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1 Corinthians 8.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

1 Corinthians 8.

Topics.

- If anyone imagines they know, they do not know as they ought to know.
- There may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth.
- Jesus Christ, through who are all things and through whom we exist.
- Wounding another's conscience when it is weak, is sinning against Christ.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul shows that one of the purposes of marriage is not only to restrain sexual promiscuity, but so that a man and woman can safely enjoy the pleasure of sex, he speaks of the different types of anxieties a single person and a married couple are challenged with and the advantages and disadvantages of being married and of being single. The chapter ended with Paul basically saying that neither the single person nor the married couple should envy each other since both have their own particular anxieties to deal with and therefore whether single or married both should devote themselves to the Lord.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-7

If anyone Imagines they Know, they do not Know as they ought to Know.

- **1 Corinthians 8:1-7:** Now concerning food offered to idols we know that "all of us possess knowledge. "This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up (Edifies in KJV). ²If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. ³But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. ⁴Therefore, 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." ⁵For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—⁶yet 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. ⁷However, 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.

Knowledge: in this context means to absolutely know and understand, to be unequivocally and without question totally sure of a thing because of the knowledge one has.

They do not know as they ought to know: to understand the words, "If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know (v2) we need to be aware that the brothers and sisters Paul is writing to believe that their knowledge regarding eating food offered to idols makes a difference to God. It is in this sense that they do not know as they ought since if a person loves God, God knows them and

therefore whether they abstain from eating food or eat food that has been offered to idols makes no difference to God. Thus the reason Paul said, "If anyone loves God they are known by God" (v3) was to point out to those who believe food offered to idols should be abstained from and to those who think it is O.K. to eat it that it does not matter to God either way since whoever loves God, God personally knows and therefore whether they eat the food or don't makes no difference to God. This is because God sees the heart and the motives behind what we do, thus the one who eats the food is doing it in faith and with a clear conscience because they know it is only food, likewise the one who abstains is abstaining in faith because they believe it is wrong for them to eat the food, thus both are doing what they are doing in faith and because they love God and because they love God, God knows them and accepts both since both are doing what they are doing out of their love for God. This teaches us an important lesson, i.e., though God sees our lack of knowledge if our heart motivation toward God is right it supersedes our lack of knowledge which means God judges us not by our knowledge, but by our heart attitude toward Him.

There may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth: to understand the statement, "There may be so-called gods in Heaven or on Earth" (v5) it helps to understand a little bit about the human imagination, when a person believes in a thing such as an idol which symbolises some form of god, the imagination develops an image on the screen of the mind of that god the person is believing in. It's a little like a small child who after going to bed and having the light turned off believes there is a monster in the room, if that belief is strong enough the child's nervous system will react in fear accordingly, since the human nervous system does not have a mind of its own and therefore responds to whatever mental movies we play in our minds whether they are true or imaginary. This same principle applies to the belief in idols or other gods, and the reason why Paul is able to say that there are many gods, meaning many gods people believe in, but in reality they are gods of superstition and though very real to those who believe in them they have not real form, no substance and no real existence except in the imagination of the mind of those who strongly believe in them since as the Bible clearly teaches there is only one God. For further information see the title:

- Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Jesus Christ, through who are all things and through whom we exist: the words, "Jesus Christ, through who are all things and through whom we exist" (v6) have been mistakenly used to support the theory that Jesus is God the Creator, but notice the previous words Paul has just written, "There is only one God the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist" (v6). When Paul wrote a similar thing of Christ he was not referring to the original creation, but to the church, the body of Christ i.e., it is through Christ we exist and the all things refer to all things needed for eternal salvation i.e., forgiveness of sins, God's favour, mercy and grace, the promises to Abraham and eternal life all things we need to be saved to everlasting life and eternal glory are in Christ. It is in this sense Paul makes the statement, "Jesus Christ, through who are all things and through whom we exist" meaning without Christ there would be no Kingdom of God it simply would not exist since from the beginning of time Christ has been the central focus of Gods foreordained eternal plans and purposes for mankind's eternal salvation. For further information see the title:

- Trinity (the Doctrine of the Trinity in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Not all possess this knowledge: Paul's statement "Not all possess this knowledge" (v7) refers to the fact that eating food or not eating food offered to idols makes no difference to God since if a person loves Him then God knows them nevertheless for those who do not understand this truth their conscience can be easily wounded by another brother or sister enticing or intimidating them to eat food against their conscience.

NOTE: wounded in this context carries the idea of causing them to feel defiled and guilty before God. Naturally God knows everyone who has and does exist, but when Paul said, "If anyone loves God, he is known by God" (v3) he does not have in mind this kind of knowing, rather Paul is referring to those who are in a loving relationship with God and living to honour His name. It means those in Christ can have confidence that God is aware of them and knows them absolutely and intimately and thinks good thoughts toward them despite their lack of perfect knowledge because God sees the motives and intent of the heart.

1 CORINTHIANS 8:8-13

Wounding another's Conscience when it is Weak, is Sinning against Christ.

- **1 Corinthians 8:8-13:** Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For 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? ¹¹And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed the brother for whom Christ died. ¹²Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Even though a brother or sister is no worse off whether they enter an idol's temple and eat food offered to an idol or don't eat it, it can cause those who don't have this knowledge a spiritual problem in their conscience thus the reason Paul is teaching the Corinthian brothers and sisters about wounding another brother or sisters conscience. Paul is basically saying if a brother or sister believes that by being in an idol's temple and eating the food offered to the idol it will defile them before God then it would be wrong for them to enter the temple and eat the food since they would be going against their own conscience and will most certainly feel defiled and guilty before the Lord if they enter the temple and eat the food. Whereas Paul with the spiritually stronger conscience and the knowledge that the food is only food and that an idol has no real existence, and that there is no God but one (v4) understands that it is only food and can therefore eat it without any guilt or sense of defilement. Nevertheless he realises that if another brother or sister sees him in the idol's temple eating it those with the weaker conscience maybe tempted to eat also especially if they are hungry, but since this brother or sister does not have the knowledge that it is only food, but still believes that it is wrong to eat any food offered to idols their weaker conscience will not only convict them, but cause them to feel defiled and guilty before God. This is because they are not eating the food because they believe it is O.K to eat it, but because they saw Paul eating it. The spiritual principle Paul is teaching is that those with the stronger conscience should be careful not to cause those who have a weaker conscience to sin by going against their conscience and doing things that they believe are spiritually wrong.

NOTICE: it is through lack of knowledge that this brother or sister's conscience is spiritually weak.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
