

**Recap from Chapter 13...**

- Submit to governing authorities – they have been instituted by God and are servants of God.
- The Law “informs” the way we love.
- Love is the fulfilling of the law.

**Romans 14 - Matters of Conscience**

- What about when the law is not so clear?
  - o What are the *boundaries*, if any, of our freedom?”
    - What *informs* our freedom?”

**The ‘weak in faith’ ...**

- ...eat only vegetables...(?)
    - o *Most meat bought at the markets was in some way associated with sacrifices to idols.*
  - Their conscience won’t let them ignore the possibility that the meat is unclean, and would therefore make *them* ‘unclean’!
    - o *It took some time for the early church to work out what their freedom really meant (Cf. Galatians and Acts 15 – The Jerusalem Council).*
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**The ‘strong’ ...**

- ...are not commended for their ‘strong faith’
  - ...but are commanded not to quarrel, despise or judge (vv1, 3, 4).
  - Instead, they should *welcome* them (v1).
    - o Nor should the ‘weak’ pass judgment on the strong (v3).
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**Be ‘fully convinced’... in our own minds (v5).**

- Principled...
  - Be convinced we are *honouring God* with our actions (v6).
  - Because, none of us lives to himself... each of us will give an account of ourselves to God (v7, 12).
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**BUT... there’s more!**

- It’s not enough to simply be convinced of your freedom (or not!) and therefore to go ahead with your own convictions.
- **LOVE** for our brother and sister is to be the deciding factor in matters of conscience... ensuring we do not put a stumbling block in the way.

**The greater freedom and stronger faith is the freedom and faith to serve Christ by NOT doing what you are free to do... for the sake of your brother or sister in Christ.**

Despite making it clear that “everything is indeed clean,” Paul makes it just as clear that it is wrong to eat if it “*causes another to stumble.*”

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**Whatever does not proceed from faith, is sin.**

- Serious business! Paul’s concerned for their eternal welfare!
    - But we have enough... in Christ, in the Word, and by the Spirit.
- .....

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit... let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. (Romans 14:17, 19).*