



## 9: ***Stumbling Blocks*** (1 Corinthians 8)

Have the actions of another Christian been a ***stumbling block*** that somehow detoured your walk with the Lord? Have ***YOU*** ever been the cause of another's stumbling? Today we are reminded how Christians should direct others to follow Jesus rather than detour them away from Him.

### beourguest

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### teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES

### Catch the Context

We live in a messed up, mixed-up world full of messed up mixed-up people...and that doesn't stop at the church door. The Church in Corinth, and many churches in America are "A Beautiful Mess".

We have seen how Paul confronts lawsuits between believers (1 Cor 6:1-8), sexual sin (1 Cor 5-6), reminds that sex is intended for marriage (1 Cor 7:1-9), notes that Christians need to stay celibate & sexually pure or stay committed in marriage - divorce & remarriage only being allowed for the exceptions of adultery, abandonment, and most likely - abuse (1 Cor 7:10-40).

Now Paul deals with other **Stumbling Blocks** - where younger believers are getting tripped up because of an older believer's poor example. Today we are reminded how Christians should direct others to follow Jesus rather than detour them away from Him.

As Christians interacted with non-Christians in Corinth, this sometimes caused confusion to young believers, a stumbling block to their young faith. One of those areas of confusion had to do with how Christians were to interact with the idolatrous practices that littered the Corinthian culture. The city of Corinth had 6 temples and 26 sacred sites to many different false gods. Corinthians prayed and sacrificed to these 'gods' to receive the protection and provision. Since most of the food had already been offered up to false gods in the temples before being placed in the marketplace the Christian was in a quandary. What if all the meat that you went to buy at the grocery store had first been offered to false gods? *What would YOU do?*

### Knowledge vs Love

**1 Corinthians 8:1 (CSB)** Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that "we all have knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but **love builds up**.

Some Christians were quick to quote another Corinthian slogan - "**we all have knowledge**", implying that the Christian should **KNOW** better than to think this food was sacrificed to *real gods*, because all other gods are false.

This is true, and Christians need to have this **knowledge**, but knowledge doesn't always lead to love.

✗ Knowledge often **puffs up** because of how much a person knows.

✓ Instead of only pursuing **knowledge** that **puffs up** ourselves, we should pursue **love** that **builds up** others.

God wants us to grow in knowledge and love.

- Knowledge without love breeds *arrogance*.
- Love without knowledge breeds *ignorance*.

## WHAT You Know vs WHO You Know

### 1 Corinthians 8:2-3 (CSB)

If anyone thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it. But if anyone loves God, He is known by Him.

Christianity is more than intellectual knowledge - WHAT you know. Christianity is about relational knowledge - WHO you know...and WHO knows you - it's about **loving God** and being **known by Him**.

## Knowledge - Only One God

### 1 Corinthians 8:4 (CSB)

About eating food sacrificed to idols, then, we know that "an idol is nothing in the world," and that **"there is no God but one."**

While Corinthian culture recognizing many different gods, the Scriptures had long taught that there is only ONE Creator, Provider, Redeemer, and Judge.

**Isaiah 43:10-11** (LSB) "You are My witnesses," declares Yahweh, "And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. **Before Me there was no god formed, and there will be none after Me.** I, even I, am Yahweh, and there is no savior besides Me.

Yahweh is GOD and there is none other. Never has been. Never will be. Yet God's people had a long history of following false gods, even during the time of Moses when God showed His incredible power. Isaiah and the Psalms speak of the silliness of making false gods.

**Isaiah 44:16-17** (CSB) **He burns half of it in a fire**, and he roasts meat on that half. He eats the roast and is satisfied. He warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm, I see the blaze." **He makes a god or his idol with the rest of it.** He bows down to it and worships; he prays to it, "Save me, for you are my god."

**Psalms 115:4-7** (CSB) Their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk. They cannot make a sound with their throats.

## One God. One Lord.

### 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 (CSB)

For even if there are **so-called gods**, whether in heaven or on earth—as there are many "gods" and many "lords"—yet for us **there is one God, the Father**. All things are from Him, and we exist for Him. And **there is one Lord, Jesus Christ**. All things are through Him, and we exist through Him.

The Scriptures affirm angelic authorities (spiritual god-like authorities - see Eph 6:11-12) and earthly **lords** (e.g. kings, governors, spiritual leaders). But there is only **one God** and **one Lord** over all - **God the Father** and the **Lord Jesus Christ**. Is the text implying that the Father is God, but not Lord? NOPE. Is Paul trying to say that Jesus is Lord, but not God? NOPE. In fact, it does the opposite. The Jewish *Shema*, recited & repeated in every day prayer, says:

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5** (CSB) Listen, Israel: The **LORD** [Yahweh] our **God**, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Is there a separation between **LORD** and **God**? NOPE! **The LORD** (*Yahweh* in Hebrew) is **GOD**. He is **ONE**. When the New Testament writers translate "Yahweh" [LORD] from Deut 6:4-5, they use the Greek "*kyrios*".

**Mark 12:29-30a** (CSB) Jesus answered, "The most important is **Listen, Israel! The Lord** [*kyrios*] **our God, the Lord** [*kyrios*] **is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart...**

Paul uses **kyrios** referring to **Jesus as Lord** - in all his writings, including in the passage we are studying today. God is ONE - Father, Son, & Spirit (see Mt 28:19).

🔍 Learn about the TRI-UNITY of God, go watch this teaching called "**Is the Trinity TRUE?**"  
<https://bit.ly/3LVO9Ou>



YOUR NOTES HERE

## Be Careful Not to be a Stumbling Block

### 1 Corinthians 8:7-11 (CSB)

However, **not everyone has this knowledge**. Some have been so used to idolatry up until now that when they eat food sacrificed to an idol, their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not bring us close to God. We are not worse off if we don't eat, and we are not better if we do eat. But be careful that this right of yours in no way becomes a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, the one who has knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, won't his weak conscience be encouraged to eat food offered to idols?

So **the weak person, the brother or sister for whom Christ died, is ruined by your knowledge**.

If we eat food sacrificed to a false god, and we KNOW there are no other gods, then it's just food - *not UNCLEAN food*. But eating this food could become **a stumbling block to the weak** brother or sister who doesn't know better.

If a believer went to a wedding in a temple to a false god, and ate **food offered to idols**, the young believer who sees the more mature believer participating might think it's okay to go to those temples, sacrifice to those false gods, and eat that food - while believing the false gods to be real (false knowledge). The mature Christian **who has knowledge** can **ruin** the **weak person** who doesn't have the same knowledge. A mature Christian should be careful not to cause this kind of confusion.

*Mature believers of our day still participate in things that can cause confusion to younger believers.*

❓ What about drinking alcohol? Are we causing any confusion?

- Consider avoiding alcohol altogether, but certainly in public.

❓ What about eating certain foods that others say should be avoided as UNCLEAN FOODS? Confusion?

- Don't eat that food in their presence. Have more discussion about the truths of Scripture.

❓ What about watching movies or tv shows? Are we confusing our children or a Christian friend?

- Limit the movies & TV you allow into your home.

🔍 **VIDANGEL.com** \$10 online service using NETFLIX, AMAZON, and other streaming accounts - filters out bad language, sex scenes, and nudity.

### **Why be so concerned about this?**

✓ We should do our best to direct people TO JESUS rather than detour them away from Him.

### **Detouring people AWAY from Jesus?**

1. We should never lead younger, weaker believers to do something that IS wrong, something Jesus says we should NOT do. Jesus warns it would be better to tie a millstone around the neck and be drown in the sea rather than causing a younger believer to stumble (Lk 17:1-2).

2. We should never lead people to do what they believe is wrong, even if it's not Biblically wrong.

### **Sinning against Jesus?**

#### 1 Corinthians 8:12-13 (CSB)

Now when you sin like this against brothers and sisters and wound their weak conscience, **you are sinning against Christ**. Therefore, **if food causes my brother or sister to fall, I will never again eat meat**, so that I won't cause my brother or sister to fall.

When we cause confusion to our **brothers and sisters**, we sin against them **AND against Christ**.

✓ Make a choice - **build up our brothers/sisters** in their faith above loving our freedom & knowledge.

- In time we may teach them what the Scriptures say about their freedom, but we should first communicate and demonstrate our love for them, rather than loving ourselves first.

#### Romans 14:21 (CSB)

It is a good thing not to eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble.

### 3 Questions

- **Have you THANKED JESUS today?** Make time to thank the Lord for giving you life and forgiving you so much!
- **Have YOU been/are you being a stumbling block to someone else?** Ask the Lord to forgive you. Ask that person to forgive you. Commit to caring more about another person's faith than your freedom.
- **Are you confused because others have been a stumbling block?** Open the Scriptures. Seek out a consistent Christ-follower to help you know Him. Don't base your faith on someone who cared more about him/herself than you - base it on the ONE who gave Himself for you!

### heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- \* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- \* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

### discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? Explain your answer.
2. Without giving names, share about a time when another believer was a stumbling block to your faith?  
Why is it so important that WE do all we can to make sure not to cause another brother/sister to stumble?
3. **Read 1 Cor. 8:1-11.** Knowledge without love is arrogance and love without knowledge is ignorance. Explain how this is the case. Why is it important for Christians to have both knowledge and love? How might the mature Christian lovingly help the younger Christian grow in knowledge?
4. **Read 1 Cor. 8:12-13 & Rom 14:21.** If we sin against a brother/sister by wounding their conscience, who else are we sinning against, and why should that concern us? What was Paul's response to keep him from sinning against a brother/sister? Can you share a time when you or someone else limited your freedom in order to help someone else's faith?
5. What are some freedoms/rights **that Jesus laid down** in order to come from heaven to earth and build us up?
6. What other questions has this teaching or discussion prompted for us to talk about?
7. **Share prayer needs and pray for one another.** Continue to pray for our Supreme Court decision on Roe v Wade. Pray for Christians in Ukraine and Russia to carry the message of Jesus with them wherever they go. Also, PRAY that God will greatly use us to impact people who need to follow Jesus.