

Finding Unity When We Disagree Romans 14:13 – 13:4

Admit that we all have areas of freedom in “opinion” issues. Romans 14:3-5

“The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.”

Examine your motivation in the use of freedom.

Is it for your needs or the Lord’s work? Romans 14:6-9

“for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” (v.8)

Be faithful in your freedom since we all will be held accountable. Romans 14:10-12

Vs. 12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

When you disagree with a believer, follow these principles:

Romans 14:13-14

- Do not judge because of their different opinion (v.13)
- Do not offend a believer in the use of your freedom - “taking offense vs. giving offense” (v.13)
- Respect others with their different convictions (v.14)

I Corinthians 8:8-12

Serve Christ by pursuing the following kingdom priorities over temporary issues.

Romans 14:15-18

- Walk in love, means I must sacrifice at times. (v.15)
- Be Spirit empowered for righteousness, peace, joy and building up others, not temporary desires. (v.16-17, 19)

I Corinthians 9:12, 19

In conclusion, evaluate carefully the areas below to build unity. Romans 14:20-15:4

“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” (14:19)

- **Your priorities:** Are you pursuing peace and building up people? (14:19)
- **Your relationships:** Is your freedom offending another person? (14:20-21)
- **Your conviction:** Are you sure you are right before God in your faith? (14:22-23)
- **Your motive:** Are you pleasing yourself or pleasing your neighbor? (15:1-3)
- **Your source of truth:** Is it from a clear knowledge from God’s Word? (15:4)

Digging Deeper

Romans 14 is a practical chapter from Paul to help those that follow Jesus live in peace and unity when we disagree in matters of “opinion.” (Romans 14:1) An opinion means an idea or conclusion I have reached based on my reasoning. The Bible is either unclear or does not speak to the issue directly. In such matters, we may agree to disagree and neither is right or wrong. Paul identifies two kinds of believers in this issue 1. Those weak in faith from Romans 14:1-2. Those stronger in faith from Romans 15:1. Those weak in faith means: Weak in knowledge because they have not learned enough on certain issues.

- Read I Corinthians 8:7. They are weak in conscience because they may experience guilt when they have not committed a sin.
- Read I Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12. In this case, these believers did not know they had freedom to eat meat offered to an idol. Therefore, if they ate that meat, they would feel guilty because of a weak conscience.

Those stronger in faith have knowledge to properly use their freedoms but must guard against offending or stumbling the faith of the weaker believer.

LifeGroup Discussion:

Read Matthew 16:22-23. Here Jesus calls out Peter as a “stumbling block.” What did Peter say or do to be a stumbling block? When he was a stumbling block, what was Peter’s mind on? How can we be stumbling blocks to people today in areas of “opinions?” If we are stumbling/offending other people in their faith, what is our mind set on based on this passage?

Compare and discuss the three kinds of people below. What category are you in? Do you know people in the other categories? What would you do to help them?

Weaker in Faith

He differs in opinion
He lacks knowledge but is teachable
He is surprised at freedom
He can feel guilty
He can be stumbled to sin
If he is stumbled it is an offense given
He feels unqualified to teach

Stronger in Faith

He accepts a difference in opinion
He has knowledge, is teachable
He is open to freedom
He recognizes false guilt
He will not be stumbled
No offense
He is willing to discuss issues

Proud in Faith

Does not care about difference in opinion
He is unteachable & assumes to know all
He judges others that differ in freedom
He makes others feel guilty
He will stumble others to sin
If he is stumbled, it is an offense taken
He is closed to discussion and wants to force his opinion on others

From last week for more LifeGroup Discussion:

To guide your motivation in choosing areas of freedom, read I Corinthians 10:23-11:1 and use the following questions to determine if your use of freedom is right or wrong. This prevents you from offending another or being judgmental in areas of freedom.

- Is it profitable? (v.23)
- Will it edify another? Who? (v.23)
- Am I seeking the good of my neighbor or just my own good? (v.24)
- Is your conscience free in using your freedom? (v.27)
- Will you offend a brother? (v.27-29)
- Will it bring glory to God? (v.31)
- Are you seeking your own “profit” or the salvation of others? (v.33)
- Do you want others to imitate your behavior? (Romans 11:1)

Next Steps:

1. **The most important step today is to believe in Jesus.** Today’s Scripture is all about believers in Jesus and how to find unity with each other. We invite you to take that initial step of trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and then grow in your new faith. Read through the booklet called “The Way to Connect with God”, available in the seat rack in front of you. You can also meet with someone from our Prayer Team at a Prayer Point during worship or after service.
2. **Join a LifeGroup** to discuss how these principles can guide you and answer questions that might arise. These are not always clear issues to understand or live by. To find out more about LifeGroups, contact Laura Copeland at 714.550.2398 or visit calvarylife.org/lifegroups
3. **Pursue relationship reconciliation through counseling.** To find out more about the Calvary Life Counseling Center, contact Care Ministries at 714.550.2334 or visit calvarylife.org/counseling