

Meditations on the Message

Sunday: March 13, 2016. *Freedom & Love*

Text: **1 Corinthians 8**

Re-read the above text and consider the following thoughts and questions:

1. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he responds to their question concerning eating meat that has been offered to idols. Instead of answering with a "yes" or "no," he gives them an important guiding principle.
 - a. If you were in Corinth, what would be your initial response to the question: are you free to eat in the temple of an idol/god, or no?
 - b. What might be your attitude toward those in the church who differed with your opinion on this matter?
 - c. If you were the initial recipient of the letter, what do you perceive is Paul's answer to the question?

2. We would think it cruel to make alcohol available to recovering alcoholic, tempting him with a known weakness.
 - a. What would we think of a Christian leading a weaker brother into idolatry and pagan syncretism?
 - b. What activities today might be destructive to weaker brother's faith (tempting them away from faith in Jesus)?

3. Romans 15:1 says that we have "*an obligation to bear with the failures of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*" We are to "*please his neighbor for his good to build him up,*" following the example of Jesus.
 - a. As a Christian, are their practices and activities you feel *obligated* to do as a member of God's family?
 - b. How does the relationship you have with Jesus (a relationship founded on immeasurable grace) impact the relationship you share with others in God's family?

4. How does the thoughtful exercise of love toward our Christian family members serve the church better than either (a) creating an ever-growing list of rules and standards, or (b) being simply careless in our activity and practices?

5. Is there anything in the present chapter that spoke to your present life and situation?

Main Message: The exercise of love for the other overrides the exercise of personal freedom and rights.