Devotion #319

**God of Peace**

**Romans 14:19 (NASB)** *“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”*

One of the most tragic things that sin has accomplished in all of us is selfishness. When God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in it, including man, He did so as an expression of His power but also of His selfless love. He wanted to show His love to His creation, but man would rebel against God and choose to go his own way. (Genesis 3) Yet, the Lord still loved all that He had made. So in the course of time, He came to the earth to rescue everyone who would turn back to Him. (Colossians 1:13) There could never be a more kind or gracious act than that.

Because God did this for us and is, by His very nature, a God who wants peace in His creation, we, too, are to demonstrate that same peace. You and I live each day struggling with one thing to the next and one person to the next, giving us the opportunity to prove that God’s love is greater than our struggles with one another and that there is peace when God is in control.

The issue Paul was addressing centers on the issue of eating meat offered to idols. The issue was that if a person was saved out of that pagan life, he or she may be very sensitive to partaking in that food. So Paul says that if someone invites you to a dinner, and they serve meat offered to idols, just eat it. It’s nothing anyway. But if the new believer is convicted by it, they you, as the mature believer, are not to take part in it for the sake of your weaker brother or sister.

There is a lot to take in with that illustration. For a better understanding, read about it in 1 Corinthians 10. Just understand that God is the God of peace. He wants all of His children to live in peace with each other. Even if that means we deny liberties we have in God. We do that because we want our weaker brother or sister in the faith to know that they are our priority. Weaker in the faith means that they have only begun their journey with Christ and have not grown up in certain areas spiritually, not that they are immature as people or less valuable.

The point is that we need to remember that we have no power to change anyone, but we can live in peace with people. We do that by being sensitive to where others are in the journey in life. We may not always agree on every subject and even passionately disagree on some subjects, but our hearts should always be striving for peace between us. Even if that means we hold back on saying something or on doing something or in Paul’s case, eating something.

It is important to remember that the message is to believers. By refraining from something for the sake of an unbeliever may make an impact in them, but not always. The issue is about offending a brother or sister in the faith. God will deal with the unbeliever by showing them how much love there is between the two believers. And maybe the unbeliever will want to know more about our God in the process.

Let’s make sure we are reflecting our Lord’s heart to one another as believers. After all, we are a part of His family. The world will only see things the Holy Spirit lets them see, in His time and His way. Our goal is to love all people, but our priority is to keep peace between our brothers and sisters in the Lord and show the world what it is like to live in a family who really loves one another. Then maybe the world will want that same love for themselves.