

THINK HARD, STAY HUMBLE: THE LIFE OF THE MIND

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[1 Corinthians 8:1-3](#)

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

This passage convicted me about how often I will speak without loving the person that is right in front of me. I have prayed that God would help me to look someone in the eyes when I’m talking to them and really care. I have seven questions I ask myself before I speak because it’s so easy for me to be distracted and to be nervous about speaking. One of the questions is, “Am I worried about what people will think of my message, or what God thinks?” Another is, “Do I genuinely love these people?”

This passage is addressing people that technically have the right theology but were still wrong before God because of their lack of love. Paul talks about food that is offered to idols. A lot of Corinthians had come out of a pagan background where they worshiped idols. Some of the more mature Christians understood that idols were nothing and that it was okay to eat meat that had been sacrificed to them. Some weaker Christians, however, had problems with it.

The mature Christians were pressuring the weaker Christians to eat the meat, and Paul responds to the mature Christians by saying, “You weren’t thinking about your brother. He didn’t feel right in his conscience about eating the meat, and yet you pushed him to eat.” Paul asked, “Why would you do that? If I knew that I could hurt my brother by eating meat, I would never eat meat again.”

I admire Paul so much for the way he feels toward people. In [Romans 9:3](#) he writes, “For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Do you feel that way about the people in your life? Paul’s life showed that he really meant what he said.

Some of you in this room think really hard through the Scriptures. My challenge to you is, How hard do you think about people? About the lost? When was the last time you wept for the lost?

It’s so easy to seclude ourselves from the world of lost people. We step out of it for a season to think hard about the Scriptures and keep going on in school to learn more, and we eventually get to the point where we realize that we don’t love the lost like we should. The point isn’t that we shouldn’t pursue learning, but we ought to be able to do both, to love people and know the Bible better.

John MacArthur wrote years ago, “Knowledge is essential, but it’s not sufficient.” Paul writes in [1 Corinthians 13:2](#), “And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

Some of you could be brilliant and worthless. You could be like a great basketball player that never misses a shot but always shoots at the other team’s basket. He’s a great shooter, but he’s killing the team.

Why did God gift you the way that he did? It’s for us, not for you. We should constantly be thinking, How can I build up other people?

Paul writes in [1 Corinthians 8:2](#), “If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.” If you really knew, you would know better and you would use your knowledge to love. There is a danger in puffing yourself up and imagining yourself to be some brilliant person.

Paul then says, “But if anyone loves God, he is known by God” ([1 Corinthians 8:3](#)). It’s not just about information. When you love God, you don’t just know a lot of facts about him. You *love* him. There’s a relationship and he knows you.

One of my favorite verses is [Galatians 4:9](#), “But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God...” It amazes me that Paul changes his expression like that. The creator of the universe knows me! I actually talk to God and he answers me!

Do you want to brag about something? Brag about the fact that God knows you. Don’t boast about how much you know. Boast about the fact that the God of the universe calls you by name.

Some of you have been studying Christ for years. But does your life look anything like his? Can you say like Paul, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ?” Do you look like Jesus? Do you love like Jesus?

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