

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians – Part 3 (early 54)

1 Corinthians 8–11

Knowledge and Liberty are Never an Excuse to Cause a Weaker Brother to Sin

8:1 With regard to food sacrificed to idols, we know that “we all have knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

2 If someone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know to the degree that he needs to know.

3 But if someone loves God, he is known by God.

4 With regard then to eating food sacrificed to idols, we know that “an idol in this world is nothing,” and that “there is no God but one.”

5 If after all there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

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

7 But this knowledge is not shared by all. And some, by being accustomed to idols in former times, eat this food as an idol sacrifice, and their conscience, because it is weak, is defiled.

8 Now food will not bring us close to God. We are no worse if we do not eat and no better if we do.

9 But be careful that this liberty of yours does not become a hindrance to the weak.

10 For if someone weak sees you who possess knowledge dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience be “strengthened” to eat food offered to idols?

11 So by your knowledge the weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed.

12 If you sin against your brothers or sisters in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

13 For this reason, if food causes my brother or sister to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause one of them to sin.

Paul Argues That as an Apostle He Has a Right to Receive Financial Support

9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you, for you are the confirming sign of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who examine me.

4 Do we not have the right to financial support?

5 Do we not have the right to the company of a believing wife, like the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas?

6 Or do only Barnabas and I lack the right not to work?

7 Who ever serves in the army at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Who tends a flock and does not consume its milk?

8 Am I saying these things only on the basis of common sense, or does the law not say this as well?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” [[Deut 25:4](#)] God is not concerned here about oxen, is he?

10 Or is he not surely speaking for our benefit? It was written for us, because the one plowing and threshing ought to work in hope of enjoying the harvest.

11 If we sowed spiritual blessings among you, is it too much to reap material things from you?

12 If others receive this right from you, are we not more deserving? But we have not made use of this right. Instead we endure everything so that we may not be a hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

13 Don't you know that those who serve in the temple eat food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar receive a part of the offerings? [cf. [Lev 7](#)]

14 In the same way the Lord commanded those who proclaim the gospel to receive their living by the gospel. [cf. [Luke 10:7](#)]

Paul Denied His Own Right in Order to Further the Spread of the Gospel

15 But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing these things so that something will be done for me. In fact, it would be better for me to die than—no one will deprive me of my reason for boasting!

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason for boasting, because I am compelled to do this. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward. But if I do it unwillingly, I am entrusted with a responsibility.

18 What then is my reward? That when I preach the gospel I may offer the gospel free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights in the gospel.

Paul Put His Freedom Aside in Order to Win More to Christ

19 For since I am free from all I can make myself a slave to all, in order to gain even more people.

20 To the Jews I became like a Jew to gain the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) to gain those under the law.

21 To those free from the law I became like one free from the law (though I am not free from God's law but under the law of Christ) to gain those free from the law.

22 To the weak I became weak in order to gain the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that by all means I may save

some.

23 I do all these things because of the gospel, so that I can be a participant in it.

The Importance of Self-Discipline

24 Do you not know that all the runners in a stadium compete, but only one receives the prize? So run to win.

25 Each competitor must exercise self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.

26 So I do not run uncertainly or box like one who hits only air.

27 Instead I subdue my body and make it my slave, so that after preaching to others I myself will not be disqualified.

Israel—An Example of Apostasy

10:1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea,

2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

3 and all ate the same spiritual food,

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they were all drinking from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

5 But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were cut down in the wilderness.

6 These things happened as examples for us, so that we will not crave evil things as they did.

7 So do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, *“The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”* [[Exod 32:6](#)]

8 And let us not be immoral, as some of them were, and twenty-three thousand died in a single day. [[Num 25:1–9](#)]

9 And let us not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by snakes. [[Num 21:4–9](#)]

10 And do not complain, as some of them did, and were killed by the destroying angel. [cf. [Num 11:1–3](#)]

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

12 So let the one who thinks he is standing be careful that he does not fall.

13 No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: He will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Paul Argues Against Participating in Pagan Festivals

14 So then, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

15 I am speaking to thoughtful people. Consider what I say.

16 Is not the cup of blessing that we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread that we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all share the one bread.

18 Look at the people of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar?

19 Am I saying that idols or food sacrificed to them amount to anything?

20 No, I mean that what the pagans sacrifice is to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons.

21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot take part in the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

22 Or are we trying to provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we really stronger than he is?

A Specific Example of How to Deal With Issues of Conscience

23 “Everything is lawful,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is lawful,” but not everything builds others up.

24 Do not seek your own good, but the good of the other person.

25 Eat anything that is sold in the marketplace without questions of conscience,

26 for *the earth and its abundance are the Lord’s*. [[Ps 24:1](#)]

27 If an unbeliever invites you to dinner and you want to go, eat whatever is served without asking questions of conscience.

28 But if someone says to you, “This is from a sacrifice,” do not eat, because of the one who told you and because of conscience—

29 I do not mean yours but the other person’s. For why is my freedom being judged by another’s conscience?

30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I blamed for the food that I give thanks for?

31 So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

32 Do not give offense to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God,

33 just as I also try to please everyone in all things. I do not seek my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved.

11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Honoring the Authority Structure of the Church

2 I praise you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I passed them on to you.

- 3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.
4 Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered disgraces his head.
5 But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head, for it is one and the same thing as having a shaved head.
6 For if a woman will not cover her head, she should cut off her hair. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, she should cover her head.
7 For a man should not have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man.
8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man.
9 Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for man.
10 For this reason a woman should have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.
11 In any case, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.
12 For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman. But all things come from God.
13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?
14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace for him,
15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.
16 If anyone intends to quarrel about this, we have no other practice, nor do the churches of God.

Concerning the Lord's Table

- 17 Now in giving the following instruction I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse.
18 For in the first place, when you come together as a church I hear there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.
19 For there must in fact be divisions among you, so that those of you who are approved may be evident.
20 Now when you come together at the same place, you are not really eating the Lord's Supper.
21 For when it is time to eat, everyone proceeds with his own supper. One is hungry and another becomes drunk.
22 Do you not have houses so that you can eat and drink? Or are you trying to show contempt for the church of God by shaming those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? I will not praise you for this!
23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread,
24 and after he had given thanks he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
25 In the same way, he also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, every time you drink it, in remembrance of me." [Luke 22:19–20]
26 For every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
27 For this reason, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
28 A person should examine himself first, and in this way let him eat the bread and drink of the cup.
29 For the one who eats and drinks without careful regard for the body eats and drinks judgment against himself.
30 That is why many of you are weak and sick, and quite a few are dead.
31 But if we examined ourselves, we would not be judged.
32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned with the world.
33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.
34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that when you assemble it does not lead to judgment. I will give directions about other matters when I come.

Scripture quoted by permission. All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://bible.org> All rights reserved. This material is available in its entirety as a free download or online web use at <http://netbible.org/>.