



1 CORINTHIANS

# STEWARDS *of the* GOSPEL

Sermon Series

Consider One Another

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

- Overview of what we have preached through in 1 Corinthians. Much of what we have discussed has been rooted in Christian ethics – how we should live day to day as Christians.
- Good reminder that this is an occasional letter. It was written to a specific group of people who were facing many issues that the letter addresses. An occasional letter is written for a particular occasion.
- But there are principles here that apply to all of us as Christians. Those are the principles that we are preaching through.

- Context matters a great deal when thinking about this – Corinth was a bustling port city and a metropolis. There were people there from a wide variety of backgrounds – social, ethnic, economic, linguistic, religious.
- Those divisions found their way into the church. They needed to be reminded of how necessary the pursuit of unity in the Holy Spirit is. This was a lingering question with many churches that were recently established, but it was especially true with the Corinthian church. They were surrounded by a wide variety of things that had the possibility to sow division.
- The particular issue being addressed here was in reference to whether Christians should eat meat that was sold in pagan temple markets. Jesus had not spoken about this specific issue, but *Paul encourages to the church to consider their conscience and their brother of sister in Christ.*

**Main Point: What does it mean to consider your brother or sister in Christ?**

### **I. Showing Humility**

- a. Just to show the different layers of division that existed in the Corinthian church
  - i. Gentile and Jewish – Gentiles were more likely to not see the pagan meats as an issue.
  - ii. Wealthy and poor – the wealthy could afford these meats. Poor could not.
  - iii. Knowledgeable and unknowledgeable – Who had grown more in their understanding of the faith and were stronger in their faith?
- b. All of these divisions impacted how people thought about and addressed issues like the one mentioned in Chapter 8.

- c. The last point of division could impact a lot of different issues, and those that are more knowledgeable in their walk with the Lord may be tempted to look down on those that are weaker.
- d. Many in Corinth would pride themselves in knowledge, but Paul pushed back against this by saying – knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.
- e. Growing in knowledge can be a good thing. We just have to remember the temptation that comes along with that. Don't forget what is most important – your love of others and your love of God.
- f. Regardless of how much knowledge we accumulate – we don't know everything.
- g. There have been many people over the years who have memorized scripture and never missed church – but when it came to how they treated others – they were completely void of Christ's love.

## II. The Right Perspective

- a. It's very easy to obtain the wrong perspective in life. Story of going to the Braves game and watching from the suites. I didn't know that you could even park that close to the stadium. When I watched the game from an air-conditioned balcony, it was real easy to look differently at everyone else.
- b. The right perspective isn't rooted in your knowledge or mine. It's not rooted in your ability or mine.
- c. The right perspective is rooted in this fact – There is only one God. We can have a relationship through His son, Jesus Christ. VERSE 6 – the only reason any of us are here is because of the grace of God.

- d. There were social cliques back in Paul's day, just like there is today. But when we remember that none of us would be here had it not been for God – those superficial barriers start to fade away in importance.
- e. The barriers that we put up really are superficial in nature. Whatever we may have accomplished or accumulated in this life doesn't matter in comparison to the question of eternity. Regardless of our wealth, social status, race, knowledge, or talents – one day we will all leave this world and meet our maker.
- f. If you have been saved by Jesus, and your brother or sister in Christ have been saved by Jesus – there really is no difference between you.
- g. Galatians 3:28-29 - There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

### III. Liberty and Stumbling

- a. Here's the point of the passage – Paul is saying there's really nothing wrong with eating the meat from the temple. It doesn't impact your standing before God.
- b. But this liberty that we have should be balanced with our love and concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- c. Someone asked me one time – would you rather be right or be happy? My answer was, “Well, I am happy being right.”
- d. There will always be tension with issues such as these because we live in a fallen world. It gets messy sometimes when we are talking about our relationship with others. People are messy because we are fallen.

- e. Within the church – we have to remember to seek humility, prioritize unity in the Spirit, show love and compassion, and be quick to show grace on secondary or tertiary issues.
- f. There are some issues we can look at and say – I think I will just have to disagree with you there. I love you, but we can just disagree here.
- g. The key is, of course, that you don't do something that would intentionally harm your brother or sister in Christ spiritually. Keep your eyes and heart focused on the main thing.