

## 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 Liberty Used Rightly

Paul the apostle was a champion of the liberty that we have in Christ Jesus!

A) Galatians 5:1 **It is for freedom that Christ has set us free**

B) Romans 6:22 – **In Christ we have been set free from Sin**

1) Romans 8:2 **We are set free from the law of sin and death**

C) Colossians 1:22-23 **In Christ we are free from the accusation of the enemy.**

1) Ephesians 3:12 **In Jesus we have freedom to approach God in Confidence**

Paul championed our freedom in Jesus and He vigorously defended it against those who would attack it through Legalism

A) The book of Galatians – **If someone preaches another gospel to you – than what we have preached – let him be accursed. -STRONG**

B) The false teachers in Galatia – Were saying in order to be really be saved –

1) believing in Jesus wasn't enough - you also needed to be circumcised.

C) Paul said, I wish that those who preach that message – **would just castrate themselves.**

D) That is how serious Paul was in defending our Christian liberty from legalistic trips

1) that people tried to bring into the Church.

E) Anyone who brought a message that was Jesus + something ELSE

1) Paul would come down heavy on.

That being said – Paul also realized that Christian liberty had to be used rightly.

A) Especially in dealing with issues that were not dealing with the gospel

B) And Issues that were not black and white in Scripture.

1) The issues that we might call the “gray areas” – things that were a matter of conscience.

C) That is what Paul deals with here in Chapters 8-10

A big issue that believers especially in Gentile cities were dealing with was this:

A) Is it ok to eat meat Sacrificed to idols.

**V.1 Now concerning things offered to idols:**

B) In that culture there really were not any restaurants like we have today.

C) So the place where people would go to eat and to purchase meat was at the pagan temples.

When an animal was being sacrificed – part of the animal would be consumed on the altar

A) But another part of the animal - usually the best choices piece of meat was available for consumption there at the temple

B) Or they would take that piece of meat to the market place called the shambles – it would be sold.

1) Somehow labeled – Meat from the temple – Best cut of meat at a bargain price.

So this is where the tension came in – There were some people who loved buying this meat at a bargain price

A) They looked at the whole situation this way- An idol is nothing but a piece of wood or stone,

B) There is ONLY ONE TRUE GOD – Jehovah – these false gods are not really gods at all –

1) Those people had no problem eating the meat that had been sacrificed to the idol-

2) **an idol is nothing. – NOT A BIG DEAL**

C) But there were others in the church who believed that to eat the meat sacrificed to idols

1) **was actually partaking in the idolatry**

D) To associate with that at all – reminded them of the lifestyle that they had come out of.

Now let me ask you two questions: Think about this honestly- #1 Which group would you be in.

A) Would you be in the group that said – An idol is nothing – bring it on – lets cook that juicy steak?

**B) Or would you be in the group that said- No-way**  
– 1) I want nothing to do with anything going on in that pagan temple.

**C) Question #2 Which group do you think would make up the mature believers? Vs the Immature?**

1) Or to put it the way that Paul does – which group would be categorized **as the weaker** brother of sisters?

**D) Those who ate the meat – or those who refused to eat the meat?**

**So that is what these chapters are about**

**A) Outline –**

- **Chapter 8** Paul gives the principles for exercising Christian liberty
- **Ch 9** Paul uses himself as an example of exercising this principle
- **Chapter 10** Paul uses the History of Israel as an example of not exercising this principle correctly

**B) Now although this issue of eating meat that is sacrificed to idols is not something that is an issue in our culture. (Backyard idols and BBQ)**

**C) We can apply the principles that Paul puts forth here to any of the issues that are matters of conscience that we do deal with in our culture**

**D) Matters of conscience – not black and white in scripture**

1) **Matters like** – Alcohol consumption/ entertainment choices/ food consumption/ whether to watch sports or not

**Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge.**

**A) We all have knowledge and understanding from the scriptures concerning these sort of things**

**B) But knowledge alone is not enough – Knowledge by itself – can cause damage.**

1) **Wisdom is the right application of Knowledge -**

**We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.**

**A) Before answering the Corinthians question concerning meat – Paul begins by addressing this foundational issue**

**B) Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies – builds up**

**C) See I can have the right knowledge about something – but if I am just throwing my knowledge about something in the face of others**

1) That is just being prideful

**D) Or if I am trying to use my knowledge to persuade to my point of view**

1) But it is someone who doesn't want to be persuaded – That is not healthy either

**Knowledge puffs up but Love builds up and that is the goal.**

**A) So in matters of Christian liberty that are dealing with matters of conscience – Not black and white – personal convictions**

**B) Paul presents three Key principles in these chapters for dealing with exercising Christian liberty in matters of conscience.**

**Principle #1** Choose fellowship or love over personal freedom

**Principle #2** Choose the gospel over personal freedom

**Principle #3** Choose what is going to glorify God the most

**D) We will look at principle #1 tonight and principle #2 and #3 next week.**

**Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. ☺ 3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.**

**7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7**

**The key principle in dealing with these matters of deal with conscience is we want to walk in Love**

**4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.**

**A) So here is the knowledge that we have from scripture – an idol is nothing**

- 3 But our God *is* in heaven;  
He does whatever He pleases.
- 4 Their idols *are* silver and gold,  
The work of men's hands.
- 5 They have mouths, but they do not speak;  
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
- 6 They have ears, but they do not hear;  
Noses they have, but they do not smell;
- 7 They have hands, but they do not handle;  
Feet they have, but they do not walk;  
Nor do they mutter through their throat.

Psalm 115:3-7

**B) Isaiah paints an interesting picture in Isaiah 44**

**C) A man goes out and cuts down a tree – with the same tree- He**

- 1) Builds a beam for his house, he makes a fire to warm himself and cook his food

**D) And he fashions an idol that he falls down and worships –**

- 1) Sounds so silly when you think of it in that way.

**E) So scripture is clear that – the idol is nothing – and there are no other gods but the one true God Jehovah**

- 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

**Now in Deuteronomy 32 – Told behind the idol is a demon –**

**A) and in Chapter 10 those who sacrifice to idols sacrifice to demons**

**B) So there is a spiritual component in Idolatry – it is not just an empty ritual –**

- 1) it is Demonic – opens one up to the demonic world

- 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

**So we are clear in that Knowledge – You who know that believe that/ are secure in that –**

**A) Go get your meat and eat away!**

- 7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; **not all believers know this** for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and **their conscience**, being weak, is defiled.

**Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real,**

**A) So when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods,**

**B) and their weak consciences are violated.**

**C) So here Paul identifies that the weaker brother or sister**

- 1) is the one who thinks it is wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols – their conscience bothers them

- 8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. What you eat or don't eat doesn't affect your relationship with God – there is freedom in this matter

But notice where this principle of choosing love and fellowship over freedom comes in

- 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

- 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

**So to the mature believer who has knowledge that an idol is nothing and eating meat sacrificed to an idol is not a big deal –**

**A) Paul says BEWARE - Be careful - be cautious – that your liberty doesn't cause someone to stumble**

**B) How are they made to stumble ? – By doing something that violates their conscience**

**C) That is the thing issue – we need to be concerned about –**

- 1) I don't want my brother or sister to violate their conscience

**D) This is so interesting, to me that in all of his writings on this subject –**

1) Paul places the greater responsibility on the person who has liberty to WALK IN LOVE.

11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (Perish = Be destroyed-their walk with Jesus is affected-condemnation sets in) 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

**Now this is such a heavy idea here – when I exercise my liberty with no concern for my bro/sis – weaker conscience**

A) And their conscience is violated – I am the one who is sinning against my brother –

B) Not only that I am sinning against Jesus – because they are a part of the body of Christ

C) You who have liberty – your responsibility is not try and use your knowledge to convince someone who doesn't have that liberty

**D) Your role isn't to use your knowledge to try and persuade them why they are wrong to feel that way.**

1) Unless they ask

E) No your role is to out of love is to defer to and prefer the person who has the weaker conscience.

13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

A) Big idea: Because my goal is to build up others

B) I will choose love and fellowship over my personal freedom, even if that means forever forsaking my own personal liberty.

C) Because I see the big picture – the Christian life is about being like Christ – **modeling Christ to others and the world**

1) So I will Choose love and fellowship over my personal freedom

**That in and of itself is extremely freeing to know –**

A) that I have the ability to enjoy everything that God has for us in Jesus – in life.

B) I can enjoy great food, I can enjoy good music – I can enjoy special places – the arts – gifted people

C) I have the freedom to live in a way that is mindful of the people around me

D) I have the freedom to live in a way that seeks to build up others rather than tear them down.

**Now we will see next week – Paul is going to use himself as an example of a person living in the freedom of Jesus**

A) But he is going to add a little twist to the conversation –

B) by talking about how we live can also affect unbelievers

C) Paul's focus was **to choose the gospel** over his own personal freedom.

D) Paul will say – I have become all things to all men – that I might win some

**Great mindset and great focus to have**

A) but it starts with loving our bro/sis in the body of Christ by using our liberty rightly

B) Whatever the gray area is – ask yourself – 1) if I exercise this liberty out in public could it cause a bro/sis to violate their conscience ?

C) If the answer is yes – **don't do IT**

D) You are free to choose love! And model the heart and mindset of JESUS.