

PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

LEARNING HOW TO BE A HEAVENLY CHURCH IN A GODLESS WORLD

1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 8:1-13

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

“THE POWER OF YOUR INFLUENCE”

HOW TO BE A CHURCH THAT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Ministry, Servanthood, Fellowship, Discipleship

Introduction to the Text:

1st Corinthians 8:1-13

The Corinthians Had Questions for Paul.

"How much should I let other people's views control my actions?" That is,
"Must I limit my Christian liberty by the narrower, more restricted views of
other Christians?"

Every one of us is leaving some sort of Influence
everywhere we go.

And to the Christian - this matters

IT'S CALLED “OUR WITNESS”

**Because the Picture we paint with our lives
Molds and shapes other people.**

Romans 14:7

For none of us lives to himself alone and none of
us dies to himself alone.

Acts 1:8

“...you shall be **witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to
the end of the earth.”

THE POWER OF INFLUENCE

LIVING RIGHT IN THE WRONG WORLD

1.) How God's love influences us

v.1-6

Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. :2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. :3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. :4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. :5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), :6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

How Does This Truth "Influence" You?

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jeremiah 31:3

"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES US

1a.) God's love is bigger

:1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge **puffs up, but love edifies**. :2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet - as he ought to know. :3 But if **anyone loves God**, this one is **known** by Him.

It was a well-known fact that – the best place to buy a great steak or pork chop in Corinth was right across the street from the pagan temples of the **PANTHEISTIC** worship system.

The best meats were given to these various gods

who didn't even have the taste buds to enjoy it.

But nonetheless – the people gave their best to their favorite god in their personal act of worship to it.

Now if you were an atheist (which nobody was back then – atheism is a relatively a new religion that man has invented) but be that as it may, you would have wanted to get your steaks at Joe's Pagan Meat Market or Popeye's Pork Chop Shop.

But there was another group of people that really wanted to take advantage of these great deals – they were the Christians at Corinth.

:1 We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge **puffs up**, but love **edifies**. **:2** And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet - as he ought to know.
:3 But if **anyone loves God**, this one is **known** by Him.

1 John 2:27

But the **anointing** which you have received from Him **abides in you**, and you do not need that anyone teach you;

The Christian Knows Now **What to Do** and **What Not to Do**
Because of the internal, indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The new or inexperienced or even legalistic believers were attributing a spiritual significance or power to the meats having been offered to the gods of the pagan temples.

1 John 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. **:8** He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

How Can I Know If I'm Growing as a Christian and Becoming more Like Jesus Christ ?

**By Looking at Yourself in the Reality of God.
The More I see Me in Light of God the More I Need Him.**

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES US

1b.) God's love is brighter

:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things **offered** to **idols**, we know that an **idol is nothing in the world**, and that there is no other God but one.

Jupiter, Mercury, Atlas, Diana, - all were wooden or stone images with a gold plating... gods made by human hands.

{The Empty Things That We Worship}

The **issue**, the **point**, the **standard** for the Christian is **love**.

"there is no other God but one. "

Romans 5:5

...that the love of God has been **poured out in our hearts** by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES US

1c.) God's love is better

:5 For even if there are **so-called** gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), :6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, **of Whom are all things**, and **we for Him**; and one Lord Jesus Christ, **through Whom are all things**, and through Whom **we live**.

THE PANTHEON OF THE GODS

By the way – the ancient Greeks were enamored with the concept of a god or gods being about to come down to earth and assume the form of a human.

Believe it or not

There is a battle of these gods for your heart and life.

In this battle there is no middle ground or grey area. One of the two powers will prevail in your life.

Our culture today is engaged in a great battle and humans are deciding to pick and choose the god that most suits them...

Acts 17:16-17,22-30

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. :17 Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. ... **Acts 17:22** Then Paul stood in the midst of **the Areopagus** and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; :23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: :24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. :25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.... :28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring.' :29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. :30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to **repent**, (real **change** you can believe in)

THE POWER OF INFLUENCE

LIVING RIGHT IN THE WRONG WORLD

2.) How God's love influences me

v.7-8

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES ME

2a.) He has set me free from religious efforts

:7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; **for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now - eat it as a thing offered to an idol**; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled

Legalism, Man-made Rules, Traditions Can Kill you Spiritually.
(that's one of the great sins of modern day Christianity)

1 Timothy 4:4-5

For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; :5 for it is **sanctified** by the word of God and prayer.

There is no value or influence in a thing -
we place value on it

Hebrews 5:13-14

For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. :14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES ME

2b.) He has set me free from self-righteousness

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

The stronger Christian has the freedom and the power and the self-control to not eat what he knows is available to him to eat so that a weaker brother is not wounded in his/her conscience.

Acts 10:9-15

The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. :10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance :11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. :12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. :13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." :14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." :15 And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

THE POWER OF INFLUENCE

LIVING RIGHT IN THE WRONG WORLD

3.) How God's love influences others

v.9-13

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES OTHERS

3a.) We must be responsible with this power

:9 beware lest somehow this liberty of yours becomes a **stumbling** block to those who are **weak**. :10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge **eating in an idol's temple**, will not the **conscience** of him who is weak be **emboldened** to eat those things offered to idols?

:9 beware lest somehow this liberty of yours becomes a **stumbling** block

Liberty

(the freedom to live that is only found in God)

2 Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

John 8:36

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Someone might say "I have to eat fish on Fridays", but I say "I can eat fish any day I want to" - who's correct? I'm Correct – **BUT** I don't beat my brother up who can't handle that **YET**.

:10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge **eating in an idol's temple**, will not the **conscience** of him who is weak be **emboldened** to eat those things offered to idols?

"In an idol's temple"

Literally – in the shadow of the idol's temple. A term meaning that geographically you had to get near or across the street from the temple to eat this really great meat.

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES OTHERS

3b.) We must be careful with such a brother

:11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother **perish**, for whom Christ died? :12 *But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ*

In Russian at Kaha's House

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Shouldn't The Weaker Brother Just Grow Up and Join the Team?

We Must Help Him Up. We Are the Ones to Pull Him Up and into a deeper and more Jesus-like life.

A Warning Here:

There are those who are evil of heart, who delight in exploiting the Christian who can be stumbled in some area. They will often taunt or taunt a Christian about drinking or smoking or getting high or sex... "O' does this offend you, brother, and your Christian witness?" – in a mocking way.

1 Timothy 1:5-6

Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, :6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk,

HOW GOD'S LOVE INFLUENCES OTHERS

3c.) We must be focused on the prize

:13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother **stumble**.

There is a law that is greater than all earthly laws
– the law of love.

Romans 13:8-10

Owe no one anything except to **Love** one another, for he who **Love** another has fulfilled the law. :9 For the commandments say, “*You shall not commit adultery,*” “*You shall not murder,*” “*You shall not steal,*” “*You shall not bear false witness,*” “*You shall not covet,*” and if *there is* any other commandment, *all* are summed up in this saying, namely, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” :10 **Love** does no harm to a neighbor; therefore **Love** is the fulfillment of the law.

Now That I’m Christian: How Do I Put This Into Practice?

**By Keeping My Eye on The End of It All – Heaven.
We’re to be doing all we can to get as many there.**

Christian Responsibility Trumps All.

I have the freedom to drive my car on the highway - but if I am wise I will drive it within the speed limit – with freedom comes responsibility.

But Why?

Because their souls and their growth is paramount. I must never do anything to hold back a brother’s spiritual development.

Galatians 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.

Paul is Saying – Forget About The Meat

I won’t offend my brother – Paul is exhibiting a high standard of Christian maturity.

I am reminded that in **England** and in **Germany**
I got busted when I said – “you guys drink beer”

I know that our missionary outreach school to the Muslim children of Mali West Africa presents a challenge

There is a great lesson here for us.
We are to show our brothers and sisters a more excellent way –
the way of love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. :2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing. :3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not **love**, it profits me nothing. :4 **love** suffers long and is kind; **love** does not envy; **love** does not parade itself, is not puffed up; :5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; :6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; :7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. :8 **love** never fails.

Philippians 2:3-4

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. :4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

————— *End of Study* —————

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