

You Really Should Know Better!

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

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.

Passage Summary:

In 8:1, Paul begins addressing a new topic that was brought up by the Corinthians in their letter to him: *eating meat (or food, more generally) sacrificed to idols*. This issue accounts for a large and complicated section which continues through 11:1. It seems that there were two parties (*once again, there is division!!*) in the church: those who approved of the practice, and those who disapproved. These groups could be called the “progressive” group and the “conservative” group. It seems that the “progressives” (those who approved of eating idol-food) were the ones who had raised the issue to Paul, hoping that he would rebuke the conservatives and stop them from making a fuss about their meat-eating. In this opening passage of this lengthy section, however, Paul turns the issue around on the progressives, revealing that they are acting in arrogance, and that while they do possess knowledge, their knowledge isn’t even as sound as they think it is. (See 10:14-23 especially.)



Practical Implications:

We must not view knowledge of God and His Word negatively - for that is not Paul's goal in this passage. The problem is what one *does* with knowledge. Knowledge can be used with immaturity, arrogance, boastfulness, and selfishness - or it can be used in love. Knowledge and love should not be pitted against one another, but rather should always be coupled together and growing together. We must also take care that we do not have an over-inflated view of our own understanding, as though *we have arrived* at perfect knowledge. As Paul will reveal to the "progressives" in 10:14-23, there was still much they did not understand.

I. Injurious Knowledge

- In what ways do you think knowledge can lead to arrogance? How can we guard against this tendency in our own lives? **Cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 1:30-31.**

- Consider the impact of our knowledge and actions on fellow believers, especially those who may be weaker in their faith or understanding. How can we use our knowledge to build others up and strengthen them? How might knowledge be used to tear down instead?



- Consider Paul's assertion that "knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies." How can we ensure that our pursuit of knowledge is balanced by a genuine love for others?

- Consider the following passage:

James 3:13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. **16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. **17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

- From this passage, what are some characteristics of “earthly wisdom”?
 - ➡ In what ways did the Corinthians exhibit this kind of wisdom or knowledge?

- What are some characteristics or traits of the “wisdom from above”?
 - ➡ How does this kind of wisdom help to **edify**, or build up others?

II. *Imperfect Knowledge*



- In v. 2, is Paul teaching that we cannot be *certain* about Biblical truths? How, or why, can we have certainty? Cf. **Luke 1:3-4, John 17:25-26, Ephesians 1:18ff, 1 John 2:26-27 & 5:13**

- Though we can be certain about much Biblical truth, why can we not “*fully know*”? Cf. **1 Corinthians 13:9-12, Isaiah 55:9, Job 26:5-13**

- Reflect on the idea of imperfect knowledge and the acknowledgment that we do not fully comprehend God or His ways. How does this realization impact our interactions with others, especially those who may hold differing theological views or convictions?

- What are the implications that we cannot *fully know* God with *complete* knowledge? Cf. **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**
 - ➡ How is this both *humbling* and *encouraging*?

III. *Intimate Knowledge*

- Paul emphasizes the importance of being **known by God** rather than merely possessing knowledge *about* Him. How does this perspective shift influence the way we approach our relationship with God on a daily basis?



- ➔ How does this perspective shift influence how we talk with others? (i.e. lost friends/family members, co-workers, social media haters, brothers and sisters in the church etc.)

Prayer Topics:

- Pray that ABC would grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, building one another up and not being puffed up with pride.

