

# **Freedom With Love**

**6-13-21**

Romans 14:1 (ESV) **O/H**

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

**True Christianity has fundamental beliefs such as 1) Salvation by Christ alone not of works, 2) Inspiration of Scripture, 3) Deity of Christ, 3) eternal life, 4) the resurrection. However, upon these Christian fundamentals, there are a whole host of opinions such views of end times, spiritual gifts, forms of worship, diet, on and on. Plus, there are C.3 Christians and C.7 Christians. However, with our understanding of Chapters 1-13, we have a good grasp of the Christian faith. **Therefore, we now have specific instructions to welcome the weak in faith and do not quarrel with them.****

Romans 14:10–12 (ESV) **O/H**

<sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; <sup>11</sup> for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

<sup>12</sup> So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

**Whatever our belief, we all will stand before Jesus and give an account of all our actions and beliefs. Therefore, we do not judge our brothers and sisters. That is God’s job. As mature Christians free in Christ, we are to be careful and not to put stumbling blocks in the way of those weak in the faith.**

Romans 14:13 (ESV) **O/H**

Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

**Stumbling block - an obstacle against which one may dash his foot and thus stumble or fall.**

***Hinderance* - originally this was the name of the part of a trap to which the bait is attached. In the NT it is used metaphorically, for a hindrance that causes others to fall.**

**Note that “stumbling block” and “hinderance” are obstacles that destroy people’s faith, or cause people to fall into sin. We want to come along side and nurture these people so they may grow in the LORD. **Therefore, we modulate our behavior around them so their faith will not be destroyed.** We welcome the weak in faith. However, it is important to discern between stumbling blocks and legalism or social preferences. Example: no one stumbling just irritated:**

- 1. Band member needed to wear ties. Irritated, he was not going to stumble and personally stop wearing ties.**
- 2. Individual set in the front row and cried because band was playing contemporary Christian music. Irritated, he was not going to stumble and buy a set of drums to secretly start playing them in his basement.**
- 3. Colored mic covers looked like turning worship into a performance. Irritated, he was not going to be tempted to go to a rock concert because mic covers.**

**Taking all this into consideration, as mature Christians we always want to be sensitive and exercise freedom with love.**

Romans 14:14–15 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. <sup>15</sup> ... .. By what you eat, **do not destroy** the one for whom Christ died.

**Note the words, “do not destroy”. Specially this is talking about meat sacrificed to idols and then serving that same meat in a meal. In a society devoted to idols, eating such meat may be seen as proclaiming one’s devotion to those idols. This could cause a young Christian just coming out of idol worship to be tempted to return to his old lifestyle of idol worship. Therefore, the Christian should be sensitive to this issue. **However, we have freedom in Christ and nothing is unclean in itself.** Therefore, if we go and eat a meal where someone serves meat after it has been dedicated to an idol but doesn’t tell us, we don’t ask and can go ahead and eat.**

1 Corinthians 10:27–28 (ESV)

<sup>27</sup> If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. <sup>28</sup> But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice (to an idol),” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you.

**The meat is fine, but we will be sensitive to the weak.**

**We are not being hypocritical.** Being free in Christ, nothing is wrong with the meat. Understanding Christian freedom is also very helpful when socially connecting with those around us who do not know Christ. Freedom with love may open our approach to evangelism.

### **Unbelievers**

1 Corinthians 9:22–23 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. <sup>23</sup>I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

**We never violate our convictions, but our freedom allows us to reach out to unbelievers in their world.**

Romans 14:17 (ESV) **O/H**

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

**Joy in the Holy Spirit goes hand in hand with Freedom in Christ! Our personal freedom, faith, and conviction are key!**

Romans 14:23 (ESV) **O/H**

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

**As mature grasping Chapters 1-8, we welcome the weak:**

Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV) **O/H**

<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not a result of works, so that no one may boast.