

‘Knowledge puffs up’

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BIG SANDY, Texas—In his first letter to the congregation in Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote the phrase "knowledge puffs up."

We know that Paul was certainly not against a person seeking knowledge. Notice one of his quotes a little later in the same letter (1 Corinthians 14:20). He wrote: "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature."

So what was Paul warning about in regard to knowledge?

The general context of 1 Corinthians 8:1 was the subject of how a believer should deal with another person who has a different conviction. The different conviction specifically named in this section of Paul's letter concerns dealing with meats offered unto idols.

Some people would gladly eat meat that had previously been offered unto idols, while other people would avoid any meat that had previously been offered unto idols.

Who was right? The people who ate the food? Or the people who didn't eat the food?

Let's notice two of Paul's main points.

First, Paul mentioned that neither behavior made a person better than another person (verse 8). Hence, neither of these doctrinal/theological points of view made a person better than the other person.

Second, Paul mentioned that a person should not allow his liberty (his rights) to hurt someone who might be considered "weak" (verses 9-13).

How does this apply to us?

While God would expect a person to follow his convictions, He would not want a person to feel superior to other people because of his convictions.

Have you ever considered why our convictions are different?

We started at different places and we grow at different speeds. We have a different heredity, a different environment and different experiences.

Here is a reminder about some definitions of sin.

- "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).
- "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).
- "Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:22-23).

Knowledge puffs up. Love edifies.