

Do Not Cause Another to Stumble

Key Verse: *“Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.”*
—Romans 14:13

Selected Scripture:
Romans 14:10-23

should never be used as a test of faith or fellowship among the saints.

Likewise, judgment of our brethren concerning those matters should be put away from our thinking. Paul says, “Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”—vss. 10,11

Far more serious than any indiscretion as to what we eat, drink, or what days we particularly celebrate as holy, would be that any of us would say or do anything

PAUL, IN WRITING TO THE brethren at Rome, states among other things that “None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” (Rom. 14:7,8) As a purchased people, since we belong to Christ, our preferences along the lines of relatively unimportant questions are best kept to ourselves, and

to stumble another brother or sister in Christ by insisting on our preferences in these or other unimportant matters. Our Key Verse describes the attitude we should have toward our brethren, who like we are striving for the same heavenly goal despite our fleshly imperfections.

“Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. ... But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” (Gal. 5:13,15) Here Paul speaks of our liberty in Christ. However, he points out that while we have freedom to do things not sinful and not injurious to ourselves, yet it is part of our privilege and of our contract with the Lord to abstain from anything which would be injurious to anyone, and that we should seek to regulate our lives so as to be a help to others and not use our liberty merely for the flesh, or self-gratification.

One of the evidences of a mature Christian who is living up to all his privileges as a member of the body of Christ, is his sympathetic understanding of fellow-members in the body who possibly have not advanced to the same degree of spiritual development. “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” (Rom. 14:21) We are representatives of righteousness and should so deal with others, “Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:10

“The kingdom of God,” Paul wrote, “is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17) Every follower of the Master is running for “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) The glorious hope of joint-heirship with Christ in his kingdom is held out to all who make their “calling and election sure.” (II Pet. 1:10) To prove faithful to our calling is the all-important matter in life. ■