

May 27, 2018
1 Cor 8:1-13
Love and Meat

Background

1. Pagan worship in general
 - a. Lots of gods
 - i. The greeks had twelve chief deities that ruled from Mt. Olympus and were called olympians -- these were interchangeable with the Roman "Dei Consentes" or counsel of gods who were the chief gods of Rome
 - ii. But there were countless other deities and spiritual powers besides these 12- there really were gods for everything so that pagan worship touched every aspect of life in Roman society
2. Food sacrificed to idols
 - a. Food, particularly meat, that was offered in a pagan temple to appease the gods and it was cut into three pieces
 - i. One piece was burnt on the altar to honor the false deity
 - ii. One piece was give to the priest to support the priesthood
 1. Now this piece was either consumed by those in the service of that god or it was sold in the marketplace
 - a. As for meat that was sold it was the best price and the was also considered "clean" of evil spirits who were believed to be trying to get into your body through your food
 - iii. One piece was taken home by the one who sacrificed it to be eaten
3. The issue of what to do with this invasive cultural norm had become a huge problem.

Knowledge and Love

1. A comparison in made between knowledge and love
 - a. Both are credited with making something bigger, however one is given negatively and the other positively
 - i. Comparisons between puffing up and building up
 1. When somethings is inflated it tends to "outgrow" its foundation making it top heavy
 - a. Something that is built is grounded by its foundation
 2. Inflation happens quickly because there is no interior structure only exterior
 - a. Building takes time because attention must be given to the internal components as well as the external.
 3. With inflation the integrity of the inflated material is being diminished while the demand on the material is increased
 - a. With building material is added to meet the increasing demand.

2. There is an inseparable union in scripture between knowledge and love in that in order to love God you must know him, and the more you know him the more you will love him
 - a. In the Garden God was known by the creation (Gen 3:8)
 - b. One of the great themes of the book of Exodus is that God wants people to know him (eg. 6:7, 8:10, 16:12, 29:46)
 - c. Psalm 100:3 Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
 - d. John 6:69 We have believed and come to know that you are he Holy One of God
 - e. 1 John 2:3-5a And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.
3. So knowledge is necessary but it is not adequate
 - a. It is essential but not sufficient
 - b. Knowledge must be rooted and grounded in love
 - I. See 1 Cor 13:2

What's the Knowledge?

1. Vs 1 "we know that 'we all possess knowledge.'"
 - a. This knowledge is identified in vs 4
 - i. "And idol is nothing in this world" and "There is no God but one"
 - ii. And Paul agrees that since idols are nothing, since they only exist because of the invention of man you don't have to worry about eating food sacrificed to them because they are not real vs 8
2. Paul points out that we don't all have this knowledge vs 7
 - a. For some in Corinth, when they eat meat that had been offered to an idol could not get away from feeling that they were participating in the worship of that idol and so they are defiled

What's the Love?

1. Love is only mentioned twice in this passage (vs 1, 3) but it is implied throughout
 - a. Most notably in vs 9 and 13
 - i. Don't become a stumbling block (9)
 - ii. If what I eat causes sin, I will never eat it again (13)
 - b. The love here is the lifestyle of building up

Nobody I know is Struggling With This

1. There are still vast populations which offer food to idols as a normal practice in life. So just because it doesn't appear relevant today we cannot dismiss the direct instruction concerning food sacrificed to idols
2. Paul is teaching a christian principle and the example is food sacrificed to idols
 - a. He could have answered their questions in one verse with a statement such as "Idols aren't real, so the food is fine, eat it" and moved on
 - b. Instead he take the opportunity to apply a timeless Christian principle to their specific question
3. So what is your specific question? What are the gray areas in your life that the bible doesn't give and direct commandment about?
 - a. What about . . .
 - i. Drinking Alcohol? Tobacco usage? Dancing? Card playing and Gambling? Movies? Concerts? Activities on Sunday? Tattoos and piercings? Hobbies? Coffee? Etc . . .
 - b. There are people in this room who have struggled with any number of such areas
 - i. On one hand you have people who having been saved out of a lifestyle of sin in which any or several of those things listed played a major role and they say "I can't imagine why any follower of Jesus could possibly participate in such-n-such an activity"
 - ii. On the other hand you have people who in their walk with Jesus feel no conviction over participation in one or all of these activities.

Some Guidelines in Christian Decision Making

1. Is it an excess?
 - a. Heb 12:1 tell us to "though off every weight"
 - i. So is it necessary or could it be trimmed without harming my walk
 1. Like a racecar driver evaluates weight and drage and eliminates all the necessary components
2. Is it a benefit?
 - a. 1 Cor 6:12 all things are lawful but not all things are profitable or expedient
 - i. The christian should want do things that benefit them the kingdom by benefiting themselves and other christians
3. Does it Imitate/Emulate Christ?
 - a. 1 John 2:6 if we say we abide in him, we ought to walk as he walked
4. Will it Evangelize?
 - a. Col 4:5 walk in wisdom toward those outside
 - i. We need to be cognitive of how our life looks from a nonbeliever's perspective
 1. Salt gives flavor, light allow for conduct with clear vision

5. Does it Build Up?
 - a. 1 Cor 10:23 all things are lawful for me but not all things build up
 - i. Am I building up those around me
6. Does it Motivate
 - a. Hebrews 10:24 let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good deeds
 - i. When Christians see your actions do they want to be more like Jesus
7. Does it Glorify God?
 - a. 1 Cor 10:31 whatever you do, do it all for the Glory of God
8. What Example Does it Set?
 - a. 1 Cor 8:9,13; Romans 14:13
 - b. 1 Tim 4:12 set an example for the believers in speech, conduct, faith, love, and purity
 - i. Initially, a young carpenter's apprentice how to use a skill saw with both feet on the ground, two hands on the saw, and the board supported properly because you want him to be successful
 - ii. As believers the we adhere to the law of Love because we want weaker believers to be successful in their walk - so they don't stumble