

Memory Verse

Romans 12:18

**If possible, so far as it depends on you, live
peaceably with all.**

GRACELIFE



CHURCH



Growing Through
Conflicts and
Reconciliation Pt. 4
Various Verses

We defined it, described some *causes of* and *personalities within* conflict and principles from *Philippians 2* about our mindset. We *cannot escape conflict* and learned what to do if *someone has something against us*, or if we *sin against someone*: Go to that person and make it right, in faith. The *goal of confrontation is not the humiliation of someone, but reconciliation with someone*. Our response should be to *listen, not get defensive* and *be careful of anger*.

Last time, we studied 2 conflicts in Scripture. One was in *Acts 15* and the other from *Galatians 2*. Both were *gospel issues*, from Paul's perspective. We looked at Christian character in *Romans 12*. It takes time, effort, and self discipline and growing in the Lord. If we are *full of ourselves*, rather than *filled with the Holy Spirit*, **conflicts only get worse!**

A. Romans 14:1-21 – Personal Convictions

*A personal conviction is a matter of conscience you hold that others may not. Maybe you don't watch R rated movies, or believe you are free to watch **some** R rated movies, knowing that swearing and pornography are sinful. Maybe you *don't* shop at a store because they promote anti-God agendas, or you believe you are *free* to shop there.*

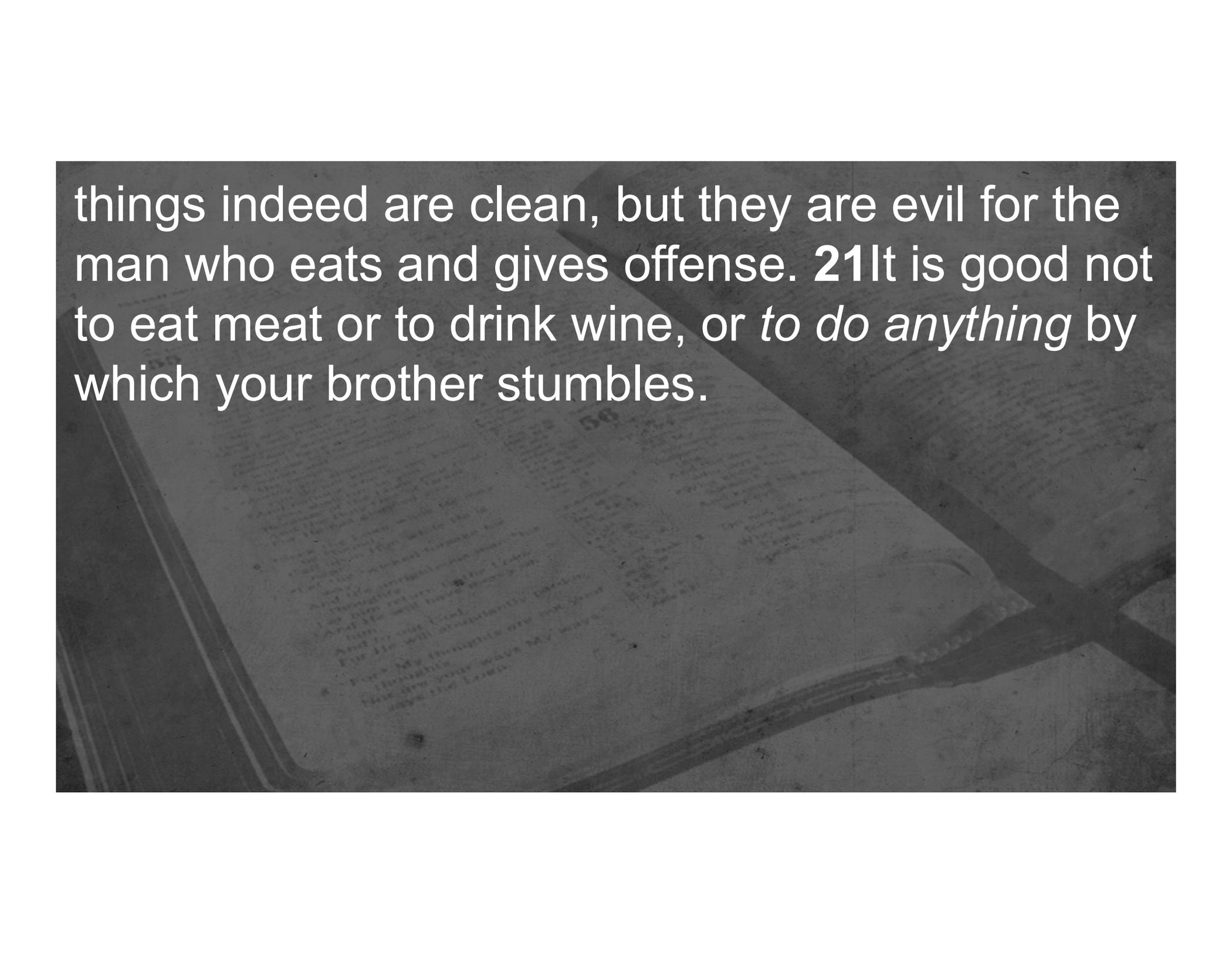
Romans 14:1-21 - Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for *the purpose of* passing judgment on his opinions. 2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only*. 3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls;

and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. 5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. 7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; 8 for if we live, we live for the

Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. **9**For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. **10**But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. **11**For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE

SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.” 12So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. 13Therefore 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. 14I 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. 15For 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. **16**Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; **17**for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18**For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. **19**So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. **20**Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All

An open book is shown in a dark, grayscale-like setting. The pages are filled with faint, illegible text. Overlaid on the top half of the image is a large block of white text. The text reads: "things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. 21It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles." The number "21" is bolded. The word "anything" is in italics. The background image shows the spine of the book and the edges of the pages, suggesting an open volume.

things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. **21**It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles.

A. Romans 14:1-21 – Personal Convictions

Paul addressed **2 issues** of his day: **food** and **the observance of certain days**. Primarily these were *problems between Jews and Gentiles*. Remember, Peter ate with Gentiles, but when the Jewish followers of Jesus showed up, he became **afraid** and stopped eating with his Gentile brethren. Paul said that was *hypocrisy*. It is similar with the *observance of days*.

A. Romans 14:1-21 – Personal Convictions

First, *both belong to the Lord. We are His, even if we disagree.* **Second**, whatever someone does or does not do, either way, he or she *does them unto the Lord.* **Third**, **who are you to judge the conscience of another, particularly of one who is weak in faith! God is their judge on those matters, NOT YOU!** Be more concerned about *your convictions* because you will give an account to God.

A. Romans 14:1-21 – Personal Convictions

Fourth, walk in *love*. If you know something you do, or say **will** cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble, *don't do it and don't say it*. It doesn't mean you *cease to have opinions or convictions*, but some are not ready to express their freedom in Christ. Others *have past baggage* that hinders them, and they have a **hard time** accepting what you do or say.

A. Romans 14:1-21 – Personal Convictions

Paul warns in *verse 15* not to destroy a brother because of food. That is, *don't hurt your brother because of your opinions about food*, or other matters that are personal. He **builds on that** thought in *verse 16* - Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; - In your mind, *you are doing what you think is right, but you are not considering the impact it has on others.*

A. Romans 14:1-21 – Personal Convictions

How are we to act? Verse 19 - So then we pursue (*aggressively chase, like a hunter pursuing a catch or prize, also translated persecute*) the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. – When it comes to **matters of core doctrine** and the **implications of doctrine**, *focus on them*. Focus on what **unites, rather than divides**, **if** it is over matters of personal opinion.

A. Romans 14:1-21 – Personal Convictions

Don't tear down the work of God over food, or *personal convictions*. This can be hard to discern, but *verse 21* sums it up – don't do something, or restrict yourself from something that ***causes a brother or sister to stumble***. If we are a **stumbling block** to another Christian who has *less faith*, then **we** who are **more mature**, are more accountable.

B. Matthew 18:15-17 – Church Discipline

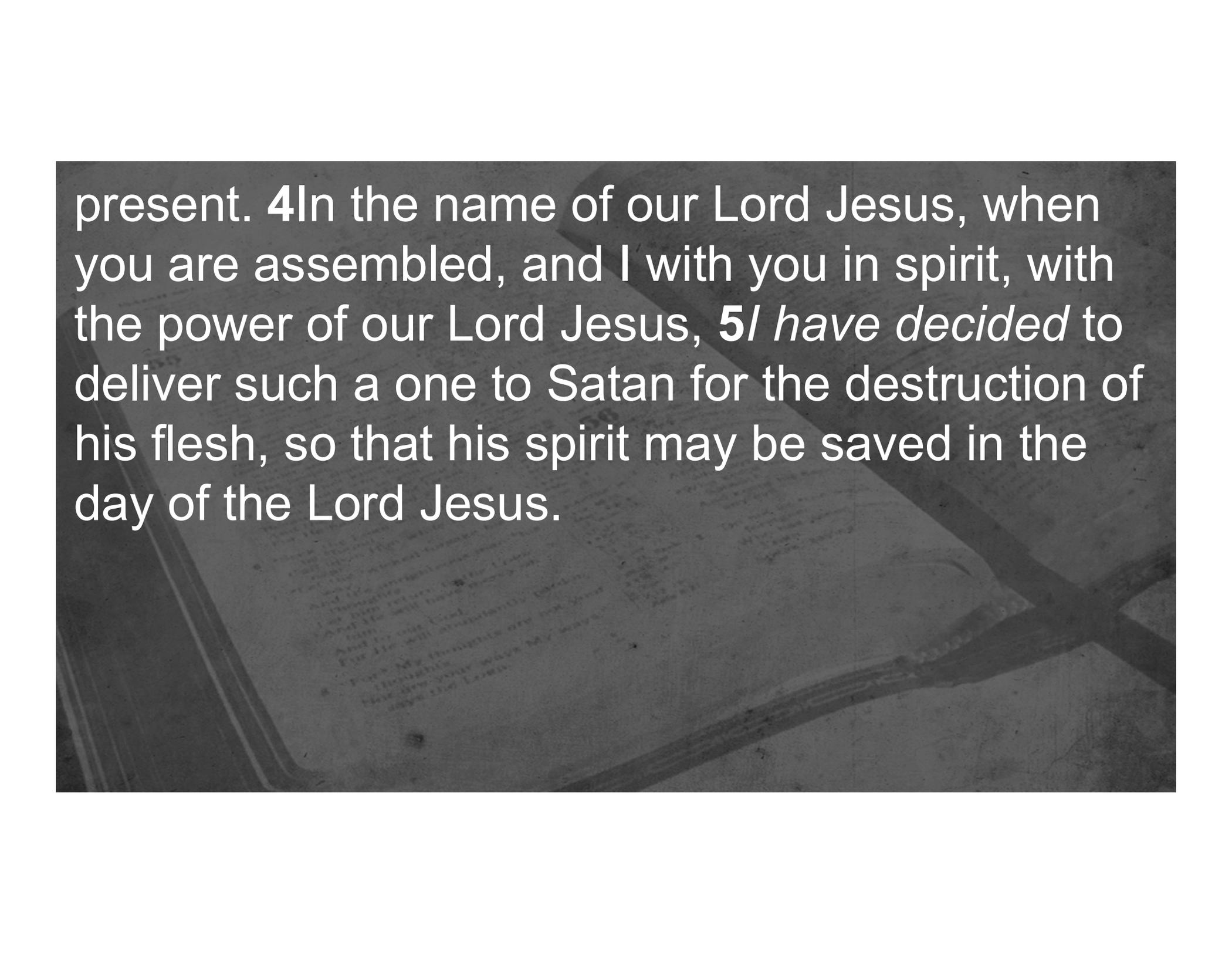
Very few churches do this. The principles are in Matthew 18:15-17, read a few weeks ago. This answers what to do when we confront someone in love and he or she doesn't repent?

Matthew 18:15-17 - “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

B. Matthew 18:15-17 – Church Discipline

This was within a **Synagogue**, but the principles became the *basis for church discipline*. If a leader or laymen sins against someone, the *one sinned against is to go to the guilty party and lovingly confront them*. If he or she listens, **great!** If not, 2 or 3 more go. If there is still no repentance, *tell it to the assembly*. Then **publicly**, put that person out of the group and treat him, or her as a Gentile or tax collector.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 - It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. **2**You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. **3**For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were



present. **4**In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, *5I have decided* to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

B. Matthew 18:15-17 – Church Discipline

While we are not told if he was confronted first, but *his sin was known, celebrated* and Paul rebuked them all for this. He *called them out* and said, *put him out!* This principle is in the Old Testament: **Deuteronomy 13:5, 17:7**. *Purge the sin in your midst, or it (or I) will destroy you!*

B. Matthew 18:15-17 – Church Discipline

In verse 13, Paul quotes *Deuteronomy*. Paul didn't have to be there in person to *know what needed to be done*. This man *needed to be put out into the world*, the realm of satan, without the spiritual protection and social comfort of the body of Christ. This was *church discipline*.

B. Matthew 18:15-17 – Church Discipline

Some say *2 Corinthians 2:5-7* refers to this man, though not by name, having repented. If so, Paul tells them to *receive him back into the church, forgive him and comfort him*. If this was him, then he repented and was free to return. This seems severe, and it *should be a last resort*.
God takes rebellion very seriously.

C. Resolving Conflicts Biblically

1. Admit the Problem
2. Resolve to Obey Scripture
3. Listen and Watch Your Emotions
4. Own Your Part in the Conflict
5. Agree in the Lord
6. Know When to Call for Help

D. Questions about Conflict

1. Is reconciliation always preferable?
2. What about forgiveness?
3. What if I didn't start it, but I am involved?
4. What if he/she doesn't listen?
5. What about politics?

D. Questions about Conflict - Politics

For those who have put our faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are *followers of Christ first*, before **any** political party. We have a *new Master, a new standard, and a new way of doing things*.

I will discuss this in **2 sections: general** and **personal**.

D. Questions about Conflict - Politics

In general, when the government *does things contrary to the Bible*, **Christians must speak out**, and get involved. *If we do not*, we cannot condemn the government or the leaders, for what they do or don't do. If they *pass legislation contrary to the word of God*, we have the **freedom in this country**, to voice our views. **Do it!**

D. Questions about Conflict - Politics

Personally, everyone has his or her own views. Sadly, some Christians and church leaders take a “*hands off*” approach. This is *unbiblical* and *contrary* to what this country was founded upon. *Read some of the early writings.* The *separation of church and state* has **nothing** to do with *separation of God from government.*

D. Questions about Conflict - Politics

Ethical and moral issues are not political, but used by politicians to get their way or pass legislation for the benefit of those who have given them lots of money. This happens on both sides. Where ethics, morality, and truth intersect political positions, we must talk about them, not as political issues, but as Biblical issues.