

First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE

The past three sessions we studied Paul's answer to the Corinthian's question about marriage. Over the next several weeks he will answer their questions about Christian liberty; that is, the freedom of the Christian life.

The question has shifted from marriage to the *offerings to idols*. The church has asked Paul for clarification on whether or not, as Christians, they can eat this meat.

Chapter 8

Verse 1–

-Now as touching things offered unto idols. The word **touching** (KJV) is a preposition and it is the same as saying "now about." NKJV translates it *concerning*. It is not the physical touch of something. We use this same phrase today when someone says, "Let me touch on a different subject."

-This letter is where we get the most information about idol worship in all the New Testament (See Romans 14).

-Idol worship must have been problem in Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:9-11). The Greek word for **things offered unto idols**, is only used ten times in the New Testament, 2x's in Acts, 6x's in 1st Corinthians, and 2x's in Revelation. The word only applies to meat from an animal that has been sacrificed in the practice of worshipping an idol.

-When Paul uses the word *idolater*, he is contrasting a Christian who eats meat that has been sacrificed to an idol vs. a Christian who participates in idolatry.

-It is not always necessary or correct to try and apply or make a parallel to our own lives from this passage. For example, this is not about smoking, drinking, or what movies we watch. This is specifically speaking to eating meat that has been sacrificed to an idol.

Yet there are some things in this verse we can apply:

-We know that we all have knowledge. What is this knowledge? That *all things are lawful* (1 Corinthians 6:12).

-Knowledge puffs up. It can make us proud, or have an attitude of superiority. The knowledge in our Christian liberty has to be tempered with **charity**, that is, love (i.e., *agape*). One puffs up, the other builds up.

Verse 2–

-Knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing. The older one gets the more he knows he know less than what he thought he knew. There comes a time when we realize we may be wrong, or at the very least we should questions the assumptions of our theological knowledge. We always test our assumptions with the word of God, not our experience.

Verse 3–

-If any man love God. It is not our knowledge that impresses God (Romans 1:22; 1 Corinthians 1:19), it is our love for him. It is better for God to know us by our love than for us to have pride in what we know.

Verse 4–

-As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols. Paul goes back to his original thought,

-We know that an idol is nothing in the world. Here is more knowledge; idols are nothing. Notice the word, **world**. It is the Greek word *kosmos* we get our word cosmos which means the universe. Idols are nothing but the imagination of man—they are nothing in the world or the universe, just wood or stone.

-There is none other God but one. Where do we get the knowledge that there is only one God? From the word of God.

Verses 5,6–

1st Corinthians	59 A.D. Date of Writing	Ephesus Place of Writing
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Six Questions Paul Answers in First Corinthians

1. What about **marriage**? (Chapter 7).
2. What about **Christian liberty**? (Chapter 8-10).
3. What about **Church conduct**? (Chapter 11).
4. What about **spiritual gifts**? (Chapters 12-14).
5. What about the **Resurrection**? (Chapter 15).
6. What about the **collection**? (Chapter 16).

-There are many so-called **gods...and lords many**. It doesn't matter what people think, the truth is **there is but one God, the Father**. If that is not the basis of our belief then we will chase after false gods aplenty. And, it is of **God the father of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ**. Everything comes from God the father and Jesus Christ. All things exist because of Jesus Christ. And idols do not exist, except that of being wood or stone. How did all things come into existence (Colossians 1:16,17).

Verse 7-

-**Howbeit** (however) **there is not in every man that knowledge**: Some think that if they eat the meat in question that it has really been offered to real gods, and it **defiles** their **conscience** – they feel guilty. A persons worldview can cause this. Take for example some Asian cultures where sacrifices to gods are still made. A person growing up in that home, and then becoming a Christian, would have a difficult time separating their experience from reality.

Verse 8–

-**But meat commendeth us not to God**: commendeth is to “stand closer.” What we eat does not get us closer to God. Nor, does it move us away from God. We are not the better in our Christian life if we eat it, and we are no worse if we don't. Some may think they will be closer to God if they are vegetarians, others may think fasting will draw them closer. We have the liberty to eat (or not eat) whatever we want.

Verse 9–

-**But take heed**. This freedom or liberty that we have comes with a warning. **Lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumbling block to them that are weak**. It is the strong or mature believer who can eat the meat sacrificed to idols. It is the weak believer who has a bad conscience for doing so. But the mature is not to cause the weak to stumble.

Verse 10–

-**See thee which hast knowledge sit at meat** (sit down for a meal) **in the idol's temple**. The mature believer could go into the idol's temple and order a steak and be at complete liberty in his Christian life to do so. But, by doing so, the weaker believer may see him doing that, join in, and have his conscience *defiled*.

Verse 11–

-**Shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?** Perish? Some think this means that if a person goes against their conscience and eats meat scarified to idols it would cause them to lose their salvation. That is utter nonsense, since salvation is by grace through faith alone and cannot be lost. So this word **perish** must mean something else. Paul uses the same word in Romans 14:15,

“But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* food, now walkest thou not charitably (in love). Destroy not him with thy food, for whom Christ died.”

What is it then that perishes or is destroyed? It is the man's conscience. Paul's point is that it is the mature Christian who causes a weaker Christian's conscience to be *destroyed*, or to perish. In fact, Paul clarifies what he means in verse 12.

Verse 12–

-**Wound their weak conscience**. The word **wound** means to “beat down” or to “strike.” A Christian who is a stumbling block to another weaker believer causes that persons conscience to be defiled, to perish, to be destroyed, to be wounded, or to *offend* (vs. 13). I think we can look at all of these synonymously. When the church body does that to weaker brothers and sisters, that church body **sins against Christ**.

Verse 13–

Can the Corinthians eat meat that has been scarified to idols? Here is Paul's answer:

“If meat make my brother to offend (to perish, be defiled, destroyed, or wounded in their Christian walk), I will eat no flesh while the world standers, lest I make my brother to offend.”

Do you see what Paul's point is in this entire passage? It is, eat what you want, but be aware who is with you and show love to them so they will stay strong in their faith.

