

Consider One Another
06-07-20

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.
Romans 14:19

The context of Romans 14 pertains to offending others when we need not do so. Specifically, it was about eating meats sacrificed to animals (and what was clean and unclean). All Christians should have understood idols were nothing (1 Cor. 8), but some still felt conscientious about it, while others (unbelievers) lacked knowledge of their meaninglessness. It was possible to cause someone to sin with this act, by either offending or causing them to trespass their conscience. Therefore, Paul was directing Christians to consider not doing something for the sake of others. This is the definition of Christian liberty: the ability to surrender something for the sake of others.

1 Corinthians 8:9 *But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.*

Galatians 5:13 *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

It is very different from human liberty, which is the freedom to act despite the offense to others. It is the freedom to surrender something for others. This is the basis of spiritual maturity, and is the cornerstone of this commandment: *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works* - Hebrews 10:24

One of the chief evidences of spiritual maturity is to consider not just whether an action is a sin or not. It is to ask ourselves these questions: how do my actions affect others, and how do my words affect others? To be mature in Christ is to pursue peace and edification of others.

Let us consider these two directions for a moment. First, do you think of others when you speak (or communicate) your words? Today we have a multitude of ways to express our opinion. Opinions are like noses, everyone has one. Have you ever stopped to consider when your opinion is of no value? Mature Christians balance unnecessary opinions with edification. Pursuing peace means pursuing edification. It contrasts speaking in anger and speaking in love, provoking wrath verses provoking better behavior. Consider Paul's command here: *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another*- Galatians 5:26.

How about the actions you take? Do you think of others with your deeds? One of the most important actions we undertake that is for others is the assembly with the Saints (Heb. 10:25). Many see this as being only about God and their own edification; this is an immature mindset. Our participation with the Saints (in the assembly or other ways) is a tremendous measure of our spiritual maturity. We participate with others not for our edification, but for theirs.

Many fail to leave the basics of Christianity (Hebrews 5:10-6:3). They are Christians for their own salvation, and are not learning to live for others. But maturity means we grow in that mindset of consideration. When it comes to being wronged, it is easier to forgive when guilty of the same (Hebrews 4:15, Matthew 18:23-35). To be spiritually mature is to be one who is not easily offended, and does not hold an offense. When it comes to speaking, it is wiser to say nothing that to speak hastily. To be spiritually mature is to know when to speak (James 1:19-20), and then to know what to say (Ephesians 4:29, Colossians 4:6).