

“Lest I Make My Brother to Offend”

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

There are times we may say we have a right to do something, and that may be true, but if it causes someone else to stumble in their walk with the Lord then our right ends where their walk begins. The Apostle Paul sums it up in the last verse of our text. After it is all said and done, we should never do anything if we know that it will cause trouble in another believer’s life, whether we have “the right” to do it or not.

There are things that are clearly right and good to do all the time, as found in Scripture: i.e., reading the Bible, praying, witnessing, giving, working, loving, etc. There are also things clearly defined in Scripture as being wrong all the time (reference the 10 Commandments, for instance). Then there are what some call “gray areas” – that is what this text addresses.

This text begins with an answer to another question that the church had in Corinth. The first had to do with marriage and sexual immorality; this one has to do with “the limitations of Christian liberty,” as Dr. Scofield titles it.

We must first address the background of the question, since it’s doubtful that any of us here have had to face anything like what was faced in the life of the new converts in Corinth.

The questions came to Paul out of a difference of opinion in the church about whether or not it was permissible for a Christian to eat food that had been sacrificed to some god. Most people today, unless they have spent time in the remote areas of one of the world's undeveloped countries, have not

been exposed to any form of worship that includes the sacrifice of animals, although it was an everyday experience for first-century Christians. There were several situations in which a Christian might be asked to eat this meat that had been offered to one of the gods. He might be invited by a friend to a special meal at the temple, an event that might have no great religious significance. There were many in those days who no longer believed in the existence of the gods, but who continued to participate in some of the festivals at the temple for social reasons. Or a Christian might be invited to have dinner in the home of a neighbor or friend who was not a Christian, in which case he could almost be assured that the meat served was from an animal that had been dedicated to one of the gods. Or even in his own home, when a Christian sat down to a meal prepared in his own kitchen he could never be sure that the meat his wife had purchased at the corner market had not been sacrificed to some idol.

Before looking at the two sides in the church that represented different positions on eating meat offered to idols, we ought at least to mention the one thing on which they were all agreed: that it is a sin to worship idols. The insistence that God's children should have no other gods before them was the theme of the Old Testament prophets, and that same insistence was assumed in the preaching of the first century. Those who became Christians had no question about the necessity to break away from the religious implications of idolatry. But the whole of society was permeated with the social implications of the worship of pagan gods, and it was at this point that the questions began to arise.

It was this situation that precipitated the question

to Paul about whether or not it was a sin for a Christian to eat meat offered to an idol. For one group in the church the practice raised no question. Though they may have had a pagan background, they were so strong in their belief that there was but one God and that He had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ that they did not view the gods to which people sacrificed animals as having any reality. The idols were now just so many pieces of wood or stone or metal. While they might not accept an invitation to dine at the temple, they saw absolutely nothing wrong with eating meat that had been offered to one of the idols in the home of a friend or in their own homes. Not only was their conscience clear, but they had almost a spirit of condescension toward the church members who did not agree with them.

A second group had a more difficult time handling the whole situation. They were also converts to Christianity who had come to faith in Jesus Christ out of a background of paganism. But they had been seriously involved in the worship of idols and in the various ceremonies surrounding that practice, including the meals in the temple. When they became Christians they accepted as true the fact that there is but one God and that the idols that had been a part of their previous life were nothing. But while they could accept this in their minds, at an emotional level they had problems. Even though they knew that the gods to whom the meat had been offered were not real, every time they ate the meat they felt guilty. They began to wonder if feeling guilty didn't mean that what they were doing was a sin, and they articulated their fears within the church. (The Preacher's Commentary, edited by Lloyd Ogilvie)

With that understood, we come to the point of it all

– how do we, as a believer, deal with life in a pagan world and still both maintain our testimony and make sure we are not contributing to the loss of a weaker brother or sister’s testimony, all the while helping them grow in their faith and their relationship with the Lord?

I. LOVE IS THE FORM – VS. 1-3

A. Charity (the sacrificial giving of ourselves to others – love) is the form by which our actions are framed – knowledge is to be used to make the charity effective.

1. It’s not what we know that has influence on others but how much we show that we care (“charity”).
2. Far too often the knowledge one has as it relates to their walk with the Lord and their understanding of biblical things is a catalyst for arrogancy and a lack of compassion and empathy for those that don’t have what they have in knowledge. That attitude needs to be tempered with love – if done, then we can help impart knowledge rather than get in the way of it.

B. Vs. 1 – “we know that we all have knowledge” – Paul is simply stating that he (and his team), as well as those strong believers in the church of Corinth, all had an understanding of the nature of idols and the meat offered to them.

1. The word "know" in the first phrase - "we know" - is the Greek word εἶδω, which means to see - to be aware of, to perceive,

to understand. They were saying that "we" - the Corinthians and Apostle Paul and his team, were well aware of, understood completely, the issue at hand.

We admit; we cannot dispute; it is so plain a case that no one can be ignorant on this point. (Barnes)

2. "That we all have knowledge" – the second reference to "know," or, as here, "knowledge," is the Greek word γνῶσις

a) "Present and fragmentary knowledge as contrasted with ἐπίγνωσις (G1922), clear and exact knowledge which expresses a more thorough participation in the object or knowledge on the part of the knowledgeable subject." (Zodhiates)

b) γνῶσις – γνώση – knowledge, cognition, awareness, learning, cognizance, sense

c) Cognate: gnōsis

(1) A feminine noun derived from ginōskō, "experientially know" – functional ("working") knowledge gleaned from first-hand (personal) experience, connecting theory to application; "application-knowledge," gained in (by) a direct relationship.

(2) gnōsis ("applied-knowledge") is only as accurate (reliable) as the relationship it derives from. For example, the Gnostics boasted of their "applied knowledge" gained by their personal spiritual experiences – and it was (is) disastrous!

["Gnosticism" is literally, "the cult based on having special, personal knowledge" (1108 /gnósis).] Copyright © 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc.

That is, on this subject; we are acquainted with the true nature of idols, and of idol worship; we all esteem an idol to be nothing, and cannot be in danger of being led into idolatry, or into any improper views in regard to this subject by participating of the food and feasts connected with idol worship This is the statement and argument of the Corinth0ians. (Barnes)

C. He then brings the focus to the real issue at hand – that of "charity" – love and compassion for others – putting the needs of others, in this case, the spiritual growth need of a weaker believer, in front of ones own perceived rights or freedoms.

1. "Knowledge puffeth up"

- a) The word for "puffeth" means to blow or to inflate and is always used to demonstrate pride. The word is used 7 times in the New Testament (four of which we have already studied previously in this book) and all but one (Col. 2:18) are found in First Corinthians.
- b) Knowledge by itself, without any qualifier, will only demonstrate a person's look at themselves – its intent is to simply "puff up" the persons standing, either perceived or real.

[Isaiah 5:21](#)

²¹ Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Romans 12:16

¹⁶ Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

2. "But charity edifieth" – or, love builds up

a) Agape – love demonstrated by action

b) "Edifieth" - comes from two words – one means a house, the other "a builder" – or literally to be a house builder, to construct – charity builds one up with a solid foundation.

D. Vs. 2 – without the qualifier of charity (love) in the work of Christ there is no real value to the knowledge one has. If all we do is come to church to learn more and never do anything with that knowledge, then we really don't know anything at all.

1. If we think we know it all, if we think we have arrived, if we think that we are smarter, or better, or more blessed than someone else, well, we don't really know anything at all – yet.

Galatians 6:3

³ For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

1 Timothy 1:5-7

⁵ Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

⁶ From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

⁷ Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

1 Timothy 6:3-4

³ If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

⁴ He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

2. Paul warned that if anyone thinks he or she has fully mastered any subject he or she can count on the fact that he or she has not. The reason for this is that there is always more to any subject than any one person ever appreciates. There is always another facet to it, another point of view that one has not considered when examining it, or more information about it.

“True gnosis [“knowledge”] consists not in the accumulation of so much data, nor even in the correctness of one’s theology, but in the fact that one has learned to live in love toward all.” (Gordon Fee, as quoted from “Constable’s Notes” in the NET Bible)

“The distinction which it seems that these rather cumbersome clauses seek to express is between, on the one hand, the collection of pieces of information (gnosis) about God, and, on the other, the state of being personally, and rightly, related to

him.” (Barret, as quoted from “Constable’s Notes” in the NET Bible)

“A famous preacher used to say, ‘Some Christians grow; others just swell.’” (Warren Weirsbe, as quoted from “Constable’s Notes” in the NET Bible))

E. Vs. 3 goes to the foundation of all love – the love God has for us, and, as the text demonstrates, the love we have for God. All love is based on this – all love is framed, is formed, by this.

1. “But if any man love God”

a) The “but” stands as a contrast to what is before – knowledge without love will show to those around us that we don’t really love God, at least not in action.

b) “If any man love God” – “which is the highest and noblest kind of love, the *source* of brotherly love, 1 John 5:2” (Alford).

[1 John 5:2](#)

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

2. “The same is known of him” (of God)

a) “The same” – the one that loves God, and demonstrates that by loving his fellow believer, and by showing that love by not being a hinderance to his walk with the Lord, as will be seen later in this text.

b) “Is known” (ἐγνωσται – perfect passive indicative)

- (1) *Perfect tense - In Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated. Jesus' last cry from the cross, TETELESTAI ("It is finished!") is a good example of the perfect tense used in this sense, namely "It [the atonement] has been accomplished, completely, once and for all time."*
- (2) *Passive voice - Represents the subject as being the recipient of the action.*
- (3) *Indicative mood - a simple statement of fact - something has occurred.*
- c) "Of him" - of God - God loves us even if we don't show we love Him, but for those that do show their love for Him by their charitable actions towards others, then that is a very real, clear, demonstrative way for the world around us to see that we are known of God - that is to say, that we are truly born again by the Spirit of God. The tense of the "is known" shows this clearly.

Conclusion: Love is the form - how are we at loving, at being charitable?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

⁴ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,

endureth all things.

No better illustration can be given than this.

II. THE LORD IS THE FOUNDATION – VS. 4-6

A. The basic biblical teaching that there is one God and one Lord, as opposed to the many gods of the heathen (and, in particular, the Corinthians) is the foundation upon which the Christian life is built.

B. Vs. 4 and 5 demonstrate that the world considers there to be many gods (and that was very true in Corinth, as we have seen throughout our study of the book), but the believer knows there is only One.

1. Vs. 4 – “we know” – again, this is something that was understood by both the Apostle and his team, as well as the leadership (and mature saints) of the church at Corinth.
 - a) “That an idol is nothing in the world” – to the spiritual believer, this is fact. But to either an unbeliever or a new convert and/or immature believer, there is a very real connection between their idol worship and their faith and we need to help them get to the same level of knowledge we have on the subject.
 - b) It would seem, however, that the more immature believers, and/or new converts, had not developed such knowledge yet.
 - c) One thing this teaches us is that not everyone develops spiritually at the same level or rate, and we need to be careful we

don't criticize or condemn a fellow believer for their lack of knowledge on any given subject, even one that seems to be so obvious.

2. Vs. 5 makes both the foundational scriptural view clear, as well as a simple fact of existence – there is really and truly only one God. Not one that matters, not one that is all-powerful, but very simply put, there is only one and it is the God of the Bible – as Daniel put it, the “God of heaven.” It is of no real consequence if people don't believe in Him, or if they believe in another god, or no god at all – does not change the fact.

C. Vs. 6 sets the foundational principle of the church and its function – there is only one God, in three Persons (two seen here in the Father and the Son).

1. “But to us” – compared to the view of the world and its many gods – to the true believer (and especially the mature believer) there is only one true God.
 - a) “But” – yet, nonetheless
 - b) “TO US” – “emphatic: however that matter may be, we hold” (Alford)
2. “There is but one God” – again, a comparison to the many gods of the world (and, in part, pointing to the fact that there is one God, whether man believes so or not).

Malachi 2:10

¹⁰ Have we not all one father? hath not one

God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

John 17:3

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

3. "The Father" – that is His name to the believer today – that is His function to us

Ephesians 4:6

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

4. "Of whom are all things"

a) An important point needs to be made here regarding the relationship between Father and Son, two Persons of the Trinity: comparing Scripture with Scripture, this text demonstrates that the two are One – what is said of the Father here is said of the Son in other texts, and since there are no contradictions of Scripture, this must mean more than what appears in the text. This is a contrast between idolatry and worship of the one true God – and to show that that Godhead has multiple perspectives and purposes.

Colossians 1:15–17

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

¹⁷ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

- b) "Of" – "ek" – out of, as opposed to "eis," into something – shows the source of being
- c) "Are all things" – one word in the Greek – a totality or the whole

5. "And we in him" (or for Him)

- a) "In" (εἰς) – "with the primary idea of motion into any place or thing...the antithesis is expressed by 'ek,' out of"
- b) "Him" – for His purposes, to serve at His will

1 Corinthians 6:13

¹³ Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

- c) As opposed to serving the old idols and gods they used to serve, they were to grow in the knowledge of the one true God and serve Him – not out of fear but out of love.

6. "And one Lord Jesus Christ" – some (Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance) say that this text, as well as others, show that Jesus Christ was not God – that is not what this is saying – again, the Bible cannot contradict itself.

- a) The term "Lord" is the New Testament equivalent to the Septuagint for Jehovah, and the Apostle Paul makes it the customary designation of Jesus (Preacher's

Homiletics) – 1 Tim. 2:5-6

1 Timothy 2:5-6

⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

⁶ Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

- b) Adonai - A Divine name, translated "Lord," and signifying, from its derivation, "sovereignty." Its vowels are found in the Masoretic Text with the unpronounceable tetragrammaton "YHWH"; and when the Hebrew reader came to these letters, he always substituted in pronunciation the word " 'adonay." Its vowels combined with the tetragrammaton form the word "Yahweh (Yahweh)"... Thus Jehovah was obtained by adding the vowels of Adonai to the consonants of YHWH. (Bibliography Information - Orr, James, M.A., D.D. General Editor. "Entry for 'ADONAI'". "International Standard Bible Encyclopedia". 1915.)
- c) Many English translations of the Bible translate the Tetragrammaton as LORD, following the Jewish practice of substituting Adonai for it.[13] In the same sense as the substitution of Adonai, the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible to Greek mainly used the word Kyrios (Greek: Κύριος, meaning 'lord') for YHWH.[14] The Apostle Paul was likely familiar with the use of the term Kyrios in the Septuagint and used it in his letters to refer to Jesus, thus signifying his divinity.
- d) As usual, the "Father" is called "God," yet not so as to exclude the Son from Godhead,

any more than to call the Son "Lord" excludes the Father from Lordship. N.B. 8.—The term [the unity of God] is used only by analogy. Though there is one "Divine nature, the unity of God is not a unity of kind, because there are not individuals of the same species, and therefore, as for other reasons, the word is inapplicable to the Divinity. Of all other objects of thought we can imagine fellows or reproductions. But in God there is absolute soleness—SOLEITAS; though what lies hidden in the mystery of this essential ONENESS we know but partially. It is wrong to dogmatise upon the nature of a unity to which we have no parallel, and which we cannot define by comparison or illustration" (Pope, Compend. Theol., i. 258). This unity not to be so emphasised as to reduce the Unity to three manifestations of the One God, successive but in different modes—Sabellianism. Paul is still so far a Jew that, speaking in the presence of heathen idolatries and of Jewish sensitiveness, his language is coloured by the Monotheism in which he had been trained from early boyhood. Yet "Lord" is the New Testament appropriation of the LXX. equivalent for Jehovah, and he, above all others, makes it the customary designation of Jesus of Nazareth, his risen Master. (Preacher's Homiletical commentary)

John 10:30

30 I and my Father are one.

John 20:27-28

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but

believing.

²⁸ And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Philippians 2:9–11

⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

e) Many false religions and cults base their beliefs on a few vague texts rather than building their beliefs on the preponderance of evidence and/or the very clear, precise texts. These foundational truths are something we all need to know – whether we are mature saints or new converts/immature saints – this is primary.

7. “By whom are all things”

a) In contrast to the “of whom are all things” said of the Father – He was the source – out of Him all things began.

b) In the Person of the Lord, Jesus Christ (God

the Son) all things were made – He’s the hands that formed man in the Garden of Eden, for instance.

John 1:1-3

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² The same was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Hebrews 1:2

² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

c) The notes in the Geneva Bible say this: This word "by" does not signify the instrumental cause, but the efficient: for the Father and the Son work together, which is not so to be taken that we make two causes, seeing they have both but one nature, though they are distinct persons.

8. "And we by him" – this points not just to our physical creation, physical life, but also to our second "birth," to redemption, to the price paid for our pardon – we live eternally because of Him.

"We are redeemed by him from sin, Satan, the law, death, and hell; we are by him what we are, as Christians, as believers in him; by him, and from him, we have all the grace and the supplies of it we have; by him we have access to the Father, and

fellowship with him; by him we are governed, influenced, protected, and preserved to his kingdom and glory; and by him we are, and shall be, saved with an everlasting salvation.” (John Gill)

Romans 5:11

¹¹ And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Revelation 5:9–10

⁹ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

¹⁰ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Conclusion to part 2: There is only one God, and one true faith. The world would like us to believe that there are many ways to God, and many ways to eternity with Him. They say that, in the end, all (especially those that are basically good) will make it. That, of course, is not true. And this text has demonstrated that for us.

The purpose of this entire text is to help the church at Corinth – both the mature and immature believers – become better at serving the one true God. They had, for the most part, been servants of false gods and proved themselves worthy proponents – it was not time they turned that into use for the Master.

What about us? How are we at serving the one true God? Are we just pew-warmers on Sunday and consider that the extent of our service? What motivates you in life? What is your primary driving force?

III. LIBERTY IS THE FUNCTION – VS. 7-13

A. *In the first point we looked at the truth of love ("charity") being the form by which all else is framed.*

B. *In the second point (last week) we saw that the Lord is the foundation upon which all else is built. Both our knowledge of Him and His authority as Lord, as well our love for Him as our heavenly Father, is what everything else in our lives is based.*

C. *The purpose of this text, the function of the demonstration of our love for others and understanding of the place the Lord has in our lives, is found, in part, in the exercise, and how we use it, of the liberty we have in Christ.*

D. *Vs. 7 – not everyone is on the "same page," so to speak, spiritually.*

1. "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge" – goes back to verse four in the clause, "we know that an idol is nothing in this world, and there is none other God but one."
2. One thing to keep in mind is that the Gentiles of that day in Corinth were ignorant people – not in a derogatory sense but they were illiterate, for the most part, and uneducated. They were, by accounts of chapter 1, the foolish of the world.

"We are to bear in mind that the pagan

were exceedingly ignorant; and that their former notions and superstitious feelings about the gods whom their fathers worshipped, and whom they had adored, would not soon leave them even on their conversion to Christianity. This is just one instance, like thousands, in which former erroneous opinions, prejudices, or superstitious views may influence those who are truly converted to God, and greatly mar and disfigure the beauty and symmetry of their religious character.” (Barnes)

3. “For some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol” – the weaker saint in the church at Corinth (Gentile believers)
 - a) The “some” are those Christians in the church that were saved out of idolatry and still struggled with it.
 - b) “With conscience of the idol” – “with conscience regard to the idol” (Barnes) – Alford interprets this word as “habituation” (to make or become accustomed or used to something).
 - c) These believers were so used to worshiping idols that their very convictions in life were centered around that worship so as to affect their spiritual growth. “Their long habit previous to their conversion made them still regard their offering as made to something really existent, and consequently to feel that it was sinful to eat of meat thus offered.” (Vincent)
4. “And their conscience being weak is

defiled”

- a) “Their conscience” – their moral consciousness, in this case – their understanding, or lack thereof, of the idol itself
- b) “Being weak” – in that it is weak
- c) “Is defiled” – to soil, to stain, to contaminate

“If they ate it unconscious at the time that it had been offered to idols, there would be no defilement of conscience. But conscious of what it was, and not having such knowledge as other Corinthians boasted of, namely, that an idol is nothing and can therefore neither pollute nor sanctify meats, they by eating them sin against conscience (compare Rom_14:15-23).” (J-F-B)

- d) If we are convicted of something, on a personal level, maybe because of our background, then it is a sin if we do the thing we are convicted of – it will be that which will bring a stain upon our lives, in the long run, by allowing a way for the devil to tempt us and we stumble and fall because of it. An illustration would be a former drunk not wanting to go to a place that serves alcohol – he’s convicted about it and it would cause him great harm if he did.

E. Vs. 8-9 – our spiritualness can become a “stumblingblock” to others if we’re not careful.

- 1. Vs. 8 – Paul then makes the argument that

the meat had no actual bearing on anyone's spirituality

- a) The ESV puts it this way – “We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.”
- b) As he pointed out earlier in the text, the thing that demonstrated their closeness to the Lord was their “charity” – their sacrificial love for others and their benefit.
- c) The word “commendeth” (παρίστημι) in this verse is one that means to cause to stand near or before – eating or not eating meat offered to idols, in and of itself, without any other predicate, “will not affect our (future) standing before God” (Alford).

2. Vs. 9 – “But” – that said (vs. 8) – even though the meat is nothing, and the idol it was offered to is nothing, the strong Christian believers (most likely the leadership of the church) were to make sure they were careful in how they addressed the issue so as to not cause the weaker Christians to falter in their growth in Christ.

- a) “Take heed” – literally, to see – use discernment in the matter of the weaker believer
- b) “Lest by any means” – all one word in the Greek (μήπως) – that word comes from two words

(1) *Μή* – a primary particle of primary negation – lest, forbid, no, not

(2) *Πως* – an enclitic (a word treated as a

suffix to the previous word) particle of indefiniteness of manner (Strong) - somehow, or anyhow

(3) This word (or phrase) shows the broad spectrum or application that this principle found in this letter (and in the Bible, for that matter) has as it relates to our liberty in connection with a weaker believer. This shows we must always, in ever situation, be compassionate and affectionate towards others and their relationship with Christ.

c) "This liberty of yours"

(1) "This" - points to vs. 8 - that meat, whether eaten or not, has no bearing on our standing with God

(2) "Liberty"

(a) The right, authority, power

(b) Of the 103 times this Greek word is used it is translated by those three words all but three times.

(c) ESV puts it, "Take care that his right of yours..."

(d) "It becomes a battle cry, personal liberty does, to those who wish to indulge their own whims and appetites regardless of the effect upon others." (Robertson)

(3) "Of yours" - the spiritual leadership of the church - the mature believers

d) "Become a stumblingblock"

(1) "An obstacle for the foot to strike"

(Robertson) – it points to the Grecian games at the time and in particular the long-distance runners. To cause a runner to be hampered or injured and opposing runner would put a small pebble in the path of the runner with the intention of causing them to stumble or fall, or in some way be affected with a disadvantage.

(2) For a believer to willfully do something that they know will cause another brother to stumble in their faith, or sin outright, is a very egregious thing, and one that God will judge accordingly.

Romans 14:13–15

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

1 Corinthians 10:31–33

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

33 Even as I please all men in all

things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

- e) "To them that are weak" – immature in their faith – they are born again but haven't grown to the point where they can demonstrate victory over this particular background.

F. Vs. 10-11 – there are serious consequences for those weaker brethren if we use our spiritualness, our liberty, without regard for anyone else's situation.

1. Vs. 10

- a) "For it any man" – speaks to the last phrase of vs. 9 - "them that are weak" (the weaker believer)
- b) "See thee which hast knowledge" – the mature believer (in particular, the leadership of the church)
- c) "Sit at meat in the idol's temple" – as shown at the beginning of this text, this was a festive gathering that many people, whether followers of any particular god or not, would attend just as a means of feasting.
- d) "Shall not the conscience of him which is weak" – goes back to vs. 7
- e) "Be emboldened to eat those things which were offered to idols" – similar to a believer that was once a drunk going to a bar or restaurant with alcohol and being tempted to drink. Our liberty to go to the restaurant

should be tempered with the understanding that a weaker believer may not understand why we go there when he is so convicted not to, and it implies it's okay and then he sins because of it.

1 Corinthians 10:28-29

²⁸ But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

²⁹ Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

G. Vs. 12 – when this is done it is sin – period!

1. "But when ye sin so against the brethren"
 - a) This, again, shows that this entire discourse via letter is given both to believers and is concerning believers.
 - b) "Sin so" – in this particular manner of using liberty without regard for anything or anyone else.
 - c) The definition of sin is to miss the mark – the mark here is the limitations of our liberty in Christ and the understanding of the weakness of some believers in matters we have victory or clear conscience in.
2. "And wound their weak conscience" – just our being in a place where they would not be and doing something they would not do (and deemed it wrong to do so) will cause a "wound" to their conscience. This word "wound" is one of violence (used of those

that “smote” Jesus – beat Him mercilessly) and shows the explicit damage that can be done when we use our liberty without regard.

3. “Ye sin against Christ” – if this doesn’t cause us “pause,” then there isn’t much that will. This is how God views us when we use our liberty without concern. When we say, “I don’t care what anyone says, I’m going to do this because I can,” and it causes a weaker, immature believer to fall into sin, God will hold us accountable (especially the spiritual leaders – the “watchmen” of the Old Testament).

Matthew 25:40

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Ezekiel 3:17–21

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity,

and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

²¹ Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

H. Vs. 13 – the solution is simply to consider others and not do something we know will cause them to stumble.

Conclusion: I believe one of the reasons the true New Testament church is not growing today is found in this basic Bible principle. If we, as mature believers, would just take the time to consider what we say, where we go, what we do, how we do it, how we say it, etc. then it will allow the immature believer/new convert, to grow at the pace God intends for them to grow, and the church will become stronger spiritually, and by default, will grow numerically.

Love is the form that frames what we do; the Lord, and our love for Him, is the foundation upon which all else is built; and liberty is the function by which both are seen.