



1 Corinthians 8

INTRODUCTION:

- In this chapter Paul answers questions about whether or not it's ok to eat meat that was sacrificed to idols, and then sold in local stores to the general public. Obviously that situation doesn't really apply to us today—but Paul does talk about many principles in this chapter that **do** directly apply to our Christian lives. He also speaks to those who were strong / mature in their faith as well as those who were weak / young in their faith. Before we jump into the text, explain what those two groups look like within any given congregation:

STRONG



WEAK

- Agree / Disagree: *Many Christians that think they are strong are actually weak in faith, while many who consider themselves weak are actually strong in faith.*

The Situation:

1 Corinthians 8:1-6

1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. **2** If anyone supposes that he knows something, he does not yet know the way he ought to know. **3** But if anyone loves God, this person has been known by him.

4 So, concerning the eating of food from idol sacrifices, we know that an idol is not anything real in the world and that there is no God but one. **5** Indeed, even if there are so-called “gods,” whether in the heavens or on earth (as in fact there are many “gods” and many “lords”), **6** nevertheless for us there is one God—the Father, from whom all things exist and we exist for him—and one Lord—Jesus Christ, through whom all things exist and we exist through him.

- What does Paul mean in verse 1 where he says, “*Knowledge puffs us, but love builds up*”?
- Boil down the point Paul is making in verses 2-3 and put it in your own words:
- Agree / Disagree: *In the opening verses Paul is talking to people who thought they were strong, but were, in fact, weak.*
- What, according to Paul (God), is the number 1 key element of maturity in our Christian faith?
- What key truth is Paul making in verses 4-6, and how does that apply to this situation?

- This was a rather unique situation the church at Corinth was facing. Can you think of a parallel situation Christians may face today?

- Would you, for example, attend a Dalawi celebration with a Hindu friend or neighbor?

The Issue of Conscience:

1 Corinthians 8:7-8

7 However, that knowledge is not in everyone. Instead some, who are still affected by their former habit with the idol, eat the food as something sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

8 Food will not bring us closer to God. We do not lack anything if we do not eat, nor are we better off if we do.

- What, specifically (v.7), was making some Christians there weak?
- Can you think of Christians today who may suffer a similar kind of weakness, because of their past lives?
- Agree / Disagree: *If anything makes my conscience feel guilty, then it's sinful for me, even if it's not really sinful.*

- If you agree, then explain why, and think of some examples:

- Why does Paul say what he does in verse 8 / what makes Christianity unique among so many of the world's religions?

Use Freedom Wisely:

1 Corinthians 8:9-13

9 And be careful that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if someone sees you, a person who has knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of this man, weak as he is, be emboldened to eat food from an idol sacrifice? 11 You see, the weak person is being destroyed by your knowledge—the brother for whose sake Christ died! 12 And when you sin in this way against your brothers and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I do not cause my brother to sin.

- When Paul speaks about “knowledge” what exactly is he talking about?
- What is to be the relationship / the prioritization between Biblical knowledge and love for my fellow believers?
- Agree / Disagree: *A pastor who comes into a church and makes a bunch of changes right away is sinning in this way.*

CONCLUSION:

- Let's say a former muslim family joins our congregation. You invite them over for dinner. Would you offer wine / beer / pork to them? Why / why not?
- What are some concrete lessons / principles that we can take from this chapter?