

# The Christian Arsenal

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## WHEN CHRISTIANS DISAGREE

The Liberated Christian

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Part 4 of 4  
Romans 14

**INTRO:** No matter who you are you will always have to learn to get along with two types of people – those who are more liberal than you are and those who are more conservative than you are.

The Christians in Rome were fighting, arguing over two different issues:

- Diet – meat eaters or vegetarians
- Jewish holidays – keep them or forget them

### TIMELESS PRINCIPLES ON HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE WHO TOTALLY DISAGREE WITH YOU

#### I. YOU NEED TO LEARN TO ACCEPT EACH OTHER

*“Accept him whose faith is weak without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man’s faith is weak and he eats only vegetables.”* Romans 14:1

#### WHAT ARE DISPUTABLE MATTERS?

It is not an issue of right or wrong, sin or righteousness. It is simply a matter of personal preference.

#### HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ACCEPT SOMEONE WHO DISAGREES WITH YOU?

- YOU DON’T LABEL THEM. v. 1 *“Accept them without passing judgement.”*

The worst form of judging a person is to label them.

- DON’T MAKE FUN OF THEM. v.3 *“The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not.”*

We do not have the right to laugh at anybody else’s convictions even if they’re wrong.

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- DON'T TRY TO BE THEIR CONSCIENCE. V. 3 "...the man who does not eat should not condemn the man who does."

Someone defined worldliness as something you do that I don't do.

ACCEPTANCE = TREATING PEOPLE WITH RESPECT EVEN WHEN THEY ARE WRONG.

## WHY MUST I ACCEPT THOSE I DISAGREE WITH?

1. **God has already accepted him.** v. 3 "...for God has received him."

"Accept one another just as Christ has accepted you." Romans 15:7

QUESTION: If God has accepted him and God has accepted me, am I better than God?

2. **Accept him because it is not your responsibility. You are not his master.**

v. 4 – "Who are you to judge somebody else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls."

3. **We are only accountable to God.**

v. 10 – "You then, why do you judge your brother? Why do you look down on your brother for we'll all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and everyone will give an account of himself to God."

## II. YOU NEED TO LEARN TO ACCOMMODATE EACH OTHER.

v. 13 – "Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another and instead make up your mind not to put a stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean of itself, but if anyone regards it as unclean for him, it is unclean."

## THREE WAYS WE HURT OTHERS BY OUR ATTITUDE

- **We can cause them to fall into their old lifestyle. We can be a stumbling block.**

v. 13 – "... not to put a stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way."

- **We can cause them emotional pain.**

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v. 15a – *“If your brother is distressed about what you eat, you are no longer acting in love.”*

- **We can cause them to lose their faith (become discouraged).**

v. 15b – *“... do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.”*

## THREE WAYS TO ACCOMMODATE OTHERS

- **Don't focus on the externals – focus on the eternal.**

v. 17 – *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but it's righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*

The Christian life is more a matter of attitude than it is appetite.

- **Build each other up – don't tear each other down.**

v. 19 – *“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification.”*

- **Limit your liberty out of love for others.**

v. 20 – *“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean. But it's wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or to drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.”*

Maturity is when you can limit your own freedom for the benefit of other people.

## III. YOU ASSERT YOUR FREEDOM IN PRIVACY.

v. 22 – *“Whatever you believe about these things keep them between yourself and God.”*

v. 5 – *“One man considers one day more sacred than another. And another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.”*

## IV. IF YOU CAN'T DO IT IN FAITH – FORGET IT

v. 23 – *“But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats because his eating is not from faith and everything that does not come from faith is sin.”*

## WHY DOES GOD TELL US TO ACCEPT AND ACCOMMODATE EACH OTHER?

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Romans 15:1 *“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.”*

## WHAT CAUSES ALL CONFLICT? SELFISHNESS

Proverbs 13:10 *“Only by pride cometh contention.”*

## WHAT’S THE GOAL?

Romans 15:5 *“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Jesus Christ so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

## THE GOAL IS UNITY!

- You can have unity without uniformity.
- You can disagree without being disagreeable.
- You don’t have to see eye to eye to walk arm in arm.

Fellowship is not based on conformity, but on unity.

St. Augustine: “In the essentials we have unity, in the non-essentials we have liberty, in all things we have charity (love).”