

sermon notes

May 2, 2021 | Pastor Tony Caffey, Harvest Decatur
Wholly Transformed | "Paul's Plea for Unity (Part 2)" | Romans 14:13-23

How do we love others who disagree with us in the Body of Christ?

- 1) _____ one another from stumbling
(14:13-15)

- 2) _____ peace in the Kingdom of God
(14:16-18)

- 3) _____ the upbuilding of fellow believers
(14:19-21)

- 4) _____ a clear conscience
(14:22-23)

Questions for further application of God's Word:

GO DEEPER

Paul says in Romans 14:19, "Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." Can we disagree with brothers and sisters in Christ on certain issues and still have peace? Can we disagree and still mutually edify one another? Are there times when Christians need to sacrifice peace for the sake of truth? If so, explain what that might look like.

Paul warns Christians not to flaunt their freedom if it causes harm to other believers. Have the actions of another believer ever caused you to stumble? If something we do causes another believer to stumble, should we refrain from that act even privately (e.g. watching movies, drinking wine, dancing)?

GET PERSONAL

Do you prioritize your own personal freedom over your love for other believers? What "debatable action" would you not be willing to give up for the sake of your brother or sister in Christ?

In what ways might you be a "weak Christian" who strongly defends extra-Biblical commands? In what ways do you need to relax your expectations of other Christians? In what ways are you the "strong Christian" who needs to be less judgmental of others who have a tender conscience in a gray area of personal conviction?

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Take some time now to thank God for the freedom that you have in Christ Jesus. Pray that God will help you to not use your freedom "as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Gal 5:13).

Listen to the song, "Brother's Keeper" by Rich Mullins and consider the lyrics:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRuH5Cs95IM>.

Cain said to God in Genesis 4:9, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Are we as Christians called to be our brother/sister's keepers? In what ways should we keep each other accountable as fellow believers? In what ways should we help protect a brother or sister from stumbling?

ADVANCED QUESTION

Are there times when Christians might use their tender consciences and their overscrupulous lawkeeping to control the actions of other believers? If so, how does a Christian handle that? Interact with the following quotation from Tim Keller: "We must be careful here. 'Stumble' and 'fall' mean more than just bothering the weaker brother. A grumpy Christian could blackmail a whole church in that case. Some churches have Christians who are very weak and have an enormous number of scruples. They are constantly getting irritated and upset by other church members who are offending their standards of proper Christian behavior. The strong do not have to refrain from doing everything that upsets anyone else."