

Road Trip Devotion - Romans 14:1-4, 10-13

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“Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don’t argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. For instance, one person believes it’s all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don’t. And those who don’t eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to condemn someone else’s servants? They are responsible to the Lord, so let him judge whether they are right or wrong. And with the Lord’s help, they will do what is right and will receive his approval.

So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For the Scriptures say, ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will confess and give praise to God.’

Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. So let’s stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.” (Romans 14:1-4, 10-13; NLT)

I believe one of the biggest lies that Satan has whispered into people’s ears from the beginning of time is that God wants to control you and keep you from having freedom. It’s the lie that provoked Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil and the same lie that keeps many people from giving their hearts to the Lord today. However, in Galatians 5:1 we are told that “it is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” The truth is that Christ died for our freedom - so much freedom that we need to be careful how we handle it! Paul gives us a “for instance” in Romans 14, addressing a cultural issue regarding what kind of food was okay to eat. I would like to offer a twist to Paul’s “for instance” that may help get the point across to our culture today.

For instance, one person believes it’s all right to drink alcoholic beverages but another believer with a sensitive conscience thinks alcohol is way out of bounds. Those who feel free to drink alcohol must not look down on those who don’t, and those who don’t drink must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them both. Instead love one another! So when you get together for dinner the one shouldn’t offer beer with the pizza, but the other shouldn’t write him off as a “sinner” if he sees a six pack in the fridge. Leave the judging up to God and enjoy your time together.

When we truly love one another we will use our freedom to make choices that will build each other up and allow us to be unified in the fight that really matters: freedom for a world that has been whispered into bondage.