

Using and Not Abusing Your Liberty

Romans 14:1 Him that is **weak in the faith**

receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. 2

For one believeth that he may **eat all things:** another, **who is weak,** eateth herbs. 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. 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. 5 One man **esteemeth one day**

above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every

man be **fully persuaded in his own mind.** 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. **7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.** **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.** **9** For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

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.** **11** For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow **to me**, and every tongue shall confess **to God.** **12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.** **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. **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.*** 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. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18 **For he that in these things serveth Christ *is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*** 19 Let us therefore follow after the things which **make for peace,** and things wherewith one may **edify another.** 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. 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. 22 Hast thou faith? Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin. 15:1 We then that are strong ought to **bear the infirmities of the weak,** and not to please ourselves. 2 Let

every one of us **please *his neighbour*** for *his* good to edification. **3 For even Christ pleased not himself;** but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

- Our Christian liberty is vertical, before the Lord. But the exercise of that liberty is horizontal, because it is seen by and affects others.
- Mind your own business. Jesus tells Peter how he will die. Peter wants to know what is going to happen to John **John 21:18** Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldst not. **19** This spake he, **signifying by what death he should glorify God.** And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. **20** Then **Peter,** turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? **21 Peter**

seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and **what shall this man do?** [22](#) Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, **what is that to thee?** follow thou me.

- Maybe many of the fights in churches could be avoided if we were more interested in spreading the gospel than controlling each other
- Is it possible that much of what hinders the gospel getting around the world is our fighting over non essential, externals
- A missionary agency listed the problems that they were having overseas and they were the following:
 - An unforgiving spirit.
 - Self-seeking.
 - **A legalistic spirit.**
 - **Playing God for others.**
 - Hypocrisy.
 - Failing to appreciate others' gifts.
 - Failing to make allowances for one another [Ephesians 4:2;](#)
[James 2:12-13](#)

- Lack of patience.
- Not sympathizing with others' infirmities or, perhaps, their lack of gifts that we possess.
- Evil speaking [James 4:11](#); [Titus 3:2](#).
- **Assuming, without grounds, that others are at fault** ([James 5:9](#)).
- Pulling one another to pieces ([James 4:11–12](#), Phillips).
- Suspecting the motives of another.
- **A domineering spirit.**
- A rebellious spirit.
- Snobbery ([James 2:1](#), Phillips).
- Hatred.
- Grumbling, arguing, murmuring.
- Maliciousness.
- Being a busybody.
- Greediness.
- Bitterness.
- Resentment.
- A sense of inferiority (i.e., not resting in the Lord, not satisfied with the gifts he has given).
- Lack of security.
- Instability.

- Timidity.
- Spite.
- Laziness.
- Economic sponging.
- Lying and slander.
- Malice.
- Jealousy.
- **Thinking too highly of oneself.**
- A critical spirit toward others.
- Carrying on controversy.
- Being ill-informed about the position of another.³

1. Be fully convinced in your own mind about these things 5

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

³ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *God's Glory: Exposition of Bible Doctrines, Taking the Epistle to the Romans as a Point of Departure*, vol. 10, *Romans 14:13–16:27* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 21–22.

a. The Bible is unclear about many things **14:1** Him that is **weak in the faith receive ye,** *but not to doubtful disputations.*

b. Your decision is about what you believe not how you can look at others **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.**

i. Don't forget that the Lord is for them.

ii. The Lord has received them

iii. You are not to despise them

iv. They are not to judge you nor you them **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.

v. Don't treat your brother like he is less or nothing **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.**

- c. What we are doing or not doing is actually between us and the Lord
 - i. We do or don't for the Lord **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.
 - ii. We are all responsible to the Lord **12** **So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**

2. Special things to know from the chapter

- a. The weak brother is actually the one with the most rules, the vegetarian **1** Him that is **weak in the faith** **receive ye,** *but* not to doubtful disputations.

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

b. We can trust God to keep both people standing 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.

c. Actually and Biblically there is nothing wrong with eating the meat 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. If we are not to do something He will make that clear enough for all of us **Romans 13:9** For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

ii. We don't operate on what the culture teaches us or men tell us but on what the Bible says clearly

- iii. Bible principles stay the same but personal preferences change
- d. The primary concerns in this chapter were food and holy days
 - i. Eating only vegetables **2** For one believeth that he may **eat all things:** another, **who is weak,** eateth herbs.
 - ii. Worshipping on certain days **5** One man **esteemeth one day** above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be **fully persuaded in his own mind.**
 - iii. Possibly into the mix would come wine **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.
- e. It can be wrong for one and not the other **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.*** **22**

Hast thou faith? Happy *is* he that

condemneth not himself in

that thing which he alloweth. 23 And **he that**

doubteth is damned if he eat,

because *he eateth* not of faith: for

**whatsoever *is* not of faith
is sin.**

- i. It is not really wrong but it is to my brother for now
- ii. I want to accept and respect my brother and how he feels about things
- iii. The verse doesn't say that it is actually wrong but the brother esteems it wrong
- iv. Don't try to force everyone to agree with you.
- v. Allow God to deal with the hearts that need dealing with
- f. For us that means there are certain things that simply aren't as clear as we wish they were
 - i. Food

- ii. Clothing
- iii. Music
- iv. Entertainment
- v. Holidays or not

3. Many things fall under freedom of conscience

- a. Baptists have historically believed that all men could decide for themselves
- b. An example for me personally would be when I am asked to try and keep a Mosque from being built-I don't get involved.
 - i. I might not agree with what they are doing but I believe that they should have the freedom to do so
 - ii. I don't picket or fight them except by sharing my faith in Jesus
- c. Pastors, preachers, and teachers often want to force their personal preferences on others
 - i. They preach things that fall under the Romans 14 heading
 - ii. They expect all to do what they say
 - iii. They become overbearing and try to force all
 - iv. I have been super guilty

- d. There is often division in churches over these things
 - i. Brothers try to force everyone to do what they believe is right
 - ii. They treat their brother like he is less, they love to argue, they despise each other
 - iii. we have driven many people away from God and church by getting hung up on the lesser issues
 - iv. Romans 14 is talking more about externals than internals
 - v. Can I get you back to the BE.DO.SERVE.TRAIN idea

4. Handling your liberty

- a. We decide to not do anything that might cause a weaker brother to stumble **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.

- i. Since our brother is weaker we know that our eating meat might offend him or hurt him spiritually

- ii. Though we might know there is nothing wrong with something we think of how it might affect our brother
- b. We walk in love and do not want to hurt our brother or

sister **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.

- i. The wrong word, the wrong action, saying or doing the wrong thing may wound them
- ii. They really esteem that as something bad. They do not understand
- iii. Can you show enough love to not do that where it might hurt them
- iv. It may sound like a stretch but you could actually destroy or devastate someone by your action **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.**

- c. Your liberty is good. But if you do not handle it correctly you will hurt the cause of Christ **16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 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.**
- d. What are we trying to accomplish in the kingdom of God **17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**
- i. The work God did your life was not to get you liberty to do what you want, to live like you want
 - ii. He did a work in you to save you for His purposes. You are still a servant
 - iii. Our goal is to build up others in righteousness
 - iv. We want to bring peace in hearts and lives. We never want to use our liberty for ourselves, to cause trouble, or make scandal **19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.**
 - v. We want there to be joy!
- e. When you treat your brother right with the right attitude you are actually serving Christ **18 For he that in**

these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

f. Do as Jesus did and please others and not yourself [15:1](#)
We then that are strong ought to **bear the infirmities of the weak**, and not to please ourselves. [2](#) Let every one of us **please *his* neighbour** for *his* good to edification. [3](#)
For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

- Think in terms of who you are and pleasing God with your life.
- Would you decide to get more busy getting the gospel out than just trying to look good as a Christian
- You, for you, need to study out what the Bible says. Be careful to be fully persuaded, convinced about what the Bible says, not culture, not parents but the Bible. Then live it
- Remember that having lots of rules is not a sign of being a better Christian. It can actually mean that you are weaker. It is more about being than doing!

- Decide now to major on major things and minor on minors. Don't make a big issue out of something unless the Word of God does. If it does it will be clear!
- Don't force your preferences on others.
- Live and act in love.
- Don't hurt your brother
- Remember that you are serving Christ and others
- Your goal is to please others