

(13) 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. 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.

(15) For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit!

(18) Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then, let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

(20) Do not --- for the sake of food --- destroy the work of God! Everything is indeed clean, but *it is wrong* for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.

(23) But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin!

Think on these things:

- 1) We're going to talk about food in this section. But what is the social issue being addressed? Are we talking about offending believers or non-believers?

**This is a passage about offending believers. If members are unaware of this history, this is a discussion about food offered to idols. In Judaism, sacrificed animals became the food source of the priests. In idol worship, this meat was often funneled to the local markets for anyone to buy and consume. "Knowing" that the meat source offered in the homes of some believers had previously been offered to idols was offensive to others: "How can you serve me meat previously sacrificed to an idol???" Not everybody believed this way, but some did.**

- 2) From Leviticus 11, can you identify some foods the Jews were taught to not eat as "unclean"? Are these the topic of 1 Corinthians 14, unclean Jewish foods, or something else?

**Leviticus cites many animals as unclean for Jews to eat. Among them are: camels, pigs, rabbits, any water creatures without fins and scales (e.g., shrimp, clams, crabs), eagles, vultures, weasels, rats, lizards, and snakes --- and this is NOT a full list. However, the Jewish food system is not the issue of 1 Corinthians 14, but meat previously offered to false idols.**

- 3) What are we told is the true nature of God's Church (v. 17)? What are believers to be pursuing as church members (v. 19)?

**The Kingdom of God has nothing to do with food and drink. God's Kingdom is about PEACE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and JOY in the Holy Spirit!**

**The challenge to believers in v. 19 is that we are to "pursue what makes for peace" within our fellowships (see Philippians 2:1-5), and to mutually build each other up in the faith (edification**

--- that means, I help and encourage you to mature and grow stronger, and you do the same for me!).

- 4) When does doing what I believe is “right” according to my faith and convictions considered “wrong” in God’s sight? Do I always have to subjugate what I believe to “conform” to the what other Christians believe? Explain. Where is the balance between two people?

This passage teaches that I must decide NOT to put a stumbling block in the way of my fellow believer (v. 13). This decision is an act of Christian love (v. 15). If I harm another’s faith by insisting on my way (convictions), good becomes ‘spoken of as evil’ and I may destroy one for whom Christ died (v. 15).

So, do I always have to do this? Yes. Don’t, for food’s sake, “destroy the work of God” (v. 20). But, also only when I’m in fellowship with the person whose convictions differ from mine. In the daily course of my life, I’m free to eat/act however my convictions allow at all other times.

- 5) If I “back off” and yield because I want to live in obedience to Christ, how is this viewed (v. 18)?

Acting in this way is considered serving Christ in a way that is acceptable to God and approved by men.

- 6) V. 22 is about your Christian convictions. How are we instructed to live in them?

Our personal convictions are developed between ourselves and God. Everyone has views and opinions...! Christians MUST allow God to shape our views (2 Timothy 3:16-17). ‘Integrity’ is living by one’s convictions, and this verse ends with, “Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself.”

- 7) When we feel self-condemned for things we say or do, or not say or do --- a guilty sense that we have compromised ourselves in some way ---- what does Paul tell us is happening (an axiom for us to remember, v. 23)?

“Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” If I am under conviction for doing, saying, or thinking the wrong thing --- or not doing, saying, or thinking the right thing --- I need to repent of it and make confession (1 John 1:9).

People and situations I want to pray for this week: