

Don't be  
Prejudiced



Be like a **PANDA**.  
They're **BLACK**, **WHITE**, and **ASIAN**

**Top ten reasons we tend to only  
prefer people who are like us.**

1. We are **BLIND** to the wisdom of God's design.
2. We are **AFRAID** of those we don't understand.
3. We are **INSECURE** with anyone not like us.
4. We are **ANGRY** with those who misunderstood us.
5. We are **DEFENSIVE** of our preferences.
6. We are **LAZY** in doing the hard work of social connecting.
7. We are **INDEPENDENT** of those we feel we don't need.
8. We are **SELFISH** when it comes to relationships.
9. We are **PREJUDICED** against those who are not like us.
10. We are **STRESSED** by the effort to relate to strangers.

*Matthew 24*

"<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples **of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

***The Great Commission is a  
challenge on two fronts:***

- 1. Reaching a diverse world***
- 2. Living with the result***

***The N.T. recognizes three kinds of  
differences in the Body of Christ.***

Different  
Spiritual  
Callings

Speaking  
and  
Serving

Different  
Spiritual  
Capacities

Mature  
and  
Babes

Different  
Spiritual  
Cultures

Jew  
and  
Gentile

***The terms "strong" and "weak" may refer  
to conscience or faith to do certain things.***

*Romans 12:6*

"according to the proportion of his faith"

***General observations***

- 1. Diversity in the Body of Christ is not the  
result of the Fall. It is a part of God's  
design.***
- 2. The N.T. gives a lot of attention to the  
challenge of managing this diversity as it  
does not come naturally.***
- 3. Promoting a loving diverse community is  
not only necessary for spiritual growth, it  
is also a witness to the world.***
- 4. Paul is the last person you might expect to  
offer this teaching given his background  
as a Pharisee.***

*Galatians 5*

"<sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another."

- ***When we think of abusing our  
freedom we think of moral laxity.***
- ***We don't often think of it applying  
to how we manage our differences.***



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- **God gives us a gift (freedom) and calls us to walk in it.**
- **But we live in a kingdom with a hierarchy of competing values.**
- **Love is our core calling and it is the managing principle of all other callings.**

### Romans

**Righteousness and Faith (faith)**  
ch.1-8

**Righteousness and Israel (hope)**  
ch.9-11

**Righteousness and Living (love)**  
ch.12-16

*Freed by Grace*

*Secured by Promise*

*Bound by Love*

- **Am I free to sin?** ch.6-8
- **Am I free from the covenants with Israel?** ch.9-11
- **Am I free from self-sacrificing service?** ch.12
- **Am I free from the authority of the state?** ch.13
- **Am I free from the conscience of others?** ch.14-15

### Romans 14

**Love and respect for conscience**

*vs 1-12*

**Don't judge one another**

*vs 13-23*

**Don't tempt one another**

### Romans 14:12

“So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

### Romans 14

“<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this – not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. <sup>14</sup> I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. <sup>15</sup> For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; <sup>17</sup> for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

### Paraphrase

#### Romans 14

“<sup>13</sup> Let's set our sights not on critiquing one another but on building one another up. <sup>14</sup> A person's faith and conscience is their source of inner peace. <sup>15</sup> Just because you have peace of conscience on an issue does not mean that you have freedom to insult or disrespect another person's peace of conscience. <sup>16</sup> Do not let what is good for you become evil through the misuse of your freedom. <sup>17</sup> The most important issue is relating to each other in love, being a peacemaker, and sharing the joy of what Christ has done for us.

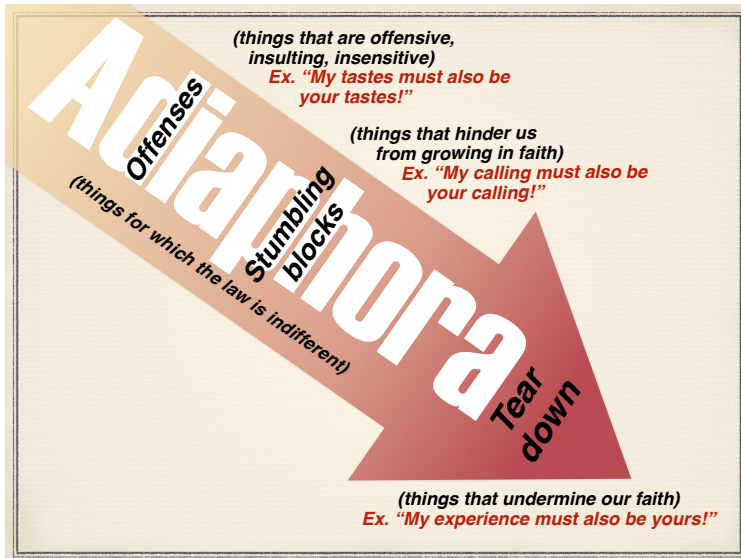
“<sup>18</sup> For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. <sup>19</sup> So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. <sup>20</sup> Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. <sup>21</sup> It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. <sup>22</sup> The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. <sup>23</sup> But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.”



“<sup>18</sup> If you understand this and live by it you will please God and be a peacemaker. <sup>19</sup> So let's set our sights on this goal. <sup>20</sup> Do not let freedom with respect to superficial things destroy what is of greater value. <sup>21</sup> Your freedom is a blessing, but forfeiting your freedom out of love for your brother is the greater blessing. <sup>22</sup> Keep your freedom between you and God when it might tempt others to violate their conscience. <sup>23</sup> Remember that when any of us do not follow our faith conscience, we are sinning.”

## Observations

- *We should be willing to lay aside our rightful freedom of conscience if it will cause another person to stumble or be led astray in their faith.*
- *When we exercise our freedom and it causes another to stumble it is not just insensitive, it is “evil.”*
- *Is Paul asking us never to offend another? Did not Jesus often offend the Pharisees. Did not Paul offend Peter and the Judaizers?*
- *The strong should not use their freedom in such a way that the weak speak ill of it.*
- *If we have any doubts about what we are doing, we probably should not do it.*
- *We are called to promote community - righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.*



## STRONG and Weak

**are not necessarily categories of spiritual commitment, & character, but of conscience & confidence.**

## Causing offense is not shameful when:

1. *It can't be avoided in the company of people with differing sensitivities.*
2. *What is done is practiced in private or not placed on others as a mandate.*
3. *It is a necessary act of love to liberate one who is burdened by restrictions or one who is abusing others with their legalism.*
4. *It is the Gospel of Christ, that is the stumbling block to those who will not believe.*

## Some common test areas

- **Lifestyle choices**
- **Social boundaries**
- **Response to stress**
- **Spiritual experiences**
- **The use of the tongue**
- **Theological emphasis**
- **Ministry gifts and calling**