

# I Cor 8:1-9:27

## Corinthians, Session Six

### Let Love Control Knowledge (8:1-13)

“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (v. 2). Who benefits from knowledge? Love?

“Any true knowledge does not lead to pride in what we know, but to humility about what we do not know. That truth flew right in the face of the Gnostic approach to religion, which was essentially acquisitive and self-centered, asking such questions as ‘How far can I go?’ and ‘what’s in it for me?’” (p. 143).

We must ask: How might my actions affect the faith of my fellow brother/sister?

An integral part of ancient life, there were two kinds of sacrifices to idols: private or public.

--In *private* sacrifice, the animal was divided into three parts. A token amount was burned at the altar...; the priests received their rightful portion...; the worshipper himself received the rest of the meat. With the meat he gave a banquet.

--In *public* sacrifice, after a portion was burned and the priests received their share, the rest of the meat went to the magistrates. What they did not use was sold to the shops and markets. Therefore, even when meat was bought, it may have first been offered to idols already.

So could a Christian eat food offered to idols?

Yes (why?)

No (why not?)

- 1) Christian freedom is not an excuse to cause someone to stumble.
- 2) We must view the fellow believer as a brother/sister for whom Christ died.
- 3) If we wound a brother’s weak conscience, we are actually sinning against Christ.

### Laying Aside Rights (9:1-14)

Is the concept of rights essential or detrimental to Christian living?

Note how Paul’s decision to restrict his own freedom for the benefit of others is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Paul makes a case for his rights...

- 1) common practice (v. 7)—the soldier/farmer/shepherd is rewarded for his work
- 2) scriptural precept (v. 8-10)—God cares about the worker (Dt 25:4)
- 3) intrinsic justice (v. 11-12)—hospitality and generosity are signs of gratitude (Lk 10:7)
- 4) Jewish custom (v. 13)—the priests shared in temple offerings
- 5) Christ’s command (v. 14)—resources are provided to allow dedication to Gospel

...but he does not claim those rights! (v. 15). Remind you of anyone?

V. 12 “obstacle” (*enkopen*)—only use in entire NT; means “a cutting into” and was used of breaking up a road to prevent the enemy’s advance. Paul avoids doing anything that might prevent a clear road for the advance of the gospel

What is the reward that Paul seeks?

Elaine Newkirk: “It has to be free, doesn’t it?”

### **Every Person’s Servant (9:15-23)**

“A man who is ready to endure anything for the gospel is not interested in his rights” (p. 157).

“Because the Corinthians had become so obsessed with their rights, they found it almost impossible to believe that Paul could be inwardly driven purely by his love for Jesus Christ and his passion for the gospel. They would have reckoned it the ultimate disaster if they had had all their supposed rights stripped from them” (p. 158). How did Paul define disaster?

Paul was willing to adopt any posture for the sake of the gospel. Is the gospel one size fits all?

How would you rate your spiritual versatility when it comes to presenting the gospel?

Read Lk. 17:7-10

“A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” (Luther)

### **Developing Self-Discipline (9:24-27)**

“Paul sensed that the Christians had become spiritually \_\_\_\_\_. They had been wanting the rewards without the hard work. They have been more concerned for pleasant surroundings than for proper training conditions. He had a ready metaphor at hand. Corinth was the center of the Isthmian Games, which took place every \_\_\_\_\_ years. The streets of the city and the hillsides of the Acrocorinth would have been full of athletes in training for these prestigious events. It was self-evident that every athlete exercises self-control in all things... ‘run to win’ is Paul’s watchword” (p. 163).

v. 25 wreath = victor’s crown

Define being disqualified in v. 27. See 3:13.

“A man who remains in Christ cannot lose his salvation, but he can find that his service for Christ has been followed through with his own resources and for his own glory. That is supremely what Paul feared” (p. 164).

“Forget your rights, Corinthians. Follow hard after that imperishable reward. Fulfill daily your responsibilities to yourselves, to one another and to the Lord himself” (p. 164).