

ROMANS 14:13-23

LOVE OVER LIBERTY

Big Idea: Christian freedom is never merely about what I am free to do; it is about how my freedom affects the faith of others.

REFUSE TO BECOME A STUMBLING BLOCK (Romans 14:13-15)

- What are some examples of “stumbling blocks” or “hindrances” Christians should seek not to put in the way of a brother or sister? How can we know when exercising a freedom might become a stumbling block to someone else? (e.g. 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; Galatians 5:13)
- What does Paul mean when he says that “nothing is unclean in itself,” but “it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean”? What does this teach us about Christian liberty and the conscience? (e.g. Mark 7:14-23; Titus 1:15)
- Verse 15 is incredibly important. Why might another believer be “grieved” by someone exercising a particular freedom? What does Paul mean when he says, “you are no longer walking in love”? And how could our exercise of freedom spiritually harm “the one for whom Christ died”? (e.g. John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5; Ephesians 5:1-2)

PURSUE WHAT BUILDS OTHERS UP (Romans 14:16-19)

- In verse 16, Paul warns, “Do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil.” How could something that is genuinely good, such as Christian freedom, become a source of criticism or division because of the way we exercise it? (e.g. 1 Peter 2:11-12, 15-16)
- What does Paul mean by “the kingdom of God,” and why does he contrast righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit with eating and drinking? What does this teach us about keeping secondary issues secondary? (e.g. Matthew 6:31-33; Galatians 5:22-26)
- According to verse 19, Christians are to “pursue” peace and mutual upbuilding. What are some biblical and practical ways we can actively pursue both in our relationships and in the church? (e.g. Psalm 34:14; Ephesians 4:1-3, 15, 29)

LET FAITH GUIDE YOUR FREEDOM (Romans 14:20-23)

- Paul says, “Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God.” What is the “work of God” Paul has in mind, and how can making too much of our personal freedoms damage what God is doing in another believer or in His church? (e.g. Ephesians 4:17-24)
- Verse 21 says it is good to give up a legitimate freedom if exercising it causes another believer to stumble. How can Christians enjoy biblical freedom while remaining sensitive to weaker brothers and sisters, avoiding unnecessary stumbling blocks, and ultimately glorifying God? (e.g. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
- What does Paul mean when he says, “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin”? How should faith, Scripture, and a clear conscience guide our decisions when the Bible does not specifically command or prohibit something? (e.g. Hebrews 11:1, 6; James 4:17)

Closing Thought: Before exercising a Christian liberty, ask:

- Is it biblical? – Am I clearly free to do this?
- Is it loving? – How will this affect my brother?
- Is it helpful? – Will this build others up?
- Is it worth it? – Am I making something secondary more important than God’s work?
- Can I do it in faith? – Can I do this with a clear conscience before God?
- Does it glorify God? – Can I genuinely do this for His glory?