

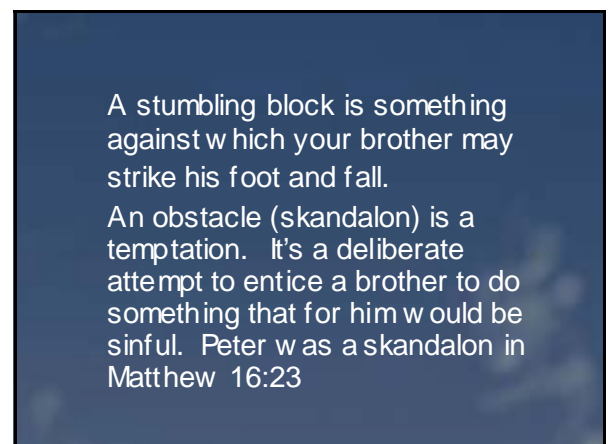
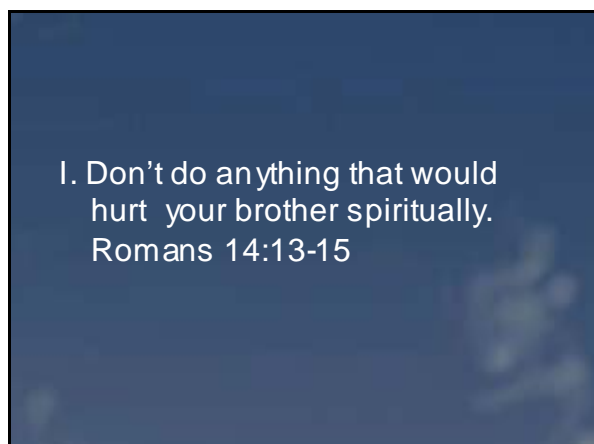
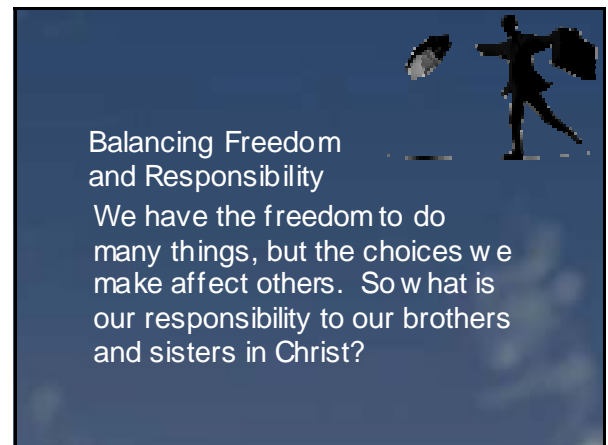
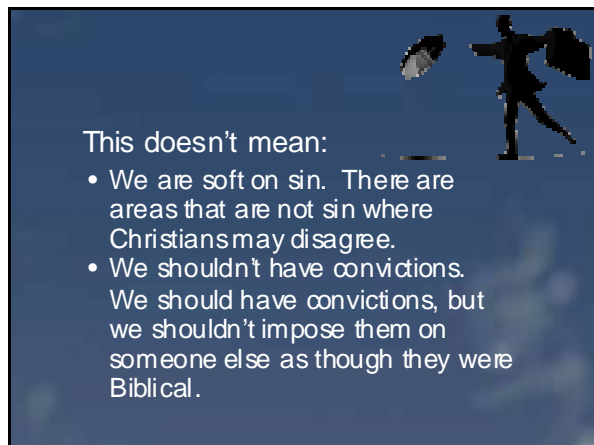


Introduction

Unity and Grace

How do we handle disputable matters?

- Accept one another.
- Surrender everything to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- Remember God is our Judge.



Paul states his conviction. *"I am convinced that no food is unclean in itself."*

Jesus himself taught that in Mark 7:17-23

Yet Paul would voluntarily give up his right to eat meat, if it would cause his brother to stumble.

Act in love.

"Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died."



II. Focus on eternal, not external.
Romans 14:16-18

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Focus on what is most important.
Focus on the heart.

Who would you rather be around – a believer who is critical, judgmental and legalistic or a believer whose life is filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

III. Strive for peace and mutual benefit.
Romans 14:19-21

"Make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification."

Work at those things that will help you and your brother to grow in Christ.

"Don't destroy the work of God for the sake of food."

To destroy the work of God may be to drive someone away from the church and Christ by a critical spirit or it may be to so damage the church that it can take years to recover.

The question we need to ask is:
Will the exercise of my freedom hurt another believer and cause them to stumble?

The question isn't does everyone agree or will anyone be offended?

Paul's concern is for the weaker brother – usually the younger believer.

Will my example cause them to stumble and sin?

If it does, the Scripture says, give it up.

IV. Keep your conscience clear.
Romans 14:22-23

Keep your convictions between yourself and God.


(We are talking about disputable matters.)

Respect one another.


Don't impose your convictions on someone else as though this is the only choice.

Follow the convictions God has placed on your heart.
Act in faith. Trust God to lead you as you pray and study the Scriptures and he will.

Conclusion



God has given us great freedom in Christ, but that doesn't mean we are free to do whatever we want. Our freedom in Christ is balanced by our love for one another.



“A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none.
A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.”
~Martin Luther~