

**(14:14) - I KNOW, AND AM PERSUADED BY THE LORD JESUS, THAT THERE IS NOTHING UNCLEAN OF ITSELF:** - It is God's testimony that all distinctions of meats and days under the Old Covenant had been abolished by Christ in the New Covenant. These dietary and ceremonial laws are not binding upon New Covenant believers. Weak believers who were bound in their consciences in these laws were wrong. Mature believers were right. No edible food is **"unclean of itself."** Eating or not eating is neither the issue in salvation nor in how we are made righteous with God. Christ is! Paul adds, however, **BUT TO HIM THAT ESTEEMETH ANY THING TO BE UNCLEAN, TO HIM IT IS UNCLEAN** - Until the weak believer is convinced in his own heart of this issue, to him it is still wrong. We who see our liberty to eat all foods in moderation should not expect weak believers to violate their consciences, and we should not judge them lost because of their weakness.

**(14:15) - BUT IF THY BROTHER BE GRIEVED WITH THY MEAT, NOW WALKEST THOU NOT CHARITABLY. DESTROY NOT HIM WITH THY MEAT, FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED.** - First, we are to avoid causing grief in our brother's conscience by questioning his salvation and excluding him from our fellowship based on indifferent things. This is contrary to brotherly love. Next, we are to avoid destroying our brother with these indifferent things. To **"destroy"** the weak brother is not referring to damnation. No one but God can destroy the soul eternally. **"For whom Christ died"** - A sinner for whom Christ has died cannot be destroyed eternally. Christ has saved him by His death on the cross. The blood of Christ has abolished eternal death for all His people. They are all righteous in God's sight and cannot perish. The destruction here has to do only with the weak believer's conscience. His conscience would be grieved if he were badgered into doing things he was convinced were wrong. We are to love, encourage, and be patient with all our brethren in Christ, even our weak brethren.

**(14:16-17) - LET NOT THEN YOUR GOOD BE EVIL SPOKEN OF: FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT AND DRINK; BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND PEACE, AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.** - When it comes to our liberty in Christ, we are to stand firm and cannot compromise or give in to the self-righteous notions of unbelievers (**Gal. 5:1**). But when it comes to our liberty in the indifferent matters of eating or not eating certain foods, we can and must at times, for the sake of our weaker brethren, forego our liberty without compromising the Gospel of God's grace in Christ. If the exercise of our liberty in these indifferent matters causes a weaker brother to stumble, or if it causes division in the church, or if it is done in a mean-spirited way, it could be spoken of as evil. We must realize then that this is not the substance or way of **"the kingdom of God."** These things contribute nothing to the ground of salvation, nor does their observance or non-observance give any true evidence of salvation. Our entrance into the kingdom of God is attained and maintained based on the blood and righteousness of Christ. Christ alone brings peace with God and joy in believing. This is the testimony of God the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is established upon Christ's righteousness which brings peace with God and with each other.

**(14:18) - FOR HE THAT IN THESE THINGS SERVETH CHRIST IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, AND APPROVED OF MEN.** - We who are saved by God's grace in Christ serve God in all these things as the Holy Spirit guides us in grace, gratitude, and love. Also, in doing these things, we serve Christ, not ourselves and not men. This is **"acceptable to God"** as it is the fruit of His power and grace, as it is cleansed by the blood of Christ, and as it glorifies and honors Christ as our Lord, Savior, and our only righteousness before God. **"And approved of men"** - It is a good testimony of grace to men - to our brethren in that it honors Christ and edifies them;

even to unbelievers who, even though they may insult, accuse, and persecute us, will not be able to do so justly.

**(14:19) - LET US THEREFORE FOLLOW AFTER THE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE, AND THINGS WHEREWITH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER.** - We are to “*follow after*” (pursue) all things that promote peace, unity, and growth among our brethren. We are exhorted to make a diligent effort to promote things that edify and bind us together and to avoid indifferent matters that divide (**Heb. 10:24-25**).

**(14:20) - FOR MEAT DESTROY NOT THE WORK OF GOD. ALL THINGS INDEED ARE PURE; BUT IT IS EVIL FOR THAT MAN WHO EATETH WITH OFFENCE.** - “*The work of God*” here is the believer himself individually and the church collectively (**Eph. 2:8-10**). We are chosen of God, justified and redeemed by the blood of Christ, regenerated and called into His kingdom by the Holy Spirit, and preserved unto glory by Christ. Eating certain foods cannot destroy this great work of God’s power and grace in Christ. Satan and all of hell will not prevail against the church that Christ has built and established (**Matt. 16:18**). All believers know these things, and we must not let indifferent things spoil our fellowship. “*All things indeed are pure*” - Paul is speaking strictly of foods we are to eat. There is no sin in certain foods (**Matt. 15:11**). Eating certain things is evil if a man eats such things with the intent of causing a brother to stumble. The evil here is not in the foods he eats, but in his heart, motive, and intent.

**(14:21) - IT IS GOOD NEITHER TO EAT FLESH, NOR TO DRINK WINE, NOR ANY THING WHEREBY THY BROTHER STUMBLETH, OR IS OFFENDED, OR IS MADE WEAK.** - It is good therefore to abstain from eating or drinking anything that would cause a brother in Christ to stumble or be made weaker. Since it is evil to our weak brother’s conscience, and since it causes him grief, brotherly love demands that we neither eat nor drink these things in his presence. We must consider that the word “*brother*” qualifies this. Paul is not exhorting us to feed the prejudices and self-righteousness of unbelievers. When the Gospel is challenged by any practice or abstinence, we are to stand fast in our liberty in Christ.

**(14:22) - HAST THOU FAITH? HAVE IT TO THYSELF BEFORE GOD. HAPPY IS HE THAT CONDEMNETH NOT HIMSELF IN THAT THING WHICH HE ALLOWETH.** - “*Hast thou faith*” refers to the specific point being discussed. Are you fully persuaded by God’s Word in your own mind that God has abolished all distinctions of meats and days? If you are, then you can happily eat and drink in moderation without any thought of condemnation. Hold fast your convictions, but do not impose your liberty upon your weak brother. Do not make this the ground of your fellowship. This can also be applied to the weak brother. Do not let your conscience in this matter be the ground of your fellowship.

**(14:23) - AND HE THAT DOUBTETH IS DAMNED IF HE EAT, BECAUSE HE EATETH NOT OF FAITH: FOR WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN.** - Again, “*damned*” means “condemned” and speaks of the weak believer’s conscience, not his standing before God. If he eats not of faith, he eats without being persuaded that it is lawful for him to eat. He must therefore condemn himself in the sense that he must agree that he does what he truly believes is displeasing to God, not damning to his soul. “*For whatsoever is not of faith is sin*” - If we believe that something is against God’s revealed will and proceed to do it, it is sinful to us even though it is not in God’s sight. We must be convinced that what we do or abstain from doing is according to God’s Word.