

Being Your Brother's Keeper

1 Corinthians 8:7-13

7 However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.

9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

Passage Summary:

"The presence of Corinthian Christians at social events such as those that took place in the temple of Asklepios created a situation in which a (new convert) could observe a "knowledgeable" Christian eating food that had been offered to idols. The knowledgeable members of the community might well assume that they had a right (*exousia*) to eat in this fashion. Those whom the knowledgeable disdained as being "weak" might be truly scandalized by their behavior. They might be moved to emulate the example of those who were eating food in the temple precincts. Their previous



pagan practices would have led them to assume that this “right behavior” was a matter of eating food that really was offered to idols. **For these people to eat food offered to idols was participation in idol worship.”**

– Collins, Raymond F. 1999. *First Corinthians*

Sermon Outline:

- I. *The Correction*
 - II. *The Caution*
 - III. *The Catastrophe*
 - IV. *The Conclusion*
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Study Questions:

- What are some *liberties* Christians struggle with during our day and age?
 - ➡ The “strong” Corinthians were so sure that they were right in their liberty and that others needed to become more like them. Yet, they were actually in the wrong (cf **10:14-33**). Has there ever been a time when you thought something was a “*Christian liberty*” that later you gave up as sinful?
 - ➡ What might it reveal about us if we are angry and defensive when a certain “liberty” of ours is hindered?

- Does God call us to care about the sin/sanctification of our brother or sister? Why, or why not?



- How might our actions cause our brother or sister in Christ to sin? Are we responsible for this? Why or why not?
 - What can we learn from the Corinthians' example about how to - and *how not to* - care well for new believers?

- Paul says in verse 8, "Food will not commend us to God." However, some in Corinth felt spiritually superior because they ate food. Are there some "liberties" today that some professing believers think make them "more spiritual?"

- Consider the following passage:

Romans 15:1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves. **2** Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. **3** For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

- In what ways were some in the church at Corinth acting in opposition to this passage?
 - How does this passage teach us to love our brothers and sisters in the church?
 - Why is it difficult to obey such a simple passage??

- In verse 13, Paul said he would be willing to give up eating meat forever if it made his brother stumble. Why is this commendable behavior?



➔ How can we foster this kind of attitude in ourselves?

Prayer Topics:

- Pray that we would seek to build one another up in edification and for each other's good.
- Pray that we would be kept from placing stumbling blocks in our brother/sister's lives.
- Pray that we would be kept from the sin of idolatry.

