

Romans 14

Jesus

- 1-11 What God did for us
- 12-16 What we do for God
 1. 13 Submit to Government/Love one another/Be your true self **and...**
 2. **14 Today...Be careful not to stumble others...**

Since loving our neighbor as ourselves is the greatest commandment
Then causing someone to stumble is one of the worst things we can do.

Luke 17:1 It is impossible that no offenses come but **woe to him through whom they do come!**

- We are to focus on what is best for others...

John 15:3 Greater love has no man than to lay down His life for his friend

I. The Law of Liberty

1 Receive one who is **weak in the faith**, but not to disputes over **doubtful things.**

- **Receive:** Take as one's companion

Be friends with one weak in faith...But **not just so you can fix him**

Romans 15:1 We then who are strong ought to **bear with the scruples of the weak,** and not to please ourselves.

These are words to take seriously. Paul warns us to not make spiritual maturity a requirement for fellowship. We should distinguish between someone who is weak and someone who is rebellious. [Guzik]

- **Weak in the faith?** One saved but **struggles w/legalism**

2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he **who is weak** eats only vegetables.

This issue in Rom 14 is not primarily dealing with *Jewish Dietary Laws*. **That is settled** [later]

Question Here? Is meat offered to idols okay for Christians to buy/eat?

Context: Meat was being offered to idols in Paul's day and sold afterward. Those weak in faith would not chance buying/eating any meat as in their view it might be polluted. Those strong in faith knew there was nothing intrinsically evil in the meat itself and had no problem at all with a medium cooked Santa Maria style Tri-Tip...no matter where it came from. [NJC]

Jewish Dietary Laws have already been dealt with/nullified by Jesus/Paul/Peter. Jewish Dietary Laws were given to the Jews to set them apart. When Jesus came, He made one man from Jew/Gentile and set them apart by Jesus...not diet which was temporal till He came. [NJC]

Mark 7:18b... Do you not perceive that whatever **enters a man from outside** cannot defile him, 19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, **thus purifying all foods?**"

1 Corinthians 10:25 [Paul's don't ask/don't tell policy] Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, **asking no questions** for conscience' sake...

- OT Jews in set apart by the law: Dietary, Ceremonial, etc. all pointing to Jesus
- NT Christians [Jew/Gentile] Now set apart in Christ...

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off [Gentiles] have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both [Jew/Gentile]one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having **abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances,** so as to create in Himself **one new man from the two** [in Christ/By Grace/Though Faith].

Everyone set apart today is **set apart to/by Christ...**not by dietary or any other ordinance
IOW's There is no place for Jewish Dietary Laws for the Christian today. Period

- Dietary Laws are sometimes **demonically motivated...**

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly [explicitly] says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to **deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,** 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to **abstain from foods which God created** to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is **sanctified** [set apart] **by the word of God and prayer.**

- **Settled:** There are no dietary laws for Christians. Period. Do not be deceived!

This issue in Romans 14 is not primarily about *Jewish Dietary Laws*
This issue in Romans 14 is not about *being a vegetarian or a meat eater*

Romans 14: About clear conscience before God/w regard to doubtful [debatable] things **v1**
E.g., Can I eat meat that may have been offered to idols? Some can. Some can't.

- **Strong in faith:** Understand freedom in Christ Nothing innately evil w/meat
- **Weak in faith:** Not yet grasped freedom in Christ Don't want take the chance

What does this have to do with us?

There are things that are clearly sin to all **and** things that are sin to you if not done in faith

- **Q. Can you...**

1. Drink a glass of wine in faith Yet not get drunk?
2. Wear flamboyant clothing in faith Yet not provocative/prideful?
3. Listen music not necessarily Christian in faith Yet still worship?
4. Do other things that may not be clear in faith Yet have clear conscience?

We are not talking about things that are clearly condemned as sin in Scripture

But doubtful things/Gray areas

- To the one who can't...don't despise the one who can. [Don't lay a legalistic trip on

them/judge]

- To the one who can... **don't despise the one who can't** [Don't mock them as prudes]

Either could use the same justification for trying to "fix" the other...

I'm right and need to show them there're wrong. Yet Pride is worse.

- It is right for those who feel guilty to abstain **until/if they can do it by faith**

Romans 14:23 ... he who doubts is condemned...for whatever is not from faith is sin.

3 Let **not** him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let **not** him who does not eat judge him who eats; for **God has received him.**

Can't deny from text: Those who struggle w/legalism are **weak in faith so...**

- **Easy for those w/freedom** to despise those who don't have freedom as legalists

1 Corinthians 8:9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a **stumbling block** to those who are weak.

- **Easy for those w/out freedom** to despise those who do judging them as licentious/ungodly
- Jesus/J the B/Paul dealt with this 24/7

Mark 7:2 [Religious leaders to Jesus] Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with **defiled**, that is, with **unwashed hands**, they found fault. ³ For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. [Yet they were not saved. Trusted in clean hands vs Nail pierced hands]

**Don't despise Judge those with different views on doubtful things
If they are saved by Jesus then God has received them...**

4 Who are you to **judge another's servant**? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be **made to stand**, for God is able to make him stand.

- **He is...**
 1. God's servant **not yours**
 2. Accountable to God **not you**
 3. In progress: God is not done with any of us

We are not to slander or gossip re. another's freedom or lack of freedom

James 4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹² There is **one Lawgiver**, who is able to save and to destroy. **Who are you to judge another?**

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be **fully convinced in his own mind**. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives

God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

- **Esteeming day?** Paul generalizes the teaching to other doubtful areas

Is it not condemned in the Word? Are there no red flags? Am I fully convinced in mind?

Then enjoy the freedom and praise the Lord. **Just be very sure.**

- Mind altering drugs? Doorway to demonic?
- **Sorcery:** *pharmakeia* Use of drugs leading to deception; e.g., AC

Revelation 18:23b... for by your **sorcery** all the nations were deceived.

Revelation 21:8b... sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Revelation 22:15 But [New Jerusalem] outside are dogs and **sorcerers** and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

- Not called out as sin in Bible/No red flags/**Fully convinced stand before God?**
- Then enjoy and praise the Lord. Just be very sure.

The moment we realize our freedom may stumble someone
Is the moment we no longer have that freedom around them anymore

7 For **none of us lives to himself**, and **no one dies to himself**. 8 For if we live, we **live to the Lord**; and if we die, we **die to the Lord**. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For **to this end Christ** died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

- **We don't live for ourselves:** Connected to Jesus/others. We affect one another

1 Corinthians 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify [Who? **A. Others**]. 24 Let **no one seek his own**, but each one the **other's well-being...**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.**

- **Give up that freedom** for love of Jesus/Others

2 Corinthians 5:14 ...the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, **that those who live should live no longer for themselves**, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

10 But **why do you judge your brother?** Or why do you **show contempt** for your brother? For we shall all stand before the **judgment seat of Christ.**

- Don't judge/Show contempt...Works will be judged

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The strict Christian found it easy to judge his brother, writing him off as an unspiritual meat-eater-compromiser. The free Christian found it easy to show contempt against his brother, regarding him as a uptight-legalistic-goody-good. Essentially, Paul's answer is "**Stop worrying about your brother**. You have enough to answer for before Jesus." [Guzik]

There is only one judge/It's not us. Do we demand others conform/bow to our will?
We are not to put ourselves in place of God...

11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, **Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.**"

- Speaking of **God the Father** in OT

Isaiah 45:23 I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That **to Me every knee shall bow**, Every tongue shall take an oath.

- Speaking of **God the Son** in the NT

Philippians 2:10 ... that at the **name of Jesus every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 So then **each of us** shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but **rather resolve this**, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

- **We all have the ability to cause stumble others...**
 1. **Weak can stumble strong:** Condemn them w/ self-imposed legalism
 2. **Strong can stumble weak:** Entice him to sin by our freedom

Resolve this question today...

Am I stumbling my brothers/sisters w/ my freedom? Am I stumbling those coming to Jesus?
Focus should not be on what we get to do but on seeing others grow

SUMMARY The Law of Liberty

II. Kingdom Priorities JOY

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.

1 Corinthians 10:25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake...

- **Paul knew/convinced nothing unclean:** Meat not inherently evil even offered idols

- Those who are not convinced will have a guilty conscience

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.

Is your freedom more important than your brother's Spiritual growth?

1 Corinthians 8:9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. **10** For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? **11** And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? **12** But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

- **Warning:** This in no way means catering to legalism [Salvation by works]. Fine line led by Spirit

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

- **Your Good?** Our freedom fails to be good if employing it destroys others

1 Thessalonians 5:22 [KJV] Abstain from all appearances of evil

IOW's It ain't about me/you...

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.**

Focus on Kingdom Priorities

- Not filling ourselves w/ as many freedom goodies as we can gobble
- But emptying ourselves for sake of others. IOWs **Serving Christ...**
 1. **In Righteousness.** Doing right thing, Desiring Righteousness not just being right
 2. **In Peace/Joy** from Spirit of God as **we empty ourselves**

Acceptable to God/Approved by men

God smiles as we sacrifice our freedoms for the growth of others

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and **acceptable** and perfect will of God.

In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty and in all things charity [Augustine?]

19 Therefore let us **pursue the things which make for peace** and the things by which one **may edify another.**

- **Pursue Two Things...**

1. Things that **make for peace**
2. Things that **edify [build up] others**

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.

- **Sake of Food:** Demanding our freedom at the expense of others
- **All things pure:** Yet indulging in these things knowing it offends another is evil

Paul will concede the point that there is nothing impure in the food itself; but he likewise insists that there is nothing pure in causing a brother to stumble. [Guzik]

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**.

- **Don't flaunt your freedom:** Offend or weaken others
- **Exercise your freedom:** Before God in private w/good/clear conscience

Don't continue if you see Red Flags/Tweak in Spirit/No longer fully convinced in mind...

22b... 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**.

Not every Christian knows this happiness. There are things God may challenge us to give up, but we go on approving them in our life – thus we condemn ourselves. It may not be that the thing itself is clearly good or bad, but it is enough that God speaks to us about the matter. [Guzik]

- **Don't continue** in what you once thought a freedom...
 1. If you see Red Flags
 2. If you get a tap from Spirit
 3. If you are no longer fully convinced in mind
 4. If you discover you are stumbling others...Stop for Jesus sake/their sake/and your sake

To the extent we empty ourselves of self for others...Is the extent we will be filled by the Spirit

IOW's How much of God's **Joy** do you desire? Priorities must be Jesus/Others/You

SUMMARY Kingdom Priorities