

“Honoring God with Our Witness”
Food Offered To Idols:
1 Corinthians 8
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Introduction:

Our subject today is quite interesting. I think we can all find an interesting place to jump into this conversation.

The bible is a book that deals with many and most situations by way of principles, yet it does not deal with each and every situation which may arise.

Each of us has principles we live by. Most people have convictions about what is right and wrong. Mature Christians allow certain behaviors young Christians do not allow and even vice versa.

How far can we go in Christian freedom when the bible is not clear on what is right and wrong?

For instance – adultery, murder, lying and stealing are directly called sin in the scripture.

Some topics that are hotly debated today that scripture does not directly speak about are drinking, smoking, card playing, dancing, wearing makeup, shorts, religious traditions, and many more personal preferences.

Romans 8:1-2

⁸ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the “law of the Spirit of life” has set me free from the law of sin and death.

Illustration:

Certain music styles, theater, or movies. Drinking coffee, tea; is caffeine a drug? Even in the book of Acts we see in Acts 15:19-20,

the issues of circumcision and meat from strangled animals and eating blood as issues that were decided.

(Romans 8:1 ff – The Law of the Spirit now).

- Jewish dietary laws and the like have been debated. (Pork)
- Sometimes geography plays a key role in what is taboo and what is acceptable.
- In some places, this chapter is still applicable concerning meat offered to idols.

Context:

We will use the **distanciation** (Distance Context) factor to interpret correctly. We will use the principles Paul uses here and bring them into 2023.

The overall context here is concerning our witness.

Does what I allow in my life help or hinder others?

Does my behavior help or hurt WBC.

* We are responsible to God and to each other. We are a body and family.

READ TEXT: Chapter 8

Verse 8:1 Περὶ δέ - Now concerning.

- It is a truth that we all possess knowledge about Christ and have His Spirit in us.
 - * That possession of knowledge allows us to make decisions about His revelation concerning right and wrong. - **gnoskō**– Experienced knowledge.

Immediately upon being filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit begins His work of education in spiritual matters.

(The Holy Spirit disciplines and sanctifies. He is the teacher).

So, concerning this liberty to eat idolatrous sacrifices – Paul states the obvious, "We all have knowledge – but your knowledge puffs up or inflates."

Love Edifies

In 1:5, Paul said the church had been enriched in speaking and in knowledge. Yet, our freedom and knowledge can puff us up and be dangerous if we are not careful.

The Corinthians had enough knowledge to know idols and gods were foolish imaginations. They don't exist.

Their knowledge allowed them to eat meat offered to idols without being harmed.

* But love would have considered what it would do to others.

Verse 2:

Love edifies, and the knowledgeable believer without the edification of love is not as mature as he is inclined to think. **If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know.** The unloving orthodox are arrogant but not edified. They have right knowledge but not right understanding.

The truly edified person has some idea of what he has yet to learn. Someone has defined knowledge as, "the process of passing from the unconscious state of ignorance to the conscious state of ignorance. Ignorance does not know that it does not know. True knowledge does not know, and knows it." (1 John 4:7-8)

Translation - The smarter I get, the more aware I am of how ignorant I am.

Verse 3:

The only way to have proper knowledge is to exercise love in knowledge. If you do not love God, you do not have proper knowledge. If you do not know God, you cannot love God.

Illustration:

A child and a stove.

John 14:21

²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

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1 John 5:1-2

¹ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

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God shows Himself to those who love Him. Paul is making a statement to lay the groundwork for the spiritual application that is to follow. Love for others controls our behavior.

*** Knowledge is given so we can love the children of God.

We do that with our witness.

Verse 4:

May I say from this pulpit that the bible says there is only one God?

If there are no other gods – they possess no power.

The Corinthians had that much knowledge to understand the meat they ate could not have special powers because there are no other gods.

Isaiah 44: 6,9,16-18

⁶ “This is what the Lord says—
Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty:
I am the first and I am the last;
apart from me there is no God.

Isaiah 44:9

⁹ All who make idols are nothing,
and the things they treasure are worthless.
Those who would speak up for them are blind;
they are ignorant, to their own shame.

Isaiah 44: 16-18

¹⁶ Half of the wood he burns in the fire;
over it he prepares his meal,
he roasts his meat and eats his fill.
He also warms himself and says,
“Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.”
¹⁷ From the rest he makes a god, his idol;
he bows down to it and worships.
He prays to it and says,
“Save me! You are my god!”
¹⁸ They know nothing, they understand nothing;
their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see,
and their minds closed so they cannot understand.

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Verse 5: Paul speaks of the so-called Greek gods.

Psalms 115:2-8

² Why do the nations say,
“Where is their God?”

3 Our God is in heaven;
he does whatever pleases him.
4 But their idols are silver and gold,
made by the hands of men.
5 They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but they cannot see;
6 they have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but they cannot smell;
7 they have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but they cannot walk;
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.
8 Those who make them will be like them,
and so will all who trust in them.

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- Don't know where God lives.
- Mouths cannot speak.
- Eyes cannot see.
- Ears cannot hear.
- Noses cannot smell.
- Hands cannot feel.
- Feet cannot walk.

* Those who make them become like them.

Verse 6: Facts “But For Us”

1. Only one God.
2. That God created all.
3. We live due to Him.
4. Our existence is from Him.
5. Our existence is for Him and His glory.
6. All things are through Him, The Lord Jesus Christ.

* He is the Son, the Source, the Sustainer, the Savior, the Sovereign, and He is Superior. We are not worried about false gods because there are none. We are not to be worried about meat offered to a false god. The false god cannot inhabit the meat and hurt you because there are no false gods.

Heb 1:1-4

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by **his Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he **made the universe**. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, **sustaining all things by his powerful word**. After **he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven**. 4 So he became as much **superior** to the angels as the name he has inherited is **superior** to theirs.

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- The Son- Spoken to us by His son.
- The Source- He made the universe.
- The Sustainer- Sustain His creation through His powerful Word.
- The Savior- He made purification for our sins.
- The Sovereign- He is at the right hand of The Majesty in heaven.
- The Superior- He is better! He is Superior!

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the

light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

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John 1:10-14

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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John 1:18

18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, **has made him known.**

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John 3:3-8

3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

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John 3:16-21

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

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John 14:6

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

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Is there only one way to heaven? Yes! There is only one way to heaven. No exceptions, no other solutions. One God and one plan for heaven. One creator. One designer.

We are to have no fear or respect for false gods.

Verse 7:

Question? Look at me!

Do you want spiritual knowledge that makes a difference?

* Read with me the essence of this chapter. **“But not everyone knows this.”**

We Can honor God with our witness if we keep this in mind.

Types of People:

1. Those who do not know God and don't care.
2. Those who do not know God out of ignorance.
3. Those who think they know God.
4. Those who do not know God but desire to.
5. Those who truly know God.
6. Those who know God and have great knowledge.

7b. Tells us the converts in Corinth had not moved far enough away from their past to be able to be around the things of their old life without their consciences being harmed or defiled.

Illustration:

When you go to a restaurant, they try to sit you in the bar. We ask to be put somewhere else. First, for witness sake, and two because some of us have temptations when we smell alcohol. We would rather honor God with our witness and not bring back events from the past that bring unnecessary temptations. Other people are not bothered by this. **Paul calls this a defiled conscience in verse 7.**

There is music that does the same thing to us. Secular and sacred. We try to stay away from it. I always say, "I love you like a song." A song can bring back powerful memories. A song can transport us to a new place and change our emotions quickly.

* The new converts in Corinth wanted to honor God, so they wanted to keep a keen conscience. That's ok. That's smart.

Illustration: A girl I dated shortly after I was saved was a member of a Church of Christ. Her mom played the piano there. I would visit occasionally but hated the music. Her mom played

the hymns in a style that sounded like “*Honkey-Tonk*.” Because I just came out of the Honkey-Tonk I could not listen to that style of sacred music. Today, as a more mature believer, it doesn’t bother me. I still don’t like the music, but it’s not offensive to me.

Verse 8-9:

Thank God for this verse. You know what this verse says?

It's okay to eat ham, bacon, and sausage. But eating or not eating will not make you more holy.

There are some things I have eaten that made me think I was in heaven, and vice versa.

Rom 14:13-18

13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. 14 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. 15 If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. 16 Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. **17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,** 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

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Rom 15:1-3

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

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This passage, and entire chapter is 1 Corinthians 6:12, 20 illustrated for us. This is as clear as it will get.

1 Cor 6:12-13

12 "Everything is permissible for me"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-but I will not be mastered by anything.

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1 Cor 6:20

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

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1 Corinthians 6: 9-20 is illustrated here. Don't fail in your freedom by hurting your brother that needs to see holiness in you. Protect their conscience, don't damage it. Innocence lost can never be restored.

Verse 10-11:

My job is to help the weak brother by not hurting his conscience.

- Don't go to the idol temple. You will have to decide where the idol temple is for yourself. Many men I know that claim Jesus as Lord are going into many different types of temples.

Read Romans 14:19-23

Rom 14:19-23

19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who has doubts is

condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

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The key is **1 Corinthians 8:10-11** – A Christian who used to eat in idol temples should not go there to eat anymore. Don't ruin your brother with your knowledge. **Apollumi** is an end times word that means destroy utterly. Complete destruction, to perish, or die.

* In **1 Corinthians 10:14-26** – Paul deals with this more specifically and says don't go to the idol temple.

1 Cor 10:14-26

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

23 "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is constructive. 24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

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* If you buy meat in the market, don't worry, it doesn't have demons in it. But don't go to the pagan temple and eat in their festivals.

Verse 12-13:

- Plain and simple – hurt your weak brother and hurt you Jesus.
- Spiritual failure hurts them and the kingdom.

(**Wound** - **τύπτω**, Strike, hit, thump repeatedly) If you sin against your brother, you sin against Christ.

Verse 13: Welcome to maturity and brotherly love.

You were bought with a price. Our actions can cause damage. If what I'm doing causes you to stumble, I should not do it.

Are you willing to change for others?

Illustration: Charles Barkley has been well known for his brash and irresponsible words and actions. He proved his selfishness and ungodliness by saying, **“I am not your kids role model.”** Sorry Charles, every celebrity, coach, sports figure, TV personality, preacher, policeman, parent, or leader is a role model. Like it or not. This comes with the territory. To not take one's influence seriously is despicable, especially for the Christian.

Paul says that if eating meat makes my brother fall, I would never eat meat again. The Greek word for fall is **skandalizo**. It is our English word for scandal, fall, entice to sin, offend, or trip. We, as Christians do not want to be known for this.

Closing:

Revelation 2:14-16

¹⁴ Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committed sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

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Luke 17:1-3

¹ Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. ² It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than to cause one of these little ones to sin. ³ So watch yourselves.

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