

引言 INTRODUCTION

Paul wrote this letter to clear up some confusion among the believers in Corinth. So far, he has addressed a few issues. He talks about true wisdom from above, immorality, lawsuits among believers and matters related to marriage. As we come to chapter 8, he presents a new topic about food. What is the concern? Remember Corinth was a pagan city. Christians were the new minority in the society, living in a culture shaped by idol worship. Back then, it was common for people to offer animals as sacrifices at pagan temples. Part of the meat would be burned on the altar, some would go to the priests and the rest would either be served in temple cafeterias or sold in the marketplace. Jewish believers knew that the Old Testament Law forbids them to eat that food. But Gentile Christians had a different background. Many of them had eaten this kind of food all their lives before coming to Christ. Therefore, they wondered if they could continue the same practice. People might recognize them as Christians when they ate in temple. How would this affect other believers? Some believers today may face the same situation if they have idol-worshipping family members. Regardless, the general principle Paul shares applies to all of us. We interact with non-believers every day. Quite likely, we may have some behaviors that are inconsistent with the Bible before we were saved. Non-Christians may feel fine if we keep those habits. However, Paul cautions us of our influence on other believers. What we do or do not do may impact their faith. As such, it is wise to exercise freedom and restrain ourselves so as not to stumble others.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 提防驕傲 Beware of Pride

Paul gives three reasons why we need to be careful about our attitudes and actions. First, he asks us to beware of pride. He begins by saying: **“All of us possess knowledge.”** That was likely a common saying back then. Just like today, people in the Greek culture valued knowledge highly. You are seen as wise if you know a lot. Knowledge becomes power. But Paul challenges that idea by saying: **This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.** Knowledge can easily lead to pride, and pride is often self-seeking. Love, on the other hand, strengthens others. What kind of “knowledge” is Paul talking about? In this context, there are two key truths. First, idols are not real. Second, there is only one true God. Both are solid biblical truths that every Christian should believe. But even good theology can lead to pride if we are not careful when applying it. Some Gentile believers in Corinth thought that since idols were nothing, eating at pagan temples was fine. Two points from the context support that argument. First, if idols are fake and the whole

system is man-made, then eating at the temple should not matter as long as they did not participate in the worship rituals. Food is just food, whether it comes from a temple kitchen or McDonald's. Second, God does not care about what and where we eat. Paul says verse 8: **Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.** Those arguments are valid. But the problem is that they can lead to pride. Some believers might be thinking, "If it's okay for me, it should be okay for everyone." And without realizing it, they impose their views onto others. That was why Paul raises the bar. Knowledge is not everything, but love must come first. When he says, "love builds up," he is thinking about the whole faith community. The real question is not just, "Am I doing the right thing?" but also "Am I helping others grow?" We all have strong opinions. You may be an expert on fixing things, cooking, managing money, etc. But if we are not careful, that knowledge can turn into an attitude of, "I'm right, and you're wrong." And that is pride. You can see how this plays out in everyday life. A pastor once encouraged parents to send their kids to private Christian schools in his sermon. That could be a good suggestion—but what about families who cannot afford it? Would that create guilt that they are not giving the best to their kids? Or take lifestyle choices. Someone might strongly believe that driving luxury cars or wearing name-brand clothes is worldly. But what if there are members in the church working for those companies? Should they quit their jobs? Then there is politics—a topic that can quickly divide people. A sister I know once advocated that Christians should only vote for a particular party because the other side is ungodly. These kinds of views often spark heated debates, especially during election season. Some people even leave churches over these disagreements. That is silly! The reality is, every church has its controversial issues. Why should we let our strongly-held convictions separate us? Paul reminds us to package our words with love. Pride will tear people down and only love builds them up. Sometimes, the most loving thing you can do is not to speak but listen. Holding back your opinion can be an act of respect. After all, the goal is not to prove that you know a lot or to convince others to follow your way, but to understand where people are coming from and their needs.

2. 屬於基督 Belong to Christ

Paul cautions the Corinthian believers to beware of their pride. Part of their pride came from their knowledge about idols. Some of them had come out of pagan religions, and now they belonged to Christ. Such relationship should shape even something as trivial as what they ate. In verses 5–6, Paul draws a sharp contrast between idol-worship and faith in the one true God: **5 For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.** The difference between the two beliefs is massive: many false gods versus the one true God. In Greek mythology, every god had a specialty—sun, sea, love, war, wisdom, music. Some of you may have Nike shoes or clothes. It is the god of victory. Traditional Chinese religions also have gods for

the door, the kitchen, money, fertility, the sea, and the rain. These gods act like humans: they marry, have children, get jealous, deceive each other, and fight. They are the results of humans' imagination who want to live forever. But the God of the Bible is nothing like that. Paul highlights two truths in verse 6: God creates everything, and He sustains everything. Both the Father and the Son share in those works. Paul implicitly places Jesus on the same level as the Father. Recognizing God as Creator is accepting an objective fact. But confessing Jesus as Lord is an act of faith. It means intentionally submitting to Him. When the Corinthians accepted Christ, they belonged to Him. As a result, what they believe must shape how they behave. Therefore, the question of eating meat sacrificed to idols is not really about food. It is about their relationship with God. Paul agrees that false gods do not exist. That was why some believers felt free to eat in a pagan temple without hesitation. But at the same time, their faith in the one true God should shape how they treat fellow believers. Their theology must direct their daily life. After all, Christianity is not a private hobby. It affects our decisions and our witness. "I belong to Christ" should be the slogan of every believer. Lordship salvation is the only true salvation. It is letting Jesus direct every part of our lives: career, marriage, parenting, leisure, everything. He is with you at school, at work, at home, and with friends. You glorify Him in all you do, whether alone or in public. Since Paul mentions idols, let me speak to brothers and sisters who used to worship false gods. Idols are not real, but Satan can use religious images to stumble you. You must cut the ties with them. Remove the statues from your home and car. Stop wearing religious charms. Jesus Christ is your only Protector. Do not trust lucky numbers or superstitions. Every blessing comes from the Father. Make up your mind to follow Jesus alone and wholeheartedly because you now belong to Him.

3. 造就別人 Benefit Others

Paul warns the Corinthian believers to beware of their pride. They no longer live for themselves—they belong to Christ now. Because of that, love must matter more than knowledge. One way to show love is to benefit others in what we do. Paul reminds them in verses 9-10: **9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?** Paul calls those who are less mature spiritually "people with a weaker conscience." Conscience is something God built into us. It helps us tell right from wrong. But our conscience is shaped by our background and experience. For example, some people love spicy food, others may think that green is a gross color and your parents may prefer you to go into certain professions. Eating food sacrificed to idols is not a sin in itself. Doing so will not cause God's rejection, avoiding it will not earn His approval either. But believers who felt free to eat that food could unintentionally harm those whose conscience was more fragile. These weaker believers knew idols were nothing, but seeing fellow Christians eat in a temple might stir old memories of pagan rituals. Satan could use those images to shake their faith. Therefore, Paul urges the stronger believers to be sensitive to the weaker ones. We face similar situations in everyday life. People make

different choices because their circumstances are different. Years ago, we only had one car. A pastor's wife kindly gave my wife a ride to a sisters' prayer meeting. Someone asked my wife, "Why don't you buy your own car?" She simply said, "Because I don't have the money." The sister was speechless. What made sense to her was not realistic for us. Another time, my wife mentioned that our house was always cold in winter. The insulation was poor. A brother gave her a simple advice: "Put on more clothes." That was wise! If he asked us to turn up the heat, then it would lead to a higher utility bill. But everyone has extra clothes. The brother was sensitive to our situation. I learned from him that if I want to benefit others, I need to step into their shoes. Later, a family who had great financial stress came to our church. Brothers and sisters gave them some help. The church had potluck meals often. This particular family never attended those gatherings. A brother wondered why. I gave him my logical guess: "Perhaps they cannot put together a presentable dish." The lesson is that others' situations may be different from yours. A good intention can become a bad idea if we ignore their needs. For example, if you know that a person had an alcoholic background, it would be a stumbling block to him to meet with other brothers at a bar. A coffee shop will be a better place. Perhaps another person had a previous gambling addiction. You may damage his faith if you take him to a casino for a seafood buffet. Someone might say, "If that's the case, then I can't say or do anything around others!" But that is not what Paul means. God does not want us to be paranoid. Paul's principle applies when you clearly know someone's background. In those cases, we should be considerate in order to benefit the person. Therefore, if you enjoy wine, drink it at home. If you like talk to sports, cars, clothes, or handbags, share those conversations with friends who have similar interests. The point is simple: loving others needs wisdom. Sometimes it may mean restraining ourselves.

結論 CONCLUSION

Paul teaches us in this chapter that it is wise to exercise freedom and restrain ourselves so as not to stumble others. Unless you live in a cave or on a remote island, people will see how you live. God calls us to be salt and light in the world. We show Christ to non-believers through our actions, and we build up fellow believers through love. As such, the mindset of "I don't care what people think of me" is not a biblical one. A story from the sports world illustrates this well. A famous professional football player once said in a TV interview that he did not wear a helmet when riding his motorcycle. The law in his state made helmets optional, and he said he felt "freer" without one. But a year later, he was in a serious accident. A car hit him, threw him off his bike, and he smashed into another car's windshield. He suffered major head and facial injuries and needed seven hours of surgery. After he recovered, he apologized to his family, his team, and his fans for risking his life unnecessarily. He finally realized that misusing his freedom did not help anyone—it only hurt the people who cared about him. Thankfully, God never says to us, "I don't care." He cares so deeply that He sent His Son to die for our sins. Because of that love, we should reflect His heart both inside and outside the church.

引言 INTRODUCTION

保羅寫這封信，是為了解答哥林多信徒中的一些困惑。到目前為止，他已經談到了幾個課題，包括從上頭而來的真智慧、不道德的行為、信徒之間的訴訟，以及與婚姻有關的事情。到了第八章，他提出一個新的主題：食物。到底問題出在哪裡呢？要記得，哥林多是一個異教的城市。基督徒在社會中是一個新的少數群體，他們生活在一個敬拜偶像的文化中。在當時，人們把動物帶到廟宇作為祭物。一部份的肉會燒在祭壇上，一部份分給祭司，其餘的則會在廟裡的食堂吃掉，或是拿到市場上販賣。猶太信徒很清楚，舊約律法禁止他們吃這類食物。但是外邦基督徒的背景不同，他們在信主之前，可能一直都在吃那些食物。因此，他們會想：我們可以繼續這樣做嗎？另外，當他們在廟裡吃飯時，別人可能會認出他們是基督徒。這樣會對其他信徒造成什麼影響呢？今天有一些基督徒因為他們的家人是拜偶像的，可能會面對同樣的情況。無論如何，保羅所談論的基本原則適用於每一個人。我們每天都接觸非信徒。很可能在信主之前我們養成了一些違反聖經的習慣，非基督徒可能不覺得這些行為有什麼大不了。但保羅提醒我們，要留意自己對其他信徒的影響。我們所做或不做的事情，都可能影響別人的信心。因此，就算我們有自由，也要有智慧地節制自己，免得使別人跌倒。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 提防驕傲 Beware of Pride

保羅提出三個理由，說明為什麼我們需要謹慎自己的態度和行為。首先，他告訴我們要提防驕傲。他一開始說：「我們都有知識。」這很可能是當時流行的一句話。就像今天一樣，希臘文化非常重視知識。知識豐富的人，就被看為有智慧，知識也因此成為一種力量。但保羅挑戰這種觀念，他說：「但知識是叫人自高自大，惟有愛心能造就人」知識很容易使人驕傲，而驕傲往往是以自我為中心的；相反地，愛心卻能建立別人、使人得益處。那麼，保羅所說的「知識」是指什麼呢？在這段經文中，有兩個關鍵的真理：第一，偶像算不得什麼；第二，只有一位真神。這兩點都是每個基督徒應該持守的聖經真理。但如果我們在應用這些真理時不小心，縱使正確的神學觀點也可能導致驕傲。哥林多教會中有些外邦信徒認為，既然偶像算不得什麼，在廟宇裡吃東西也沒有問題。他們的看法有兩個理由支持。第一，偶像是假的，整個敬拜也是人造的，那麼只要不參與敬拜儀式，在廟裡吃東西就無所謂。食物就是食物，不論是廟宇的廚房煮的，還是從麥當勞買的都沒有差別。第二，神

並不在乎我們吃什麼、在哪裡吃。保羅在第八節說：其實食物不能叫神看中我們，因為我們不吃也無損，吃也無益。這些論點是合理的。但問題在於，這些觀點很容易讓人產生驕傲。有些信徒可能會想：「既然我可以這樣做，那麼大家都應該照樣做。」不知不覺中，就把自己的看法加在別人身上。因此，保羅把標準提高了一知識並不是一切，愛心才是最重要的。當他說「愛心能造就人」時，他想到的是整個信仰群體。真正的問題不只是「我這樣做對不對？」而是「我這樣做能不能幫助別人成長？」我們都有一些個人堅持的看法。你可能在某些方面是個專家，例如修理東西、燒菜、理財等等。但如果不小心，這些知識可能會變成「我是對的，你是錯的」的心態。這就是驕傲。在日常生活中，我們常常看到一些例子。一位牧師曾經在講道中鼓勵父母把孩子送到私立基督徒學校。這或許是個好的建議，但對那些負擔不起學費的家庭會不會造成壓力？他們甚至可能覺得自己沒有給孩子最好的而感到內疚？再看看生活方式的選擇。有些人強烈認為開豪華車或穿名牌衣服是貪愛世界。但如果教會中有成員是在那些公司工作呢？他們應該辭職嗎？還有政治這個很容易引起分歧的話題。我認識一位姐妹曾經主張，基督徒只應該支持某一個政黨，因為另一方是不敬虔的。這類觀點常常導致激烈的爭論，特別是在選舉期間，甚至有人因此離開教會。這其實是很可惜的。事實是，每個教會都會有一些具爭議性的課題。我們為什麼要讓自己堅持的看法引起分裂呢？保羅提醒我們，要用愛心來包裝我們所說的話。驕傲會拆毀人，唯有愛心才能造就人。有時候，最有愛心的做法就是保持沉默，專心聆聽。保留自己的意見，本身就是一種尊重。畢竟，我們的目標不是證明自己知道多少，或說服別人照我們的方式去做，而是去理解別人的處境與需要。

2. 屬於基督 Belong to Christ

保羅提醒哥林多的信徒要提防驕傲。他們的驕傲來自於對偶像的「知識」。他們當中有些人曾經信奉異教，如今卻已經屬於基督了。這樣的關係，應該影響他們生活中的每一個層面，甚至包括飲食那麼簡單的事情。在第 5 到 6 節，保羅對比了偶像敬拜與對獨一真神的信仰：5 雖有稱為神的，或在天，或在地，就如那許多的神，許多的主；6 然而我們只有一位神，就是父，萬物都本於他；我們也歸於他，並有一位主，就是耶穌基督，萬物都是藉著他有的；我們也是藉著他有的。這兩種信仰之間有很大的差異：一邊是眾多虛假的神，另一邊是獨一的真神。在希臘神話中，每一個神明都有他們負責的範圍—掌管太陽、海洋、愛情、戰爭、智慧、音樂等等。有些人可能有 Nike 的鞋子或衣服，這名字其實來自「勝利之神」。中國傳統信仰中也有各式各樣的神明：門神、灶君、財神、生育之神，以及掌管海洋和雨水的神等等。這些神明的行為其實很像人：會結婚生子，會嫉妒、欺騙，彼此爭鬥。說到底，它們不過是人類渴望長生不老而投射的想像。但聖經中的神完全不同。保羅在第 6 節強調兩個真理：神創造萬有，也維持萬有。而且這些工作是父神和耶穌共同參與的，這也間接表明聖父和聖子是同等的。承認神是創造主，是接受一個客觀

的事實；但承認耶穌是主，則是一個信心的回應，意味著我們主動地願意順服祂。當哥林多人接受基督時，他們就屬於祂了。因此，他們的信心必須影響他們的行為。換句話說，吃不吃祭過偶像的肉，問題並不只是食物本身，而是反映他們與神的關係。保羅同意偶像並不存在，因此有些信徒可以毫無顧忌地進入廟中吃東西。但同時，他們對獨一真神的信仰，也應該影響他們如何對待其他信徒。他們的神學，應該引導他們的日常生活。畢竟，基督信仰不是一種私人的嗜好，它會影響我們的決定，也影響我們在別人面前的見證。「我屬於基督」應該成為每一位信徒的座右銘。所謂「主權的救恩」，才是真正的救恩——就是讓耶穌掌管我們生命的每一個層面：工作、婚姻、教養兒女、休閒活動，以致其他一切。祂與你同在，無論你在學校、工作、家中，還是與朋友相處的時候。無論獨處或在人前，你都在榮耀祂，見證你的信仰。既然保羅提到偶像，我也想對曾經拜過偶像的弟兄姊妹說幾句話。偶像本身雖然不實際，但撒但可以利用一些宗教形象來絆倒你。因此，你需要與它們徹底斷絕關係。把家中和車上的偶像清除，不要再戴任何護身符。耶穌基督才是你唯一的保護者。也不要再相信什麼幸運數字或迷信。你一切的祝福都來自天父。立定心志，專一且全心地跟隨耶穌，因為你已經屬於祂了。

3. 造就別人 Benefit Others

保羅提醒哥林多的信徒要提防驕傲。他們不再為自己而活——他們如今是屬於基督的人。因此，愛心應該比知識更重要。而表達愛的一個方式，就是在我們所做的事上造就別人。保羅在第 9-10 節提醒他們：**9 只是你們要謹慎，恐怕你們這自由竟成了那軟弱人的絆腳石。10 若有人見你這有知識的，在偶像的廟裡坐席，這人的良心，若是軟弱，豈不放膽去吃那祭偶像之物嗎？**保羅把那些靈命比較不成熟的人稱為「良心軟弱的人」。良心是神放在我們裡面的一種機制，幫助我們分辨是非對錯。但良心也會受到我們的背景和經歷影響。比如，有人喜歡吃辣，有人覺得綠色很難看，你的父母可能覺得某些行業比較有前途。吃祭過偶像的食物本身並不是罪。吃了不會讓神棄絕你，不吃也不會讓神特別喜歡你。但一些隨意吃那些食物的人，可能在不知不覺中傷害到那些良心軟弱的信徒。那些信徒雖然知道偶像算不得什麼，但當他們看到其他基督徒在廟裡吃東西時，可能會勾起過去參與異教儀式的記憶。撒但也可能利用這些畫面來動搖他們的信心。因此，保羅勸那些「剛強」的信徒要體諒「軟弱」的人。在日常生活中，我們也會面對類似的情況。人們因為處境不同，會做出不同的選擇。許多年前，我們家只有一輛車。當時教會的牧母有愛心載我的太太去參加姐妹禱告會。有人問我太太：「妳為什麼不自己買一輛車？」我太太直接地回答：「因為我沒有錢。」那位姐妹啞口無言。對她來說合理的做法，對我們卻不現實。還有一次，我太太提到我們的房子冬天很冷，因為保溫不好。有位弟兄給了一個很簡單的建議：「多穿點衣服。」這其實很有智慧！如果他建議我們把暖氣開大，便會增加我們的開支。但每個人都有額外的衣服。他體諒了我們的處境。我也從他身上學到：如果要造就別人，就要設身處地為對方著想。後

來，有一個比較窮困的家庭來到我們教會。弟兄姊妹給了他們一些幫助。教會常常舉辦聚餐，但這個家庭從不參加。有位弟兄問為什麼。我給了一個推測：「也許他們沒有能力準備一道體面的菜。」這提醒我們，每個人的處境都不一樣。如果忽略對方的需要，再好的建議也可能變成不切實際的想法。再舉個例子，如果你知道某人過去有酗酒的習慣，那麼邀請他到酒吧與弟兄相聚，對他來說很可能是一個絆腳石。改去咖啡店會更合適。同樣地，如果有人曾經有賭博的問題，你帶他去賭場吃海鮮自助餐，也可能傷害他的信心。也許有人會說：「那這樣我在別人面前什麼都不能說、什麼都不能做了！」但這不是保羅的意思。神並不是要我們變得神經質、過度緊張。保羅的原則，是在你清楚知道對方背景的情況下，應該多一份體諒，好讓你造就別人。所以，如果你喜歡喝酒，可以在家裡享用；如果你喜歡談論運動、車子、衣服或名牌包，就和興趣相同的朋友聊。重點很簡單：愛人需要智慧，有時也意味著願意約束自己。

結論 CONCLUSION

保羅在這一章教導我們：就算我們有自由，也要有智慧地節制自己，免得使別人跌倒。除非你住在山洞裡或荒島上，否則人們都會看見你的生活方式。神呼召我們在世上作鹽作光。我們透過行為向非信徒顯明基督，也用愛心去建立其他信徒。因此，「我不在乎別人怎麼看我」這種心態，並不符合聖經的教導。體育界的一個故事很好地說明了這一點。有一位有名的職業美式足球員，曾在電視訪問中表示，他騎摩托車時不戴安全帽。他所在的州法律允許不戴，他說這樣讓他覺得「更自由」。但一年後，他發生了一場嚴重的意外。一輛車撞上他，把他從摩托車上拋出去，整個人撞上另一輛車的擋風玻璃。他頭部和臉部嚴重受傷，經歷了長達七個小時的手術。康復之後，他向家人、球隊和球迷道歉，因為他讓自己承擔了不必要的風險。他終於明白，誤用自由不但沒有幫助任何人，反而傷害了那些關心他的人。感謝神，祂從不對我們說：「我不在乎。」祂非常關心我們，甚至差遣祂的兒子為我們的罪而死。正因如此，我們也應該在教會內外活出祂的心意，以生命反映祂的愛。