



# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## I CORINTHIANS 8:1-13

### LESSON: CONCERN FOR A WEAKER BROTHER — April 3, 2022

#### INTRODUCTION: SYNOPSIS

The Corinthian believers needed help; they needed answers to questions; guidelines that would help them as they lived in the midst of a sinful and pleasure-mad world. Therefore, someone wrote Paul and asked him about meat offered to idols, about the questionable pleasure and social functions of day to day life. Paul deals directly with the Corinthian problem, but he also uses the issue and expands it to include the whole question of Christian liberty and personal rights: *"Can a Christian do his own thing? Is a Christian honestly set free in Christ? If not, what restraints are put upon his liberty or freedom?"* The sacrifices were food offerings, symbolically presented in worship to the god of whose temple they were given. The particular issue was that of eating food that had been offered in those sacrifices. The Greeks and Romans were worshiping many gods. They had a god, or a group of gods for every circumstance, every need, and every activity: god of war; god of travel; goddess of justice etc.; thereby, believing in many evil spirits. Idol offerings were divided into three parts: 1. One part was burned on the altar as the sacrifice. 2. The second part was given as payment to the priests who served at the temple and the feast that followed. 3. And the remaining part was taken home and kept by the offerer. Because of the number of offerings, the priests were not able to eat all of their portion, so what they did not need was sold in the butcher shops and marketplaces. That meat was highly valued because it was cleansed of evil spirits, and was thus the meat served at feasts and to guests.

For the Christians, the meat symbolized the association with pagan gods and goddesses, having been part of an offering to them; and it was associated with the superstition that it had once been contaminated by evil spirits. This was an unavoidable and questionable for a believer who had any personal contact with Gentiles because of the social occasions of weddings and festivities of the sort that involved pagan worship held in the temples where idol food was always served. If a relative was getting married or a long-time friend was giving a banquet, well then a Christian either had to make excuses for not attending or if attended was concerned if the food he ate was a part of an idol offering.

#### LESSON: I. LOVE IS GREATER THAN KNOWLEDGE 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1- 3

**1 ST—8:1** **Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.** This passage concerns the believers touching things sacrificed to idols. The ones making the claim had more than enough knowledge and understanding of God's Word. Knowledge makes us look good and feel important, but one can easily develop a prideful know-it-all attitude. Many people with strong opinions are unwilling to listen to and learn from God and others. The Corinthian Christians were arrogant. They had knowledge without love. They knew that pagan gods and idols were not real and that food sacrificed to them was still just food. They knew that eating the food could not contaminate them spiritually, that it had no affect on their Christian lives. They felt totally free to eat whatever they wanted, no matter what others thought. Those believers having the knowledge were not mature in love. Paul says we all have knowledge, but God's knowledge, the kind needed to build the church and to build others up can be obtained only by loving God! Love edifies, or builds up others, and that edification they did not have. They were solid in doctrine but weak in love. They were strong in self-





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love, but weak in brotherly love. What they knew, puffed them up and did not show the love to edify (build-up) others. **The point is: Love edifies and grows people, not knowledge.**

**1 ST—8:2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.** Many behaviors are not commanded, commended, or forbidden in Scripture. They are neither black nor white, but gray. Such issues in one age or area may not be the same as those in other times or places, but every age and every place has had to deal with the gray area of Christian living. Knowledge is only partial. No matter what he knows, it's incomplete! <sup>1</sup>The minute a person gets to the stage where he thinks he knows everything, he has stopped learning and probably does not know near as much as he thought he did.

**1 ST—8:3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him. Love unites a person to God.** If a man loves God, he is known and accepted by God. Therefore, believers have a relationship with God, and will continue in that relationship because Love is the key! Loving and being loved by God is everything! Therefore, Love is greater than knowledge!

## II. LOVE IS GREATER THAN IDOLATRY 1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-6

**1 ST—8:4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. Paul now returns to the critical problem of the Corinthians: eating those things (the meat) offered in the sacrifice to idols. He agrees with those Corinthians who were taught well and knew that an idol was nothing. The stone, precious metal, or wood is real, but there is no god behind it. The image is not anything that really exists. It only reflects the imagination of the one who designed it, or the impersonation of the demon that deceives through it. Idols are not gods. There is no God but One. He is God Almighty; I AM; Jehovah, known by many names but One God who is the Supreme Majestic Being of the universe! He is the One of whom are all things. He is the Source of all creation! He is our life!—the One who stands supreme between God and man and is God! He is the One true God; He is a Spirit!**

**1 ST—8:5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) In Egypt there had been thousands of false gods. Here in Corinth, there had been many false gods, as well. The problem with people who worship false gods is that they want a god that they can see with their eyes. And they worship things from God's creation instead of worshipping the Creator.**

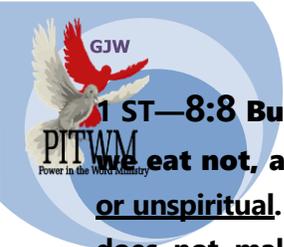
**1 ST—8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.** Paul reiterates that as far as being a Christian believer, there is just one God, the Father of whom all things come from, and we live in Him and there is just one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things came by Him, and we live by Him! Pagans believed that there were many gods. However, all things owe their existence to the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

## III. LOVE IS GREATER THAN LIBERTY 1 CORINTHIANS 8:7-13

**1 ST—8:7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. Paul asks how come every man does not have this knowledge? (about idols). Well, some of the Corinthian believers were immature. They had immature knowledge and were likely to fall back into sin and defile their consciences.** Some took it as with its false beliefs, when eating the meat offered to idols, if they participated in the questionable pleasures and social functions, they would defile their consciences. They were not spiritually strong enough to control their minds and beliefs—at least not yet—not totally.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/1corinthians/12.html>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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**1 ST—8:8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. The fact is that food is immaterial to God. It does not make us spiritual or unspiritual.** The meat is not what makes the sin. It is their attitude toward the meat. Eating or abstaining does not make us acceptable to God; neither one makes us better (*meaning to excel or to have an advantage*) or worse (*meaning to come short or behind*). God's approval is not based on the food we take.<sup>2</sup> Anything that we cannot do with a clear conscience is sin if we do it. If we are a Christian, God has placed His laws in our heart. Our conscience alerts us when something is a sin or not. Matthew 15:11 says "A man is not defiled by what enters his mouth, but by what comes out of his mouth."

**1 ST—8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.** This is the kicker! A believer's liberty can cause a weak believer to fall into sin, that's why Paul gives this strong exhortation: "take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block." A "stumbling block" means a stone, an obstacle, an occasion, an offense— something that causes a person to fall because of what you've done or said. Therefore, in the case of the Corinthians, some believers were participating in the social functions where meat had been offered to idols and then attending functions in the idol's temple. This caused some of the weaker believers to do the same, but they were not able to handle the situation (meaning in their mind and their beliefs).

**1 ST—8:10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;—** As they recline at the table in the idol's temple and the weak man sees the mature or knowledgeable man sitting and eating meat that's been offered to idols shall not the conscience of the weak man be encouraged and reassured to do the same?

**1 ST—8:11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?—** Since the mature believer is usually looked upon as having knowledge; knowing what is right and wrong, he should not cause the weak brother to perish. The one supreme reason is that Christ died for him. Christ paid the ultimate price and sacrificed everything to save the brother. How much more should we? Will that really fortify or harden his weak conscience that he too will eat food offered to idols?

**1 ST—8:12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. To wound a brother's conscience is to sin against Christ Himself.** 1) There is no greater sin than to damage a person's conscience and spirit. Why? Because... (a) A wounded conscience or spirit makes a person feel useless and helpless. It destroys all drive and initiative, will, and ambition. (b) A wounded spirit causes a person to give up, lie around, do nothing, and walk about defeated. (c) A wounded conscience or spirit that has been wounded deeply enough will destroy a person. 2) Jesus Christ is identified with believers. He lives within the believer, even the weak believer. Remember: Christ loves the weak person so much that He died for him. He gave His life for that person, therefore, anyone who sins against or harms a weak brother by leading him astray, sins against and harms Christ!

**1 ST—8:13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.** Paul makes this clear declaration that if meat (food) causes his brother (those younger and immature in the faith) to stumble or be offended, or be destroyed, he will not eat that food.<sup>3</sup> Paul was willing to limit his own freedom. He would never make it difficult for another Christian. His

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/1corinthians/12.html>  
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/1-corinthians-lbw.htm>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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action might be good in itself. But it would be wrong if it caused another believer to sin.

## **SUMMARY:**

**1**This passage concerns them touching things sacrificed to idols. What they knew, puffed them up and did not show the love to edify (build-up) others. It is love that edifies and grows people. Knowledge is only partial. **2**No matter what man knows, it's incomplete because if any man think that he knows anything, he knows nothing as he ought to. **3**Love unites a person to God. If a man loves God, he is known and accepted by God (**8:1-3**).

**4**Paul now returns to the critical problem of the Corinthians: eating those things (the meat) offered in the sacrifice to idols. Should Christians buy such meat? Should they eat it if it is served at someone else's home? Should they participate in meals associated with pagan religious festivals? Some in the community see nothing wrong with eating this meat because *"no idol has any real existence in the world"* (1 Corinthians 8:4). Paul agrees with those Corinthians who were taught well, and knew that an idol was nothing. It only reflects the imagination of the one who designed it, for there is no God but One. He is God Almighty. **5**In Egypt there had been thousands of false gods. Here in Corinth, there had been many false gods, as well. The problem with people who worship false gods is that they want a god that they can see with their eyes. They worship things from God's creation instead of worshipping the Creator. **6**Paul reiterates that as far as being a Christian believer, there is just one God! Pagans believed that there were many gods. All things owe their existence to the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! (**8:4-6**).

**7**Paul asks how come every man does not have this knowledge? (about idols). Well, some of the Corinthian believers were immature. They were not spiritually strong enough to control their minds and beliefs—at least not yet—not totally. **8**The fact is that food is immaterial to God. It does not make us spiritual or unspiritual. The meat is not what makes the sin. It is their attitude toward the meat. Eating or abstaining does not make us acceptable to God; neither one makes us better. **9**Therefore, in the case of the Corinthians, some believers were participating in the social functions where meat had been offered to idols and attending functions in the idol's temple. This caused some of the weaker believers to do the same, but they were not able to handle the situation in their conscience. A believer's liberty can cause a weak believer to fall into sin, that's why Paul gives this strong exhortation: *"take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block."* **10**As they recline at the table in the idol's temple and the weak man sees the mature or knowledgeable man sitting and eating meat that's been offered to idols, shall not the conscience of the weak man be encouraged and reassured to do the same? **11**The mature believer is usually looked upon as having knowledge; knowing what is right and wrong, he should not cause the weak brother to perish. The one supreme reason is that Christ died for him. Christ paid the ultimate price and sacrificed everything to save the brother. How much more should we? **12**But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. **13**Paul makes this clear declaration that if meat (food) causes his brother (those younger and immature in the faith) to stumble or be offended, or be destroyed, he will not eat that food (**8:7-13**).

## **APPLICATION:**

Considering others is forgetting about yourself. Allow God to fill you with His love so He can build the right attitude in you so you won't be puffed up.

