



The Epistle should be studied with all possible intellectual attention and concentration. It is important that the whole Epistle should be read right through in the Revised Version at one sitting, and that this should be done, if possible, day by day for a month...the advantage will soon be immense. It should be studied with earnest prayer and personal trust. Intellectual attention alone is insufficient. The Epistle should be regarded as a personal letter to ourselves.

Romans 14:20-23 (NASB77)

²⁰ Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

²¹ It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles.

²² The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating* is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

9 Principals or admonitions or exhortations in view of our attitude towards things that are indifferent.

- 1. Verse 13a, STOP judging one another about indifferent things**
 - 2. Verse 13b Don't put a stumbling block or trigger in your brother's way.**
 - 3. Verse 15a. Walk according to love**
 - 4. Verse 15b. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.**
 - 5. Verse 16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil.**
 - 6. Verse 19 Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.**
 - 7. Verse 20 Do not destroy the work of God**
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Let us follow Paul:

- **1 Cor. 9:19** *“Though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more . . .*
- **10:24** *Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor’s good . . .*
- **10:33** *even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many that they may be saved”.*



To be strong in faith then is what we all should be: only if it is adjacent to the energy of love for those who are weak, guarding against all bragging in that which we received by grace from God.

²⁰*Do not **destroy** the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.*

"Destroy" here is not the translation of *apollumi* (destroy, ruin) of verse 15, but

kataluō, "to loose down, to tear down," as one would tear down a building

¹⁵*For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. **Do not destroy** with your food him for whom Christ died.*

"All things are pure,"

Denney says, "This is the principle of the strong, which Paul concedes; the difficulty is to get the enlightened to understand that an abstract principle can never be the rule of Christian conduct."

The Christian, of course, *admits* the principle, *but he must act from love.*



To know that all things are clean,

- Does not (as is often assumed) settle what the Christian has to do in any given case.
- It does not define his responsibility but only makes clear his obligation.
- Acknowledging that principle, and looking with love at other Christians, and the effect of any given line of conduct on them, he has to define his obligation for himself.

The word "**pure**" or “clean” is *kathara*.

This purity is ceremonial, non-moral in its implications.



Some take this as a warning to the weak; but the whole tone of the passage, is rather a warning to the strong

(dia proskammatos) The man who eats with offense is the man by whose eating another man is made to stumble."

All food, is indeed (in itself) clean, but to him that eats with a bad conscience, everything is evil.

God plainly says, concerning those who “*command to abstain from meats,*” that such are

“giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, because He Himself created meats to be “received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth” (I Tim. 4:1-5).

But if one has not the assurance in his own conscience freely to obey this “command” of God, let him not violate his conscience; but wait humbly upon God, by His Word to strengthen him, and bring him into true Christian liberty.

²¹ It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

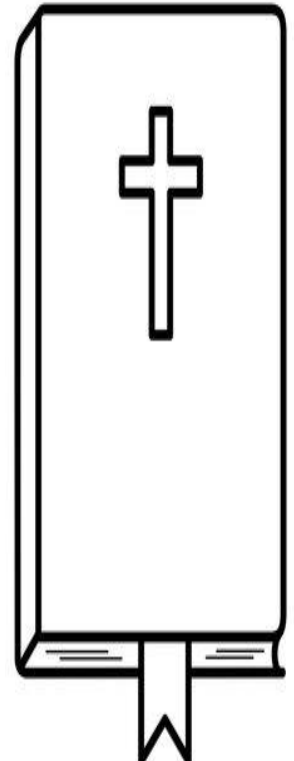
It is **noble not to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor [to do] anything whereby your brother is made to stumble, or is ensnared, or is [made] weak—**

In each of these three things,

- The effect is less than in the preceding one,—
- Greatly strengthening and enlarging the exhortation.

3. Third, **do not use your liberty**, if your weaker brother, although he sees you are right, **is not yet strong enough to follow you**: and would therefore become disappointed and discouraged if he sees you do so.


1. First, **do not cause your brother**, by your use of your liberty, or in any conduct of yours, **to have his fatal fall**;
2. Second, **do not obstruct his Christian course** by doing what might act as **a snare to your brother, inducing him to act beyond his conscience**;



Brown (in Jamleson, Fausset & Brown) well says,

‘This injunction to abstain from flesh and wine and whatsoever may hurt the conscience of a brother, must be properly understood.

- **Noticeably the apostle is treating of the regulation of the Christian’s conduct with reference simply to the prejudices of the weak in faith;**
- **And his directions are not to be considered as principles for one’s entire lifetime,**
- **But simply as caution against too free use of Christian liberty in matters where other Christians, through weakness, are not persuaded that such liberty is Divinely allowed.”**



²² The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

To the strong believer Paul asks: “*do you have faith?*”

Answer- **Have it to yourself before God.”** We have probably known people whom, in this sense, we did not know about them! They had learned, yet were content not publicly to use, that great liberty of faith into which God had led them.

²²*The faith which you have, have as your own conviction **before** God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.*

BEFORE Greek Word: ἐνώπιον-enōpion

Part of Speech: prep


Vine's Words: Before., Presence, Sight of

in the sight of 16 -in the presence of 7 -in (one's)

sight 5 - in (one's) presence 2

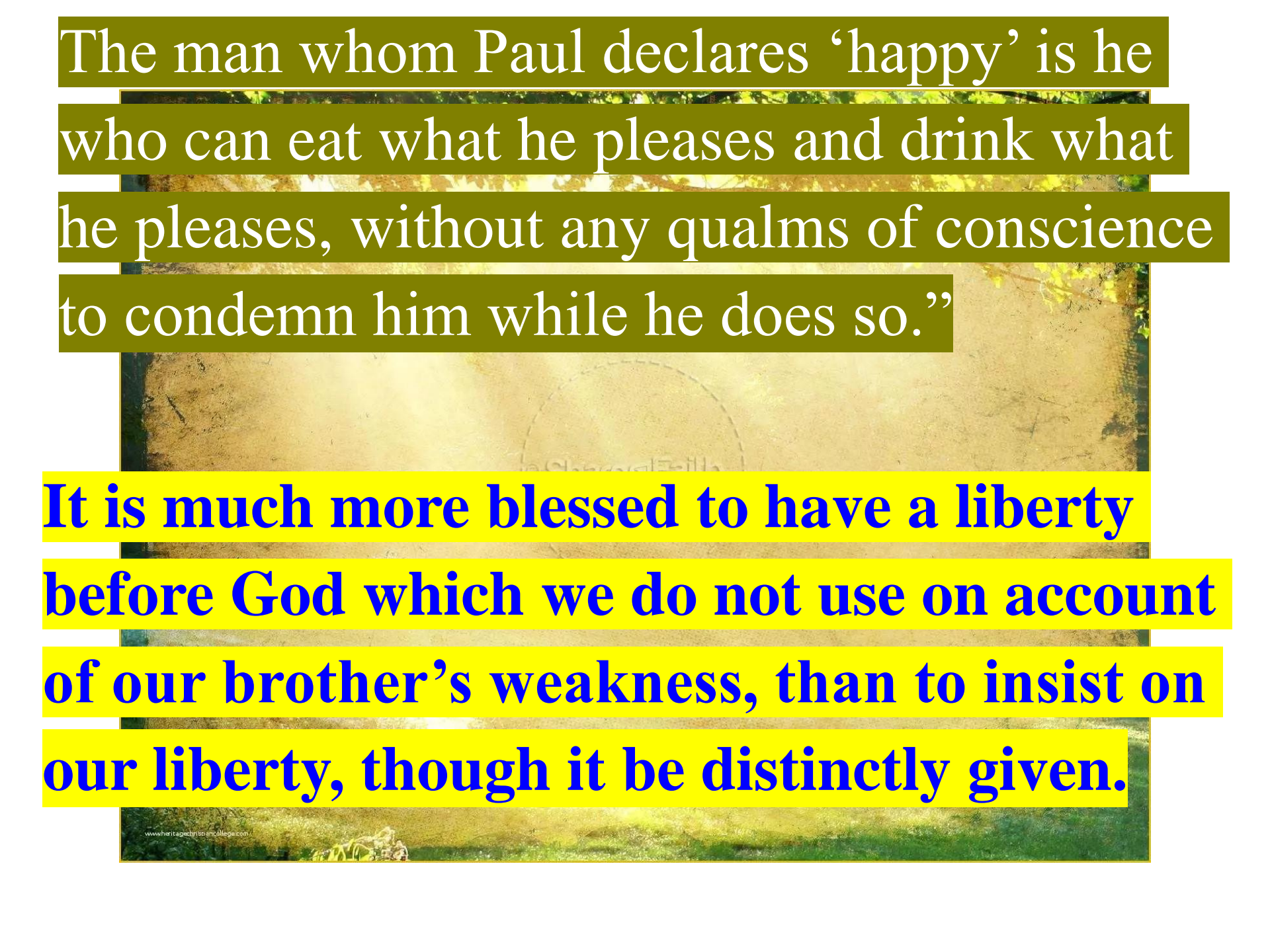
before, in the presence (sight) of

**To be strong in faith then is right:
only it should be adjacent to and
with the energy of love for those
who are weak, guarding against all
boast also in that which is received
by grace from God.** Slide 5



It is blessed to have faith.

It is yet more blessed to have that faith
“before God”—when using the freedom it
gives - might confuse another!



The man whom Paul declares ‘happy’ is he who can eat what he pleases and drink what he pleases, without any qualms of conscience to condemn him while he does so.”

It is much more blessed to have a liberty before God which we do not use on account of our brother’s weakness, than to insist on our liberty, though it be distinctly given.

*²² The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what **he approves**.*

The word translated “**allows**,” or “**permits**,” or “**approves**,” is literally, “**puts to the test**”

Dokimazei to test with a view to approving,”

For, though this believer has in his mind that he is free in such or such a matter, if his conscience checks him, he “judges” “puts to the test” himself if he rushes ahead in an action.




²³*But he who **doubts** is **condemned** if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.*

The one but being doubtful-wavering,

The word “damned KGV” “condemned”) is not the meaning here.

But what is meant is the state of conscious condemnation into which one falls who goes beyond his faith in the exercise of his liberty.



Conscience

As a native faculty of every human being, conscience is most difficult to understand and has too often been wholly neglected in works on Anthropology and psychology.

When Immanuel Kant presented what has come to be the time-honored threefold division of the immaterial part of man as intellect, sensibility, and will, he failed to include conscience, vital feature of human existence though it is.

1. Conscience is an acquired attitude of mind, a mere habit formed by the discipline of early training, which training accentuated the values of good and evil. Since conscience is capable of being weakened and seared, it could be expected that, whatever may have been its native strength in the early childhood of heathen peoples, it would be all but destroyed as one's years advance.

2. Conscience is the voice of God speaking directly in the human soul.

The Bible assumes the presence of conscience in man as a native factor of his being and predicates such limitations of it as to make it a fallible human characteristic. (from the fall)

It seems to be something inborn and universal rather than an acquired faculty, and to be a voice of human origin rather than the voice of God.

When an induction is made of all Scripture bearing on the conscience, the dependable facts representing this human competency will be revealed.


The word occurs thirty times in the New

- 1. The conscience acts judicially, accusing or excusing**
Romans 2:15 (NASB77)¹⁵in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,).
- 2. The conscience acts punitively, inflicting remorse and self-punishment.**
- 3. The conscience anticipates future judgments and then acts by way of prediction.**
- 4. The conscience acts socially in judging others**



²³But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

- Paul's definition of sin here as **“what is not of faith”** is most searching.
- It will drive us to our knees.
- It reaches everything in our lives concerning which our conscience is not at rest, in which we do not have faith to proceed, in which we cannot walk with God.



It is possible that the Holy Spirit works in and through the human conscience when registering His reactions to the believer's thought and conduct. The Apostle thus testified of himself, ***"My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit"*** ([Rom. 9:1](#)).

Grace respects the conscience of him those doubts, and instead of trifling with scruples would rather seek to lead into the due application of Christ to the case by faith: without it all is vain or worse.



The subject at best is shrouded in mystery. Personality seems to express its full scope and inclusiveness when it wills and executes its purpose guided by the intellect and the sensibilities; nevertheless, over and above this manifestation of personality, conscience sits in judgment whether the action be good or bad.

Chafer

Being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and therefore subject to the mind and voice of the Spirit, the question may be raised whether a Christian really lives at all by the restricted impressions which an unaided conscience engenders.

The Holy Spirit becomes the new Monitor, and the child of God either grieves or does not grieve the Holy Spirit. It is therefore written:

([Eph. 4:30](#)) *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"*.

