



COMMUNITY
CHURCH

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**Romans 14:13-23: When Freedoms Destroy
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Romans 14 is NOT saying

- there are no sins or moral absolutes.
- as long as your conscience is clear, you're good. 👍
- you never need to call a brother or sister to repentance.
- be unified and accept anyone as brother, above all else.

Romans 1 & 13 are clear about this, as Paul lists out things the Church MUST stay away from.

Similar, repeated calls from God to His Church regarding sin:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9–13
- Galatians 5:18–21
- Ephesians 5:2–7
- 2 Timothy 3:1–5
- Revelation 22:14–15

Ok, on to part two of what Romans 14 is saying!

*“Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.”
(Romans 14:13a)*

Wait... on all things? No. Read the context. Read other instructions on judging.

*“You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.”
(Matthew 7:5)*

Hypocrisy is Jesus' primary example of judging poorly

Jesus and Paul say: Judge Rightly

How to Judge Rightly

1. No hypocrisy. Judge yourself first.
2. Don't judge disputable matters.
3. You are not the final judge. You don't truly know the heart of the other.
4. Relatedly, no slander. You are not a judge of identity. (See James)
5. We only judge those within the Church, not the world.

The only good human judge is the one who speaks what God has already spoken.

“Our consciences can make clean things unclean (sin). But our conscience cannot make unclean things clean.”
(Mike Winger)

If WE put things in front of the weak, WE are not acting in love. WE are encouraging them to violate their conscience.

Jesus takes it even further:

“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. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! (Matthew 18:6–7)

Jesus said woe to you, through whom sin comes. It is better to die than to cause someone to fall into sin.

Paul goes on, do not by your eating...by your freedom, destroy someone for whom Christ died. Same destroy as in Matthew 10 and John 10.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

Two clear ways to be part of destroying a person:

1. To flaunt something in front of them or by speech convincing them to sin against their conscience. (Romans 14)
2. By seeing them living in sin, ... and not tell them, not rebuke them. (Ezekiel 3)

So, You say, I have the right to _____ (fill in the blank).

But if it causes your brother to stumble, can't you give it up to love him?

V17. The Kingdom of God is a matter of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

v19. Make every effort for peace and edification – lifting each other up. Helping each other with their consciences.

v22. On debatable matters of conscience, keep it to yourself. You don't need to discuss it.

Convincing others to let go of their convictions... not our role.

Weak brother, you don't need to change. Strong brother... you need to give up your rights.

When we present a temptation to a weaker brother, we encourage him to:

- Violate his conscience, training himself not to listen to it
- Become more legalistic because of his guilt
- And finally, to sin

(John MacArthur Bible Study)

Can I help a brother or sister in their wrestling and struggling against sins:

Pride	Laziness
Arrogance	Apathy
Unwillingness to Submit	Media & Entertainment
Materialism	Addiction
Greed	Leisure Addiction
Coveting	Unrighteous Anger
Stealing	Hate of another person
Love of Money	Gambling Addiction
Lust	Foul Language
Selfishness	Slander
Self-Obsession	Gossip
Drunkenness	Rebuking Authority
Drug Addiction	Love of Witchcraft
Gluttony	Love of Violence

Here's the question:

What am I doing in life, that might be causing a brother to stumble in these areas?

We should go through them, one by one. Test yourself and your life.

See if you, by your freedoms, are tempting brothers or sisters into sin ... and from sin into destruction.

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. (Galatians 5:13)

Home Group Questions ...

1. Look at the list of sins against which our brothers and sisters struggle and wrestle and fight. What freedoms are you grasping or practicing that might be leading your brothers and sisters into temptation?
2. Read:
 - Romans 13:12–13
 - 1 Corinthians 6:9–13
 - Galatians 5:18–21
 - Ephesians 5:2–7
 - 2 Timothy 3:1–5What might we at Hope be tempted to include into “disputable matters” which the God clearly asks His people to stay away from?
3. In what areas of freedom are you weak? Ask your brothers and sisters for help and encouragement in these areas. Confess sin, one to another.

(Remember! Strong ones: be compassionate. It is not your role to change a brother, but rather, by your actions, care for them and their consciences. But! This doesn't mean we don't speak up on essential matters.)