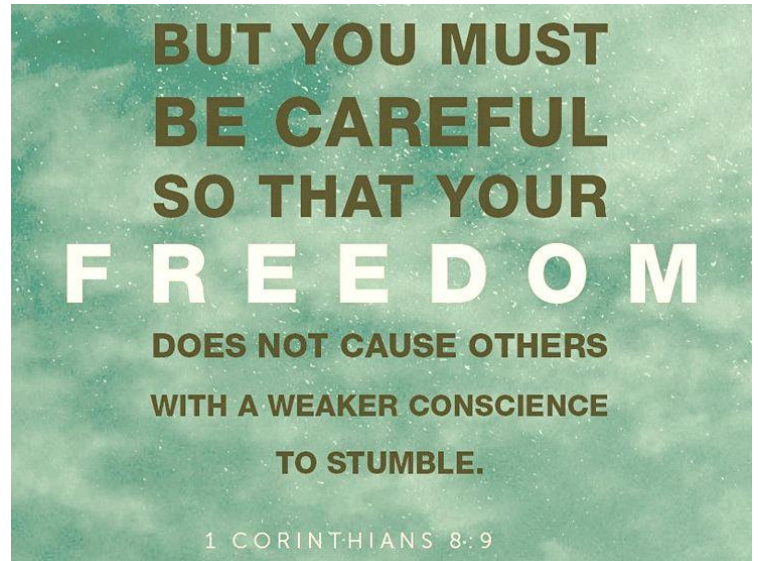


1 Corinthians, Chapter 8

Having stated principles to help the Christians in Corinth decide for themselves whether or not to marry under their circumstances, St. Paul continues by applying the Christian freedom theme to another question asked of him: “May Christians eat foods offered to idols?” He distinguishes three types of Christians involved in the question: (1) those who have no scruples about eating such meat because they know an idol is nothing; (2) those who regard the practice as sinful and refrain from it; and (3) those who consider the practice sinful and so violate their consciences by joining others in eating such foods anyway. St. Paul pleads with the strong in faith to suspend their Christian freedom, lest by their eating of foods once offered to idols they offend the weak in faith and cause spiritual harm to brethren for whom Christ died. **Read: 1**

Corinthians 8: 1-13.



1. St. Paul moves now to another subject the Corinthians had asked about, the eating of meat offered to idols. But before he deals with specifics, he emphasizes the place of knowledge and love toward God and toward one another.
 - a. St. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 8:1 of himself, the Corinthians, and all Christians that “all of us possess knowledge.” Paul summarizes the “knowledge” he is referring to in verses 4b-6. Why is knowledge alone inadequate to a right relationship with God? (Consider **James 2:19**)
 - b. St. Paul contrasts knowledge with love in **1 Cor. 8:1b**. What do you think he meant by this observation?
 - c. In **1 John 4:7-8**, St. John connects love and knowledge in another sense. How would you state John’s point?
2. St. Paul comes to the subject of eating food that was sacrificed to heathen idols. Compare what he says about these idols in **1 Cor. 8:4-5** with **Psalms 135:15-18**. These idols were worshiped as gods or as though they represented gods, though such “gods” actually did not exist. Idolatry is giving someone or something else the reverence and trust that belong only to the one true God. Why might it be said that idolatry is still the most popular sin?

3. People in Corinth might join friends in dining rooms at one of the temples to eat meat left over from a sacrifice to a heathen god. Some of this meat also was sold in the market. Apparently, some Christians thought that the idol gods really did exist, and that eating meat left over from a pagan sacrifice brought them into actual contact with these gods. How do you think Christians who thought this way would be confused by seeing other Christians eating meat sacrificed to idols?

4. Read **John 1:3, 10**. Notice the same thing stated about God the Father in **1 Cor. 8:6a** is repeated exactly about Jesus Christ in **1 Cor. 8:6b**. What conclusions do you draw from this?

5. Noting the strong language of St. Paul in **1 Cor. 8:7-13** about the careless regard some Christians in Corinth showed their weaker brothers and sisters in Christ, what response do these words prompt in you?

6. **Read Romans 14:21** and **1 Corinthians 8:13**, nothing what Paul says he is willing to give up. Would you be willing to give up to avoid injuring a weak Christian's conscience (or, what have you already given up for this reason?)

7. What is the responsibility of the stronger Christian regarding weaker Christians considering 1 Cor. 8?

Closing Prayer: (from LSB 698 – May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill)

1 May we Thy precepts, Lord, fulfill
 And do on earth our Father's will
 As angels do above;
 Still walk in Christ, the living way,
 With all Thy children and obey
 The law of Christian love. Amen.

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Sources: God's Word for Today: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 1997), LifeLight: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2007), Luther's Works (CPH, Fortress), Concordia Commentary: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2000)