

## **SUBJECT :**

### **Called To Help The Weak**

## **BIBLE BASIS:**

**Lesson Scripture: 1Corinthians 8:1-13**

## **BIBLE TRUTH:**

**Don't kill your weak brother, help him. Gen. 4:9-11**

## **MEMORY VERSE: 1 Cor. 8:8-9**

**But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. [9] But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.**

## **Lesson Aim**

**Help believers to consider their weak brothers and sisters when it comes to questionable behavior among believers.**

# Introduction

- In the ancient world when a person accepted Jesus Christ what was he to do about his circle of friends and their social functions?
- Practically every social function served meat that had been offered to idols, and when a significant social function was held, such as a marriage, it was sometimes held in the temple. No matter where it was held, an offering was always made to the idol god of the family. What was a believer to do? Could he attend such social functions? If he refused, how would it affect his friends? His job? His business?
- Practically every family had its own idol god sitting in the home. At mealtime the family would offer a small sacrifice to its god in order to assure its blessing. What was a believer to do about fellowship with his neighbors? Was he to cut off all social contact with them?
- The market place was usually filled with meat recently offered to idols. Some believers felt that it was wrong to purchase meat that had been used in idol worship, and they could seldom tell if the meat was pure or not. This was the reason many Christians throughout the ancient world became vegetarians. Were they right in their conviction.
- The Corinthian believers needed the answers to these questions. Therefore, they wrote Paul and asked him about meat offered to idols. Paul deals directly with the Corinthian problem, but he also uses the issue and expands it to include the whole question of Christian liberty and personal rights.

- 1 Cor. 8:1-Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth..
- Judge personal issued by love, not by knowledge. Note that Paul says “we all have knowledge.” He identifies himself with the Corinthians. Apparently, they were stressing the importance of intellect and knowledge in determining right from wrong. This knowledge was emanating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil which is sensual. James 3:14-16
- Charity is from the tree of life and edifieth the hearer. James 3:17
- They were stressing the fact that an idol is nothing in itself. Meat (food) is nothing; It does not make us acceptable or unacceptable to God. Jesus put it this way. Mark 7:15-23
- Paul says that he knows that an idol is nothing; neither is food anything. Thinking through the issue clearly shows this. However, being able to reason this through and to clearly see the fact is no reason to be puffed up over other believers. Rom 12:16
- Holding the position of Christian liberty—that a person is free to participate in social functions is no reason to be puffed up over other believers. The rule of the Christian is *love*, not knowledge. It is love that edifies and grows people, not knowledge.
- People really don't care what you know until they know you care. Heb. 4:15-16
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- [2] And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. [3] But if any man love God, the same is known of him
- Regardless how much a person knows, he or she can only know in part. No matter what a person thinks he knows, it is incomplete. Man is totally incapable of knowing anything in its fulness and totality. 1Cor. 13:9-10
- The love spoken of in verse 3 is the kind of love God has commanded of every believer. Mark 12:30
- Therefore, to take pride in a rational position is wrong. Rational positions are very weak, especially when compared to positions based upon *love*. Love unites a person to God. If a man loves God, he is known and accepted by God. He is not accepted by God because of knowledge and rational positions. The man is accepted because he loves God and loves people. Therefore, a person who bases his life upon love and not knowledge is the person who is known and accepted by God. 1John 4:7-9,16
- The point is, it's not how much we know about God that counts, but, to be known of God. To be known of God is to be born again. John 3:1-7,
- They were those who did many wonderful things in the name of Jesus, that Jesus said he didn't know. Matt. 7:21-23, 2Tim. 2:19

- [4] As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. [5] For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)
- Know that what foods we eat or don't eat does not make us spiritual. The Corinthian problem was a critical problem. Paul agreed with those who knew that "an idol is nothing in the world." It matters very little how sincere a person may be about his beliefs in Idols he is just sincerely wrong and his faith is misplaced. There is no other God but One. It is true that people call out to gods many, but, they are gods of their own minds and imaginations, ideas and notions. They are gods of wood and stone. They are gods and lords of their own creation.
- As believers, if we don't study to be approved of God, we can be guilty of creating gods of our own imagination. Matt. 7:24-27
- To know the one God requires revelation knowledge. This knowledge doesn't come through the senses, but, this knowledge comes from the inward spirit or consciousness to the mind. **Luke 10:22-24**

- [6] But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him..[7] Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.
- To the believer, there is but one God, our Alpha and Omega. He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all believers.
- The word “ of ” indicates that we are connected to him and he is our source and by him all things persist. Col. 1:15-17
- The stress is upon His care for us just as a father cares for his own children. He is the One “of whom are all things.” He is the Source of all creation. John 1:1-3 James 1:17
- The point is this: some of the Corinthian believers were immature; they had immature knowledge and were likely to fall back into sin and defile their consciences
- They had not grown enough spiritually to break away from the world and its false beliefs. Therefore, if they participated in the questionable pleasures and social functions, they would defile their consciences. They were not spiritually strong enough to control their minds and beliefs—not yet—not totally.

- [8] But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse [9] But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. [10] For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;
- The fact is that food is immaterial to God. It does not make us spiritual or unspiritual. Eating or abstaining does not make us acceptable to God, neither one makes us better
- The warning, take heed, that we don't allow our liberty to become a stumbling block to them that are weak in the faith. The word "stumbling block" means a stone, an obstacle, an occasion, an offense—something which causes a person to fall. **Romans 14:13-21**
- In the case of the Corinthians, some believers were participating in the social functions where meat had been offered to idols. Some were even attending the functions in the idol's temple. Apparently, this was causing some of the weaker believers to do the same. But they were not able to handle the situation. 1John 3:20-21
- Some were grievously stricken in conscience, and they felt sinful and unworthy to be the Lord's. They had a difficult time handling the matter just as any believer does when he knows he has sinned. He has a difficult time accepting the forgiveness of God. He has to struggle even to forgive himself.

- [11] And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?
- Others were running the risk of slipping back into idolatry and perishing. The word perish is strong. It means to destroy, to ruin, to utterly destroy and perish. The exhortation is strong. Note the words “*by any means*”: “Take heed lest *by any means* this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock.” No believer is to participate in any function that will cause another believer to stumble lest it destroy him. There is one supreme reason: Christ died for him. Christ paid the ultimate price and sacrificed everything to save the brother. How much more should we?
- Any man, not just the weak brother, may be led astray. The reason is because the mature believer is usually looked upon as “having knowledge,” knowing what is right and wrong. If he is seen doing some questionable thing, others are sometimes influenced or else thrown into a reactionary spirit. Of course, if the mature believer participates in questionable pleasures and social functions, there is always the possibility that he might fall as well. **2 Cor. 6:3, 1 John 2:10**



- [12] But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. [13] Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.
- Do not wound a brother's conscience. To wound his conscience is to sin against Christ Himself. There is no greater sin than to damage a person's conscience and spirit. Why? Because a wounded conscience or spirit makes a person feel useless and helpless. It destroys all drive and initiative, will and ambition. A wounded spirit causes a person to give up, lie around, do nothing, and walk about defeated.
- Remember: Christ loves the weak person so much that he died for him. He gave His life for that person.
- Therefore, anyone who sins against a weak brother sins against Christ. Jesus Christ is identified with believers. He lives within the believer, even the weak believer. Therefore, to harm a believer is to harm Christ. **Matt. 18:6-7, 25:45, Acts 9:4.**
- Do nothing that leads a brother astray. The word for "meat" means food. Imagine! Paul says that if any food causes his brother to stumble, he will not eat that food. Paul will do nothing, absolutely nothing, to cause his brother to stumble. No matter how enjoyable, how satisfying, how pleasurable—he will give it all up to keep from destroying those younger and more immature in the faith. **Acts 20:35, Rom 15:1, 1Cor. 9:22, 10:24, 1Thes. 5:14, 1Pet 1:22**

