

I Corinthians 8 – Summary

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B. Of Things Sacrificed to Idols, vv 1-7

1. **Knowledge & Love, vv 1-3:** – 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.

- a. The Council in Jerusalem, Acts 15:20, asked Gentile Christians to refrain from things polluted / contaminated by idols as this was an offence to Jews; yet in this chapter Paul, who was at the Council, says that in itself such eating is harmless.
 - b. Some analogies today could be drinking alcohol, smoking, belonging to a union or lodge, dancing, attending a movie theatre where Christians differ on their morality
 - c. Love excels knowledge because it considers others than oneself.
 - d. This agrees with 1 Cor 6:12 which says not everything is expedient or suitable.
 - e. It inflates a person's self-esteem at the expense of another Christian's well-being.
 - f. 'To be known by God' is relationship, not just that He knows everything.
2. **Knowing about Idols, vv 4-6** – 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.

- a. The 'know' in verse 4 is factual or head knowledge; a rational understanding.
- b. Though to worship idols was to worship demons (1 Cor. 10:19), idols themselves had no effective existence and so could not contaminate the meat.
- c. The gods & lords of Deut 10:17, Ps 136:2-3, etc., owed their original existence to God before they became rebel beings.
- d. God the Father in contrast, the one, true, self-existent God, Creator of all things.

3. **The Concern of the Unknowing, v 7** – ⁷ However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

- a. They feared worshipping some evil reality by eating meat sacrificed to idols.
- b. Such doubts condemned them of sin as they acted without faith (Romans 14:23)

C. The Response of the Knowing, vv 8-12

1. **The Reality about Such Food, v 8** – 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.

- a. Physical items cannot in themselves cause spiritual damage.
- b. The OT dietary law has no application to Christians.

2. **The Danger in Liberty, vv 9-11** – ⁹ But take care lest this liberty of yours 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 things sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

- a. That thoughtlessly exercising Christian liberty injure a weak or new Christian.
- b. A stumbling block is an offence or cause of failure in another person.
- c. 'Strengthened' has idea of 'emboldened', making bold to do questionable act.
- d. He is ruined by feelings of guilt, which hurt his relation to Christ.
- e. Jesus Christ gave up the ultimate liberty to bring that weak brother forgiveness.

3. **The Sin Committed, v 12** – ¹² And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

- a. It is sin to cause a forgiven Christian to act so as to bring guilty feelings.
- b. In Matthew 18:6 Jesus says those who do this are liable to heavy punishment.

D. **The Problem Resolved, v 13** – ¹³ Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.

1. Vegetarianism is not the issue but avoiding any possible act of offence.
2. Daniel & his friends chose vegetables to avoid completely any wrong diet, etc.
3. Love's solution is to restrict any liberty that may hurt another Christian.