

Romans 14:1-23

Causes of church division

- Theological disputes (1, 11-12)
- Dietary regulations (2, 17, 20-21)
- Judgmental attitudes (3-4, 10,13)
- Calendars & holy days (5-6)
- Doubt about Jesus' lordship (7-9)
- Cleanliness practices (14)
- Inflexible legalism (22)
- Sinful behavior (23)

Church and denominational splits are led by autistic clergy who seek to impose their narrow views on others.

Weak in faith

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.

- **Welcome:** Or receive (into churches).
- **Weak:** Or lacking, lit. 'sick'.
- **Faith:** Or conviction.
- **Quarrel:** Or disputing

To be weak in faith means not yet to believe all that Jesus has revealed.

Dietary beliefs

² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.

- **Some:** Not an essential doctrine.
- **Believe:** These have 'strong' faith.
- **Eat:** "All foods are 'clean'."
- **Weak:** Lacking full faith.
- **Vegies:** Good choice, wrong reason.

For religious reasons, not for wise dietary choices.

³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them.

- **Despise:** Pres. Tense = Stop despising.
- **Judge:** Pres. = Stop condemning.
- **God:** Everyone's Savior-Judge.
- **Welcome:** Aorist tense = present truth.

Let the saving grace of God accomplish its work.

⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

- **Slaves:** Another party's property.
- **Lord:** Master. Life and death.
- **Able:** Both just and powerful.
- **Stand:** Metaphor = innocent.

The Lord is as capable to guide others as he is to guide us. It may be we who are self-deceived.

Sabbaths and holy days

5 Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

- **Day:** Friday, Saturday, Sunday.
- **Convinced:** Have your reasons.
- **Mind:** And understand them.

The church in Acts 20 met after sundown on the Sabbath, which was Saturday night.

6 Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

- **For:** Dative = no clear meaning.
- **Lord:** Yahweh the Son
- **Thank:** *Eu·charis* = reply to grace.
- **God:** Yahweh the Father

The Lord accepts ill-informed worship.

8 If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. **9** For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be **Lord of both the dead and the living.**

- **To:** Dative = no clear meaning.
- **This:** = that he be Lord
- **Both:** Starts already, goes on forever.

The clergy soon die, leaving behind split churches and denominations which perpetuate their errors.

7 Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

- **Why:** Satan = divide & conquer
- **Brother:** Fellow Christian
- **All:** Regardless of denomination
- **Seat:** *Béma*, raised platform.

I have enough failures of my own.

11 For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." [Isa. 45:23]

12 So then, each one of us will be held accountable [to God].

- **Praise:** *eks·omo·logeô* (say from same) = admit wrong doing.
- **Account:** "give word (*logos*)"

One of few verses in which the NRSVue seems to have made a questionable translation choice.

16th–21st century evangelical-ism

- Salvation and believers' (re)baptism.
- Personal faith, prayer and witness.
- Biblical authority and interpretation.
- Freedom of conscience & association.
- Social mercy, justice and equality.
- Lay ministers, chosen and dismissed.
- Separation of church and state.
- National and international missions.

Yes, we are a sect. We just like our biases better than others' biases, even when we have no cogent defense.

13 Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother or sister.

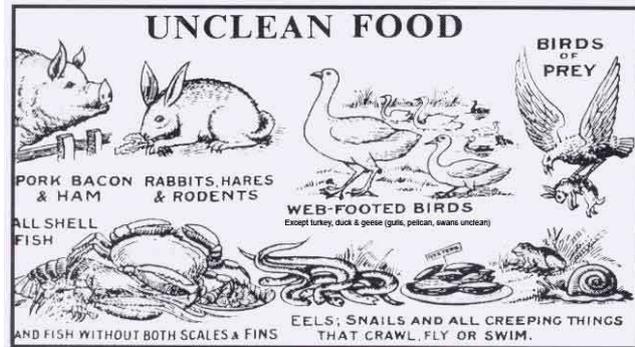
- **Judge:** *Krinō*, decide (for others).
- **Resolve:** *Krinō*, decide (for ourselves).
- **Block:** A cause of offense.
- **Hindrance:** A temptation to sin.

But what if they are stupidly or stubbornly wrong?

Clean and unclean foods

14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who considers it unclean.

- **Persuaded:** Know to be true.
- **Clean:** Acceptable to God.
- **Unclean:** Forbidden by God.
- **Consider:** Reckon, think, assume.



15 If your brother or sister is distressed by what you eat, [then] you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. **16** So do not let your good be slandered.

- **Distress:** We flaunt what we eat.
- **Ruin:** They violate their conscience.
- **Good:** Our freedom of conscience.

Others will follow our example, even before they are convinced that we are right. This is one reason for which the Lord judges teachers more severely.

17 For the kingdom of God is not food and drink **but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.** **18** The one who serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and has human approval.

- **Kingdom:** Obedience to God.
- **Holy Spirit:** The indwelling God.
- **Acceptable:** Regardless of days & diet.
- **Approval:** To meet standards.

One of the “great” texts in the New Testament. Religions impose strict dietary laws, which become some folks’ main claim to godliness.

So then ...

19 Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God.

- **Peace:** Harmonious relations.
- **Upbuilding:** Cause faithful obedience.
- **Destroy:** Undo or stymie growth.
- **Work:** Fellow Christians.

One of the few instances in which humans prove stronger than God.

Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong to make someone stumble by what you eat; **21** it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble.

- **Clean:** Acceptable to God.
- **Stumble¹:** They eat what you eat.
- **Good:** *Kalos*, beautiful, to refrain.
- **Stumble²:** To fall (into sin).

Clean does not mean healthful! The USA arguably has the worse diet in the developed world. (Refined sugars and carbohydrates, chemical additives, seed oils, depleted soils, and pesticides.)

22 Hold the conviction that you have as your own before God. Blessed are those who do not condemn themselves because of what they approve.

- **Conviction:** *Pistis*, faith, faithfulness.
- **Own:** What I believe and practice.
- **Condemn:** By haranguing others.
- **Approve:** As God's revealed will.

We condemn ourselves by passing judgement on others. This is different from offering sound advice.

23 But those who have doubts are condemned if they eat because they do not act from faith, for **whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.**

- **Doubts:** To hesitate.
- **Condemn:** Feel shame or guilt.
- **Faith:** Conviction on a matter.
- **Sin:** A selfish act or attitude.

"Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).

Seek a scriptural defense for doctrines, for practices, and for preferences.

How to cause Christians to sin

- Split churches over disputed issues.
- Entice them to violate their convictions.
- Cast doubt on OT & NT Scriptures.
- Teach that Jesus is not the Messiah.
- Teach that Jesus was only human.
- Rationalize immoral practices.
- Neglect the hungry at church meals.
- Offer them sugar, carbs and seed oils.

We are victims of historical sins against believers.

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