

What's Behind your Influence?

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: I Corinthians 8:1-13.

B. Everyone must ask how to adjust his actions accordingly because of different standards that Christians have.

C. Paul was dealing with the question of whether to eat meat sacrificed to idols.

II. Some claimed that since so much of the food was sacrificed to idols and since it meant no harm that Christians should go on eating the meat.

A. If we are consistent everybody uses or refers to things that were at one time related to idols.

B. Some argued that since Christians know there is one true God then it does not matter if one eats meat sacrificed to idols because the idol is nothing. Paul acknowledges this.

C. Drinking, dancing, movies, and television are just some issues that divide Christians in a similar manner.

D. Christians argue for it from the standpoint of knowledge, but knowledge has its problems—it creates a sense of pride and it is always incomplete.

III. Doctrine is not enough—a person needs love because love builds up.

A. Beginning to recognize how much God loves you helps you to love others.

B. When one causes a person to stumble who is weaker in his faith he sins against his brother.

1. Love individualizes recognizing that not all possess knowledge of freedom.

a. This condition is weakness of conscience.

b. The Christian view towards weakness is helping those who are in need.

2. Love evaluates clearly.

a. We are to consider our influence on others and consider that what we want to do is inconsequential compared to the importance of another's spiritual life.

b. This only applies when there is a chance of injuring someone spiritually.

c. In many of the cases, it is not a matter of someone's conscience being weak but their prejudices being irritated.

d. Love requires self-control in the latter situation. (Luke 17)

Application questions:

1. What are some other issues that might cause weaker Christians to stumble outside of those mentioned in the message?

2. The speaker makes a distinction between injury and insult with regard to eating around a “weaker brother.” What are some situations where a person might simply be insulted and not injured by the practice of Christian liberty?

3. What are some issues today that some claim are a matter of Christian liberty, but are actually matters of sin? Explain.
