

1 Corinthians 8:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

Analysis

For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple (ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, en eidoleio katakeimenon, "reclining in an idol-shrine")—Paul provides a concrete scenario. The verb katakeimai describes the Greco-Roman dining posture (reclining on couches), indicating formal meals, not merely purchasing meat at market. The "strong" believer, confident idols are nonentities, accepts social invitations to temple banquets.

Shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened (οἰκοδομηθήσεται, oikodomethsetai, "be built up, encouraged")—bitter irony drips from Paul's reuse of "edify" from verse 1. The weak believer's conscience is "built up" not unto godliness but unto sin—emboldened to violate his own conscience by imitating the "strong" believer's example. **To eat those things which are offered to idols**—the weak person isn't liberated but destroyed, acting against conscience and thus sinning (Romans 14:23).

Historical Context

Temple dining rooms (eidoleia) hosted social, business, and civic meals. Invitations indicated social status and networking opportunities. Declining meant social and economic consequences. The "strong" argued their theology permitted attendance

—idols are nothing, so meals are neutral. Paul agrees theologically but condemns the practice pastorally: it destroys weaker believers who imitate without the strong's theological foundation.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What practices do you engage in that might embolden weaker believers to violate their consciences by imitating you?
2. How do you balance Christian freedom with the responsibility your example carries?
3. Where might your "liberty" be functioning as a destructive influence rather than a helpful witness?

Interlinear Text

ἐὰν γάρ τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὰ ἔχοντα γινῶσιν ἐν
if For any man see thee which hast knowledge in
G1437 G1063 G5100 G1492 G4571 G3588 G2192 G1108 G1722

εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον οὐχὶ τὰ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ
the idol's temple sit at meat not which the conscience of him
G1493 G2621 G3780 G3588 G4893 G846

ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὰ τὰ
weak which is be emboldened G1519 which which
G772 G5607 G3618 G3588 G3588

εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν
those things which are offered to idols to eat
G1494 G2068

Additional Cross-References

Romans 14:23 (Parallel theme): And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

1 Corinthians 8:4 (Parallel theme): As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

Romans 14:14 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Corinthians 8:7 (Parallel theme): Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.