

Letters to the church in...



Corinth

Focus: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Lesson 8-The Voice of Conscience

- **Having the knowledge of the True and Living God (v.1-4)**
 - (v.1-3)—*We have knowledge; YES! But let us be humble and realize we don't know anything as we should. Knowledge puffs up, but Love builds up. **Let us love the living God—then we'll be known by Him!!** (as His own sons and daughters)*
 - (v.4)—*True Knowledge tells us that there is only **one God!***
 - ***"...an idol is nothing in the world...there is no other God but one!" (v.4). (Deuteronomy 6:4 "...the Lord our God is one Lord..."; Psalm 135:15-18; Isaiah 44:6, 16-22—the folly of idolatry. **But our God lives, and He made us!!** (we could not make Him)).***
- **Living according to the knowledge of the Truth that we have (v.5-7)**
 - (v.6)—*We live because the living God has given (and lent) His life to us (See Acts 17:24,25,28).*
 - ***(v.7) some had eaten food, KNOWING that it was sacrificed to an idol. (they ate it, with that thought in their mind, and their conscience felt guilty about it—"...conscience being weak was defiled."***
- **Taking action so as not to offend the conscience of another—Do not set or give an example that would lead others to sin against God (v.8-13)**
 - ***(v.8)—Just the matter of eating some peace of food, doesn't make a difference. "But take heed..." (v.9).—your eating a piece of food could become a stumbling block to another (comp. w/Romans 14:21).***
 - ***(v.9-13)—Maybe you are thinking in your mind, "Oh, this is okay for me to eat this food sacrificed to an idol, because an idol is nothing."** (Yea, in your mind you may be thinking that—your conscience is not condemning you for it). **BUT**, perhaps your brother in Christ sees you eating it, and in his mind, this action is clearly wrong—it's part of pagan worship!!! (He'll likely think you're involved with something that is not good—it will cause him to stumble. **AND**, worse yet, if He follows your example, while also thinking this is wrong, he will be lost for his knowledge of making a sinful action. **A MATTER OF PERSONAL CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD IS VERY IMPORTANT (See Acts 23:1; 24:16; Romans 2:15; 1 John 3:20,21).** I should not do something to cause my brother to offend (v.13).*
 - ***Does Paul or the word of God support the action of eating the food which has been sacrificed to idols? (See Revelation 2:20; 1 Corinthians 10:19-28) (No, if we know it was offered to idols, then we should not be partakers of it).***
 - *This same basic issue of **the matter of conscience** is dealt with by Paul in his letter to the Romans. Romans chapter 14 closely parallels this chapter of 1 Corinthians 8. Both help to*

explain each other. Sometimes Paul's writings were not always easy to understand—even in the Greek—he had a reputation for that (ref. 2 Peter 3:15,16). However, the essential elements seem to stand clear to us. **We must keep a clear conscience in everything that we do before God. We must also be careful about misleading or offending the consciences of others by some apparently wrong action.** We should be faithful to the Lord and help others to be faithful. **Some issues are black and white clear (like the Ten Commandments),** but other issues might be a bit more ambiguous. One's conscience on an issue may be just a bit different from another's. We should be careful not to offend the conscience of others. And we should be careful to keep an honest and clear conscience before God in our own personal lives as well.

Question (s) for the Heart:

Is it your desire to have a conscience which is always "...void of offense towards God and towards man"? _____ (Acts 24:16)(Be faithful and conscientious towards God! Do not just do as everyone else when you know and feel that this matter is wrong—otherwise, your conscience towards God will be defiled. "He that **Knows** to do good, and does it not, to him **it is sin**"-James 4:17).