

## *I Corinthians 8:1-13*

### *Defilement*

- The Jewish culture of Jesus' day was obsessed with the Law and the need to avoid defilement from the world. Great energy was spent by the Pharisees to keep from being "defiled" or stained by things. Any close contact with Gentiles was forbidden. Jesus association with known sinners was viewed as a sure sign that he was not of God (in the minds of the Pharisees).
- The same impulse (to avoid defilement) exists in parts of the Christian community today. The most common culprits are 1) Amusements that are worldly, 2) Associations that are ungodly, 3) Addictions of various types that become spiritual strongholds that keep people captive. But the most conspicuous culprit is any association with the occult or things related to occult activity.
- There are a number of things we must understand to be free of defilement.

#### **A. Knowledge of the truth may set us free but without love it may defile others.**

"<sup>1</sup> Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. <sup>2</sup> If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; <sup>3</sup> but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him."

John 15:12-13 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one **lay down his life for his friends.**"

Ephesians 4:15 "but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ."

#### **B. Defilement is a real threat but not by what comes from outside us.**

"<sup>4</sup> Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. <sup>5</sup> For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, <sup>6</sup> yet for us there is {but} one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we {exist} for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we {exist} through Him."

Jn.17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, **the only true God**, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent."

I Tim.2:5 "For **there is one God**, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,"

#### **C. Defilement comes from the condition of the heart that believes a lie.**

"<sup>7</sup> However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat {food} as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. <sup>8</sup> But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat."

Matthew 15:11 "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but **what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.**"

Matthew 15:18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from **the heart, and those defile the man.**"

#### **D. The truth sets us free but not to destroy others.**

“<sup>9</sup> But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup> For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup> For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.”

**Matthew 18:6** “but **whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble**, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

### **E. To misguide another person is a sin against Christ.**

“<sup>12</sup> And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.”

**Matthew 25:40** “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even to the least of them, **you did it to Me.**’”

### **The point of this text**

**Defilement is a threat  
to those who have no understanding  
and to those with truth and no love.**

### **Action steps from this text**

- **Seek love, not just knowledge.**
- **Do not fear false gods.**
- **Acquire understanding to avoid spiritual defilement.**
- **Never let liberty exist without love.**
- **See Christ standing with the weaker brother or sister.**