

December 20

1 Corinthians 8: 9: But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10 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; 11: And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12: But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

Mature believers, have knowledge of our liberty from ordinances. Our life is Christ. (Rom 10: 4; 14: 17) We are not bound by old covenant law, vain traditions or commandments of men in any way. If men insist we observe those things we are to never let them bring us into subjection to them. (Col 2: 14, 16-17, 20-22) Also, we know an idol is nothing. Men may call something a god but it does not make it God. Our triune God in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only God. (1 Cor 8: 4-6; Col 2: 9; Is 9:6) True believers are of him, by him and in him. We are in him as our covenant God, in him by everlasting love, in him by inseparable union, chosen by him, redeemed by him, reconciled by him, called by him, justified by him, preserved by him, kept by him, resurrected by him and glorified by him. Therefore, to us, an idol, their days, ceremonies, and offerings is nothing at all.

Still, not all believers have this knowledge. (2 Cor 8: 7; Rom 14: 14, 20, 23) Their conscience, being weak, is easily wounded. We would that every believer fully understood that sin is not in things. Meat, drink and days do not make us better or worse. (2 Cor 8: 8) Christ alone commends us to God. Believers are complete in Christ at God's right hand and that will never change. (Gal 6: 15) If we could we would turn our weak brethren from having their minds occupied with indifferent things and set their hearts on Christ above! (Heb 13: 8-9; Col 3: 1-4) But only their own Master can increase their faith. (Rom 14: 4)

So what is a mature believer to do with his liberty before his weak brethren? God-given knowledge, together with God-given love, makes mature believers wise to not insist on our own way over things indifferent. (Ja 3: 13-18) Our personal gratification is not worth leading a weak believer, for whom Christ died, to do anything that wounds his conscience, making him feel he has sinned against his Redeemer. We are so united with Christ that to do so to our brethren is to do so to Christ himself. Also, remember, just because he may be weak does not mean he is not a believer; receive him without doubting. (Rom 14: 1-2) Neither, despise or judge one another. (Rom 14: 3) Instead, wait on the Lord Jesus to fully persuade each believer in his own mind. (Rom 14: 5-6) If men draw a line on such matters, insisting we oppose our weaker brethren, we must never require a certain level of knowledge be put between a believer and Christ. Remember how merciful Christ is toward us despite our own infirmities, ignorance and unbelief, even now. It will help us be more willing to bear the infirmities of our weak brethren, to seek their edification, rather than pleasing ourselves. (Ja 3: 13-18; Rom 15: 1-3)