

1 Corinthians

# Wisdom & Unity

Meeting the demands of  
Christian life and living



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Starting where  
you are:

Any questions?





# Overview of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

## Wisdom for a Balanced Life

From 8:1-11:1, the primary concern is eating meat/food offered to idols. The question that drives this extended address is: Should Christians eat meat that has been offered to idols during non-Christian rituals?

Paul's nuanced response conveys principles by which Christians in Corinth should govern their lives. These principles promote a balanced approach to life and living in secular society and they are just as relevant for contemporary Christians.



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# Overview of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

## Wisdom for a Balanced Life

The unchecked exercise of rights and/or privileges paves the road toward spiritual abuse that plays out in a degradation of social dynamics, political conversations, economic practices, and personal conduct. A Christian response to the danger of unchecked exercise of rights is the call for balance.

### **Outline for 1 Corinthians 8:1 – 11:1**

8:1-13 □ Knowledge balanced by love

9:1-17 □ Liberty balanced by discipline

10:1-11:1 □ Experience balanced by responsibility

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# Wisdom for a Balanced Life – part 1 of 3

## **1 Corinthians 8:1-13** ***Knowledge balanced by love***

- Point of agreement: it is a sin to worship idols.
- Point of contention: eating meat sacrificed to idols.

The issue is bigger than eating meat. Addressing this matter leads to personal quests to determine how a Christian can live in this world without compromising their values and lifestyles.

- The results are rewarding and frustrating
- The quest should inform our engagement

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# Knowledge balanced by love (8:1-13)

To live as a Christian in the world is to discover ways to foster community in the light of the larger culture. Where people's practices differ from one's own, there is an opportunity to be loving instead of self-centered.

The ultimate concern is for knowledge to be balanced by love.

## Chapter Outline

- Let love rule (8:1-3)
- There is only one God (8:4-6)
- The practice of Christian liberty (8:7-13)
  - Respect the other's conscience
  - Respect the other's faith
  - Don't bully one another
  - Don't manipulate one another

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## Let Love Rule (8:1-3)

**At issue:** There were two places to buy meat: 1) in the market at a higher price; or 2) from the temple at a lower price. In either place, the meat could be leftover after the sacrifice to idols.

**The question:** Should Christians eat the meat knowing it was offered to idols first?

**At stake:** Christian fellowship (with one another and with unbelievers)

# Let Love Rule (8:1-3)

## The setup:

- Love promotes sustainability (8:1). Unity is strengthened by love.
  - The effect of knowledge □ [**φυσιόω** physióō] to inflate, make one proud. (1 Cor 4:6, 18-19; 5:2)
  - The effect of love □ [**οικοδομέω**, oikodeméō] to build (construct, as a house), establish (3:9; 6:9; 13:4; 14:1-5, 12, 26)
- Love invites understanding (8:2). Understanding becomes more possible as we admit the limits of our knowledge.
- Love reveals God's "knowledge" (8:3).
  - A sign that one is saved by and known of God (2 Tim 2:19; contrast w/ Matt 7:23)



# There is only one God (8:4-6)

## The response (pt. 1):

- Knowledge of God addresses the “risk” of idols (8:4)
  - “an idol is nothing in the world.” □ lacks the personhood of God
  - “there is no God but one” □ lacks the power of God
  - Exodus 34:15; Numbers 25:2-3 (Ps 106:28)
  - Exodus 20:4-5; Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 46
- Knowledge of God determines the “reality” of idols (8:5-6)
  - Gal 4:8-9; Rom 11:36

**Those whose faith is strong can “eat meat” because their faith is not at risk.**

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# The practice of Christian liberty (8:7-13)

## The response (pt. 2):

- Respect the other's conscience, or practice
- Respect the other's faith
- Don't bully one another
- Don't manipulate one another

## What else does the Bible say about this?

- Acts 15:1-29. Don't be a stumbling block.
- Rom 14:6. Do everything as unto the Lord with thanksgiving.
- Rom 14:15-23. Don't destroy God's building.

***Those whose faith is strong do not set the agenda for everyone else. Each person exercises Christian liberty in a way that is effective for them.***

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## Here's the bottom line:

Members of the Christian church have a responsibility for the care of one another. If the actions of one who is “stronger” will cause harm for another who is “weaker,” then love dictates that the action not be taken.

*“People won't care how much you know until they know how much you care.”*

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Any Questions?



**For next week:**

- Pray about today's lesson**
- Read 1 Corinthians 7:25-40**



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