

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"LOVE BUILDS UP" | 1 COR 8 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What are common gray areas Christians disagree on how God's people ought to live?

"Love" 1 Corinthians 8: 1-3

Paul tells the Corinthians that knowledge can lead to puffed up pride, but loving God leads to being known by Him. **What are ways knowledge leads to pride? What are the benefits of being known by God?**

"Knowledge" 1 Corinthians 8: 4-6

Paul reminds believers that Idols are nothing and for them there is only 1 God who is the source of everything, and He is the purpose for all believers. **What does it mean for a believer to live for God? How does this impact gray areas of life like food, fashion, or fun entertainments? How should believers respond to other believers who have different convictions in gray areas?**

"Conscience" 1 Corinthians 8: 7-13

This passage points out that while believers can use their knowledge of God to live free, they shouldn't use that right to cause another believers to stumble. **When should believers live freely? When should believers limit their freedom for others?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus' death and resurrection frees His people from sin, including superstitions and legalism. However, Christian freedom doesn't mean a life without limits, but free to live for God without fear, including the fear of missing out on what the world says is needed. Christ-followers are part of a family and should practice their freedom with love toward others. **What gray areas has God called you to abstain from? Have you been faithful in those areas? Have you been understanding of others with different convictions, or condemning? Pray for forgiveness where you have failed, and for strength to live out your freedom with love.**

Love Builds Up

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those in the Fellowship Hall and Online.
- B. **Slide1 GriefShare - Today** at starting at **1:00 pm**. For **more information** about our *Loss of a Spouse seminar* and **to register** at CalvaryMurrieta.com/GriefShare.
- C. **Slide2 Sunday Night Prayer:** Next Sunday, March 3rd join us at 6:30pm in the Agape Room as we pray for our community around us and for each other.
- D. **Slide3 MS Camp Sponsorships:** We are looking for *sponsorships* for our 678 Winter Camp. Youth Camps are impactful in helping youth draw closer to Jesus and building friendships with their peers. *If you are interested in sponsoring a child to go to camp, go to our Giving page and select "Youth Camp" option. Thank you.*
- E. **Slide4 Ministry Surveys:** Last year you helped our leadership team by doing the *church-wide survey*. We heard about various needs including for fellowship, which is why we are focusing on that this year. We want to get some more specific info from you in terms of *particular ministries*. We have a one-stop-shop area where **you can choose which ministries you are connected with and can take a survey on**. Just go to our **website** or use the **QR** on the screen or around campus. **Your responses are anonymous. Thanks for being part of continually improving our church.**
- F. **Slide5 Hiring Opportunity:** We have a job opening here at Calvary. **If you're detail-oriented and love crunching numbers, join our team as a part-time Accounts Receivable Clerk.** You can go on the **website** for **more information** or to **apply**.
- G. **Slide6 Prayer:** *If I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.*

II. Slide7 Intro: Love Builds Up

- A. **Big Idea:** Christian decision-making is **filtered through Love**.

B. In the next 3 chapters, Paul deals with the subject of *Christian Liberty*.

1. Your love may be tested *more by Christians* who disagree w/you, *than by unbelievers* who persecute you. [It takes a diamond, to cut a diamond]
2. What do you do when your Christian brother/sister disagrees with you, on how God's people ought to live?

C. First let's see how chapters 8,9,10 fit together:

1. **Ch.8**, Paul tells **one group** of believers (we will call them the *Knowers* - or *those in the know*) that they have **a right** to eat meat sacrificed to an idol, **but** make sure that you're not causing a brother to stumble.
 - a) Particularly to dining **in and around** a temples. You **have that right but** you might want to **give up that right** in regards to a weaker bro/sis.
2. **Ch.9**, Paul illustrates **how he has given up a right** to take financial compensation for his ministry. **So** what he's asking them to do is **something he's not unwilling to do**.
3. **Ch.10**, Paul then returns to the talk of topic of idolatry. This time he's talking about *if you're dining at a temple and there's a pagan ritual going on*, you must flee idolatry because you're actually participating in demon worship.
 - a) So there is a social idea of eating in and around a temple, a restaurant (ch.8). **And** there's an event that's **more like a pagan ritual**, **He explicitly forbids that action**.
4. **Then** there's another situation at the end of chapter 10. Sometimes this meat has been taken to the marketplace, that was previously sacrificed to an idol. **And the Corinthians are asking can we eat that?** **And** Paul says **that depends**: **If** you don't know where it came from, you can eat it. **If** someone informs you or you may harm their conscience you can't eat it.

D. I will try to help us **thread the needle** through *complex gray areas*.

E. **Story**: When I 1st got saved I had a **Crucifix** on the wall, at the foot of my bed. When I'd say my prayers at night I was taught by my mom from an early age, *I should stare at the crucifix when I prayed*. It was a habit for so many years. I wasn't

sure if I was supposed to stop? **Right or Wrong?** Would you have counseled me to stop? **Sin issue or preference?** [~~cross~~/no Jesus on. **crucifix**/Jesus on] (honor His supreme sac)

III. Slide8a **LOVE (1-3)** *Read* love builds up our brother or sister.

A. Love Trumps Knowledge.

B. (1) **Food offered to idols** – in Corinth, meat was purchased *for the most part* in the marketplace. The problem for some of the **believers** was that they knew, *most likely*, it had been offered in one of the pagan temples, in which 3 things would have taken place:

1. **Part** of the meat was burned to a deity.
2. **Part** was served at a banquet w/the deity as honored guest.
3. **Part** was sold at the marketplace.
 - a) So, Christians didn't know what to do with this ... **Was this compromise to eat this? Did it even matter?**
4. We may not deal with whether the butcher at Costco/Albertson's has said some strange prayer over our T-Bone's or not, **but we all still deal with Christian liberties.**
 - a) **Slide8b** When can we **lean on** our Liberties? & when to **leave off** our Liberties?

C. *If **knowledge** puffs you up, it usually tears others down.

But if your **love** swells up, it usually builds others up.

1. **Having knowledge** *does not* make us wise, **applying** that knowledge makes us wise. (wisdom is knowledge-applied).
2. Paul is saying you have this knowledge I'm about to talk about. **But** don't use that knowledge to **hold it over** younger believers (those younger in their faith, **or** those less mature in their conscience).

IV. Slide9 **KNOWLEDGE (4-6)** *Read* we know (what does God's word say)

A. Liberty and Sanctified Logic.

- B. After teaching *the danger of knowledge*, now Paul uses knowledge rightly ... *with some sanctified Logic*.
- C. True, we are *Monotheists*, there is but **one true God**. But, let this knowledge of *One God* be **a tool, not a weapon**. [don't use your knowledge as *a wrecking ball*]
- D. In light of this, *there is no connection between food and spirituality* (8 very clear).
1. Since, idols weren't real, and the sacrifice to an idol was meaningless, it really didn't matter what was *said over them, or done to them* ... *it was just a religious hocus-pocus* as far as Paul was concerned.
 2. Therefore, we can always just jump in and partake ... *right??? NO!*
- E. Slide10 (6) Note: From & for. Through & through. (It's like a *Paul-pause* to *worship*)
1. For whom we exist - *don't miss this!* Why are we here? What is my purpose?
 - a) We exist, to fulfill God's purposes in the world. **For His glory & for our good**.

V. Slide11a **CONSCIENCE (7-13)** *Read their conscience* (what you believe to be right or wrong in a matter) [Our conscience acts like **a rudder to help steer us**, keep us from drifting into dangerous waters]

1. The conscience is *not infallible*, yet it is a serious matter to violate it. Or to tempt others to violate theirs.

B. Slide11b Liberty Not License. *Christian Freedom is Tied to Responsibility*.

C. Our Liberties are controlled by Conscience (7,11,12).

1. Conscience is *the-judge-within* that **commends** us for doing right and **condemns** us for doing wrong.
2. As we grow in *spiritual understanding*, a weak conscience becomes stronger and we appreciate *our freedom in Christ* more and more.
3. The weak believer must not run ahead of his conscience and the strong believer must never force them to do so.

D. Don't become a **stumbling block** to other Christians (9-12). Do become a **stepping-stone** (1-3) [Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up]

E. (8) It is a clean heart and not clean food that matter, and the weak brother confounds the two. Wycliffe Commentary on the NT. [msg *fortunately God doesn't grade us on our diet*]

F. If you've been saved out of a certain background or from a diff country, that *greatly affects your Christian Liberties*.

1. If you go over to *Jade China Chinese restaurant*, over by Albertsons, and there's a big Buddha sitting on the counter, *Should I walk out or should I eat there?* I say, *Lord bless this meal. Amen* (ps: great food). But if you invited a friend who *just came out of Buddhism*, and are now a Christian, they might be uncomfortable with that.
2. What I actually did once. ***Clearman's North Woods Inn*** in La Mirada is a popular American restaurant known for its *cozy and warm woodsy ambiance, stained glass, and oil paintings*. Kel and I went many times there on dates growing up.
 - a) We had a pastor's family visiting from PI. We took them there and we forgot about 1 thing. *The waitresses!* (very short skirts and low tops). To the point where our guests turned around to stare at the wall, and covered their small children's eyes. My assessment was, I probably shouldn't have taken them there.

G. Over the years we've discussed: R-rated movies, alcohol in moderation, dancing/God forbid, smoking, eating at places with a bar, cheering for the Raiders football team.

1. In the 80's in PI and in the 90s in Haiti christian men with earrings or tattoos, were taboo, they were a big deal. So we would talk to our team members about *giving up their rights to wear their earrings and cover up their tattoos*. [not that they were wrong to have, but was it good to do?]
2. One time, back then, when I had my earrings on ... :)
 - a) In Mk.3 where Jesus healed the man with withered hand, in the synagogue, on the Sabbath while the Pharisees watched on. Jesus first asked, is it **lawful/** right? Then basically expressed, but is it **good**?

3. Somebody said ch.'s 8-10 is about the **venue** not the **menu**. It's about the **Character** and the **Context** of the meal, *than* the meat itself.

H. **Slide12** (11,12) msg *Christ gave up his life for that person. Wouldn't you at least be willing to give up going to dinner for him - because, as you say, it doesn't really make any difference? But it does make a difference if you hurt your friend terribly, risking his eternal ruin! When you hurt your friend, you hurt Christ.*

1. It's not that you **upset** them, **but** you would **mislead** them.
2. **This isn't something minor, it's something major.**
3. **Because you may mislead or redirect them back to paganism. It's serious.** It sounds like *stumbling* is a situation where it's so serious they could have *a lapse of faith*. **Not just you prefer this and I prefer that.**

I. **Slide13 Wrap Up:**

1. Use your *liberty* for **love**. (You are my disciples IF you **love** one another!)
2. Let's *not go out of the way to offend others* to prove that we have our own freedoms.
3. Let's also *not be easily offended* by what others do.
4. Think **Balance**.
5. You **may** want to *give up your rt* to do something you have freedom to do.
6. **Ask what does my friend need?** If I eat with a Vegan, why not eat off the Vegan menu? (I've not tasted a Vegan before, but ...)

J. Keywords: Love, knowledge, conscience.