

"TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH"

PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH



1 CORINTHIANS 8

BACKGROUND

In the ancient Greek world sacrifices to their gods was common and the meat was "eaten" by the god (by being given to the priests) and the worshippers. Such sacrifices happened not just at temples, but also among trade guilds (like unions for skilled craftsmen), who all had patron gods. At the sacrifices of these guilds, everyone in the guild was expected to eat of the sacrifice as part of the worship to these patron gods. This would be a problem for Christian craftsmen. Also, these sacrifices often had leftover meat, which was sold in the market as sacrificial meat (to make it more valuable). So, sometimes a host offering a feast would buy such meat for his guests; this also would be a problem for a Christian. So the Corinthian church asked what to do about it.

¹ Now concerning things

sacrificed to idols, we know that

we all have knowledge. Knowledge

makes arrogant, but love edifies.

² If anyone supposes that he knows

anything, he has not yet known as

he ought to know; ³ but if anyone

loves God, he is known by Him.

THE DANGER OF ARROGANT, SELFISH KNOWLEDGE

- Summarize the question is that the Corinthian church is now asking Paul.
- By just looking at verses 1-4, what does it appear that some people were saying; from what point of view were they arguing?
 - What did they claim to know?
- Why were they arguing this? What would be the "pay-off" for them?
- How does Paul answer their argument about having knowledge in verse 1?
 - Knowledge makes _____
 - Love _____
- What seems to be implied when Paul uses the word "supposes"?
 - What does Paul mean when he tells them that they don't yet know what they ought to know?

⁴ Therefore concerning the eating
 of things sacrificed to idols, we
 know that there is no such thing as
 an idol in the world, and that there
 is no God but one. ⁵ For even if
 there are so-called gods whether in
 heaven or on earth, as indeed there
 are many gods and many lords, ⁶
 yet for us there is but one God, 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.

⁷ However not all men have this
 knowledge; but some, being

- What is Paul's counterpoint to those who claimed knowledge? (v. 3)
- What was their knowledge missing? (see 13:2)
- What does "but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him" mean?

WHAT CAN WE KNOW?

- V. 4 — ESV and NASB footnote says, "we know that "an _____ has no real _____,"
- How many gods are there really?
- What does Paul mean by saying "even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords"?
- "Yet for _____ there is but _____"
- We exist _____ the Father (Meaning?)
- We exist _____ Jesus (Meaning?)
- "However, not _____ men have this _____." (Meaning?)

- What is the matter with other men?

accustomed to the idol until now,

eat food as if it were sacrificed to

an idol; and their conscience being

weak is defiled. 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. ⁹ But

take care that this liberty of yours

does not somehow become a

stumbling block to the weak. 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

- Who do you think Paul is talking about, when he speaks of “some being accustomed to the idol...eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol”, Jews or Gentile pagans?
- So what happens when those who are accustomed to the idol are asked to eat meat sacrifice to idols or see someone else eating meat sacrificed to idols?
- What does it mean to have one's conscience defiled?
- But truth be known, according to Scripture, will eating or abstaining from eating food sacrificed to idols (by itself) damage us spiritually?

TAKE CARE WITH YOUR LIBERTY!

- What could our liberty, for example, to eat meat sacrificed to idols, do to someone else?
 - What is a stumbling block?
 - What would be the definition of a “weak” person be?
 - What would a weak person be tempted to do, if he were to see a knowledgeable person doing something that he thought was forbidden (in this case, eating meat sacrificed to idols)?
 - Would it be wrong for the weak person to do it, if it isn't wrong for the knowledgeable person to do it?
 - Why or why not?

things sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ For
through your knowledge he who is
weak is ruined, the brother for
whose sake Christ died. ¹² And so,
by sinning against the brethren and
wounding their conscience when it
is weak, you sin against Christ. 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.

- What other sorts of things might cause a weak person to stumble?
 - In what way would the weak brother be ruined?
- The knowledgeable brother sins against the brethren, when v. 12 he _____ the _____ when it is _____.
 - What does it mean to wound the conscience?
 - In what way is sinning against the brethren sinning against Christ?
- What would Paul rather do than cause a brother to stumble?
- Is there a difference between someone who is genuinely weak and someone who just wants their way and tries to use this principle to make the other person give in?
 - How did Jesus deal with people who drew lines, where God didn't draw lines?