

URGENT

1st
CENTURY
CIRCA ROM



1 Corinthians



The Apostle Paul's Mission to the Corinthians



Christ Bible Church



Adult Bible Class Calendar Spring 2023

Date			Lesson Portion of 1 Corinthians
1	February	5	Review of 1 Corinthians 1-7 & Preview of 1 Corinthians 8-11
2	February	12	1 Corinthians 8:1-6
3	February	19	1 Corinthians 8:7-13
4	February	26	1 Corinthians 9:1-14
5	March	5	1 Corinthians 9:15-27
6	March	12	1 Corinthians 10:1-13
7	March	19	1 Corinthians 10:14-22
8	March	26	1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1
9	April	2	1 Corinthians 11:2-16
10	April	9	1 Corinthians 11:17-34

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

CONCERNING FOODS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS (8:1-11:1)
Correcting the Problem: Knowledge and Love (8:1-13)

Freedom of Conscience
Concerning Things God
Does Not Forbid
1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

Outline of 1 Corinthians

- I. Introduction (1:1-9).
- II. Responses to Received Reliable Oral Reports from the Corinthians (1:10-6:20).
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4).
 - A. Concerning Marriage and Related Questions (7:1-40).
 - B. Concerning Foods Sacrificed to Idols (8:1-11:1).
 - 1. **Correcting the Problem: Knowledge and Love (8:1-13).**
 - a. **Paul's Statement of the Principle of Knowledge & Love (8:1-3).**
 - b. **Paul's Use of the Principle of Knowledge & Love (8:4-13).**
 - 2. Modeling Proper Use & Non-Use of Christian Freedom (9:1-27).
 - 3. Applying a Warning: Israel's Example (10:1-13).
 - 4. An Analogy: The Lord's Table (10:14-22).
 - 5. Summarizing the Corrective: True Limitations of Christian Freedom (10:23-11:1).

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Correcting the Problem: Knowledge & Love

- **Paul's Statement of the Principle of Knowledge and Love (8:1-3).**
- **Paul's Use of the Principle of Knowledge and Love (8:4-13).**
 - **Use of Knowledge (8:4-8).**
 - **Use of Love (8:9-13).**

1 Corinthians 8:1-6

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—yet for us, there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, with the following letter:

“The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. *For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.* If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

Acts 15:22-29

Food & Drink—Colossians 2:16-23

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—“**Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch**” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.



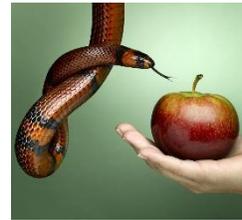
The basic idea that grounds the Gnostic belief that God's created material is inherently evil originated in the Garden of Eden.

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The Greek translation of the OT uses the same word Paul uses to state the regulations that promote a self-made religion.

Genesis 3:1-3



The serpent said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, **neither shall you touch it** lest you die.’”

Some Background to Consider

- Jews and Jewish Christians might be inclined to refrain from eating such foods for two reasons:
 - It was regarded as defiled because it was offered to idols.
 - If it was meat, it could not be assumed to be kosher (slaughtered according to kosher customs).
- Likely, there were Jewish Christians in Corinth who imposed their scruples on other Jewish and Gentile Christians who freely ate foods offered to idols.
- Paul addresses two chief concerns:
 - Some in Corinth ate foods offered to idols with no regard for others.
 - Some in Corinth were bound in conscience and needed to be freed from their bondage.
- A crucial aspect of Gnostic beliefs is present in Corinth concerning foods offered to idols.

Some Background to Consider

- Doubtless, there were some Gentiles in Corinth who had been proselytes to Judaism who would endorse the Jewish prohibition of eating any foods sacrificed to idols.
- It also seems evident that there were some Gentiles in Corinth who became Christians out of paganism whose consciences were likely bound, permitting neither themselves nor others to eat food offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8:7).
- Also, there were undoubtedly Gentiles in the church who had no scruples about eating foods offered to idols.
- So, Paul needs to address two questions.

Some Background to Consider—Two Questions

- Two distinct questions the Corinthian Christians must ask:
 - Should I take part in pagan temple festivals-feasts? Yes, or no?
 - Should I eat meat purchased in the meat shops of Corinth, where it is likely that some of the meats being sold came from pagan temples? Yes, or no?
- These questions are of tremendous significance.

There Were Likely Three Different Levels of Conscience in the Corinthian Church

Weak in Conscience

(Bound Conscience;
Inducible to Act
against Conscience)

Bound Conscience

(Not Free to Eat Foods
Offered to Idols,
also More Likely to
Condemn those who
are Free than to be
tempted to Act against
Conscience)

Strong in Conscience

(Free Conscience)

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

The Apostle of Liberty

- An overview of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 indicates that Paul is arguing for freedom of the conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:8; 9:1-12, 19a).
- Paul advocates for freedom, which has two crucial aspects.
 - Freedom in Christ Jesus—Having a conscience that is not bound to anyone but Jesus Christ and thus not accusing (8:8; 9:19; 10:29).
 - Freedom entails the freedom to exercise one's free conscience or to restrict the exercise of one's free conscience for the sake of another Christian whose conscience is yet bound (8:13; 9:12, 15, 19).

1 Corinthians 8:7-13

However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat and no better off if we do. But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so, by your knowledge, this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, by sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

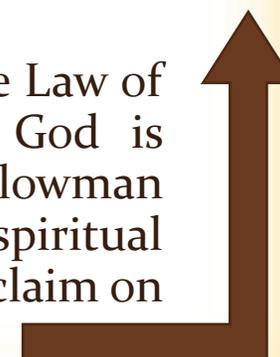


1 Corinthians 9:1-12

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to eat and drink? Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?

Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?



1 Corinthians 9:19-23

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.



1 Corinthians 8:13; 9:15, 19-23

Freedom to Act & Freedom Not to Act

Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble (1 Corinthians 8:13).

But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision (1 Corinthians 9:15).

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

- Knowledge inclines some to act on their Christian freedom without regard for others who are yet bound.
- Lack of knowledge inclines some to impede the freedom of fellow Christians.

Both are “puffed up.” Paul’s essential principle: What is crucial is not knowledge that allows one to eat without guilt or lack of knowledge that prohibits one from eating foods offered to idols. What truly matters is the behavior generated from love.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

- “Knowledge” occurs six times in 8:1-3. Paul is countering an early form of Gnosticism, the heresy that would emerge into full bloom during the second century A.D.
- Gnostic & Gnosticism derive from the Greek “gnosis” (γνώσις) which means “knowledge.”
- Knowledge by itself puffs up.
- Paul has already rebuked the Corinthians for arrogance (4:6, 18; 5:2), and does it again here.
- Knowledge is essential—“all of us possess knowledge”—but knowledge abstracted from love is inflated and empty.
- Knowledge must be mastered by love for God and for neighbor.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

- **“To know” is not of first importance. Rather, “to be known by God” is.**
- **Paul is not saying that our love causes God to “know” us.**
- **He means the opposite.**
- **God’s knowing us enables us to love God. “The one who now loves God is the one on whom God has fastened his knowledge.” This is an allusion to God’s electing knowledge (Romans 8:29; 2 Timothy 2:19; Galatians 4:9).**

1 Corinthians 8:4-6

Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—yet for us, there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God except one.

1 Corinthians 8:4-6

Paul sets Christian monotheism over against pagan polytheism.

For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—yet for us, there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

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1 Corinthians 8:4-6

Idols are nothing other than gods carved out by humans after their own image and likeness.

Christian knowledge frees us to eat foods sacrificed on pagan altars because the idol is nothing since there is only one true God.

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1 Corinthians 8:4-6

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Later, Paul states that when pagans offer sacrifices before idols they are making their offerings to demons (1 Corinthians 10:18-20). Yet, Paul distinguishes between the identity of demons and idols.

We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God except one.

1 Corinthians 10:18-20

Christian knowledge frees us to eat foods sacrificed on pagan altars because the idol is nothing since there is only one true God.

Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants at the altar? What do I imply, then? That food offered to idols is anything, or an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.

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