

## Conscience Matters

Selected Scriptures - NCBC, January 24, 2021

Main Point: **Understanding how our conscience works helps us keep loving each other through our differences.**

### What is the conscience? (Romans 2:14-15)

- The conscience is your awareness of guilt
- The conscience is dependent on your truth sources
- The conscience is uniquely personal and ever-changing
- The conscience is reactive like a judge, not proactive like a guide
- The conscience is calibrated by God's Spirit and His Word

### How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree? (Romans 14:1-15:13)

- Expect differences of conscience on non-essential matters
- "Stronger"/"weaker" refers to conscience's sensitivity to God's Word (14:1, 15:1)
- Welcome those who disagree since God has welcomed them (14:1-4; 15:7)
- Be fully convinced that your position honors the Lord (14:5-6, 22)
- Remember Jesus reigns as Lord and Judge over all (14:7-12)
- So do not judge those who hold different convictions (14:3-4,13)
- Never encourage anyone to ignore their conscience (14:13-23)
- Follow Jesus' example of serving God by putting others before self (15:1-2)
- Be flexible on non-essential matters to build up others and advance Gospel (15:3-9; c.f. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, 10:33)

Application: **Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31ff)**

### Opening Announcements:

- **RightNow Media** is a fantastic online library of discipleship resources made available for you through New Castle Bible Church. To learn more, and sign up for your own complimentary account, please visit <https://myncbc.org/media/rightnow-media/>.

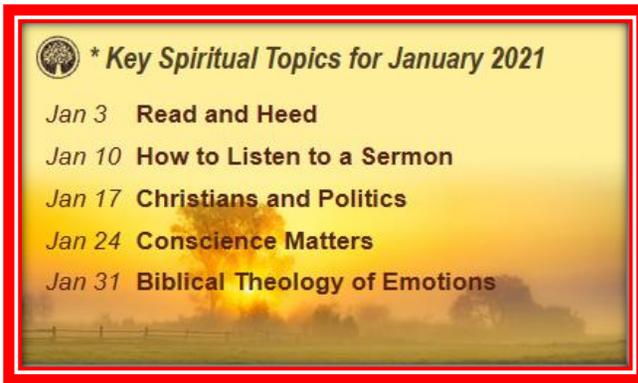
<<Reformation Song>>



That song is wonderful celebration of the biblical Gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for the glory of God alone. And it is this biblical gospel that offers us hope as we turn our attention today to *Conscience Matters*.

Please open your Bible to **Romans chapter 2** as we prepare for our Scripture reading together.

Our focus on Conscience Matters today continues our special January series on *Key Spiritual Topics*:



I continue to pray that God will bless the ministry of His Word through each one of these topical messages by purifying and strengthening our faith and worship of Jesus together.

Next week we will study the *Biblical Theology of Emotions*, and then the first weekend in February is a very special ordination weekend for our own Pastor Shaun Lewis. Whenever a local church has the privilege of formally ordaining a man for a lifetime of Gospel ministry – it is a true delight! All of you are invited and encouraged to attend the events on Saturday Feb 6<sup>th</sup> and Sunday Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, so please see the worship folder for more details.

Please don't miss all that God has planned for us together in the next couple of weeks!!



Today we are going to learn what the conscience is and how to calibrate our consciences so we can love well those who hold different convictions than us.

To begin, we will read from **Romans chapter 2** which clearly describes how God gives every human being a conscience, or an internal sensitivity to God's moral law written on their hearts.

So if you're able, please stand in honor of the reading, of **Romans chapter 2**, beginning in **verse 13**, from the English Standard Version:

*<sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.*

[this sounds a lot like what we learned a couple weeks ago about *how to listen to a sermon*, doesn't it? Now **verse 14:**]

*<sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting*

*thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup> on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.*

This is God's Word. Please be seated.

### Let's Pray.

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What should you do when you strongly disagree with another Christian? How can you determine which convictions are negotiable, and which ones are not?

In these days when Christians can seem so united in Gospel beliefs, yet disagree so strongly about matters of face masks, vaccines, politics, climate change, etc. etc. ... who is really right? And how does God intend for us to get along with people who hold such different personal standards?

Church – these questions all directly relate to our conscience. So today we are going to roll up our sleeves, open the Bible, and learn what God teaches about this often neglected but all-important topic for Christians living in our society today.

Here's our main objective today:



**Understanding how our conscience works helps us keep loving each other through our differences.** As we each calibrate our own conscience to the Lordship of Jesus, we will first experience the freedom of a clear conscience ourselves, and then better love those with different convictions as God has loved us.

This message has two basic parts: First, we'll learn *What the Conscience is* by walking through a simple drawing on the screen. If you're taking notes, we'll make 5 important observations together about a biblical understanding of the conscience.

Then, after renewing our minds with a biblical understanding of what the conscience is, we will turn to **Romans chapter 14** to discover how we can love Christians whose consciences disagree.

So let's begin by answering the question, *What is the conscience?*

If your Bible is still open to **Romans chapter 2, verse 15**, you notice the conscience is the human heart's ability to sense our own guilt before God. Even unbelieving Gentiles who have no access to the Holy Scriptures have

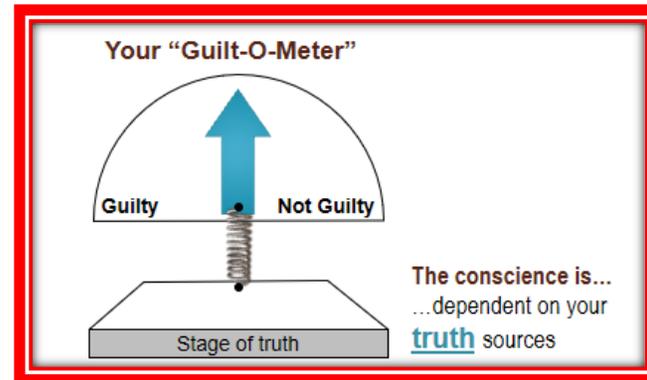
an internal sensitivity to God’s transcendent law by which they accuse or excuse their own soul.



Therefore, to use an illustration, your conscience is your “Guilt-O-Meter.” **The conscience is your awareness of guilt.** Write that down... because contrary to Disney’s portrayal of Jiminy Cricket as Pinocchio’s conscience... your conscience has more to do with *guilt* than *guidance*. But more on that later...

God has created every human soul with a conscience...an internal jury that constantly holds court and evaluates your own life to cast a verdict: If you do something wrong, your conscience pings “Guilty!” If your conscience doesn’t sense any guilt, then it bears witness of “Not Guilty!” And in this way, your conscience is like a warning light on the dashboard of your soul... it’s the internal consciousness of your own guilt.

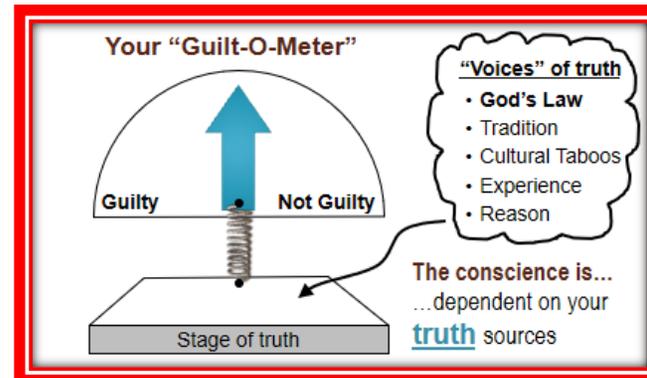
But of course, any judgment of guilt first requires the conscience to examine your life against some law or moral code. And that’s why we must understand that,



**The conscience is dependent on your truth sources.**

Whether or not your conscience gives you a “Guilty” or “Not Guilty” reading depends on what truth is governing your heart and mind.

Because for every one of us, our stage of truth is occupied by several influential, and often competing, voices of truth:



**For example, Romans 2:14 makes the point that even people who have never read one Bible verse have a witness to God’s moral law in their hearts.** So every human being has some internal voice for God’s law present on their stage of truth. But each of us also

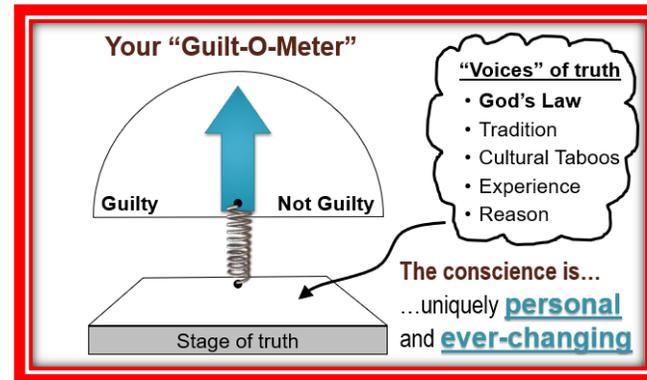
constantly hear the voice of tradition, the voice of our own culture that has its own social norms and taboos. Our own personal experience also tries to tell us what is right and wrong, and we all listen to an internal voice of reason.

All of these are different sources, or voices of truth, which are competing for the ruling authority of our hearts. And notice, that your Guilt-O-Meter is connected to your stage of truth with a spring.

Obviously, there's not a real spring inside our souls, but I'm trying to illustrate that our conscience gives its readings in response to, and dependent on, whatever truth is ruling our hearts.

For example, if you grew up in a strict Christian subculture, your conscience might ping "Guilty" if you take just a sip of alcohol... even though God's law doesn't actually forbid moderate drinking.<sup>1</sup> Because on that particular issue, what determines whether you feel guilty or not is your strict Christian tradition more than the word of God.

So notice carefully... true guilt is based God's law, not how our conscience feels. When our conscience is informed by some ruling voice other than God's Word, it can give faulty readings. Either convicting us of guilt when God does not, or convincing us we're "not guilty" even when God says we are.



Therefore, we must understand that the conscience is **uniquely personal** and **ever-changing**. God gives every person a conscience as an individual gift. Your conscience is given to you, and it is for you. Your conscience is not for me.<sup>2</sup> It's a gift from God to help you personally know how well you conform to God's Law – how well you are loving Him completely and loving others as yourself.<sup>3</sup>

However, since your conscience depends on your own growing knowledge of God's law, your traditions, your culture, your experiences, and your reasoning ability... no one's conscience is going to exactly match another's.

Now please listen carefully: God's law, or our eternal standard for real guilt, never changes.<sup>4</sup> So I'm not saying that God's law is different for different people. That's not true at all, since God's Word is transcendent and universal

<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy 5:23; c.f. John 2:1-11. Drunkenness is clearly sin (Proverbs 20:1; 23:20, 29-32; Isaiah 5:22; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:18), since any master we obey other than Jesus is an idol, and idolatry is sin (1 Corinthians 10:14; c.f. Matthew 6:24).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:29

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 22:37-40

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18, 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; John 12:34; 1 Peter 1:24-25

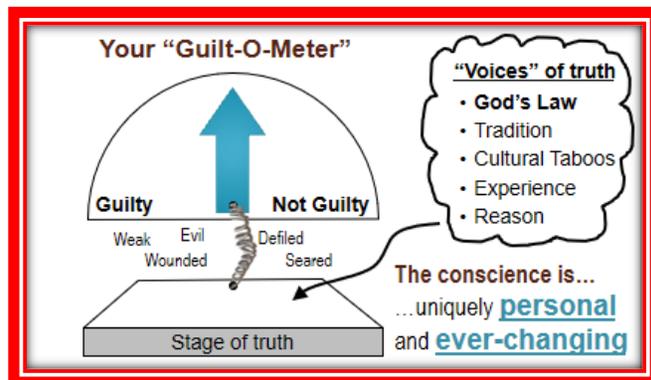
for all people.<sup>5</sup> All people from all cultures are truly accountable and guilty based on the universal law of God – regardless of how their conscience reports.<sup>6</sup>

But even though God’s law never changes, each of us have our own unique and ever-changing sensitivity to God’s law. Does that make sense?

Here’s where the spring analogy for our conscience is helpful. Because have you ever seen a “sprung spring”?

<<Show example of a sprung spring>>

Sometimes, springs can become damaged so that they lose their sensitivity or become hyper-sensitive.

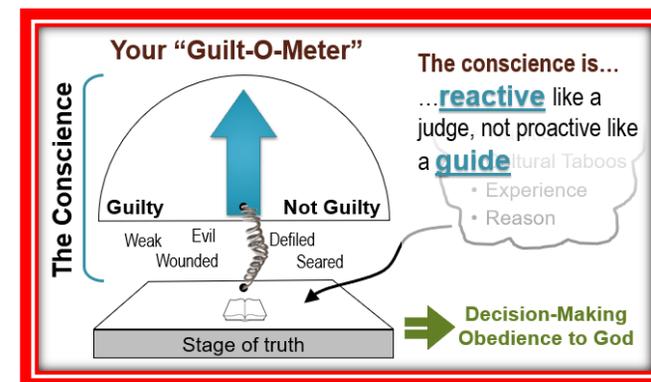


And **this can happen to our consciences as well.**

A *weak* conscience accuses us of things that are not truly wrong.<sup>7</sup> Our conscience can become *wounded*<sup>8</sup> or *defiled*<sup>9</sup> -- meaning that it becomes distorted and starts calling evil "good," and good "evil."<sup>10</sup> If a person repeatedly ignores their conscience and continues to sin, their conscience can actually become *evil*,<sup>11</sup> or even *seared*<sup>12</sup> so that it loses all sensitivity to God’s law altogether.

And for these reasons, it’s very dangerous to take Jiminy Cricket’s advice to “*let our conscience be our guide!*”

Write this down:



The conscience is **reactive** like a judge, not proactive like a **guide**. Your conscience cannot provide you with new information. Your conscience is only a warning light on your dashboard, not the windshield that gives you a view of the road ahead of you.

<sup>5</sup> Romans 3:19; 14:12

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 10:18; c.f. Proverbs 21:2; Romans 3:20; 1 John 3:20-21

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:7, 10 12

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:12

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:7; Titus 1:15

<sup>10</sup> C.f. Romans 1:21, 28, 32

<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 10:22

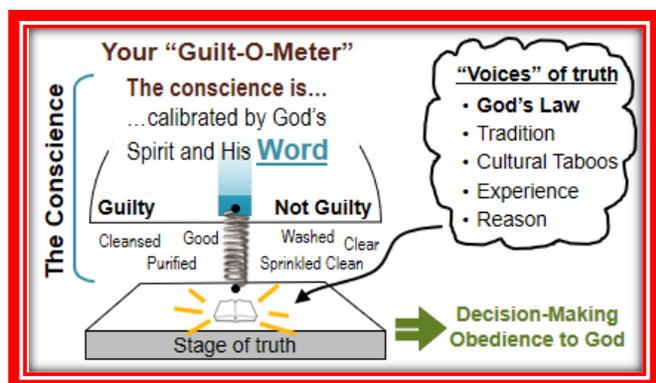
<sup>12</sup> 1 Timothy 4:2

You see, the conscience is not a little man inside you that tells you what to do. The conscience is not your “shoulder-angel” that opposes your “demon-angel” and tries to tell you how to live and please the Lord.

Remember, the conscience is about guilt, not guidance.

For guidance, Christians have God’s Word and God’s Spirit.<sup>13</sup> We know how God wants us to live from His Word.<sup>14</sup> And God gave us His Spirit so we might understand His Word<sup>15</sup> and be able to obey and apply it<sup>16</sup> into the daily shoe-leather of our lives.

The conscience can only react and judge your life by whatever voice is ruling your stage of truth. And this is why,



The conscience must be calibrated by God’s Spirit and His Word. For since our conscience is like a spring, it can again be sensitized to God’s Word as its ultimate authority. In fact, **Hebrews 9** describes how the blood of Christ is able to *purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God*.<sup>17</sup> **Hebrews 10** describes how drawing near to Jesus causes our hearts to be *sprinkled clean from an evil conscience*.<sup>18</sup>

So be encouraged – even though your conscience is imperfect in its guilt judgments ... through the rescuing grace of our Lord Jesus, you can again have a *good*<sup>19</sup> and *clear conscience*<sup>20</sup> that has been *purified*,<sup>21</sup> *washed*,<sup>22</sup> and *sprinkled clean*.<sup>23</sup>

By the power of God’s Spirit, our conscience can again become sensitive to God’s Word as the supreme authority in our life. You calibrate your conscience simply by quickly repenting whenever you become aware of your sin, and immediately seeking to obey God’s Word whenever God’s Spirit helps us understand it. In brief, you calibrate your conscience by being a doer of the Word, and not only a hearer.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>13</sup> John 16:13-15

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 119:105, 130; Proverbs 6:23; John 17:17; Colossians 1:9, 3:16

<sup>15</sup> John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; c.f. Romans 8:27; 1 John 4:6

<sup>16</sup> Romans 1:4-5, 8:5, 16:26; Galatians 5:25; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6; Titus 3:5

<sup>17</sup> Hebrews 9:8-14

<sup>18</sup> Hebrews 10:19-20

<sup>19</sup> 1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 1 Peter 3:16, 21

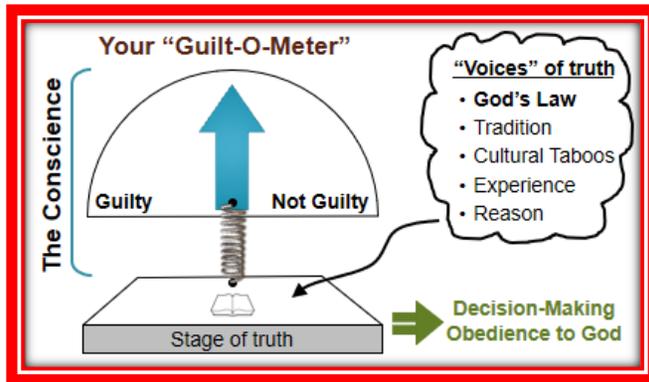
<sup>20</sup> 1 Timothy 3:9; 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 13:18

<sup>21</sup> Hebrews 9:14

<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 10:22; c.f. 1 Corinthians 6:11

<sup>23</sup> Hebrews 10:22

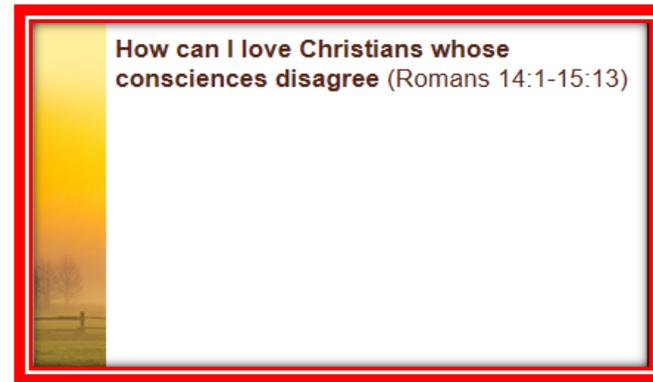
<sup>24</sup> James 1:22ff



So now, take a deep breath. We've covered a lot of ground quickly so let's review, what is the conscience?

The conscience is your imperfect awareness of guilt. Your consciousness of guilt is dependent on whatever truth is ruling your heart on that particular issue. Therefore, your conscience is ever-changing and personal to you. Even though the voices of truth serve to guide your living, your conscience is not given to you as a guide, but rather as a helpful awareness of guilt before God. Therefore, a conscience that has been renewed by God's Spirit and submitted to the Lordship of Jesus is a precious source of joy and assurance to God's child,<sup>25</sup> that is well worth cultivating and maintaining over time.<sup>26</sup>

Now then, this understanding of conscience helps us consider,



How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree?

After all, once we understand what the conscience is and how it works, we should absolutely,



Expect differences of conscience on non-essential matters among any group of believers.

Remember, while every Word of God is true, not every biblical truth is equally significant for believers' cooperation and mission together.<sup>27</sup> We must humbly recognize God

<sup>25</sup> Romans 9:1, 13:5; 2 Corinthians 1:12, 4:2, 5:11; 2 Timothy 1:3; 1 John 3:19-23

<sup>26</sup> Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 3:9; Hebrews 13:18

<sup>27</sup> For further study on this concept of "theological triage," I'd recommend Gavin Orlund's helpful book, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage*, published by Crossway, April 21, 2020. Also,

doesn't call Christians to die on every hill, and not every question is on the final exam!

**How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree (Romans 14:1-15:13)**

- **Expect** differences of conscience on non-essential matters

Fourth Order: insignificant

Third Order: important but disputable

Second Order: urgent for church

First Order: essential to Gospel

It is helpful to consider Christian doctrine in four categories:

*First order doctrines* are essential to the Gospel and must be believed in order to be a Christian. Examples of first order doctrines would be the doctrine of the Trinity, or Jesus' bodily resurrection, or that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

*Second order doctrines* are urgent enough that they create defining boundaries between Christian churches and denominations. These doctrines are significant enough that its difficult to cooperate closely with those who differ, even though they are still brothers and sisters in Christ. Examples of secondary doctrines might include your view of baptism, or God's sovereignty in salvation, female pastors, or whether sign gifts still occur today.

Now where our consciences most often disagree at New Castle is in the third and fourth order doctrines:

*Third order doctrines* are important but disputable. Examples of these disputable matters might be the timing of the millennium, female deacons, or questions of Sabbath-keeping.

*Fourth order doctrines* are matters of practical Christian preference that are insignificant to our fellowship, such as what clothes you wear, or what radio station you listen to, or what car you drive, etc.

And because of how our consciences work, we should expect differences among God's children on non-essential, disputable matters of preference.

We are each in different places along our spiritual growth path. We are each learning to apply God's Word in wisdom to such practical and disputable matters of conscience in our individual lives. So, some humility and patience with one another goes a long way when we discover that we disagree with another Christian on a nonessential matter.

In fact, did you know that God's Word speaks directly to these third and fourth orders of conscience differences? In **Romans 14-15** and **1 Corinthians 8-10** the apostle Paul describes these types of disputes using the terms, "stronger brothers" and "weaker brothers." And for the purposes of our study today, it's important to understand that in the New Testament,

**How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree (Romans 14:1-15:13)**

- **Expect** differences of conscience on non-essential matters
- “Stronger”/“Weaker” refers to conscience’s sensitivity to **God’s Word**

“Stronger”/“weaker” refers to the conscience’s sensitivity to **God’s Word**. The stronger brother is one whose conscience is more sensitive to God’s Word. The weaker brother has a conscience that for whatever reason, is less sensitive to the authority of God’s Word when it makes its judgments of right and wrong. So most often, the weaker brother will feel guilty about something that God does not call sin.

So, as we turn our Bibles to **Romans 14** now to discover God’s wisdom for loving Christians whose consciences disagree, please remember that stronger refers to a stronger sensitivity to the authority of God’s Word in the question at hand.

Now then, let’s quickly skim across the surface of **Romans 14** to observe seven biblical principles for how to love others well in disputable conscience matters.

In the context, the conscience disputes are about meat-eating and day-keeping. In **verse 2**, the Christians with Jewish backgrounds believe they should only eat vegetables. The Christians with Gentile background believe that it’s totally fine to eat at Burger King. Then in **verse 5** some of the Christians believe they need to

follow the Sabbath, while others don’t. To make it a bit more contemporary, you could say some of the Roman Christians believed in celebrating Christmas, and some did not. Some celebrated birthdays, and some did not. You get the point, right? Paul’s audience are all Christians, but they are struggling to love each other well because of their opposing conscience matters.

Now let’s read **Romans 14, verses 1-4**:

*As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. 2 One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. 3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. 4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

So here’s our first principle:

**How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree (Romans 14:1-15:13)**

- **Welcome** those who disagree since God has welcomed them (14:1-4; 15:7)

**Welcome** those who disagree since God has welcomed them. **Romans 15 verse 7** bookends Paul’s argument by teaching,

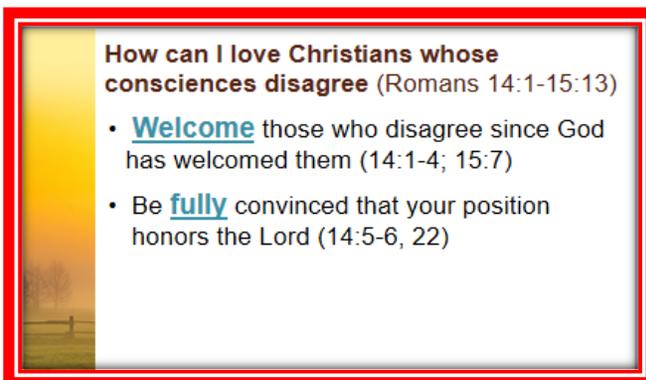
*Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

Church, when you disagree with another Christian about mask-wearing, or vaccines, or dating, or alcohol, remind yourself... this is someone whom God welcomes as His own child.

**Verse 4** asks why would you judge one of God's children? God is their master, not you. And consider the promise at the end of **verse 4**: since your opponent is one of God's children, he will make it to heaven, *for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

So no matter if you are arguing for greater strictness or greater freedom in the specific matter of conscience, do not judge, or condemn, or despise this one whom God has welcomed into His own family. Instead, welcome them with the same hospitality, kindness, and mercy that God has welcomed you. This glorifies God.

Next, look at **verse 6** where we learn to,



**How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree** (Romans 14:1-15:13)

- **Welcome** those who disagree since God has welcomed them (14:1-4; 15:7)
- Be **fully** convinced that your position honors the Lord (14:5-6, 22)

Be **fully** convinced that your position honors the Lord.

**Verse 6** reads, *Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.*

Now, at first, this sounds like Paul is trying to put out a fire by pouring gasoline on it! This isn't at all how our culture teaches us to overcome differences.

But notice, the Christian life is not about tolerance, or being wishy-washy, or not having strong convictions. The Christian life is about love and the glory of God...which requires that every Christian be fully convinced that their position truly honors the Lord.

Therefore study God's Word carefully, so that you can make sure your conscience is being informed by the voice of God's law, rather than your culture or personal preference. And then believe the best about your brother or sister who is also seeking to honor the Lord in their conscience even though they've come to a different conclusion than you.

And when you and your believing friend find each other on opposing ends of the issue,



**How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree** (Romans 14:1-15:13)

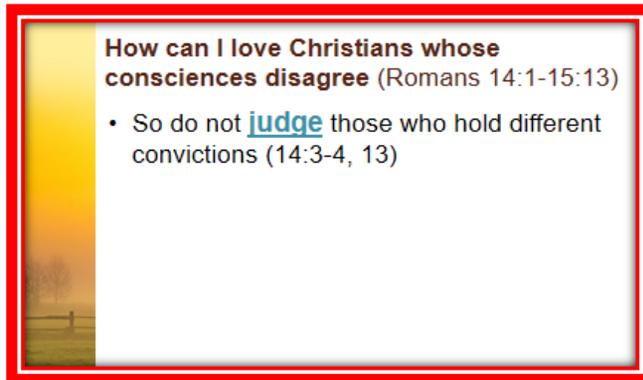
- **Welcome** those who disagree since God has welcomed them (14:1-4; 15:7)
- Be **fully** convinced that your position honors the Lord (14:5-6, 22)
- Remember Jesus reigns as **Lord** and Judge over all (14:7-12)

Remember Jesus reigns as **Lord** and Judge over all.

I believe the point of **verses 7-12** is simply that Jesus is Lord over both life and death. And there's not two things that could be more opposite from each other than life and death.

So even when we find ourselves in a polar-opposite conscience conviction with another believer, remember Jesus is the Lord of both the dead and the living, and we are all going to have to stand before His judgment seat, and give an account of ourselves before Him.

We won't have to give an account for our brother or sister... just ourselves.



So do not judge those who hold different convictions.

**Verse 13** reads,

*Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.*

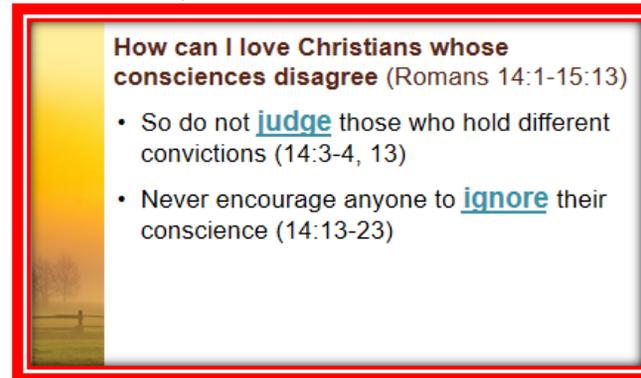
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<sup>28</sup> Galatians 5:26  
Page **12a** of 15

We must stop provoking and envying one another out of pride.<sup>28</sup> We must stop trying to control and manipulate one another out of fear.<sup>29</sup>

Instead **verse 13** tells us to determine to never put a stumbling block in our brother's way.

That means,



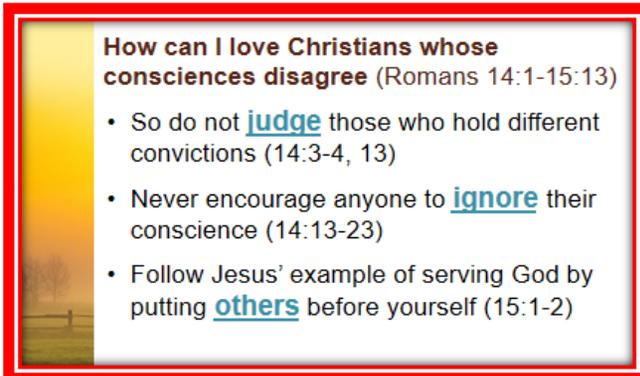
Never encourage anyone to ignore their conscience.

Now this is genius love. Paul says in **verse 14** that God's law doesn't forbid eating at Burger King. But if your brother currently believes it would be sinful for him to eat at Burger King... don't encourage him to do anything that he believes is truly sin. For to go against his conscience in this way would actually desensitize his conscience, or you could say, distort his spring...and weaken his faith in Christ in the process.

So be careful before you try to convince another Christian to do or believe anything that they have come to see as sinful. Yes there may be a time when you can open God's Word together and inform their conscience

<sup>29</sup> 1 John 4:19; c.f. 2 Timothy 1:7

with God's liberating truth, but in the meantime, the first couple of verses in **chapter 15** make it clear that we are all to,



**How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree** (Romans 14:1-15:13)

- So do not **judge** those who hold different convictions (14:3-4, 13)
- Never encourage anyone to **ignore** their conscience (14:13-23)
- Follow Jesus' example of serving God by putting **others** before yourself (15:1-2)

Follow Jesus' example of serving God by putting others before self.

*We who are strong ... those whose consciences are most sensitive to the authority of God's Word in their lives, have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.*

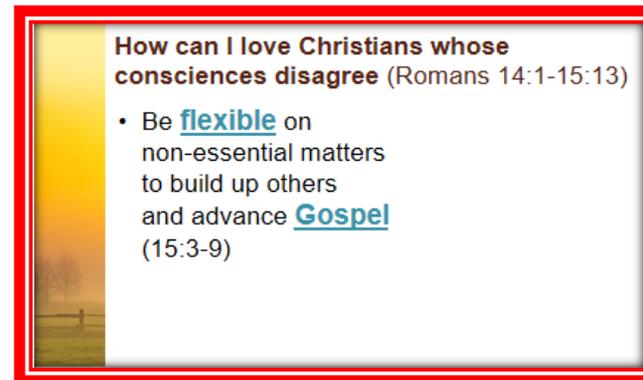
Now listen carefully. Paul continues his argument in the next several verses to make sure we don't misunderstand his point here. He's not calling us to be people-pleasers. We're not called to submit ourselves to the most ignorant and immature Christian conscience among us. But we are called to serve God more than ourselves. And when we serve God, we do not seek to please ourselves, but we seek to build up one another in

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<sup>30</sup> Isn't it interesting to consider that Jesus obviously knew that circumcision was not required to enter His kingdom (Galatians 5:2-6). Yet He willingly became a servant, laid down his biblical freedom, and received circumcision

our faith in Christ – never encouraging each other to sin, but always being willing to lay down my own life for the others' eternal good.

And that brings us to the final principle we'll consider today. How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree?



**How can I love Christians whose consciences disagree** (Romans 14:1-15:13)

- Be **flexible** on non-essential matters to build up others and advance **Gospel** (15:3-9)

Be flexible on non-essential matters to build up others and advance Gospel.

Look at **Romans 15:5-7**. When you disagree with another Christian about any nonessential conviction, our God of endurance is able to empower you to be flexible, so that you can imitate Jesus who became a servant to the Jews in **verse 8**.<sup>30</sup>

Just as Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:22**,

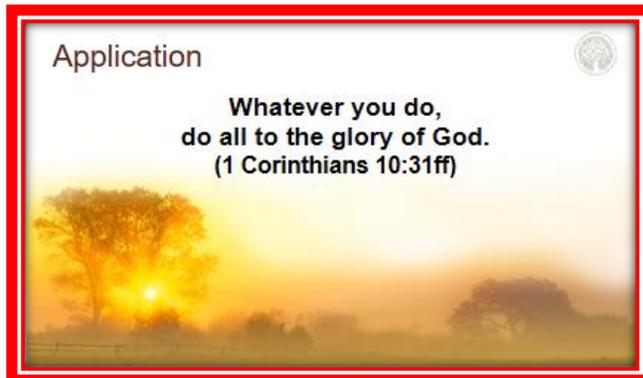
*To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I*

as a Jew (Luke 2:21) all to advance the essential truths of the Gospel. C.f. 1 Corinthians 9:22.

*might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.*<sup>31</sup>

Loved ones... God has given us His Word, that through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might not despair but have hope in these days.<sup>32</sup> The church of Jesus Christ will be upheld. Jesus reigns as Lord over all of us. He is our master, so let's welcome one another and build up one another in joyful submission to His Lordship in our lives. And then, in the words of the apostle Paul as he concludes his own sermon on Conscience Matters found in **1 Corinthians 8-10**,

So whether you eat meat or veggies...



Or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.<sup>33</sup>

God is glorified when we first receive His welcome by submitting to the Lordship of Jesus in repentance and faith, and then when we joyfully welcome each other in all our conscience disagreements with the same mercy with which Jesus has welcomed us, all for the glory of God.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:22-23, c.f. vv 19-21, 10:23-11:1

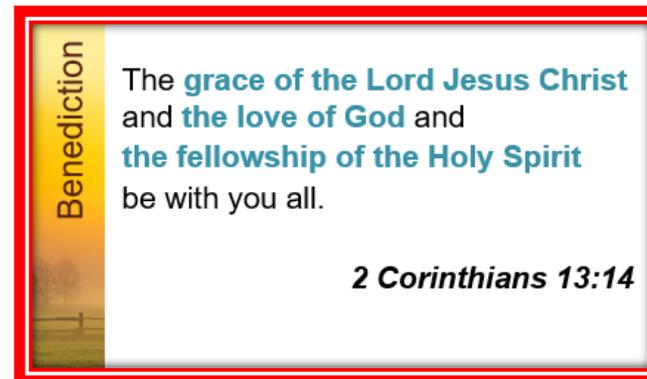
<sup>32</sup> Romans 15:4



**Let's pray.**

<<On Christ the Solid Rock>>

**Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.**



*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*  
**2 Corinthians 13:14**

<sup>33</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:31-33

### Recommended Resources on Conscience Matters:

- Genesis 20:5-6
- 1 Samuel 24:5; 25:31-33
- 2 Samuel 24:10
- 1 Kings 8:38
- 2 Chronicles 34:27
- Job 27:6
- Psalm 1; 51:10
- John 3:20-21; 16:8-15
- Acts 24:16
- Romans 2:15-16; 9:1; 13:5; 14:1-15:7
- 1 Corinthians 8:7-12; 10:23-33
- 2 Corinthians 1:12; 4:2; 5:11
- Galatians 2:14
- Colossians 2:16
- 1 Timothy 1:5, 18-19; 3:8-9; 4:1-5
- 2 Timothy 1:3
- Titus 1:10-16
- Hebrews 9:8-10, 13-14; 10:1-4, 19-23; 13:18
- 1 Peter 3:14-22
- 1 John 3:19-23
  
- <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/1259>  
(Sproul on Conscience)
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/can-you-really-vote-your-conscience>
  
- *Conscience*, Naselli and Crowley
- *The Art of Turning*, DeYoung
- *The Vanishing Conscience*, MacArthur
- *Finding the Right Hills to Die On*, Ortlund

### Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Review Romans 2:14-15. How is the biblical conscience different than Disney's portrayal of Jiminy Cricket in *Pinocchio*? Why is it spiritually dangerous to make your conscience your guide?
2. Read Romans 14:1-4. Identify the three reasons God gives for why we should not judge those who hold different convictions than us. How does a judgmental or arrogant attitude towards those with different convictions on non-essentials diminish God's gospel?
3. Read Romans 15:1-2. What does it mean to be strong? What does it mean to be weak? Is it possible for a person to be both strong on one issue, while weak on another, at the same time?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 8:7-13. How could you wound another Christian's conscience? Why is it sinful to ignore the conscience's warnings and do something you believe to be sinful, even if it is not actually sin according to God's law? (C.f. Romans 14:23)
5. Read 1 Corinthians 4:2-5 and 1 John 3:19-21. How is a clean conscience a gift from God? How is the reliability of our conscience limited?
6. Read Hebrews 9:8-14 and 10:19-23. How can you practically pursue a clean conscience? (C.f. Psalm 51:10; 1 John 1:8-10)