

Romans 14:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Analysis

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably—Ei gar dia brōma ho adelphos sou lypeītai, ouketi kata agapēn peripateis (εἰ γὰρ διὰ βρῶμα ὁ ἀδελφός σου λυπεῖται, οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖ). Lypeītai (λυπέω, is grieved/wounded) is stronger than annoyance—spiritual harm, conscience violation. Kata agapēn peripateis (κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατέω, walk according to love) summarizes Christian ethics: love is the guiding principle. If your eating wounds a brother, you've abandoned love's way, even though your action is objectively permissible.

Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died—Mē tō brōmati sou ekeinon apollye hyper hou Christos apethanen (μὴ τῷ βρώματί σου ἐκεῖνον ἀπόλλυε ὑπὲρ οὗ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν). Apollymi (ἀπόλλυμι, destroy/ruin) is severe—not temporary distress but spiritual destruction, potentially apostasy (1 Corinthians 8:11, 'the weak brother perishes, for whom Christ died'). The clause hyper hou Christos apethanen (for whom Christ died) is devastating: Christ's death purchased this weak brother—will you destroy what Christ died to save over food? If Christ valued him enough to die, surely you can limit your diet.

Historical Context

Paul's rhetorical question echoes 1 Corinthians 8:11-13—causing a brother to stumble is serious sin, potentially damning him. This isn't hypothetical: some weak

believers, emboldened by strong believers' example, violated conscience by eating idol-meat, then fell back into idolatry or despaired over sin. Paul's pastoral heart refuses to sacrifice the weak on the altar of the strong's rights. This shaped Christian ethics: liberty limited by love, rights subordinated to others' spiritual welfare. The strong bear responsibility for the weak (15:1).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the phrase 'for whom Christ died' (hyper hou Christos apethanen) reframe your attitude toward limiting freedom for weaker believers?
2. What legitimate liberties might you willingly restrict to avoid 'destroying' (apollymi) someone Christ died to save?
3. How do you balance standing firm on truth with pastoral sensitivity to those whose consciences are weaker?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	διὰ	βρώματί	ό	ἀδελφός	σου	λυπεῖται	οὐκέτι
if	But	with	meat	G3588	brother	thy	be grieved	not
G1487	G1161	G1223	G1033		G80	G4675	G3076	G3765
κατὰ	ἀγάπην	περιπατεῖς·	μὴ	τῷ	βρώματί	σου	ἐκεῖνον	
G2596	charitably	walkest thou	not	G3588	meat	thy	him	
G26		G4043	G3361		G1033	G4675	G1565	
ἀπόλλυε	ὑπὲρ	οὖ	Χριστὸς	ἀπέθανεν				
Destroy	for	whom	Christ	died				
G622	G5228	G3739	G5547	G599				

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 5:13 (Parallel theme): For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Ephesians 5:2 (References Christ): And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Romans 14:20 (Parallel theme): For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Romans 15:2 (Parallel theme): Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

1 John 2:2 (Parallel theme): And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Romans 13:10 (Parallel theme): Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1 Corinthians 8:1 (Parallel theme): Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

1 Corinthians 13:1 (Parallel theme): Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Ezekiel 13:22 (Parallel theme): Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: