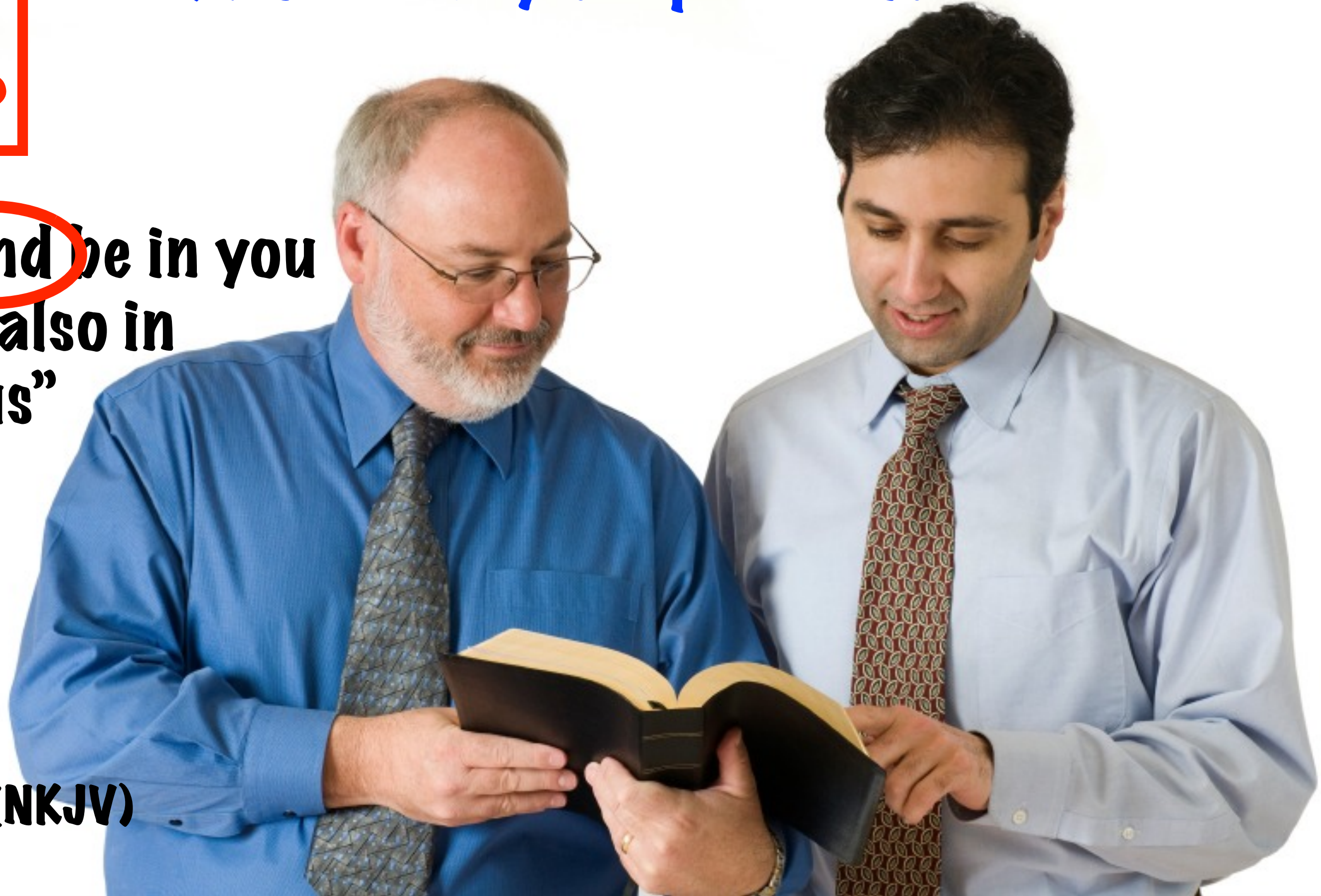
1. Food and days (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8). Eat different foods, honor different days.

(more later)

**complete  
doctrinal  
agreement?**

**—No 2. Necessary on specific doctrines**

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**



**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

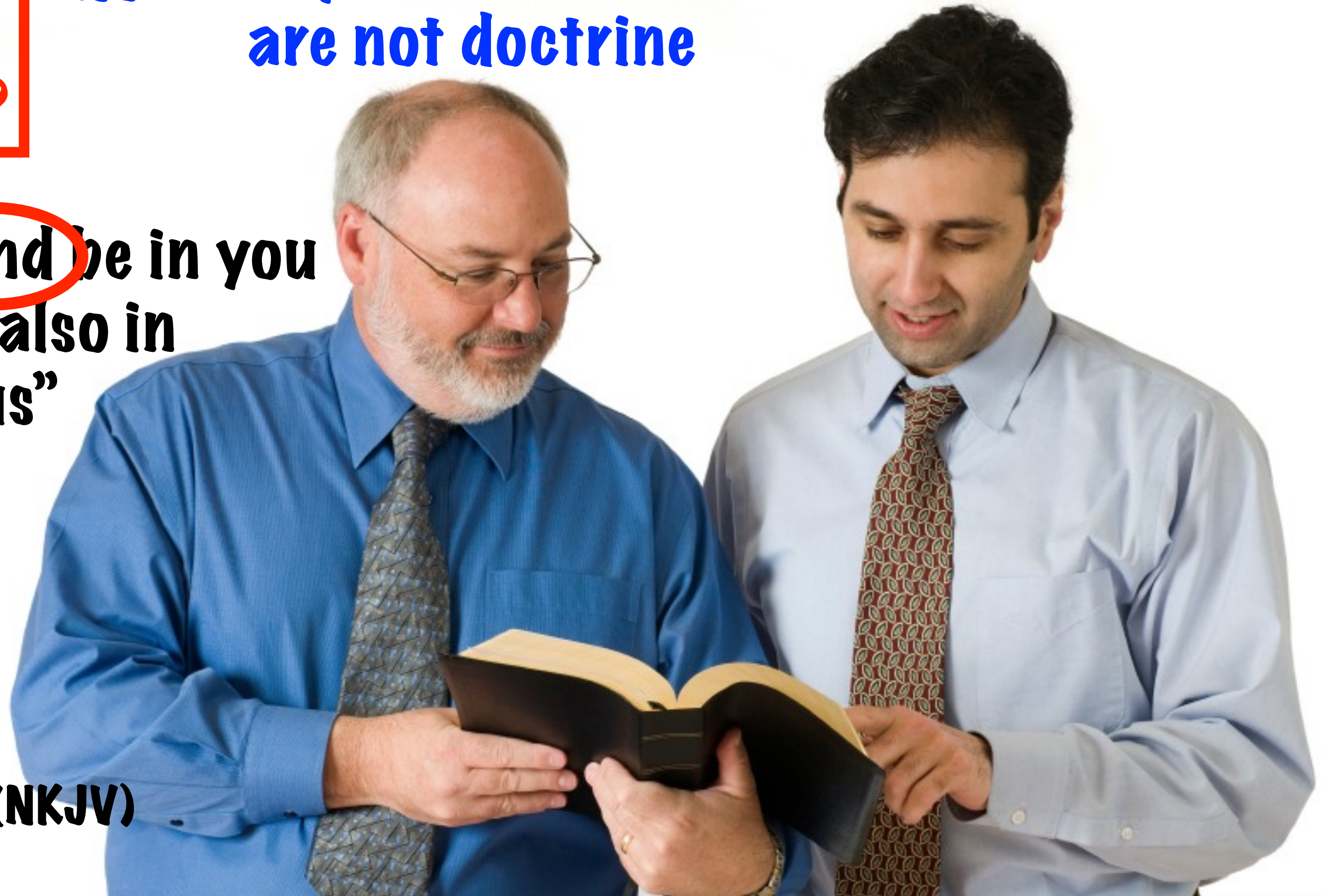
2. We do need to have agreement of specific doctrines.

Jesus is the son of God, He died, He was raised from the dead.

**complete  
doctrinal  
agreement?**

**—No 3. My reasoned conclusions  
are not doctrine**

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**



**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

3. My reasoned conclusions are not doctrine.

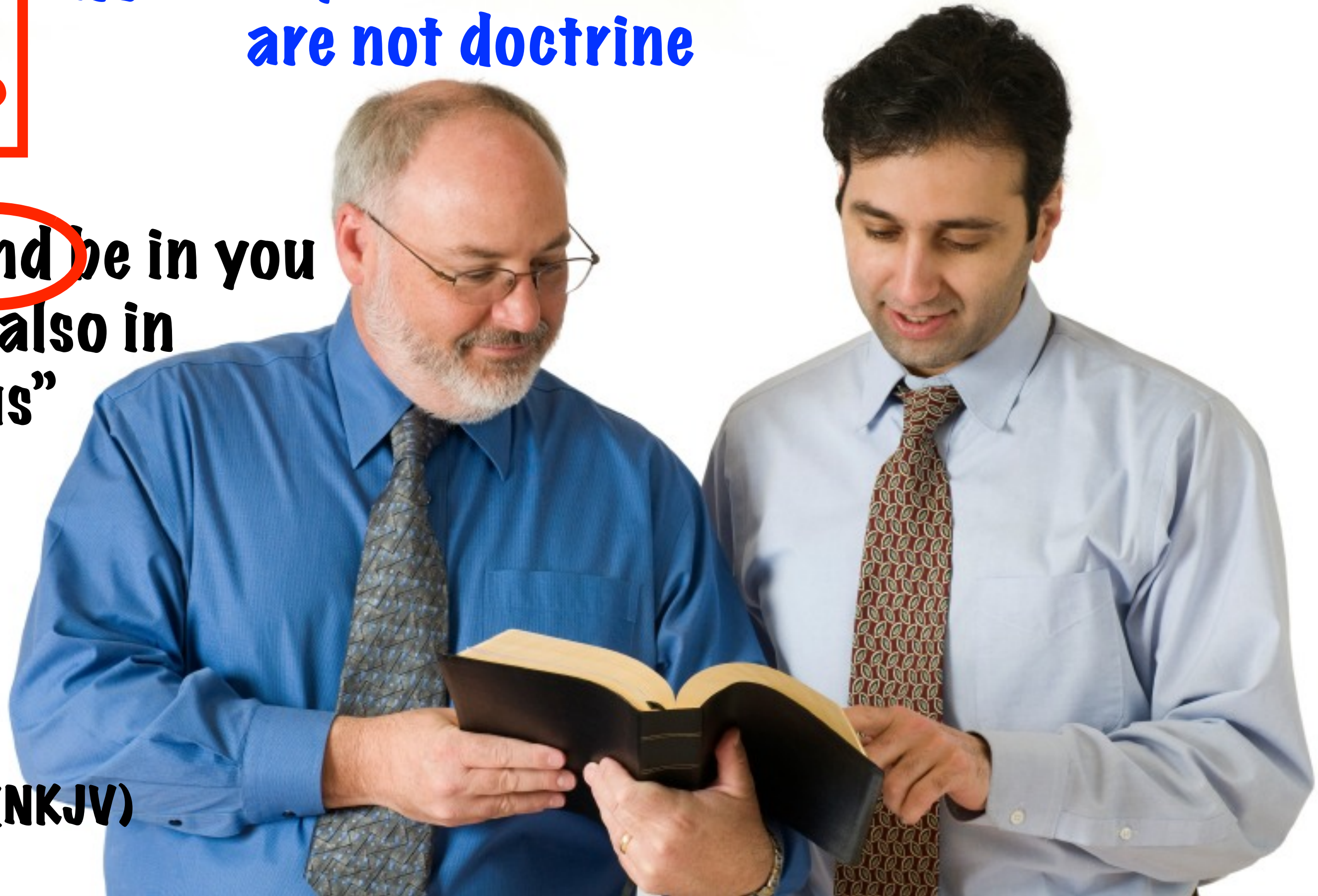
**complete  
doctrinal  
agreement?**

**—No 3. My reasoned conclusions  
are not doctrine**

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**

**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

Mt. 15.9: “In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”





**complete  
doctrinal  
agreement?**

**attitude of  
serving?**

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**

**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

It seems to me that the mind we are to have does not mean complete doctrinal agreement.



attitude of  
serving?

“Let this **mind** be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”

**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)**  
**CB NT p. 345**

Consider the attitude of serving.



**“Mind of Christ...  
emptied himself,  
by taking the  
form of a servant”**

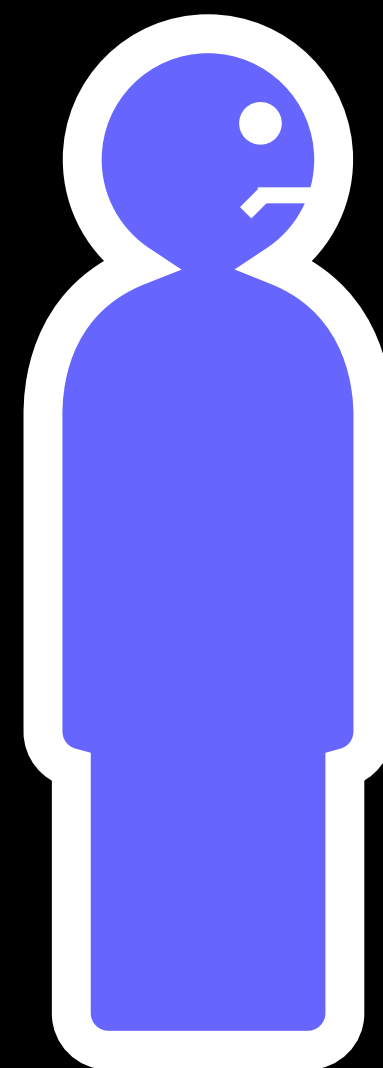
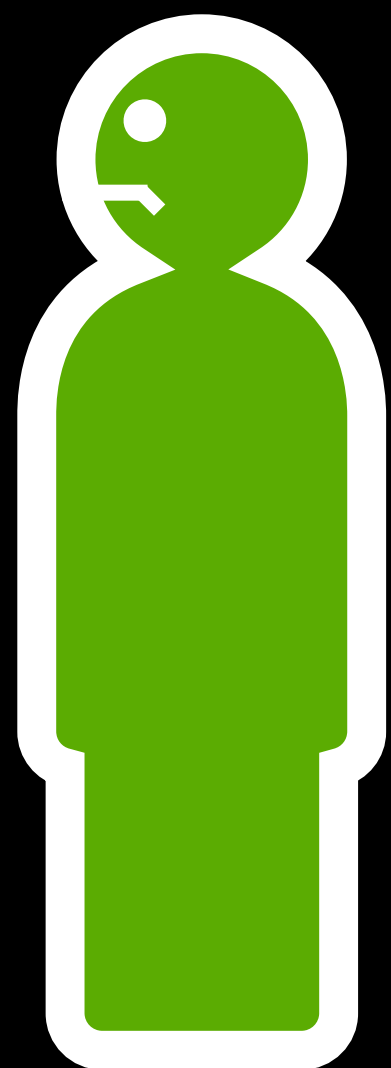
**attitude of  
serving?**

**“Let this mind be in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus”**



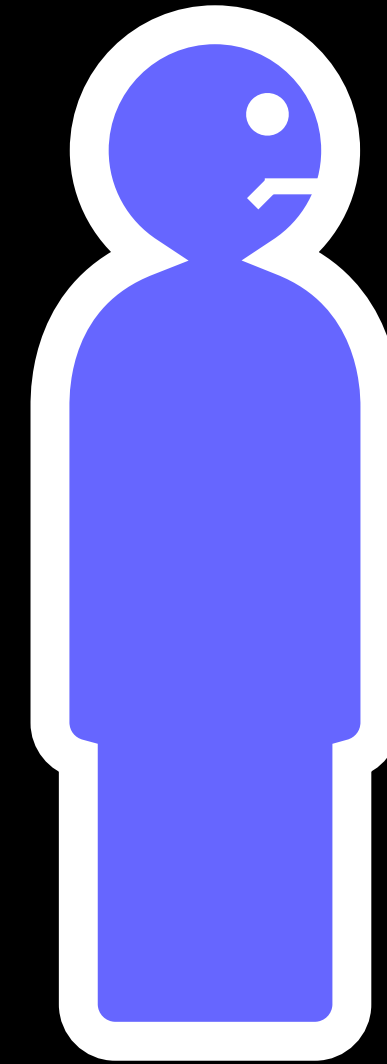
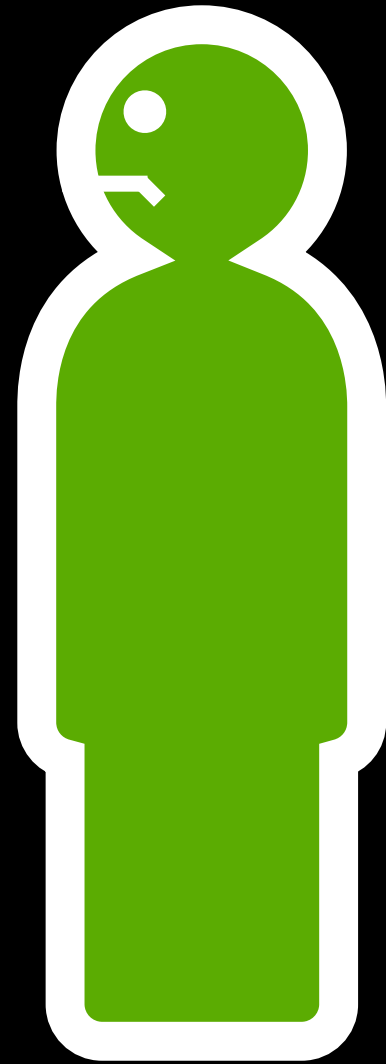
**Philippians 2.5 (NKJV)  
CB NT p. 345**

Phil. 2.5–8: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.



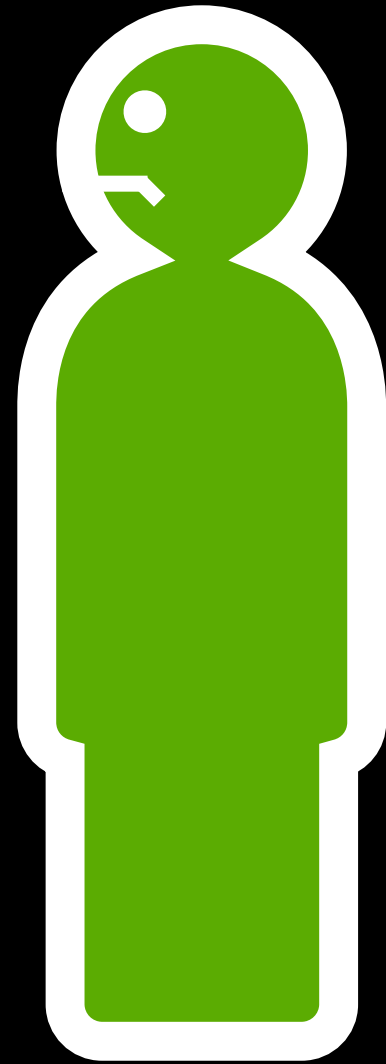
**Romans 14**  
**CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

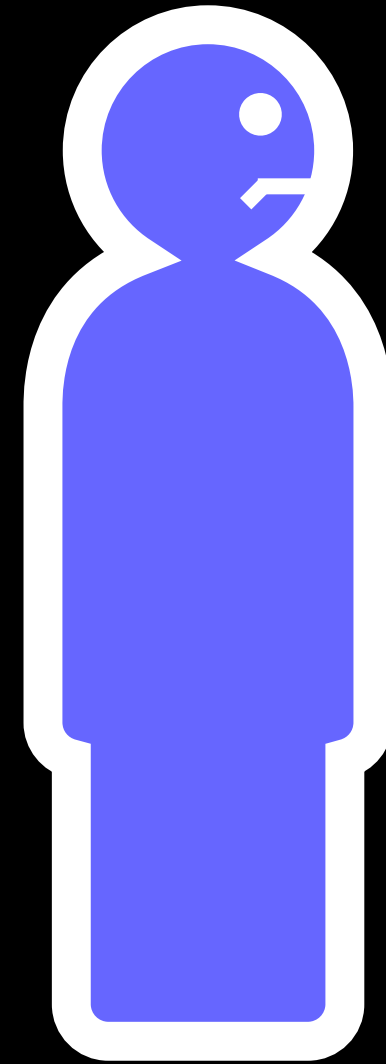


**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**



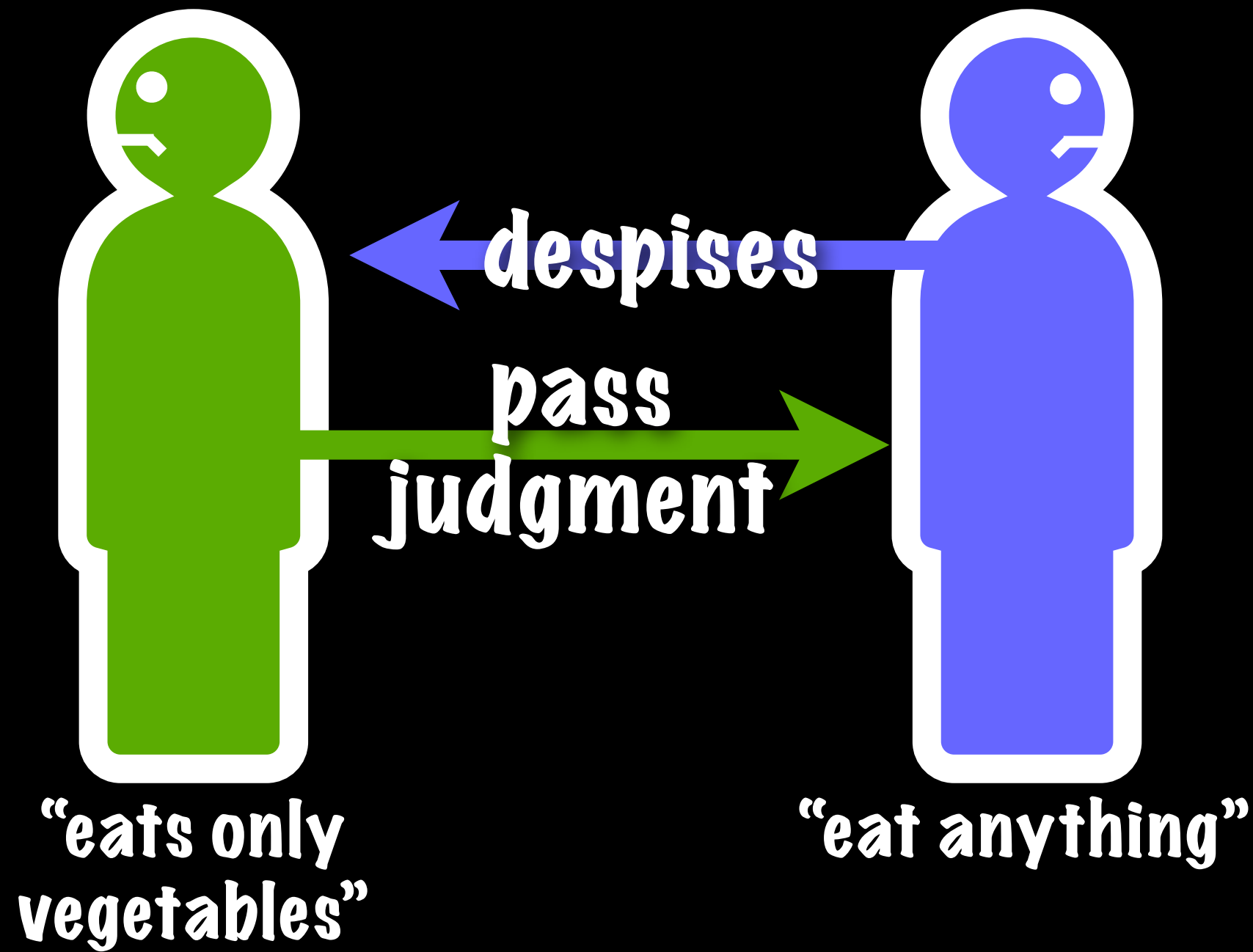
**“eats only  
vegetables”**



**“eat anything”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

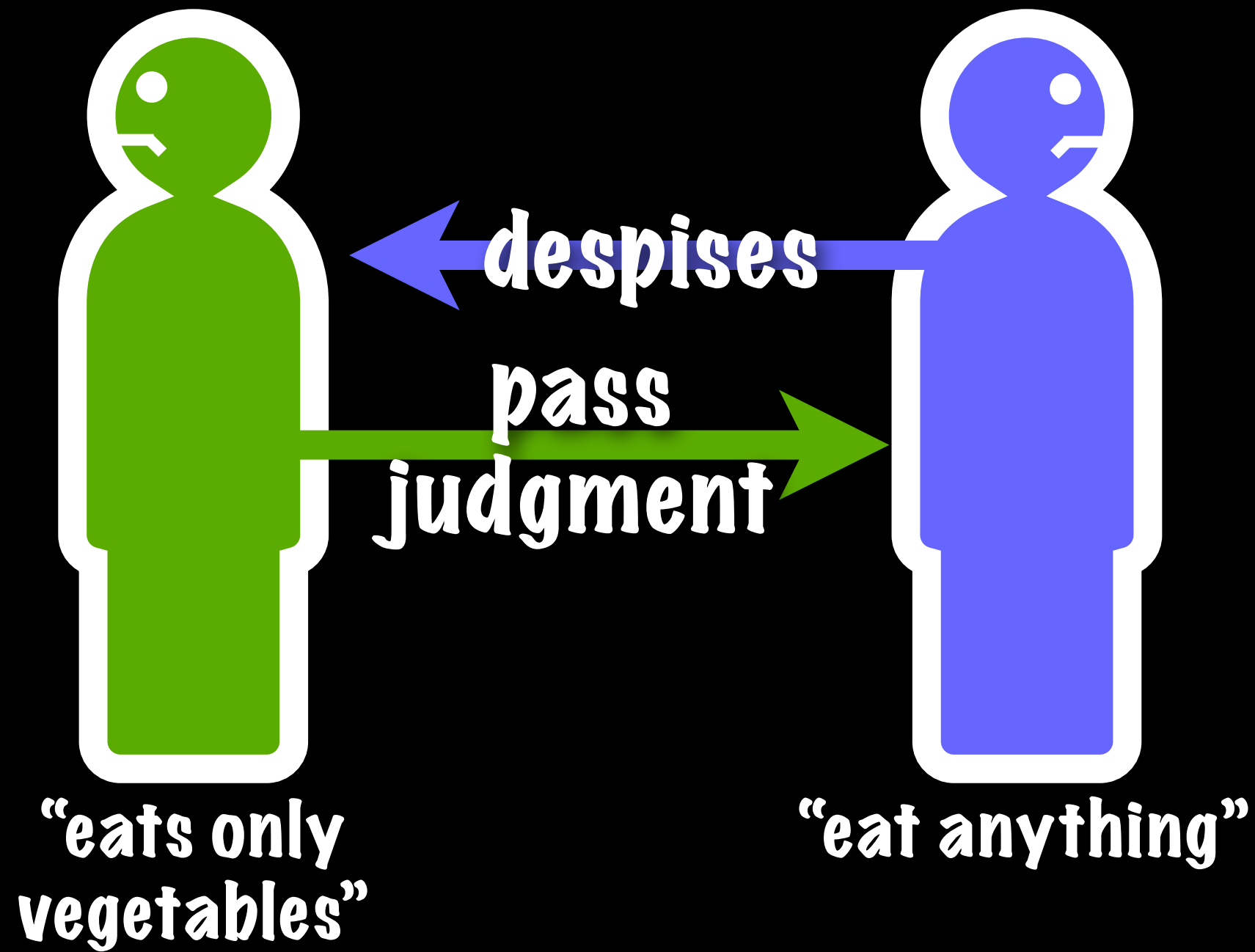
**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**



**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

[3] Let not the one who eats **despise** the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains **pass judgment** on the one who eats, for God has **welcomed** him.

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**



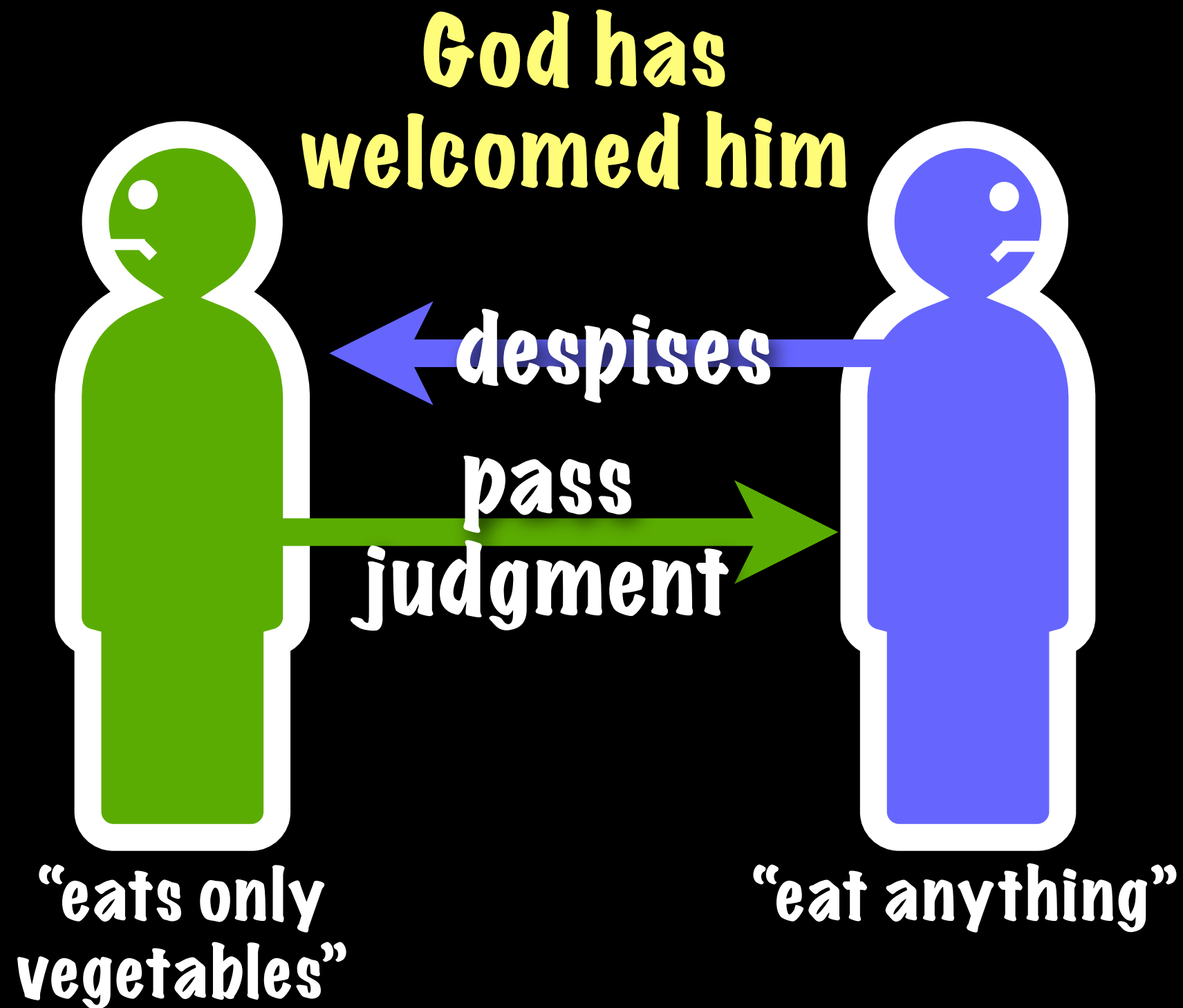
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

Despises: “You don’t understand the freedom you have in Christ and are caught up in the old ways. You are denying the meaning of Jesus’ death.”

Pass Judgment: “You are still worshipping false gods. You cannot serve two masters.”

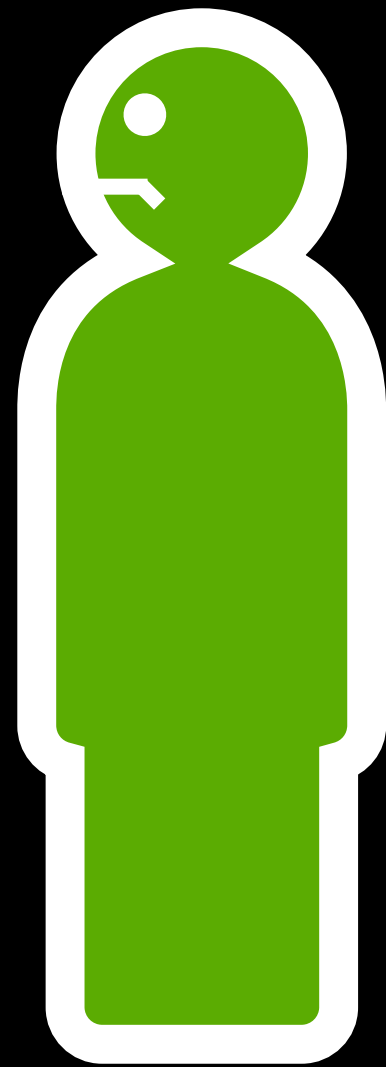


**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

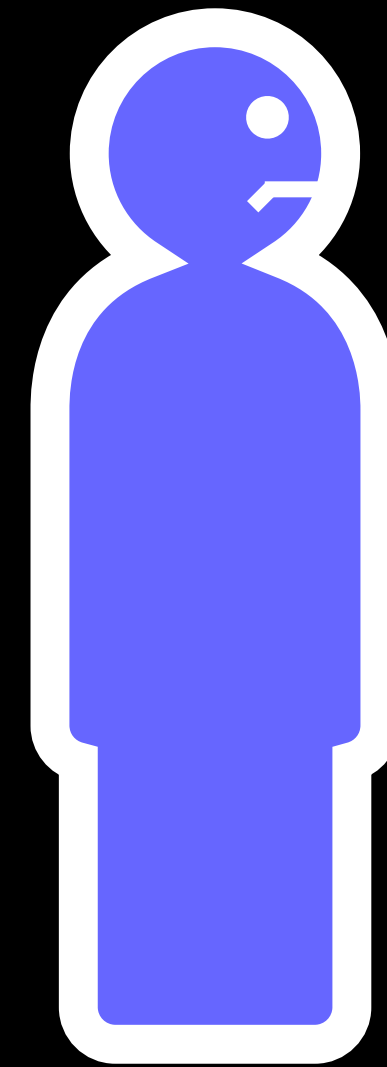


**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**



**“esteems one day”**



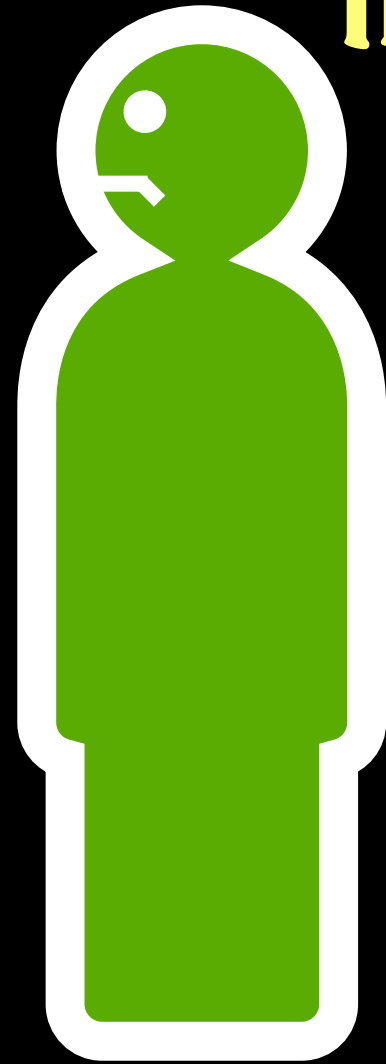
**“esteems all days”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

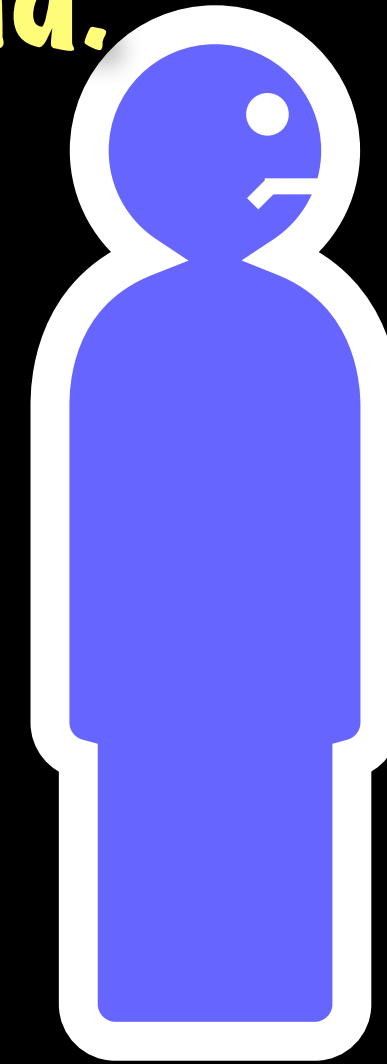
[5] One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike.

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“Each one should be FULLY CONVINCED  
in his own mind.”**



**“esteems one day”**

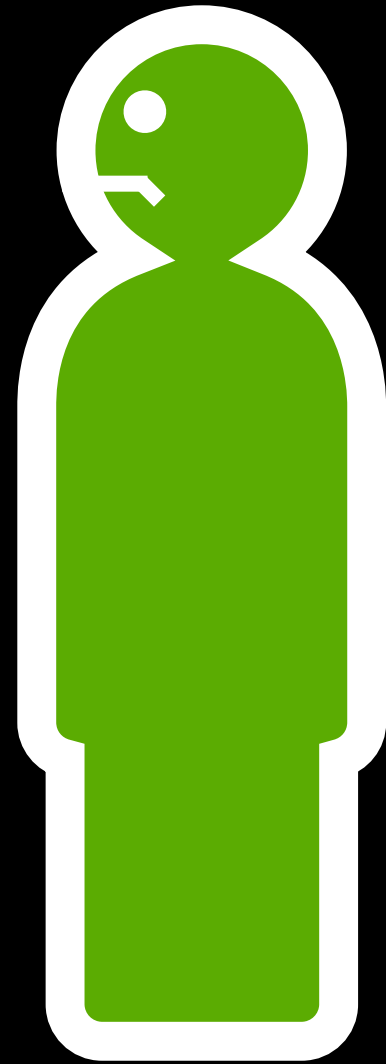


**“esteems all days”**

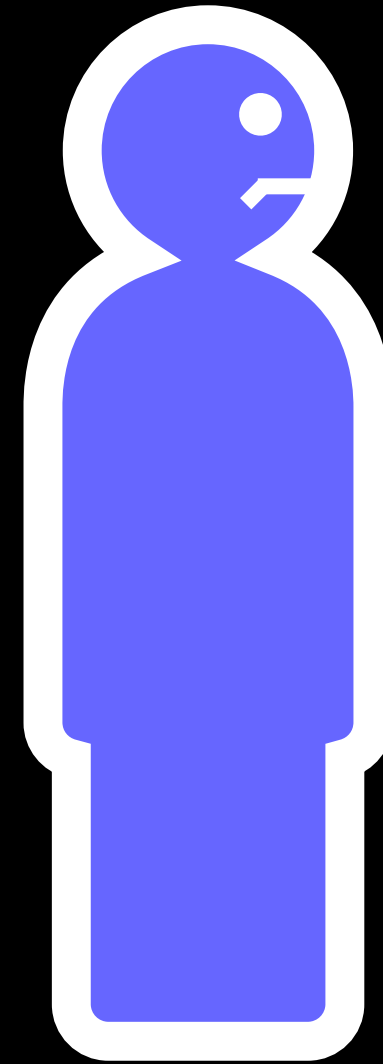
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.”**



**“esteems one day”**

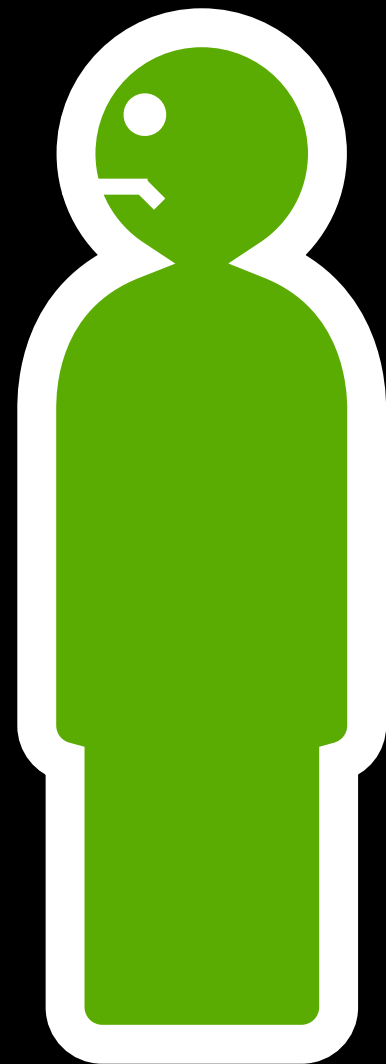


**“esteems all days”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

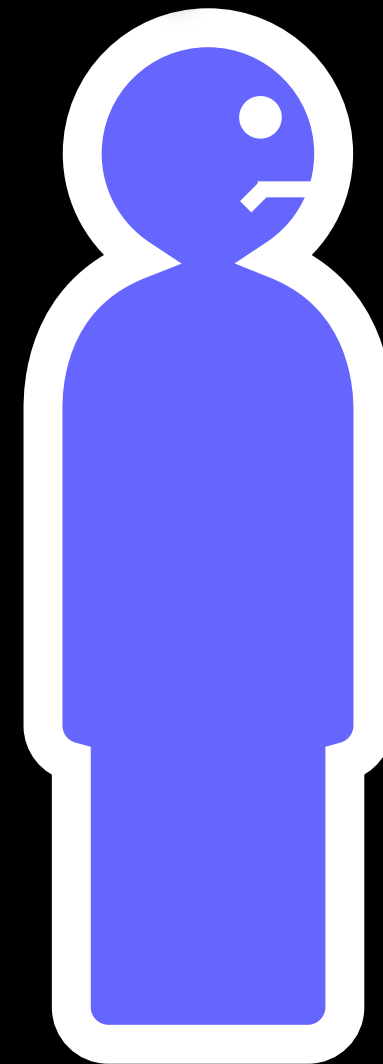
**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“Why do you pass judgment on your brother?**



**“esteems one day”**

**Or you, why  
do you  
despise  
your  
brother?**

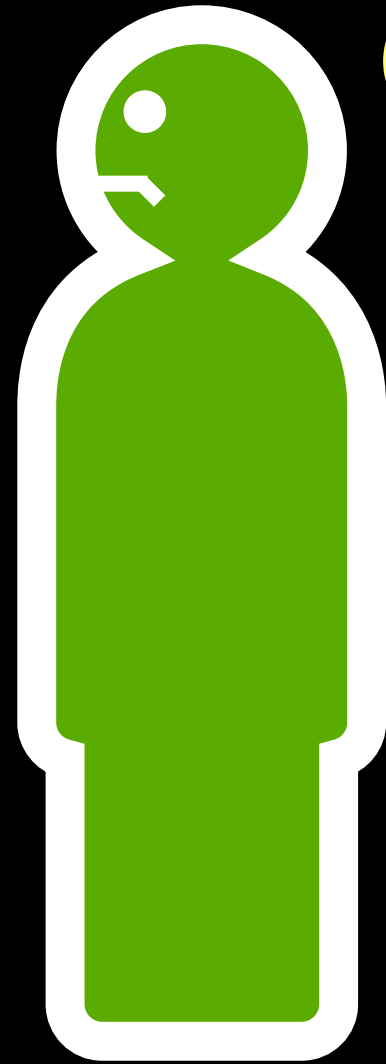


**“esteems all days”**

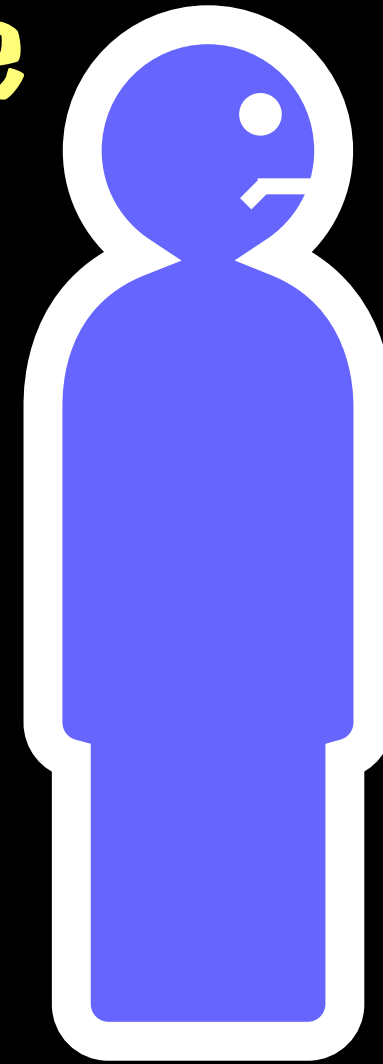
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“decide never to put a stumbling block  
or hinderance  
in the way  
of a brother”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**

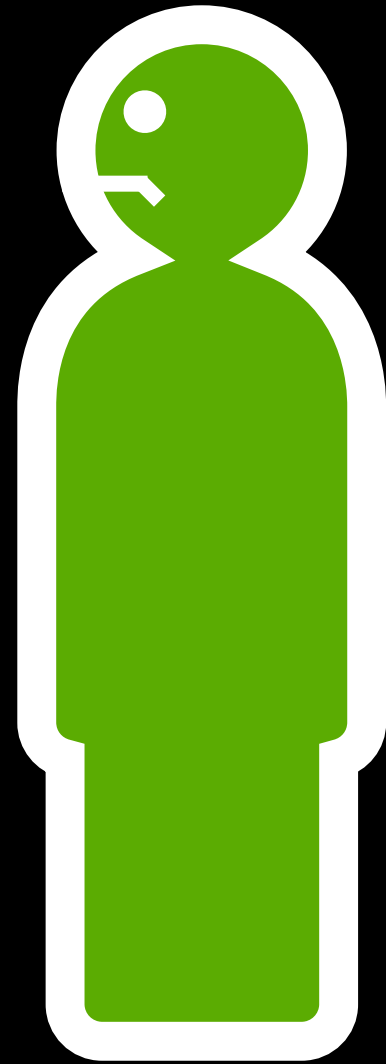


**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

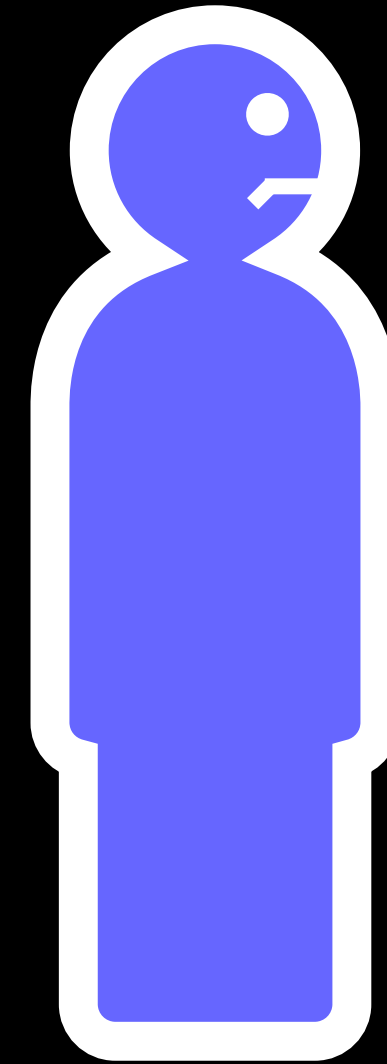
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“you are no longer walking in love”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**

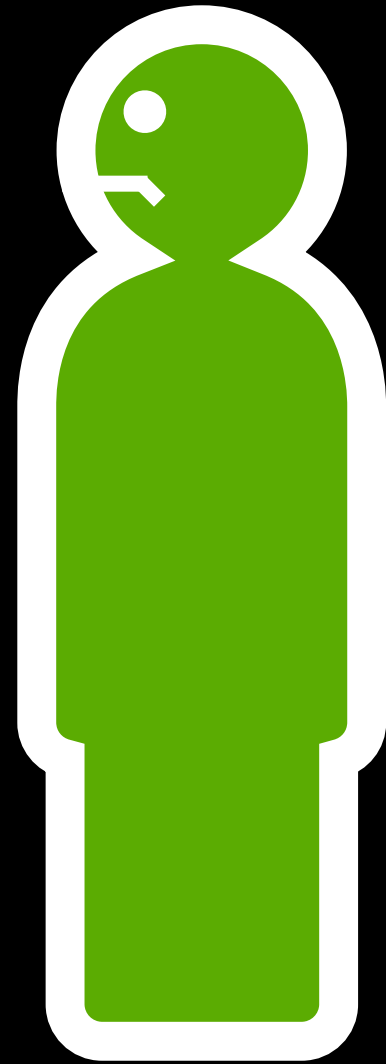


**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

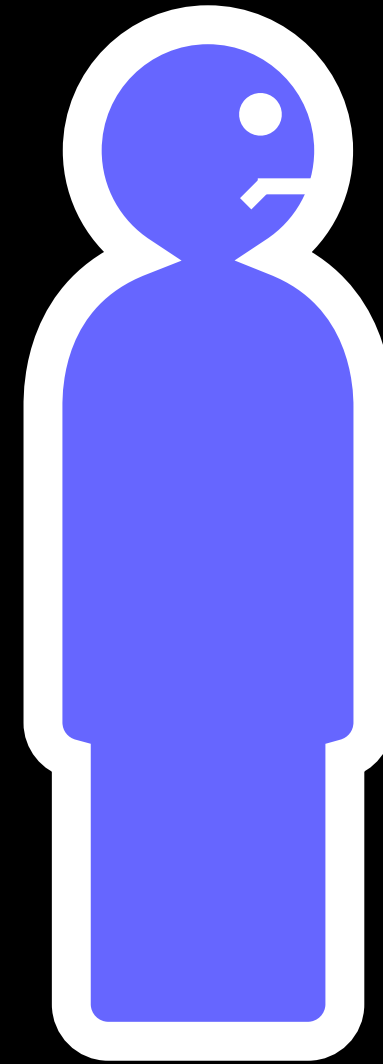
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“do not destroy the one  
for whom  
Christ died”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**



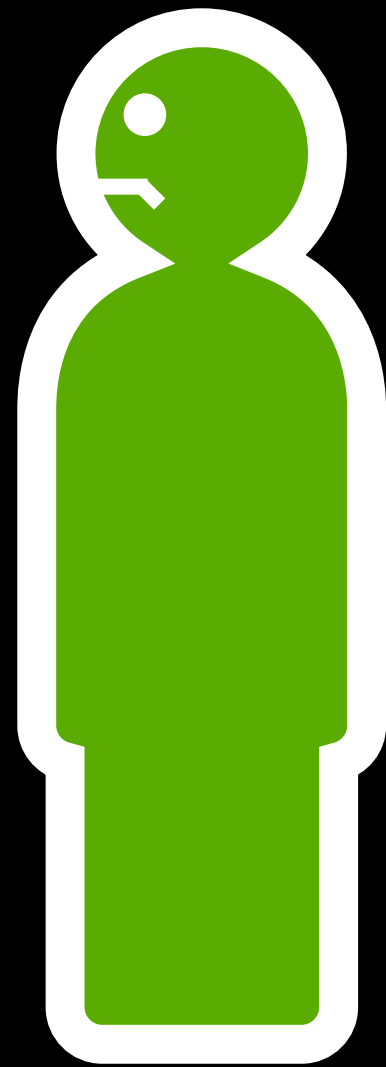
**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

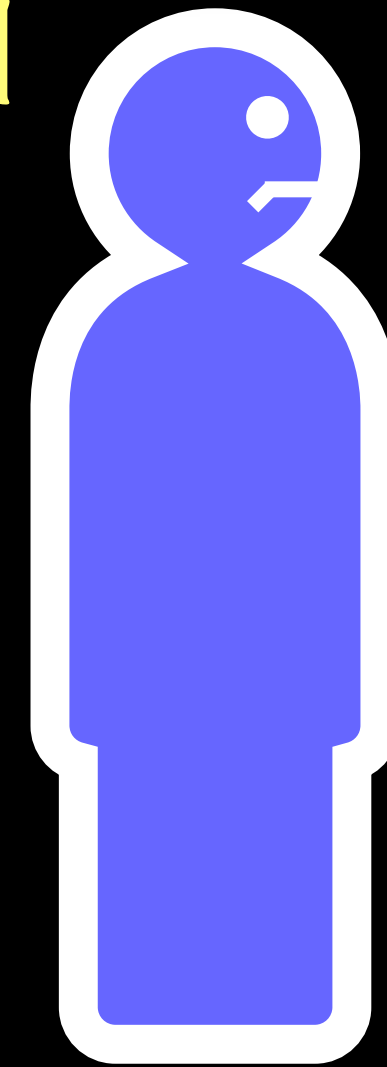


**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“For the kingdom of God is not a matter  
of eating and  
drinking”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**

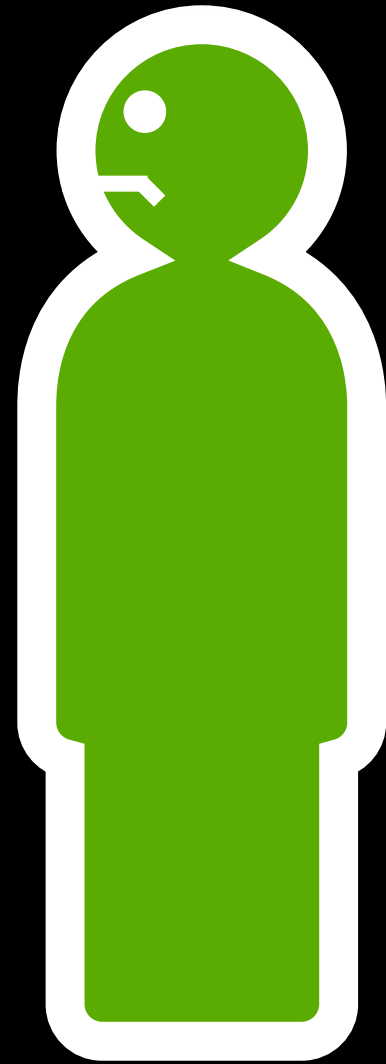


**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

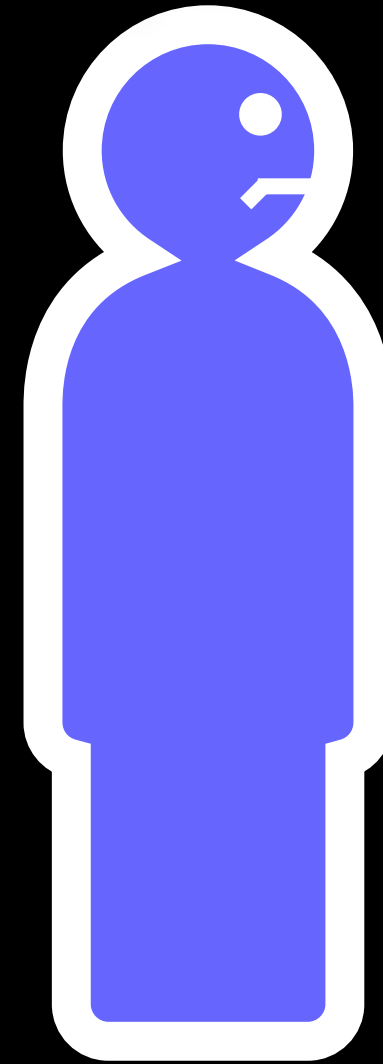
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“but of righteousness and peace and  
joy in the  
Holy Spirit”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**

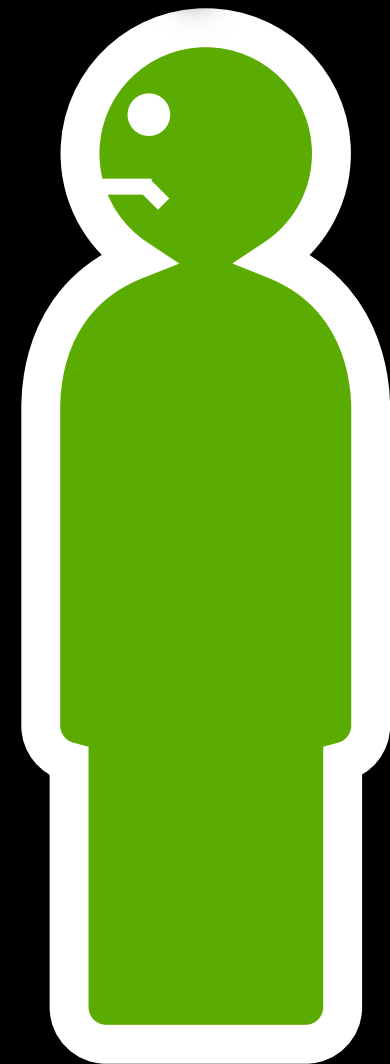


**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

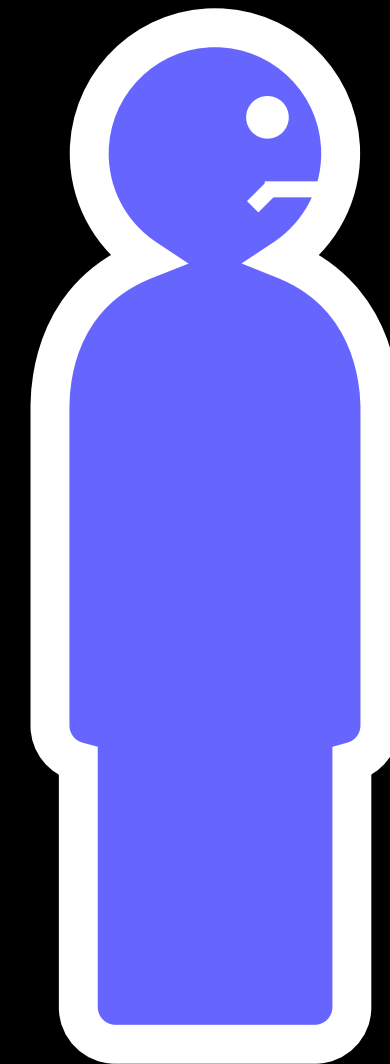
**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“Let us pursue what makes for peace**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**

**and for  
mutual  
upbuilding.”**

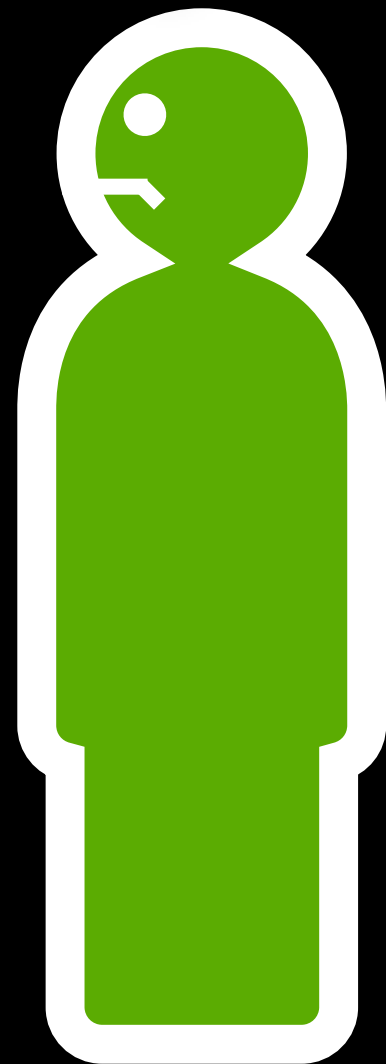


**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

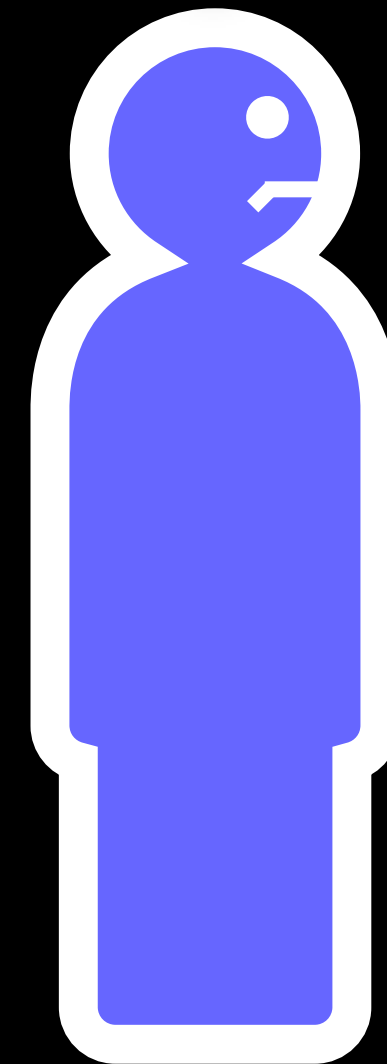
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“Do not, for the sake of food, destroy  
the work  
of God.”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**

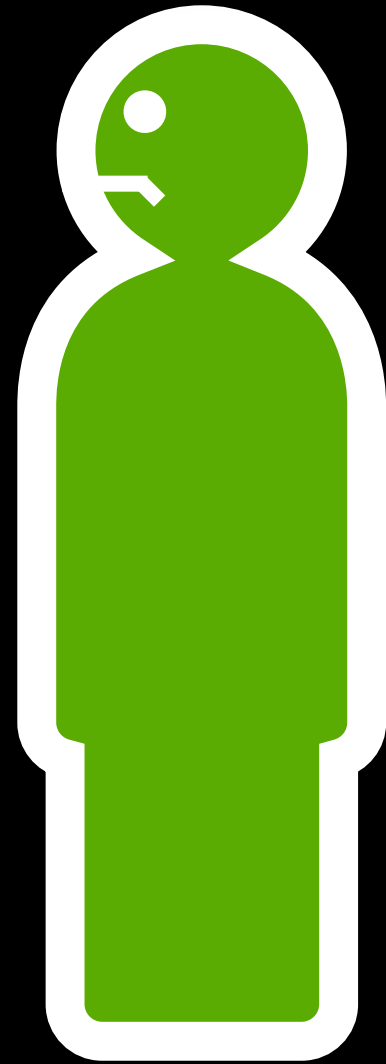


**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

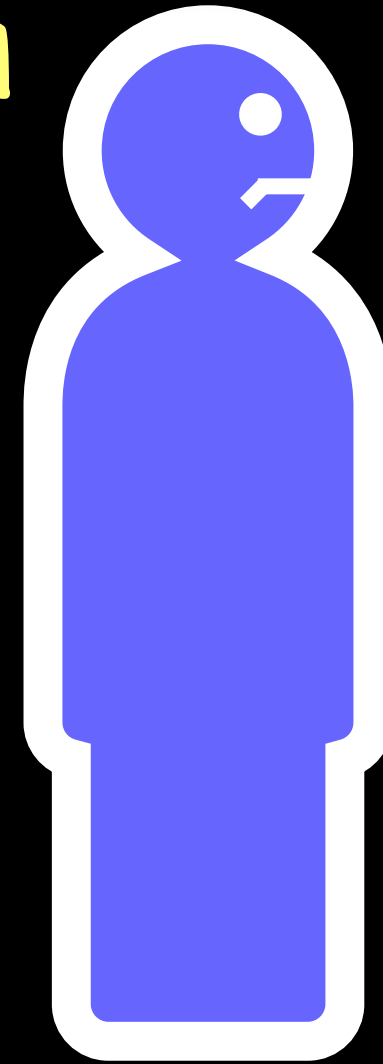
**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“The faith that you have,  
keep between  
yourself  
and  
God.”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**



**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

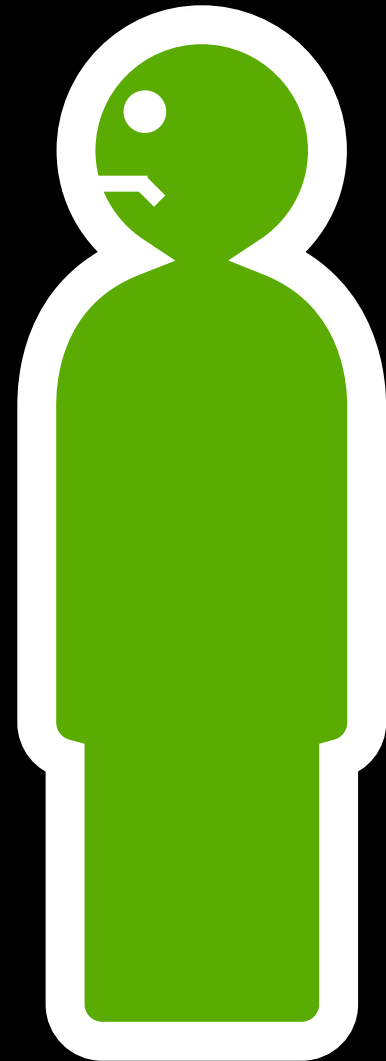
22: “The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.”

We don't have to discuss everything and we don't need to agree on everything.

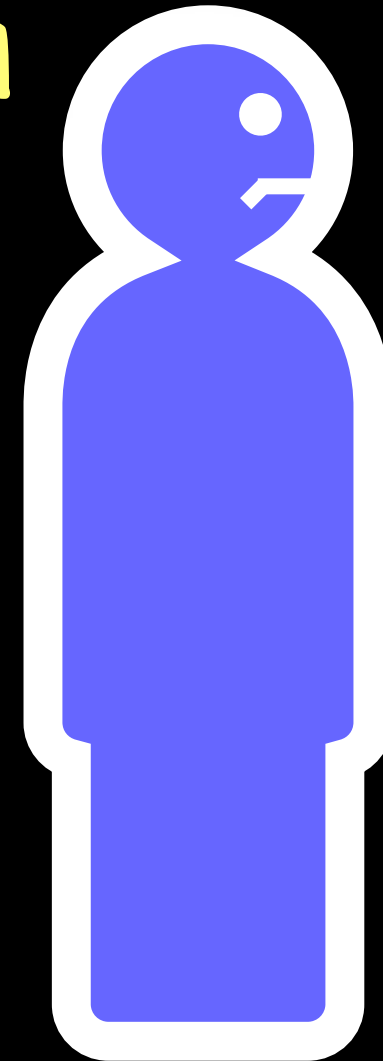
In fact, there are times when I must keep my opinions to myself!

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“The faith that you have,  
keep between  
yourself  
and  
God.”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**



**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

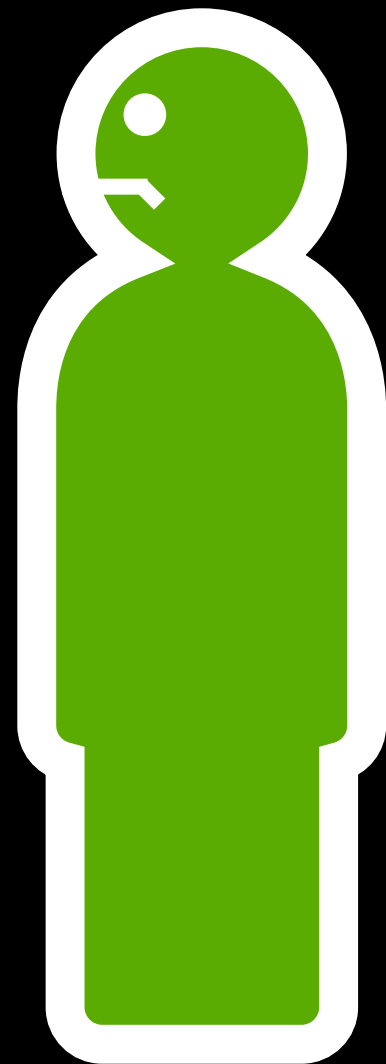
Note, Paul does not diminish the reasoned opinion. “The FAITH” that you have.

You’ve thoughtfully considered God’s word, and drawn a conclusion.

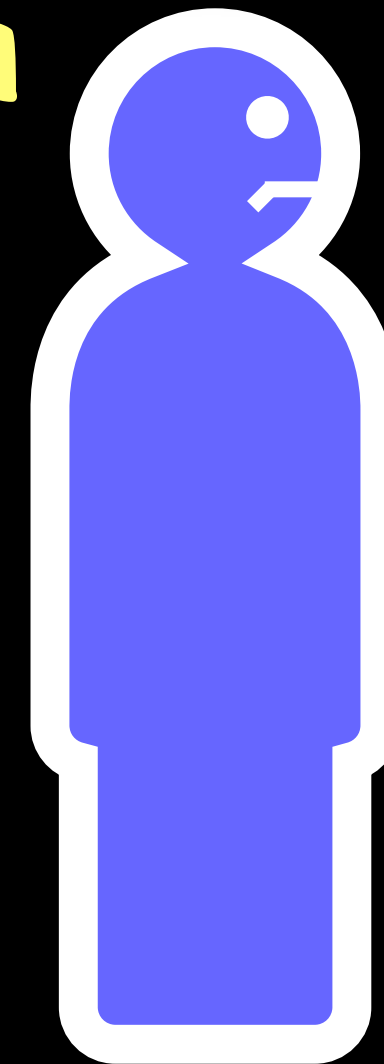
It makes sense to you.

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**“The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.”**



**“esteems one day”  
“eats only vegetables”**



**“esteems all days”  
“eat anything”**

**Romans 14  
CB NT p. 283**

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**



**“The faith that you have,  
keep between yourself and God.”**



**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**1. “It’s not just opinion.”**



**“The faith that you have,  
keep between yourself and God.”**

Abuse this passage: 3

1. Little importance to do with our quarreling today. My position is not a matter of opinion. It's the truth. I'm not quarreling over opinions. If you don't agree with me, then you are denying the faith. (Eating food sacrificed to idols is sinful! Smoking: When did it become a sin?)

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**1. “It’s not just opinion.”**



**“The faith that you have,  
keep between yourself and God.”**

Israelites/Pharisees: Mt. 15.9: “In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”

The weak will use this passage to force their opinions on others.

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**1. “It’s not just opinion.”**

**2. “Any disagreement is wrong.”**

**“The faith that you have,  
keep between yourself and God.”**

2. Some would hold that this passage has to do with ALL our quarrels. Any disagreement between brothers is wrong, so we must tolerate all views on all topics regardless of how “important” they may be.  
(Resurrection = denying the faith)

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him,  
but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**1. “It’s not just opinion.”**

**2. “Any disagreement is wrong.”**

**“The faith that you have,  
keep between yourself and God.”**



Some use this passage to tolerate any false teaching.

Beware of both extremes.

**“As for one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

**1. “It’s not just opinion.”**

**2. “Any disagreement is wrong.”**

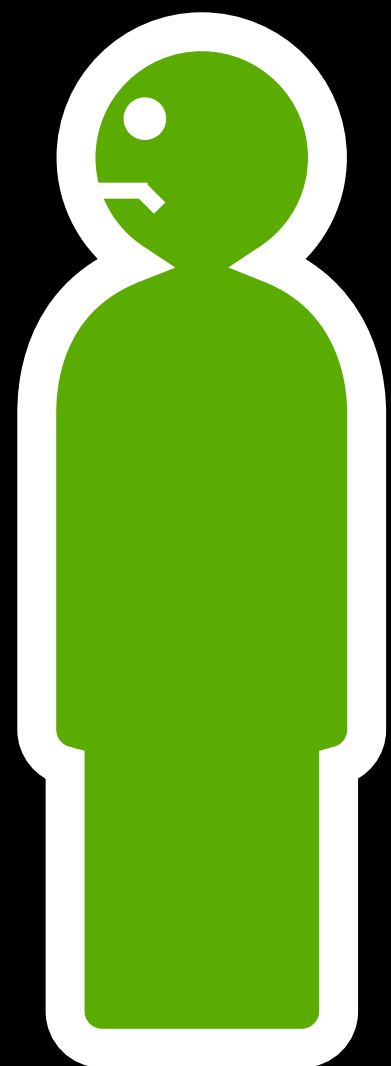
**3. Attempting to apply beyond relationship within a congregation.**

**“The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.”**

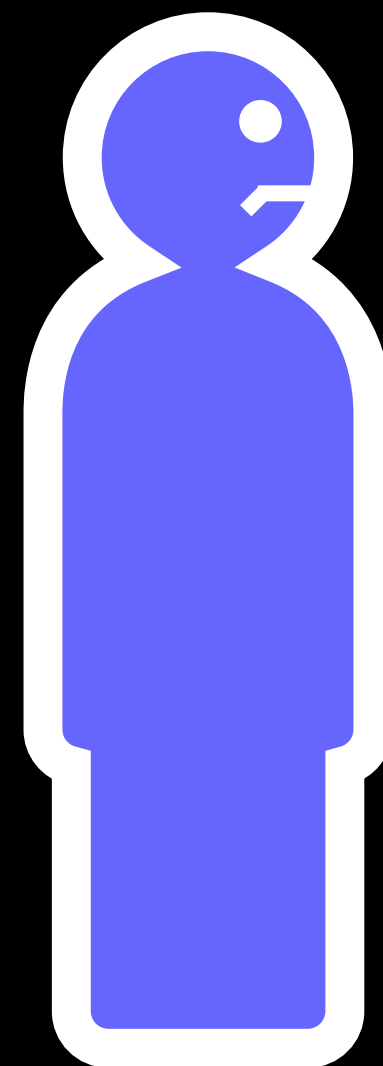


One more danger...

Trying to apply this to brethren beyond the context of a congregational relationship. This was written to Christians in a church who were struggling amongst themselves.



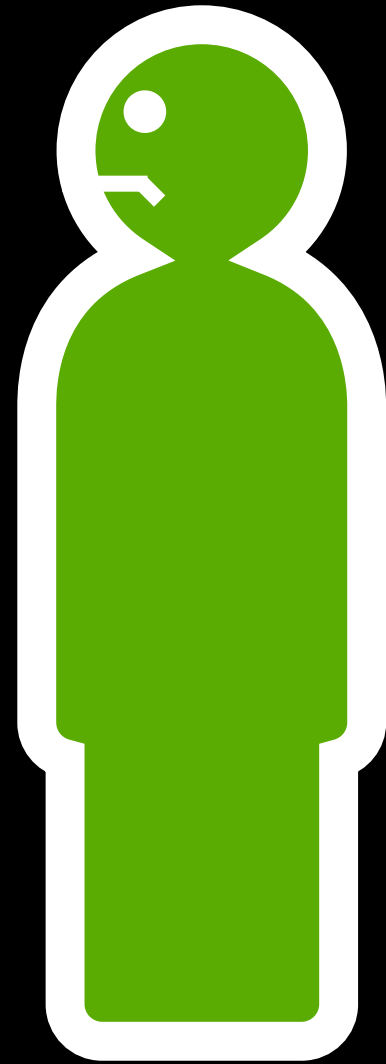
**“eats food offered  
to idols”**



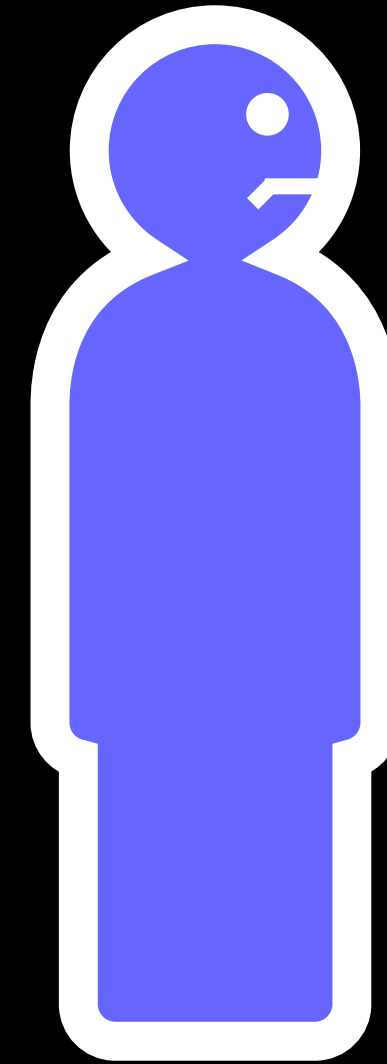
**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

**1 Corinthians 8  
CB NT p. 298**

**“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**

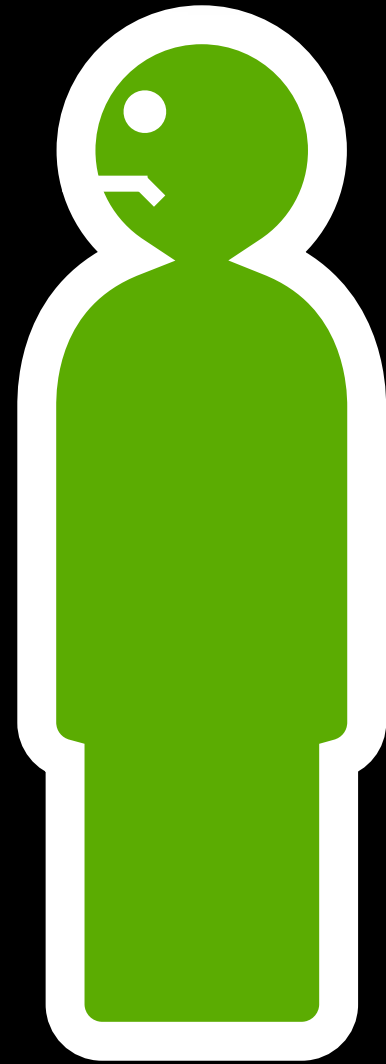


**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

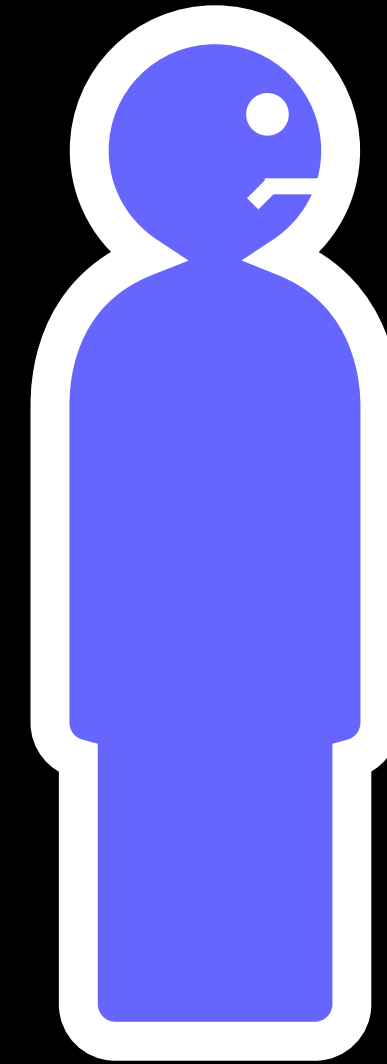
**1 Corinthians 8  
CB NT p. 298**

**“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”**

**“Food will not commend us to God.”**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**



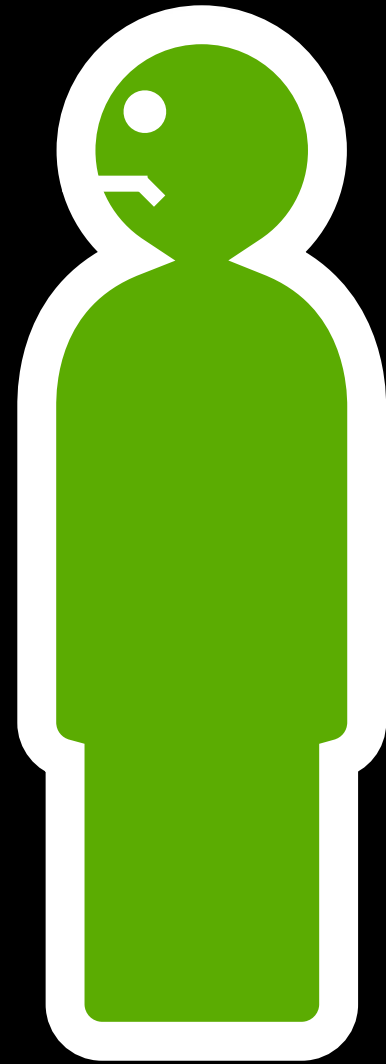
**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

**1 Corinthians 8  
CB NT p. 298**

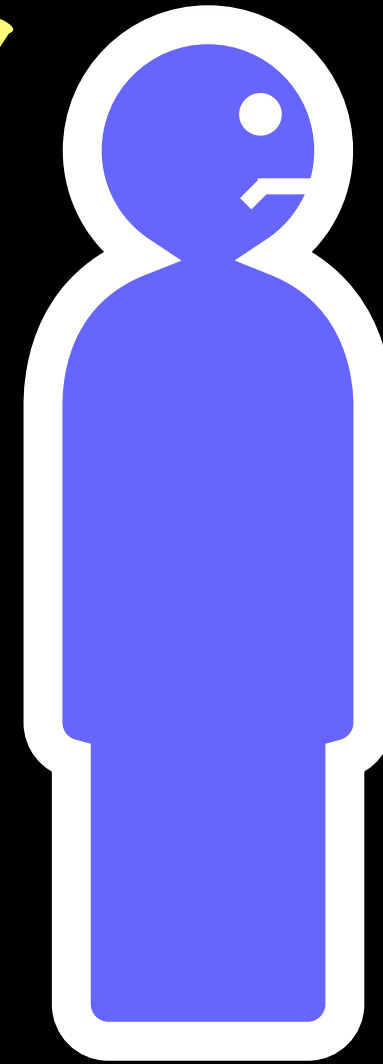


**“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”**

**“We are no worse off if we do not eat,  
and no better  
off if we do.”**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**

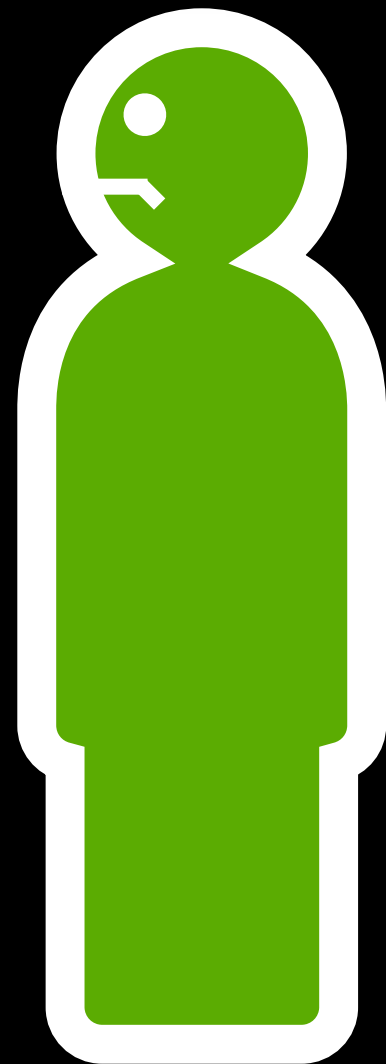


**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

**1 Corinthians 8  
CB NT p. 298**

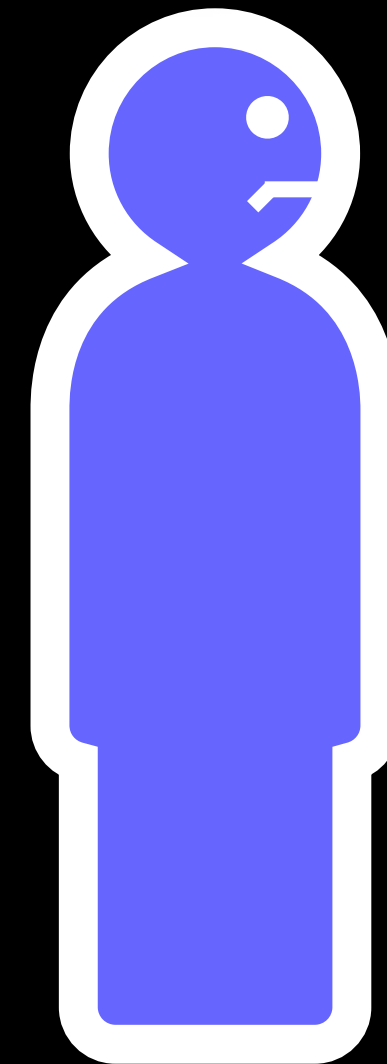
**“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”**

**“But take care that this right of yours**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**

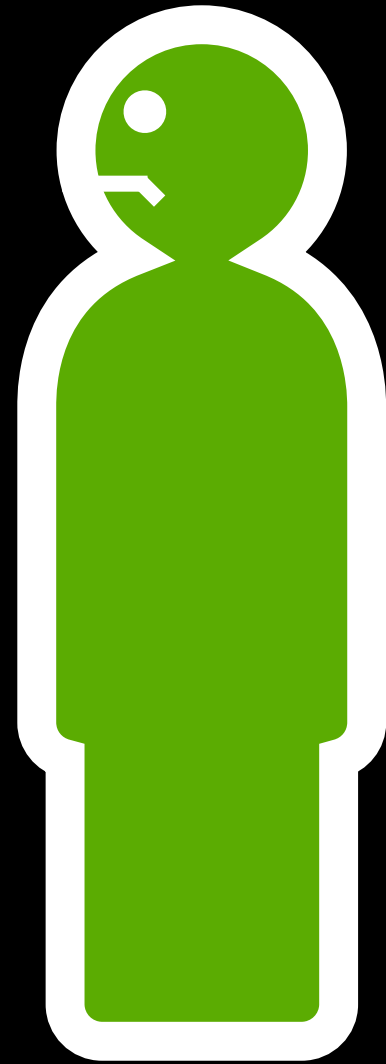
**does not  
somehow  
become a  
stumbling  
block to  
the weak.”**



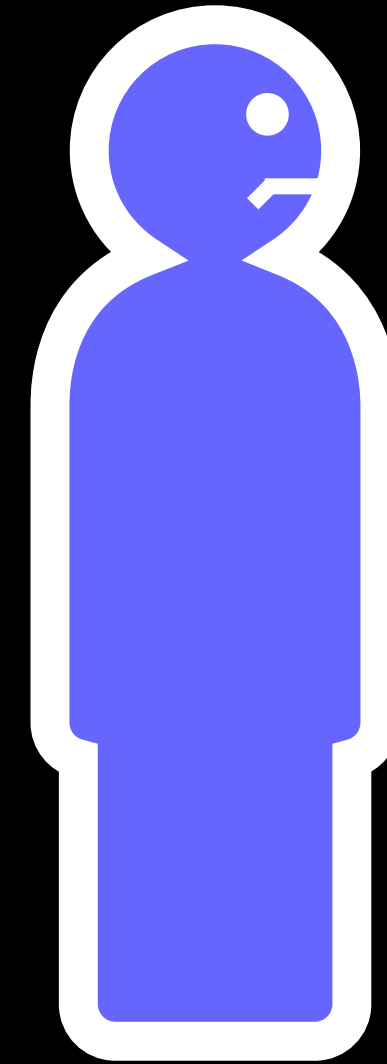
**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

**1 Corinthians 8  
CB NT p. 298**

**“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**



**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

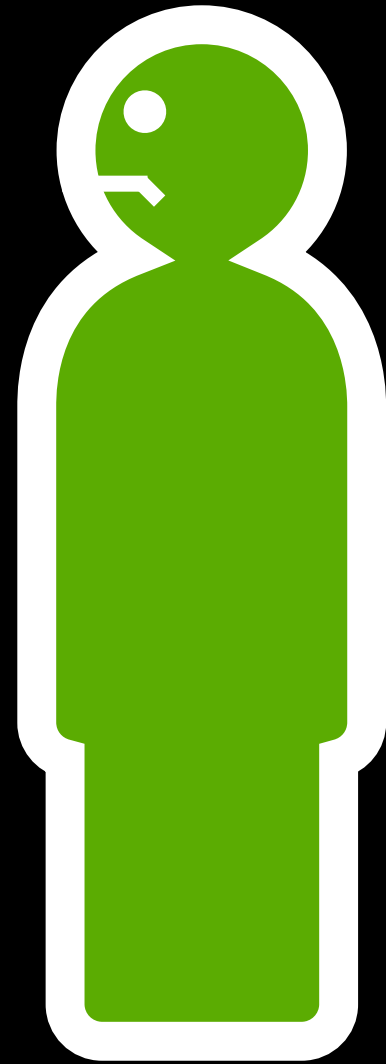
**1 Corinthians 8  
CB NT p. 298**

Knowledge is essentially selfish. I can use my knowledge against the weak (ignorant?), treating them as less righteous and less spiritual than me.

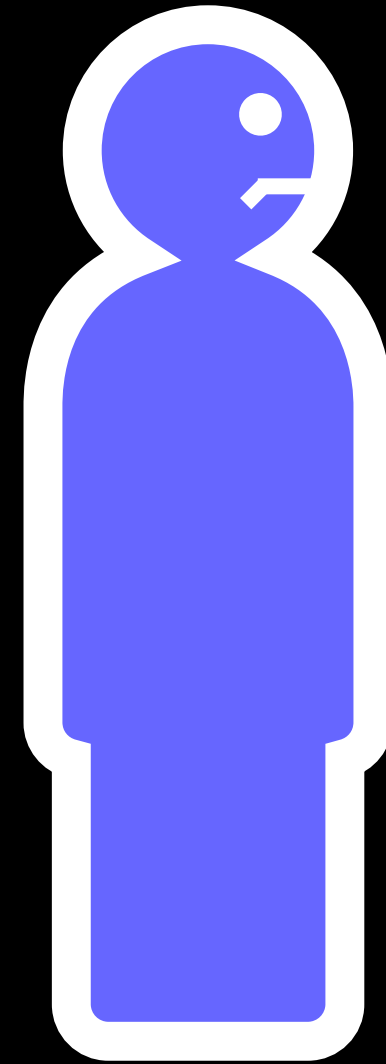


I think of myself as superior, and that I don't need to consider the needs of those who are less knowledgeable than myself.

“Knowledge puffs up, but **love** builds up.”



“eats food offered  
to idols”



“does not eat food  
offered to idols”

**1 Corinthians 8  
CB NT p. 298**

Love on the other hand considers what I can do to help my brother. It's an attitude of willingness to serve them.



Of course, I know I can do some things; but considering my brother, I choose not to. I think about what is best for them, not myself.

Having knowledge, I teach with patience and long suffering

“Knowledge puffs up, but **love** builds up.”

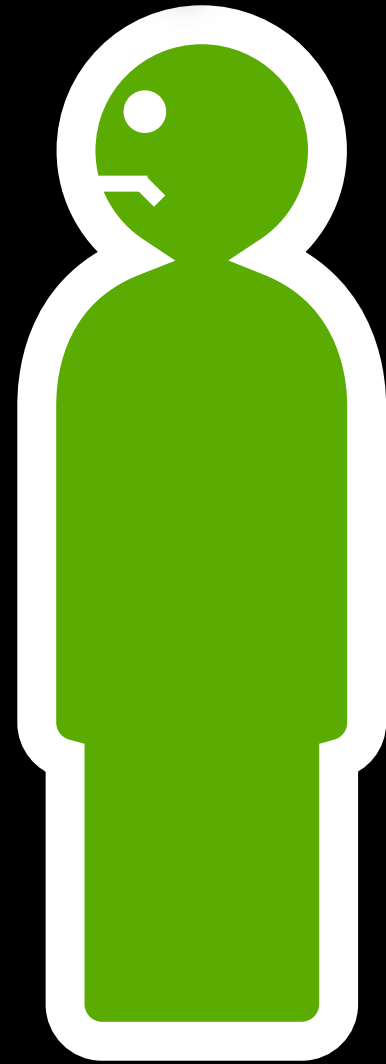


Which will you choose? Knowledge or love? Obvious?

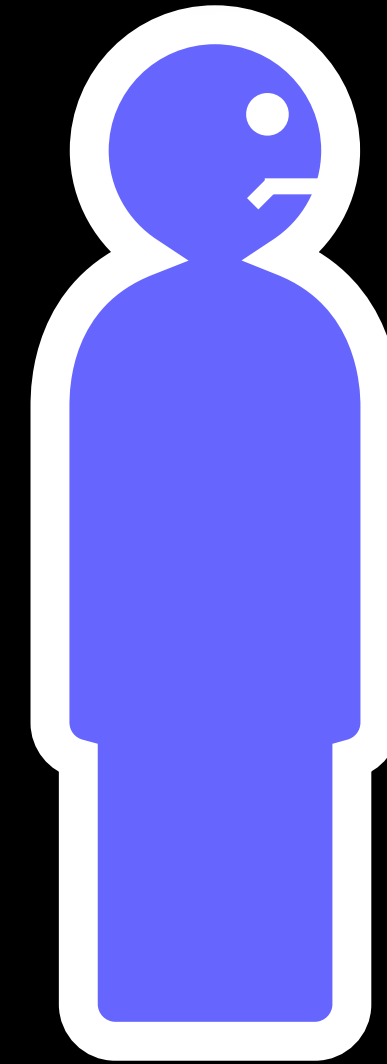
Practically, all too often, we choose knowledge! I have a personal opinion, faith, but I will not keep it to myself. I must impose my judgment on you.

**“Knowledge puffs up, but **love** builds up.”**

**“For you were called to freedom,  
brothers.”**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**



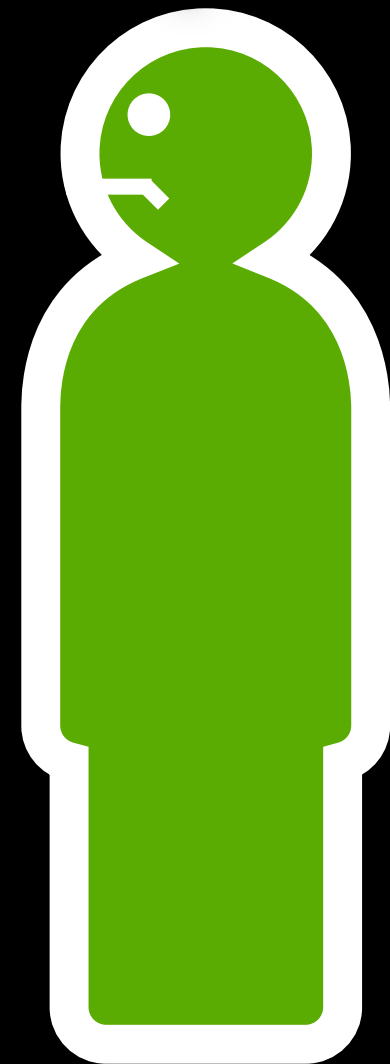
**“does not eat food  
offerred to idols”**

**Galatians 5:13  
CB NT p. 333**



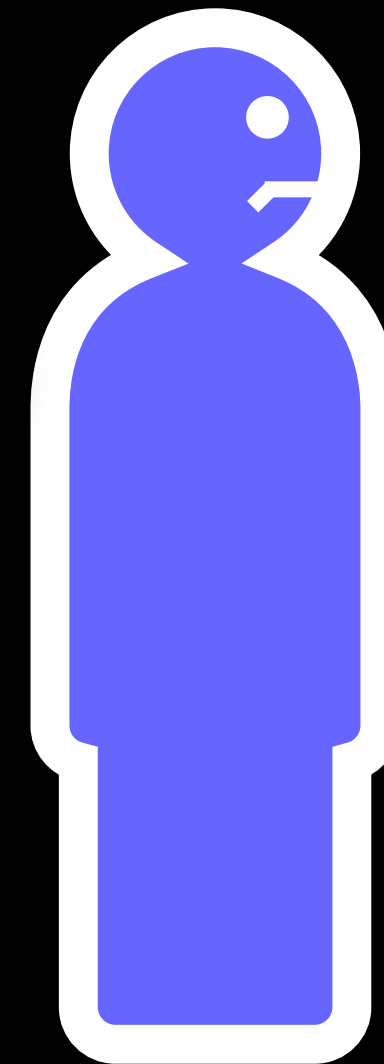
**“Knowledge puffs up, but **love** builds up.”**

**“For you were called to freedom,  
brothers.**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**

**...  
through love  
serve one  
another.”**

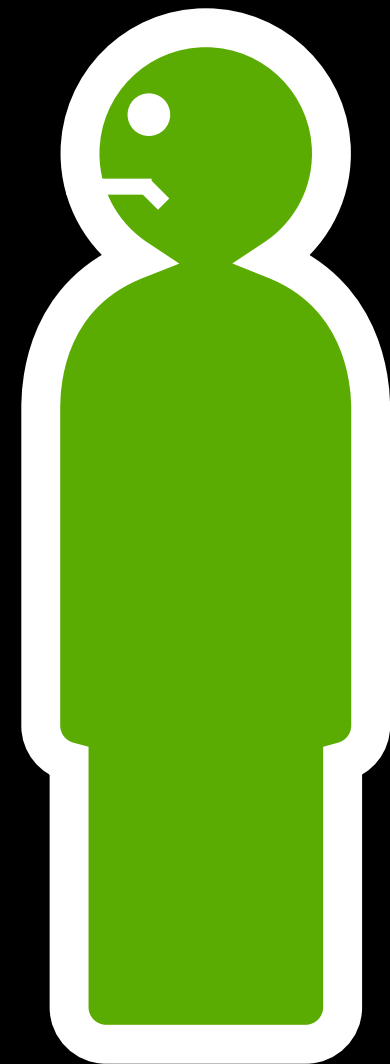


**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

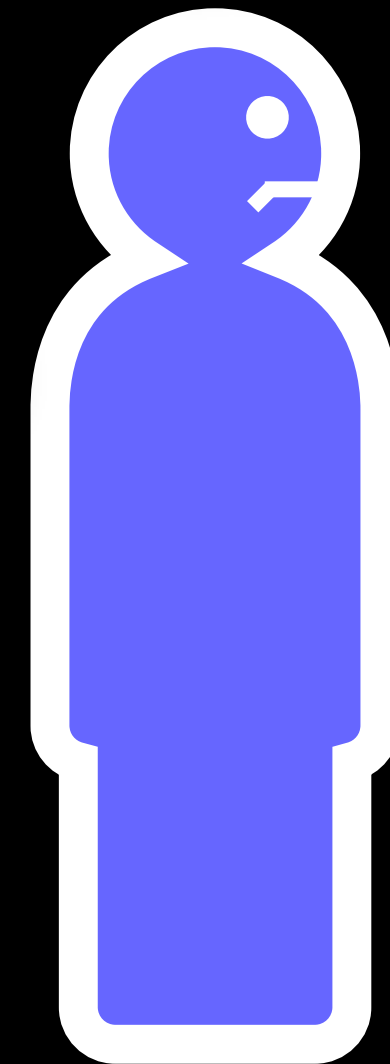
**Galatians 5:13  
CB NT p. 333**

**“Knowledge puffs up, but **love** builds up.”**

**“But if you bite and devour  
one another,  
watch out  
that you are  
not  
consumed  
by one  
another.”**



**“eats food offered  
to idols”**



**“does not eat food  
offered to idols”**

**Galatians 5.15  
CB NT p. 333**



So, what do we learn from Barnabas and Paul?  
Did they sin? Was one right and the other wrong?  
Did they separate with bad attitudes?



Because they could not agree, they chose to do the work separately.

From text, we don't see any animosity in their separation (though we often suppose it).

Later Paul speaks well of both Barnabas and Mark (1 Cor. 9.6; Col. 4.10; 2 Tim. 4.11)



We will face conflicts with one another... over issues that are important to us?

What have we learned that will help us to deal with issues, but not have to separate?



# 1. Have the mind of Christ

1. Have the Mind of Christ

The mind of a servant: Phil. 2.5



# 1. Have the mind of Christ

1. Have the Mind of Christ

Maturity: Eph. 4.13: "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."



## 2. Welcome your brother

2. Welcome your brother

Not to quarrel over opinions

Not to pass judgment, God is the only judge!





# 3. Walk in love

## 3. Walk in love

Don't grieve your weaker brother by your actions.

Don't act like you are a weaker brother to try to coerce a younger Christian into conceding to your opinions.




## 3. Walk in love

Don't destroy the one from whom Christ died.

Don't cause another to stumble because of your opinion.

We are free, use your freedom to serve your brother.

A photograph of two men in business attire. The man on the left is older, with glasses and a beard, wearing a blue shirt. The man on the right is younger, wearing a light blue shirt. They are both looking down at a book or document they are holding together. The background is plain white.

**By this all people will  
know that you are my disciples, if  
you have love for one another.”  
(John 13.35, CB NT p. 191)**

## **3. Walk in love**




## 4. Pursue peace and mutual upbuilding

4. Pursue peace and mutual upbuilding.

Peace is harmony, not lack of fighting.

Love builds up... knowledge is arrogant

A photograph of two men, one older with glasses and a beard, and one younger, both wearing business attire and reading a book together. A large black speech bubble with white text is overlaid on the image.

**If possible, so far as it depends  
on you, live peaceably with all.  
(Romans 12.18, CB NT p. 282)**

## **4. Pursue peace and mutual upbuilding**

Romans 12:18: If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Gal. 5.15: But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

**May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such **harmony** with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with **one voice** glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Romans 15:5-6  
CB NT p. 285**

- Romans 15:5-6
1. Have the mind of Christ
  2. Welcome your brother
  3. Walk in Love
  4. Pursue peace and mutual upbuilding.

**Will today be the day  
you decide  
to go to  
heaven?**

**Photo Credits:** (All photos from istockphoto.com are copyright protected. Please do not use without permission.)

Two Men arguing: <http://liferemixed.net/tag/disagreement/>

Paul, Barnabas, John Mark on Ship: <http://thebiblerevival.com/clipart/1913/acts12.jpg>

Teacher helping student: <http://abcphoneticblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/teacher-and-student.jpg>

Two men fighting: iStock\_000001852501

Man stomping another man: iStock\_000004879011

Teacher hitting student: iStock\_000005377886

Two men studying Bible: iStock\_000006237001



## A Sharp Disagreement

Acts 15.36-41

**Synopsis:** The separation of Paul and Barnabas reminds us that even strong Christians will disagree. It is imperative that we learn how to deal with issues so that they do not lead us into sin. In this lesson you will learn the importance of having the mind of Christ, welcoming your brother, walking in love and pursuing peace and mutual upbuilding.

“Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”

**“Let all that you do be done with love.”**