**1 Corinthians 8**

*Paul discusses the conscience, and calls the Corinthians to respect the weaker Christians among them. The specific context is that of eating meat offered up to idols. (Synopsis by Stan Cox)*

1. Inquiry from Corinthians **(7:1-16:4)** – *“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:”* **(7:1)**.
   1. Concerning marriage **(7:1-24)**.
   2. Concerning virgins **(7:25-40)**.
   3. Liberties, but should not jeopardize another’s, or own, relationship to God **(8:1-11:1)**.
      1. *“concerning things offered to idols”* **(8:1-13)**.
         1. Knowledge, Love, and Idols **(v. 1-6).**
            1. Love is supreme **(v. 1-3).**

Knowledge without love makes one arrogant. Love builds others up **(v. 1).**

Knowledge without love is incomplete, lacking in the way in which God wants man to know **(v. 2).**

The one who loves God is the one known by Him. Not the one with mere knowledge **(v. 3).**

* + - * 1. Knowledge concerning idols, and things offered to idols **(v. 4-6).**

The proclaimed deity which the idol (physical image) represents does not exist. There is only one God **(v. 4).**

There are assumed gods, or *“so-called”* gods. Yet, the Christian knows they are not real – they do not exist. The Christian recognizes the existence of only one God, and Lord **(v. 5-6).**

* + - 1. The strong brother is to express love toward the *“weak”* brother **(v. 7-13).**
         1. Some lack that knowledge, or have a weak conscience **(v. 7).**

Although knowing an idol is nothing **(v. 4)**, their past involvement as Pagan idolaters continues to be on their mind **(v. 7a).**

Because they cannot help but associate the eating of meats offered to idols with idol worship, when they eat such they defile their conscience **(v. 7b).**

*Outline continued on back. 🡪*

* + - * 1. Do not let your liberty become a stumbling block **(v. 8-9).**

Food does not affect our relationship with God. (Negatively or positively) **(v. 8).**

However, if abused, such liberty can cause a *“weak”* brother to stumble. Beware **(v. 9)!**

* + - * 1. Abused liberty is to the detriment of the *“weak”* and the strong **(v. 10-12).**

The one exercising his liberty without love for a *“weak”* brother will encourage him to do what his conscience does not allow **(v. 10).**

This selfish and loveless act causes the *“weak”* to perish, and is a sin against Christ **(v. 11-12).**

* + - * 1. Paul’s conclusion: He will never abuse a liberty so as to cause a brother to stumble **(v. 13).**

**Questions**

1. How might knowledge puff up? Is Paul belittling, or even condemning knowledge **(v. 1-2)?**
2. What is the difference between *“knowledge”* in **verse 1**, and *“knowledge”* in **verse 7?** Does Paul contradict himself here?
3. How is a sin against a brother a sin against Christ **(v. 12)?**

**Another Question to Consider**

Compare **1 Corinthians 8** with the text of **Romans 14**. What other angle does Paul take concerning liberties with brethren? Does **Romans 14** include sinful activity? Why?