

1 Corinthians 8

Paul, in response to the letter that was brought to him (1:11,7:1), now addresses the concern of the Corinthian church regarding food that was offered to idols. In the pagan religions of Corinth meat was frequently given in connection with the religious sacrifices. The leftover portions, which were significant and choice meats, were sold in the marketplaces often without telling the consumers that the meat had previously been offered to an idol. Some in the church were disturbed by the knowledge that their food may have been “idol leftovers”, while others understood it was not sin to eat the food. In handling this matter we see Paul very wisely and directly address the bigger issue and that is the issue of brotherly love.

Verses 1-3, In these verses we see two key categories. Paul is identifying that we must be aware of these two topics and understand their motivational influence. Name the 2 topic/categories. Which of the two has the greater authority and why?

Verses 4-11, Obviously we do not have to deal with food offered to idols as they did in the Corinthian church. In every age and culture the church has had to reconcile Biblical truth with cultural influence. Review the following “cultural influences” and discuss the controversy they have brought into the church.

- Consumption of alcohol _____
- Smoking _____
- Television/movies _____
- The way we dress _____
- Other influences _____

It is interesting how so much of scripture rests on a few key principles. Jesus, speaking to a lawyer, acknowledged the simplicity and importance of loving God and loving your neighbor (Matt. 21:34, Luke 10:25-28). In Romans 13:8-10 it is declared that love is the fulfillment of the law. Read Romans 14:1-23. Compare Romans 14 with 1 Corinthians 8 and write a brief, one sentence, summary of the key point being communicated.

How does one practically live out your summary sentence?

Knowledge is important and even is identified as one of the gifts of the spirit (1Co.12:8). Note also that the Bible clearly teaches that knowledge without love makes us nothing (1 Co.13:2).

This week make it a point in your life to have love ruling over knowledge. In serving others we will see the work of the Spirit in our own lives and be encouraged- “... *by the mercies of God, ...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*”
Romans 12:1