



Life Lessons from 1 Corinthians, Chapter 8

Do you ever think someone is watching you? I've heard someone is always watching. What do they see? And how does it make them feel or cause them to respond?

In Chapter 8 of 1 Corinthians, the Corinthians had a question about eating food offered to idols. The "spiritually mature" believers weren't concerned about eating the food because they knew the idols had no power. It didn't matter whether they ate the food; they had the freedom to eat anything. But new believers weren't convinced the idols had no power and were concerned about eating the food. They couldn't eat it in good conscience.

"So, what about eating meat that has been offered to idols? Well, we all know that an idol is not really a god and that there is only one God.⁵ There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords.⁶ But for us,

***There is one God, the Father,
by whom all things were created,
and for whom we live.
And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ,
through whom all things were created,
and through whom we live.***

⁷ However, not all believers know this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated.⁸ It's true that we can't win God's approval by what we eat. We don't lose anything if we don't eat it, and we don't gain anything if we do." [1 Corinthians 8:4-8](#)

What food we eat is not an issue unless it becomes an issue for someone else. So, Paul reminded the spiritually mature believers they could eat in freedom but needed to choose *not* to eat the food so they wouldn't cause others to stumble by violating their conscience.

An issue isn't an important issue unless it's an issue for someone else. Then, the unimportant issue becomes an



important issue for everyone.

We should use our freedom with others in mind. What we know is not enough. We must love others who do not know. We must make choices that won't lead them to sin by doing something against their conscience. Paul warns that doing so would be a sin not just against others *but against* Christ too.

Eating food offered to idols isn't an issue in most societies today. So, how can we apply Paul's words to today's times? There are many actions we may consider permissible. But in our freedom, they could be a stumbling block to others. For example, having a glass of wine over a nice dinner with your spouse may be permissible. But what if a friend who has a problem with substance abuse sees you drinking that wine? Could it be a problem for them?

“But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble.” [1 Corinthians 8:9](#)

We should always seek the good of others and live our lives above reproach. However, something that seems pleasurable to us may be harmful to someone else. Therefore, you and I need to be careful with our actions. Love others rather than causing them to stumble.



Action Step: There are some questions we can ask before we do something we consider permissible but could hinder someone else:




Stumble, Stumble, Don't Make Them Tumble, Love Before You Act

- Will my action glorify God?
- Will my action build me up or tear me down?
- Will my action cause another to stumble?

The Holy Spirit will guide us to the correct answer if we are willing to listen!

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