

Romans 14
Grace for Jewish Believers
Scripture: Romans 14:1-23

Big Idea: Showing Jesus in our attitude towards Jewish believers (weaker)

Call to Action: Think about how you treat those around you who hold to different beliefs within Christianity. Do you show compassion or division?

Family Action: Talk with your kids about how God gives different convictions, and remind them not to force those convictions on others or cause someone to stumble.
Talk about your convictions.

Exposure to Exposition & Exploring the Scriptures: (10-20 mins)

- Bible Drills (Memorization of OT & NT Book order)
- Guide the children to Romans 14:1-23 in the Bible. (Help them as needed, NT vs OT)
- Say: We are going to continue through Paul's letter to the church of Rome.
- We will learn that the gospel is God's power to save everyone who believes, and we should never be ashamed of Jesus.
- Read aloud. (Ask kids to start their pointer finger on V1 and follow along)

Review: vv. 11:1-27 God is not done with Israel; He is showing kindness towards Gentiles (Israel's Future)
vv. 11:28 – 12:2 God keeps His promises & Our relationship with God
vv. 12:3-13 Our Relationship with Believers & Serve the Body with spiritual gifts
vv. 12:14-21 Our Relationship with Unbelievers
vv. 13:1-14 Our Relationship with Governing Authority
vv. 14:1-23 How we can show Grace to Jewish Believers

Opening Question

Have you ever met another Christian who believed something a little different than you? For example, maybe they think eating certain foods is wrong or believe a different day should be set aside as special. → How do you think God wants us to treat other believers when they follow different personal rules?

Notes:

In Romans 12-15, Paul shows us how to live in response to God's mercy. This is not a list of rules, but a plan for worship. Because God has saved us and nothing can separate us from His love, our lives should reflect gratitude and obedience.

Think of it like a target 🎯:

- The center is our relationship with God (12:1-2).
- Then comes our relationship with other believers (12:3-13).
- Then comes our relationship with the world/unbelievers (12:14-21).
- and finally, government and society. (13).

Remember, Paul is teaching us how to live as a living sacrifice for God. As we learn God's Word and change the way we think, our actions begin to change, too. This is called growing to be more like Jesus.

Now Paul explains how Christians should treat other believers in the church who still follow certain old rules from the Law, like not eating certain foods or keeping a certain day special.

God gave those rules to the people of Israel long ago to help set them apart and prepare them for the coming of Jesus. But when Jesus came, He perfectly fulfilled the Law. Because of this, people who believe in Jesus are no longer required to follow those old rules to be right with God.

Some Jewish believers in the early church were still used to those rules because they grew up with them. Paul says other believers, especially Gentiles, should be patient, loving, and kind toward them, because they are still learning and growing in their understanding.

Key Theological Term: *Sanctification*- The process of becoming more like Jesus in our lives.

Romans 14:1-23 NLT

Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. 2 For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. 3 Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

5 In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable. 6 Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. 7 For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. 8 If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.

10 So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For the Scriptures say,
"As surely as I live," says the Lord,
'every knee will bend to me,
and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.'"

12 Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. 13 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.

14 I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. 15 And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died. 16 Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good. 17 For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. 19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

20 Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble. 22 You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right. 23 But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.

Romans 14:1-4 Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. 2 For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. 3 Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

V1-4 Accept Believers Who are Still Growing

Paul teaches that believers must accept one another and show patience, even when they have different convictions about certain things.

- "Weak" does not mean someone is bad – it means they are still growing spiritually. (v.1)
- Some believers felt free to eat anything, while others felt they should avoid certain foods. (v.2)

These differences came from their background and understanding.

- Paul says believers should not:
- Look down on others
- Mock their convictions
- Pressure them to change immediately
- Instead, they should show grace and patience.

Do not judge other believers by what they eat or don't eat, or by what they worship (v. 3)

- If God has welcomed (accepted) someone into His family, believers should welcome them too.
- Some believers will understand their freedom in Christ faster than others.

Every believer serves the same master (v.4)

- Paul reminds the church that every believer belongs to Jesus.
- Christ is the one who leads and judges His servants.
- Give other believers time to grow in Jesus.

Kid Point: Believers should accept and love one another, giving grace to those who are still growing in their faith.

Romans 14:5-9 In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable. 6 Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. 7 For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. 8 If we live,

it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.

V5-9 Following Your Convictions for the Lord

Paul continues that when believers have different convictions about certain practices, they should respect one another and remember that each person is living to honor the Lord.

- Some believers treat certain days as special, while others do not. (v.5-6)
- What matters is that each believer is fully convinced in their own mind that they are serving the Lord.

Believers Do Not Live for Themselves (v.7-8)

- Paul reminds the church that Christians belong to Christ.
- Everything we do should be about serving the Lord, not pleasing ourselves or other people.
- Our entire life is meant to honor Jesus.

Paul ends by reminding believers why Jesus died and rose again. (v.9)

- Because Jesus is Lord of every believer, He is the one who guides each person's conscience.
- We should not try to control other believers' convictions.

Kid Point: Believers may have different convictions about certain things, but everyone should live to honor the Lord and respect one another's faith.

Romans 14:10-13 So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For the Scriptures say, "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God."

12 Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. 13 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.

V10-13 Let God Be the Judge

Do not condemn other believers' convictions. (v.10)

- Paul asks an important question: Why would we condemn another believer for their choices when they are free to worship in a personal way?
- When believers pressure others to follow their own standards, it can hurt their faith and walk.
- Paul reminds the church that one day every believer will stand before God.
- Everyone will recognize God's authority and stand before Him. (v.11)
- This shows that God alone has the right to judge His people.

Each person is responsible for their own life. (v.12)

- Every believer will answer to God for their own choices.
- We are responsible for how we obey Christ – not for controlling others.

Protect your brother's walk. (v.13)

- When believers pressure others to ignore their convictions, they can cause them to sin or stumble.
- Instead, Christians should help each other grow by:
- Showing patience
- Teaching Scripture
- Encouraging obedience to Christ
- Loving others means helping them follow Jesus faithfully.

**** Stumbling Over Convictions:**

This can happen in two ways. First, a believer may try to force their personal convictions on others and look down on them for not following the same rules. Second, a believer who feels free in Christ may look down on another Christian who still chooses to follow certain rules about food, drink, or special days. In both cases, pride can cause believers to judge one another instead of showing love.

Kid Point: God alone is the judge of every believer, so Christians should respect one another's convictions and focus on living faithfully for the Lord.

Romans 14:14-23 I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. 15 And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died. 16 Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good. 17 For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. 19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

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V14-23 Love Is More Important Than Being Right

Christians should care more about people than about proving their freedom. (v.14-16)

- Paul explains that food itself is not sinful, but if you have a personal conviction, then it is wrong for you.
- And on the opposite side of that, if eating something hurts another believer, love should come first.

God's Kingdom Is Not About Food (v.17)

- Paul reminds believers what truly matters.
- God's kingdom is about:

- Living rightly
- Living in peace
- Experiencing joy through the Holy Spirit

Serving Jesus is the Goal (v.18-19)

- Having a loving attitude towards other believers is pleasing to God and others.
- Live well with each other, even when there are differences in personal convictions.

Don't Divide or Cause Another to Stumble Over Food or Drink (v.20-21)

- Paul says sometimes it is better to **limit our freedom** if it helps another believer.
- Love sometimes means giving up something so that another believer can grow stronger.

Paul says believers should hold their convictions between themselves and God. (v.22)

- Paul warns believers not to encourage behavior that could cause guilt or stumbling.
- Because we have the freedom to eat/drink or not eat/drink certain things, we should be careful not to make others stumble or act like we are better than them.
- The goal is to build others up, not pressure them into actions that trouble them.

Acting against your convictions is sin, in any case. (v.23)

- Paul warns all believers that when we go against convictions, it becomes sin.
- Even if the action itself is not sinful, doing something against what you believe God wants is disobedience.
- The Holy Spirit guides believers through their convictions.

Kid Point: Christians should follow their convictions before God and respect the convictions of other believers, always acting in love.

Observation Questions (What did it say?)

1. What does Paul tell believers to do with someone weak in faith? (Accept them with compassion and do not argue about their opinions. v.1)
2. What examples does Paul give of differences between believers? (Differences about eating certain foods and observing special days. v. 2,5)
3. What warning does Paul give about causing another believer to stumble? (Believers should not put a stumbling block or obstacle in another believer's path. (*See V.13 to help guide this Q&A)

Understanding Questions (What does it mean?)

1. Why should believers avoid judging one another over personal convictions? (Because God has already accepted each believer, and each person will answer to God. v. 3-4,12)
2. What does Paul mean when he says the kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking? (God's kingdom is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit rather than personal preferences. v. 17)
3. Why is acting against your convictions considered sin? (Because it is God who convicts us, therefore, we must listen. v.23)

Application Questions (What should I do?)

1. How can you show patience with another believer who has different convictions than you? (By loving and accepting them without judging and giving them time to grow spiritually. v. 1)
2. What should you do if your freedom might cause another believer to stumble? Example: Drinking alcohol may be ok for you, but it may hurt another; Eating pork may hurt another (From the Law). (Choose love and avoid doing what would harm their walk. v. 15,21)
3. How can you make sure your choices honor God? (By following your convictions and seeking to live for the Lord in everything. v. 8,23)

Activity #1: Don't Make Them Stumble!

Supplies:

Cones, chairs, or objects to place on the floor

Blindfold (optional)

Tape or rope to mark a path

Instructions: Help students understand that our choices can help or hurt other believers, and we should live in a way that builds others up instead of causing them to stumble.

Step 1 - Set the Path (The Stumbling Obstacle Course)

- Create a simple walking path across the room.
- Place a few obstacles along the path (cones, books, chairs).
- Explain that the path represents walking with Jesus.

Step 2 - First Round (Without Help)

- Choose one student to walk the path blindfolded.
- The class cannot help them.
- Usually, they will bump into something or hesitate.
- Let each one try without help.

Step 3 - Second Round (Helping Each Other)

- Now have students choose a partner.
- This time, your partner can guide by saying things like:
 - "Step to the right!"
 - "There's something in front of you!"
 - "Stop!"

Step 4 - Remove the Obstacles

- After each child has finished the obstacles, remove the obstacles for your partner and guide them to walk the path.
- Explain: Sometimes loving others means removing obstacles, like giving up something that might cause another believer to stumble.

Discussion:

What did it feel like walking the path with obstacles?
How did it feel when others helped you?
How can our choices affect other believers?

Connect this to the Bible passage. Romans 14:19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

Explain:

- Believers should help each other walk with Jesus, not create obstacles that make someone stumble.

Activity #2 : Memory Verse: (Come up with moves)

Romans 14:19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

Remind them: What is the Gospel?

Jesus' perfect life paid for the sins of all who believe. Jesus died on the cross as the punishment for sin. But Jesus did not stay dead, three days later He rose to life (resurrection) defeating the power of death. Believe, and you will be saved!

- We are all sinful. We all deserve the consequence of sin- death.
- Jesus is what saves us from the sin we all have in our bodies. And one day, he'll even give us a new body.

Supporting Truths Kids Can Grasp:

- Believers should accept and love other Christians who are still growing in their faith. (Romans 14:1).
- God has already accepted every believer, so we should not judge one another over personal convictions. (Romans 14:3-4).
- Christians should be careful not to cause another believer to stumble in their walk with Christ. (Romans 14:13).
- God's kingdom is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit—not about food or personal preferences. (Romans 14:17).
- Believers should follow their convictions before God, because whatever is not done (OR is done) is sin. (Romans 14:23).