

**Sermon Notes – Aug 3, 6, 2017**  
**Pastor Michael Ewart**

**Vintage** (A sermon series on Romans)

**“WEAK & STRONG”**

**Summary:** *Why do church people chip away at each other? Why do we argue about things that don't ultimately matter? How can we promote love, unity and peace, especially in matters where God gives us freedom to make our own choices? Romans ends with an urgent encouragement to give glory to God in all of our interactions with one another.*

**Christian freedom ≠ I can do whatever I want**

**In matters God has not commanded nor forbidden, wrestle with these two questions:**

**A. Which path best**

- **expresses my love for God**
- **and helps my walk with God?**

1. Let your decisions flow from **faith** and the convictions of your **conscience** to the glory of God.
  - *1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*
  - *Romans 14:5-9 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*
  - *Romans 14:14 I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean.*
  - *Romans 14:23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*
2. Avoid whatever might **enslave** you
  - *1 Corinthians 6:12 “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything.*

**B. Which path best**

- **expresses love for others**
- **and helps their walk with God?**

1. Do not judge or condemn others whose conscience and choices are **different** than yours.
  - *Romans 14:1-4 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. 2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but*

*another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.*

- *Romans 14:10 You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.*
- *Romans 14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.*

2. Consider how your decisions might destroy or build up another's **faith**.

- *Matthew 18:6 "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*
- *Romans 14:13-15 Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. 14 I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. 15 If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.*
- *Romans 14:19-21 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.*
- *Romans 15:1-2 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.*

3. Consider how your decisions reflect on God's **reputation** both inside and outside of his Church.

- *Romans 15:5-7 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6 so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*
- *Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Points to Ponder:**

1. Such an important topic deserves further study. Review Romans 14 – 15. Then read 1 Corinthians 8 and 1 Corinthians 10:14-33. What additional insights do you get from the Corinthian verses?
2. Think of a disagreement you've had with another Christian relating to a matter that God has neither commanded nor forbidden. Apply the two "which path" questions above to that situation. What would you do differently?

3. Discuss with your family or small group the following areas of Christian freedom. (Feel free to add other examples!) Share how your conscience directs you. Also discuss ways one person's choices might cause another to stumble.
  - Use of alcohol
  - Food choices
  - Worship styles
  - Dancing
  - Gambling
  - TV shows and movies
  - Halloween

**Homework:** Next week we begin a new series: "Taboo." Our first taboo topic: "Drunkenness." In preparation read Galatians 5:13-26.