First Corinthians 7:17-8:11 Part 2
By Charles Feinberg

Charles Feinberg:

What do you mean by that? Animals, Meat, flesh for the sacrifice to Idols. In this chapter, the subject and oh how important it is. How this would be a unifying cementing force, a powerful harmonizing force in our churches. What's the subject? Christian liberty. Oh the things that have been said about Christian Liberty erroneously and the licenses that have been taken because folks say I am exercising my Christian liberty even doing things that are directly contrary to the Word of God. That's not Christian liberty, that's claiming to be Christian and to have Christian liberty and acting like the heathen.

Now, in this chapter the subject is Christian liberty and consideration, mark it now, consideration for a Christian brother. The specific problem in Corinth friends was whether a Christian. Now you and I, we may never be called upon to face this problem because we are not living in a society where there are actually idols and images and idol worship goes on not to any great extent at any rate. It's not the usual general thing in our life. This specific problem in Corinth was whether a Christian was at liberty to eat meat which were slaughtered in idol worship. You see, almost all meats sold in the markets were of such a type. Young believers were fearful that if they eat of meat like that they would be dishonoring the Lord as though they were having a part in idol feast or idol worship. Course when we buy meat in a market we don't know exactly how many different processes it's gone through. We do have a federal overseeing body and yet at times they indicate that they're not too sure about things after all they're only human and all but we do not have any oversight over things before they're in the market. This is talking about Christians going into a marketplace and buying meat and the only meat they had
there was, almost all of it at any rate, sold in those markets were of that type. I suppose they
didn't want to kill animals and in their paganism not offered it first to their idols. They wanted to
give their idols the best of all. You know that in heathen cultures and even today.

Now young believers were afraid lest if the aid of that meat knowing what had been done
with it before they would be dishonoring the Lord as though they were having part in idol feasts
or idol worship. You see what I don't see how in heaven's name they could ever come to that.
Well, it doesn't appeal to your logic mine but Paul is dealing not with things as they might be but
he was dealing with actualities. He's not thinking up things to correct. There were plenty of
problems in Corinth without imagining and conceiving certain other ones. The reason, and we
have to have a concern we have to have a love for the unbelievers today as well as them and
young believers doesn't mean young in age necessarily, but young in the Christian faith. They
didn't want to compromise that testimony by taking part or recognizing anything like a heathen
ceremony. So they had written Paul about the matter that was troubling them. They certainly
went to the right source and Paul went to the right source. He was before the Lord for the
answer. And this thing is important enough. It's going to occupy the apostle Paul from Chapter 8
verse 1 to the first verse of Chapter Eleven, so it must not be a small matter. In fact it takes up
more space than the whole matter of Immorality in the fifth chapter. It takes up more space than
the matter of marriage which was in the seventh chapter. So we ought to put emphasis where
God puts emphasis.

Now though the question may seem to have no bearing on our lives remember this, it is
still alive issue among missionaries who are working among idolatrous people. Some of those
that are from the Stone Age, some of them are still in barbarous. Some that are still in
cannibalism. Some that are still head hunters and remember too. And here's the important thing.
The Bible is timely talks to the age in which it was written and it is timeless. It is good throughout all the centuries of the Christian faith. The principles laid down are of abiding value for us and for believers throughout the church age. This is still our guidebook. This is not some kind of a harness to keep us in a certain position, a condition not at all my friends. The word of God is given to meet the need of believers then and then those all down the years of the Christian faith. Our Lord Jesus prayed that way in John 17. He says I pray not only for these who has given me out of the world but I want to pray and I am praying for those who shall believe on thine name through them here after. Our Lord Jesus had a concern. Do you realize? Did you ever stop to think that the Lord Jesus Christ when he prayed that marvelous prayer in John 17 prayed for you because down the line you are in the faith through the ministry of someone who is saved by someone who had led that one to the Lord and all the way that Christ was praying for each one. Now, how does Paul put it? Now, notice how these chapters begin. Now concerning the things which you wrote. He begins a new theme and when we get verses to the 12th chapter we'll have something like that again.

Now concerning spiritual gifts brother I do not want you to be unaware. Now concerning things sacrifice to idols, we know, not guessing, we know that we all have knowledge. Now notice don't misread that. He doesn't say we know that we have all knowledge. We know that we all have knowledge. God imparts knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant but love edifies. Oh yes, you should see some folk if they know a little peanut of an idea before it's all over they have blown it up to 12 times or more its size just like puffed wheat and puffed rice. Knowledge makes arrogant but love edified.
He is speaking of things sacrificed to idols, portions that were not consumed at the time of offering even though the pagan had a lot of priests. There was a limit to how much meat they could eat. You see, so portions that were not consumed at the time of offering are not eaten by the heathen priests were put on sale in the markets for public use. And he says we all have knowledge. He speaks not of unbelievers he's speaking of believers and saying not that we know everything. If this were so in Corinth, they wouldn't have sent a letter asking Paul's judgment on this matter are on marriage or on anything else. No no no. We all have knowledge, they would not have read if they had known everything that since we know the one true and living God we know what the folly of idolatry. So he says knowledge makes arrogant, puffs one up. He's aware at once that a word of caution is in order. Don't get puffed up.

A young graduate of a medical school came to his family doctor who had been in medical practice for some 30 or 40 years. He says, "Doctor my good friend, you've been in medical practice for I don't know how long you taken advanced courses after you got your degree and all and I know what a wonderful medical man you are. What is the most remarkable thing that you have found out in all your 40 years or so of medical practice? What's the most remarkable thing that you found out about the human anatomy?" And without a moment's hesitation he said, "Young man, I found out this most important thing that if you pat a man on the back his head swells." Now, that happens to be a feeling of every human body. All our anatomy is knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies and no wonder the Greek said a statement. And also it's in Alexander Pope, he spoke figuratively of that fountain of knowledge. He said a knowledge, knowledge is a dangerous thing. Drink deep or touch not of the Pierian Spring. Pierian Spring was in mythology supposed to be the source of wisdom and knowledge. So he's aware at once that a word of caution is in order for such knowledge can be used in such a way as to be a
stumbling block to others. Knowledge, if you have it friend, must be held in humility. Otherwise it becomes very very and I do mean very obnoxious.

Someone says he knows things and he knows he knows them. Yes, any man that thinks he knows with finality. Notice Paul says if anyone supposes that he knows anything he has not yet known as he ought to know. Any man who thinks he knows with finality shows that he is deficient in knowledge. He needs to have much much more imparted to him. I had a marvelous man of God to teach me theology. Dr. Chafer, a founder of Dallas seminary. And he gave a marvelous definition of education that I've never forgotten. He said, "Education is the process of passing from unconscious to conscious ignorance." Yes, a person who knows something will be conscious of how great his lack of knowledge is. How much more there is to be known about anything. I've often told students in examinations. Please write in this examination only what you know. If you and I began to write on things we don't know, we would never finish in this life. My friends if anyone supposes that he knows anything with finality hasn't yet known as he ought to know but if anyone loves God, ah, he's known by him. There is the mark of the Redeemed life. Remember, there is one knowledge that's worth everything. There is one relationship that is all surpassing, that is the one who knows something that matters not only for time but for eternity. This type of knowledge I say it with all earnest this type of knowledge gets you somewhere. It gets you somewhere not only in time peace heart sense of forgiveness knowledge of fellowship with God and our Lord Jesus with the Spirit of God. But he will get you all the way to eternity. If anyone loves God. He's known by him and then he's gonna begin to talk about the whole matter of idolatry. We don't have to leave that for our study next time. And it is so important. It will give us principles whereby we evaluate things of this life, things that enter in so largely and sometimes be cloud more important issues. Beloved let's not only read the word, let's not only
understand the word but by God's grace let us, every one of us who hears and knows let us all put it into practice. Happy are you. If you do them said Our Lord Jesus the Lord abundantly bless you.

Announcer:

The talk you have just heard is one of a series of messages from the book of First Corinthians taught by Dr. Charles L. Feinberg the third and final talk in this cassette will begin in just a few moments. These messages were originally heard on the new standard for living radio broadcast produced by Lockman Bible ministries translators of the New American Standard Bible. The Amplified Bible and Bible translations in many languages around the world. If you would like more information about this unusual Ministry of Bible translation and publication we invite you to write to us at new standard for living post office box 5 9 9 9. Sunny Hills California 9 2 6 3 5. And by the way study notes for this areas are also available free from the same address. And now here is Dr. Feinberg with his next message in this series from First Corinthians.

Charles Feinberg:

On our last study together our broadcast we had begun the eighth chapter of First Corinthians. The problem of things or meats sacrifice to idols. We indicated the background that believers though not taking part in idol worship or idol sacrifices which is strictly forbidden in the word of God of course but almost all the meat sold in the markets were of a type where they had been slaughtered in idol worship. The question arises whether a believer should eat of such meats because certain young believers and mature believers where afraid they would be dishonoring the lord as those, they were having a part in the Idol feast or idol worship, although they were buying the meat in the regular marketplace or the shambles as it was called. Paul says
then, in this matter the first thing we have to realize in exercising Christian liberty is that we are not to become arrogant puffed up proud about what we may allow ourselves or what we may not allow ourselves. The governing principle that will build up and in the church and between believers the important area is edify building up. We all need to be build up. We all need to be strengthened. Even the oldest believer in the world needs encouragement and needs sustaining grace every day of his life. And none of us knows any item with finality. If anyone supposedly knows anything means with finality or absolutely he hasn't yet known as he ought to know. But we do know the all-important matter and the all-important person and that is we know God and anyone loves God he's known by him. That is a tremendous leveling force. It is tremendous permeating forth. It will transform and transfigured any and every. I promise you it will transform every relationship every decision to be made for yourself as unto God or the relation to someone else.

Now in verse 4 says Paul, "Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrifice to idols," you see his resume and what he said in verse one not concerning sacrifice to idols. "Now concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world and there is no God but one." You say, "What is he talking about? How could there be no such thing as an idol when people were worshipping idols?" Now when he says there is no such thing as an idol he says believers realize that there are no such entities or personalities as are represented by the idols. Idols are the picture of anything real or substantial. Now this does not deny, although an Idol is not anything in the world it has no objective value. This does not deny the fact that behind all idolatry and I underscore the word all behind all idolatry is demon power. Demons are committed, just as the Holy Spirit is committed for our worship of God and
our worship of the Lord Jesus so demon power, satanic power is committed to the worship of idolatry. Behind all idol worship is demon power.

First Corinthians 10:20. Then he goes on to say there is no such thing as an idol in the world and that there is no God but one. In other words we're going to be speaking not because we're afraid that the Lord might be outvoted with reference to idol worship, that he has some kind of a rival or competitor. Oh no no no we're not afraid of that we know deep down in our hearts and the Word of God gives it to us and all the Old Testament testified, there is no God but one. And that's the true and the living God that Paul wrote of in first Thessalonians and that true and living God is the only one to be worshipped as indicated even in the Ten Commandments in the 20th chapter Exodus. There shall be the first commandment there shall be no other God. You shall have no other god before me. And Remember when Israel was so self-assured they were so self-dependent they thought that they would worship God above all others we can do all the commandments. And before Moses ever came down from Mount Sinai they had broken not the seventh or eighth or ninth a tenth Commander. They've broken the very first one, they were worshipping an idol that they had encouraged Aaron to make for them. Oh my friends, men don't even know the depths of their hearts to lead them astray from God. So he says, there's no God but one. Truly there is one God who exists in three persons. God the Father, God the son and the Holy Spirit but there is one God. Paul says to Timothy there's one god and one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus. Now he says for even if there were so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth as indeed there are many gods and many lords people make those to themselves, yet for us, ah, yet for us there is but one God the Father from whom we're all things and we exist for him and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things and we exist through him. Now he says we know we're talking about things that believers take as basic truths
axiomatic truths which all believers know for a fact. In reality there is but one God. He says now if other people want to have God's heaped up to themselves he says the so-called gods and they have some of them in heaven some on earth as indeed there are many gods that folk worship and many lords. He said for us believers we have been taught by the Spirit of God in a different way and by the word of God. There is only one God and He is the father from whom are all things. He is the source of everything and we exist for him not for ourselves for his glory. In other words our life is in him in whom we live move and have our being. Paul says to the Athenians in Acts 17 that God the Father, everything comes from him. He is the creator. He is the preserve. He is the sustaining. He is the director. He is the governor and we exist for him. A lot of folks think are existing for themselves and they are doing it but it's not according to the will of God. We have no right to say I'll leave my life the way I want.

We exist for him and we have one Lord, now you notice here the Spirit of God is not mentioned but he is involved as well. There is one God is the father the son and the Holy Spirit. We said one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things now from over all things God the Creator through them are all things our Lord Jesus Christ also created the first chapter of the Gospel of John where we read that he created all things and without him was not anything made which was made and Paul tells us in Colossians that which agrees with what the apostle John tells us in John the first chapter. Paul says that he is the one who made all things and threw him all things. The old version used to say consist, they cohered, they stick together. It's not gravitation that keeps this world together, it's the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. So through whom are all things and we exist through him. We live unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ he is our sustaining principle. We owe him life and breath and all things.
Now he says however not all men have this knowledge. Evidently they don't even today think of what happened in our country where so many tried to make a god out of a man and what a miserable man he was at that. And we're willing almost a thousand of them to go out of this life following him, self-destruction. Certainly not all men have this knowledge. That's why we send missionaries to different parts of the world and we have to keep on doing that because our Lord Jesus gave the command. It's not a matter of option, it's a matter of direct command and we better learn it early. Why? Because all men do not have this knowledge that there's only one God. They think they have all kinds. And do you know that in ancient Egypt as wise as it was they had a marvelous method of hardening copper so that they could make those pyramids. They had marvelous ways of mixing color. You should see some of the pictorial representations in their tombs of the dead. I've seen them. They look as though some of them as though they'd been done last week. People would love to know that. And yet these Egyptians were so dark and in their minds apart from God. The ancient Egyptians had to themselves all kinds of idols, frog headed and cattle headed. Those ten planes were against the Gods of Egypt. They worship the Nile. They worshipped the sun, they worship the first born of Pharaoh. That's why those ten plagues were on them. They even worshipped the dung beetle. The scarab and the Pharaohs even put their names, their cartouche C A R T O U C H E on a dung beetle. Supposed to have been a representation of something in the heavenly sphere, think of it. Not all men have this knowledge and I'm sorry to say even in our so-called enlightened Christian countries not all men have this knowledge, but some being custom to the idol until now. Eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol and the conscience being weak is defile.

Now not everyone has the knowledge that is imparted to believers and not all have knowledge which is the portion of mature believers. Therefore it is not for us to say that it makes
no difference whether meats were offered idols and that we may eat of them. As far as the individual conscience is concerned, he's at liberty to eat but he must. And here at friend he must consider the effect of his actions on others. A Christian must be concerned about the consciences of others. How many times as dean of seminary I had to point that out to students. They wanted to allow themselves some of them, this this and that and the other and I say why do you do that? They said, "Well, frankly I don't think it can hurt me." And my answer invariably came back. "My dear young brother, for years I've looked through the Bible to find out where anything I did was to be done solely or only on the ground that it wouldn't hurt me." There is a higher element there is a higher standard. There is a higher measuring stick said was that a Christian shouldn't say doing such and such won't hurt me. I'll do it. That certainly should be the basic. But he's got to go on further and Scripture tells us you ought to refrain from things not only because they won't hurt you but you better be sure they weren't hurt someone else and those students on those occasions had to admit that they hadn't taken that into account and the Lord Jesus says, "He who owns the name of Christ must remember our Lord Jesus and Matthew 18 warned against anyone who would make a little one stumble" that means little ones as children or those young in the faith, the principal would be the same. Why does he say this? Look at first seven. Because some some do eat food as if it worked sacrificed to an idol. You know better. But if they see you doing it they say well I'll do it and all the while in the back of their mind. All this has come from idol ceremonies has come from idol sacrifices and the conscience as being weak is defiled. It's disturbed. If we exercise our liberty, hear it brother sister. If we exercise our liberty regardless of the thought of others I'm talking to Christians, what will be the result on the lives of others? There's a sense in which we even have to be careful what we do as a witness and as a reflection of the Christian life too before unsaved ones and believers all the more. You take a weak believer
who wouldn't allow himself that but he see you doing and he's got to keep up pace. It's as if a fellow who has just learned how to swim should see how easy it is for an Olympic swimmer and the fellow eggs him on it says all come on you can make it you can make it.

If he tries to keep up the pace he can bring on a heart condition. Oh no. Watch out. They may be emboldened to do the things we do without the conviction we have that the matter is right before the Lord. There may have been certain qualms we had on other matters when we were young, they have these qualms in theirs. Let's have some Christian regard as to putting a brake. Let's put some kind of restraint ourselves before the Lord on things we allow ourselves to have Christian Liberty of course. And if you're doing it alone eating certain things such as that it's one thing, but to do it before a believer you are causing harm. Thus you're doing them harm, robbing them of peace of mind. The strong believer then is not scot free. Oh no. The Scripture says he is to blame. You remember we're told that certain man could not see Jesus for the press, the crowd was in the way. They were between him and our Lord Jesus. He wasn't tall enough to see over them. Their bodies obstructed his view and prevented him from seeing Jesus.

Somewhat he said, "I wonder if the same thing isn't true today. If some who claim to know Christ are not in the ways of other people seeing him." Our bodies may not keep anybody from seeing Jesus, but our lives can and sometimes do. People cannot see Jesus because our lives are in the way. When you hear a person of the world say if that's Christianity, I don't want it. Some professed Christians life has come between that person and the Savior. Is your life, is mine a stumbling block that keeps someone else from Christ, God forbid. A blind man we're told, went about the town where he lived with a lantern on his arm. Someone who knew he was blind. Asked him why in the world are you carrying a lantern? Because you're blind it can't help you. He said to keep other people from stumbling over me. What a good example. He wasn't just
thinking of himself. He was thinking of others, but that's always the way of selfishness. It thinks of itself, the Christian life is to be unselfish. Christ thought not of himself. He thought not of that equality but God has something to be laid ahold of and to be grasped and never to be relinquished.

No. He became obedient to that Philippians 2:5-11. There you have the marvelous principle. Now notice verse 8. But food will not commend us to God. We are neither the worse if we do not eat it, not the better if we do eat it. You're not any more saved or any less safe. But take care. Here's the principal less. This liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. My friend. How could Paul in all the world make this matter more clear since these matters are not a primary importance that of eating, why not put it away if it troubles someone else, you see. That he goes on, take care less this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you who have knowledge, doesn't bother you you know these ideas are nothing in the world and that none of that idolatress worship is going to rub off on you because you eat that meat, you can eat the meat because it's edible. Someone sees you have knowledge dining in an idol's Temple. Some of them did that too. Well not his conscience if he's weak be strengthened to eat things sacrificed idols for through your knowledge, he who is weak is ruined. The brother for whose sake Christ died. My dear friends let's not be a stumbling block. Let's be a climbing block, a block upon which one they climb to higher planes of Christian maturity and knowledge. Let's not rob that person of the peace of mind for which Christ died. Think of it when he says for through your knowledge who is weak is ruined. The brother who say Christ died. If Christ died for that man, how, even though is weak can he be ruined?
You have robbed him of peace of mind. And don't you ever put a small price on that because the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary, that we might have freedom from sin and might have peace of mind not only with reference to sin but all of our life. Don't allow yourself to make these things of secondary importance, never to be a stumbling block. Would you think of being one to put a hurdle in front of a blind man? Would you see a child or just rubbing his eyes just gotten out of its crib? Would you then take something in the room and make it a cause of stumbling and of injury to that child you say well how how unthinking and how cruel can one be. Yes but people do it all the while. You say well I'm on a higher grade of spiritual and will use it to bless another one. Remember what Paul said to the Jew I became a Jew to the Gentiles and talk to one with a law under the law not being under the law except in law to Christ.

What did you mean by that? Well if Paul met a Jew, said I don't understand the virgin birth? What did he say oh you simpleton, you're an idiot. Can't you understand the virgin birth? Why not everybody in the world came into the world from a father or mother. Adam didn't and certainly that worked and Eve came into the world a different way than Adam did. Why can't you understand it? You stupid? No, we're not just do that and then Isaac came in a different way too. His mother and father could have been married for another thousand years and they would never have a child. Romans tells us they consider their bodies as good as dead. That was a miracle. You and I haven't come into the world in the same way that Adam did or Eve. Nobody's come that way. And how many have come in the way Isaac did? Maybe John the Baptist, but not very many. And then finally there is still another way, the way we all came in through Father Mother. But those four ways are not the only way. One did come into the world, Paul would tell that unbelieving brother of his in Judaism, he would say there is, he had a fifth way. And that was to be born of one parent and not both. To be born of a mother without a father. Now the child
prenatal he has to be nurtured and carried by someone and God made the mother to be the one to do that. So there was one in the history of the world who came in by way of a virgin birth that you say it's only one. Yes, but Adam was only one and Eve was only one and Isaac was only one, that's no excuse. So my friends let's not say I am on this level of knowledge you come up to my knowledge don't you do that. You become unto them see that all the stumbling blocks are out of the way. A group of women were talking together before missionary meeting started. The subject they were deeply concerned over was how they could get their husbands to come to church and really know the Lord. An elderly woman spoke up and said I don't often tell this but I will today because it may encourage you ladies not to give up but to pray and work on and on and on for your husband's salvation. For a good many years I went to church by myself. My husband was good enough to take me, but he always left me at the front door of the church then drove home again. Sometimes I felt very concerned because we'd never come in but what I tell the Lord all about it he would tell me to keep on trusting and live the gospel before my husband. As I put up my husband's lunch one day I put my Sunday school paper over the top of his lunch knowing that in his lunch hour he'd read it asking God all the while to help him.

Sure enough, that night he asked me what I'd gotten that paper. I told him it was my Sunday school paper. Say, he said that certainly has some good stories in it, put one in every day. So all I could do to pray and obey God prepared my husband's heart. One day at the close of a Sunday service we were asked about his prayer and an invitation was given. When I raised my hand there was my beloved husband at the front kneeling. When we got home I said to her husband. How did you happen to come in church tonight? Well wife, he said, I've been watching you for a long time now and I saw you had something I didn't have. When I heard the singing inside. Something drew me into the church and I took a back seat. When the minister asked if
there were any who would like to give their hearts to Jesus I decided I wanted your savior to.
This lady says you can't imagine how surprised and happy I felt ladies but it was well worth my
every effort cause and prayer. I've often thought what if I had gotten discouraged and given up.
My husband's salvation in a certain sense depended on his seeing Jesus in me.

My friends, doesn't this stir your mind and heart. Doesn't that put you down on your
knees? Doesn't it at least put your heart on its knees before God? Oh cry out to God. So many
come to me. My husband's unsaved or less often, a husband comes and says my wife is unsaved.
Won't you talk to them? I almost invariably say what kind. I don't want to be too personal but
what kind of a life have you lived before that unsaved companion. And oftentimes they make
excuses all over the landscape. Don't do it don't do it. It's gonna be even harder for anyone to get
the message across if you in your life are a stumbling block. You said well if I am I do it
unintentionally. Well then as God asked God fervently to keep you even unintentionally from
being any kind of a stumbling block to your dear beloved spouse. Believe God make this
meaningful to us all this is so important. You see how timely this word was with reference to the
dear ones in Corinth and don't to see it's not been outmoded, it's not outdated, it's not
unnecessary. As long as people live in the world and as long as they have the same needs as you
and I. Human nature is still the same. That's why the gospel is applicable in the 20th century just
as much as it was in the 10th century, in the second century in the first century because men need
God's word God is saving grace and do apply. May these lessons friends, I plead with you I
earnestly plead with you. May these lessons be not just a tale well told? Let's make it part and
parcel of our life. That's the only way the word of God can do that. I often say you and I don't
know any more of the word of God than we are willing to put into practice. Think that over. Pray
over it and make God abundantly bless you in any relationship in your home or elsewhere.
Announcer:

This concludes this series of messages on this cassette. If you would like a free catalogue of other Bible study cassettes available or free study notes for this series please address your letter of request to new standard for living post office box 599 Sunny Hills California 92635. We thank you for your interest and prayerful support of this ministry.