



SERMON STUDY GUIDE

Sermon Title: “*DO NO CAUSE ONE ANOTHER TO STUMBLE*”

Scripture: Romans 14:1-15:1

Date: November 15th, 2015

STORIES OF FAITH

As you begin your time together, invite the group to share ‘*Evidences of God’s Grace*’ that you have experienced or observed this week. This helps draw our attention to what God is doing in the everyday routines of life, brings Him glory, and allows us to encourage each other where we see fruitful growth in one another.

**Alternatively, you could ask one person each week to share their Jesus story (testimony), sharing about the difference Christ has made/makes in their life.*

OPENING COMMENT

What should Christians do about our differences over secondary issues? And how do we love one another despite our differences? How do we balance Christian Liberty with Christian Charity? Ultimately, we sacrifice our own desires for the sake of others because that is precisely what Jesus has done for us. The gospel beckons us to look beyond our own interests and to the interests of others in our community for the sake of unity and upbuilding.

Read the passage: Romans 14:1-15:1

WORKING THROUGH THE PASSAGE

1. LIBERTY: Freed to Embrace God’s Creation in a God-Glorifying Way that is Not Self-Indulgent

- How might embracing the liberty given to us in Christ help us glorify God more fully than if we are *weaker*? (1 Cor 9; Col 2:16-23; 1 Tim 4:1-8)
- The text reveals that the *weak* are not self-exalting in their abstinence, and the strong in faith are not self-indulgent in their liberty. Why is it important that we *glorify God* in our liberty and that we not be *self-indulgent* in our liberty?

2. CHARITY: Out of Love for Others, Our Liberty Should Not Shipwreck Someone Else's Faith

- In our individualistic culture, have we lost some of the depths of what communal faith is meant to be? Do embrace individual liberty over corporate charity more because of it?
- Discuss how these two statements by Martin Luther work together: *A Christian is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.*
- Read 1 Corinthians 9:19. What would the Church look like if we lived that way?

3. UNITY: The Gospel Frees Us To Be A Diverse and Flourishing Community

- What does Paul seem to be saying in the text (and in 1 Cor 8 & 9) about how we ensure that we strive for unity, while safeguarding the essentials of the faith?
- Discuss the quote attributed to Augustine: *In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in everything, charity.*
- As we have gone along in this sermon series we have discovered a number of commands that revolve around *loving one another* well. Why is it sometimes so difficult to have a gracious tone and to recognize matters of opinion for what they are?

SHARE & PRAY

Pray for unity among our family of faith.

Pray for wisdom, clarity, and grace from God and His Word for all of us regarding non-essential issues.

Pray that God would help you restore any relationships where you may have hindered someone's faith for the sake of your liberty.

Pray for the needs and missional opportunities in your midst as a group.

Christmas season is coming and is a time when many are open to hearing the Gospel message. What are some missional opportunities that your group can start praying about? What can you do together and/or as individuals to impact the community with the love of Jesus this Christmas?