

**Men's Sunday Night**  
**The Book of 1 Corinthians**  
**“Christian Conduct”**  
**Lesson 7 - 1 Corinthians 8, 10**  
**“The Believers Freedom”**

Chapters 8 and 10 deal with the church's questions about meat offered to idols. This was a serious problem to them, especially since the church was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and the Jewish believers were anxious to avoid any contact with heathen idolatry. The situation was this: most of the meat in Corinth was slaughtered at the temples. The priest kept part of the meat, but the rest was used for private feasts or sold in the markets. In fact, sacrificial meat was sold at a cheaper price, making it that much more attractive to these poor Christians. If a friend or neighbor invited a Christian to a feast, it was likely that the meat had been dedicated to an idol. Should the Christian participate in the feast? Would some demonic power be present in the meat and injure the believer? Would eating such meat defile the Christian?

We don't face this same problem today, but the basic situation is still with us: does a Christian, because he is set free from the Law, have the right to live any way he pleases? There are many practices that we know from Scripture are definitely wrong, but there are also many borderline problems about which even dedicated Christians disagree. In these two chapters, Paul outlines the basic principles that should govern our lives when it comes to questionable things. Here in chapter 8, he uses the example of Christ and states that we must be controlled by love so as not to cause others to stumble.

Finally in chapter 10, Paul uses the example of Israel to warn believers about sin, particularly those connected with idolatry and immorality. Paul now points to Israel's past history. This section deals with meat offered to idols. He probably had in mind the overconfident members of the church at Corinth, believers who thought they had such wisdom and knowledge that they did not have to beware of temptation or sin.

**Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. Pray and answer the following questions:**

At the pagan temples in Corinth, meat that had first been offered to their idols and was then sold at bargain prices. The Christians asked themselves and one another, “Is it wrong to eat this meat?” This is one issue we really don’t struggle with in our culture today, but you would be surprised how contemporary Paul’s response is to this issue. Every church has traditionalists and those that call themselves “free thinkers.” Paul now goes beyond the technicalities of the argument and pleads for a spirit of love.

1. The issue of eating food offered to pagan idols raised several questions for the Corinthians. What were some of those?
  
2. What light does Paul’s statement about idols throw on the question of eating meat previously sacrificed to idols?
  
3. How should we limit our freedom out of sensitivity to weaker Christians?
  
4. How can the example of a mature believer challenge an immature believer to grow? What responsibilities does each have toward the other?

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-15. Pray and answer the following questions:**

Should Christians go to R-rated movies or for that matter any movies? Should Christians drink alcoholic beverages such as beer or wine? Should they wear expensive clothes, makeup and jewelry? Debates over such “questionable” practices are as old as the church.

The Corinthian’s were divided over such issues. They would not sit down to a meal if the meat had been purchased at a pagan meat market (and therefore offered to a “god”). Others were so “liberated” that they could participate in

the Lord's Supper and then commit acts of sexual immorality. In 1 Cor. 10 Paul finds a way of reaching both kinds of people. In this study we return to the idea that every behavior is not beneficial, and will seek to bring the appropriate discipline into our lives. Paul in our text calls Believers to do everything for the glory of God.

5. What warning should we remember when tempted to participate in idolatry, sexual immorality, testing the Lord, or grumbling?
  
6. What difference should it make in your daily life that God will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear?
  
7. How can a person escape when faced with temptation?
  
8. What are today's idols?

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:16-33. Pray and answer the following questions:**

Paul was a driven man. He had a clear sense of what was important and moved ahead accordingly. Paul knew that God had called him to share the good news about Christ, so he ordered his life around that purpose. Paul was motivated by the needs of people, his responsibility to use his gifts, and the knowledge that God would evaluate his life. As a result, he was dedicated to telling others about Christ. God has a unique calling and purpose for each of us. To be effective, we need to have a sense of purpose and to know where to focus our energies.

9. Since eating at the Lord's Table is a participation in Christ, and since eating Jewish sacrifices is a participation in the Jewish altar, what is the obvious conclusion about eating at a dinner party in a pagan temple?

10. What qualifications go with the saying, “Everything is permissible”?
11. What is the guiding principle on the subject of our freedom?
12. How can a Christian do “all for the glory of God”?

### **Summing Up This Week’s Study**

God is dishonored when anyone sins, but He is especially dishonored when His own people sin. Because He has specially honored us by His forgiving grace, we especially dishonor Him by our sin. When in justice He is forced to chastise us, He is further dishonored by unbelievers who charge, as did the nations around Israel and Judah, that He does not even take care of His own people. Sin of any sort takes glory from God.

In the same way God is specially honored and glorified when His people are faithful and obedient. Just as our sin reflects against His honor, so our loving obedience reflects to His honor. When we resist and forsake sin we glorify our heavenly Father. And when we willingly use our Christian liberty for His sake and for the sake of His children, we glorify Him still the more.

*John MacArthur*

### **Life Application**

Compare your notes and daily Scripture references. Take some time to pray and meditate on what God showed you in a practical way this week and how you can apply it to your Christian walk. Write your insights down for review and group discussion.