Convictions

NKJ

"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things."

NIV

"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. "

New American Standard

Now accept the one who is weak in faith…

...but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

Amplified

"AS FOR the man who is a weak believer, welcome him [into your fellowship],"

" but not to criticize his opinions, or pass judgment on his scruples"

Or perplex him with discussions.

Romans 14:1

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with — even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

Romans 14:1

What is a commandment?

A *commandment* is a specific instruction in the Word of God that applies the same way in every situation.

What is a conviction?

A *conviction* is how I apply a <u>general principle</u> of the Word of God to a <u>specific area</u> of my life.

For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume all Christians should be vegetarians and eat accordingly.

Romans 14:2

But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table.

Romans 14:3

Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

Romans 14:4

Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.

Romans 14:5

Examples of Convictions

Attending Movies
Working for Pay on Sundays (Mowing Lawn, Fishing)
Cooking with wine
Attending theater with live drama
Participation in Sports
Eating food in church building
R-Rated Movies
Drinking Alcohol
Mixed swimming
2 Piece swimsuits
Playing pool or cards
Wearing pant suits to church
Wearing beards / Hair over the ears
Buying insurance
Bible translation other than the King James
Playing guitars or saxophones in church
Wearing make-up
Going to a psychiatrist

Guideline #1

You Determine Your Own Convictions!

What's important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for God's sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you're a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli.

Romans 14:6

None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It's God we are answerable to — all the way from life to death and everything in between — not each other.

Romans 14:7-8

That's why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.

Romans 14:9

Guideline #2

Allow Your Brother & Sister in Christ to Determine Their Own Convictions!

So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I'd say it leaves you looking pretty silly — or worse. Eventually, we're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit.

Romans 14:10

Read it for yourself in Scripture:

"As I live and breathe," God says, "every knee will bow before me; Every tongue will tell the honest truth that I and only I am God."

Romans 14:11

So tend to your knitting. You've got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.

Forget about deciding what's right for each other. Here's what you need to be concerned about: that you don't get in the way of someone else, making life more difficult than it already is.

Romans 14:12-13

I'm convinced — Jesus convinced me! — that everything as it is in itself is holy. We, of course, by the way we treat it or talk about it, can contaminate it.

Romans 14:14

If you confuse others by making a big issue over what they eat or don't eat, you're no longer a companion with them in love, are you? These, remember, are persons for whom Christ died…Don't you dare let a piece of God-blessed food become an occasion of soul-poisoning!

Romans 14:15-16

Guideline #3

Use Your Liberty With Love

God's kingdom isn't a matter of what you put in your stomach, for goodness' sake. It's what God does with your life as he sets it right, puts it together, and completes it with joy.

Romans 14:17

Your task is to single-mindedly serve Christ. Do that and you'll kill two birds with one stone: pleasing the God above you and proving your worth to the people around you.

Romans 14:18

So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words;

Romans 14:19

Don't drag them down by finding fault. You're certainly not going to permit an argument over what is served or not served at supper to wreck God's work among you, are you? I said it before and I'll say it again: All food is good, but it can turn bad if you use it badly, if you use it to trip others up and send them sprawling.

Romans 14:20

When you sit down to a meal, your primary concern should not be to feed your own face but to share the life of Jesus. So be sensitive and courteous to the others who are eating. Don't eat or say or do things that might interfere with the free exchange of love.

Romans 14:21

Cultivate your own relationship with God, but don't impose it on others. You're fortunate if your behavior and your belief are coherent.

Romans 14:22

But if you're not sure, if you notice that you are acting in ways inconsistent with what you believe — some days trying to impose your opinions on others, other days just trying to please them — then you know that you're out of line. If the way you live isn't consistent with what you believe, then it's wrong.

Romans 14:23

The End!