

Choose Love

Romans 14:14-23

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Amplify

Reflect

Outline: Recap

Realize

Points to Ponder

Respond

Questions to draw out understanding.

REFLECT

Sometimes the choices we want to make in life don't line up with the decisions that are the most loving for the people in our lives. That's why sacrifice is what transforms our "nice thoughts" into real love. If we want to be the best people we can be, we have to choose to love each other, even when it's hard, and we have to realize that love will always be greater than our liberty. Join us this Sunday as we learn together what it means to make all our decisions from a place of love.

[LINK to SMALL GROUP VIDEO MATERIALS](#)

REALIZE

1. Love is greater than liberty.

- **Romans 14:14-18**
- **Leader Notes**
 - We are saved by faith in Jesus, who did all the work of redemption for us. But that doesn't mean God doesn't care about how we live. Legalism is believing you can earn salvation, not trying to live a righteous life. Our lives have to change or we're not really following Jesus. That's what Paul is getting at in Romans 14.
 - We live in a day and age where people want to be free in all things, with no responsibility. But there are some matters that are just matters of conscience for us as Christians, not explicitly stated in Scripture. In these matters, love is greater than liberty. Just as Jesus sacrificed his life for love, we sacrifice our liberty out of love for one another.
 - We never want our freedom in Christ to hurt or grieve someone else. The stakes are high because when we live that way we counteract the way Christ lived in the world. God's kingdom is not about temporary things we get to do. It's about the righteousness, peace and joy we've been invited into.
- **Sometimes, the things we do with a clear conscience through our freedom in Christ grieve or hurt someone else. When did you choose something that wasn't inherently sinful, but it hurt someone else? How would you handle that same situation today?**

2. Choose peace and edification.

- **Romans 14:19-21**
- **Leader Notes**

- When we think of practicing peace, usually we think of the cessation of hostilities, or the absence of fighting. What Paul calls peace is not just the absence of something, but also our conscious choice to edify (build up) others in the body of Christ.
- The sign of Christian maturity is to make Jesus the center of our lives and not ourselves. The truly free person is not someone who has to act on their liberty, but who chooses not to enjoy everything they could, for the sake of love. That's practicing meekness, strength under control.
- **In the last week, when did you choose to practice meekness - strength under control - for the purpose of pursuing peace and building up the body of Christ? How can you live out peace and edification this coming week?**

3. Live by faith.

- **Romans 14:22-23**
- **Leader Notes**
 - As we consider these matters of conscience - the things God leaves up to us to choose - we have to always act in faith. If we doubt or question whether something is right, it's wrong. Why? To honor Jesus, we automatically can't do anything our hearts condemn. Jesus allows us to walk with him by faith, which means we let our Holy Spirit-inspired consciences direct the choices we make. If you have a check or experience uncertainty about something, don't proceed and violate your conscience. When in doubt, don't.
 - Anything that God leaves up to us to decide (anything that isn't specifically commanded in God's word), we can proceed in if we have clear consciences.
- **As believers, God makes his will clear to us, so when in doubt, don't. What is one recent decision or upcoming decision where you've been experiencing doubt about how to move forward? What would it look like to live by faith and love in that decision?**

Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?