

## 1 CORINTHIANS 8

### 1Corinthians 8 An Introduction

The focus of 1Corinthians 8, 9, and 10, is my attitude. Why am I carrying on with this activity? Is it to please self? Is it to please Christ? Is it going to build up other believers?

The issue addressed is meat, specifically meat that has been offered to an idol. That meat would be sold in temple restaurants and in the market place. Should a believer eat in such a restaurant or buy that meat in a market place.

Paul is addressing in this chapter those who deliberately cause to be offended a brother or sister. They know that believer is sensitive to a particular issue, yet they deliberately offend their sensitivity. The Lord makes a strong statement about offending others, in Matthew 18:7. "It must needs be (*it is inevitable*) that offences (*will*) come; but woe to that man by whom the offense comes."

1Corinthians 8, we are to avoid practices that may cause others to stumble

1Corinthians 9, we are to change the way we do things so that others are not stumbled

The principle of liberty: Liberty carries with it responsibilities.

We are accountable for the way our actions influence others.

### **Knowledge guided by love** 1Corinthians 8:1-3

This chapter would cause fewer problems if we practiced Hebrews 10:24 "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

**1Cor.8:1 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.**

**"we know"** - understand or perceive  
also in 8:2, 4, 10 (see)

**"we all have knowledge"** - we understand that we all have some intellectual awareness (knowledge of spiritual things), .

**"knowledge"** - intellectual awareness also in 8:7, 10, 11

**"love edifieth"** - love seeks to build up others. It promotes the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal.5:22, 23)

**"knowledge puffeth up"** - knowledge (mere intellectual awareness) by itself leads to conceit, to pride

**"love edifieth"** - unless knowledge is exercised in love it will not build up or edify other believers.

Knowledge is not everything. Knowledge by itself will not edify the saints. Knowledge must be tempered by a love for others to be profitable. The apostle Paul desired that the believers in Colossae would be "filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom (*when to impart that knowledge*) and spiritual understanding (*an appreciation of the needs of others*)".

**1Cor.8:2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.**

**"thinks he knoweth"** - if any man thinks he has a complete understands of the matter,

**"he knoweth not"** - he has not yet gained a full knowledge of the problem.

**"as he ought to know"** - there is more to practical Christian living than the acquiring of facts. The apostle Paul told the Colossians that he prayed that they would "be filled with the knowledge of His (God's) will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding". That they would not only know the facts, but they would have an appreciation of that knowledge and would know the appropriate times and manner to apply that knowledge.

To have intellectual knowledge without love is not true wisdom.

**1Cor.8:3** *But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

**“man love God”** - my love for God will put an end to my pride. It will foster humility and compassion for other believers.

**“known of Him (God)”** - he who manifests love in his activities is the object of God’s approving knowledge.

He sums up the matter and saying don’t be proud of intellectual knowledge, but rather rejoice in your salvation, in your love for God. Rejoice because you are “known of Him (God)” Remember the Lord’s words in Luke 10:20 “but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

***There is one God and one Lord 1Corinthians 8:4 - 6***

**1Cor.8:4** *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.*

**“eat ... things ... offered in sacrifice unto idols”** - the complete animal was offered, but only parts were taken by the priests. The rest was sold in the market.

**“an idol is nothing”** - an idol cannot save. What does God say about idols? “For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.”

**“there is none other God but one”** - Isaiah 45:22 “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”

1Corinthians 8, would be primarily for Gentile believers, for God had made it very clear to the children of Israel as to their relationship with false religions.

**Deuteronomy 12:2 - 4** God gave commandments to His people concerning false religions. The Lord’s people were to make every effort to avoid:

- every place (location) of false worship
- every means (altar, pillar) of false worship
- every memorial (grove) of false worship
- every object (graven image) of false worship
- every remembrance (name) of false worship

**Deuteronomy 12:30, 31** What does God think of the practice of examining, or studying false cults, religions or idolatry

12:30 "enquire not after them"

12:31 to enquire after them is an offense to the Lord

But, what does the Lord ask you to do - study the truth.

Deut.12:32 observe what God has commanded

Deut.12:1 observe the Lord's statutes and judgments

**1Cor.8:5, 6** *For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 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.*

It is true that there is only one God, so things offered to idols have no value in relation to your salvation, however, from 1Corin.10:18-20, things offered to idols are in truth offered to devils and to partake of them is to have fellowship with devils

*“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 fundamental truth of scripture.

1Timothy2:5, 6 *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”*

Isaiah 45:22 *“I am God, and there is none else.”*

### ***Liberty and spirituality 1Corinthians 8:7 - 8***

***1Cor.8:7 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.***

***“that knowledge”*** - the conviction that there is only one God

***“conscience of the idol”*** - they still associate it with their former lives, their practices in unsaved days

- accustomed to thinking of idols as real and living

***“weak”*** - feeble, fragile, not yet strong, easily lead astray

~ uneasy (also 1Cor.8:10) ~ easily offended

~ better understood as tender - like that of a new convert

***“defiled”*** - polluted, contaminated, defiled

In **1Peter 2:8** we read of a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence in the gospel, but this chapter speaks of a stone and a rock in the path of a fellow believer.

*“a stone of stumbling”* ~ an obstacle in the pathway that trips up the believer in their spiritual progress.

*“a rock of offence”* ~ something that blocks the believer’s spiritual progress.

A brother or sister may be right to have a conscience that is weak (doubtful, uneasy) in relation to things offered to idols, if by participating it brings them back to the bondage of their past life.

1Thess.5:21, 22 *“hold fast that which is good (and) abstain from all appearance of evil”*

***1Cor.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.***

What we eat or do not eat will not make us spiritual or unspiritual. What will affect our spirituality is our attitude and our motives for eating or not eating a particular food item.

### ***A danger accompanying liberty 1Corinthians 8:9- 13***

We must willing put limitations on our lives in consideration of a fellow believer’s conscience

A question that we might ask ourselves is this. Am I willing to put a limitation on my personal

“liberties” in consideration of a fellow believer’s conscience?

- when self-will is supreme disaster will be the result

Sometimes what may appear “harmless” has deeper implications that are opposed to the enjoyment of Christ.

***1Cor.8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.***

***“liberty”*** - authority of choice, a lawful privilege

Our attitude is very important. We have in liberty the authority to make choices regarding foods we

eat. But that choice will affect not only our reputations, but it will affect the spiritual growth of others as well.

**“a stumblingblock”** - that which hinders spiritual growth

**“weak”** - tender, powerless, needy

~ doubtful, unconvinced (also 1Cor.8:12)

Personal behaviour and assumed liberties must be tempered by consideration for the convictions of others

We do not have an idol's temple selling meat here in Manitoba, but we do have casinos (an idol's temple?)

What would people think if they saw you eating at the restaurant in a casino? The next door neighbour? The mother of a student who deals cards in the casino?

**1Cor.8:10, 11** *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; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?*

**“conscience”** - the voice of the Spirit of God within us. Our conscience needs to be trained according to the Word of God. It is the principles of the Word of God that will properly guide us to distinguish between right and wrong.

**“emboldened to eat”** - encouraged to think of the idol as something of importance and thus partake of it in violation of his conscience

**“perish”** - spiritually stumbled such that their effectiveness for Christ is harmed

The word of God does not specifically tell us what food a Christian may eat, but it does teach that we are responsible for the way we influence others (the same applies in dress, business, attendance at meetings)

If Christ is the centre and focus of my life, then to offend another believer will be abhorrent to me. When I deliberately offend another believer it indicates that I am out of fellowship with the Lord.

**1Cor.8:12** *But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*

**“wound”** - disquiet one's conscience

**“weak conscience”** - without strength, the idea is a conscience that is tender or untaught.

***The downward steps destroying a conscience,***

DEFILING 1Corin.8:7 conscience defiled when we do that which we know is wrong

WOUNDING 1Corin.8:12 conscience injured by association with the appearance of evil

EMBOLDENED 1Corin.8:10 conscience unable to distinguish between good & evil and leads to wrong doing

SNARED 1Corin.8:13 a stumbling block or a snare is put before the fellow believer's conscience

SCARING 1Tim.4:2 conscience is hardened or unfeeling because of continual wounding or defilement

SIN 1Corin.8:12 to wound a fellow believer's conscience is to sin against the Lord

When we persist in activities that are harmful to the conscience of other believers the assembly cannot function scripturally nor profitably. And we are all losers.

**1Cor.8:13** *Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*

When I am willing to put limitations on rights it is an indication of spiritual development. It shows that the things that will benefit the assembly have become important to me.

**“offend”** - to participate again in the things of his unsaved days

We speak about the conscience of the weaker believer, but what about the conscience of the stronger believer? Will not his conscience be affected if he eats of those things offered to idols, knowing that it will offend another.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. 1Corinthians 10:23

*expedient* - profitable, contribute to godliness

*edify not* - do not build up a person, do not promote growth in Christian wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness

**The matter of offences:**

Matthew's gospel gives us very clear instructions concerning offenses.

**Mat.18:6** *“whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me”* To offend a young believer is to offend the Lord. The idea of offend in this verse is to set a stumbling block in the path of the believer's spiritual development.

Mark 10:14 would indicate that one serious offence is to hinder a little child from coming to the Saviour.

**Mat.18:7** *“it must needs be that offences come”* It is inevitable that there will be offences. Some offences will be accidental. Unconsciously by some action or word a stumbling block may be placed in the path of another.

*“woe to that man”* I believe that the Lord is saying woe to the one who offends and does not seek reconciliation.

**Mat.18:8-10** Self judgment is needed in light of offences.

Mat.18:8 - offences because of our actions

Mat.18:9 - offences because of our covetousness

Mat.18:10 - offences because of a wrong attitude on our part