



Sacrifice for the Good of Others
Romans 14:13-23

Main Idea: In love, sacrifice on matters of opinion so that opinions don't destroy the faith of others.

In love, make the decision to not do things that may cause others to stumble (13-19).

- *Don't let matters of opinion be the cause for hurting someone's faith (14-16).*
- *Remember that the Kingdom of God is about growing faith and life in the Spirit (17).*
- *Serve Christ by pursuing peace and building others up (18-19).*

As Paul continued to teach about matters of opinion, he moved from not judging others on matters of opinion to not allowing matters of opinion to become something that detracts from or even destroys the work of God in someone else's life. In love, the command from the Lord in verses 13-19 is to make the decision to not do things that may cause others to stumble. Specifically, this is in relationship to the things that we do that are connected to matters of opinion. In other words, don't let matters of opinion be the cause for hurting someone's faith. Paul's example is simple. It's his opinion that anything is clean to eat. He's convicted of that in his faith, but if eating something would cause his brother to stumble or even destroy their faith, then it would be unloving for Paul to do so! Remember that the Kingdom of God is about growing faith and life in the Spirit. God's Kingdom isn't about our matters of opinion on what we can eat or drink. So the call is the call to follow Jesus: Serve Christ by pursuing peace and building others up. These two guideposts are important for our decision making in life when it comes to matters of opinion. Does my conviction on this matter of opinion have the potential to cause conflict and problems, or does it protect and promote peace in my relationship with others? Does my conviction on this matter of opinion have the potential to cause someone to sin or to damage their faith, or does it protect and build up their faith and life in Christ? Now that is some simple and straightforward direction from the Lord for us to follow!

1. What are some matters of opinion that you have on food and drinking wine? What are some other matters of opinion that you have? Share, and discuss.
2. Use the two questions in the explanation above as guideposts for thinking about how you should act on your matters of opinion. Are there any matters of opinion that you need to re-examine in your life?
3. Why is it important to remember that the Kingdom of God is not about these matters of opinion in this life here on earth; rather, the Kingdom of God is about growing faith and life in the Spirit? How does this also help us think about matters of opinion?
4. In the things that you do that fall in the matters of opinion category, are you serving Christ?

In love, sacrifice on matters of opinion for the sake of God's work in others (20-21).

Paul made it really simple. In love, sacrifice on matters of opinion for the sake of God's work in others. If Paul's eating and drinking were to destroy the work of God in someone's life, then it would be wrong for him to do that. It won't be loving. It won't serve Christ. It won't build up. So, it would be much better to sacrifice that thing that is only a matter of opinion in order to protect God's work in the lives of others.



1. Even if you have a clear conscience on some matter of opinion, if your actions then cause someone else to stumble, you've done wrong. Have you ever had this happen in your life?
 - a. Has the actions of someone else on a matter of opinion caused you to stumble (i.e. It caused you to be tempted to do something that went against your conscience. It caused you to really struggle or question your faith.)?
 - b. Have your actions had this kind of a negative impact on someone else?
2. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do a word study for "it is good" in verse 21. What does God mean by "it is good?" What does God say is "good" in this verse?
3. Is there some matter of opinion that you need to sacrifice in your life for the good of God's work in the lives of others?

In love, keep your opinions between you and God and do everything by faith (22-23).

The first part of verse 14 demands some explanation and consideration. The command is to keep your opinions between you and God. Obviously, this is related to matters of opinion. Matters of truth that are connected to God's Word are different. We're to share, to teach, and to proclaim God's Word, so this is on matters of opinion. But that doesn't mean that we never share our opinions. Paul himself shared his opinion in this very passage in verse 14, but he did it in a way that didn't force it on to others or demand that others accept it. Paul shared his opinion for the purpose of instruction. He shared his opinion and offered to sacrifice it for the sake of God's work in others. This is the heart of God's command. In other words, matters of opinion should be matters of conscience between you and the Lord. In faith, you follow your convictions and live your life in faith with a clear conscience before God and man, which also means that you prioritize the faith of others over your opinions that may cause others to stumble. Matters of opinion need to be decided in your heart between you and God. You need to have a clear conscience on all you do, and if you don't, then don't do it! To do something that isn't grounded in faith is sin. This is true with matters of opinion and everything else in our lives.

1. Are you doing anything right now in your life that isn't being done by faith? Consider these questions as you answer that question:
 - a. Are you making career decisions or actions without asking the Lord and having a conviction in your heart that this is what God wants you to do?
 - b. Are you allowing your children to participate in sports or activities at school or in the community that demand your family's time and resources without asking the Lord and having a conviction in your heart that this is what God's wants your children to do, remembering that you're responsible for them before the Lord until they are adults and stand solely accountable for their own decisions before the Lord?
 - c. What are some other ways to press this fundamental question into different areas of your lives as you consider the importance of doing everything by faith?
2. What does it mean to do everything by faith?
3. Pray for one another! Use the outline in this lesson to guide your prayer time, praying for these specific things in our hearts and homes.