

“The Liberty that Offends”

1 Corinthians Chapter 8

Divisions

Chapter 1 – Divisions in the Church

Chapter 2 – Difference between God’s Wisdom and Man’s Wisdom

Chapter 3 – Difference between Mature Christians and Carnal Christians

Chapter 4 – Dealing with Arrogance

Disorder

Chapter 5 – Dealing with Sexual Immorality and Mis-Directed Tolerance

Chapter 6 – Dealing with Lawsuits and Prostitutes

Difficulties

Chapter 7 – Dealing with Sex, Marriage and Divorce

Paul has another issue on his list to address. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

Chapters 8, 9 and 10 will be dealing with Christian liberty.

1Cr 8:1 1) Going Deeper than the Surface Issue vs 1-3

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols,

- Referring back to chapter 7 verse 1 there seems to be a letter with a series of issues asked of Paul.
- He addresses these and the subject change here in chapter 8 is indication of moving on to another issue. “Things sacrificed to idols”
 - To understand this chapter we need to understand the issue of the day. Eating meat that was sacrificed to idols.
 - In that culture, the pagan practice of bringing meat to the temples of the pagan gods to appease them. A worshipper would bring the meat. A portion was burnt; a portion was given to the temple priests and a portion given back to the worshipper.
 - Due to the amount of meat offered to the temple, the priests could not eat it all there for the excess was sold in the temple markets at discount prices. You could imagine, people bringing their best to the temple and then it was sold at a discount to the public. What a deal.
 - Everyone likes a deal. So some Christians didn’t think twice about shopping there. Yet others thought it was horrible.

we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant (*KJV puffs up*), but love edifies (*builds up*).

- But right at the beginning Paul takes it deeper. More to the heart of the issue rather than simply eating meat sacrificed to idols.
- Paul is addressing what govern their behavior. Knowledge? Or Love?
- Knowledge **Puffs up**. Love **Builds up**. Both cause growth. But LOVE is far superior then the other.
 - 1 Corinthians 13:2 “If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

1Cr 8:2 If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;

1Cr 8:3 but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

- If we think we know a matter in reality we actually only know in part. There is always more to learn.
- AW Tozer said, “There are two things that make a man ignorant: One is no education, the other is too much education.”
- Paul says if we love God we will be known by God. This is the knowledge I desire. I desire to be known by Him. For this to happen I need to Love Him. Not perform for Him, Not do great things for Him. Just Love Him.
 - John 21:15-17 Jesus asked Peter three times if he Love Him. Three times Peter said he did. Three times Jesus told Peter that his love for Jesus would be demonstrated in feeding Jesus’ flock.
 - James 1:27 “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”
 - God will know you if you love people.

1Cr 8:4 2) Christian Liberty from Knowledge vs 4-8

Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we **know** that there is no such thing as an idol in the world,

- Paul first approaches this issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols with knowledge.
- WHAT DO WE KNOW?
- **#1** - There is no such thing as an idol. (meaning an image that has power)
 - **Isaiah 44:13-17** the prophet talks about a man who cuts a tree down, from it he makes a table, makes a fire and makes an idol and bows down to it. From the same tree. It doesn't make sense, What if he accidentally burned the idol part and is now bowing down to the table leg part.
 - **Habakkuk 2:18-19** "*What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols. 'Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!' To a mute stone, 'Arise!' And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it.*"

and that there is no God but one.

1Cr 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords,

1Cr 8:6 yet for us there is *but* one God,

- **#2** - We know there is no God but Jehovah. Yes, there are those who acknowledge "SO-CALLED" gods but they are, in truth, NO GODS AT ALL.
 - In **Daniel 3** Nebuchadnezzar knew after the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that there was no other God but Jehovah. For "*there is no other God that can deliver after this sort*"
 - **Isaiah 44:6** "*Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me'*"

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.

- **#3** - We know all things exist for God for He created everything. If He create us and all things for His purpose. They were not created to take away His glory. God does not share His glory with anyone or anything.
 - **Exodus 34:14-17** "*you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods. 'You shall make for yourself no molten gods.'*"
 - **Isaiah 42:8** "*I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.*"

1Cr 8:7 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.

- **#4** - We also know that not all men are equal in their knowledge and experience. And that those who are worried about tainted meat do not understand the reality of things and are weak and form a sense of defilement based upon lack of knowledge.

1Cr 8:8 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.

- **#5** - Lastly, we know that it doesn't matter at all about the meat. There are not cooties on it from the idols.
- You can imagine the posturing in the argument some Christians would have justifying themselves with the Christian Liberty they have in eating meat.

1Cr 8:9 **3) Christian Liberty from Love** vs 9-13

But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

1Cr 8:10 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?

1Cr 8:11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

- Paul puts the responsibility of correcting this issue on those who have knowledge.
- He doesn't tell them they are correct - even though they are.
- He doesn't tell them to teach - even though they may.
- He tells them to take care in how they use their knowledge.

- It is the responsibility of those with knowledge to understand the disparity of understanding in the body of Christ and walk in a nurturing love toward weaker brothers and sisters.

1Cr 8:12 **And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.**

- This is the first mention of SIN in this chapter.
 - Sin isn't eating meat sacrificed to idols. (Paul nowhere calls this sin)
 - Sin isn't worrying about eating meat sacrificed to idols
 - Sin IS wounding a weaker Christian's conscience.
- You sin against Christ.
- *"Don't ever violate your conscience or cause anyone else violate their conscience."* (Focht)
- Verse 11 says the weaker is ruined. They become ruined by developing a habit of violating their conscience. They learn to live a life of compromise.

1Cr 8:13 **Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.**

- Paul's Proper Perspective - if my liberty might causes one person to fall, I will never, ever enjoy my rightful liberty, for his sake. **Now That is Love!**
- *"Our actions can never be based just on what we know to be right for ourselves; we also need to consider what is right in regard to our brothers and sisters in Jesus."* (Guzik)

We Are Christians

**We are Not Living in Legalism that binds,
We are Not Living in Liberty that offends,
We Live in a Love that frees and edifies**

**"Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible[®],
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)**