

# Surrender ■ Through the Eyes of Radical Christianity

by Dean Taylor

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*This sermon delves into 1 Corinthians 8, addressing the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols. It emphasizes the importance of balancing freedom with consideration for others, highlighting the need for humility, submission, and mutual respect within the church. The speaker cautions against conflating avoidance of extra-biblical standards with congregational submission, urging a careful approach to spiritual authority and shepherding. The message stresses the significance of love, edification, and self-sacrifice for the sake of unity and spiritual growth.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 8:1, 1 Corinthians 8:9, 1 Peter 5:5, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:1, 1 Corinthians 8:13

**Topics:** "Freedom vs. Responsibility", "Love and Unity in the Church"

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## Description

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## Transcript

So today I am going to continue in the Corinthians series and today we get to chapter 8 of 1st Corinthians. Now it's sort of an archaic, a little outdated passage it would seem, dealing with eating meat sacrifice to idols. So why don't we just take a moment and I'm gonna pray and ask the Lord to give us wisdom from this passage.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for chapter 8 of 1st Corinthians and we thank you for all the rich treasures you have for us there. And so God, I pray that you would illuminate your word and illuminate all of us to have in us the kind of heart that you inspire the Apostle Paul to write about.

About the relationship with the church, with fellow brothers, for the weak, for the strong. I pray you would give us wisdom in these things. In Jesus name, amen.

So I asked the Lord for, you know, what am I gonna use for a theme for this passage? And you know the whole series is through the eyes of radical Christianity. I'm kind of been, to those who are a visitor here today, I've been going through, kind of reflecting upon my 25 years in radical Christianity through the eyes of 1st Corinthians because I think Corinthians reminds me a lot of first-generation churches, you know, and I can, there's a lot of things I relate to. And so today I'm gonna call this, this is a German word, I think we all know it, Glossenheit, or surrender, through the eyes of radical Christianity.

Glossenheit, or surrender, through the eyes of radical Christianity. I mentioned before, just a second ago, that this passage seems a bit archaic, a bit outdated, but it's funny. Years ago, a few years ago, when I was visiting ancient Corinth and I was going there with a, my guide who was a convert from Islam, and as we toured the whole of ancient Corinth and we walked through the Agora, the marketplace, and we got to the outside of it, we were sitting at a restaurant.

And it was interesting because I had ordered some sort of pork steak or something, I can't remember what it was, and he ordered fish. And somehow the conversation started talking about, he didn't just order fish because he liked fish, there was something about it, still about the idea of pork being unclean. So we started talking about this and all of a sudden I said, wait, this is strange, we're talking about the ideas of foods and things and we're right outside Corinth.

And here we were, literally, right on the outside of the Agora in Corinth. And so it just makes me think of how timeless these passages are. When we were trying to say, is there anything, you know, about this steak or whatever those things, and it was an interesting conversation that we were having.

So I do think there's a lot of things packed into 1 Corinthians chapter 8. Let's look at it. So it starts off with this passage, and there's a lot of things that are recognizable quotes, but they're used, probably wrong, most of the time. And this is one of them, right at the beginning, verse 8. Now concerning things offered to idols.

So here's the topic, remember we have a topic change now in the book of Corinthians. We know that we all have knowledge, but knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing, yet as he ought to know.

But if anyone loves God, this one is known by him. If I could think of, you know, particularly in the college business and everything that I, my job, and the idea that constantly gets brought to me is this passage. Well Dean, knowledge puffs up, love edifies.

And my first instinct is to just go to this and say, you're missing what the scripture is talking about. But I don't want to go too far from that, because regardless that that's oftentimes used wrong, it's still true. And there's still something that we need to look at in this passage.

But first of all, where it's wrong. The irony is, what's being argued here is not about some knowledge about Jewish histories, or some kind of high-level theology, but it's about practical things, about daily life. It's about what to do with meat, and whether you know this sacrifice was over this meat when it was sold in the marketplace.

And so it's a very practical thing. And so it's odd that it's usually used against study, or scholarship, and that type of a thing, because it kind of can brought the other way. It's that this kind of, it almost comes off maybe like, oh just local customs, or local standards, or local something that would have an influence.

It's almost more the direct interpretation. But the idea though still, I think, needs to be looked at. So but first of all, is it okay to have this kind of knowledge that also comes with love, and to discern through that? Because there is something that he's getting at here that's very wrong.

There's something also that he says is very good. And I look at the passage in Proverbs, you know, Proverbs you just go through, and all these incredible passages about knowledge. I just picked out a couple.

Proverbs 1.7, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Or Proverbs 15.14, the discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly. So this idea of seeking knowledge, of finding God, and especially particularly with the fear of God, brings a carefulness, brings something in us that is healthy, and it comes out in the right way.

And so I think that that's, I push back a little bit on this passage. Then I'm going to get to where it does sting, but continually push back on it, because there sometimes is in radical Christianity, and this is this series, almost a piety to remain ignorant. Almost a piety to boast that, well I don't study, you know, I think that that puffs up.

So I'm going to almost intentionally leave myself in ignorance. And I get the humility, I'm going to let it sting here after what I'm about to share, but I think this is really a wrong interpretation of the Scripture, and it's very dangerous. As a matter of fact, one of my favorite passages in the whole script, in the whole New Testament, is there in 2nd Peter chapter 1. And it has some really important stuff about the type of knowledge, and what this knowledge will actually do in our sanctification.

Here it is in 2nd Peter chapter 1, I think it is verse 2, Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. So watch now how many times he talks about having this understanding of God. As his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him, who gave us by glory and virtue, who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that through these, that is claiming those promises, you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And then he continues, but also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue. To virtue, knowledge. To knowledge, self-control.

To self-control, perseverance. To perseverance, godliness. To godliness, brotherly kindness, and brotherly kindness to love.

So it is good for us to see that knowledge is something we're supposed to add to our faith, but it does supposed to lead somewhere, and it leads to brotherly kindness, it leads to love, it leads to, that's the direction of it. So that part does need to sting. For if these things are yours, and ask yourself this evening, are they yours? If these things are yours, all that he, that beautiful stuff he talks about, if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For he who lacks these things is short-sighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he has, was cleansed from his old sins. So again, I think that this passage is mostly used wrong, and that this sort of piety of ignorance is something that I think is sometimes found in radical circles that I think is very dangerous. And this is the kind of wisdom, this is the kind of thing that we should seek after.

However, besides the fact that it's usually out of context, it's still something for us to understand. That if we have the kind of knowledge that isn't leading to brotherly kindness and love, and that kind of a thing, it actually gets very ugly. And I think that comes in verse 2 here.

Because this next kind of knowledge he's talking about is not a sanctified knowledge. And he's got a point with it, verse 2. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing. Yet as he ought to know, but if anyone loves God, this is the one who is known by him.

So this idea of a false kind of knowledge is what he's getting at. Now, again, the whole series is addressed to radical Christianity. And I don't know, but there is something that's common amongst us that can sometimes just get nasty, ugly, not with brotherly kindness, not led to love.

It comes off sarcastic. It comes off...it's just...there's not the spirit of God there. And so I do give this caution.

As a college, and I work at a college, obviously, and in that, it's been a burden for me, even to our young people that often come there, that it comes off in the right way. Sometimes I hear about trips back home, and different things, and my heart, you know, skips a beat a few times I hear these stories. My mentor college has been Eternity Bible College, and with Francis Chan started in California.

And I called up, as I was talking with their president, I had a talk with him once, and I said, so here you've got this Bible college, and your founder is sort of this, you know, he's an evangelical, but he's pretty eccentric, you know, in this, in your world. And how do you deal with these challenging things that you're getting taught, and then what you get brought home? Because you see, we're kind of in the Anabaptist world, but I've got this founder, and he's like kind of eccentric, and, you know, he stretches, and I got, I could, I could use some wisdom. And so it was, it was a very good talk with him about all this, and he said, you know, Dean, I, I always, first of all, he said, what does the word the drawn and quartered mean anything to you? You know, there's the pressure that he feels from his constituency, and I said, yeah, I get it.

And he said, you know, I tell you what, I, every term, I, I close the term off with a don't be a jerk talk. Every term, I said, oh, wow, okay. He said, every term.

And I remember talking with Daniel Kinnison, who was just here. He apparently, he does that with Scent, with Scent One, and, and sends it back. And it's just something about, when you learn something, you want to tell someone, you get excited about it, and you kind of have the feeling that no one else quite understands this, but there's just a maturity that needs to be there, that, that, that I think the scriptures will help us.

And I think it can apply, although a little bit out of context, with what Paul is saying there. Psalm 1 says this, blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, we know those part, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law he meditates day and night.

There's a, if, if it's, if in radical Christianity you find yourself being kind of scorning, kind of mocking, kind of that kind of a spirit, it may be not right. Maybe it's a righteous indignation, I'm not to judge that. But watch yourself if this could be something that's in there.

You know, Proverbs also 15 says, a soft answer turns away wrath. And Colossians 3.13, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven us, so also you must forgive. And 1 Peter 2.1, put away malice and all deceit and hypocrisy.

James tells us there's different kinds of wisdom, right? There's wisdom that comes from where? Above, and there's wisdom that come from where? Below. And the kind that, from above, is he makes very clear. But in James 3.16, he says, for where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

Hey, if you're ever in a situation, if you're ever in a radical church, if you're ever in a situation that's just confusion and every evil work, maybe you should do your reverse algebra and see maybe there's a problem in the type of wisdom that you're swimming in. But the wisdom that is from above, verse 17, he says, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle. Ooh, watch this one.

It's, in German, you could say, Gelassenheit. Willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. That's a tough one.

So that's the kind of thing that wisdom from above looks like, but wisdom from below is self-seeking. You're talking about yourself, your own particular radicalness, your own particular thing. Is there confusion in every evil thing and work around you? This is a guide for us to be able to see, to see, understand.

I tell you, the older I get, the older I get, I understand John 8, 9. And they went out one by one, dropping their stones, beginning with the oldest, even to the last. There's something about just getting older in life that makes you a little slower to throw stones. I think Paul is getting a little bit to some of this in all of Corinthians, not just this particular passage.

All right. So he says this. Now concerning things offered to idols, we know this, that we all have knowledge.

Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. What does edify mean? Yeah, build up. And if anyone thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing, yet he ought to know.

But if anyone loves God, this one is known by him. All right. Now this next little passage about God and the Trinity, I almost spoke of it as a parenthetical.

I almost could be a whole sermon on the Trinity, and maybe I'd like to do that sometime. But I think he's going deep for a reason. So I didn't want to just treat it as a parenthetical thought.

He makes some pretty bold statements here about God. So in the context now where he's talking about knowledge, look how he gets and breaks into this little doxology, if you would, or this little praise of God in verse 4. Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. Did you catch that strong Trinitarian statement? For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or earth, as there are many gods and many lords.

In chapter 10, we're not going to get to that in particular, but he takes all of this more and really gets spiritual with this whole thing that's going on about these guys who think they're being strong and how they're offending people. In chapter 10, verse 8, it says, Observe Israel after the flesh. Are not those who eat of the sacrifice partakers of the altar? What am I saying then? That an idol is anything or what is offered to idols is anything? I rhetorically would say no.

Rather that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, it's going to get spiritual here, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. And I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.

You cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of the demons. Or do you provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? And so this idea of this part of this, this is a spiritual thing. I didn't want to just treat as a parenthetical thought, as a parentheses, as something on the side.

So let's look at this. Verse 4, at the end of it, No other God but one. And he goes on verse 5, and this is beautiful.

It's just tucked in there, but it's awesome. For even if there are so-called gods, many in heaven or on earth, whether in heaven or earth, for there are many gods and many lords in this passage. Yet for us, but for us, there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we from him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

Now, I am a classic Nicene, Homiocene Trinitarian, and that's the way I teach it at school, is just your classic Nicene Trinitarianism. And I think that there's sometimes in radical circles just a sense to just kind of challenge everything and to walk away from some of these very profound and ancient doctrines. And I think that the one thing that I wanted to stress about this little tucked away passage is the ancient concept, more Cappadocian, Nicene concept, that every act of God, every act of God originates from the Father.

It happens through the Son and perfected by the Holy Spirit. Everything. And as you look at that, it flows with the Trinity in a powerful way.

Now, in this particular passage, he doesn't mention the Spirit, in others he does, but here you see it, here in this passage, and don't miss this little point. Yet for us, there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. Everything is from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

And that's powerful. Maybe do a whole talk on that if it fits into Corinthians later on, but it's like sort of like the Genesis 1 story. So the example in God created the world through his eternal word, the Son, and the Spirit hovered on the waters.

When the incarnation happened, the Father sent the Logos to the world, that's through the Son, and the Holy Spirit was there, as the scripture also tells us. And this concept is a beautiful thing that Paul is giving us just a little nugget of. It's good, rich, robust, Trinitarian language, which I think is beautiful.

And here's a doxology, a worship that comes through it. It also works the same way, in reverse, in our worship to God. I have a habit, and I think David Rousseau probably knocked it into my head years ago, the idea that when I pray, I pray in the name of Jesus to the Father.

So by the Spirit, I pray to the Father through the Son. And the same kind of thing of how God operates to us, we bring our worship back to him. And this is beautiful.

And for us, there is one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we for him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. Ephesians 2.18, for through him, we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. You see how this is just beautiful.

And this beautiful Trinitarian language comes out with Paul. And I think it needs to not be lost. Galatians 4.4 is one of my... I got to stop saying it.

It's a great passage. Galatians 4. But when the fullness of time had come, watch how this all works. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman born under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Therefore, you are no longer slaves, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. So every act of God originates from the Father, is executed through the Son, and is perfected by the Holy Spirit.

Beautiful little... I don't think just a parenthetical statement, but a beautiful... Paul does this a lot, just worship that comes out in the middle of a deep argument that he's making. All right, verse 4. Let's get back to the, I guess, the main argument. Let's go there.

Verse 4 says, remember, therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world. Now, verse 7, it says this. However, and this is where I really think the point of his message comes out really strong.

However, there is not in everyone that knowledge. For some with consciousness of the idol until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled. But food does not commend us to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

Paul thinks the Corinthians are being way too cavalier with the way they're receiving that. The way they're treating these meats, but it's a careful tightrope that he's walking on. I was looking up some of the ancient commentaries on this, and Chrysostom seems pretty bent on saying that Paul's intention is to rebuke both parties.

He wants to try to correct the weak in understanding, but he also, he's really concerned about the way that the cavalier attitude that these people are having with this treatment of this doctrine. But here's the thing. We treat it kind of like an odd little side thing.

Chrysostom's like, these people could both lose their souls. It's very serious, and it's actually a really big deal of what's happening here. It's no light thing, and if you read the text much more carefully, if you read it much more in the context, and don't just read over the words too quickly, I think it'll come out in that way.

All right, let me give you some examples. The whole topic of eating meat sacrifice to idols was not new here in the Corinthians. It was something that the early church was dealing with.

Writing in Acts 21, after the whole Acts 15 council on what to do with the Gentiles, it says, but concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrifice to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. So it says specifically that they shouldn't do this. So Paul's on a little tight rope here.

Now, back to Corinth. When I was in Corinth, it was an interesting view, and if you remember, it's been a while now, but on the first episode, I showed some slides that I took, some pictures of the Agora, of the marketplace in Corinth, and you could literally see the market where they would have sold these meats, and right behind it is the Temple of Zeus, and they would have had this, and so you could literally see people saying, praise be to Zeus, or something, and then this blasphemous type of thing, and they're

cutting this meat, and they're bringing over, and they're selling that in the marketplace. That's the practical of what's going on, and so I'll be honest.

I mean, you know, if I was there, I'd be like, it would feel odd for me to buy that steak and go home with it, but Paul is wanting to make something clear, and I'm going to show you an important point why he was walking such a tightrope, because our conscience is very important to Paul. It's very important to Paul, and we know that, so we already have that you're not supposed to eat meat sacrificed to idols, particularly if there's somehow you are participating in the sacrifice. We know from Jesus himself in Revelation 2 that churches are losing their lampstand over this issue.

Look at Revelation 2.14, but I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality, and then Revelation 2.20, again, nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols. So somehow, seduction, bit by bit, it seems to be applied, and how this whole practice of just getting loose with this stuff apparently led to people losing their lampstand in the book of Revelation. So it's really serious, and it keeps coming up in the New Testament.

In Romans, so here's in Corinth, and then way over in Rome, Paul's writing to them, same issue, you can imagine the same marketplace, now instead of Corinth, we're in Rome, and he says this, and watch, we usually just kind of read over these passages, that's kind of an archaic thing from the past. I'm going to ask for a minute of how we can apply this to our day, and so listen to though how seriously he takes it. In Romans, he says it this way, I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself.

Paul's on this tightrope, he doesn't want to create some new law, some new, he doesn't want to defile more consciences by creating something that's not scriptural, if you would, or from the Holy Spirit. So he does set it clear that nothing is unclean of itself, but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love.

So wait a minute, it's not my problem, I have a clear conscience, I'm eating the meat, so what's wrong Paul? I mean, but he's saying look, if you've got brothers in your church, and sisters, if you have people in your church that are getting offended by this, you're not walking in love. Is that a big deal? It's a big deal. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

Chris Austin, when he's talking about this passage, he really hits on this, like how serious it is, and goes on and on about Jesus dying for sin, and now we can't do away with something? You can't, you know, lay something down for your brother? All right, verse 16, Romans here again, 14, 16. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil, for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ and these things is acceptable to God, and approved by men.

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace, and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. He's talking about souls.

He's talking about people that were saved. Don't destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure.

Yes, I'll grant you that. But it is evil for a man to eat with offense. It is good neither to eat meat, nor drink wine, nor do anything by which your brother stumbles.

Did you hear that? It's good neither to eat meat, or drink wine, nor do anything by which your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak. That seems awful. I don't know.

Don't you think that's a little over the top? Let me read it again. I mean, let's not just read over this. It is good neither to eat meat, nor drink wine, nor do anything by which your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak.

Do you have faith? Have it of yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself and what he approves, but he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin. So, back to our Corinthian text.

It's a big deal. It's not a little thing. The kind of language that Paul is surrounding this whole butcher market in Corinth and Rome is a big deal.

Verse 7. However, there's not in everyone that knowledge. There's not everyone the understanding that there's nothing in this. For some with consciousness of the idol until now eat it as if a thing offered to idols, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

And again, that's not a light thing for him. But food does not commend us to God, for neither if we eat are we any better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. So, how do we apply this? Fortunately, today we don't have these sacrifices and things.

How do we apply it? On one hand, it helps me with somewhat, sometimes on my journey of writing to radical Christians, sometimes all of us, don't we? When we start to get really serious, your mind can almost go crazy about, well, if I do this that's associated to that, and that's associated to this that's of that. You can almost go crazy about feeling defiled by so many things. I do.

And so, it's good to understand that I can be at peace and just receive things as blessings from God without trying to dig things just too crazy deeply with all. You know what I mean by that? There's a sense that there's a strange sense of Paul recognizing that even though something as that graphic was happening, at the end of the day, there's nothing really to it. They were offering it to demons, but to you that doesn't count.

And even seems to be saying that's generally okay if somebody would accidentally or whatever give you that meat. So that helps me, but that's not the thrust of his argument. The thrust of his argument is the way you're using your liberty.

That's what he's rebuking in Romans. That's what he's rebuking now. And in the chapter a little bit more in 9, he goes a little bit more 10.

You're saying it's not a sin. It's not a sin. So what's the problem? And that whole mentality, it's not a sin.

What's the big deal? Is what he's getting onto is something. That he's trying to have a fine line about it. So let's say going to a movie theater, or I'll get practical here.

I just couldn't hardly stand going to a movie theater. I just, granted, I would be like, using this application, I don't think there's anything necessarily sinful about a theater and a film and that kind of a thing. But if

somebody was to see Dean Taylor going to a movie theater, and I'm walking out and everything, and there's all these movies that they show that they have on there.

Let's say I'm going to see, I remember telling you once and I years ago, we went to see the Gospel of John on one of our anniversaries. But if I'm walking out and people see, I don't know, some other thing that's playing in that movie, oh, just see Dean's at the movie. Oh, well, Dean can do that.

It must be okay. Is that a stretch of this application? I think he's saying that you just got to be careful, that we have a sense of carrying the burdens of the weak, as he says, in some of these passages. But he's on a tightrope.

And the tightrope is fascinating to watch because of this. He hits on our conscience. And here's the interesting thing.

The conscience can get messed up by carelessness or law. Both law and carelessness can mess up your conscience. And so I think that that's why Paul is walking such a tightrope when he goes with it.

Let me give you a couple examples of each the other. For carelessness. In Romans 1, 21, where he's talking about the Gentiles and just how they live their life.

He says, for although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. So in other words, they came to a point where their idolatry and everything just seared their conscience. And although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Another one I think that kind of represents carelessness searing our conscience is Titus 1, 15. To the pure, all things are pure. This is so Pauline, right? But to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their minds and conscience are defiled.

So it's saying that a depraved person, a person who's given himself to sin and wickedness, it actually works to sear your conscience, to mess you up, that you're not going to be able to discern things correctly. And so that's a concern and many of the things in the New Testament try to help us with that. But the scary part, it works the other way too.

In 1 Timothy 4, 1, he actually says that these excessive laws can sear the conscience. Now the Spirit, 1 Timothy 4, 1. Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with hot iron. Wow, what were they doing? Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For every creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving for it is sanctified by the word and God through prayer. Wow, so both living a loose life can mess up your conscience or adding a bunch of extra laws can mess up your conscience. So you can see the tightrope that Paul is doing about this whole eating meat sacrifice to idle things.

He doesn't want to go there and start to create some things that's going to make people feel guilty about walking past the Agora. But on the other hand, he's got a big problem with how loose the church is behaving and letting people literally lose their soul over your liberty. I can do what? I'm free.

And I'll tell you this part about this law part. I'm a radical Christian. You know, radical Christians can really mess people up.

I've been in radical Christianity ever since my conversion. And here's the way it can happen. If the way that you're perceiving yourself, that you're adding these little things, that you're you're getting a bunch of extra biblical thing, or you're convinced on these type of things, we have to be very careful and walk in humility.

And because if we create this whole world that then falls apart, people are just, I've seen it, people just break into pieces. It's like when people leave a cult. If you ever hear, I was talking to David, Dave Brosseau has a teaching on Jehovah's Witnesses.

And he says, you know, when people leave something like Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons or something like that, they're usually pretty messed up. They don't just go down to the evangelical church and plug in and start singing in the choir because their entire life they've been told that everything is wicked except this. I've said this before, I'll say it again.

There's two ways to rule the world. The one way is to be like Alexander the Great and Napoleon and raising might and conquering power and to roll over the whole world with tyranny. That's one way.

The other way is to create a world so small that you remove all the competition. And I have found that in those people around that world, it can be just as destructive. So in this way, to be able to walk righteously with conviction to not to be a slave to the things that there's so much of the broad way that wants to tear us down to destruction.

And I want to walk with the radicals. I want to walk with in that road that that is the narrow way that one of my favorite quotes from the Martyr's Mirror is they press through a gate so straight that they left their flesh on the post. They press through a gate so narrow that they left their flesh on the post.

I want to be amongst the radicals, but in that Paul is pleading with us be charitable towards brotherly love, towards edification, towards watching if you're making your brother sin and in particular now your freedom and what it's doing to others. All right, so radical Christian, you are free. But verse 9, but beware, lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

For if anyone sees you to have knowledge of eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who was weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And I happen to think that this has got to be probably what's happening to the churches that Jesus is rebuking in the book of Revelation. Somehow this whole thing got carried away and now people are setting their eating and they're losing their lampstand over it. And so he's saying you've got to be able to deal with your freedom in a way that's constrained.

Y'all have heard the example before of what true meekness is, and in the Hebrew I've heard this given, and you language scholars can correct if this is true or not, because they say who is the meekest man ever to exist? Moses. Yeah, Moses. I'm reading the bible, I'm like that doesn't sound too meek, you know.

But the idea of meekness is not weakness, it's strength that's controlled, it's strength that is harnessed, it's strength that is Colossianite, and that is genuine meekness. I think this is what Paul is getting at here. He doesn't want to turn us into a bunch of scared wimps that are now scared of meats and walking around with a bunch of extra laws and things that are that are scaring you.

He wants you to be strong, he wants you to be discerning, he wants you to understand, but he wants you to be Colossanite. He wants you to be concerned about what's going on around you. It's not just about you, it's the whole church.

Verse 11, Now, you sin against Christ. This is not small stuff. As a matter of fact, in what we've got so far in Corinth, this is almost stronger than the language against the adultery in verse 6, in chapter 6 and such.

Did you get that? I think the King James says it, I won't eat as long as the world stands. Are you willing to do that for your brethren? Are you willing to be free, not to create some different law, but to be free? But yet to be free and to be submitted, to be careful, to be loving of your brother and watch your freedom. All right, the obvious thing that's going on here, again, is the meat argument.

And again, it's easy for us just to pass this up. But did you get the self-sacrifice part? You know, at the beginning of the whole letter, the whole letter of Corinthians, he's trying to get this church that's just tearing each other apart, right? And we get this in 2 Corinthians, and then we pick it up in actually Clement of Rome writing to the Corinthians later. Corinthians just tends to keep being bent on faction and division and everything.

And the ability to bend to each other and to get along is something that is trying to get them to do. And in 1 Corinthians, right at the beginning, it says, now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. In chapter 10, he's going to get to, after this chapter we're on now, let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

In Romans 15, now we who are strong ought to bear the weakness of those without strength and not to please ourselves. That word ought, in the Greek, some of you Greek scholars, it's packed. There's a responsibility.

It's like, it's not just a casual thing, but that we should genuinely care about each other. You know, in the army, they're really big on making sure you don't just succeed yourself, but that you succeed with your buddy. They buddy you up right at basic training and you don't win unless you win with your buddy.

And it's kind of almost a funny thing, but it's very important. So like, if I was to jump over a wall and say, see you later, and just keep running and my buddy's back there, I'm going to be doing a lot of pushups in basic training. It has to be this, I'm also concerned about my brethren, my buddy in that case.

And this is the kind of thing he's getting at. The Christian walk, the church life is not about just, I'm free. So that's your problem, not mine.

15.1 of Romans, now we who are strong ought to bear the weakness of those without strength and not to please ourself. One other passage I'll give you here in Philippians 2. Powerful, he even brings this example to Christ. This is so Paul.

If you don't get this, you don't get Paul. Let nothing, Philippians 2.2, let nothing be done, verse 3, let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man to his own things, but every man also of the things of other.

Let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant,

and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. So that's really a staggering thought in this whole thing. So let's bring it one more little stretch here.

Going over to the next chapter in chapter 9, and I'm not going to get into the details there, but just in summary there, he goes on to talking about a different topic, but he still tiptoes back and forth into this very topic. In Corinthians 9 he says, my defense to those who examine me is this, do we have a right to eat and drink? And he goes on to talk about his ministering rights and therefore. But then he says this in verse 19, for though I'm free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I may win the more.

And to the Jews, I became a Jew that I may win the Jews. But those who are under the law as under the law, that I may win those who are under the law. To those who are without the law is without the law.

And you know this passage, and he talks about being a Greeks to the Greeks and the Jews to the Jews. But then the big passage, again, is usually quoted at the end where he's now talking about discerning through this, is the whole passage in verse 24 of 9, do you not know that those who run the race all run, but one receives the prize, run in such a way that you may obtain it. When I was reading Chrysostom, and he's talking about that, he's mentioning, Chrysostom mentions this idea that Paul is very careful to do this and to do it right with both the Jewish people and the Gentile people.

And I think it's just extraordinary. So, radical Christian, let's bring it home. In the radical Christian circles that I've been about, we've usually made a strong point about the problems that come with many extra biblical standards.

And I get that. There's many in radical churches are full of funny stories and awkward enforcements of uniform standards. And I get that.

As a matter of fact, my whole doctrinal dissertation is studying this practice of the early 20th century anabaptism. I get that. And I embrace that, the idea that we are biblically based and we make those principles on that.

And so we see these problems, in particular, people who come out of like the Lancaster County, Kansas and Ohio and all that. It's a common theme in a lot of those. But here's my caution.

Here is my sober caution. My dear radical brethren, if we conflate our avoidance of extra biblical uniformity and nonsensical standards and such with congregational submission and gloss and height to one another and consider them the same thing also to be avoided, there is no hope for us. There's no hope for us.

Did you did you get that? If we conflate this whole business of, you know, uniformity and these different things and all the stories and you conflate that to just the idea of congregational submission and gloss and height and consider it both the same thing to be avoided, there is no hope for you, either personally or your church. And I don't believe you understand the Bible. I certainly say you won't understand Paul, but I don't think you understand how even the Holy Spirit works in the church if you don't get this point.

This is why I think 1 Corinthians 8 is so important. The stuff in the Bible gets painfully practical. We look at the different ways that Paul, but Paul is amazing to me how he walks this tightrope and pays attention to the conscience and walks through it so very closely.

I'm amazed to watch him. 1 Corinthians 15 clearly states that what the Gentiles are able to do and that circumcision is categorically not required. 1 Corinthians, I mean Acts 16, he takes Timothy and circumcises him because he's walking down to where the brothers are there in Jerusalem.

Are you kidding me, Paul? But yet, he will not permit them to circumcise Titus. And when Peter is up there doing this nonsense in Galatia, he rebukes him to his face and says, Barnabas, even you were led away in all this type of a thing. He walks this tightrope.

And the way I think that you can summarize Paul's understanding of this is this way. If you personally can do without something, if you personally can put something away because of to have peace with the brotherhood or to submit in some way, if you personally can do it, Paul would be about it. I won't eat meat as long as the world stands.

But when he saw that something would actually cause people to not come into the gospel, that would be offensive to them in the gospel, I rebuke them to their face. Do you see the careful tightrope that Paul walks? And it's a discernment of that that is, I think, good. So let me ask you just a few practical questions coming towards the end here.

Radical Christian, let me get practical. Do you believe in congregational discipleship? Do you believe in as a fellowship? Let me give you a few verses. 1 Peter 5, 5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourself unto the elder.

Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility. For God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Wow, if that's the practice of a local church, that we are truly saying, brother, I just got this problem and it doesn't really have to make sense.

Do you get it? And I don't think we should try to ever think of being universal. I think that's where we get in trouble there. But as local fellowships, we walk through this.

And that idea of the younger submitting to the elders and each subject one to another, the clothes with humility, as 1 Peter 5 says, would go a long way. 1 Timothy 5, 1 through 2. Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father. Younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all purity.

You know, I'm a student of history. And I do realize that a lot of movements were started by young people, young men and women. And an older generation needs to always make sure that we are leaving room for that.

If we try to stop it and squash it, it doesn't work very well. You need to leave to that. But let me say this, as a person who's dug deep into history, a lot of those movements I took some maturing before, you know, I mean, I love what George Blaurock did, but I would still have coffee with the brother and say, can we talk? You know, it's there's some things in there that that we can still walk by the Holy Spirit and walk in maturity that I think applying Paul's careful words here are very good.

I'm concerned about this as getting this is kind of goes back to my call with Eternity Bible College. You know, let's be careful that as we get young and zealous and old and zealous, that we do this with humility, with with walking, the way we speak to each other, young to old. And I tell you one thing I really appreciated by time and with the Hutterites, they use this term feta for older brothers.

And what's the sister Basel? Basel for the older sisters. And what it means is you have a brother and a sister, but then you have an older brother and older sister. And just this is built into a culture of respect and something that's just healthy.

And I just, I think we have to be careful with that. Let me ask you one more practical thing. Radical Christian, you're free.

All things are lawful, but do you submit to a pastor? Is that okay? Is, is, can I, uh, what if I, I didn't say, do you agree with your pastor? Well, if he's a good teacher, if I agree with them, is there within you a galahs and height, a sense of submission to a pastor? You know, if, when you think in my background, the evangelical background, when we think of this type of a subject, pretty quick, the idea of the idea of me taking on someone else's opinion, the first passage that comes to mind is acts 5:29. But Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than man. And anytime you talk to me, I'm thinking I'm hearing from God and I'm not going to listen to you because you're a man and I'm going to listen to God.

And that seems to be kind of a spirit. And, and I'll say this, a lot of people from my background, maybe it's changed. I have a feeling it hasn't, it feels almost wrong to bend your heart in a brotherhood.

It almost feels wrong. Like, well, if I just bow my heart because he's got this problem, well, then I'm not being a real man. And it almost feels a conscience against us.

Paul's saying just the opposite. Again, not to create a bunch of laws and get our consciences all messed up. Paul is clear on that.

But what about authority? I tell you, the sort of post-radical world that I grew up with, excuse me, I raised my children with, and kind of dealing with these subjects, I hear them really talking harshly about standards and about things like this. And I always ask the question, so what, what, how do you submit one to another? What about a pastor? What about your brothers in the church? What about the older brothers and the older sisters? Do y'all, is there any place where you submit to one another? I'm afraid that it's going away in many radical circles that I've raised my children in. Hebrews put it this way.

So we're all free, but read this. Hebrew 3, 13, 17, obey those who rule over you and be submissive for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

It's interesting the way he words it there. That word rule, I've heard different interpretations of different commentaries try to make that a little lighter word. And I appreciate, but it's where we get our English word hegemony from.

It's a tough word, no matter how powdery up you make it. There's a real sense of Goloshenheit with spiritual authority. Radical Christian, do you have that? First Peter 5, 1, 2, the elders, first Peter 5, 1, 2, listen to this one.

The elders who are among you, I exhort, I whom also am a fellow elder and a witness of the suffering of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. Well, he packed that one up. Shepherd the flock of God, which is among you serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain, but eagerly.

The idea of having shepherds. I tell you, if radical Christianity in the future is going to be just this total egalitarian thing of a democracy that we don't bow to our heart to one another, we don't have spiritual leadership, we can't submit to pastors, we can't submit. Let me just tell you, there is no hope for you.

Zero. It will not happen. I can say this based upon the authority of God's word and the base of the experience that I've had in my life.

So, bringing this down. I have one more thing here, bringing this down. Please don't pretend you're into the early church if this is your view.

Years ago, I ran across a book called Radical, if y'all have seen it. It was out in the 90s. And it was the idea of fire your pastor and this type of a thing and all this kind of a thing.

And I read through that and I just thought, what nonsense. And these people tried to claim early Christianity with this. Limp through Ignatius and see his discussion about the carefulness that the church has.

And Tertullian and Ignatius says, be attuned to the bishop like strings on a lyre. And he talks about mutual. Don't get me wrong, I also feel that elders need also, another whole sermon is about that also need to be under accountability and not to be just without accountability themselves.

But the message here that I'm saying is, is the spirit of I'm free. I can do what I want. I have to have my own conscience.

It doesn't matter what you say is common in radical circles. And I hear 1 Corinthians 8 as a rebuke to that. So, now concerning things offered to idols, I'm closing.

We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing.

Yet, as he ought to know, but if anyone loves God, this one is known by him. Therefore, 13, therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat lest I make my brother stumble. All right, let's close with prayer.

Father, I thank you for this ancient problem that happened in Rome and Corinth and in modern-day Turkey and in all these different places that we can look at how careful that we should be as a brotherhood to walk through these things and to have a direction and to have a clarity about going forth with your Holy Spirit guiding us. God, help. I so much just think so highly of myself and what my concerns are and what my pet doctrines are and my concern, but Lord, let me have more of a heart for my brethren and my weaker brethren and my sisters and the next generation.

And Lord, please guide us that we can talk and we can discern and we can walk through this broad way and have the narrow way, to walk away from the broad way and walk into the narrow way and to have eternal life with you and have life. Lord, we thank you for this example. In Jesus' name we pray.

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