

# BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

## Small Group Study Guide: 1 Corinthians

Week of September 29 (Week 9)

1 Corinthians 8: What is Grace and what is Not



### 1 CORINTHIANS 8: SUMMARY

1 Corinthians 8 offers valuable insight into balancing knowledge with love and using our freedom in Christ responsibly. The key takeaway from this chapter is the call to prioritize love for our fellow believers above our personal freedoms. Paul teaches that while we have the right to certain freedoms, we should not exercise those rights if they risk causing another believer to stumble in their faith. This passage calls us to a higher standard of love, reminding us that our actions should always reflect our commitment to God and our care for each other. (Bible Hub, 1 Corinthians 8: Summary).

### OBSERVING & APPLYING THE TEXT

#### Starting with God

1. What does 1 Cor. 8 tell us about the character and nature of God? Reflect on the following verses:
  - “If anyone loves God, he is known by God” (v. 3)
  - “there is no God but one” (v. 4), there is one God, the Father, from whom all things and from whom we exist, and the one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (v. 6)
  - “And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died” (v. 11)

#### Continuing the Conversation

#### **What Grace is Not (1 Cor. 8; see also Rom. 15:1, 4)**

At the backdrop of 1 Corinthians 8 is the Jewish dietary law and how it is understood by both the Jew and Gentile converts, among whom are believers with stronger and weaker faith which calls for grace, acceptance and tolerance to build up the body of Christ (read also Romans 14 and 15:1-7)

1. What is the issue Paul is dealing with in 1 Corinthians 8? Read the following verses: 1, 4, 7, 8, 10 & 13.

2. In dealing with the issue of “food offered to idols,” Paul’s remark in verses 1 & 2 reveals the attitude of a group of Corinthian believers. What do we understand about the Corinthians’ attitude? Who are they as regarding their faith? (Compare Rom. 15:1).

The characteristic of those who have “knowledge” (1 Cor. 8) and considered “strong” in their faith (Rom. 15):

3. In 1 Cor. 8:7, Paul says “not all possess this knowledge.” Read verses 9-12 to understand who these people in the faith are.

Who they are in the faith:

Their characteristics:

Reflection: Both 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 15 are criticisms of the strong in faith. In both these passages Paul deals with the issue of tolerance and moralism because they can both replace the grace of Christianity. Both say “my way or get out.” The Weak say, “I have the truth, and you don’t so I’m better than you.” The Strong say, “I don’t make moral evaluations and if you do, I’m better than you.” But the Bible calls us beyond both mistakes” (Tim Armitage, Sermon Notes on 1 Corinthians 8).

## **What Grace is (8:10-11; cf. Rom. 14:1; 15:1, 7)**

4. What is the attitude of grace according to 1 Cor. 8: 1b and Romans 15:1, 7?

Reflection: Four ways we can show grace to another: (1) to make space for someone to whom you deeply differ by being willing to understand them; (2) to make space by being willing to change, or even expecting to learn, not with pity; (3) to make space by expecting to be misunderstood; and (4) to make space by being patient that change takes time; waiting on God to do the work. (Tim Armitage, Sermon Notes on 1 Corinthians 8).

## **Growing in Grace**

5. According to verses 8-13, how can both the weak and the strong in faith grow in grace?

- The weak in faith understanding grace (v.8)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- The strong in faith understanding grace (vv. 1, 9-13)

Reflection: “You place a high value on relationships. You have a passion to engage culture. But should engagement with an unbeliever take precedence over love for another believer? I understand your heart. Make sure you understand God's heart. Weak believers exist everywhere. It takes time to develop maturity. Strong believers have a responsibility to them” (Thomas Constable, Tom Constable Notes on 1 Corinthians as quoted from Nyquist, pp. 115-16).

## PRAYER

### PRAYER GUIDE

September 30-October 4, 2024

Read 1 Corinthians 8

**Monday:** 8:1 *"We know that all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up.* Lord, thank you for the knowledge and the truth that sets us free, but also for the love that still restrains us and makes us give consideration to someone else's welfare, not just our own.

**Tuesday:** 8:2 *"If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know."* "Whenever we have a view that some attitude, or action, or freedom that someone exercises is wrong, we are always seeing things only from our point of view" (Ray Stedman). Lord, keep me from seeing things only from my point of view without really giving weight to the other person's point of view.

**Wednesday:** 8:6 *"... for us there is one God, the Father from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."* Reflect on the character and nature of God and worship Him for who He is.

**Thursday:** 8:9 & 12 *"But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak ... Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ."* "Christian courtesy would demand that we never flaunt our liberty before anybody who feels strongly about it" (Ray Stedman). Lord, give me wisdom in exercising my Christian liberty so that I do not sin against you by sinning against fellow Christian and wounding their conscience when it is weak.

**Friday:** 8: 13 *"Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."* Dear Lord, if there is anything that I do stumble other Christians help me to give up for the sake of love and the welfare of fellow Christians.