

See then how important it is to allow love toward God and neighbor (the summation of the Law), to be the **guiding principle** in Christian relations and practice, being careful not to offend others, yet holding our own convictions before God.

Romans 14:13-18 - 13 Therefore **let us not judge one another anymore**, but rather determine this — **not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way**. 14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that **nothing is unclean in itself**; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For **if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love**. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore **do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil**; 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. NASB

Here Paul makes several key points. First, he restates the fact we **“not to judge one another anymore”** about these kinds of issues, as he did in verse 1, 3, 4, 10. Second, he points out that instead judging, we should **“not put an obstacle or stumbling block in a brother’s way.”** By this he means, be careful not give a brother or sister cause to judge or condemn you by violating his personal convictions. This Paul says in verse 15 is **“walking according to love.”** Third, he points out that **“nothing is unclean in itself.”** By this he means that inanimate physical objects, like food and drink, are in and of themselves **amoral**, meaning it has no positive or negative moral value. He adds to the depth of this statement by saying that food and drink are not the nature of the **“kingdom of God” but rather “the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”** However, if you use your food or drink in an inappropriate way, it can become an unclean and moral issue. In this context and elsewhere Paul commands that we be **careful not to offend the convictions** of our weaker brother or sister by doing things that violate their personal convictions. This Paul calls sin and points out that it is unloving.

1 Corinthians 8:8-9,12-13 - 8 But **food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat**. 9 But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a **stumbling block to the weak.....** 12 And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their **conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ**. 13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that **I might not cause my brother to stumble**. NASB

The point is clear. In regard to eating and drinking and other amoral issues, **have your own conviction** that clearly define your faith before, allowing the clear teaching of Scripture to inform your convictions. But do allow your convictions to bring hurtful offense to or disrupt peace between you and your Christian brother or sister. Paul restates this again to emphasize **how important it is not to cause your brother to stumble**, because this surely an issue of moral importance to God, that we maintain **“peace, joy and righteousness”** in His kingdom.

Romans 14:19-22 - 19 So then let us **pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another**. 20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. 21 **It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles**. NASB

Christians should also **“pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”** See here we are to be a person that **builds others up**, not tears them down. Let us judge ourselves by this wise rule.

Romans 14:22-23 - 22 The faith which you have, have as your **own conviction before God**. Happy is he who **does not condemn himself in what he approves**. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and **whatever is not from faith is sin**. NASB

Here, in verse 22, **“faith”** is used to mean the content of our entire doctrinal understanding of our relationship to God. Paul restates the importance of defining our faith with our own convictions before God. Then he makes another important point. We must be careful to have convictions that do not condemn us before God. This is clear from the statement **“Happy is he who does not condemn himself by what he approves.”** We understand from this that it is very important to have our convictions informed by the Word of God lest we define our practice by things that