

- I) V1 INTRO: Now concerning things offered to idols: we know that we all have Paul continues answering questions posed to him by the Corinthians  
He began answering questions in 7:1 and chapters 8-10 continue this theme  
**WE NEED TO REMEMBER**
- II) Corinth was filled with idolatry and many in the church were formerly idolaters  
As gentiles, they worshipped worthless idols, and were without God in the world
- III) Paul repeatedly spoke of this in his letters  
Eph 2:12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and **without God** in the world.  
Ro 1:22 (Gentiles) **exchanged** the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles  
Ro 1:25 They exchanged the truth about God **for a lie**, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.  
**IN THE CASE OF THE THESSALONIANS**
- IV) In 1 Th 1:9 Paul speaks of how they turned to God **from idols** to serve the living and true God
- V) The **Corinthians** had done the same thing  
Having grown up in a world of idolatry, they would have had many questions
- VI) They are now asking questions relating to food offered to idols  
**KEY**
- VII) At the heart of this question is **Christian liberty**  
What is permissible, if scripture does not **specifically forbid it**?  
**APPLICATION**
- VIII) Over the years Christians have argued over various things  
Alcohol, smoking, drinking coffee, playing cards, wearing make-up and jewelry, dancing, worship music, going to movies, secular music, how to dress in church, tattoos, piercings, length of hair for men, women wearing pants, growing mustaches
- IX) Many consider these **spiritual issues**, but have no scripture teaching it
- X) For some, to practice **any or all** of these behaviors worldly and is **sin**  
For others, these things are debatable and permissible
- XI) Over the years the Church has battled **two extremes**: **Legalism or License**

I) **First:** What is **legalism**

Every behavior, attitude, or habit is black or white with no room for the Spirit

It is a **fleshly attitude** that conforms to a moral code for the **exalting of self**

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE**

II) It isn't legalistic to be obedient to the Word of God

Christians follow Jesus and obey His orders with a loving heart

**SOMEONE ONCE SAID**

III) As the **soldier** follows his general, as the **servant** follows his master, as the **scholar** follows his teacher, as the **sheep** follows its shepherd, **just so** ought the professing Christian to **follow Christ**.

IV) **Obedience to Jesus** isn't legalism because legalism is not fueled by love

V) Jesus dealt with **legalism** constantly in His ministry

Mt 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Mk 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

Lu 13:14 (After healing woman with spirit of infirmity for 18 years) But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day."

VI) Christian **liberty** differs radically from legalism

Legalism is obedience to the **letter of the law** to the neglect of the **spirit**; Christian liberty is revealed by obedience to **the spirit** of the law **as well as the letter**.

2 Co 3:6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant --not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but **the Spirit gives life**.

VII) **Second:** What is **License**

**Legalism** is black or white but for those who live in **license**, **everything is white**

When living under **license** people don't care about what the Bible has to say

VIII) The mature believer knows obedience is part of the discipline of the Christian life

For the undisciplined person, Christian living is only a matter of interpretation

IX) Their rallying cry is Grace, which is really another word for license!

- I) This is what we are seeing today: Christian doctrine by feeling  
Scripture is interpreted by how people **feel** after they have been taught
- II) This results in theological error and a lack of **discipleship**  
Everything is relative, and there are no trustworthy guidelines for living for Jesus  
**QUESTION**
- III) How do you know what *is* permissible, if you have no **specific scripture**?  
**PRINCIPLE**
- IV) V9 **Liberty** must never cause a weaker brother **to sin**  
**Liberty** is not license, it is the freedom to do as one pleases **in the Lord**  
Gal. 5:13 For you brethren have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.**
- V) Liberty is **always** tempered by love for Jesus and your brother or sister in the Lord  
It is exercised with a concern for the conscience of another believer  
Ro 15:1 We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. **We must not just please ourselves.**  
**AT THIS POINT**
- VI) It appears that the Corinthians were living by three rules  
Spiritual Knowledge  
An idol is nothing  
Food is not an issue with God
- VII) One by one Paul answers the question concerning things offered to idols
- VIII) V1 Now concerning things offered to idols we know that we all have knowledge  
Paul begins first by dealing with things sacrificed to idols  
**CONCERN**
- IX) Giving food sacrifices was of great importance in Greek idolatry. The Greeks believed demons were constantly trying to invade human beings. The easiest way to enter was through food, **generally meat**. The only way they could be dislodged from the food was to first offer the food to a god. By offering the food to a god, two purposes were achieved: **First**, it pleased the god. **Second**, it cleansed the meat of the demons.
- X) Offerings to idols were divided into three parts, or separate offerings  
**For the god**, which was burned on an altar  
**For the priest**, who offered the sacrifice  
**For the offerer**, who took the meat home and ate it

- I) Because of the great amount of offerings priests took their portions and sold them  
This became very valuable, because it was certified grade D-F: DEMON FREE  
**THE PROBLEM**
- II) Some of the gentile Christians with sensitive consciences were stumbled over this  
They did not like the memories attached to this meat  
They also did not want to be associated with this old lifestyle
- III) Other Christians were not bothered  
For them, meat is meat: I don't have to worry about it! Deviled ham!  
**WHAT WAS THEIR ATTITUDE ABOUT THIS**
- IV) You have to deal with this yourself, because it is *your problem*
- V) V1 Paul tells them: **We all have knowledge**  
We all know better, we all have Biblical understanding in this matter  
We all know that an idol has no life and no power, this is basic
- VI) This knowledge by itself can lead to arrogance and a lack of understanding  
Instead of caring for their sensitive feelings, you treat them with disdain  
**THE FACT IS**
- VII) Knowledge makes proud, but love makes sacrifices  
Ro 15:1 We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves.
- VIII) V2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything he knows nothing yet as he ought  
Freedom is not intended to hurt your brother or sister
- IX) This knowledge of Christian liberty must be tempered by Love  
Ro 14:14-15 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. 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.
- X) If knowledge does not cause you to **act with love**, you are not helping others  
This is because love seeks the best for others: it edifies others
- XI) It is not love that is motivating you, but your own self interest  
You really don't know God, you simply are informed about Him

- I) V3 But if anyone **loves God** this one is known by Him  
Loving, and being loved by God, is of the utmost importance  
It is the glue that keeps the church together  
1 Co 16:14 Let all that you do be done with love.
- II) Personal intimacy with God is reflected by your behavior  
It is clearly seen in the way you treat one another  
1 Jn 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- III) V3 This one is **known by Him**  
This love for God evidences **a relationship** with God: he is known by God  
Mt 7:21-23 Not everyone **who says** to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one **who does the will** of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'
- IV) V4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols we know that an  
**SECOND**
- V) An idol is nothing (So we have nothing to fear from them)  
The stone, iron, wood is real, but *the god isn't*: It is a deception  
Jer 10:3-5 For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers to that it will not topple. They are upright like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; They must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, Nor can they do any good.  
Jer 16:20 Will a man make gods for himself, and they are not gods?  
**OBVIOUSLY**
- VI) V5 There are **so called gods** whether in heaven or on earth as there are many gods  
These are made up, inspired by devils but we know there is only **One God**  
Is 45:22 Look to me and be saved all you ends of the earth: for I am God, and **there is no other**  
Is 46:9 Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and **there is none like Me**

- I) The **One God** has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ (Jn 1:1, 14)  
Heb. 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the *exact representation of his being*, sustaining all things by his powerful word.
- II) V6 yet for us there is one God the Father **of whom** are all things and we for Him  
**Of whom:** He is Creator of all things  
Rev 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things and by your will they were created and have their being
- III) **Through whom:** Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created **through Him** and for Him
- IV) **Through whom we live** (Jn 3:16)  
He is the author of salvation who gives us spiritual life  
Jn 1:4 **In Him was life**, and the life was the light of men  
Jn 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent Me **has eternal life**. He does not come into judgment but has passed **from death to life**
- V) V7 However **there is not in everyone that knowledge** for some with consciousness  
Some new Christians were still new in their faith and believed idols were real  
Their conscience was weak, and was violated if they ate this kind of meat  
**HIS POINT**
- VI) Do not stumble your brother: Do not defile their conscience  
Is defiled speaks of being violated: they are stumbled  
This is offensive to God because it causes a weak believer to be offended
- VII) V8 But food does not commend us to God for neither if we eat are we the better  
**THE THIRD THOUGHT**
- VIII) Food does commend (bring us near God) or make us better
- IX) He makes it clear that food for food's sake alone does not bring us to God  
You are not better for eating the food, nor are you the worse for doing so  
Mk 7:15 Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him.  
Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'.  
1 Ti 4:4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving



- I) V9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to  
Beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock  
Never influence someone to violate his or her conscience:
- II) V10 For if **anyone sees you** who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple  
We are examples: People follow our examples, for good or for bad
- III) This means mature believers are to influence to good, not be a stumbling block  
They consider the sensitivity of other believers and restrict their freedoms  
Phil 2:4 Not looking to **your own interests** but each of you to the interests of others
- IV) V11 And because of your knowledge shall your weak brother **perish**  
This returns to the thought of knowledge **puffing up**
- V) **Perish**: Be destroyed, ruined: Be *caused to sin*  
Christ died for him to set him free, and you are stumbling him  
Ro 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way
- VI) V12 But when you thus **sin against the brethren** and wound their weak conscience  
You sinning against a brother by encouraging him to violate his conscience  
Ro 14:23 The one who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.
- VII) By stumbling them and injuring them, it resulted in them sinning  
On their part, it was putting a stumbling block before them  
Ro 14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.
- VIII) By sinning against brother, you sin against the lord  
Jesus taught us to love one another, not to harm one another  
This no mature believer will do
- IX) V13 Therefore if food makes my brother stumble I will never again eat meat lest I **will restrict my liberties**, if it means my brother will grow spiritually mature  
Col 3:14 Over all these virtues **put on love**, which is the bond of perfect unity