

## Sermon Title: Is it what you know or who you love?

### Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 8

Let me share 3 scenarios with you, & I want you to think about what you would do in each situation, & consider what a Christian response should be?

- You're in high school & it's homecoming, & you hear about an afterparty that will have some questionable activities taking place. **Do you go?**
- You are hosting Thanksgiving dinner at your house and there is a recovering alcoholic coming. **Do you serve wine at the meal or not?**
- A friend confides in you that he is afraid that he might sin, & dishonor God, in his dating relationship, so he believes that he should end it... They haven't kissed yet but they're getting close! **What is your counsel?**

There are 3 common responses, by those who claim to be Christians, to situations like these:

#### 1) A legalistic response

*"You should never go to such a party..." "You should never serve alcohol..." "You should never put yourself in a situation where you might be tempted..."*

*"Legalism believes that every act, every habit, every type of behavior is black or white. Legalists develop lists of do's & don'ts & live by those rules!"*

#### 2) A license response

*"You can go to the party as long as you yourself don't engage in the sinful behavior..." "You can serve alcohol... No one's getting drunk... Jesus made wine..." "Dude, kissing is not a sin, & even if it was God would forgive you..."*

*"License believes that almost everything is acceptable as long as it is not strictly forbidden in Scripture. Christian freedom is virtually absolute & unqualified."*

#### 3) A response of love

*"How does my love for God effect this decision...?" "How does my love for others determine how I should respond...?" "What role does my God-given conscience, & the consciences of others, play in my actions...?"*

*Love for God, for others, & even for ourselves, is what turns knowledge into understanding! "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up!" – Vs. 1*

What is more important, what you know, or what you do with what you know? **Knowledge matters... but knowledge alone is insufficient!** How we apply knowledge, within the context of our relationships, matters even more

Scripture doesn't always give us as clear and specific applications to the knowledge & truths it proclaims as we would like it too!

As a result, legalism or license is often our default application! But in our passage today (1 Corinthians 8), **Paul shows us a better way!**

**"But if anyone loves God, he is known by God."** Paul elevates loving God and being known by Him, above having mere knowledge that puffs up!

This issue of eating food that had been offered to idols may be a disconnect for most of us today, but the point is still clear from this issue facing the Corinthian church, that to love God, & others, triumphs over being right!

The legalist would say, *"Food sacrificed to a foreign god is absolutely off limits..."*, *"This is idolatry..."* *"Only pagans would do such things..."*

The license response would say, *"There are no other gods... so food offered to them is not unclean b/c they don't exist..."* *"So eat up, there's no sin in it!"*

Paul agreed with the license to eat such food as a Christian, but he says, **"Not everyone possesses this knowledge..."** *"Some have a past that effects their present..."* *"Some have a conscience that would condemn them..."*

**So Paul's response was to abstain!** Not because he didn't have the right knowledge, but because of how he sought to apply understanding to that knowledge through the filter of love!

- **Vs. 9 - "But take care that this right does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak..."**
- **Vs. 11 - "That by our knowledge a weak person is not destroyed."**
- **Vs. 12 - "To wound a brother's conscience when it is weak, is to sin against Christ."**
- **Vs. 13 - "Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat."**

Personal examples – Both good and bad...

**In our application of knowledge, where do we need to move away from legalism or license, in order for love to be the distinguishing mark of our Christian faith?**

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- 4) A \_\_\_\_\_ response  
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"Legalism believes that every act, every habit, every type of behavior is black or white. Legalists develop lists of do's & don'ts & live by those rules!"

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- 6) A response of \_\_\_\_\_  
*"How does my love for God effect this decision...?" "How does my love for others determine how I should respond...?" "What role does my God-given conscience, & the consciences of others, play in my actions...?"*

Love for God, for others, & even for ourselves, is what turns knowledge into \_\_\_\_\_ **"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up!" – Vs. 1**

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