

ROMANS: The Gospel of God

Chapter 14

Introduction:

1. Romans 14 deals exclusively with Christian liberty, though Paul included other doctrines to serve his topic.
 - a. Christian liberty is the freedom for each Christian to do as he will with things God has not addressed.
 - b. Theologians and commentators in the past called these indifferent things and dealt with men's scruples.
 - c. You can follow your conscience anywhere you wish, as long as you do not violate God's commandments or set up any standards of your own for others, including things required or prohibited.
 - d. Peace lovers will love this subject, for it is the rules that help different folks live together in harmony.
2. The main issues facing Paul had to do with the churches he served having both Jewish and Gentile converts.
 - a. Eating meat or drinking wine offered to idols offended the Jews much in their scruples to avoid idolatry.
 - b. Keeping ceremonial days of Moses' law was very important to the Jews due to scripture and tradition.
 - c. Eating unclean meat was very offensive to the Jews, for their scriptures had taught against it (Dan 1:8).
 - d. With Jewish legalists accusing and attacking as they could, Jews or their sympathizers were affected.
 - e. The early Christians ate together often, which brought the meat differences up quickly and repeatedly.
 - f. Paul was very flexible until pressed about doctrinal precedence (I Cor 9:20-23; Acts 16:1-3; Gal 2:3-5).
 - g. What might be safely granted, if asked and given as a matter of indifference, became a fatal apostasy when demanded as a matter of necessity or condition of salvation.
3. An acid test that may clarify is to consider whether a person should be excluded and shunned for liberties.
 - a. It is easy for weak Christians obsessed with some minor matter to shout loud and long about their view.
 - b. But should a perfect family in perfect standing with the church be excluded for their liberty on a matter?
 - c. If the family or person should not be excluded, it is Christian liberty, for God's rules require exclusion.
 - d. Another angle: should a church that glorifies God and exalts the Lord Jesus in truth be left over liberty?
 - e. What causes a person to violate their church membership and reject the local church over a liberty?
4. What causes a person to go off on tangents God does not care about and raise divisive issues in a church?
 - a. Partial or poor understanding of the Bible will lead to false interpretations and applications of the truth.
 - b. A self-righteous attitude that they are special, thus their ideas and rules make them better than others.
 - c. A misunderstanding of true Christianity, so that peace and joy are not very important to them (14:17).
 - d. A substitute for their lack of true spiritual religion and the importance of a relationship with Christ.
 - e. Too much time in para-church organizations built primarily on external matters of liberty outside Christ.
 - f. Too much Internet time, where they become weekend experts on issues they want to impose on others.
 - g. The love to be different and have what they consider an "edge" over other Christians that love Christ.
 - h. The very false idea that the more conservative on any issue is the more godly position e.g. Pharisees.
 - i. Teaching and agendas from other churches and pastors where Christianity is or includes witch hunting.
 - j. Personal experiences with excess or abuse of issues that work up their emotions e.g. a drunkard father.
 - k. Family habits or traditions that are hard for them to think of as manmade due to familiarity and esteem.
 - l. A superstitious approach to religion that puts sacred value on practical matters that the Bible does not.
 - m. Ignorance about the danger, nature, safeguards, temptations, or other factors of some liberty practices.
 - n. The wiles of the devil, who seeks to divide churches and distract saints like no other (I Pet 5:8; Ep 6:11).
5. The Council of Jerusalem had obvious limitations, or eating of meat offered to idols could not be a liberty.
 - a. Paul called meat offered to idols a liberty in I Corinthians 8:9, but the Council did not (Acts 15:20,29).
 - b. The decree was against a specific Jewish heresy and limited geographically (Acts 15:23-24,41; 16:4-5).
 - c. Paul's first preaching trip did not extend into Asia (western Turkey) or anywhere near Greece (Corinth).
 - d. The false teachers out of Jerusalem had followed Paul's evangelistic fruit only so far as he had gone.
 - e. Geography and travel difficulties limited information from traveling as far as we expect (Ac 28:20-22).
 - f. The decree was a temporary ruling to placate the Jews joining with Gentiles (Acts 21:24 cp Heb 9:10).
 - g. Paul's application of the decree avoided any overt intention or participation with idols (I Cor 10:28-33).
 - h. It was not a blanket condemnation of a sinful act, but conditioned on circumstances, attitude, and intent.

- i. Blood prohibition and strangled meat comes from Noah and Moses and is not shown modified (Ge 9:4).
 - j. There is no situation where fornication is allowed, whether in a public pagan feast or in private at home
6. For much more about Christian liberty ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/christian-liberty/sermon.php>.

Suggest reading:

1. Romans 14:1-23
2. Romans 15:1-7
3. I Corinthians 6:12-13
4. I Corinthians 8:1-13
5. I Corinthians 9:19-23
6. I Corinthians 10:19-33
7. Galatians 3:13-16
8. Galatians 4:8-11
- 89 Colossians 2:13-23
10. I Timothy 4:3-6
11. Titus 1:14-15
12. Hebrews 9:9-10
13. Hebrews 13:9
14. Leviticus 11:1-47
15. Deuteronomy 14:2-21
16. Acts 10:9-18
17. Acts 15:4-21

Simple Outline:

- 1-4 Paul summarily condemned judging others.
- 5-9 Honest men perform any liberty they have to God.
- 10-13 Saints will give account to Christ for their liberty.
- 14-16 Charity demands the strong compromise for the weak.
- 17-19 God approves a righteous, peaceful, and happy church.
- 20-23 The strong can destroy and damn the weak without compromise.
- 15:1-4 The example of Jesus should help the strong compromise.
- 15:5-6 God cannot be rightly glorified without likeminded worship.

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

Him that is weak in the faith.

- A. *The faith* is the religion of Jesus Christ, assuming knowledge and commitment to certain things.
 1. It does not say a man weak in faith, but rather *the faith*, meaning the doctrine of Jesus Christ.
 2. Paul elsewhere connected it closely to knowing the truth which is after godliness (Titus 1:1).
 3. The wholesome words of Jesus and doctrine according to godliness is our standard (I Tim 6:3).
 4. James appealed to the faith the faith of Jesus Christ did not include respect of persons (Jas 2:1).
 5. New Testament Christianity had no use for Old Testament Mosaic legalism or Greek paganism.
 6. Old Testament rituals of Moses had passed away with John and Jesus (Luke 16:16; Heb 9:10).
 7. Christianity has beliefs and practices required or condemned and anything else is irrelevant.
- B. *Him that is weak* in Christ's religion are men with doubts about things God does not care about.
 1. If God commands anything, a true follower of Jesus Christ will do that thing as commanded.
 2. If God condemns anything, a true follower of Jesus Christ will not do anything close to it.
 3. If God has neither commanded or condemned a thing, a true disciple does not make it an issue.
 4. When a man starts worrying about things God has ignored, he shows his Christian weakness.
 5. When a man starts commanding or condemning things God has ignored, he is a weak Christian.

6. When a man gets superstitious about something in the Bible and makes it a rule, he is weak.
 7. When a man gets fearful about a thing in the world to be used and makes a rule, he is weak.
 8. Paul called some Christians weak (14:1-2; I Cor 8:7,9-12), meaning others are strong (15:1).
 9. If you do not like being called *weak in the faith*, then grow up and end your foolish thoughts.
- C. If the faith of Jesus Christ or His religion commands or condemns something, we enforce it strictly.
1. Whatever the New Testament teaches, we enforce only that holy standard on church members.
 2. Any conduct outside this doctrine and practice, we allow as liberty for each man's conscience.
 3. A simple way to crush manmade ideas is to ask if you are willing to publicly rebuke, exclude, and socially shun a godly church family perfect in all other respects than your little pet peeve.
 4. For more about church discipline ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/church-discipline.php>.

Receive ye.

- A. Churches can and should *receive* weak converts with ignorant, superstitious, or tender consciences.
1. Strong members will be tempted to despise a weak conscience or understanding of a convert.
 2. Weak members will be tempted to fear or resent a strong conscience and liberty of a convert.
- B. The issue here is membership, communion, and fellowship in a local church body or congregation.
- C. It is in the church where we learn and continue to convert to be perfect men in Christ (Ep 4:11-16).

But not to doubtful disputations.

- A. Weak converts may not discuss, debate, dispute, publish, or question their doubts in the church.
1. This is applied to any public opportunity to speak to part or all of the church in any forum.
 2. This is applied to any private opportunity to speak to one or more church members informally.
 3. You may state what you do or do not do, but condemnation or promotion cannot be tolerated.
- B. The kingdom of God is to exalt peace and unity above your scruples (14:17; 15:5-7; I Cor 1:10).
- C. Can you grasp and accept this? Neither God nor men care what you think on your little pet peeves.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

For one believeth that he may eat all things.

- A. One man, likely a Gentile in this context, believes he can eat any kind of animal meat he wishes.
- B. He is the strong conscience in this matter of Christian liberty, for he lives by the religion of Jesus.
- C. Consider the conscience, habits, mind, and conversion of this Gentile to the Christian religion.
1. He only has to hear once that Lev 11 and Deut 14 are over, because he never followed them.
 2. If as a proselyte he had followed Moses for a few years, he fondly remembered his Gentile diet.
 3. When converted from idolatry, he learned there was only one God and the pantheon was a lie.
 4. Once converted, he knew the vanity and mechanics of idolatry, and he could mock false gods.
 5. His family and relatives ate meats often that were condemned by Moses without any scruples.
 6. This strong believer devouring shrimp near Jupiter's temple looks like a libertine to the Jew.

Another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

- A. One man, likely a Jew in this context, believes he is limited by Leviticus and his hatred of idolatry.
- B. He is the weak conscience in this matter, for the ceremonial law was gone and idols are nothing.
- C. Consider the conscience, habits, mind, and conversion of a strict Jew to the Christian religion.
1. He heard Lev 11 and Deut 14 all his life and never broke them a single time. He eats kosher!
 2. His family and relatives never ate meats that were condemned by Moses for any reason at all.
 3. He had never tasted bacon, ham, or pepperoni, so he is content with lamb roast and beef stew.

4. When turned from Moses to Christ, he still believed in Jehovah and despised Rome's pantheon.
 5. A cultural and national hatred of idols and God's constant war against them has him set for life.
 6. When shopping he buys veggies, knowing the meats had likely been offered to Roman idols.
 7. This weak believer feasting with homegrown lambs looks like an ignorant monk to the Gentile.
- D. Nowhere in the Bible is vegetarianism taught after Noah got off the Ark (Genesis 1:27-30; 9:1-4).
1. If vegetarians think there is any religious value in it, then they are considered weak by Paul.
 2. If a Christian wants to be a vegetarian, he may, as long as he neither promotes nor condemns.
 3. Christians do not want to hear man's ideas about vegetarianism for God fully approves meat.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not.

- A. The strong Gentile practicing true Christianity without scruples must charitably accept the Jew.
- B. No matter how ignorant or superstitious the Jew was in the Gentile's mind, he was to love him.
- C. If you cannot grasp the great offence Jews and Gentiles would have had for each other, start over!

And let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth.

- A. The weak Jew practicing a hybrid of Christianity with scruples must charitably accept the Gentile.
- B. No matter how careless or lascivious the Gentile seemed to the Jew's mind, he was to love him.
- C. If you cannot grasp the great offence Jews and Gentiles would have had for each other, start over!

For God hath received him.

- A. God did not care if converts ate meat that had been offered to idols or not. It did not matter to Him.
- B. God had received each man and both men based on Christ's death on the cross regardless of meat.
- C. What is the antecedent of him? It is each man by the whole verse and God's acceptance of both.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant.

- A. The Lord Jesus by the apostle Paul confronts the Romans and you about judging others' liberty.
- B. It was and is a rule of judgment and justice that an employer should not judge another's employee.
- C. You do not know the employment contract or overall character or conduct of another's employee.
- D. You are way out of your ability, right, role, and league to be judging another man's employee.
- E. The lesson is clearly this: each believer stands before God not before other believers in such things.
- F. Who do you think you are, Christian, to sit in judgment on other Christians for your little issues?

To his own master he standeth or falleth.

- A. Each servant, or employee, receives the approval or criticism of his own master and not any other.
- B. If he fulfills his employment contract in the things expected, he will receive his master's approval.
- C. If he violates his employment contract in the things expected, he will receive his master's censure.
- D. What others think of him do not matter at all, for they are entirely outside his employment contract.

Yea, he shall be holden up.

- A. God is the master in this metaphorical and rhetorical argument over both the Jew and the Gentile.
- B. It had already been stated that God had received on the merits of Christ and true conversion (14:3).
 - 1. God is already reconciled (perfect tense) to the elect without meat or holiday laws (II Co 5:18).
 - 2. And He shall preserve His elect (future tense) through Judgment without such laws (8:1,28-39).
- C. Each man, the Jew and the Gentile, shall be preserved in Christ Jesus to God's approval (Jude 1:1).
 - 1. Whether a Christian follows or rejects any ideas on Christian liberty does not affect eternity.
 - 2. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus and follow the Spirit (Romans 8:1).
 - 3. There is no shortage of spiritual blessing or any possible separation from God (Rom 8:28-39).
 - 4. No man can pluck them out of the hand of Jesus Christ or the hand of His Father (Jn 10:28-29).
- D. What the weak say about the strong or the strong about the weak matters not, but God's approval!
- E. You are not upheld before God by your monastic fanaticism for any or all liberties, but by Christ!

For God is able to make him stand.

- A. God is the master in this metaphorical and rhetorical argument over both the Jew and the Gentile.
- B. It had already been stated that God had received on the merits of Christ and true conversion (14:3).
- C. Once God has received a man by Christ's death, the man shall obtain all else he needs (Rom 8:32).
- D. He has been predestinated to adoption and made accepted in the Beloved Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3-6).
- E. The context is a metaphor (first half of this verse) and a prophecy of Judgment (Rom 8:1,28-39).

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

One man esteemeth one day above another.

- A. After meats, Paul then addressed the keeping of Jewish days required by Moses' ceremonial law.
 - 1. These are not pagan holidays for idols or false religion, for such are clearly condemned in both testaments (Deut 12:29-32; Jer 10:1-3; Acts 19:18-20; II Cor 6:14-18; I Thes 1:9-10; Rev 18:4).
 - 2. These were Jewish ceremonial days of Moses that Paul rejected elsewhere (Gal 4:10; Col 2:16).
 - 3. If a Jewish convert did not want to work at all on the Sabbath (Saturday), he was free to do so.
 - 4. The church assembling on the Old Testament day was wrong (Acts 20:7; I Cor 16:2; Col 2:16).
- B. A converted Jew could easily cherish his personal and family tradition of keeping Jewish holidays.
 - 1. Habits and honors for days, months, new moons, and years would have been precious to him.
 - 2. He would know the scriptures by memory that commanded Israel to keep those days forever.
 - 3. With Jewish legalists spewing their worship of Moses everywhere, he also had Internet allies.

Another esteemeth every day alike.

- A. Gentiles converts would not care about the Jewish holidays, because they had never kept them.
- B. To Gentile converts, Friday and Saturday were equal and also the tenth day of the seventh month!
- C. They did not have an exodus out of Egypt to remember nor a year of release they had practiced.

Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

- A. In matters of Christian liberty where God has not ruled, every man should have a clear conscience.
 - 1. Liberties, things God does not care about, become sin without a clear conscience (14:22-23).
 - 2. If you are going to do or not do something, then your own mind should be fully convinced.
 - 3. Look at the liberty afforded in the gospel! *Every man* is singular and *his own mind* is singular!
 - 4. Each Christian is free by God and Paul to hold any view they wish with their own convictions.

5. Each Christian is free by God and Paul to ignore views of others no matter how many or loud.
- B. God has declared His will on all matters of importance, and we must be fully obedient to them.
- C. The power of the human mind in God's worship and in authority is important to introduce here.
 1. Though a daughter or wife might vow unto the LORD, the father or husband could annul it.
 2. Her sincerity did not matter; the father or husband might have weak reasons; it was annulled.
 3. Considering the laws for vows shows that each man's conscience carries great weight in matters of a personal sort that are not directly commanded or prohibited by God (Nu 30:1-16).
 4. The father or husband should make the decision for matters of liberty for his household.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord.

- A. The assumption here and in the following verses is sincere Christians with the proper perspective.
- B. This is a Jew that cares about some Jewish holiday that passed away with Moses' ceremonial law.
- C. The Jew, though ignorant and superstitious – truly weak, keeps the day for God Jehovah's glory.
- D. All that truly matters for each Christian is that liberty choices are to honor God and Jesus Christ.
- E. The beauty of Christian liberty is that each side of an issue can do so to the Lord equal to the other.

And he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.

- A. This is a Gentile that does not care about Jewish holidays, knowing Moses' ceremonial law is past.
- B. The Gentile, believing the New Testament – truly strong, ignores the day for God Jehovah's glory.
- C. All that truly matters for each Christian is that liberty choices are to honor God and Jesus Christ.
- D. The beauty of Christian liberty is that each side of an issue can do so to the Lord equal to the other.

He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for He giveth God thanks.

- A. This is a Gentile that eats either or both unclean meats and meats offered to Rome's pagan idols.
- B. The Gentile, believing the New Testament – truly strong, knows he may eat anything (I Tim 4:1-4).
- C. All that truly matters for each Christian is that liberty choices are to honor God and Jesus Christ.
- D. The beauty of Christian liberty is that each side of an issue can do so to the Lord equal to the other.
- E. What is more important? Meat or vegetables on the table, or the diners thanking God for the food?
- F. Thanksgiving sanctifies prayer (Phil 4:6-7), and it also sanctifies every creature of God (I Tim 4:4).

And he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

- A. This is a Jew that will not eat either unclean meats or meats that had been offered to Rome's idols.
- B. The Jews, hung up in the Old Testament – truly weak, is superstitious about meats (Hebrews 13:9).
- C. All that truly matters for each Christian is that liberty choices are to honor God and Jesus Christ.
- D. The beauty of Christian liberty is that each side of an issue can do so to the Lord equal to the other.
- E. What is more important? Meat or vegetables on the table, or the diners thanking God for the food?

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

For none of us liveth to himself.

- A. The assumption here and in the following verses is sincere Christians with the proper perspective.

- B. Your life is not your own to make it what you will based on your own desires or ideas on any issue.
 1. Even in matters of liberty, though God gives freedom, the primary concern is the Lord's sake.
 2. Your life did not originate with you; it is not preserved by you; you were saved despite you!
 3. God created you, so you are all His (Pr 16:4). Jesus bought you, so you are all His (I Co 6:20).
 4. The main issue that should truly matter for every Christian's decision is to please Jesus Christ.
 5. Rather than your own ideas that do not matter, we seek God's glory and others' profit (14:13).
 6. Therefore, if the Lord has not made a thing binding, why do you want to bind others with it?
- C. Paul's argument is explained by what went before (14:6) and by what follows (14:8) – the Lord.
 1. Though many Christians are earthly minded, Paul has assumed for all the godly perspective.
 2. Following Christ and showing a work of grace means we take up our cross daily (Luke 9:23).
 3. Therefore, we should truly only be concerned about those things the Lord has made binding.
- D. You are a bonds slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ to be told what to do in every part of life.
 1. **Bonds slave.** A more emphatic term for a slave, clarifying that you are owned rather than paid.
 2. You are bought with a price requiring you to glorify God in all, for you are God's (I Co 6:20).
 3. You should have no goals – even in matters of worship like diet or days – that are your own.
 4. You cannot please God, be helpful for others, or be happy yourself until you give up your life.
 5. The happiest and most contented Christians are those that have given up all rights to be God's.
 6. This is the wisest, life-saving choice a man can make to find his life (Matt 10:38-39; 16:24-25).
- E. Do you mean to tell me that I cannot live the way I want to live? That is right – you cannot do so.
- F. Do you mean to tell me that I do not have any rights? You do: obey your parents, for this is right!

And no man dieth to himself.

- A. Even death, which is the end of bodily life and the spirit goes to God, should be to honor Christ.
 1. Do not think death is so personal that you can do as you wish, for Paul said it belongs to God.
 2. A moment after you die you will appear before God and answer for all your choices on earth.
 3. Your time of death is not in your own hands but in the hands of Him Who gave and takes life.
 4. Paul was plain about himself, “So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Phil 1:20; Acts 20:24; 21:23; I Co 15:31; II Co 4:10; II Tim 4:6-7).
- B. Some ask about the human right to commit suicide, but physical life on earth is God's gift for God.
- C. Do you mean to tell me I cannot even die when I want the way I want? That is right – you cannot!

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord.

- A. While a man has breath and functions in this world, he owes every act of his life to Almighty God.
- B. Therefore, whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, it must be all to God's glory (I Co 10:31).
- C. You are a bonds slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ to be told what to do in every part of life.
 1. Jesus Himself is called in the scriptures God's righteous Servant (Isaiah 42:1; 52:13; 53:11).
 2. Some feel trapped in their jobs or their marriages, but being trapped for righteousness is glory!
 3. The right response is to thank God for trapping us from doing those things that we want to do.
 4. Some feel chained to their parents or spouses, but being chained for godliness is very precious!
 5. Some feel forced to love or respect those they do not, but thank God for His force to do right!
 6. David prayed for God to make him go in the way of His commands (Ps 119:35). A bonds slave!
 7. Saints asked God to incline, or manipulate hearts, to godliness (I Kgs 8:58; Ps 119:36; 141:4).

And whether we die, we die unto the Lord.

- A. When we die, our spirits leave this world to be in heaven under the dominion of the King of kings.
- B. In either condition and in either place, we are created and saved to live lives obedient to the Lord.

Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

- A. If you think this redundant, then think again about how few Christians actually live fully for Christ.
- B. He worked in us to will and do His good pleasure, not our own, and we work it out (Phil 2:12-13).

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived.

- A. Jesus Christ had a specific purpose for His death, resurrection, and new life at God's right hand.
 - 1. We are God's by creation and Christ's by salvation so that we owe Him as Lord all we have.
 - 2. He has all power in heaven and in earth with lordship over both body and spirit, alive or dead!
 - 3. You are bought with a price, so glorify God in your body and spirit, which are His (I Cor 6:20).
- B. Christ revived: He took up His life again and lives forever, both ideas included (Jn 10:17; Re 1:18).
- C. Even in matters of Christian liberty, we should remember Jesus is our Lord in any state forever.
- D. He gave His children one new heart and way to fear and obey Him forever (Jer 32:29; Ezek 11:19).
- E. God works through Jesus Christ to make us perfect doing God's will and pleasing Him (He 13:21).

That he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

- A. The dead and living are not two different categories of men but two different states of His elect.
 - 1. Jesus is Lord of us as embodied spirits here and now in this world as both Lord and Saviour.
 - 2. Jesus is Lord of us when our bodies and spirits are separated by death in two different worlds.
 - 3. Jesus is Lord of us when He comes again and raises our bodies from graves to join our spirits.
 - 4. Jesus is Lord when we stand before Him to give account of our lives (14:10-12; II Co 5:9-11).
- B. Therefore, in all matters of life, even matters of liberty taught here, we owe the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. Sell yourself into slavery today! Are you already baptized, then you already did so (Col 3:1-4)!
 - 1. If you have truly seen God, you will say with Isaiah, "Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).
 - 2. If you have truly met Jesus, you will say with Saul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

But why dost thou judge thy brother.

- A. The inspired conjunction *but* condemns criticism of brothers due to what went before and follows.
- B. Because we are the Lord's in this life and in the Day of Judgment, why would you judge a brother?
- C. Because we are the Lord's in this life and in the Day of Judgment, make sure you use liberty right.
- D. Paul has followed the error of judging another to his master and now takes it to the final Judgment.
- E. Why? Do you hear the Holy Spirit? Why? There is no basis or reason for you judge others' liberty.

Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother.

- A. **Set at nought** = to despise, defy, scorn, disregard; see also Pr 1:25; Mark 9:12; Acts 4:11; 19:27.
- B. This is the despising and judgment by members Paul had introduced already in the lesson (14:3-4).
- C. Since they and you are doing it to the Lord, and since the Lord will judge all, why such arrogance?

D. Why? Do you hear the Holy Spirit? Why? There is no basis or reason for you judge others' liberty.

For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- A. Why did Paul pull the severe matter of the Day of Judgment into a discussion of Christian liberty?
 - 1. It first matters that God will rightly judge everyone else, and your opinion will not matter at all.
 - 2. It second matters God will judge you for your use of liberty, so you better use it as to the Lord.
 - 3. It third matters, and most importantly, God will judge you for how your liberty affects others.
- B. Consider some main facts that we should remember considering this judgment we must all face.
 - 1. There is nothing more terrifying than this certain appointment every man will keep (Heb 9:27).
 - 2. Paul wrote that Roman believers and he would be in it by the inspired plural first person *we*, so fatalists and antinomians presuming they will never give account due to grace will be shocked!
 - 3. Elementary gospel facts include resurrection and eternal judgment (Heb 6:1-2; Acts 24:25).
 - 4. Solomon considered final judgment part of his summary of man's life on earth (Ec 12:13-14).
 - 5. The plan of redemption is not remedial for man, but revelatory for God Himself (Prov 16:4).
 - 6. Rather than a trial for discovery of evidence, it will display and reveal facts (Rev 22:11-15).
 - 7. God ordained Jesus Christ to be the Judge of the world (Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; II Timothy 4:1).
 - 8. Eternal destiny depends on the book of life, blessing or shame on obedience (I Jn 2:28 – 3:3).
 - 9. The elect are judged here by chastening, the evidence of eternal salvation (I Cor 11:30-32).
 - 10. The formal declaration of eternal life by the book of life will trump the books (Rev 20:11-15).
 - 11. God does judge practically, but phases of judgment are not mutually exclusive (I Cor 3:11-17).
 - 12. While every man will need the book of life for salvation, their service and thus honor will vary.
 - 13. Every idle and secret thing, those you think minor, will be judged without parole or probation.
 - 14. The just will not be condemned for sins they have done, but their use of grace will be disclosed.
 - 15. Right understanding of the judgment leads to terror and great effort for approval (II Co 5:9-11).
 - 16. Wise men will consider judgment every day with zeal like Paul's for godliness (II Cor 5:9-11).
 - 17. There are things to do for this coming day, and Christian liberty is one of them (I Tim 6:19).
 - 18. No one that believes on Jesus Christ will ever be ashamed or confounded (Rom 9:33; I Pet 2:6).
 - 19. John, who likely saw more terror than anyone, was not fearful of that great day (Rev 22:20).
- C. For much more about the judgment of believers ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/judgment-seat-of-christ.pdf.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

For it is written.

- A. The quotation is from Isaiah 45:23, *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*
- B. When God speaks or prophesies, especially if He swears, His words will be fulfilled (Matt 24: 35).
- C. God cannot swear by anyone or thing greater, so He swears by His independent life (Heb 6:13).

As I live, saith the Lord.

- A. What a glorious God we serve, who must swear by Himself, for there is no greater (Heb 6:13-14)!
- B. How does God live? On what authority does His life confirm? He is Jehovah – I AM THAT I AM!

Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

- A. This is the future of humanity, whether dead or alive, whether believers or reprobates, of all kinds!
- B. The Lord Jesus Christ will hold this exalted place of Judge over all men and angels (Acts 17:31).

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

So then every one of us.

- A. Paul concludes by *so then* after introducing the final judgment and then proving it by the scriptures.
- B. The key here is: *every one of us*, based on *we all* (14:10) and *every knee* and *every tongue* (14:11).
- C. Every member in Rome will give account, those judging others and those judged by the others!
- D. Since all will be judged, the judgmental should leave others alone and be persuaded themselves.

Shall give account of himself to God.

- A. With this fact settled, Christians should allow others liberty in things indifferent for God to judge.
- B. With this fact settled, Christians should be fully persuaded themselves their liberty is to the Lord.
- C. With this fact settled, Christians should very carefully and charitably avoid offending weak saints.
- D. The church is bound to judge sins against God, but Christian liberty is left to the Lord (I Cor 5:12).

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more.

- A. Paul's further conclusion by *therefore* indicates that he has provided reasons to leave liberty alone.
- B. If God will judge both sides of the aisle, then men should be merciful to others and holy at home.
- C. Paul to this point addressed both sides of the aisle, but now he more directly addresses the strong.
 - 1. It is the eater of meat Paul now addresses (14:15,20-21), whom he identified as strong (14:2).
 - 2. Meat-eaters reduced to vegetarian diet would not be offended or hurt, just frustrated by salads!

But judge this rather.

- A. The play on words here is for those that delight to sit in judgment on others for minor differences.
 - 1. The apostle does not contradict himself – *judge no more, but judge* – for there are two senses.
 - 2. If you think yourself wise to parse insignificant distinctions of liberty, see if you can parse this!
- B. Rather than judge others for what they do, judge how others' consciences must affect what you do!

That no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

- A. The strong, likely Gentiles eating any and all meat, must consider the Jews' conscience about meat.
- B. In addition to the Jews' pure conscience (14:6) and their eventual judgment (14:10), charity arises.
- C. **Stumblingblock.** Something to stumble at or over; a cause of stumbling. An obstacle to belief or understanding; something repugnant to one's prejudices. See also Leviticus 19:14 and
- D. A Jew, with a conscience condemning meat offered to idols or unclean meats, must be protected.
 - 1. If you boldly eat meat of both kinds, then you encourage or extort him against his conscience.
 - 2. If he violates his conscience by eating, it is a sin (14:22-23), thus you separate him from God.
 - 3. Thus your presumption to press your own liberty causes another to sin and becomes your sin!
- E. This stumblingblock or an occasion to fall here is shortly described as destroying your brother!

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus.

- A. Paul was the strongest of the strong when it came to liberty, yet he was also the most charitable.
- B. Paul's seminary training in Arabia and inspiration of the Spirit had convinced him about meats, for Paul was taught personally by Jesus Christ rather than by Jewish apostles or men (Gal 1:11-12).
- C. Did Paul know when writing Romans about Peter's encounter in Acts 10:9-18? Yes (Ac 15:7-11)!
- D. Did Paul know that a good minister from Jesus Christ allowed all meats? Yes (I Timothy 4:3-6)!
- E. Paul taught clearly that fussing about meat was over and foolish (Col 2:16-23; Heb 9:9-10; 13:9)!

That there is nothing unclean of itself.

- A. Unclean meats of Moses' ceremonial law had been nailed to the cross (Col 2:13-17; I Tim 4:3-6).
 - 1. Idols have fully no effect, in that there is only one God, Jehovah God Himself (I Cor 8:4-6).
 - 2. Fussing about meats is folly for those who know the truth and love grace (Heb 9:9-10; 13:9).
- B. Meat offered to an idol is not altered in any way whatsoever, for the idol is nothing (I Cor 8:4-6)!
- C. The Jews, and modern Pharisees like them, think there is evil in things swallowed (Matt 15:10-20).
- D. They think no clearer or truer than socialists that want to outlaw guns while coddling murderers!

But to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

- A. In spite of Jesus Christ's clear doctrine, weak Jews could not overcome their habits (I Cor 8:7,10).
- B. Even if a thing is allowed and clean, like meats here, you sin if you partake without faith (14:23).
 - 1. Your conscience is another criterion by which God judges (Pr 20:27; Rom 2:14-15; John 8:9).
 - 2. Thankfully, a conscience can be taught and trained by God's word to advance in knowledge.
 - 3. It is weak, or rebellious, believers that use their consciences as a copout and do not train them.
- C. The issues of liberty before Paul had a Biblical basis in Moses' law, council of Jerusalem, etc.
 - 1. God had clearly identified clean and unclean meats for the Jews (Lev 11:1-47; Deut 14:2-21).
 - 2. Their rules forbade meat that died of itself, certain fats, blood, strangled animals, etc (Eze 4:14).
 - 3. Therefore, Jews holding fast rabbinical rules based on Moses' law, thought most meat unclean.
 - 4. Daniel their national hero purposed to not defile himself with the king's meat or wine (Da 1:8).
 - 5. Jews had added regulations, not reduced them, as indicated by washings, etc. (Mark 7:8,13).
 - 6. The Jews missed clear N.T. doctrine about such things and were protected by God's mercy.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat.

- A. Why an inspired disjunctive *but* here? Because Paul is overriding your own knowledge about meat!
- B. Though there is nothing wrong with meat (14:14), violating your conscience makes it sin (14:23).
- C. Though the strong know they can eat meat (14:14), violating another's conscience is also sin.
 - 1. The sin by strong members pressing their liberty to offend others is hating rather than loving.
 - 2. The sin is serious, because you are offending those in hatred that you ought to love the most.
 - 3. The sin is serious, because you are offending those that are Jesus Christ's as well (I Cor 8:12).

Now walkest thou not charitably.

- A. There are three traits required for wise liberty: humility, charity, and discretion; here is charity.
- B. Charity is the rule of Christianity and local church relations, which must be taught and pressed.
 - 1. Yes, the strong are right! Yes, the strong know more! Yes, they are strong! But do they love?
 - 2. Great apostolic gifts are vanity without charity; what of foolish things of liberty (I Co 13:1-3)?
- C. For much more about the importance of love ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/love-is-the-greatest.pdf.

Destroy not him with thy meat.

- A. How can a strong believer destroy another church member by doing what is allowed and good?
- B. If your conscience is scarred or seared, you may not know the destructive effect of a defiled one.
- C. If strong church members press their liberty, then weak members may violate their consciences.
 - 1. Though there is nothing wrong with meat (14:14), violating a conscience makes it sin (14:23).
 - 2. If they violate their consciences, which is a sin, then they lose fellowship with God due to you!

For whom Christ died.

- A. This has already been stated (14:3,9), but here the apostle applies it to the despised, weak brother.
- B. The fact those sitting near you are God's elect and blood-bought by Jesus Christ should move you.
- C. The real issue of brotherly love is to love God's children – His children, thus brethren (I John 5:1).

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

Let not then your good.

- A. What good? The good thing of knowing that any meats are allowed to New Testament Christians.
 - 1. Unclean meats of Moses' ceremonial law had been nailed to the cross (Col 2:13-17; I Tim 4:4).
 - 2. Idols have absolutely no effect, in that there is only one God, Jehovah Himself (I Cor 8:4-6).
- B. Though the strong are good in their knowledge and understanding, they can turn good into evil.

Be evil spoken of.

- A. The weaker Jews, seeing the Gentiles pressing their liberty frequently, would have despised them.
- B. The weaker Jews, sinning against their consciences due to the Gentiles, would have resented them.
- C. The weaker Jews, pressed into sinning by Gentile "good," could blame their damnation on them!

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

For the kingdom of God.

- A. What is the kingdom of God? The reign of Jesus Christ over His elect saints and in His churches!
 - 1. The kingdom of God is the true religion of Jehovah and His Son Jesus Christ by the gospel.
 - 2. The true citizens of the kingdom of God have a Ruler and rule in their hearts for godliness.
 - 3. God has an elect people and a called people under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Are you in it?
 - 4. For the kingdom of God ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/prophecy/gospel-millennium/sermon.php>.
- B. Rather than fuss about defining terms or prophetic timing, are you an active and serving citizen?
 - 1. The kingdom of God is Christ's reign by the gospel, and you should be part of it (Luke 16:16).
 - 2. Do you live like you are part of mount Sion and the heavenly city Jerusalem (Heb 12:22-24)?
 - 3. The real evidence of a citizen is humility and charity to serve others and church peace and joy.

Is not meat and drink.

- A. The spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ is not based on external matters that God does not care about.
- B. Meat, whether offered to an idol or unclean by Moses' law, is not the basis of kingdom duty at all.
- C. The new reign of Jesus Christ replacing the nation and religion of Moses is not one of the senses.
 - 1. Jesus told the woman of Sychar that God's true worship was not in Jerusalem (John 4:20-24).
 - 2. From lacking an earthly altar to the rejection of musical instruments, N.T. worship is spiritual.

But righteousness.

- A. This is not righteousness of Jesus Christ that justifies the elect, but their righteousness in a church.
- B. It is first doing what is right as defined by God in the Bible, which we call practical righteousness.
 - 1. As soon as you limit yourself to what is clearly taught in scripture, matters of liberty disappear.
 - 2. God did not care about Moses' meat rules or meat offered to idols, or He would have written it.
 - 3. God did not care whether a Jew took Moses' Day of Atonement off from work. See 14:5-6.
- C. It is second and closely related as treating others fairly and justly in the matters of Christian liberty.

And peace.

- A. God has called His churches to peace with similar desire and definition as a father does his family.
- B. Pressing your opinion about issues of Christian liberty never produces peace, but rather strife.
- C. Read closely James' indictment of bitterness, envy, and strife compared to peace (James 3:13-18).
- D. For more about peace among believers in families or churches ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/peace.pdf.

And joy.

- A. God has called His churches to rejoice and be happy in the knowledge of grace and other benefits.
- B. Pressing your opinion about issues of Christian liberty never produces joy, but rather unhappiness.
- C. What are you doing to increase joy in your church? Talk about yourself? Sulk? Stay to yourself?
- D. Happiness is not an option. If you are not happy, it is just a stupid choice you have made. Get glad!

In the Holy Ghost.

- A. Righteousness, joy, and peace are evidences and fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:9; Gal 5:22-23).
- B. Those who lack these things, either do not have the Holy Spirit or have grieved or quenched Him.
- C. A church full of the Holy Ghost, as Jerusalem after Pentecost, was righteous, peaceful, and happy!

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

For he that in these things serveth Christ.

- A. The fact some Gentiles knew so much about meat did not mean anything to their Lord and Saviour.
- B. The key things in a Christian's life are righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. See 14:17.

Is acceptable to God.

- A. It is the things of Romans 14:17 that are acceptable to God and pleasing to Him as the sons of God.
- B. It is a foolish and false presumption that zeal for things of liberty make you a champion for God.

And approved of men.

- A. The opinion and judgment of others about you is important in both testaments (Pr 22:1; Ro 14:16).
- B. When you can get those differing from you in liberty loving you, then you are finally a Christian.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Let us therefore.

- A. Paul drew a conclusion that should be very obvious and may be retraced all the way back to 14:10.
 - 1. The word *therefore* indicates a logical conclusion is being drawn from what has been stated.
 - 2. First, Paul taught that saints will be judged by Christ for how they practiced liberty (14:10-12).
 - 3. Second, the weak are wrong, but should be protected, because Jesus died for them (14:13-15).
 - 4. Third, your strength in liberty is nothing compared to righteousness, peace, and joy (14:16-18).
 - 5. With these three main points defined, it is obvious others' peace and edification are our goals.
- B. If the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, then meat is irrelevant.
- C. If God accepts and men approve those who modify liberty for the sake of others, meat is irrelevant.

Follow after the things which make for peace.

- A. The first goal is *peace* – Paul by the Spirit chose this out of the list of three things given (14:17).
 - 1. The matters of liberty facing mixed congregations of Jews and Gentiles had to be overcome.
 - 2. Rather than be exposing your liberty, even if correct, you should be known for making peace.
 - 3. Allow and protect those in the church differing from you so to keep the church body in peace.
- B. Peace is an endeavor – it takes sacrificial work by each member to prefer one another (Eph 4:3).
 - 1. God loves peace and peacemakers (Matt 5:9; Jas 3:17-18; Psalm 133:1; Rom 12:18; II Cor 13:11; Col 3:15; I Pet 3:10-12; II Pet 3:14; I Thess 5:12-13; Heb 12:14).
 - 2. Those who hold bitterness, envy, or strife are devilish after their father Satan and brother Cain (Jas 3:14-15; II Cor 2:10-11; Eph 4:26-27; John 8:44; James 4:1-7; I John 3:11-12).
 - 3. The churches of Jesus Christ must reject troublemakers (Ro 14:1; Pr 6:19; Gal 5:20; Col 3:5-6).
- C. The *things* here are choices of conduct to restrain your liberty to protect another's liberty for peace.
 - 1. With the importance of peace clear to Bible readers, how hard will you follow after (I Sa 31:2)?
 - 2. You may dislike “agree to disagree,” but in matters of Christian liberty it is absolutely correct.

And things wherewith one may edify another.

- A. The second goal is *edification* – Paul protected and profited the weak (14:13,15; 15:2; I Cor 10:33).
 - 1. The context is to avoid offending others by our liberty so they walk with God in their liberty!
 - 2. Ministers have the obligation to teach the truth, as Paul did in many places against ignorance about liberty; church members should avoid doubtful disputations unless asked by a weak one.
- B. The purpose of local churches is to build each other up by every part giving edification (Eph 4:16).
 - 1. We must warn the unruly, but until they are unruly we should be dedicated to building them up.
 - 2. Paul warned Timothy to avoid Jewish fables and genealogies to choose edifying (I Tim 1:4).
- C. The things here are choices of conduct to restrain your liberty to help another grow as a Christian.
 - 1. A reason we are in a body is not for the pastor or ourselves, but to help others (Heb 10:23-25).
 - 2. Every conversation and interaction with church members should have an agenda – edification.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

For meat destroy not the work of God.

- A. This clause may be seen as the opposite side to the exhortation of the previous verse to edification.
- B. The concept of destruction of fellow church members was already introduced by Paul (14:15).
 - 1. It was possible that a strong Gentile doing good with meat could destroy a weak Jewish family!
 - 2. Christians seeking to do God's will tremble about destruction, defiling, damnation in context.

- C. What is the work of God? The salvation and conversion of a Jewish man and his family to truth.
- D. How can he be destroyed? By causing him to sin against conscience and lose fellowship with God.
 - 1. If you push liberty too far, you can ruin him by taking away peace of conscience and with God.
 - 2. If you push your liberty, you can cause his sin bringing damnation of God's judgment (14:23).
- E. Meat, nor any other matter of liberty, makes any difference to God, so who cares (14:6; I Cor 8:8)!

All things indeed are pure.

- A. Meat is clean and good and pure to a man with a knowledgeable conscience (Rom 14:14,16,20).
- B. The all things here is very limited – to those things of liberty to which God is entirely indifferent.
- C. In particular, the all things here are meat and drink offered to idols or unclean by Moses' law.
- D. Paul, as much as anyone, and taught well by Jesus, knew that all meats were pure (14:14; Tit 1:15).
- E. If you know indeed that some activity is pure by God's liberty, you must protect weak brothers.

But it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

- A. But meat, though intrinsically good, is not good for the man with a conscience that considers it sin.
- B. You must be very careful to think about every other person's conscience and possible sin by it.
- C. Paul knew all the meats were pure, but he knew a weak conscience made them wrong (14:14,23).

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

It is good neither to eat flesh.

- A. Charity dictates that to protect the weak from violating their conscience, the strong should abstain.
 - 1. While good and pure to eat meat unclean in a Jews' mind (14:14-20), it is good to save others.
 - 2. There are three traits required for wise liberty: humility, charity, and discretion; here is charity.
- B. Paul himself declared to Corinth that he would give up meat forever to save a brother (I Cor 8:13).
 - 1. We understand this severe restriction as hyperbolic and for public eating (14:22; I Cor 8:10).
 - 2. The sense of the apostle here is to accept and embrace the good aspects of sacrificing liberty.
 - 3. This severe rule is not for everyone, nor for all time, nor for all situations, nor for private use.
 - 4. Paul's first warning must be kept in view and applied, lest the weak overrun a church (14:1).
 - 5. If "good" of not eating is absolute or universal, then Paul should have just ordered abstinence.

Nor to drink wine.

- A. The Jews' fear of wine was that of drink offerings to idols or wine that could be unclean by Moses.
 - 1. All Jews drank wine regularly other than exceptional vows like the Nazarite, who drank wine again when the vow was over (Num 6:1-7,20). Note also grapes, raisins, hair, and funerals!
 - 2. Jesus drank wine often and supplied much for a wedding in Cana (Luke 7:33-34; John 2:1-11).
 - 3. God and Moses warned Israel about drink offerings of wine to idol gods (Deut 32:38; Hos 9:4).
 - 4. Daniel feared the king's meat and wine (Dan 1:8), but Daniel usually drank wine (Dan 10:3).
 - 5. This liberty issue of "drink," "wine," or "cup" is libations to idols (Rom 14:17; I Cor 10:21,31).
- B. Hatred of wine by teetotaling Pharisees of the Prohibition or Temperance Movement is irrelevant.
 - 1. There is no Biblical basis for this superstition as there was for wine offered to idols or unclean.
 - 2. Prohibition and the Temperance Movement compare to foolish Jewish washings (Mark 7:8,13).
 - 3. Jesus showed no mercy to such hypocrites but rebuked their false doctrine (Matthew 15:10-20).
 - 4. If you lived near the Amish, would you turn off your electricity and throw your toilets away?
 - 5. If you live in a city around 50% Baptist, should you refrain from ordering wine in a restaurant?
 - 6. See the application of this passage in the sections following at the end of the chapter comments.

Nor any thing.

- A. Paul added to the meat and wine issues of the Jew-Gentile controversy he had identified (14:2,17).
- B. Christians today do not worry about meat offered to idols, Jewish dietary rules, or their calendar.
- C. However, they have a whole new set of liberty differences that they must deal with by Paul's rules.
 - 1. The main issues facing Paul were meats and days, but he applied his doctrine to all liberties.
 - 2. The key is to assess whether your liberty in any matter provides a legitimate issue of stumbling.

Whereby thy brother stumbleth.

- A. These three terms can mean the same thing or contribute to one another – so look for variations.
- B. The first level of caution is to avoid any conduct that could lead a brother to sin against conscience.
- C. This stumblingblock sin against a weak brother Paul described as defiling and perish (I Co 8:7-12).
- D. Though Moses' law was over and meat offered to idols was fine, charity protects weak brothers.

Or is offended.

- A. The second level of caution is to avoid any presumption to partake of liberty publicly and offend.
- B. In this case the weak brother is offended that you would insensitively push your liberty before him.

Or is made weak.

- A. The third level of caution is to avoid suggestions or pressure for him to question his conscience.
- B. In this case the weak brother is forced in a sense to question or resent his conscience over meats.

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

Hast thou faith.

- A. This is not belief in Jesus Christ but rather knowledge to know all meats and wines were lawful.
 - 1. Paul continued to teach the strong in this chapter, since their use of liberty could hurt the weak.
 - 2. It is the strong that ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, as Paul will teach shortly (15:1-7).
- B. This verse is a valuable follow-up to the previous verse, modifying its extreme restraint of liberty.
 - 1. Romans 14:21 and I Corinthians 8:13 are not absolute prohibitions for all situations or time.
 - 2. If you are a strong believer knowing that something is pure, Paul here gives you your liberty.

Have it to thyself before God.

- A. Faith in things of liberty is a good (14:16) and pure matter (14:20) of strong Christians (14:1-2).
 - 1. Therefore they should enjoy their freedom and liberty before God as clearly allowed by Him.
 - 2. Since keeping days or eating meat is to the Lord (14:6), the strong can enjoy meat before God.
- B. The apostolic rule was not to sacrifice all liberty for the sake of weak Christians, but rather hide it!
 - 1. If liberty is used carelessly, it can destroy the weak (14:15,20-21) or cause damnation (14:23).
 - 2. Here is where discretion is added to humility and charity as important traits needed for liberty.
 - 3. When, where, and how you enjoy a liberty or mention a liberty requires prudent discretion.
- C. Therefore, liberty must be kept private where you can enjoy God's freedom without hurting others.
 - 1. Keep liberty out of sight of weak brethren, for they may see your liberty and be hurt (14:13).
 - 2. Keep them from seeing your liberty by doing it at home in privacy before God (I Cor 8:10).
 - 3. Therefore, by logical extension, there is no reason to talk about your liberty before the weak.
 - 4. There are plenty of things to talk about other than your liberty in many issues of controversy.

5. The severe call for abstinence intends only situations with the weak present (14:21; I Cor 8:13), for if this were not the case, Paul would have condemned all liberty to have saved all the weak.
- D. The apostle Paul was a master at altering his behavior depending on audience and circumstances.
1. Read his modus operandi that he presented to Corinth while teaching liberty (I Cor 9:19-23).
 2. His life was kind discretion and courtesy, as we say, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”
 3. His goal at all times was to save, edify, and build up converts, and he would adjust accordingly.
 4. If circumcision could help, he circumcised (Acts 16:3). If it would hurt, he did not (Gal 2:3-5).
 5. Paul preached Christ over the law everywhere, but he took a vow to help Jews (Acts 21:18-26).
- E. This is not hypocrisy, for true hypocrisy only pertains to moral issues of God’s commandments.
1. Hypocrisy is the designed impression by actions or statement by words to advertise godliness.
 2. The Pharisees were hypocrites – wearing scripture but refusing to keep what scripture taught.
 3. The Pharisees were hypocrites – whitewashed sepulchers that were full of dead men’s bones.
 4. Altering behavior or speech due to persons present or circumstances is charity and godliness.
 5. Graciousness always wants to be and do what the audience desires and/or expects of them.
 6. Hate feelings that you should be what you are at all times for some false notion of consistency.
- F. Why did Paul rebuke Peter for altering his behavior regarding Gentiles at Antioch (Gal 2:11-14)?
1. The church at Antioch was at peace with Jews and Gentiles eating together until Peter’s event.
 2. Peter, an apostle and influential person, caused church division at Antioch due simply to fear.
 3. His hypocrisy without conscience (for he ate with Gentiles) was contrary to Christian liberty.
 4. Peter by fear rather than charity or conscience caused others to violate charity and conscience.
 5. The Council at Jerusalem had ignored Jewish meats and drinks as being binding on Gentiles.
 6. Peter violated the Council of Jerusalem out of fear only and caused a church division by it.

Happy is he that condemneth not himself.

- A. Self-condemnation is painful: it torments the man with an ignorant conscience under its bondage.
1. So severe is this condemnation of guilt, that it is included in the damnation of the next verse.
 2. Every man’s conscience should be so sensitive, but most have seared it by violating it often.
- B. There is great joy and pleasure in having a conscience free from any guilt or shame in a matter.
1. Paul laid the foundation for this joy: let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind (14:5).
 2. Every conscience can be educated, taught, and converted, which mature Christians do easily.
 3. To arrive at maximum peace and pleasure in life as designed by God, you must feed yourself the word of God constantly so as to have your conscience reflect the truth and wisdom of God.
- C. There are many good things that God allows Christians that foolish parents or false teachers ruin.
1. The Jews missed out on good food and drink by their superstition about Moses’ dietary laws.
 2. The Jews had schedules messed up by their superstition about Moses’ ceremonial calendar.
 3. If the Bible is true, wine is a good thing, but teetotalers miss it through ignorant stubbornness.
 4. If the Bible is true, marriage is honorable in all, but prudes see only missionary position in bed.

In that thing which he alloweth.

- A. These are things indifferent to God – not legislated either way – that a clear conscience can allow.
- B. An informed conscience is a great blessing and comes by submission to all teachings of scripture.
- C. If you can allow God’s good things without guilt or shame, it is a happy blessing to allow them.
- D. Personal allowance to participate in a matter of liberty must be done with full persuasion (14:5,23).
- E. For more about the conscience ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/20_27.php.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

And he that doubteth.

- A. All men doubt at times about various things, but this is men doubting about a matter of conscience.
 - 1. Remember, Paul required any exercise of liberty to be based on full mental persuasion (14:5).
 - 2. The doubts here are uncertainty as to what is right or wrong, pleasing or displeasing to God.
 - 3. The doubts here are a conscience still questioning whether a practice was lawful or not for him.
 - 4. If a man did not have full assurance he could eat pork, then by all means he should not do so.
 - 5. If a man did not have full confidence he could skip the Day of Atonement, he should keep it.
 - 6. The conscience is sufficient to judge a man by accusing or else excusing conduct (2:14-15).
- B. This verse is the opposite of the previous verse, where a man with faith was happy for his liberty.
 - 1. Though the two verses are joined by the coordinating conjunction *and*, they are truly opposites.
 - 2. The man with faith can be happy not condemning himself, but the doubter is damned by eating.
- C. Let this verse strike a little fear in every heart to consider their conscience and be fully persuaded.

Is damned if he eat.

- A. This damnation is not eternal torment in the lake of fire, but conscience and God's chastening.
 - 1. First, the conscience smites the man and destroys his joy and peace in Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Second, a sin against the conscience is a sin against God and thus brings God's chastening.
 - 3. The eater's happiness in 14:22 is a lack of self-condemnation, setting the sense for damnation.
 - 4. It is similar to the damnation of Rom 13:2, where rejecting civil rulers brings severe judgment.
 - 5. It is similar to the damnation of I Corinthians 11:29-32 and I Tim 5:12 where God chastens.
- B. Violating your conscience is a serious sin and deserves God's severe chastening as against Him.
 - 1. Though a matter is intrinsically pure, eating against your conscience turns it to evil (14:20).
 - 2. If your conscience tells you something is wrong in God's sight, then doing it is sin against God!
 - 3. The conscience is sufficient to judge a man by accusing or else excusing conduct (2:14-15).

Because he eateth not of faith.

- A. Faith, or full persuasion of the mind about issues of liberty, is necessary to avoid sinning in liberty.
 - 1. Faith in this context is being fully persuaded as Paul required when opening this subject (14:5).
 - 2. Though a matter is intrinsically pure, eating against your conscience turns it to evil (14:20).
 - 3. If your conscience tells you something is wrong in God's sight, then doing it is sin against God!
 - 4. The conscience is sufficient to judge a man by accusing or else excusing conduct (2:14-15).
- B. All kinds of pressure can cause a man to eat without faith, which is the reason for charity to others.
 - 1. If your boldness or foolishness pushes him to eat anyway, then you sin as well (I Cor 8:9-13)!
 - 2. It is better to be cautious and slow and protect your conscience than to foolishly feign boldness.

For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- A. Here is a wonderful axiom or maxim for your life; if you do not have full confidence, do not do it!
- B. The faith here is not faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour but rather full confidence in a thing of liberty.
- C. This is a great rule by which you can judge all questions and conduct not addressed by scripture.
- D. If you are not fully persuaded in your own mind (14:5), then to go ahead and do it is to commit sin.
- E. Baptism involves the conscience (I Pet 3:21), so we rebaptize those lacking faith in an earlier one.
- F. For much more about Christian liberty ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/church/christian-liberty/sermon.php>