

1 CORINTHIANS

8:1-13 | STUDY GUIDE

Food

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1, "Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up." (ESV)

- Food offered to idols
 - 1 portion burnt to honor god
 - 1 portion given to worshipper to take home and eat
 - 1 portion given to priest
 - Whatever the priest didn't want was sold at market for a discount
- We have to consider the daily life of a first century Corinthian convert
 - "Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one.'" (1 Corinthians 8:4, ESV)
 - If there's only one god, than idol worship is meaningless and the food is uncontaminated?
 - Paul takes an alternate approach: knowledge vs love

1 CORINTHIANS 8:7, "However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled." (ESV)

- It's not just about you and your personal walk—we bear each other's burdens
 - "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2, ESV)

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- Some Christians are still struggling to separate with the old way of life and are looking to those whose conscience seems “strong” to guide them
 - This is complicated by some who view their “knowledge” as a “right” or free pass to do what they want and eat what they want
 - “But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.” (1 Corinthians 8:9, ESV)
 - Isthmian Games (feasts)
 - Imperial Cults

1 CORINTHIANS 8:10-11, “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? And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died.” (ESV)

- Perspective
 - These believers are arguing the superiority of their knowledge and their right as socially elite to attend feasts and indulge
 - Paul makes clear their responsibility to one another □ emphatically adding that Christ died for the person they see as “less than”

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1 CORINTHIANS 8:12, "Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ." (ESV)

- Although Paul makes clear in verse 8 that, "Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do." We are still in danger of sinning when we fail to consider the impact of our actions on others.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, Timothy Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom, Stoic Philosophy, and the Ancient Economy*, Craig Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, N.T. Wright, *The New Testament in Its World*