

## **I Corinthians 8:7-13** **The Strong and Weak**

### **Introduction:**

I remember watching the sports channel: The strongest man in the world contest; all these men looked very muscular and strong but only one will receive the reward for the strongest man. They had to pick up these huge boulders in succession, each weighting more than the previous one. By the time these men got to the end they were dropping out, only one strong man persevered and lifting the last boulder weighting 400 lbs. A man from Holland won the contest and the prize of \$20,000 dollars. However in the Christian life the spiritually strong are “to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just to please ourselves.” (Rom. 15:1)

### **I. Weak Conscience v.7-8**

#### **A. Paul’s concern for the weaker brother**

1. Not every Christian has the knowledge of the strong – See I Cor. 3:1-3
2. Some new believers are “accustomed to the idol” v.7
3. Food is rather a minor matter.

#### **B. The problem arises when the strong assert freedom.**

### **II. Christian Liberty – v.9-13**

#### **A. The strong must learn the way of love – v.9**

1. Be aware of being a “stumbling block” (proskomma- GK.) means “an obstacle in the way”
2. Paul gives a for instance v.10

#### **B. Tearing down your brother – v.11**

1. “To ruin” is to “destroy” by way of judgment – (Matt. 8:25; Luke 15:24)
2. Walk according to love – Rom. 14:15

#### **C. Extent of the atonement:**

1. The weaker brother is not a stranger or a reprobate
2. A specific text for whom did Christ die.
3. John Owen’s brilliant work on the “Death of death in the death of Christ”

#### **D. The Seriousness of the offense:**

1. You sin against Christ – v. 12 cf. Acts 9:25; 22:8; 26:15
2. Each brother and sister in Christ is joined to Christ

#### **E. A major question: Should the weak remain weak? Or should we expect the weak to grow up?**

1. Undoubtedly Paul is one of the “strong” Rom. 14:14
2. Paul does not say the weak are right – Mark 7:1-13
3. Paul establishes a fundamental principle – I Tim. 4:4,5
4. Paul gives us another helpful principle – Titus 1:15

#### **F. Maintaining the right balance – v.13**

#### **Conclusion:**

1. *Paul is not saying we must allow our conduct to be dominated and dictated by the views of other Christians – John 8:36; II Cor. 3:17 cf. WMC – chapter 20, Sec. 2 on Christian liberty.*
2. *It is the Christian’s duty to think not as it affects ourselves only, but also as it affects others – Rom. 12:2*
3. *The strong should forgo his privileges because to hurt our brother is contrary to the law of love – Rom. 14:15*

