

## Give up your freedom!

### 1 Corinthians 8

Paul begins a new section (which continues until 11:1) responding to the church's question about food sacrificed to idols. Although this might seem like an abstract concept to us, the underlying principles that govern Paul's response are full of guidance and practical help for Christians living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Outline

##### Knowledge vs Love (8:1-3)

The church had a dispute about *"Food offered to idols"*. It seems within the church at Corinth there were two groups, those who were adamant you could eat meat offered to idols and those who thought that behaviour was wrong.

Paul raises his own issue, a governing principle that will resolve this dispute, *"Knowledge must be guided by love"*.

##### Knowledge (8:4-7)

What the "puffed up" know:

- v4 Idols are nothing
- v5 Although there are created rulers (both earthly and heavenly)
- v4 There is one God
- v6 Who created everything
- v6 Who sustains us
- v6 This one God is both the Father and the Son

The reality for those lacking this knowledge:

- v7 Due to their past idol worship they associate eating meat offered to idols with idolatry
- v7 For these people eating this food is idolatry and therefore sinful

##### What they really need to know (8:8)

Paul, siding with neither group, is clear about this issue's impact on our nearness to God:

- Abstaining from "idol meat" doesn't move us away
- Eating "idol meat" doesn't bring us closer

##### Love (8:9-13)

vs9-11 Using your knowledge/ exercising your freedom, in front of someone with a weak conscience destroys them

v12 That means you have sinned

v13 Love means I forgo my freedoms for the good of others (In this context becoming a lifelong vegetarian if necessary)

#### Questions

What does Christian maturity look like in this passage?

How do I normally respond if someone has a different view on a conscience issue? How should I?

Think of other areas where these principles apply. Am I guilty of "destroying" my fellow Christians?