

Rom 14:14-23

14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. 22 Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

In the first section of this chapter Paul wrote that Christians should not despise or condemn others.

In the section we're covering today he says that Christians should not hinder the conduct of others.

15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, (or distress.) you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. (apóllumi - spoiling and ruining their conscience)

Read 1 cor 8 sometime,  
(The entire chapter speaks of love limiting its liberty.)

16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;

Paul has been speaking about the concerns people had over eating meat and of which days they worshipped.

The Pharisees were so concerned with the externals that they forgot the eternal.

Paul's concern in this passage is that we are often clearing our own path but we make it difficult for our neighbors to walk down their path.

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

(Paul said earlier in chapter 8:6 that the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.)

The Lord doesn't look at our outward appearance as He does the inward.

- Your motivation,
- Your thoughts,

We as a society are programmed to look at the outward. Everything we see is outward.

18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

To serve Christ means to be His slave.

People will recognize our position in Christ because of

- our actions thus
- leading to the approval of men.

Jesus said in Matt 5:16 to Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Our goal should be to please the Lord which will lead to the approval of men so that you may win some over.

19 Therefore let us pursue (chase down) the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. (to edify is to build up,)

20 Do not destroy (don't demolish,) the work of God for the sake of food.

In verse 15 Paul said something similar. He said not to destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. (apóllumi - spoiling and ruining their conscience)

Paul was convinced that he had liberty in the Lord.

Now in verse 20 he says not to destroy the work of God for the sake of food. Two different uses of the word destroy: here he uses *kataluō* - means to loose down or tear down as in tearing down a building.

One usage is to destroy the conscience, the other destroys the whole person.

20 Do not destroy (don't demolish,) the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

Paul warned the Galatians some 6-8 years earlier:

- against taking the Jewish law on to themselves in an attempt to
- become part of the Messiah's family.

Now it appears in Romans as though the Gentiles have taken a 180 as Paul is now appealing to those that are happy to eat or drink anything they want.

They've gone from one extreme to the other!

Paul is now telling the believers, hey, there are occasions when

- you need to hold back from this freedom, you need to back off!

If you and I were exploiting, abusing our freedom today,

- we'd undo the message of the cross

21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

Extreme love is great when we, or someone we know,

- limits their liberties because of
- their love for Christ and for others.

It is nice when we can sacrifice for our brother or sister so as to not become a stumbling block.

22 Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves (dokimozo - test).

23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

Paul concludes chapter 14 by saying,

- whatever you believe about these things,
- literally - do you have faith,
- then keep this between you and God.

Martin Niemoeller was a noted pastor in Berlin during the Nazi time; before that he was a renowned U-boat commander during World War I. Niemoller was persecuted and imprisoned by the Nazis but for too long he remained silent in the face of injustice. He used words from experience which have become famous:

When they came for the Jews, I said nothing.

I was not Jewish.

When they came for the Socialists, I said nothing.

I was not a Socialist.

When they came for the Catholics, I said nothing.

I was not a Catholic.

When they came for me, no one said anything.  
There was no one left.

<https://sermonwriter.com/sermons/john-1415-21-let-conscience-guide-kegel/>

We've all heard the saying, let your conscience be your guide.

1 Jn 3:21 tells us that if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

John 14:16-17

16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Ultimately it's the Holy Spirit that guides us so we need to always be seeking the Lord and His wisdom.

Paul said in 1 Cor 1:25 that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

#### Rom 15

Paul continues in chapter 15 speaking on the will of God, something he's been doing since chapter 12. He's speaking of the nature of true believers getting along with one another.

In chapter 15 Paul speaks of

- the stronger brother
- putting up with unity in the church.

1 We then who are strong ought (same word for debt.) to bear (bastázō; to take up or to hold, to carry a burden.) (This means we are to put up with the weaker brother or sister.) with the scruples (weakness or susceptibilities,) of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Paul put it this way in 1 Cor 9:19 19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

We're not going to win people to Christ by serving ourselves.

Yet, we are not to be man pleasers all of the time either.

Galatians 1:10:

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.

3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." (this is a prophesy from psalms 69:9)

1 Cor 10:23-11:1

23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 26 for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

27 If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

29 "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? 30 But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Chapter 11 1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

In verse 3 of this chapter Christ didn't please Himself.

4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

(Just look at Christ and compare yourself according to Him, no one else)

6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.