

# On Trying to Change Others

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## I. Introduction.

A. Text: Romans 14:1-12.

B. Christians' favorite sport is to try to change others.

C. How much fellowship can one have with someone who does something that one does not agree with?

D. The context of the passage deals with love: love must serve, be genuine, universal, and tolerant.

E. Love must be patient.

## II. Dealing with weaker brothers.

A. We are to accept weaker brothers because they are part of the family of God.

B. We are not to accept a brother by not attempting to argue unclear points.

C. There were some gray areas in Paul's time (matters regarding eating) and there are some today.

1. There are some clear areas where judgment and discipline need to happen.

2. There are areas that are open, however.

3. Someone who is weak in faith has a doctrinal problem—the mark of understanding truth is liberty and freedom.

D. Reasons someone is weak in the faith.

1. The person does not yet understand Christian liberty.

2. The person has not liberated himself from the efficacy of works—he is still trying to earn a right relationship with God and has not yet accepted the way of grace.

E. The strong in faith must not exclude the one who is still weak.

1. He must not think about him in a disdainful way.

2. Strength in the faith means not only understanding but also living in light of it.

## III. Those who do not find freedom to drink should not look down upon those who do.

A. This means that one should not reprove or rebuke in gray areas.

B. This also means no legislating against these.

C. Christianity is not a set of rules, but the world gets a false idea of what Christianity is all about when Christians over-legislate.

IV. Paul's reasoning.

A. We are not to judge in these areas because we are not responsible for others in these areas.

1. If the believer is wrong, God will do something about it.

2. God is able to do it.

B. God is reading the heart, and He can see something that we cannot.

C. Others are often acting out of their consciences, and we should too until we are convicted otherwise by the Scriptures.

D. Our relationship with the Lord is more important than our lifestyle—we belong to the Lord, and He has the right to change us.

E. Christ alone has the right to judge us.

**Application questions:**

1. What are some gray areas today to which Christians should give liberty?

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2. What are some areas that some Christians claim are gray that are actually not?

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3. What ways can you show more liberty towards Christians that you have not in the past? Explain.

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