

Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

1 Corinthians

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Liberty or care for others? (chapter 8)

- 8:1, Next subject in Paul's letter (see 7:1): should Christians eat food offered to idols?
 - Background: like most Greek cities, Corinth had many alters where animals were sacrificed to pagan gods. The question for Christians was whether it was a sin to eat the leftover meat offered to an idol/pagan god.
 - Apparently Christians were eating the meat was eaten in three places:
 - At banquets that followed the sacrifice ceremony ((8:10)
 - Take it home
 - Buy it in the market
 - Some Christians thought it was okay to eat the meat because they knew the idols were false (8:2)
- 8:2, while all Christians have 'knowledge' (Greek is *gnosis* meaning knowledge from spiritual experience), this is insufficient for dealing with this subject
- 8:3, the solution to this issue (and most all issues) is NOT based on knowledge, but rather on love
 - Love is the means of obtaining the highest/deepest knowledge
- 8:4-6, all believers reject the existence of other gods, and instead accept God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ
- 8:7, "not everyone has this knowledge".
 - Prior to becoming a Christian, some used to offer meat to idols because they believed in those idols.
 - Now, even though they no longer believe in those idols, they struggle with eating the meat because it reminds them of their heathen habits
 - They "defile (Greek is '*pollute*') their weak conscience ...Greek is '*soon-i'-day-sis* meaning 'knowledge-together'. A person's conscience is based on (1) having knowledge, and (2) knowing right from wrong. Even if the conscience is wrong (due to flawed knowledge), it must still be followed because a person's conscience is a gauge of the spiritual condition
 - Today's issues? Cards, alcohol, dress, dancing, music, etc
- 8:8, "whether we eat"(seen by some as heresy), "or we don't eat"(seen by others as ignorance), neither is going to bring us closer to God
- 8:9-13, the real issue is being careful not to offend those with a weak conscience
 - A "strong" believer may have the 'freedom' to eat meat in an idol's temple, but the if the "weak" brother sees this and does the same thing, he will violate his conscience and stumble in his faith
 - Note that one's persons accurate knowledge may result in someone else having their faith ruined. This is why love is more important than knowledge (see 8:1)
 - V.12 "wound", Greek is *toop'-to* meaning to slap (in the face)

Rights of an Apostle (Chapter 9)

- 9:1, two themes in this chapter, (1) to establish his authority as an apostle (2) to show himself as an example of self-denial
 - Apostle is *ap-os'-tol-os*, meaning a 'sent messenger'. Acts 13:1-3 is the account of Barnabas moving from a teacher/prophet to an apostle by being *sent* by the church
 - See 1 Cor. 12:28 for the authority of an apostle in the church..."firstly apostles" (to be discussed in chapter 12)