

“*Scruples*”
Romans 14:13-15:4

The Context of Romans 12-15

1. A call to consecrate ourselves unto God. Rom 12:1,2
2. Applications: Ourselves, Rom 12:3-8. Others, 12:9-16. Enemies, 12:17-21. State, 13:1-7
3. Principle: Love & Law. Rom 13:8-14
4. Principle: Love & Freedom. Rom 14:1-15:13
 - ◆ How we are to *think* towards Christians with whom we disagree. 14:1-12
 - ◆ How we are to *act* towards Christians with whom we disagree. 14:13-15:4

First: Don't Cause Your Brother To Stumble By Use Of Your Freedom. Rom 14:13-18

1. The Principle: Stop being a stumbling block! Vs 13.
 - ◆ Stop *judging* each other over debatable matters.
 - ◆ But determine (lit. *judge*) this: I will no longer let my freedoms hurt others
 - ◆ NB There is a time to *not* give in: when the Gospel is at stake. Gal 2:3; Acts 16:3; Act 15
2. The Dilemma: One person's freedom can be another's sin. Vs 14
 - ◆ In Christ Jesus nothing is evil in itself (unless Scripture actually says it is Cf. 13:8ff)
 - ◆ But if a brother regards something as evil -- for him it *is* evil (because of his conscience)!
 - ◆ I.E. He sins by partaking & violating his conscience. Or not partaking but judging others.
3. Three Applications: Vs 15-17
 - ◆ **Christian love:** Its not love to hurt your bro's conscience over areas of freedom. Vs 15a
 - ◆ **The aim of Christ's atonement:** Christ sacrificed Himself to save, will you selfishly pursue your rights and *harm* him over some superficial freedom? Vs 15b
 - ◆ **The reputation of Christ's Kingdom:** Vs 16-17. The agenda of His eternal kingdom is
 - * righteousness (imputed through faith. Rom 3:21ff),
 - * peace with God & others (through justification. Rom 5:1f),
 - * joy in the Holy Spirit (through knowing Him. Rom 8:23f).

Don't let insignificant freedoms (which are good) become troubling issues in His Church!
4. The results (when you pursue these three things): Vs 18:
 - ◆ You serve Jesus Christ (and not yourself).
 - ◆ You are approved by people, and His reputation is lifted up
 - ◆ You are acceptable (well-pleasing) to God. Rom 12:2 not Rom 15:1)

Second: Build Your Brother Up, Don't Tear Him Down By Use Of Your Freedom. Rom 14:19-15:4

1. The Principle: Pursue peace. Build others up & stop tearing them down. Vs 19-20a.
 - ◆ Build up His people: Christ does (Mt 16:18). Are you (I Cor 3:9; Eph 2:21; 4:12)?
 - ◆ Don't tear down His work: Over strong person's freedom or the weak person's legalism.
2. The Dilemma: The use of your freedom can give offense. Vs 20b
 - ◆ All things are pure! (unless Scripture actually says it's not Cf. 13:8ff)
 - ◆ But if a brother misuses his freedom -- for him it *becomes* evil (because he violated his brother's conscience)!
 - ◆ I.E. His brother partook against his conscience. Or became judgmental.
3. Four Applications: Vs 21-15:4
 - ◆ **Pursue the good:** Give up your freedom where it causes your brother to stumble. Vs 21.
 - ◆ **Keep your freedoms to yourself:** Keep quiet & practice them away from your weak brother. Vs 22a. Cf. I Cor 10:25-31
 - ◆ **Pursue faith & avoid matters where you doubt:** Joy comes thru a clear conscience. A violated conscience is sin. Do all things in faith (confident God allows it). Vs 22b-23
 - ◆ **Bear with your brother's weaknesses., Don't just please yourself:** Don't live for yourself. Serve your brother. Be as Christ who suffered for the Father! Vs 1-4