



1 Corinthians 8:1-3

1 Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. **2** If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. **3** But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

What do you think Paul means when he says, “This ‘knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up”?

How do you react to people who are puffed up with knowledge? Are you tempted to be prideful about what you know? Is it hard to admit when you don’t have the answer? Why?

What does Paul argue is more important, aspiring to know all things or to be known by God?

1 Corinthians 8:4-6

4 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.” **5** For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—**6** yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Food that has been offered to idols is not common in our own culture, but it was in Paul’s day and in the life of the Corinthian church. What do you think would be the concern in eating a steak you knew was offered up to an idol? Would you go to a restaurant that dedicated its food to idols?

This question about food offered to idols is just one example of the difficulty the church is having in balancing out living in the world. How much do you think a Christian can act like unbelievers and how much should a Christian stand apart? How can we know what to do when?

Jesus Christ is the one “through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” What does this say about Jesus?

1 Corinthians 8:7-13

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. **8** Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. **9** But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. **10** 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? **11** And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. **12** Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

The Corinthians who possessed the knowledge about the non-existence of idols were in danger of doing what to those who did not know?

The Corinthians could use their knowledge to act upon their "right" to eat anything, but in so doing could hurt their fellow believers. Paul therefore encourages them to do what?

Do we value our freedom (here seen in eating whatever they want) more than we value our responsibility to care for others who may not know as much (here seen in sacrificing their right)?

Ephesians 3:14-19

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **16** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Paul is praying that the church in Ephesus gain understanding and knowledge, but more than that what is his prayer?

As in Corinth, knowledge alone can be a dangerous thing and we must have love as well. How can we show love to those who may not "know" as much in the church?

How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?