

6/24/12

Knowledge Without Love, Is Destructive
1Cor. 8:1-13

The Corinthians were very prideful of their human wisdom and were deceived in thinking they were spiritual, revealing their inability to make proper judgments.

1. They were unable to make the proper judgment that party divisions contradicted the nature of the church and Christ. 1Cor. 1:10-17
2. They were unable to make the proper judgment that the gospel was the power and wisdom of God, while the wisdom of the world was foolishness. 1:18-25
3. They were unable to make the proper judgment that the gospel saves man not excellence of speech, for God reveals Himself by His Holy Spirit. 1Cor. 2:1-16
4. They were unable to make the proper judgment that they were carnal instead of spiritual, as they got caught up with the importance of certain men rather than recognizing their distinct benefit for the church. 1Cor. 3:1-23
5. They were unable to make the proper judgment that every man is a steward of God and will be judged in service as to the motive of the heart, even Paul's paternal love for them. 1Cor. 4:1-21
6. They were unable to make the proper judgment that the sin of incest was to be removed from the

church, while God would judge the sexual immoral of the world. 1Cor. 5:1-13

7. They were unable to make the proper judgment that related to matters of life, but were going to the pagan courts, as well as not judging the evil of being one sexually with prostitutes, making Christ one with her. 1Cor. 6:1-20
8. They were unable to make the proper judgment that in the service of Christ it was wrong to withhold sexual benefits to one's mate and that singles and married individuals were to serve Jesus after their gift and calling. 1Cor. 7:1-40
9. Now they were unable to make the proper judgment related to the eating of meats offered to idols in view of their relationship to Christ.
* Don't confuse this with legalism of foods and days in Romans! Rom. 14

This topic is dealt with in a very detailed manner in the three chapters that follow, they are a unit, which in principle can be applied to the gray areas of our life, which are not so black and white in the Scriptures. 1Cor. 8-10

1. The principle of Christian liberty in the eating of meats sacrificed to idols, is love for others. 1Cor. 8
2. The personal responsible example of denying one's Christian liberty through love is Paul, as he refused to take wages, having the right. 1Cor. 9
3. The perversion of Christian moral liberty in love for self, is Israel in the wilderness who was judged by God. 1Cor. 10

* The key verse of the entire section is in chapter ten, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons”. 1Cor. 10:21

Paul presents the principle of Christian liberty, love, in view of eating meats sacrificed to idols, characterized by three problems: 1Cor. 8:1-13

- I. The problem with knowledge:
Knowledge is inferior to love. vs. 1-3
- II. The problem with people: Knowledge is not equal with all people. vs. 4-8
- III. The problem with exercising one’s liberty: Knowledge is destructive without love. vs. 9-13

I. The problem with knowledge: knowledge is inferior to love. vs. 1-3

A. The apostle Paul declared he was going to answer their questions about offerings to idols. vs. 1a

* “Now concerning things offered to idols.”

- 1. The phrase “now concerning” is used for the questions the Corinthians asked Paul.
 - a. About marriage and their sexual responsibility to each other. 1Cor. 7:1
 - b. About virgins and marriage virgins. 1Cor. 7:25
 - c. About offerings to idols. 1Cor. 8:1
 - d. About gifts of the Spirit. 1Cor. 12:1

- e. About the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. 1Cor. 16:1
- f. About Apollos visiting. 1Cor. 16:12
- 2. The Greeks had many societies and clubs, such as burial societies, political as well as religious societies.
 - a. These societies and clubs were celebrated with feasts and sacrifices, which bonded them into a family of brotherhood.
 - b. Rome was very careful in scrutinizing every new society or club, due to their loyalty, which at time, was greater than that to the state and empire.
 - c. Rome without doubt saw synagogues and the church as religious societies, watching them closely.
 - d. These pagan societies, be they political, societal or religious were all tied to idol gods, to which they sacrificed and worshipped.
 - 1) The Corinthians were Gentiles, who had come out of idolatry.
 - 2) There were different views about a Christian partaking of meats that had been offer to an idol.
 - 3) The person not joined to these societies, temples and guilds, often would be cut off from work and social life.

- B.** The apostle Paul declared a general statement, admitting they had a common grasp about idols. vs. 1b
 * “We know that we all have knowledge.”
1. Paul made himself one with the Corinthians.
 - a. The personal pronoun “we” refers to Paul and the believers at Corinth.
 - b. They had mutual understanding.
 - 1) The word know “eido”, means to perceive and discern by the faculty of their mind. vs. 1, 2, 4, 10
 - 2) Knowledge “gnosis” intellectual information related to the pagan practice. vs. 1, 7, 10, 11
 2. Paul came to the Corinthians and called them to repentance from their idolatry.
 - a. Both were familiar with the temple sacrifices to various gods. 1Cor. 6:13-16
 - b. Both were aware the sacrifices dedicated to the various gods were sold to the meat market, then sold to the common person. 1Cor. 10:25
 - c. The Corinthians and Paul knew that the sacrifices were really to demons and not to God. 1Cor. 10:20
- C.** The apostle Paul declared the contrast between knowledge and love. vs. 1c-d
 * “Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”

1. Paul pointed out the potential problem with knowledge. vs. 1c
 - a. He told them, “Knowledge puffs up”.
 - 1) The word knowledge “gnosis”, again refers to human intellect, information and understanding.
 - 2) Knowledge often causes people to be arrogance, rather than humble, it is deceptive, causing man to think he is superior to others.
 - 3) The evidence in the first four chapters, marked their prideful boasting based on their trust in human knowledge and wisdom, both being inferior to God’s knowledge and wisdom.
 - 4) This human knowledge is “ego-centered”, divine knowledge is “theo-centered”.
 - b. He gave them a vivid picture about the problem with knowledge.
 - 1) The phrase puffed up “phusioo” means to blow up, inflate, to swell.
 - 2) We say, “He has big head”.
 - 3) The word appears seven times in the New Testament, all but one are used for the pride and carnal state of the Corinthians. 1Cor. 4:6, 18, 19, 5:2, 8:1, 13:4
 - c. He stated this in the context of things sacrificed to idols.

- 1) There were those at Corinth, who thought they knew perfectly about the issue of offerings to idols, pro and con, for Christians.
 - 2) There must of been others who were not so sure, as to the affects and consequences of eating meats offered to idols, as Christians.
2. Paul pointed out the potential benefit of love on the other hand. vs. 1d
- a. He told them, love edifies.
 - 1) The word love “agape” identifies the love of God and used for God’s love for mankind. Jn. 3:16
 - 2) It is used to identify the love of God shed abroad in the heart of the believer and fruit of the Spirit. Rom. 5:5, Gal. 5:22
 - b. He gave them a vivid picture about the benefit of agape love.
 - 1) The word edifies “oikodomeo” means to build up, erect or restore, depending on the context.
 - 2) The contrast between mere knowledge and agape love is marked by the word “but”.
 - 3) Knowledge inflates one’s head and self-perception, while agape love uses knowledge to serve other.
 - 4) Agape love is to be the motivation for all a Christian does in life.

- 5) The Corinthians were acting out of pure knowledge regarding the things offered to idols, perhaps in a very dogmatic way without any consideration of love for those who did not quite see it the way they saw it and in fact looked down on them, rather than edifying them in Christ.
- D.** The apostle Paul declared a sharp rebuke to those who thought they knew all about the things offered to idols. vs. 2
- * “And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.”
1. Paul was not denying general knowledge, only that it is a small portion of all that can be known.
 - a. The perfect active tense, “to have known”, indicates full and complete knowledge.
 - b. This, no man possesses.
 2. Paul was saying that when a person gets to the place they think they know everything there is to know about any one thing, then they know nothing.
 - a. He literally says, “nothing he has known”, indicating what the man believed he knew, he did not know.

- b. The result is ignorance by thinking one knows, while one don't know.

E. The apostle Paul commended those who were acting out of God's agape love, rather than just knowledge. vs. 3

* "But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him."

1. Paul pointed out the person who loves God. vs. 3a
 - a. He makes the sharp contrast by the word "but".
 - 1) To the one who is self-inflated by knowledge. vs. 2
 - 2) To the one who will use knowledge for the good of others. vs. 3
 - b. He indicated "anyone" has this potential, having free-will.
 - 1) All who yields to God's agape love will be concerned about others.
 - 2) The source is God, not the person.
 - a) Jesus told a lawyer that the greatest commandment was to love God with all our heart, mind and soul, the vertical. Matt. 22:37-38
 - b) The second was to love our neighbor as ourselves, and that in these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets, the horizontal. Matt. 22:39-40

2. Paul pointed out that the consequences of loving God, the person is known by God.
 - a. He stated God alone knows the motive of the heart.
 - 1) The word known "ginosko", means full and complete knowledge, indicated by the perfect passive tense in the Greek.
 - 2) God sees them as a genuine person and as His own. Gal. 4:8-9
 - b. God is Omniscient, all knowing.
 - 1) God cannot learn anything.
 - 2) God is not surprise by anyone.

The problem with knowledge is that knowledge is inferior to love!

II. The problem with people: knowledge is not equal with all people. vs. 4-8

- A.** The apostle Paul identified the mature believer in relation to the knowledge of things offered to idols. vs. 4-6
- * "Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols."
1. Paul specified the problem, the eating of things offered to idols. vs. 4
 - a. The eating of things offered meant a person became one with the deity.
 - b. The sacrifice was offered in their name, as a devotee to the idol.

2. Paul stated the truth about idols. vs. 4b
 * “we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world.”
- a. He again includes the Corinthians.
- 1) The plural pronoun “we” identifies Paul and all spiritually mature.
 - 2) The mature Christian understands an idol implies religion, not a personal relationship with God.
- b. He stated the true nature of idols.
- 1) The idols of man, possess no power or ability to do anything, in and of themselves in this world.
 - 2) The mature person acknowledges that an idol is but stone, wood or metal and the work of man’s hands, insensate as the Psalmist declares. Ps. 115:4-8, 135:15-18
3. Paul stated the truth about God. vs. 4c
 * “and that *there is* no other God but one.”
- a. He pointed out that there is only One God.
- 1) Before they believe in polytheism.
 - 2) Many still believed this in Corinth.
- b. Those mature in Christ are not led by ignorance.
- 1) God’s word reveals what is truth, comparing all things to the Bible.
 - 2) God’s word produces confidence about truth. Acts 17:11

- b. Those mature in Christ are not led by superstitions.
- 1) They had come to the True and Living God.
 - 2) They had a living relation with Jesus Christ.
4. Paul stated the belief, as a reality of the religious world. vs. 5-6
 * “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords)”
- a. He acknowledges the devotion to other gods and lords. vs. 5
- 1) The reference to “gods” is to those who people trusted in and sought after, as idols. vs. 5a
 - 2) The reference to “lords” is to the ownership of their lives by those gods.
- b. He described their locality, heaven and earth.
- 1) The people worshipped Jupiter, Mercury, Apollo, Mars, etc.
 - 2) The worship of local deities, the gods of the valleys or the mountains, the wind or lightening, as a common belief.
5. Paul stated the specific belief, the reality of the mature believer. vs. 6
- a. He pointed out that for the believer there is only one God. vs. 6a-d

- * “yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him.”
- 1) The word “yet” marks the contrast of the pagan and the Christian.
 - 2) This comes from the Shema of Israel that was repeated in the morning and evening, they still do so on the radio today for the nation of Israel. Duet. 6:4-5
 - 3) The Father who is the source of all things, who is not confined to heaven and earth, like the pagan idols, He is Omnipresent. Acts 14:15, 17:24-31
 - 4) The believer exists for Him, committed and set apart.
- b.** He pointed out that for the believer there is one Lord. vs. 6e-g
- * “and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.”
- 1) The Lord Jesus Christ, Master and Messiah of his or her life.
 - 2) The one through whom are all things. Col. 1:16-17
 - 3) The One through whom every believer comes to God the Father for salvation. Jn. 14:6, Heb. 1:1-4

- B.** The apostle Paul identified the immature believer. vs. 7-8
1. Paul stated that the mature believer has to understand that there is not in every believer this mature knowledge. vs. 7a-b

* “However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge.”

 - a. He marks the contrast back to the immature believer.
 - 1) The word however “*alla*”, is a strong contrasting conjunction.
 - 2) It looks back to the previous verse and verse one, not all have this knowledge.
 - b. He pointed out there are always immature believers in the church.
 - 1) Due to being young in the Lord.
 - 2) Due to not growing spiritually.
 2. Paul stated that some immature believers have a difficult time with eating meats offered to idols. vs. 7c-h

* “for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol.”

 - a. He pointed out that some can not allow themselves the freedom to eat offered to an idol, without believing they are partaking with the idol.
 - 1) The number is some “*tis*”, certain, or a set number.

- 2) The responsibility of the mature Christian is to be considerate of the weaker brother out of love!
- b. He pointed out the problem was they were acting against their conscience.
 - * “and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.”
 - 1) The word conscience “suneidesis”, literally means to live up to knowledge.
 - 2) Having the ability to make moral judgments of right and wrong.
 - 3) The word appears nine times in the letter, all regarding foods. 1Cor. 8:7, 10, 12, 10:25, 27, 28, 29
- c. He pointed out the painful result by their conscience.
 - 1) Their conscience is weak “asthenes”, they feel guilty, it does not allowed them eat freely.
 - 2) Their conscience then is defiled “moluno”, stains and soils. Rom. 14:23
- 3. Paul stated that food does not affect our relation to God. vs. 8
 - a. He pointed out that food does not give us entry or access to God. vs. 8a
 - * “But food does not commend us to God.”
 - 1) The word commend “paristemi”, means to place besides or near.

- 2) The word is legal term and refers to court proceedings.
- 3) The tense is taken by some in the present others in the future.
- b. He pointed out that food does not make us closer to God. vs. 8b-c
 - * “for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.”
 - 1) The partaking of certain foods does not make me more spiritual.
 - a) The word better “perisseuo”, means to abound or overflow, being more excellent, in the negative.
 - b) This will not place a Christian in a favorable position before God.
 - 2) The abstaining of certain foods does not make me less spiritual.
 - a) The word worse “hustereo”, means to be behind, to be devoid or less, as a Christian.
 - b) This will not place a Christian in dis-favorable position with God.

The problem with people is that knowledge is not equal with all people!

III. The problem with exercising one’s liberty: knowledge is destructive without love. vs. 9-13

- A.** The apostle Paul declared a warning to those who are acting out of pure knowledge. vs. 9
- 1.** Paul stated the contrast should not be missed again.
 - * “But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours.”
 - a.** The word “but” is in contrast to the preceding verse.
 - b.** The word beware “blepo” means to see with the mind’s eye, to discern, to understand, to take heed mentally, observe and perceive carefully.
 - * The word is used metaphorically to reflect on one’s action, to weigh carefully one’s knowledge in view of what it does to another.
 - 2.** Paul stated the strong warning to the one acting on pure knowledge without concern for the immature believer.
 - * “become a stumbling block to those who are weak.”
 - a.** He pointed out danger to the one convinced by his knowledge about the eating of meats offered to idols.
 - 1)** The phrase “this liberty of yours” is emphatic in the Greek.
 - 2)** The exercises of his liberty in eating the meat offered to an idol, without any consideration for the weak brother.

- b.** He pointed out the actual danger, it causes them to stumble.
 - 1)** The word stumbling block “proskomma” means an obstacle in the way which if one strikes his foot against, he stumbles or falls and causes him to sin.
 - 2)** Even if the strong believer knows that food does not commend him to God, he still has to take the weak brother in mind.
- B.** The apostle Paul declared a real case scenario. vs. 10
- 1.** Paul stated the fact of someone seeing another believer eating in a temple. vs. 10a
 - * “For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple.”
 - a.** He described the one with liberty eating the meat offered to an idol.
 - 1)** The word eating “katakeimai”, means to be sitting or lying on one’s side eating, reclining.
 - 2)** This is the way the ate, not as we do in chairs.
 - b.** The location is the idol’s temple.
 - 1)** The gathering of pagans.
 - 2)** The place of invoking other gods.

2. Paul stated the outcome of such a situation to the weak brother. vs. 10b
 * “will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?”
- a. The one with knowledge has the greater responsibility.
 - 1) He is to be an example.
 - 2) He is to consider the weak ones.
 - b. The one who has a weak conscience might be emboldened to eat, due to the practice of the stronger believer.
 - 1) The word emboldened “oikodomeo”, is the same word as verse one “puffed up”.
 - 2) The context indicates he would become encourage and confident in eating the meat, but only for the moment.

C. The apostle Paul declared the consequences to the weak believer. vs. 11

1. Paul stated in the form of a rhetorical question to the mature believer.

* “because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish?”

 - a. He pointed out that there is only one right answer, NO!
 - 1) He was trying to bring the person to act out of love, not mere knowledge.

- 2) He was trying to draw compassion out of him for the weak brother.
 - b. He pointed out the real potential, to perish.
 - 1) The word perish “apollumi” means to be lost, ruined, destroyed, put out of the way entirely.
 - 1) The verb is in the present tense, literally is, being destroyed.
 - 2) The word stresses the progressive damage.
 - 3) The same word is used for the activity of Satan, to steal, kill and to destroy and those in the wilderness. Jn. 10:10, 1Cor. 10:9-10
 - c. The sense is, that the tendency of this course would be to lead the weak brother into sin, to apostasy, and to ruin.
2. Paul stated the rest of the rhetorical question.
- * “for whom Christ died?”
- a. He again pointed out there is only one right answer, NO!

* Attempting to communicate the seriousness of the matter.
 - b. He pointed out Jesus died in his place.
 - 1) Just like Jesus did for him.
 - 2) God loved and died for all sinners, making them brothers.

* God is not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance. 2Pet. 3:9

D. The apostle Paul declared the personal accountability of the one living out his knowledge without love. vs. 12

1. Paul stated the abuse of one's own liberty in Christ is to sin against the weaker brother.

* "But when you thus sin against the brethren."

a. He pointed out the believer still has sin nature and can and does sin.

1) The word sin "harmatano", means to miss the mark.

2) The failure is do to yielding to our sin nature or being overcome by not trusting Christ.

b. He pointed out the nature of the sin, to wound their weak conscience.

* "and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ."

1) The word wound "tupo", means to strike, beat or smite, used figuratively to communicate the literal damage to the conscience.

2) A participle in the present active tense, you are wounding.

3) This is done by not considering the individual, but rather only self.

2. Paul stated the sin is a sin against Christ.

a. The person belongs to Christ.

b. The person sinning is accountable to Christ.

* "You sin against Christ, a present tense."

E. The apostle Paul declared the guiding principle of love. vs. 13

1. Paul stated the conclusion of the matter of eating meats offered to idols. vs. 13a

* "Therefore."

a. The conclusions is prefaced by the word therefore.

1) This is the sum total of all he has discussed.

2) The need of knowledge to be tempered by love for one's freedom.

2. Paul stated the potential problem of eating meats offered to idols. vs. 13b

* "if food makes my brother stumble."

a. The word stumble "skanalizo", means to place a stumbling block or impediment.

b. To cause him or her to be offended or provoke them to do something that will cause them great regret.

c. To cause them to fall away.

3. Paul stated his personal resolution of eating meats offered to idols. vs. 13c

- * “I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”
- a. He would forsake meat, if he had to for the sake of weak brothers. vs. 13a
 - 1) Paul would not be ruled alone by knowledge, focusing on himself.
 - 2) Paul would be ruled by the principle is love with knowledge.
 - b. He pointed out the reason, lest I make my brother stumble.” vs. 13d
 - 1) The repetition of “brother” gives emphases to love for him.
 - 2) The repetition of stumbling, gives emphasis on the sin that love avoids.

The problem with exercising one’s liberty is that knowledge is destructive without love!

IV. The problem of knowledge and love has a personal application.

- A. The Christian is the freest man on the entire earth. 1Cor. 10:23-24
 1. You can do anything, but all things are not helpful or beneficial.
 2. You know that though all things are allowable they are not all edifying.
 - a. We don’t have meats offered to idols that are sold to the butcher-shop, so

- the literal situation does not apply to us.
- b. But, whatever we came out of, we have to be careful we do not stumble others.
 3. You have the responsibility to make the decision with knowledge through love for other’s well being.
 - a. The principle can be applied to my liberty in drinking or smoking, dancing or going to movies, causing someone to be drawn back into the worldly life-style.
 - * We are not talking about liberty for nudity of profane language!
 - b. The principle can be applied to my liberty before my family and my witness to others, as a Christian.
 - e. Though this text is not dealing with legalism, as Roman 14, the principle of love can be applied. Rom. 14:1-6, 13
 - * “Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God.

Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.”
Rom. 14:20-23

- B.** The Christian was to eat the meat in the market. 1Cor. 10:25-26
1. The believer was not to ask the butcher if the meat he was about to buy had been offered to an idol, so as not to defile his conscience. vs. 25
 2. The reason that it was all right for him to eat the meat even, if it had been offer to an idol, for the earth is the Lord’s and all of it’s fullness. vs. 26
 - a. God created animals for food.
 - b. God knew that the person was not eating it as to the idol.
- C.** The Christian was to eat whatever was placed before him at a dinner. 1Cor. 10:27-30
1. If a non-believer invited him to dinner he was not to ask if the meat had been offered to an idol.
 2. If they told him that it was offered to an idol, then he was not to eat for the sake of the pagan and conscience sake. vs. 28

3. He qualifies conscience, not their own but the weak brothers, for they feel free in just giving thanks. vs. 29-30
- D.** The Christian was to be motivated by God’s love. 1Cor. 10:31-11:1
1. Whatever is to be done, eating or drinking, all is to be done to the glory of God. vs. 31
 2. No offense was to be given to Jews, Greeks or the church of God. vs. 32
 3. Paul is the example of this principle, seeking not his own but the profit of many to be saved, so he calls them to imitate him. vs. 33, 11:1

The problem of knowledge and love has a personal application!

Illustration

Charles V was determined to compel all his subjects to adopt his thinking about religion. Thousands died rather than conform. Weary of a long reign, Charles abdicated in 1556, and retired to a monastery, where he amused himself by trying to make a dozen clocks run absolutely together.

When he failed, he exclaimed: “How foolish I have been to think that I could make all men believe alike about religion when I cannot even make two clocks run together.” **#3080**

Conclusion

We have looked at the principle of Christian liberty in the eating of meats, love, which Paul characterized by three problems:

- I.** The problem with knowledge is that knowledge is inferior to love!
- II.** The problem with people is that knowledge is not equal with all people!
- III.** The problem with exercising one's liberty is that knowledge is destructive without love!