

I Corinthians

Chapter 8

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

We thank you for yet another time you have given to us to spend in your word. We pray that will help us to understand these great truths that you have given to us in written form. Help us to know you more as that is our desire. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen!

1 Corinthians Chapter 8 is one of three chapters dealing with the subject of meat offered to idols. This is not something that you and I probably would have problems with. But again, we are dealing with the principles that Paul is presenting for us.

The first thing we are going to study is Verses 1 through 3 of 1 Corinthians Chapter 8, the problem of knowledge.

C.O.

I Corinthians 8-10
The Meat Offered to Idols

M.V.

I Corinthians 8:1

You may have heard Chapter 8 Verse 1 quoted by many people that knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. It is a famous quote that is actually used out of context by people professing to be Christians who are not interested in the study of the word of God.

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These are people who say you get into that "knowledge stuff," and that "mind stuff," and that's not what is important because knowledge puffs up. But love builds up, so I'm all for love they say.

Well, we've got a problem! Knowledge has trouble with love, and love has trouble with knowledge. The person that has knowledge has trouble with love.

If knowledge is your number one interest and your hunger is for the things of the word, your mind is going to be filled with knowledge before your heart is developed in love.

And it will be a problem because people use knowledge to preach at other people and it is also a great builder of pride. A person that has knowledge has trouble with love because by love the knowledge must be applied.

But we also find out that the person that says all I want to do is love, and I don't want to study, they have problems with knowledge that is the truth about love.

We have our text here, and then there's another text that backs up the statement. Paul says for the Jews, for I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

"They really love the Lord, they are on fire for Jesus," as some people will say. But it's not according to knowledge. It's not according to the truth and it's not accurate.

So you see, there's a balance there. Obviously people who would prefer for the love of Christ to minister through them, and that only, is a better person to be around than the person that's just pursuing knowledge and wants to "hammer" people.

The problem is that the person who is loving, most of it is human effort, and they would prefer to psychologically stay in that loving framework. It doesn't take much work that way!

We're told in 2 Peter Chapter 3 Verse 18 to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are to seek knowledge. But just knowledge in and of itself puffs up.

We will see later in this chapter that those who have knowledge are the mature Christians. And because of their lack of development in love, they have a tendency to not care what the younger Christian thinks about his freedom because of his knowledge.

You see, love is the application of the truth. That's the message. In these next couple of chapters, we will see exactly the message that Paul is trying to bring.

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

Now as touching things offered to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but charity, or agape love, edifies.

The word edify is a construction term that means to build up or to develop. Love develops. Knowledge, just in and of itself puffs people up.

M.V.

I Corinthians 8:2

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

Do you know what the frustrating thing is about the study of the bible? You can commit yourself and dedicate yourself to the study of the bible hours a day for years.

And the more you get into it, the more you realize that there is more left than you imagined, and that all the years that you have studied, you just scratched the surface.

There's so much more there than just the ink on the paper, in concept, and in truth!

3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

That is by God. The evidences that a person belongs to and knows the Lord is that the Lord's love is upon him.

The presentation of knowledge:

What knowledge is he talking about? He says we all have knowledge, even though knowledge puffs up.

Now here's his instruction:

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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.

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice to idols, we know, and here's the knowledge: that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

Now you can take a piece of wood or stone and make any kind of image you want, and put it up on your mantle at home and worship it all you want to. But there's nothing there. It's just a piece of stone, or a piece of wood. An idol is nothing. There's no life in it at all!

In comparison, he says:

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

For though there be those that are gods, and notice the small "g," whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many, that people worship)

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.

This is one of the great texts that support the deity of Christ, that Jesus is God come in human form.

There's only one God in the Father that has expressed Himself through Jesus Christ. From Him, we have all come. By Him, we all exist.

So he says take this into consideration:

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.

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge:

Not everybody knows that. Some people take worship of idols pretty seriously. Statues for idols, anything!

For some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

Remember, I told you about the conscience. Conscience is an information gathering part of the brain. Conscience needs to be developed. Conscience judges right and wrong based on the information that you feed it.

So he says that some people, in their conscience, they still associate the meat sacrificed to the idol as belonging to the idol.

Now what he is saying, in sharing his knowledge, is that everybody knows that a piece of wood is just a piece of wood. But you see, the problem that we are going to have here is that they take this meat and they offer it to the idol on this type of grill, and after it is cooked they take it off the grill.

Some of the meat goes to the priests that work in the pagan temples, and all the rest of the meat goes down to the marketplace, and they sell it.

So Paul says "I have knowledge. There's nothing wrong with that meat." It's not like some demon jumped into it or anything. There's nothing there. It's just a piece of meat. Even the idol itself, it's not real. There's nothing there!

But somebody, in their conscience, after being involved in the whole process of the worship of the idol, they'll see it down at the marketplace and they'll associate it with that idol no matter where it is. And they will say that anybody that participates with that piece of meat is participating with the idol, as if it's real.

So he is saying that as people with knowledge, we know that there's only one God. But some people in their conscience have associated the meat with the idol.

And their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Their conscience will tell them that I have corrupted myself if I eat a piece of meat from that.

You have to understand that the Christians in Corinth, when they got saved, they're making a clean break with all of paganism, the meat, the idols, the society and social network. Just cut it all off!

And here comes Paul walking through town saying "Hey, there's a steak!" And to him it's just a piece of meat. There's nothing wrong with it.

He's not going to be contaminated because his conscience has been fed enough knowledge to know the difference in all of this, where another person in their conscience, they're going to say "Nope, that's wrong!"

Conclusion in Verse 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.

But meat does not commend us to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. So food doesn't have anything to do with our relationship with the Lord.

Back in Romans Chapter 14 Verse 17, we saw that Paul says that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

It's spiritual with God. So it has nothing to do with food, what you eat and what you don't eat.

Now the precaution concerning knowledge:

Do you see what he's getting at here?

The person can have knowledge as to what the truth is, but he can be exercising that knowledge among people that don't have the knowledge.

Now here's where love comes in. What do you do when you know something is okay for you to do according to God's word, but somebody else is around in the vicinity that doesn't think that it's right?

Usually we just blow right past them and if they can't handle it, too bad, because we know what the bible says. That's puffed up because of knowledge!

You see, love is sacrificial even if you know it is okay to do.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

But take heed lest by any means this liberty, or freedom of yours become a stumblingblock, or offence to them that are weak.

Illustration in Verse 10:

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;

What happens if one of these people who don't have the knowledge that you have, they see you eat that piece of meat, so they think that it's okay to go back up to the temple and worship.

In their mind they say "It must be okay for us Christians to do? I stopped doing it because I thought it was pagan?"

So he gets the courage and he becomes emboldened to say "I'm going to go back up there because I got all my friends up there and we used to eat together!"

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

Perish means not destroyed as a person, but his relationship with Christ after salvation has been destroyed. His growth process has stopped. He's confused and he doesn't know what to do. He doesn't know what's right and wrong!

But here's the application, take heed:

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

But when you sin against your brother, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

Wow! How do I sin against Christ? I've taken the truth and I just railroaded everybody, but who cares? Who cares what the ignorant think, you know, because I've got my freedom?

Well, I've sinned against Christ because it's not His love governing the truth and the knowledge that I have.

Verse 13, the portrayal of knowledge.

In consecration:

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.

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Wherefore, if meat makes my brother to be offended, I will never eat flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend.

I will never eat, not just meat, but any kind of flesh. As long as the world exists, I will never eat it again if it makes my brother to be offended.

Let's close with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Again we thank you for your word. We know from your word that we have freedom in Christ. We are free to do things and we are also free to not do things if it offends others.

We thank you for Paul's teaching. We know that his teaching does not conflict with your teaching because his teaching came directly from you. We pray that as we continue to study these teachings that you will impress these truths upon our hearts and minds.

Help us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen!