

- A Knowledge and love** (1 Corinthians 8 — Food sacrificed to idols)
- ❖ Paul “divides” the church into two groups: the “strong” and the “weak”.
 - The strong understand that idols are nothing, for there is only one true God. The weak have not yet grasped this point (1 Cor. 8:4-7a).
 - The strong eat meat sacrificed to idols because they know that idols cannot contaminate food. The weak believe they sin if they eat that meat (1 Cor. 8:7b).
 - ❖ But the strong, through their knowledge and example, can cause the weak to fall (1 Cor. 8:10). Out of love for his brother, the strong must restrain himself (1 Cor. 8:11-13).
 - ❖ Christians should put love before knowledge when knowledge may be a stumbling block for the “weak” brother (in the process of growth).
- B The rights of the gospel** (1 Corinthians 9 — Paul renounces his rights)
- ❖ Paul renounced at least three rights out of love for the weak:
 - * Right to be fed by the congregation (1 Cor. 9:4)
 - * Right to be accompanied by his wife (1 Cor. 9:5)
 - * Right not to perform common maintenance work (1 Cor. 9:6)
 - ❖ Although Jesus made it clear that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel, both Paul and Barnabas voluntarily renounced it so as not to hinder believers (1 Cor. 9:12-14; Lk. 10:7).
- C Lessons from the past** (1 Corinthians 10:1-13 — Warning against idolatry)
- ❖ The experience of the Exodus, understood spiritually, is a parallel to our own. The crossing of the sea is like our baptismal covenant (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). The food and drink they ate in the desert is like our participation in the Lord's Supper, where we eat and drink, spiritually, the body and blood of Jesus (1 Corinthians 10:3-4).
 - ❖ Beware! Despite their experience, the Israelites fell into serious sins, including idolatry and immorality. Let us not fall into the same trap! (1 Corinthians 10:5-10).
 - ❖ Hence the apostle concludes this section with a powerful piece of advice: “So, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).
- D Abandon idolatry** (1 Corinthians 10:14-22 — The Lord's cup and the cup of demons)
- ❖ If food sacrificed to idols can be eaten without worry, why does Paul seem to advise against it in 1 Corinthians 10:20?
 - ❖ It's one thing to eat meat at home, without any guilt, and quite another to do so during a public celebration where idols are being worshipped. By participating in such celebrations, the believer renounces their faith and accepts idol worship.
 - ❖ By partaking of the Holy Communion we become part of the body of Christ (the church), whereas, by partaking of idolatrous ceremonies, we take part with the demons (1 Cor. 10:16-20).
 - ❖ We cannot take the cup of Holy Communion, praising Jesus, and –at the same time– take from the cup that praises demons (1 Cor. 10:21).
- E What is lawful and what is appropriate** (1 Corinthians 10:23-33 — Do everything to the glory of God)
- ❖ “Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial” (1 Corinthians 10:23). Two concrete examples:
 - The butcher shop sold both food sacrificed to idols and food that had not been sacrificed. The believer was not to ask about its origin so as not to give the impression that he considered it unlawful to eat that kind of meat (1 Cor. 10:25).
 - An unbeliever invited a believer to eat. The believer ate without question (everything is permissible for him). But the host said that the meat had been offered to an idol. Therefore, so as not to offend the host's conscience, it was deemed inappropriate for the believer to partake of that meat (1 Corinthians 10:27-29).
 - ❖ The basic principles behind these instructions are also two: to praise God in everything (1 Cor. 10:31); and to seek the benefit of others (1 Cor. 10:24, 32).
 - ❖ That is, to love God above all things and your neighbor as yourself (just as Jesus asked the rich young man).