

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 20TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

KNOWLEDGE VS. LOVE (1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-3)

"FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS"

Paul was answering a question that was a serious issue to the Christian church. Most meat bought in the marketplace would've been butchered in a temple and may have been sacrificed to a pagan god. They wanted to know if eating food that may have been sacrificed to an idol would defile them.

BASIC KNOWLEDGE

Paul says, "we all have knowledge" in that we want to do what is right for our relationship with Christ. But, some struggled with the decision of whether or not it was right to eat this meat. The fact is, they're asking great questions. They didn't want to do anything that would jeopardize their Christianity.

KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP

There were obviously stronger believers who knew there were no issues with eating the meat but were acting superior to those who struggled with it. Paul was condemning this knowledge that can make us feel superior by saying they actually don't know anything.

- **Our knowledge should help us lead and encourage others, not puff us up.**

LOVE > KNOWLEDGE

He's not rejecting the importance of knowledge but making the point that knowledge without love is unsympathetic and arrogant. The mature person knows they don't know everything.

- **Don't let your knowledge be a source of pride. We can all learn from each other.**

IDOLS (1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-6)

THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF IDOLS

Paul wants the church to understand all idols and "gods" are nothing compared to the one true God. These idols and "gods" aren't real, and therefore can't hurt our body or spirit. This is simple logic. Paul wants them to know the truth so they can experience freedom.

- **Christ came to set us free from religious rules and rituals.** (Colossians 2:16)

ONE TRUE GOD

Paul isn't denying we can make a "god" out of anything. What he's saying is they will all pass away, and only one God deserves our worship. Everything we have is from Him. We were made for Him. Everything we are and hope to be is found in Jesus.

- **We are constantly distracted by things that vie for our attention.** (1 Corinthians 7:35)

STUMBLING BLOCKS (1 CORINTHIANS 8:7-13)

"NOT EVERYONE HAS THIS KNOWLEDGE"

Paul reminds them, while we're all on the same journey, we might not be at the same place. This is a reminder for them to continue to help their brothers grow in knowledge. This is why we **pray, read and obey the word**. It's why we attend church and **life groups** or are in a discipleship relationship.

We are supposed to be maturing in our faith.

THE WEAKER CONSCIENCE

In other words, consider your brother. Some were so used to eating foods sacrificed to idols that they expected a benefit from the sacrifice. So, if they ate it, they felt they violated their loyalty and devotion to Christ. **Old superstitions die hard, but they must die.** Paul was letting them know this is extremely difficult for a less mature believer.

IT'S NOT ABOUT FOOD

He couldn't have stated it more plainly. Paul is explaining what you eat doesn't make you more or less acceptable to God. This is all about your brothers and sisters in Christ. Instead, those with the freedom to eat what they wanted were dismissive of those who struggled. They were almost flaunting their spiritual freedom.

"BE CAREFUL"

Christian freedom doesn't mean anything goes. Your freedom doesn't give you a license to damage another. Our responsibility is to encourage other believers and make disciples. Some actions may be fine for you but may cause a weaker brother to sin (Matthew 18:5-7).

- **Our freedom should be less important than strengthening the faith of a brother or sister.**

WHAT IS IMPORTANT HERE?

When your freedom is more important than your brother or sister in Christ, it is sin. Paul wants them to know this is no small thing. When you sin against your brother you're also sinning against Christ.

Sin affects more than just you.

- **Protecting those in Christ takes precedence over exercising our own freedom.**

CAUSE THEM TO FALL

There is a difference between offense and causing someone to sin. Paul wasn't telling them they can't do things that might be offensive to another believer, his point was to not do something that would cause them to sin.

- **We may not all have the same freedom, but, as believers, we can't make up rules for behavior modification.**

MATURITY VS. LEGALISM

The whole point of this section is to help Christ followers mature in their faith and understand our salvation isn't determined by good deeds or legalistic rules, but by the free gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). **It is dangerous to impose our opinions and beliefs on others and expect them to act and look like us instead of looking like Jesus.**

KNOWLEDGE OR LOVE

- Are you growing and maturing in your faith?
- Is your knowledge of God's Word a blessing to others? **Arrogance is the opposite of humility** (Romans 12:3).
- How willing are we to listen to the instruction of others?
- Our knowledge must be seasoned with grace and mercy.

CONVICTION OR OPINION

- Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought (Romans 12).
- **This is not about being offended.** Too often we want to control others with our opinions instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to convict of sin.
- Our convictions must be based on the Word, not simply our opinion.

FREEDOM

- Just because we've been set free from the law doesn't mean we can live how we choose.
- You and I are responsible for our neighbors.
- Everything we do must flow from a heart that loves God and loves others.
- **We must be willing to sacrifice our freedom for the sake of a brother or sister.**