

Our Lesson Tells Us

Sam's mother smiled as she read the note from his teacher. "Sam is doing well. He has a logical mind."

Sam knew Mom was proud of him. He knew Dad would be proud too—when he heard. Dad was in the army. His absence was especially hard for Sam's little brother. Jacob had been having bad dreams.

Jacob's cries woke Sam every night. Jacob dreamed about monsters and house fires. That night, Sam woke to hear Jacob's yells.

Sam sat on Jacob's bed and said, "Jacob, you are being silly. There is no such thing as monsters. It is not likely we will ever have a house fire. Can you just think logically about this?"

To Sam's surprise, Jacob began to howl louder. Mom hurried into the room and hugged Jacob. In just a minute, he was asleep.

Sam and Mom tiptoed out to the hall. "I do not understand." Sam frowned. "I explained to Jacob that his dreams are not logical, but he cried harder."

Mom smiled. "Logic cannot solve all problems. Some need love."

The church at Corinth had a problem logic could not solve. Only love could solve it. They disagreed over whether it was right to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians to help them solve the problem. He spoke to those who thought they knew the right answer and were proud of their knowledge. Paul said that everyone has knowledge and that pride is bad. Pride hurts others, but love builds up others.

We do not know all we should, so we should not be proud. Knowing God and His will is most important.

To know God, we must love God. God knows whether we love Him.

Knowledge did not solve the question about meat offered to idols. Paul said that we know an idol is nothing. There is only one God. People may worship many idols or gods, but that does not make them real. We worship the one true God, who created everything and gives life.

Some Christians in Corinth had weak faith. They had worshiped idols before they were saved, and they thought of the idols when they ate the meat. They felt they had sinned. Their conscience made them feel guilty.

Food is neutral, neither good nor bad. Eating or not eating it does not bring us closer to God. Still, the Corinthians needed to be careful. They were not to eat meat offered to idols just because they thought it was all right. They had to consider others.

Suppose a weak Christian saw a strong one eating that meat. He might think, "If it is OK for him, it is OK for me." He might then sin against his conscience and eat. That might lead him to sin against his conscience in other areas.

Our conscience can change us as we learn more about right and wrong, but until it changes, we should not sin against it. If we do, it will be easier to ignore it and sin in other ways.

A Christian sins if he makes a weak Christian ignore his conscience. Paul said he would stop eating meat rather than hurt a weak Christian. Paul made his choices based on love, not just knowledge.

If you love someone, you will not make him sin. When you make a decision, think of others.

SOMETHING TO DO

To decode the message, do not copy the letters given. Instead, print the letter that comes directly before each letter in the alphabet. For example, if the letter given is *B*, you should print *A*.

1. HPE XBOUT VT UP SFTQPOE JO MPWF UP PUIFST

Read I Corinthians 8:1-13. Fill in the blanks with the letter of the phrase that correctly completes each sentence.

2. ____ Knowledge makes people proud, but charity (love) (a. builds up others, b. tears down others).
3. ____ If someone really loves God, (a. it is a secret, b. others know it).
4. ____ The Corinthians disagreed on whether or not to eat meat (a. that was undercooked, b. that had been offered to idols).
5. ____ If we do what we think is right but it causes another to sin, (a. we are wrong, b. we do not need to worry about it).
6. ____ It is more important to (a. insist on our Christian liberty, b. think of how our actions affect others).

MY DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY—Where did the light of God shine?
Read John 1:1-5.

TUESDAY—Where is the fire never quenched?
Read Mark 9:42-48.

WEDNESDAY—What is the second most important commandment?
Read Mark 12:28-34.

THURSDAY—What three things describe the kingdom of God?
Read Romans 14:13-19.

FRIDAY—What edifies, or builds up, others?
Read I Corinthians 8:1-6.

SATURDAY—When do we sin against Christ?
Read I Corinthians 8:7-13.

SUNDAY—How many things should we do to God's glory?
Read I Corinthians 10:23-11:1.