

# Build Up One Another

In Romans 14, Paul is dealing with the life that exists within the fellowship of the saints and the conflict that arises between the weak and the strong. Conflict is a natural result when you have any plurality of humans functioning together. Sometimes those who are strong feel the need to exercise their liberty - and in doing so offend the weak - which creates conflict, disrupts unity, and undermines the testimony of the local church. In Romans 14.13-23, Paul stresses that the strong must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of the weak.

## I. Romans 14.13: Don't Cause Your Brother to Stumble

- A. 14.13b: *Instead decide never to put a **stumbling block** ... in the way of your brother.*
- B. How can I cause a brother to stumble? By exercising your liberty in front of a weaker brother.

## II. Romans 14.14-15a: Don't Cause Your Brother to be Hurt

- A. 14.14a: *Nothing is unclean **in itself**.* Moral evil does not exist in non-moral things. But...
- B. 14.14b: *If a person believes something to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* If they are forced into doing it:
- C. 14.15a: *Your brother or sister will be **hurt**.*
  1. If a person believes something to be wrong, they shouldn't do it ... don't violate your conscience.
  2. If we force another Christian to violate their conscience...
- D. 14.15a: *You are no longer walking in **love**.* It is not loving to push someone into doing something that causes them to stumble and fall into sin.

## III. Romans 14.15b: Do not destroy the one for whom Christ died

- A. 14.15b: **"Destroy"**: To bring to ruin. To cause a devastating spiritual setback.
  1. 1 Corinthians 8:8-9: *Food will not bring us close to God. We are not worse off if we don't eat, and we are not better if we do eat. But be careful that this right ... becomes a stumbling block to the weak.*
- B. Romans 14.15 - love will not seek to destroy a brother.

## IV. Romans 14.16-19: Don't Destroy Your Influence

- A. Acts 15: The practice of the early church:
  1. Acts 15:20: *abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from eating anything that has been strangled, and from blood.*
  2. 15.21: The exercise of liberty is fundamental to evangelism. See also 1 Peter 2.15-16.
- B. Romans 14.16: *Therefore, do not let your **good** be slandered,*
  1. If the world sees us being indifferent to the pain of someone weaker ... how will they conclude that this is something they want to be part of?
  2. Connect this with 1 Corinthians 10.27-28.
- C. Romans 14.17 - What is the point of the kingdom? Not matters of discretion ... but
  1. *...**righteousness**, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.* This is a summary of the Christian life.
- D. Romans 14.19 - *Pursue what makes for **peace** and mutual upbuilding.*

## V. Romans 14.20 - Don't Tear Down God's Work

- A. 14.20: *Do not **tear** down God's work because of food. Everything is clean, but it is wrong to make someone fall by what he eats.* The believer is a work of God. God is at work in every Christian.
  1. 1 Corinthians 8.13: *Therefore, if food causes my brother or sister to fall, I will never again eat meat, so that I won't cause my brother or sister to fall.*

## VI. Romans 14.22-23 - Don't Flaunt Your Freedom

- A. 14.22: *Whatever you believe about these things, keep between **yourself** and God.*
  1. Don't flaunt your liberty without caring how you affect others.
- B. 14.23: *Everything that is not from faith is sin.* Weak brother? Don't go against your conscience.

## VII. As We Close...

- A. The ultimate goal is a profound testimony that brings forth ... salvation.
- B. Do you need Jesus?