

1 Corinthians 8

1 Corinthians 8.1-6

V 1-3 – A prelude to the question

V 1 – "Now concerning..." – he is replying to their last letter and their question

-**Why was Paul so slow to answer (why no answer until 1 Cor. 10.25)?** Because of the division of the church – It was bad enough as it was

-**Where have we studied the eating of meat offered to idols before?** *Romans 14*

-Notice: 1 Cor. 10.25 – It was impossible to identify meat in the marketplace which had been offered to idols

-The person would have to ask!

-**Any parallels today?** Pawn shops – **Should we ask if a certain item is stolen or not?**

"We know that we have all knowledge"

-Paul is again using sarcasm – just as in 4.8

-**What were they lacking?** Love

-Knowledge VS. wisdom, as with Nazis before World War II – they had great knowledge, but no godly wisdom

-Knowledge is very different from wisdom

V 2 – This explains v 1 – The starting point is love, not knowledge

-When the Gentiles ate meat sacrificed to idols, they believed that the smoke arising from the cooking allowed them to commune with the idol

V 3 – Explain v 5 – See *Acts 17.23*

V 4-5 – **Two things they could know?**

1. There are many so-called gods
2. There are many lords

V 6 – **Paul's immediate answer?** All things being equal, forget about it – there is no such thing as an idol

-This is one of the things that a mature Christian knows

1 Corinthians 8.7-13

V 7 – **Importance of "however"?** *V 6* is not the final answer – there is a "catch"

-A modern day parallel: An alcoholic who gives up drinking and becomes converted still has a weakness

-To be around alcoholic beverages would be more than he could stand

-Some Scriptures that support the moderate drinking of alcohol (when there are no extenuating circumstances)

-*John 2.9*

-*1 Cor. 11.21*

-*1 Tim. 4.4*

-*1 Tim. 5.23*

-Therefore, we have the "right" to drink wine, but love can prevent us
-What was happening to weaker members? It was violating their consciences (See *Rom. 14.23*)

-Some people think that wine is in the same category as drinking water, lemonade, or soda
-But *Rom. 14.21* puts it in the same category as eating meat offered to an idol

This is the point Paul made in *Romans 14*:

Romans 14.20-21 – Do not tear down the word of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

V 8 – Does it really matter what we eat? No – salvation is not based on what we eat

V 9 – One exception? If it is a stumbling block to the weak

-In other words, we are "free" to do many things as Christians, but we can choose not to do them because of our love for other Christians

V 10 – Strong members: "Since idols are fake anyway, it won't hurt to dine in a pagan temple"

-Example: Eating a great meal at a casino in Las Vegas

-How would that affect a weaker Christian who was trying to overcome a gambling habit?

-Would we eat chocolate in front of a Christian trying to overcome an eating problem?

-Paul's point: Things can be wrong because of their circumstances

V 11 – Notice the strong statement made here: Knowledge is not the only thing at stake here!

-Christ died for weak Christians also!

V 12-13 – What is lawful in some situations is unlawful in others (based on circumstances, weaker Christians who might be watching us, and a society that is being destroyed by that "matter of opinion")

-The conclusion? Paul: If it might cause a new Christian or a weaker Christian to stumble, I will voluntarily avoid that thing for the sake of my brother or sister in Christ

-Notice "I" in *v 13* – Paul is gently correcting the Corinthians by making himself the example

-The writer of these notes grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, during the 1950's, and a Christian person never went to a pool hall back then

-It seems rather quaint now, but back then the pool hall was where all the fights took place, where all the criminal elements met (for example, see the early movies of Marlon Brando), and where drinking and smoking and drug deals took place

-Is it a sin to knock around a ball with a stick on a table with green felt on the surface? Of course not

-But it would set a bad example for weaker Christians who were trying to get out of the habit of going there.

