

Pastor Wil Lake
1 CORINTHIANS
Part 8: Someone is Watching You

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures referenced in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to facilitate a discussion.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together.

While the questions are important, remember your small group's goal is not to pound through the questions but to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships, so knock yourself out with the discussion questions but spend more time laughing than answering the questions.

Connecting our spirituality to our morality is a sign to those around us about life in Christ. Whether you know it or not, whether you like it or not, someone is watching your life. Live like your life matters because it does!

[1 Corinthians 8]

Now regarding your question about food that has been offered to idols. Yes, we know that "we all have knowledge" about this issue. But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church. Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes. 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. There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods

and many lords. 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. 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. 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. But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble. For if others see you—with your "superior knowledge"—eating in the temple of an idol, won't they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol? So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer for whom Christ died will be destroyed. And when you sin against other believers by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ. So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live—for I don't want to cause another believer to stumble.

INFLUENCE: a person or thing with the capacity or power to have an effect on someone or something

[1 Corinthians 11.1, NIV]

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

If you're following Jesus, someone is following you.

[Galatians 5.13, CEB]

*You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve **each other** through love.*

[1 Corinthians 8.1]

Now regarding your question about food that has been offered to idols. Yes, we know that "we all have knowledge" about this issue. But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church.

[1 Corinthians 8.2-3]

Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes.

Life based on knowledge alone brings bondage; knowledge with love brings freedom.

[1 Corinthians 8.4-6]

*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. There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords. 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.*

[Colossians 1.15, NLT]

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.

[John 14.6, NLT]

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

[1 John 5.20, NLT]

And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.

[1 Corinthians 8.7-8]

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. 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.

Conscience = the perception that brings our heart and mind together and tells us that something is right or wrong.

Established believers with a "strong" conscience influence newer believers with a "weak" conscience through their life choices.

[1 Corinthians 8.9-13, NLT]

But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble. For if others see you—with your “superior knowledge”—eating in the temple of an idol, won't they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol? So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer for whom Christ died will be destroyed. And when you sin against other believers by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ. So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live—for I don't want to cause another believer to stumble.

Paul lived his life for the weakest person in the room, not because of legalism but because of love.

[1 Timothy 4.12, CEB]

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. Instead, set an example for the believers through your speech, behavior, love, faith, and by being sexually pure.

Five Areas of Influence:

1. Be an Influencer in Speech

[Ephesians 4.29, NLT]

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

2. Be an Influencer in Behavior

[James 3.13, NLT]

If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom.

3. Be an Influencer in Love

[1 Corinthians 13.7, CEB]

Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.

4. Be An Influencer in Faith

[Romans 1.16, CEB]

I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

5. Be An Influencer in Sexual Purity

[1 Thessalonians 4.3-8, CEB]

God's will is that your lives are dedicated to him. This means that you stay away from sexual immorality and learn how to control your own body in a pure and respectable way. Don't be controlled by your sexual urges like the Gentiles who don't know God. No one should mistreat or take advantage of their brother or sister in this issue. The Lord punishes people for all these things, as we told you before and sternly warned you. God didn't call us to be immoral but to be dedicated to him. Therefore, whoever rejects these instructions isn't rejecting a human authority. They are rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Where are some places that people are watching you on a regular basis, whether you like it or not (work, school, gym, etc.)?**
- 2. Who are some people that you are following, that influence your own choices?**
- 3. Discuss knowledge and love: How do both affect our faith? Can one function without the other? What is the proof that they work well together? In other words, in what ways do you see love and knowledge working well together?**
- 4. What causes our God-given conscience to become weak, numb, or inactive? What redeems the consequences of our fallen nature and restores our conscience? How does the Holy Spirit direct our conscience? (Think about words of knowledge and revelation, in addition to the everyday)**
- 5. Which of the five areas of influence can you immediately focus on this week? What can that look like?**
- 6. Pray for each other for increased influence and a greater capacity to love.**