



Ro 14:13–23—Stumbling Blocks

August 18

OVERVIEW: [Romans \(5–16\)](#)

CONTEXT: We've seen how Roman's fits together into one unified hole. Beginning in Ro 12:1 Paul begins to address righteous living in light of the Gospel, or Christian living. As Christianity is corporate and not merely individual, much of this discussion centres around the corporate Christian life, as it does in today's reading about stumbling blocks.

FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP (Ro 12:1–2)

- Why does Paul exhort/appeal to the Romans, and for what?
- How does “therefore” function as a turning point in Romans? What does it connect?
- What is the world and how does it mould/pressure people into conformity?
- What is antidote to this for the Christian? How can we be transformed rather than conformed?

READ: Ro 14:13–23

QUESTIONS:

1. *14:1–12- Paul addresses the issue of judgement, quarrelling over mere opinion rather than agreeing in what God has clearly revealed as true (this centred around food and ceremony).*
2. *Who do you think the strong/mature and the weak/immature may have been?*
3. *Judgement can mean two things: a) passing moral/legal decision, b) evaluation or discernment. Compare Jesus' differentiation in Mt 7:1 and then in Mt 7:6 and Jn 7:24. Even Paul said Ro 12:9b (certainly judgement is required to do that). So what is the difference between judgement and Judgementalism?*
4. *Rather than passing judgement (of the first sort) we should, in love, seek to remove stumbling blocks to weaker brothers and sisters spiritual walk and progress. This passage speaks of love, humility & service.*

5. *The two issues at hand are food and drink. When one remembers the conflict between Jews and Gentiles in this congregation one can appreciate the issue this would have caused.*
6. *Conscience factors highly in our passage (i.e. going against conscience is harmful). This is on the issue of food and drink. It would be wrong to expand that principle and say that a murderer, paedophile or arsonist who acts in accordance with their seared conscience are just in what they do! (see Ro 10:2). No, the Royal/moral law still must be upheld.*
7. **V. 13- “decide”- Rather than judging why must we “decide”?**
8. **At the outset, how would you describe a stumbling block? (c.f. Mt 18:6). Can you give an example?**
9. *Paul walks through the issue twice, vv. 14–19 and 20–23.*
vv. 14–19
10. *Vv. 14a- Paul knows that the Lord has made all food or drink “clean” (Mk 7:19; Acts 10, [compare with Acts 15:20; 1 Cor 10:28]) but in love we must remember those brothers for whom it might be “unclean.” (clean was an OT ceremonial word). We must remember the issue here is not a primary, or even a secondary matter (v. 17). We mustn't compromise on those matters, even if it doesn't sit well (Ro 12:18)—yet according to 1 Pet 3:15, how can we even use our passages principles when dealing with important matters?*
11. **How do we determine a primary, secondary and tertiary matter? Food and drink are not issues in 21st Century Christian circles, what might be a non-essential matter today?**
12. *For some things, like what we eat or drink, it matters not, because the Kingdom is about more important things (v. 17). So if the matter concerns some tertiary or indifferent point, yet a weaker (meaning less mature) brother or sister would be bothered by it (either for cultural or misunderstanding), rather than judging their weakness/view, what should we do? (v. 15a, v. 16). What motive does this show? (v. 15b) What end does this accomplish? (v. 19). What is the alternative? (v. 15b). (See also Q. 15) Can you share or imagine a scenario to illustrate this?*

13. How do the mature have a greater responsibility for their motives & actions?
14. This approach, and not what, serves Christ (v. 18)? (v. 6- How can misguided, while not correct, honour to the Lord, and have a measure of acceptability before Him?).

vv. 20–23

15. *Here Paul paints the same argument with another coat of paint.*
How do vv. 20 and 21 help answer question 12?
16. *Vv. 22–23- the faith of Abraham and the doubt of Adam (seen previously in Romans) may be alluded to here.*
17. *V. 22- Speaking to the spiritually mature, their “faith” or trust in the promises of God means they are free from a troubled conscience on non-essential matters. What a blessing!*
18. *V. 23- Still speaking to the spiritually mature, why is doubting [litt. wavering between 2 opinions] what is true not faith but sin? What does this mean in the context?*
19. *V. 23b is a shocking truth. **Beyond our passage, what does this mean?***

20. How would you describe a stumbling block now?

NEXT TIME: Aug 25, Acts 21:1–16, Paul Travels to Jerusalem