

***What would you give up for Christ? (1 Corinthians 8)***  
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***Introduction:*** How do we envision ourselves in our service to God?

- A. What *in our mind* would we give up for Christ? What is the actual reality?
  - 1. Peter said he would *die with Christ!* (Mt 26:35)
  - 2. The Pharisees said they would have *stood with the prophets!* (Mt 23:29-30)
  - 3. Christians say they *want the best* for other Christians! (Jas 2:15-17)
- B. It is often in the “small” things that *our hearts are revealed.*
  - 1. How do *we react* when we are “inconvenienced” by a brother in Christ?
  - 2. What kind of thoughts run through our mind? **Rom 14:15-16**
  - 3. How can we keep a heart that will *see things as God does?* What is valuable?

***I. The Problem of Idolatry and Socially Accepted Practices.***

- A. Corinth was a major center for idol worship.
- B. What was *the appeal* of idols?
  - 1. Man is designed to worship God. An idol is a way *to misdirect that desire* and then manipulate it. It is a deception of Satan. (1 Cor 10:20-21)
  - 2. Man-made religion is found in many forms. It *destroys one's ability to reason.* (Ps 115:8; 135:18)
  - 3. When it became engrained in the public traditions, there was *great peer pressure* to go along. Logic is cast away for conformity. (Acts 19:28, 32)
- C. What was the common practice of idolatry like *in Corinth?*

"Pagan sacrifices could be thought of as typically consisting of three portions. One small part would be used in the sacrificial ritual. A larger portion would be for the use of the priests or other temple personnel. The largest part would be retained by the worshiper to be used in one of two ways....The one who offered the sacrifice sometimes used the remaining portion as the main course in a meal which might be served at or near the pagan temple." - Holman's

  - 2. The social gatherings and the selling of meat in the marketplace all had close connection with idolatry.
  - 3. The apostles *specifically addressed* these things to all Christians. (Acts 15:29)

***II. The grave danger of personal pride (1 Cor 8:1-3)***

- A. How can we each keep a humble heart? We start with *a daily consciousness of God.*
  - 1. When we accurately understand *the presence and holiness of God*, we abide in His love in a pursuit of holiness. (Ps 19:7-14)
  - 2. When you live a daily life like this, you remember *that path you took to get there!*
- B. God's knowledge will impact *different hearts in different ways!*
  - 1. A *proud heart* seeks to place self in the best light. It is blindness. (Gal 6:3-4)
  - 2. Consider the term “puffed-up.” (1 Cor 4:18-19; 5:2)
  - 3. Pride causes one to view *both brethren and God* differently. (2 Cor 10:12, 17-18)
  - 4. What *commends us before God?* It is not food! Is then food more important than a brother in Christ? (1 Cor 8:8)

***III. What is the truth about the one God and the deception of idolatry? (1 Cor 8:4-6)***

- A. Every Christian should have *a memory* about coming to know God. (Jn 17:3; 1 Thess 1:9)

1. This is more than a cold fact; it must move each of us.
  2. How do we react when one *does not yet have* this deep conviction?
- B. How should every Christian view *the deception of idolatry*?
1. *Simple logic* easily exposes idolatry. Idols are a waste of good wood!  
(Ps 115:2-8; Isa 44:14-20)
  2. What if we *became arrogant in our knowledge*? Do we think that we cannot be deceived? Are we blind to the tragedy of those caught up in this?

#### ***IV. How can we help each other keep a good conscience? (1 Cor 8:7-8)***

A. What is *a conscience*?

**Conscience** - “συνείδησις {soon-i'-day-sis} conscience 1) the consciousness of anything 2) the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other.

1. The conscience is *a judge* based upon *previous training and experience*.  
(Rom 2:14-15)
  2. A conscience will make you feel bad *by just thinking* of something!
  3. A conscience *can be trained in a wrong way*. You may do bad and feel good or do that which is not sin and feel bad! (Acts 23:1, 26:9; 1 Cor 8:7)
  4. A weak conscience is *one that has been improperly trained*.
  5. The conscience is a great gift from God that we must carefully protect! Idolatry in both old and current forms, destroy the conscience *by denying all standards*.
- B. The conscience is to be given great attention within each of us. The conscience when trained by God’s word can *keep us humble, teachable and aware of reality*.
1. Our conscience helps us live a life of repentance. A living faith will give us *great energy and effort* in living a principled life. (Acts 24:15-16)
  2. Jesus appealed to the conscience to bring others *to see reality*! (Jn 8:9)

#### ***V. We must be determined not to weaken the consciences of our brethren (1 Cor 8:9-13)***

- A. I should be horrified at *the thought* of harming my brethren. (Mt 18:6-7)
1. How far will I go to keep my brother alive? What is a “*stumbling block*?”
  2. A *defiled conscience* can be the first step to spiritual destruction.  
(1 Tim 1:4-5; 19-20; 1 Tim 4:1-2; Titus 1:15-16)
  3. Yes, we will at times become frustrated with the scruples of our brethren.
  4. We are talking about a compromised conscious and *not a stubborn opinion*.
- B. What are other things that *could harm* our brethren?
1. We can *openly sin*! Ex. Honesty, smoking, temper, social drinking, etc...
  2. What am I *willing to give up* for the good of my brethren? Do I want a good conscience? (Heb 9:14; 10:22; Rom 14:23)

**Conclusion:** Let each of us joyfully come to know and serve one another!