

Wednesday Word ~ May 25, 2022

“If what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall (1 Cor. 8:13 *NIV*).

This passage should be of interest to everyone who has a desire to exercise a good influence on others. The matter of influence will be considered from three directions.

The first consideration is a discussion of conscience and love. 1st Corinthians 7:1-2 introduces Chapters 7 and 8 with the issue of whether it is best to be married or to stay single. This is a question that needs serious consideration in our day.

Another matter concerns abstaining from eating certain foods. Paul’s argument is based on a person’s influence. Paul placed knowledge beside influence and shows that knowledge is overridden by love. Love is the essential element, not knowledge.

The matter of eating or not eating has nothing to do with commending one to God (1 Cor. 8:8). Some people consider themselves strong in comparison to others. They think that eating anything they want will make no difference. They are not aware of the influence they exercise. They may think that because they are strong in their relationship to God, they have an advantage over others. This is a mistake. The question is: How does eating meat offered in a pagan temple affect others? It is evil and wrong if the weaker person thinks it is wrong. The warning is to take heed that one does not cause his brother to stumble.

The second consideration is the fact that each person does exert an influence on others. The question is: What kind of influence do I exert on others?

The Lord gives each person a great deal of liberty. We can use that liberty for good or evil. The question is the responsibility of liberty.

Some things are not wrong for an individual as such, but because of an evil influence on someone else, they become wrong. Many traditional taboos come under this category.

The third consideration is how much does one care?

The matter of caring or loving is the determining factor as to whether a particular thing should be done or not done. Some matters worthy of consideration are social drinking, observance of the Lord Day, and gambling.

Christians should honestly ask themselves whether they can justify their action in the sight of God. This will enable them to determine whether or not they should continue in certain practices.

We, as Christians, need to constantly examine every activity in the light of its effect on our brothers and sisters in Christ.

To God be the Glory!