CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

1 Corinthians Chapter 8 — Knowledge, Love, and Christian Liberty

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

1 Corinthians Chapter 8 answers another question from the Corinthians' letter.

“Now concerning food offered to idols.”

To modern readers, this may sound like a strange question.

But in Corinth, it touched almost every part of daily life.

Animals were sacrificed in the city's many temples.

Part of the meat was burned on the altar.

Part was eaten by the worshipers and priests.

And much of what was left was sold in the public market.

Temple dining rooms were also used for social events.

Family celebrations, business dinners, and community gatherings often took place there.

So the question was real:

Can a Christian eat meat that was offered to an idol?

Some believers said, **“Yes, of course.”**

They had knowledge.

They knew idols were nothing.

They knew there is only one true God.

So they ate freely, even in temple dining rooms.

But other believers had a weaker conscience.

They had worshiped idols for years before coming to Christ.

For them, eating that meat still felt like worshiping a false god.

When they saw the “strong” believers eating it, they were tempted to eat too, against their conscience.

And it was damaging their faith.

Paul's answer is wise and surprising.

He agrees with the theology of the strong.

Idols are nothing.

There is only one God and one Lord.

Food does not bring us closer to God.

But Paul says knowledge is not enough.

“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”

The real question is not, **“Am I allowed?”**

The real question is, **“How will this affect my brother or sister for whom Christ died?”**

The chapter moves through four movements:

- Knowledge vs. Love (verses 1–3).
- Idols and the One True God (verses 4–6).
- The Weak Conscience of Believers (verses 7–9).
- Responsibility Toward the Weak (verses 10–13).

The central truth of 1 Corinthians 8 is:

Knowledge alone makes us proud, but love builds others up, so believers must gladly limit their freedom rather than cause a brother or sister for whom Christ died to stumble.

I. KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP

1 Corinthians 8:1 — But Love Builds Up

“Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”

Paul introduces the new topic.

“Now concerning food offered to idols.”

Then he seems to quote the Corinthians:

“We all possess knowledge.”

The strong believers were proud of what they knew.

Paul does not deny that they had knowledge.

But he immediately warns them:

“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”

Puffs up is the word Paul has used again and again in this letter.

It pictures something swollen with air.

Big on the outside, empty on the inside.

Builds up is a construction word.

It means to build a house, brick by brick.

Knowledge by itself makes **me** bigger.

Love makes **others** stronger.

Paul is not against knowledge.

He is against knowledge without love.

Cross References

Romans 14:1

> Welcome anyone whose faith is weak, but do not argue with them about their opinions.

1 Corinthians 13:2

> If I have the gift of prophecy, understand all secret truths, and have all knowledge, and if I have faith strong enough to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

Romans 15:2

> Each of us should please our neighbor for his good, to help him grow strong in faith.

Spiritual Principle

Knowledge without love inflates the self; love uses knowledge to strengthen others.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Being right is not enough; we must also be loving.

II. HE DOES NOT YET KNOW

1 Corinthians 8:2 — The Limits of Our Knowledge

“If anyone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.”

This is a humbling verse.

The person who is proud of his knowledge has missed something.

He **“does not yet know as he ought to know.”**

True knowledge always comes with humility.

The more we truly understand God, the more we realize how much we do not understand.

Proud knowledge is partial knowledge.

It knows facts but misses love.

It knows truth but forgets people.

Cross References

Proverbs 3:7

> Don't think of yourself as wise. Respect the LORD and turn away from evil.

Galatians 6:3

> If anyone thinks he is something when he is really nothing, he is fooling himself.

Romans 12:16

> Live in harmony with one another. Don't be proud, but be willing to spend time with ordinary people. Don't think you are wiser than you really are.

Spiritual Principle

The more truly we know, the more humbly we hold what we know.

Application

Be careful when you feel sure you know more than others.

That feeling can be a warning sign of pride.

III. KNOWN BY GOD

1 Corinthians 8:3 — Loving God

“But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.”

Here is the beautiful turn.

The Corinthians wanted to be known for their knowledge.

Paul points to something far greater.

“If anyone loves God, he is known by God.”

The most important thing is not how much you know about God.

It is whether God knows you.

To be **known by God** means to be loved by Him, chosen by Him, and claimed as His own.

And the sign that God knows you is that you love Him.

We love Him because He loved us first.

Cross References

Galatians 4:9

> But now that you know God—or rather, now that God knows you—how can you turn back to those weak and worthless basic powers? Do you want to be slaves to them all over again?

1 John 4:19

> We love because He loved us first.

Psalm 1:6

> For the LORD watches over the path of those who do right, but the path of the wicked leads to ruin.

Spiritual Principle

Being known and loved by God matters more than anything we know.

Key Truth

Knowledge can make us proud.

Being known by God makes us humble and grateful.

IV. AN IDOL IS NOTHING

1 Corinthians 8:4 — There Is No God But One

“So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: we know that “an idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “there is no God but one.””

Paul returns to the question.

He quotes two statements the strong believers were making.

“An idol is nothing at all in the world.”

“There is no God but one.”

Paul agrees with both.

An idol is a piece of wood, stone, or metal.

It has no real divine power.

And there is only one true God.

This was the great confession of Israel.

“The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

So, in itself, meat offered to an idol is just meat.

The idol cannot change it.

The theology of the strong believers was correct.

But as Paul will show, correct theology must be applied with love.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 4:39

> So know today and keep it in mind: The LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

Isaiah 44:6

> This is what the LORD says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD of Armies: “I am the first and I am the last. There is no God except Me.”

Deuteronomy 6:4

> Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Spiritual Principle

There is only one true God, and every idol is empty.

Key Truth

Idols have no power over those who belong to the living God.

V. SO-CALLED GODS

1 Corinthians 8:5 — Many “Gods” and Many “Lords”

“For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—”

Paul admits that the world is full of **“so-called gods.”**

Corinth had temples to Apollo, Aphrodite, Asclepius, Demeter, and many others.

Roman emperors were also honored as gods.

People called these beings **“gods”** and **“lords.”**

Paul says they are **so-called.**

They are gods in name only.

They are real in the sense that people worship them and give them power over their lives.

And later in this letter, Paul will warn that demons can stand behind idol worship.

But they are not real gods.

There is only one God who made heaven and earth.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 10:17

> For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome. He shows no favoritism and cannot be bribed.

Psalm 96:5

> All the gods of the nations are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Galatians 4:8

> In the past, when you did not know God, you were slaves to things that by nature are not gods at all.

Spiritual Principle

Anything people worship in place of God is a false god, no matter what they call it.

Application

Modern idols may not be statues.

They may be money, success, pleasure, or people.

Anything we trust and love more than God becomes a so-called god.

VI. ONE GOD AND ONE LORD

1 Corinthians 8:6 — The Father and Jesus Christ

“yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we live; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we live.”

This is one of the most important verses in the New Testament about who Jesus is.

The world had many gods and many lords.

“Yet for us.”

Christians confess something different.

“One God, the Father.”

All things come **from** Him.

We live **for** Him.

“One Lord, Jesus Christ.”

All things come **through** Him.

We live **through** Him.

Paul is echoing Israel's great confession:

“The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

And he places Jesus right inside it.

The Father is the one God.

Jesus is the one Lord.

Jesus is not one of many lords.

He is the one Lord through whom everything was created.

This is a clear statement that Jesus shares the identity of the one true God.

Cross References

Malachi 2:10

> Don't we all have one Father? Didn't one God create us? Then why are we unfaithful to one another, breaking the covenant God made with our ancestors?

Ephesians 4:6

> There is one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all.

John 1:3

> Everything was made through Him. Nothing that was made was made without Him.

Spiritual Principle

All of life comes from God the Father and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of life is for Him.

Key Truth

Jesus is not one god among many.

He is the one Lord through whom all things were made.

VII. NOT EVERYONE HAS THIS KNOWLEDGE

1 Corinthians 8:7 — A Weak Conscience Defiled

“But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some, still accustomed to idols, eat food as if it were sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.”

Now Paul turns.

“But not everyone possesses this knowledge.”

Some believers knew in their minds that idols were nothing.

But their hearts had not yet caught up.

They were **“still accustomed to idols.”**

For years, they had worshiped false gods.

They had eaten sacrificial meals as acts of worship.

Now, even as Christians, eating that meat still felt like worship.

Paul says their **“conscience is weak.”**

A weak conscience is a sensitive conscience.

It is not yet fully trained by the truth.

When they ate against their conscience, they felt they were sinning.

And so their conscience was **“defiled”**—stained with guilt.

Cross References

Romans 14:14

> I know and am fully convinced in the Lord Jesus that no food is unclean in itself. But if someone believes something is unclean, then for that person it is unclean.

Romans 14:23

> But anyone who has doubts and eats anyway is condemned, because he is not acting from faith. And anything not done from faith is sin.

Titus 1:15

> To the pure, everything is pure. But to those who are corrupt and do not believe, nothing is pure. Their minds and consciences are corrupted.

Spiritual Principle

Going against your conscience is spiritually harmful, even when the act itself is not wrong.

Key Truth

Believers grow at different speeds.

Not everyone's heart has caught up with what their head knows.

VIII. FOOD DOES NOT BRING US NEAR TO GOD

1 Corinthians 8:8 — No Worse, No Better

“But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.”

Paul makes a key point.

“Food does not bring us near to God.”

Our relationship with God does not depend on what we eat.

The strong believers may have thought that eating showed their spiritual maturity.

The weak believers may have thought that not eating made them more holy.

Paul says both are wrong.

“We are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.”

Food is morally neutral.

It does not make anyone more or less spiritual.

Only Jesus Christ brings us near to God.

Cross References

Romans 14:17

> For the kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking. It is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 2:16

> So don't let anyone judge you about what you eat or drink, or about religious festivals, New Moon celebrations, or Sabbath days.

Hebrews 13:9

> Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be made strong by grace, not by rules about food, which have not helped those who follow them.

Spiritual Principle

What brings us near to God is Christ, not food or any outward practice.

Key Truth

If something does not make you closer to God, it is not worth hurting your brother over.

IX. A STUMBLING BLOCK TO THE WEAK

1 Corinthians 8:9 — Be Careful with Your Rights

“Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak.”

Paul now gives the warning.

“Be careful.”

The strong believers had **rights.**

They were free to eat.

Paul does not deny it.

But he warns that their freedom could become **“a stumbling block to the weak.”**

A stumbling block is something in the path that makes someone trip and fall.

The strong believer's freedom could cause a weaker believer to fall into sin.

Freedom is good.

But freedom used carelessly can do real harm.

Cross References

Romans 14:13

> So let's stop judging one another. Instead, decide never to put anything in the way of a brother or sister that would make them stumble or fall.

Romans 14:21

> It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that causes your brother or sister to stumble.

Galatians 5:13

> Brothers and sisters, you were called to be free. But do not use your freedom as an excuse to please your sinful nature. Instead, serve one another in love.

Spiritual Principle

Christian freedom must always be guided by love for others.

Application

Before you use your freedom, ask: **“Who might be watching, and how will this affect them?”**

X. EMBOLDENED TO EAT

1 Corinthians 8:10 — Eating in an Idol's Temple

“For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you, who have this knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols?”

Paul gives a real example.

A strong believer is seen **“eating in an idol's temple.”**

Temple dining rooms were common places for meals and celebrations.

A weak believer sees him.

And he thinks, **“If he can do it, so can I.”**

He is **“emboldened.”**

The word means **built up.**

It is the same word Paul used in verse 1.

There is sad irony here.

The strong believer thinks he is building up his brother.

But he is really building him up to sin against his own conscience.

That is not the kind of building up love does.

Cross References

Romans 14:15

> If your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer living in love. Do not let what you eat destroy someone for whom Christ died.

Romans 15:1

> We who are strong should help carry the weaknesses of those who are not strong, and not just please ourselves.

Romans 14:20

> Do not tear down God's work over food. All food is clean, but it is wrong to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.

Spiritual Principle

Our example teaches others, for good or for harm.

Key Truth

Someone is always watching.

Make sure your example leads them toward Christ.

XI. FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED

1 Corinthians 8:11 — Destroyed by Your Knowledge

“So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.”

This is a sobering verse.

The weak believer is **“destroyed”** by the strong believer's knowledge.

The word means ruined or brought to harm.

The weak believer's faith is damaged.

He may be pulled back into idol worship.

And notice how Paul describes this weak believer:

“For whom Christ died.”

Jesus loved this person enough to die for him.

How then can a strong believer refuse to give up a meal for him?

Christ gave His life.

Can we not give up our rights?

Cross References

Matthew 18:6

> But if anyone causes one of these little ones who trust in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and be drowned in the deep sea.

Romans 14:15

> If your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer living in love. Do not let what you eat destroy someone for whom Christ died.

Romans 14:21

> It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that causes your brother or sister to stumble.

Spiritual Principle

Every believer is precious because Christ died for them.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If Christ gave His life for my brother, I can give up my rights for him.

XII. YOU SIN AGAINST CHRIST

1 Corinthians 8:12 — Wounding a Weak Conscience

"When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ."

Paul calls it what it is.

"Sin."

Causing a weaker believer to stumble is not just unwise.

It is not just unkind.

It is sin.

The word **wound** means to strike or beat.

A weak conscience is easily hurt.

And then Paul says the most serious thing of all:

"You sin against Christ."

Christ is so united with His people that what we do to them, we do to Him.

Jesus told Saul on the road to Damascus, **"Why are you persecuting Me?"**

Saul was persecuting Christians.

Jesus took it personally.

Cross References

Matthew 25:40

> The King will answer, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me.”

Acts 9:4

> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

Romans 14:15

> If your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer living in love. Do not let what you eat destroy someone for whom Christ died.

Spiritual Principle

How we treat Christ's people is how we treat Christ.

Key Truth

There is no such thing as a small offense against one of Christ's own.

XIII. I WILL NEVER EAT MEAT AGAIN

1 Corinthians 8:13 — Love Limits Liberty

“Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to stumble.”

Paul ends the chapter with a personal decision.

He does not just tell others what to do.

He shows them.

“I will never eat meat again.”

Paul was free to eat meat.

He knew idols were nothing.

But if his freedom would cause a brother or sister to fall into sin, he would gladly give it up.

Not just once.

“Never.”

This is love in action.

Love does not ask, **“What am I allowed to do?”**

Love asks, **“What will help my brother?”**

In the next chapter, Paul will show how he gave up many of his rights for the sake of the gospel.

Cross References

Romans 14:21

> It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that causes your brother or sister to stumble.

Mark 9:42

> If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a large millstone tied around his neck and be thrown into the sea.

2 Corinthians 11:29

> Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not burn with distress?

Spiritual Principle

Love gladly gives up personal rights for the good of others.

Application

Is there a freedom you enjoy that might cause someone else to stumble?

Are you willing to set it aside out of love?

XIV. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 8

1. Knowledge Without Love Is Dangerous

“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”

Principle:

True Christian maturity is not about proving what we know, but showing love that builds others up.

2. Idols Are Powerless, but Consciences Are Fragile

Idols are nothing, but some believers still struggled with their past.

Principle:

We must be sensitive to the weaknesses of believers who are still growing.

3. Food Is Morally Neutral, but Love Is Not

Food does not bring us near to God.

Principle:

Eating or not eating makes no difference to God, but using our freedom without care can harm others.

4. Our Actions Affect Others

When we wound a weak conscience, we sin against Christ.

Principle:

Causing a weaker believer to stumble is not just unkind—it is sin against Christ Himself.

5. Love Limits Liberty

“I will never eat meat again.”

Principle:

The Christian should gladly lay aside personal rights when they threaten another's faith, because love comes before freedom.

XV. FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS IN CORINTH

Paul's discussion makes more sense when we understand daily life in Corinth.

Sacrifices in the Temples

Animals were offered to many gods in Corinth's temples.

Part of the animal was burned, and part was eaten.

Meat in the Market

Leftover meat from the temples was often sold in the public market.

Many people could not tell where their meat had come from.

Meals in the Temple Dining Rooms

Temples had dining rooms where people gathered for birthdays, weddings, business meals, and community events.

Turning down an invitation could mean losing friends, customers, or social standing.

Paul Says More Later

In Chapter 10, Paul will give further teaching.

Meat bought in the market may be eaten with a clear conscience.

But taking part in idol feasts is dangerous, because demons stand behind idol worship.

Key Truth

The question about idol food was not small; it touched the believer's work, family, friendships, and witness.

XVI. THE STRONG AND THE WEAK

1 Corinthians 8 describes two kinds of believers.

The Strong Believer

- Knows idols are nothing.
- Has a clear conscience about eating.
- Has real freedom in Christ.
- Can become proud of his knowledge.

- Must be careful not to cause others to stumble.

The Weak Believer

- Is still affected by his past with idols.
- Has a sensitive conscience.
- Feels guilty if he eats.
- Can be pulled into sin by the example of others.
- Is a brother or sister for whom Christ died.

What Each Must Do

The strong must use freedom with love.

The weak must grow in understanding.

Both must stop judging one another.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The strong are not called to win the argument, but to carry the weak.

XVII. ONE GOD AND ONE LORD

Verse 6 is one of the great confessions of the Christian faith.

Israel's Confession

“Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

Every faithful Jew confessed this daily.

Paul's Christian Confession

“One God, the Father.”

“One Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Paul takes Israel's words about the one God and places Jesus within them.

What the Father Does

All things are **from** Him.

We live **for** Him.

What Jesus Does

All things are **through** Him.

We live **through** Him.

Key Truth

Jesus is not a second god beside the Father; He is the one Lord who shares the identity of the one true God.

XVIII. WHAT 1 CORINTHIANS 8 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

The One Lord

There are many so-called lords, but only one Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Creator

All things came into being through Him.

The Giver of Life

We live through Him.

The Savior Who Died for the Weak

The weak believer is one **“for whom Christ died.”**

The Lord Who Is United with His People

To sin against a believer is to sin against Christ.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Lord through whom all things were made is the same Lord who died for the weakest believer.

XIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why was food offered to idols such an important question in Corinth?

Much of the meat sold in the city came from temple sacrifices.

Many social events took place in temple dining rooms.

The question affected daily life, work, and friendships.

Question 2

What does “knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” mean?

Knowledge by itself can make a person proud.

Love uses knowledge to help and strengthen others.

Question 3

Why is being known by God more important than knowing about God?

Our knowledge is always limited.

Being known by God means being loved and claimed by Him.

That is the foundation of our faith.

Question 4

Were the strong believers wrong about idols?

No.

Paul agreed that idols are nothing and that there is only one God.

Their problem was not wrong theology but a lack of love.

Question 5

What does verse 6 teach about Jesus?

It places Jesus within Israel's confession of the one true God.

He is the one Lord through whom all things were created.

Question 6

What is a “weak conscience”?

A conscience that is sensitive and not yet fully trained by the truth.

These believers still felt that eating idol food was worship of a false god.

Question 7

Why is it harmful to act against your conscience?

Even if the act itself is not wrong, going against conscience means acting against what you believe God wants.

That damages your relationship with God.

Question 8

Does food make us closer to God?

No.

Food is morally neutral.

Only Christ brings us near to God.

Question 9

What is a stumbling block?

Something that causes another person to fall into sin.

A believer's freedom can become a stumbling block when it leads a weaker believer to sin against his conscience.

Question 10

Why does Paul say causing a brother to stumble is sin against Christ?

Christ is united with His people.

He died for them.

What we do to them, we do to Him.

Question 11

Was Paul saying that Christians must never eat meat?

No.

He was saying that he personally would give up meat if it caused a brother or sister to fall into sin.

Love sets the limits of liberty.

Question 12

What should 1 Corinthians 8 change about the way Christians live today?

1 Corinthians 8 should cause believers to live:

- Humble about what they know.
- Using knowledge to build others up.
- Worshiping the one God and one Lord.
- Patient with those who are still growing.
- Careful about the example they set.
- Valuing every believer as one for whom Christ died.
- Willing to give up their rights out of love.

XX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians 8 asks several important questions.

Am I Proud of What I Know?

Does my knowledge make me bigger, or make others stronger?

Do I Love God?

Am I known by Him?

Are There Modern Idols in My Life?

What do I trust and love more than God?

Am I Patient with Weaker Believers?

Or do I look down on them?

Who Is Watching My Example?

Am I leading anyone toward sin?

Do I See Others as People for Whom Christ Died?

How would that change the way I treat them?

Am I Willing to Give Up My Rights?

Is there a freedom I need to set aside out of love?

XXI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Love Limits Liberty”

Christians are truly free.

Free from the law as a way of salvation.

Free from the power of idols.

Free from rules about food.

But Christian freedom is not the freedom to do whatever we want.

It is the freedom to love.

Sometimes love means using our freedom.

Sometimes love means laying it down.

The question is never only, **“Is this allowed?”**

The question is also, **“Is this loving?”**

Jesus had every right as the Son of God.

Yet He laid them down for us.

He did not insist on His rights.

He went to the cross.

This creates a powerful principle.

The strongest Christian is not the one with the most freedom.

It is the one most willing to give it up for others.

Principle:

Love comes before liberty, because Christ gave up everything for us.

XXII. FINAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians Chapter 8 was written to a church that knew a lot.

They knew idols were nothing.

They knew there was one God.

They knew food did not matter.

They were right.

But they were not loving.

Their knowledge had made them proud.

And their pride was hurting their brothers and sisters.

Paul pointed them to a better way.

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

1 Corinthians 8 therefore reminds us:

Never be proud of what you know.

Never forget that you are known by God.

Never despise a weaker believer.

Never use your freedom to harm someone for whom Christ died.

The church does not need more people who are right.

It needs:

Humble knowledge.

Patient love.

Careful examples.

And believers willing to give up their rights for others.

The same truth still calls us:

Tell people that there is one God and one Lord, Jesus Christ.

Tell people that idols are empty.

Tell people that Christ died even for the weakest believer.

Tell people that love is greater than knowledge.

And as you use your freedom:

Build others up.

Watch your example.

Protect the weak.

Let love lead.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that there is one God, the Father, from whom all things come and for whom we live.

Thank You that there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Thank You that You know us and love us.

Thank You that Christ died for every believer, the strong and the weak.

Thank You for the freedom we have in Christ.

Forgive us when our knowledge has made us proud.

Forgive us when we have looked down on others.

Forgive us when we have used our freedom carelessly.

Forgive us when our example has caused someone else to stumble.

Teach us that love is greater than knowledge.

Help us use what we know to build others up.

Give us patience with those who are still growing.

Make us careful about the example we set.

Help us see every brother and sister as someone for whom Christ died.

Give us hearts willing to lay down our rights for the good of others.

Keep us from every idol, and keep our hearts fixed on You alone.

And may our lives show that we love You and are known by You.

“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.” — 1 Corinthians 8:1

Central Truth

Knowledge alone makes us proud, but love builds others up, so believers must gladly limit their freedom rather than cause a brother or sister for whom Christ died to stumble.

1 Corinthians 8 in One Sentence

Paul agrees that idols are nothing and that there is one God and one Lord, Jesus Christ, but warns that knowledge without love puffs up, and calls believers to give up their freedom rather than cause a weaker brother or sister for whom Christ died to stumble.