

INTRODUCTION – 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER EIGHT

This chapter is categorized in one section and reveals Paul's messages to the Corinthians for our study, understanding, obedience, blessings and edification.

1. Be sensitive to Conscience **(1 Corinthians 8:1 – 13)**

Clearly it portrays Paul as the spiritual father to the Church of Corinth with interest and passion to the faith of the Corinthian Believers, Christian teachings and doctrines, spiritual growth and maturity.

This first section emphasized on being sensitive to one's conscience as a Believing Christian. The Church of Corinth struggled to maintain unity of faith and purpose because some of them mingled with unbelievers in idol temples, ate their food with the consciousness of an idol and not with the consciousness of Christ. In their ignorance and immaturity, they damaged the weak conscience of new converts and growing Believing Christians giving a false foundation in the Church.

Like the saying: what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Since this was affecting the unity of faith and purpose of the Church, Paul's messages emphasized on the dangers of sin against the brethren and Christ. In other words, they were instructed and counseled to stop fellowshiping in idol temples and eating their food because of their so called strong faith. They were charged to edify the Church and not divide it. This was Paul's conclusive message to restore the holiness and sanctity of the Church as he ended his teaching on this eighth chapter of his first epistle.

It is also good to note that this message of Paul was reopened in **2 Corinthians 7:1** where he charged the Corinthians Believers to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit in order to inherit the promises of God.

It teaches us to be mindful of social gatherings, festivals, cultural events and religious gatherings where food and drinks served have been dedicated to their gods. If we become knowledgeable of them, we are to avoid eating and drinking for the sake of Christ to holy and not defile your spirit. Be reluctant to share in the sin of idol association and worship and fellowship of eating and enjoying their food and drinks to have a negative influence in the Church. Be mindful of the faith of new converts and growing Believing Christians in the Church and edify them and not destroy their Christian lives through works of righteousness by the Holy Spirit.

To enable readers and the Churches and Body of Christ as a whole understand the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle, I have done my best with the grace of God upon my life and ministry to explain verse by verse or combination of verses in bringing out the quality of Paul's messages to the Corinthians.

Like a weaned child just weaned from milk and drawn from the breasts, the word of God is taught precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little **(Isaiah 28:9 & 10)**. Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, He shall guide us unto all truths **(John 16:13)**.

Connect to other writings of the Church and bible commentaries as the Holy Spirit enlightens your understanding because grace and truth emanated from our Lord Jesus Christ **(John 1:17)**. For this study, additional biblical information from the New King James Bible Commentary added fresh revelations to enhance understanding.

Study and know its relevance to your life first as a Christian before you apply it to other Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders. I trust God that you will be equipped with His knowledge and continuous belief in Christ's salvation work on the cross as tied to obedience, knowledge, spiritual wisdom, humility, spiritual growth and maturity. You are not alone because the Holy Spirit is Your Helper.

The focus here is your obedience to gain insight and understanding of Paul's messages unto spiritual growth and maturity of the Church. It is my prayer and hope that you shall be an instrument in the Lord's service to bring sound Christian teachings and practices to your local Church and Body of Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen. Hallelujah!

THE CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE IS FOR EDIFICATION; NOT FOR DESTRUCTION

INSPIRATION

Knowledge is good and better when it is applied with wisdom to improve the wellbeing of people. But when acquired knowledge rather intimidates and worsens the situations of people, then it is either false knowledge or false people at work lacking the power thereof.

The bible says that the labour of the righteous leads to life but the wages of the wicked to sin (**Proverbs 10:16**). Again the bible says that when the righteous falter before the wicked, it is like a murky spring and a polluted water (**Proverbs 25:26**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 8:1 – 3 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

In the Church of Corinth, Apostle Paul had another divine assignment to correct and stop satanic practices hidden in festivals, rituals, offerings, foods and drinks offered to idols. This was paganist in nature as part of their idol worship. However, some converted pagans into Christians were still influenced by their pagan knowledge and practices to eat food to idols and gods.

A// THE PRIDE OF KNOWING IT ALL; YET SINNERS

1 Corinthians 8:1a – Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge.

In the Corinthian Church, the frequency of the slogan: We know that we all have knowledge – was in the mouths of some Christians. They claimed to be more knowledgeable than other Believers and therefore more faith than the other brethren. They believed that they could eat food offered to idols and still be righteous and not sinful. Faith was misconstrued as intelligence and smartness to balance the Christian faith with worldly practices. Hence spirituality was different from physical things such as food and drinks. They used their knowledge to bully and discourage Christians who did not eat food offered to idols; for they saw in them as people with a weak faith.

New King James Bible Commentary: We know that we all have knowledge appears to have been a slogan used by certain Corinthian believers as an arrogant statement against weaker Christians. The weaker Christians believed that eating food offered to idols was a sin. Other Corinthians Believers thought that such concerns were ridiculous. They argued that if the idols were worthless, then the meat offered to them was fine to eat. Paul agreed that food offered to

idols was not contaminated, but he wanted the knowledgeable Christians not to flaunt their enlightened point of view.

It reveals that knowledge that is inconsistent with God's word; the gospel of Jesus Christ is false knowledge and practiced by false or ignorant people. Hence the practice where people in the Church use their high knowledge to twist and turn the word of God and the Christian faith is corruption of our most holy faith. In other words, you cannot partake of the Lord's Supper as having fellowship with Christ and then partake of eating food offered to idols and claim not to be corrupted but show of strong faith. That is you can eat but nothing happens to you spiritually because your faith is strong. The bible says that this is wrong and such knowledge is a deceit and a weapon of the devil to tempt and overcome you. For with every fellowship, either the Holy Spirit or demons is at work. Be warned!

DO NOT EAT FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS BECAUSE THEY PORTRAY SPIRITUAL CONNECTION AND UNION. FOR CHRISTIANS AND THE CHURCH HAVE CONNECTION AND UNION WITH JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE EATING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

This comes close to the description of people in these last days whose bad habits and characters show a form of godliness but deny the power of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit **(2 timothy 3:1 – 5)**. Hence be among the brethren in the Church whose faith in Christ is evident in works of righteousness beyond rhetoric in the likeness of Abraham and Rahab **(James 2:18 – 26)**.

YOU THINK THAT YOU KNOW IT ALL BUT YOU SIN IN YOUR FAITH AND WORKS; AND YOU USE YOUR FAITH TO BULLY FELLOW CHRISTIANS IN IGNORANCE. THIS IS WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT.

B// KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP; LOVE EDIFIES

1 Corinthians 8:1b – Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

Paul's message to the Church of Corinth here was that knowledge puffs up but love edifies. That is knowledge has the tendency to make people arrogant and disobedient as evident among some Corinthians Believers. In other words, Paul made a distinction between the knowledge of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of self, tradition and culture, religion, philosophies and books.

Clearly, the arrogance of some of the Corinthians was their claim to know it all and show of so called strong faith to eat food sacrificed to idols without knowledge and conviction of sin. The unconcerned attitude of a section of the Corinthians Believers was selfish and self – centred in nature and uncharacteristic of the Church. As a result, Paul rebuked them because this attitude did not edify the Church but divided them.

Earlier, Paul noticed this puffed up spirit at work in the Church of Corinth when he wrote and warned them to be humble like him and Apollos in ministry. They did not claim to know it all even as Apostles but trusted God and obeyed their calling through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, they were led and empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach and teach and do the work of the ministry. Hence he warned them that they should not think themselves above scripture as written and ordained for them to be obedient and righteous in their Christian faith **(1 Corinthians 4:6)**.

Again Paul noticed the arrogance of those who complained bitterly about him for abandoning them in the Church and Christian faith. For they spoke as if he would not return to them again **(1 Corinthians 4:18)**. Yet he assured them that he would come again to the Church of Corinth at the Lord's will and power and not the puff up spirit of his enemies **(1 Corinthians 4:19)**.

Indeed the puff up spirit cannot be of the knowledge of God because it promotes sin of disobedience, division and pollution of the holiness and righteousness of God's word and Spirit. This is buttressed by the sexual immorality experience in the Church of Corinth when a man had sexual relations with his father's wife without regret and remorse. Instead of being humble to be sorrowful and repentant, he became proud and arrogant disobeying counsel and correction **(1 Corinthians 5:1 & 2)**.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SELF, TRADITION AND CULTURE, RELIGION, PHILOSOPHIES AND BOOKS INCONSISTENT WITH GOD'S WORD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMOTES PRIDE, ARROGANCE, DISOBEDIENCE AND DIVISION.

According to Apostle Paul, Christians should use love to edify one another and build up their Christian faith. Love encourages and does not discourages; love protects and is not unconcerned; love rebukes to correct and not expose to condemn; love is giving and does not withhold good. Hence love is obedient to the heavenly calling as Ministers and the Church as disciples. Obedience to the word of God promotes is love at work to foster unity of faith and purpose as Paul desired for the Church of Corinth.

LOVE IS THE PICTURE OF GOD IN CHRIST TO BE EMULATED FOR BUILDING CHRISTIAN UNIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS. WHENEVER THERE IS LOVE IN THE CHURCH, THERE IS A BUILD UP, ENCOURAGEMENT, HELP, SUPPORT, BLESSING, UNITY OF FAITH AND PURPOSE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IT TEACHES US THAT OUR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND FAITH AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE LOVE IN ACTION TO EDIFY THE CHURCH AS BODY OF CHRIST.

New King James Bible Commentary: Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies: This is one of Paul's five attacks on the arrogance of some of the church members at Corinth **(1 Corinthians 4:6, 18,19; 5:2). These people belittled their weaker brothers and sisters with their knowledge. They had missed the point. They should have been using their knowledge to help other believers in the church.**

It confirms God's word in

Isaiah 35:3 – Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees.

Again we read

Hebrews 12:12 & 13 – Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

THE RENEWAL OF SPIRITUAL VITALITY AND STABILIZATION OF THE CHURCH NEED THE PRAYERS, COUNSELS AND SUPPORT OF ALL CHRISTIANS TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER. THIS IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH.

2// FALSE KNOWLEDGE IS FALSE CONFIDENCE; AVOID IT

1 Corinthians 8:2 – And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

Paul continued his message of rebuke and correction to the pride and arrogance of the Corinthians. In their minds, they thought they knew it all but in reality they lacked understanding and revelation of being holy and righteous to God through abstention from eating food sacrificed to idols. Indeed their concept of having strong faith with an unconcerned attitude for the faith of other Believing Christians was not edifying but destructive in nature. Hence their limited knowledge and worldly wisdom compared to the knowledge and wisdom of God as of the Israelites in the days of the Prophet Hosea (**Hosea 6:6**).

Apostle Paul's message here now was to make those arrogant Christians repent and humble to obey God's word and be led by the Holy Spirit in holiness and righteousness. This was important to make them use their knowledge to strengthen their brethren and not to weaken their Christian faith. He pointed out their arrogance in limited knowledge of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ because there are more depths of knowledge and wisdom to be known by the Holy Spirit. In reality, their actions and attitude towards their fellow Christians exposed their weakness; the paradox of Christian knowledge, works and fruits.

FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS DURING FESTIVALS AND RITUAL SACRIFICES AND FAMILY DEITIES ARE DEMONIC AND SATANIC. THEY INVOKE AND ASSOCIATE WITH WORTHLESS IDOLS THAT CANNOT PROVIDE ETERNAL SALVATION BUT RATHER PUTS US IN BONDAGE OF FEAR AND IGNORANCE.

FALSE KNOWLEDGE IS DECEITFUL, SHORT AND LONG SIGHTED; AVOID IT

Indeed lack of revelation and discernment of God's word makes belief and obedience questionable. The bible says that when the Pharisees and Jewish religious leaders planned to kill Jesus and stop Him in His messianic ministry after the miracle of resurrecting Lazarus from the dead. They envied Him and planned to end His life so that many other people would not believe Him. But the Chief Priest Caiaphas who was one of them and high priest that year spoke that the people knew nothing at all (**John 11:46 – 49**); ignorance was high. He prophesied unknowingly that it was scriptural for one person to die in place of the nation and many people, and gather the people of God from all nations through one person (**John 11:47 – 53**). What we can learn is that the Jewish people and religious groups did not know it all because they did not discern that it was scriptural for one man to die for the sins of the nation and bring together the people of God in Israel and others scattered in other nations.

It means to say that even people in the Church cannot know it all when they lack the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to them. For the natural mind cannot comprehend the things of God because they are revealed by the Holy Spirit and spiritually discerned (**1 Corinthians 2:8 – 11**). They cannot be discerning of the ways and works of God to fulfill His divine purposes through His Church. They cannot be cooperative to the plans and purposes of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Truly ignorance is the thief of knowledge.

The bible says that one of Bildad's questions against Job was to inquire of past things and knowledge, wisdom, works and discoveries of the fathers of old because he perceived Job to be a young man by age (**Job 8:8 & 9**). Truly when people lack revelation and understanding of the will of God in your life, ministry and the Church, they belittle your knowledge, wisdom and works of righteousness. This is what I call the paradox of life when the perceptions of people does not fit you but themselves.

LACK OF REVELATION AND DISCERNMENT OF GOD'S WORD MAKES BELIEF AND OBEDIENCE QUESTIONABLE. THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND PEOPLE WERE TOLD TO KNOW NOTHING AT ALL BY THE HIGH PRIEST CAIAPHAS. LIKewise BILDAD TOLD JOB THAT HE NEEDED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM AND DISCOVERIES OF THE FATHERS OF OLD IN ORDER TO BE AT PEACE WITH GOD.

WHICHEVER WAY KNOW THAT WE DON'T KNOW NOTHING UNTIL THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS THE THINGS OF GOD IN CHRIST TO US AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS. BE PRAYERFUL WITH A SEARCHING HEART FOR ANSWERS FROM GOD.

3// GOD KNOWS THOSE WHO LOVE HIM

1 Corinthians 8:3 – But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

The statement "But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him". By this biblical truth, Paul meant that false knowledge and false confidence does not make God know somebody but His knowledge, wisdom and power through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It means to say also that obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ makes God's everlasting covenant established for a fruitful relationship and works of faith and works.

In other words, Paul's message reminded the Corinthians Believers that the Christian faith does not thrive on false knowledge, false confidence and disobedience but the knowledge of God, faith in Christ and revelations and leading of the Holy Spirit. It means to be humble and submissive to the will of God and grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God, and fellowship with the brethren.

It reveals a covenant relationship between God and His children in Christ. Hence the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the trinity comes in to play a crucial role in the lives, ministries and Church of Believing Christians.

It reveals the potential of the Holy Spirit to provide more knowledge, insight, wisdom, revelation and understanding of the word and ways of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ to committed and faithful Christians and the Church.

If you love God as a Christian, then you are a candidate for divine knowledge and wisdom for a fruitful Christian living by the Holy Spirit to culminate in Church growth and maturity. God increases us (Christians) without partiality and discrimination because the Holy Spirit has been freely given to all believers. Jesus said that "if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home there **(John 14:23)**.

The bible says that the foundation of God stands sure and has this seal of acceptance and relationship despite sin and lifestyle of sinners. That is the Lord knows those who are His and let every man named after the name of Christ depart from iniquity **(2 Timothy 2:19)**. It means to say that God respects and rewards relationships based on life of righteousness through faith in Christ and leading of the Holy Spirit. It means to say also that false brethren in the Church does not have the respect of God to receive answered prayers even when they mention the name of Jesus or recite scriptures or mention the name of Jesus.

THE LOVE FOR GOD AS A CHRISTIAN IS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MAKE KNOWN THE WAYS OF GOD AND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO YOU IN DEEPER AND GREATER DIMENSIONS. IN THE CHURCH, THE LOVE FOR GOD IS EXPRESSED IN COMMITMENT AND FAITHFULNESS BY CHRISTIANS AND DETERMINES LEVELS OF GROWTH AND MATURITY.

PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank You for Your instruction to be holy by maintaining our faith in Christ but keep away from eating food offered to idols.

We pray as a Church that the Holy Spirit makes us knowledgeable and discerning about the things and works of God, and that of the devil.

Keep us away from false knowledge and false confidence that deceives us to know it all by our strength but humble and submit ourselves in Christ for spiritual growth and maturity.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will make love be the basis for edification for spiritual growth and maturity, and not knowledge that puffs up to have negative influence on the Church.

We pray that the power of the Holy Spirit will make the Church influence the world for blessing, and not the world enter the Church with its negative influences.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A PRAYING CHURCH IS VERY SPIRITUAL TO KNOW AND DISCERN THINGS OF GOD FROM THE THINGS OF THE DEVIL. A PRAYING CHURCH TEACHES MEMBERS TO SHOW LOVE FOR EDIFICATION PURPOSE AND ESCHEW DESTRUCTIVE WORKS. NANA KWAKU DUODU

WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK IN THE CHURCH, THE WORLD CANNOT ENTER THE CHURCH WITH ITS INFLUENCES BUT THE CHURCH ENTERS THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO ATTAIN THE BLESSING OF ETERNAL SALVATION, LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE WITH GOD. NANA KWAKU DUODU

ONE GOD AND ONE JESUS CHRIST FOR THE CHURCH; NOT IDOLS

INSPIRATION

Knowledge is good and better when it is applied with wisdom to improve the wellbeing of people. But when acquired knowledge rather intimidates and worsens the situations of people, then it is either false knowledge or false people at work lacking the power thereof.

The bible says that the labour of the righteous leads to life but the wages of the wicked to sin (**Proverbs 10:16**). Again the bible says that when the righteous falter before the wicked, it is like a murky spring and a polluted water (**Proverbs 25:26**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 8:4 – 6 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many Lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

Having proven that food offered to idols should not be eaten because of negative influences, Apostle Paul attacked and exposed the so called “idols” that was accustomed with the Corinthians society. His Jewish background as a Pharisee who believed in the Ten Commandments revealed knowledge of the uselessness of idols. Clearly God revealed Himself as the only true God to be worshipped and was against molding of idols, bowing down and worship of them (**Exodus 20:1 – 6**).

It was in this revelation and understanding that Paul's message to the Church of Corinth revealed the knowledge of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. In this truth, he provided a clear distinction between God and idols. But this was not an excuse to allow idol influences in the Church of Corinth. In deed the fact that they lived in an idolized society did not mean that they were to entertain idol practices.

Again Paul did not dispute the fact that there were many idols as gods in this world but only existed in the minds of those who believe in them. By this Paul acknowledged the existence of different cultures and traditions and religions with their own idols as gods that were worshipped.

Therefore Paul emphasized on the distinction between the Christian faith and beliefs, and other religious faiths and beliefs. He stated clearly that the Christian faith has only one God who created all things and all belong to Him. Again he stated clearly that there is only one Lord Jesus Christ through whom the Father made all things and we live as Believing Christians. On this truth and revelation, Paul pointed out that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ made them have a sense of belonging to God as the Father and Creator. Hence they could not have any other idol in their minds as gods when the revelation

and blessings of the true God and Lord Jesus Christ has made free from the bondage of sin and also obtain the gift of eternal life.

It means to say eating food offered to useless idols has no part in our freedom to eternal salvation. Rather, they put us into bondage and take us far away from God and His plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore the so called Corinthian Christians who thought that they had strong faith should use the knowledge of God to edify their fellow Christians especially the new converts. They were not to weaken their faith by eating food sacrificed to idols and create the impression that it was a normal and acceptable thing as it was when they were unbelievers and idol worshipers. This would rather make them susceptible to sin than promote God's righteousness in Christ and the Holy Spirit to attain holiness.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD REVEALS, SPEAKS AND DECLARES GOD AS ONE AND JESUS CHRIST AS TRUE MASTER AND LORD OVER ANY OTHER IDOL EVER KNOWN IN THIS WORLD. THIS MAKES ANY RELIGIOUS OFFERING, SACRIFICE AND OBLIGATIONS USELESS AND BASELESS WITH CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

New King James Bible Commentary: 1 Corinthians 8:4 – 6 The Corinthians believers who claimed to have knowledge readily admitted that an idol is nothing (see Isaiah 37:19; Jeremiah 16:20, Galatians 4:8) and that there is only one God (see Deuteronomy 6:4). But Paul did not dismiss the idea of idols altogether because though these gods are not real, they exist in the minds of those who worship them (10:20).

Do you know that people of different religious faiths perceive preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to be foreign gods? It means to prove the belief, worship and satisfaction of idols as gods in the hearts and minds of people. The bible says that when Paul preach Christ to the Athenian Epicurean and Stoic Philosophers confronted him saying that he was a "proclaimer of foreign gods". The main reason was that "he preached to them about Jesus and the resurrection" which was foreign to them (Acts 17:18).

Indeed, the worship of many gods have been polished in many cult practices through provision of monies, acquisition of properties, visa connections, political career, educational career, spiritual protection, charms and overcoming enemies in life. Some of them are associated with shedding human blood and animal blood, and abstinence from certain foods and sex sexual relations with the opposite sex. Be it as it may, constitutions of countries in the principles of democracy and freedom of religion and peaceful co – existence permit proliferation of all religions.

THOUGH THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD FROWNS ON THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS AS GODS, KNOW ALSO THAT PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO NATIONS AND PEOPLE WITH THEIR OWN GODS PERCEIVE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AS FOREIGN GODS. THEREFORE BE GUIDED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PRAYER, KNOWLEDGE, REVELATION, WISDOM AND POWER TO PROVE JESUS AS SAVIOUR AND LORD IN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

This confirms the message of the prophet that these idols and gods are not to be trusted as generations have proven their misdirection and satanic doctrines, bondages and punishments instead of protection and salvation eternally.

We read

Jeremiah 16:20 – Will a man make gods for himself, Which are not gods?

This is a thought provoking question that reveals the useless and worthlessness of idols in the affairs of humanity. They blind us through religious beliefs and obligations, traditional and cultural practices, customs and festivals.

This was part of the Prophet Jeremiah's message to hope in God and not idols. The Gentiles whom the people of Judah would be exiled would come to the God of Israel in fulfillment of the promise to bless all the families on earth in Genesis 12:1 – 3 according to the New King James Bible Commentary.

On these truth and revelation, the gods of this world are made and sought by some people unlike Jehovah El Elohim; the Creator and His Son Jesus Christ for eternal salvation and righteousness by the Holy Spirit. Yet the eternal work of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit is a stretch of His love to us and make us holy, righteous and acceptable to Him. Therefore watch what you eat and drink as a Believing Christian, Christian leader and Minister in order not to commune with demons. For food sacrificed and offered to demons must not be eaten even if you have strong faith. Why because it does not edify the Church but makes young and weak Christians stumble in their Christian faith.

THE CREATOR IS BIGGER AND MORE POWERFUL THAN THE CREATED. THEREFORE OUR FAITH MUST BE IN CHRIST TO WORSHIP GOD BUT ABHOR IDOLS. THE CHURCH CANNOT BE A PARTAKER OF FELLOWSHIP WITH IDOLS AND DEMONS BECAUSE IT POLLUTES OUR MOST HOLY FAITH IN CHRIST UNTO GOD.

We must continue to walk in Apostle Paul's revelation as a Church of knowing and believing in only one God as the Creator even though the evidence of many gods in households, communities, families and the nations have dominated the lives of people. Yet the message is that there is one God and one Lord Jesus Christ even with the presence of these gods and idols in the world. This has been proved by God's love, sacrifice, salvation, power, joy and peace through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

THERE ARE MANY IDOLS IN COUNTRIES, NATIONS, COMMUNITIES AND HOMES OF PEOPLE AND RELIGIONS BUT WITH THE CHRISTIAN FAITH THERE IS PROVEN EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS ONE GOD, JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH ULTIMATE POWER UNTO FREEDOM AND ETERNAL SALVATION FOR PEOPLE OF EVERY NATION, TRIBE AND TONGUE; THE WORLD.

Our association, communion and union with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit is a true reflection of our Christian faith and knowledge and wisdom. For you cannot combine or blend the Christian faith with any other religious gods. Don't try to be smart and intelligent in your ways to satisfy religious groups through participation of religious practices because the gospel according to Paul is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

WHAT PAUL TOLD THE CORINTHIANS ABOUT NOT EATING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS REQUIRED ABSTENTION TO SHOW COMPLETE FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND WORSHIP OF GOD AS THE FATHER.

We read

Acts 17:28 & 29 – for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ Therefore since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.

Wisdom in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is a necessity and proven to be results oriented eternally. For Christ is God’s wisdom to the world. The bible reveals that Paul applied wisdom in preaching and explaining God’s eternal salvation plan to the Athenians. In the given opportunity to address the Areopagus, he began his gospel message with the identification of the inscription “**Unknown God**”.

Then he built his message to the point of describing Him as the Creator and Father of life and every human being and procreation and even boundaries of every human existence as nations and communities and now we know as countries. His message according to this context emphasized on the truth that God is our Father and we have a relationship with Him. Hence the Athenians were to perceive Him as living and interested in our affairs and not as images of gold, silver, stone or by the hand or machine of man’s imagination, art and skill.

By this message Paul reveals that even where there is proliferation of idols and gods in different religions, countries, nations, communities, the gospel of Jesus Christ can and must be preached to them in wisdom as led and inspired by the Holy Spirit. That is why preaching by revelation achieves eternal results more than just head knowledge or book knowledge. Knowing the traditions and cultures and religions that shapes the lifestyles of the people should help us to make wise decisions prayerfully with preaching Christ to them.

THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH IS TO PREACH CHRIST ALSO IN IDOLIZED SOCIETIES AND COMMUNITIES JUST LIKE APOSTLE PAUL. BEFORE YOU VENTURE INTO SUCH TERRITORIES, YOUR PERSONAL FAITH IN CHRIST AND RELATIONSHIP MUST NOT BE QUESTIONABLE.

TELL THEM THIS TRUTH: GOD IS A SPIRIT AND SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED TO THE STATUS OF IDOLS SHAPED BY HUMAN HANDS AND CRAFTS. AS CHILDREN OF GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRIST IN

YOU TO GROW SPIRITUALLY AND MATURE AND WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. THEREFORE DO EVERYTHING IN CHRIST AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS.

We read

Acts 17:29 – 31 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Apostle Paul revealed to the Athenians that the preaching of the gospel of Jesus is not complete without warning of God’s judgment against the worship of idols as gods in the nations and peoples of diverse cultures, traditions and religions. He emphasized on the Judgment Day where Christ would judge all people as His righteous decision because He is the Author of eternal salvation and confirmed through resurrection from the dead by God.

Therefore blow the trumpet loud to warn all worshippers of idols as gods that Christ would judge, condemn and cast them to hell fire if they refuse to obey Him and His words of eternal life. The bible says also that there is judgment for all after death **(Hebrews 9:27)**.

TELL THEM THIS TRUTH: GOD’S KNOWLEDGE AND WARNING IS FOR ALL PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR AND LORD AND STOP WORSHIPPING AND SACRIFICING TO IDOLS BECAUSE JUDGMENT AWAITS US. IT CONFIRMS THE TRUTH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN JUST AS GOD ASSURED US OF THE GENUINNESS OF HIS SON BY RAISING HIM FROM THE DEAD.

According to the gospel of Paul, the warning to idolized nations and peoples is the same warning to the Church where they blend faith in Christ with other religious faiths with their own set of idols as gods. **REPENT! Remember the words of Jesus: You cannot serve two masters; either he will hate the one and love one the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13).**

PRAYER

We pray as a Church to maintain our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in respect to worshipping God as the Father.

In grace, let Your Holy Spirit be our Helper to abhor idols and things sacrificed to idols.

Help us to depend on Your knowledge and wisdom, and never in our human intelligence and smartness to live Christ and to preach Christ, and to maintain a holy Church with righteous works.

Make us overcome worldly offers that are marked with idols and sacrifices.

We pray for love and unity of our faith in Christ unto God through the workings of the Holy Spirit as a Church. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

KNOWING THE TRUTH MUST LEAD TO CHANGE OF ATTITUDE. BUT IF YOU RATHER CAST A BLIND EYE TO IT, YOU ARE IN DANGER OF JUDGMENT. IDOL WORSHIP AND FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS ARE TO BE ABHORED. ONCE WE PARTICIPATE ONLY IN GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE HAVE OBEYED GOD AND BELIEVED IN HIS WORD AS ONE GOD (FATHER) WITH ONE SAVIOUR AS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS A CHURCH AND MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE TIME IS NOW FOR THE CHURCH TO ARISE FROM SLEEP AND PROCLAIM ONE GOD AS THE FATHER OF CREATION; THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS THE MESSIAH, CHRIST AND THE JUDGE; THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRIST AND HELPER IN THE CHURCH, CHRISTIAN FAITH AND MINISTRY WORK. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

IF THE CHURCH IS SATISFIED WITH THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST AND WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THERE WILL NOT BE ANY PLACE OF IDOLS AS GOD IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

NOT THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF AN IDOL BUT CHRIST IN EATING FOOD

INSPIRATION

Knowledge is good and better when it is applied with wisdom to improve the wellbeing of people. But when acquired knowledge rather intimidates and worsens the situations of people, then it is either false knowledge or false people at work lacking the power thereof.

The bible says that the labour of the righteous leads to life but the wages of the wicked to sin (**Proverbs 10:16**). Again the bible says that when the righteous falter before the wicked, it is like a murky spring and a polluted water (**Proverbs 25:26**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 8:7 – 8 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

New King James Bible Commentary: 1 Corinthians 8:7 – 13 The knowledgeable believers were correct in their view of idols, but it did not matter if the weaker brothers and sisters saw other believers eating food to idols, they might also eat, in violation of their own conscience. To go against the conscience was in fact sinning. By their knowledge the stronger believers were causing the weaker believers to stumble. Paul exhorted the strong believers to show love to the weaker ones by refraining from offending them.

A// POOR KNOWLEDGE AND WEAK CONSCIENCE

1 Corinthians 8:7 – However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

The message of Apostle Paul here was that not everyone had the knowledge and revelation of faith in One God and the Lord Jesus Christ in whom we have a sense of belonging. Though this was the position of the Church, the attitude of some members of the Corinthian Church was questionable. Paul did not understand why they shifted from their faith in God and Christ to fellowshiping with idols through eating of their foods.

Besides, Paul realized that those people ate food offered to idols “**with consciousness of the idol**”. It means that they knew of the source of their food as from idol temples and idolized people. They did not see anything wrong with it but ate in a satisfactory manner as food from those so called idols. This can be likened to the Church where Believing Christians partake of the Lord's Supper with the consciousness of Christ. By these truths, the soul and spirit of the partakers were connected strongly to either idols or Christ respectively.

This was faith based on knowledge that is to be desired than faith based on ignorance and negativity. In the Corinthian Church, some of the Christians ate food offered to idols with the consciousness of an idol. They had the idol in mind as pagan traditions, cultures and festivals with attributed provisions of food, water, good harvest, fertility, successes in battle to these idols and gods. They became connected to these idols in communion and union and this corrupted and defiled their pure Christian faith because of faith based on ignorance. How different is the Church today from the Corinthian Church in this perspective?

HOLINESS IS ACHIEVED WITH SEPARATION FROM ALL FORMS OF SIN AND EVIL, AND PRACTICING THE WORKS OF CHRIST IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE CONSCIENCE IS ALSO A GATE WAY.

Paul knew something that the Corinthians did not know because it was based on truth and revelation beyond their convictions. He saw weak faith against their supposed strong faith to eat food offered to idols. Knowing and accepting that they eat food offered to idols, they defiled and corrupted their conscience and therefore confirmed their weak faith by the standard of God's word in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Indeed conscience is knowing what is good or bad and right or wrong. Clearly, Paul's message here is that they were conscious of their actions making their defiled and weak conscience become a stumbling block to the faith of other Believers; especially new converts and young in the Christian faith.

It is a reminder of Paul's earlier message that knowledge puffs up but love edifies **(1 Corinthians 8:1b)**. Hence even dining and wining as Believing Christians must be purposed driven to strengthen, encourage, and unify the Church; edify the Church. Our works and inaction must be done prayerfully and meditatively to edify the Church as children of God filled with God's word and led by the Holy Spirit.

BEING CONSCIOUS OF THINGS OFFERED TO IDOLS SHOULD NOT BE EATEN BECAUSE OF SO CALLED STRONG FAITH. ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF PAUL, THIS IS RATHER WEAK FAITH BECAUSE IT IS DEFILING AND CORRUPTIBLE WITH BAD INFLUENCES ON NEW CONVERTS AND YOUNG IN FAITH. WHEN WE ARE CONVICTED AND LED BY GOD'S WORD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE WILL NOT BE INTERESTED IN IDOLIZED THINGS BUT THE THINGS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A CHURCH.

B// FOOD DOES NOT COMMEND US TO GOD BUT FAITH IN CHRIST

Truly, the works of the flesh have been found and proven to make us carnal even as spiritual people if they dominate our lives, ministries and the Church. We read

1 Corinthians 8:8 – But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

Paul did not want the Corinthians Believers to have a misguided focus and purpose in the Church. His argument was not against eating food or not because food nourishes and strengthen the body but does not commend us to God. Food does not approve us to God whether we eat a type of food or not. Rather it is consciousness of the food we eat whether as from God or offered to idols. Truly, it is our righteousness in Christ and the Holy Spirit in us that is important to God. However their mindset and ignorant behaviour was so deep that they could even eat in an idol temple openly without conviction because they claimed to have great faith.

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN IS STRONG AND POSITIVE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, GODLY KNOWLEDGE AND OBEDIENCE BUT WEAK WITH WORLDLY, PAGAN, DEMONIC, SINFUL AND NEGATIVE INFLUENCES.

What Apostle Paul observed and discerned was that their eating habits could lure weak Christians into eating of foods offered to idols in a very sinful way. Already, they were some Christians identified as weak with limited knowledge of their Christian faith and purpose in life. They could easily follow their bad example to sin with no conviction or adamant to the convictions of the Holy Spirit because they see mature Christians doing and living it.

SHOW OF FAITH IN CHRIST AND RIGHTEOUS WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE TO BE ENCOURAGED IN THE CHURCH AND NOT IDOLISM AND EATING FOOD AS RITUALISM TO IDOLS.

Paul's paternal role as a father to the Corinthian Church was still evidenced in his concern and interventions in their affairs. Having proven himself as a father beyond an instructor, he charged them to imitate him **(1 Corinthians 4:15 &16)**. In this context of being like him, they had to follow his righteous examples and obey his teachings and messages. They were to trust him and stop their associations and communion in eating food sacrificed to idols.

FOLLOW THE GOOD EXAMPLES OF CHURCH LEADERS AND MATURE CHRISTIANS AND NOT THEIR WEAKNESSES. BE PRAYERFUL, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Paul stated clearly that the Christian faith is not about eating food or not eating food but faith in Christ and life of righteousness by the Holy Spirit in obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is commendable as long as we obey God's word in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Later in Paul's second epistle, he wrote to the Corinthians that commendation and approval by God are better and preferred to self – commendation **(2 Corinthians 10:18)**.

The danger of worldly and demonic infiltrations and manipulations in the Church was inevitable in such a situation of eating food offered to idols. Besides, it takes time for a new Christian convert to grow and attain maturity in the ways of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit. It was therefore necessary to put a preventive measure in place and not just a curative measure.

KILL THE BAD FIRE NOW BEFORE IT BURNS YOU; CAST OUT THE DEMON AND BE FREE BEFORE THAT DEMON CONTROLS AND DESTROYS YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE.

Let me also remind you that the kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit **(Romans 14:17)**. In other words, it is not eating and drinking that will make you a son or daughter in the kingdom of God but faith in Christ and obedience to be righteous, have peace with God and being joyful in both good and bad times to remain in the Christian faith.

IT IS NOT THE WORKS OF THE FLESH THAT MAKES THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN YOU BUT THE WORKS OF GOD AS A RESULT OF FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. WITHOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, YOU CANNOT BE A CANDIDATE AND AN ASSET IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Don't underestimate idol influences into the Church. Therefore watch and pray so that you do not enter into temptation **(Matthew 26:41)**. Pray and stop all demonic influences and habits in the name of Jesus. Yes stop the danger else the danger will stop you.

Again the bible says that anyone who serves Christ in righteousness is acceptable to God and approved by men **(Romans 14:18)**. Hence Believing Christians are to pursue the things which makes us have peace with God and edify one another in the Church **(Romans 14:19)**.

In another context, Paul's message to the Roman Believers was not to destroy the work of God for the sake of food. Though all things are pure to God, it is evil for the man who eats with offense **(Romans 14:20)**. Besides, Paul was interested in edification of the Church other than putting stumbling blocks their way or offend or weaken them in their faith through eating food or drinking wine **(Romans 14:21)**. He ends the fourteenth chapter with a message of eating food by faith to please God and not in condemnation to sin **(Romans 14:22 & 23)**.

PRAYER

As a Church, we pray for grace to discern works by the Holy Spirit from works of the flesh.

Give us the knowledge and consciousness of our faith in Christ to be obedient and righteous, and not associate ourselves with idols and eating food sacrificed to idols.

Help our Christian leaders and Ministers to encourage purity of the Christian faith in righteousness but discourage contamination through association and communion with idols and eating food sacrificed to them.

Help our Christian leaders and Ministers to make righteous interventions like Apostle Paul to the Church in Corinth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

RIGHTEOUS INTERVENTIONS SUCH AS PRAYERS AND INSTRUCTIONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ESTABLISH THE FAITH OF THE BELIEVERS ARE THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS IN EVERY CHURCH. NANA KWAKU DUODU

A CHURCH THAT ACCEPTS AND EMBRACES IDOL WORSHIP AND COMMUNION WITH IDOLS SUCH AS EATING FOODS SACRIFICED TO THEM IS IN DANGER OF CORRUPTING THE PURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. A CHURCH THAT FOCUSES ON CHRIST EXPERIENCES THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS CHILDREN OF GOD. NANA KWAKU DUODU

GUARD YOUR GOOD CONSCIENCE IN CHRIST TO EDIFY THE CHURCH

INSPIRATION

Knowledge is good and better when it is applied with wisdom to improve the wellbeing of people. But when acquired knowledge rather intimidates and worsens the situations of people, then it is either false knowledge or false people at work lacking the power thereof.

The bible says that the labour of the righteous leads to life but the wages of the wicked to sin (**Proverbs 10:16**). Again the bible says that when the righteous falter before the wicked, it is like a murky spring and a polluted water (**Proverbs 25:26**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 8:9 – 13 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

A// BEWARE OF BAD INFLUENCE; TURNING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH UPSIDE DOWN

Know that the Christian faith is not selfish oriented but has corporate interests to be satisfied for the collective benefit of the Church. For you are like yeast in flour. That is you must have a good influence in the lives and ministries of other Believing Christians and not bad influence. We read

1 Corinthians 8:9 – But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

As Paul ended this chapter of cleansing the Church of Corinth from idolism and pollution of the Christian faith, he emphasized and sounded a note of caution. Here his first and major caution was to beware and spiritually sensitive not to use their knowledge of sanctification of food through prayer and the word to put stumbling blocks to the faith of weak Believers. That is even if by their knowledge and strong faith in the application of prayer and the word, they were to be mindful of the presence of other Believers around especially the weak ones.

By this message, Paul emphasized that their Christian's liberty is for Christ and righteous living and not for the devil and evil. It's purposed driven to promote the works of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit other than sinful works. But to make selfish decisions because of strong faith without consideration for the faith of other Believing

Christians can be used by the devil to sway the hearts of the weak to spiritual growth and maturity.

EVERY CHURCH HAS TWO CLASSES OF PEOPLE; THE STRONG IN FAITH AND THE WEAK IN FAITH. BUT THE GOSPEL OF PAUL TEACHES US NOT TO “SPIRITUALLY BULLY” THE WEAK IN FAITH AND MAKE THEM BACKSLIDE WITH EATING FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS. AVOID NEGATIVE INFLUENCE.

B// DON'T EAT AT IDOL TEMPLES; BAD INFLUENCE ON WEAK CONSCIENCE

The bible says that wisdom is the principal thing and therefore get wisdom and use it in all things to make righteous decisions and perform righteous works **(Proverbs 4:7)**. We read

1 Corinthians 8:10 – For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

Another concern area in this context was against a knowledgeable Believing Christian seen eating in an idol's temple. For this he was sure that the young in faith yet to grow spiritually and mature in the Christian faith would see nothing wrong with eating at an idol's temple and easily follow their bad example. He foresaw their boldness in their limited knowledge in the Christian faith.

Indeed boldness is good and effective to achieve righteous results but must be guided with wisdom to achieve efficient results. Yes the bible says that the righteous is as bold as a lion **(Proverbs 28:1)** and it is only the lazy man who refuses to go out to work because there is a lion on the road **(Proverbs 22:13)**.

But this is the big question: What will a Believing Christian be doing in an idol temple even to the extent of being seen eating their food offered to their gods? Clearly it will portray the person as one of the worshipper and partaker of their rituals and sacrifices. Once a Believing Christian with a weak conscience begins to also frequent idol temples and eat also food offered to idols, it will be in the consciousness of an idol and therefore a sin to God.

DON'T FREQUENT IDOL TEMPLES EITHER PHYSICALLY, THROUGH TELEVISION, RADIO, MOVIES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNE WITH THEM AND THEIR GODS AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN. OTHERS ARE WATCHING AND WILL FOLLOW YOUR EXAMPLE.

The bible is straightforward about the things that God hates and this includes a heart that devises wicked plans and feet that is swift to running to evil **(Proverbs 6:18)**.

WHAT GOD HATES, HE HATES. GUARD YOUR HEART AND FEET TO BE INNOCENT AND RIGHTEOUS.

C// WHY SHOULD YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN CHRIST MAKE A BROTHER BACKSLIDE AND PERISH?

Knowledge that improves the living standard of a person is good unlike knowledge that worsens the lives of people. In the Christian faith and the Church, the knowledge of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit guides us to make righteous decisions with eternal benefits. For there lies the wisdom of God. The bible says that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. But fools despise wisdom and instruction (**Proverbs 1:7**). We read

1 Corinthians 8:11 – And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

The second revelation by Apostle Paul to the Church in Corinth was a rebuke in a question form. Why should their knowledge of God in Christ be the basis for a brother or sister to backslide and perish? There was no need to use Christian knowledge selfishly to associate and commune with idols without regard to the faith of others. Why because you sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience. You confused them because discerning of spirits is low from weak conscience.

Indeed the wound of a brother or sister in Christ is the effects of the damage part from the area of attack. Job described his sufferings as wounds that God brought into his life to break him (**Job 16:14**). It is a reminder of how Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus with a kiss (**Luke 22:47 & 48**). This was a type of wound inflicted on Jesus that began his woes in His journey to the cross, death, burial, resurrection and ascension.

In other words, making a brother or sister backslide is a wound that is visible to the eye. It causes pain and discomfort. For their carnal nature will show off clearly in their backsliding state. In this truth and revelation, you sin against Christ for having a substitute for Him and causing the brethren to stumble in their Christian faith. Earlier Paul's message to the Corinthians was that Christ as the Passover Lamb was sacrificed for us (**1 Corinthians 5:7**). Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ that whatever we do or do not do for one of the least ones of His, we did it unto Him (**Matthew 25:31 – 40, 41 – 46**).

It means that the belief and acknowledgement of many religions with their gods and the need for peaceful co – existence is not an excuse to fellowship and be in their temples and eat food sacrificed to their idols.

With all these Christian truths and revelations, we need the leading of the Holy Spirit to be called sons and daughters of God in obedience (**Romans 8:14**). Hence Paul's question inferred that something righteous had to be done to change the prevailing situation and he was God's instrument of righteousness as their spiritual father.

HAVING A SUBSTITUTE OR ADDITION TO CHRIST PAVES THE WAY TO WEAKEN THE FAITH OF YOUNG AND GROWING BELIEVING CHRISTIANS. BE FOCUSED AND COMMITTED IN CHRIST.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN CHRIST WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IMPERFECTION.

D// SIN AGAINST THE BRETHREN; SIN AGAINST CHRIST

Knowledge that improves the living standard of a person is good unlike knowledge that worsens the lives of people. In the Christian faith and the Church, the knowledge of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit guides us to make righteous decisions with eternal benefits. For there lies the wisdom of God. The bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. But fools despise wisdom and instruction **(Proverbs 1:7)**. Again the bible says that the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding **(Proverbs 2:6)**. We read

1 Corinthians 8:12 – But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

Paul's rebuke was explained further that the sin of eating food offered to idols and eating food in idol's temple is not just against the brethren or the Church but also Christ Himself. Since we are individual members of the Church but members of Christ's body, we need to maintain our faith and connection with Christ. For there is only one foundation laid which other structures and works are built upon it **(1 Corinthians 3:11 – 15)** and Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches. As long as we are connected to Him, we will bear fruit that will last **(John 15:1 – 7)**.

It means therefore that the so called Corinthians Believers who made their brethren backslide by eating at idols temple clearly were not building on the foundation of Christ. They sinned against Christ because they were not satisfied in Him but had fellowship with idols and demons. They thought that they had strong faith to eat food even in an idol's temple but in reality they sinned not just against Believers with weak consciences but Christ Himself. Truly, their faith was questionable even though the religious background of the Corinthians was heathen and idolized like other heathen nations.

Don't be the cause of backsliding of other Believing Christians because of your so called intelligence and smartness to play the cards of profitability. Don't try to satisfy all religions and their god's by practicing some of their beliefs which are clearly contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus commands us to embark on the Great Commission and tell people the good news of the gospel of salvation in His name **(Matthew 28:18 – 20)**. Living by example proves the existence of God and His Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember the words of Joseph to his master Potiphar's wife: **"...How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9b)**. It is of this same understanding and revelation that the Prophet Samuel told the Israelites: Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and the right way **(1 Corinthians 12:23)**.

BEING CONSCIOUS OF ONE'S FAITH IN CHRIST AND TRUST IN GOD MUST NOT MAKE YOU SIN AGAINST THE BRETHREN AND CHRIST. DON'T GO TO IDOL

TEMPLES PHYSICALLY OR THROUGH THE ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH IDOLS AND SIN AGAINST THE CHURCH AND CHRIST.

YOU CAN PREACH WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN CHRIST IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. LIVING BY EXAMPLE IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO EVANGELIZE TO PEOPLE.

E// SEEK TO EDIFY THE CHURCH EVEN THROUGH EATING FOOD

Knowledge that improves the living standard of a person is good unlike knowledge that worsens the lives of people. In the Christian faith and the Church, the knowledge of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit guides us to make righteous decisions with eternal benefits. For there lies the wisdom of God.

The bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. But fools despise wisdom and instruction (**Proverbs 1:7**). Again the bible says that the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding (**Proverbs 2:6**). We read

1 Corinthians 8:13 – Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Having warned the Corinthians Believers sinning against their brethren and Christ, Paul wrote a conclusive message emphasizing on abstention from eating idolized foods and eating in idol temples to be holy and righteous. Whether strong faith or weak faith, strong conscience or weak conscience, abstention from idol temples and eating food served to idols was the way of righteousness. This revealed a purposed driven life and righteous motives as a Believing Christian who is led by the Holy Spirit.

Clearly Apostle Paul advocated for edification of the Church other than being a destroyer of their faith in Christ. As he revealed, eating a particular food that leads to the downfall of other Believing Christians must be stopped. Indeed it is about making up your mind to edify the Church and not to destroy them. It is also about not giving any opportunity for the devil to tempt you into sin.

WHAT YOU EAT, HOW YOU EAT AND WHERE YOU EAT MATTERS TO GOD AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN. STRENGTHEN THE BRETHREN AND NOT WEAKEN THEIR CONSCIENCE. HELP THEM TO KNOW WHAT IS GOOD OR BAD.

That explains why he was concerned about eating food offered to idols in a manner that weakens the Christian faith of other believers especially the young converts. Why should you eat food sacrificed to idols or be seen eating in an idol's temple to make young Believing Christians stumble and fall? Why should you cause other Christians to backslide into the world in which Jesus Christ saved us from the devil's bondage?

Do not sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience? Be simple and innocent as a Christian to win people for Jesus Christ and maintain Christians in the faith and the Church.

IF YOU CAN BE THE CAUSE OF OTHER CHRISTIANS TO STUMBLE, THEN RATHER USE YOUR INFLUENCE AND WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO HELP AND SUPPORT THEM AS JESUS CHRIST DID TO THE TWELVE DISCIPLES OF WHICH ONE BECAME A BETRAYER; JUDAS ISCARIOT.

The love of Apostle Paul was so strong and beneficial to promote unity and brotherhood in the Church. His message: I will not eat or do anything to make my fellow Christian stumble. He preached this message to highlight the truth that the Christian faith promotes righteousness in Christ and not divisions and sin in idol worship and communion for Christians to backslide. Like Solomon, the conclusion of the whole matter was to fear God and keep His commandments as man's all (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**).

YOU CANNOT HAVE STRONG FAITH TO PROMOTE THE WORKS OF THE FLESH (SIN). RATHER HAVE STRONG FAITH TO DO AND PROMOTE THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IF YOU VISIT THE SINFUL PLACES FOR FORNICATION, LESBIANISM, ADULTERY OR HOMOSEXUAL, OR PROSTITUTION, OR FOR OTHER SEXUAL IMMORALITIES AS A CHRISTIAN, STOP THEM TO BE HOLY AND EDIFY THE CHURCH. SURELY GOD IS COUNTING THEM AND JUDGMENT IS INEVITABLE.

We read

Galatians 5:13 – For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

This explains why Apostle Paul reiterated the same message to the Church in Galatia that the Christian liberty should not be abused for self – gratification, legalism and showmanship of strength and power but helping and supporting one another in love. It is not about the works of the flesh but works of righteousness for edification purpose.

THE CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ATTAINING SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY AND NOT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WORKS OF THE FLESH TO WEAKEN THE FAITH OF OTHER BELIEVERS. SEEK TO EDIFY THE CHURCH.

We read

Hebrews 13:1 – Let brotherly love continue.

Learning from the Hebrew writer, we are to love and encourage one another in the Christian faith always. It is the way of unity of faith and purpose to instill righteousness in the Church.

Also we read

Romans 12:10 – Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

Learning from Paul's epistle to the Romans, let us show love, affection, care, and support in the interests of other Believing Christians. In your Christian living, be considerate of other Christian's faith, spiritual growth and maturity. Don't make them stumble and backslide but love and care in a sacrificial manner. Since these areas are the works of the Holy Spirit in Believing Christians, edification, spiritual growth and maturity of the Church are assured with eternal results.

IF EATING MEAT (FOOD) CAN MAKE SOME CHRISTIANS STUMBLE AND BACKSLIDE, THEN EVERY UNRIGHTEOUS THOUGHT, WORD AND WORK CAN MAKE THEM BACKSLIDE. THEN YOU ARE NOT TO EAT AND DRINK, AND PARTICIPATE IN PAGAN ACTIVITIES CARELESSLY. DO NOT SAY THAT YOU ARE STRONG IN FAITH TO OVERCOME SIN AND EVIL AS A CHRISTIAN WHEN OTHERS ARE FALLING EASILY INTO IT.

Later in Paul's second epistle, he wrote to the Corinthians that their ministry works in Christ does not permit them to do nothing against the truth but for the truth (**2 Corinthians 13:8**). Learning from Paul's message, let us work for the cause of Christ and the Church, and never against God's interests and will and Christ's sacrificial death that has saved us eternally.

WORK FOR GOD'S INTERESTS AND WILL IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND NOT AS AN ENEMY OF THE CROSS OF JESUS.

New King James Bible Commentary: 1 Corinthians 8:7 – 13 The knowledgeable believers were correct in their view of idols, but it did not matter if the weaker brothers and sisters saw other believers eating food to idols, they might also eat, in violation of their own conscience. To go against the conscience was in fact sinning. By their knowledge the stronger believers were causing the weaker believers to stumble. Paul exhorted the strong believers to show love to the weaker ones by refraining from offending them.

PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we affirm our faith in Your Son Jesus Christ and trust that the Holy Spirit leads us always.

We pray that we shall find satisfaction in the Church and not be found in idol temples.

We pray also that we shall have the grace to remain in Christ and not go to the wrong places and do bad things to weaken the consciences of young and growing Believing Christians.

Help us O God to be careful and righteous in all our ways, as well as the food we eat to edify the Church, and not make people stumble in their Christian faith.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE CHURCH CANNOT BE THE CAUSE OF BACKSLIDING OF FELLOW BELIEVING CHRISTIANS BUT RATHER EDIFY THEM IN WORD AND WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY. PLAY YOUR ROLE EFFECTIVELY. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IS KEEP BELIEVING IN CHRIST, RIGHTEOUS LIVING WITH WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT IS TO UPHOLD AND DEFEND THE CAUSE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH, AND NOT THE DEVIL AND SIN IN SELF – GRATIFICATION. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH TEACHES US THAT OUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND WORKS CAN MAKE THE CHURCH STRONG OR WEAK. YOU CAN BE IN THE CHURCH AND BE AN AGENT OF CHRIST AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS OR AN AGENT OF THE DEVIL AND SIN. HENCE LET US LIVE FOR CHRIST TO EDIFY THE CHURCH AND NOT TO OURSELVES BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IN US AS CHILDREN OF GOD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**



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