



So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

Romans 14:13



What is something that you once felt strongly about, that you have now changed your mind on?

1. Read **Romans 14:1-4** According to verse 1 what is the first responsibility of believers towards those who hold different convictions/views?
 - Why do you believe Paul begins with acceptance rather than correction?
 - What attitudes are forbidden in verses 3-4?
 - How can looking down on someone and condemning someone be two different forms of the same problem?
 - Paul reminds us that God has already accepted the “other” person, how would this change our approach if we began every disagreement with the knowledge that the other person is loved and accepted by God?
2. In **Philippians 2:3-4** we are called to think of others as better than ourselves, and to look to the interests of others. How can this change the way we approach a disagreement with a fellow Christian?
 - How would considering each person's time and feelings more valuable than our own, change how we treat them and speak to them?
 - Why is it difficult to apply the above when someone disagrees with us?
 - What practical steps can we take to get better at this?

3. Read **Romans 14:5-6**. What examples are given to highlight differing convictions amongst believers?
 - What evidence is there that both opposing groups are trying to honour God?
 - Why is it important for us to distinguish between essential doctrines (core beliefs essential to our faith) and personal convictions?
 - What are some of the essential doctrines every believer must agree on?
 - What are some of the issues faithful believers may have that they may not agree on, and yet can still have fellowship with each other?
4. In **Romans 14:7-12** what is the repeated truth that should help us keep our disagreements in perspective?
 - Whose approval should we seek according to these verses?
 - How should knowing every believer will give an account to God change the way we speak/think about those who disagree with us?
5. Read **Romans 14:13-15**. Paul calls believers to stop condemning each other – what should we focus on instead?
 - What do you think it means to cause another believer to stumble?
 - How would what we do change if we asked “what is loving?” rather than “what am I allowed to do?”
 - What are some things (freedoms) you have given up, or that a believer may need to consider giving up, to help prevent a brother/sister from stumbling?
6. What does Paul say the kingdom of God is primarily about in **Romans 14:17**?
 - Why are believers often more passionate about secondary issues rather than what Paul has listed here?
 - Which of the following Kingdom qualities do you need more of in your life right now? (Righteousness, peace, joy in Holy Spirit)

Application: *This week before each conversation, check yourself with the following:*

- ***Am I aiming to win an argument or move this person closer to Jesus?***
 - ***Am I protecting my position, or reflecting the character of Jesus?***
 - ***Will my words build this person up, or tear them down?***
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