



WHEN ITS DOUBTFUL DON'T STUMBLE

Text: Romans 14:14-23

1. Destroying a brother is wrong. - Romans 14:14-15

Paul knew that there was nothing intrinsically unclean about meat that was not kosher or sacrificed to an idol. Yet there was *nothing* that could justify the destruction of a Christian brother over food.

The issue now is not my personal liberty; it is **walking in charity** towards one whom Jesus loves and died for.

If Jesus was willing to give up His life for the sake of that brother, I can certainly give up my steak dinner. Or my desire to argue and fight over modern issues of doubtful things.

I am not going to destroy a brother over the issues that are currently plaguing our country.

It doesn't mean that we can't have honest and open discussions about modern topics. I think we should, but in the end I will receive my brother.

We shouldn't be making ultimatums about doubtful things.

2. Serve the Kingdom of God. - Romans 14:16-18

Our liberty in Jesus and freedom from the law is **good**, but not if we use it to destroy another brother in Christ. If we do that, then it could rightly be **evil spoken of**.

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink: If we place **food and drink** before **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**, then we are hopelessly out of touch with God's priorities and His heart.

Acceptable to God and approved of men: Serving God with a heart for His **righteousness and peace and joy** is the kind of service that is **acceptable** in His sight, and will be **approved by men**.

Illustration: Lead by Pastor Anwar, the team of youth workers got to work. They starting praying for and working with our teens. They put the cause of Christ first, and they started leading young people to Christ, and discipling them. Today God is doing such a great work in our youth group! There are 5 or 6 being discipled, there are several ready to follow Christ in believers baptism!

They became living examples of **1 Timothy 4:12**, ***“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”***

Christian, let's get after it! The world need some people with compassion to make a difference for the cause of Christ!
How about you?

3. Use your liberty to build - Romans 14:19-21

If eating or drinking something will stumble another brother, then we are not free to eat or drink in that circumstance. Even if we have the personal liberty, we do not have the liberty to stumble, offend, or weaken a brother.

All things indeed are pure: Paul will concede the point that there is nothing impure in the food itself; but he likewise insists that there is nothing pure in causing a brother to stumble.

Don't do anything where your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak: However, we shouldn't think that Paul would permit this kind of heart to cater to someone's legalism. Paul speaks about the stumbling of a sincere heart, not catering to the whims of someone's legalism.

For example, when some Christians from a Jewish background were offended that Gentile believers were not circumcised, Paul didn't cater to their legalistic demands.

4. The Concluding Principle of Faith. - Romans 14:22-23

Do you have faith? If you **have faith**, and feel liberty to partake of certain things, praise God! But have your strong faith **before God**, not before a brother who will stumble.

Whatever is not from faith is sin: Paul concludes with another principle by which we can judge "gray areas" – if we can't do it in faith, then it is sin.

1. What does it mean "that nothing is unclean of itself"? Are there limits to this statement?
2. How can we destroy a brother over doubtful things?
3. Can you think of a scenario where good can be evil spoken of? How is this different from calling good evil and evil good?
4. How can we both be acceptable to God, and approved by of men when men are evil?
5. Is being approved of men important? Does this apply to our current government?
6. Using the example of our youth workers, how can we impact the Kingdom of God?
7. Is it possible to destroy the work of God because of doubtful things? How?
8. What does "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" mean?