

1 Corinthians Chapter 8

1 Corinthians 8:1 "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

It seems that in each one of these chapters in Corinthians that Paul is answering questions they have written and asked him about. We remember that "idols" mean nothings. Paul is possibly saying; I know that you all know not to worship idols. It seems that the person who had written Paul was puffed up with pride, and Paul is about to show him the error in being puffed up with pride about the little knowledge he had. Love, or charity, builds a person up. Pride destroys.

The Greeks and Romans were polytheistic (worshipping many gods), and polydemonistic (believing in many evil spirits). They believed that evil spirits would try to invade human beings by attaching themselves to food before it was eaten, and that the spirits could be removed only by the food's being sacrificed to a god. The sacrifice was meant not only to gain favor with the god, but also to cleanse the meat from demonic contamination. Such decontaminated meat was offered to the gods as a sacrifice. That which was not burned on the altar was served at wicked pagan feasts. What was left was sold in the market.

After conversion, believers resented eating such food bought out of idol markets, because it reminded sensitive Gentile believers of the previous pagan lives and the demonic worship.

"We all have knowledge": Paul and mature believers knew better than to be bothered by such food offered once to idols and then sold in the marketplace. They knew the deities did not exist and that evil spirits did not contaminate the food.

"Charity (love), edifies": Knowledge mingled with love prevents a believer from exercising freedoms that offend weaker believers, and rather builds the others up in truth and wisdom.

1 Corinthians 8:2 "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

The minute a person gets to the stage that he thinks he knows everything, he has stopped learning and probably does not know near as much as he thought he did. A little knowledge is a very dangerous thing. I believe a technical knowledge of the Bible, without benefit of the spiritual meaning, is dangerous as well. When you find a humble person still eager to learn more, you find a knowledgeable person. You can know what a Scripture says, without knowing what it means. To understand what it means must be revealed to you by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 8:3 "But if any man love God, the same is known of him."

To know God exists is one thing, but to have Him as your personal Savior is something else entirely. To know of God is one thing, but to love God in your heart is an entirely different thing as well. Love is the proof of knowing God.

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine." He knows us and we know Him, if we love Him.

Galatians 4:9 "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

1 Corinthians 8:4 "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol [is] nothing in the world, and that [there is] none other God but one."

Christians should believe that idols are nothings. The sin involving idols is to elevate them up and worship them. Christians should believe in God and God alone. Any form of worshipping idols is totally unacceptable. There would be absolutely no way to know what meat had been offered to idols and what was not. To regard the meat clean or unclean would be regarding the idol. They should not try to judge at all. Just ignore all of that, since an idol is a nothing anyway.

Paul states his agreement with the well taught believers who knew idols were nothing, so food offered to idols was not defiled.

We must remember through all this, that Paul is answering questions someone in Corinth had written to him. God had shown over and over that idols are nothings, as He did in Egypt; to make the Pharaoh let the people go.

1 Corinthians 8:5 "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)"

In Egypt, there had been thousands of false gods. Here in Corinth, there had been many false gods as well. The problem with people who worship false gods is that they want a god they can see with their eyes. They worship things from God's creation instead of worshipping the Creator. God is the Eternal Spirit.

John 4:24 "God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth."

The One true God is Spirit, and must be seen in the Spirit and not with physical eyes.

1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us [there is but] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him."

A powerful and clear affirmation of the essential equality of God the Father and God the Son. (Eph. 4:4-6).

Here is the Scripture which explains it best.

1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

The Lord Jesus Christ is the same as the Word mentioned here (in 1 John). Eternal God is the beginning of all. Our Salvation is by believing in Lord Jesus Christ. The Word was Creator God. All things exist by Him. He bought us with His precious blood, and we are now adopted children of the Father. There is no other way to the Father, but by Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:7 "Howbeit [there is] not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat [it] as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

This is just speaking of those who know the meat was offered to an idol, feel that they should not eat it, and eat it anyway. That would be a sin, because they went against their conscience. Those who regard the idol as nothing would not sin, if they ate of the same meat, because they do not regard the idol as anything. They could eat it with a clear conscience.

For more information on this read (Romans 14:20-23).

1 Corinthians 8:8 "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse."

The meat is not what makes the sin. It is our attitude toward the meat. Anything that you cannot do with a clear conscience is sin if you do it.

If you are a Christian, God has placed His laws in your heart. Your conscience alerts you when something is a sin or not. We must never do anything that we feel in our heart is wrong to do. The eating is not the sin. The sin is doing what you know or feel in your heart is wrong for you.

1 Corinthians 8:9 "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak."

We must make a judgment call here. If we do something that we know in our heart is not wrong for us to do, but would cause our brother to sin, it is wrong for us to do. It is wrong, because we would cause our brother who has a weak conscience to sin. All Christians should be aware of their brother's weakness, and not do things in front of him that would cause him to sin. It is even more important that ministers are careful what they say and do. Sometimes the only example of Christian living that a person has, is the one we live before them.

1 Corinthians 8:10 "For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;"

This is speaking of someone who has no guilty conscience about eating things offered to idols, because he does not regard the idol as anything. The sad thing is that the person who does have a guilty conscience about eating the sacrifice offered to the idol might eat to show that they can do anything you are doing. Remember, you are their example, and they would sin because of your freedom in the Lord. It is just best to be careful of this for their sakes and not for your own sake.

1 Corinthians 8:11 "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"

We see in the following Scripture, it is not always what we do that is sin, but our attitude about what we do that is sin. Anything you do without having faith in your heart that it is alright to do, is sin. Look with me at that very thing in the following Scripture.

Romans 14:23 "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith: for whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin."

The sad thing is that we have great influence on those who have just received Jesus as their Savior. We must not give even the appearance of evil for their sakes. The new Christian is not aware of the privilege of Christianity and thus you might cause him to sin.

1 Corinthians 8:12 "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."

A strong warning that causing a brother or sister in Christ to stumble is more than simply an offense against that person; it is a serious offense against the Lord Himself.

1 Corinthians 8:13 "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Paul has said a tremendous thing here. Not only will he not sin, but he will not do anything that might cause someone else to sin. Paul says, even if I can never eat meat again, I would even do that to keep my weaker brother from sinning. Will we do as much?

1 Corinthians Chapter 8 Questions

1. Knowledge _____ up, but _____ edifieth.
2. What does "idols" mean?
3. What happens to a person who thinks they know everything?
4. The author believes what kind of knowledge of the Bible is dangerous.
5. Who must reveal to us what a Scripture is truly saying?
6. To know God exists is one thing, what is better than that?
7. What does Galatians chapter 4 verse 9 tell us of our relationship with God?
8. If an idol is nothing, how can we sin regarding it?

9. What must we remember is the reason Paul is writing this?
10. When is a specific time that God proved that idols are nothings?
11. What causes a person to worship a false god?
12. What other Scripture explains 1 Corinthians 8:6 best?
13. The Word was _____ God.
14. What relationship do the Christians have to the Father?
15. Why would it be a sin for someone to know the meat had been offered to an idol, felt it was a sin, and ate it anyway?
16. The meat is not what the sin is; it is our _____ toward the meat.
17. Your liberty might become a _____ to them that are weak.
18. Sometimes the only example of Christian living a new Christian has is what?
19. What might embolden the young Christian to sin?
20. Whatsoever is not of _____ is sin.
21. In 1 Corinthians 8:12, when you wound a weak Christian's Conscience, ye sin against _____.
22. Paul said: If meat makes my brother to offend, I will eat _____ while the world standeth.