

# 1<sup>ST</sup> LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

*Christian Answers to Real Life*

# WHO NEEDS MEAT, ANYWAY?

After discussing purity in the church and in personal life (1 Cor. 5-7), Paul tackles another question from the church in Corinth:

## **1 Corinthians 8:1 (CEV)**

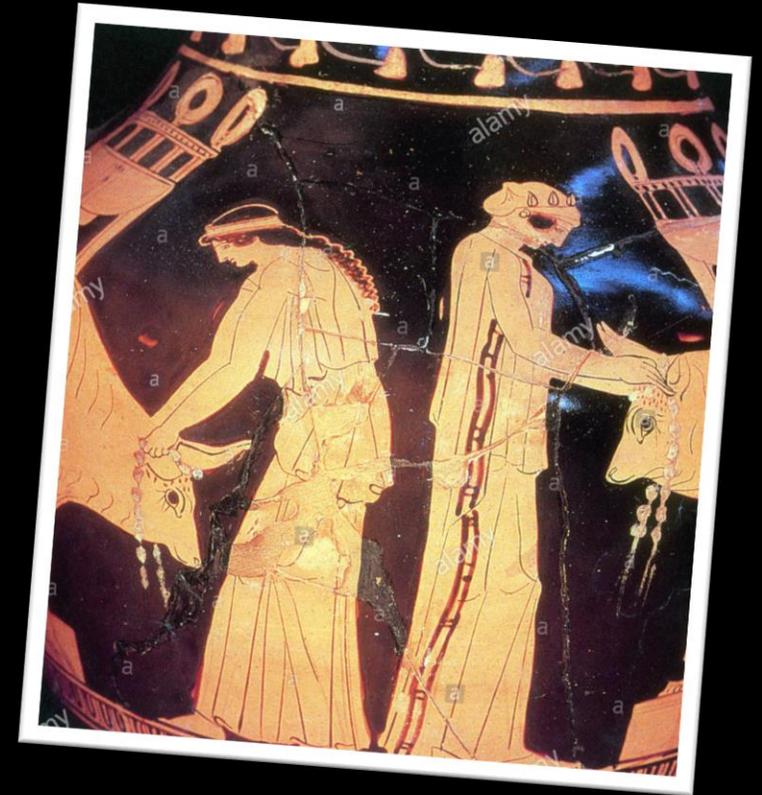
<sup>1</sup> In your letter you asked me about food offered to idols. All of us know something about this subject. But knowledge makes us proud of ourselves, while love makes us helpful to others.

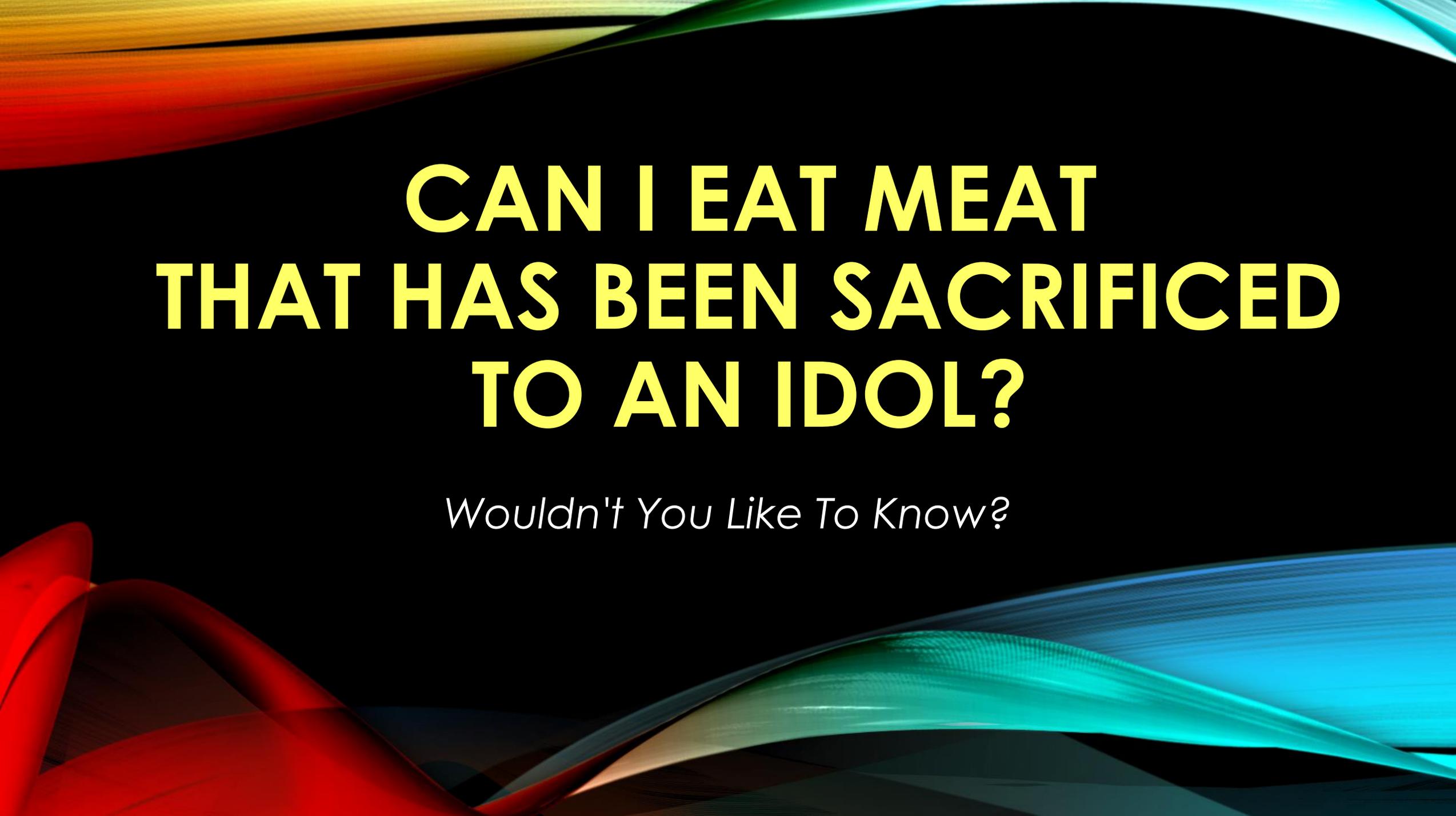


# ANIMAL SACRIFICE AND THE MEAT MARKET

In Paul's time, people would offer animal sacrifices at the altar of pagan gods. However, parts of the animal would be taken to the local meat market to be sold for human consumption.

Some in the church thought this didn't matter since idols are not real gods. Others, however, thought it would be idolatry to eat of the meat from these animals.





**CAN I EAT MEAT  
THAT HAS BEEN SACRIFICED  
TO AN IDOL?**

*Wouldn't You Like To Know?*

# TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT?

## 1 Corinthians 8:2-3 (CEV)

<sup>2</sup> In fact, people who think they know so much don't know anything at all. <sup>3</sup> But God has no doubts about who loves him.

In answering the question from the Corinthians, Paul first lays down the principle that in our walk with God, **it is not how much you know but how much you care!**



# ANYTHING – LOVE = 0

## 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (CEV)

<sup>1</sup> What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels? If I did not love others, I would be nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

<sup>2</sup> What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge? And what if I had faith that moved mountains? I would be nothing, unless I loved others.

<sup>3</sup> What if I gave away all that I owned and let myself be burned alive? I would gain nothing, unless I loved others.

# THE STARTING PLACE: LOVE

Here Paul reminds us  
that anything of  
eternal value must  
come from a place  
of love!



# THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

## 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 (CEV)

<sup>4</sup> Even though food is offered to idols, **we know** that none of the idols in this world are alive. After all, there is only one God. <sup>5</sup> Many things in heaven and on earth are called gods and lords, but none of them really are gods or lords. <sup>6</sup> We have only one God, and he is the Father. He created everything, and we live for him. Jesus Christ is our only Lord. Everything was made by him, and by him life was given to us.



# NOT EVERYONE IS SURE

## 1 Corinthians 8:7-8 (CEV)

7 Not everyone knows these things. In fact, many people have grown up with the belief that idols have life in them. So when they eat meat offered to idols, they are bothered by a weak conscience. **8 But food doesn't bring us any closer to God. We are no worse off if we don't eat, and we are no better off if we do.**



# LET'S EAT? WAIT... NOT SO FAST!

At this point, Paul has established that “an idol is nothing” (v.4, NKJV) and that those who are bothered by meats offered to these imaginary gods has a “weak conscience” (v.7).

So you might expect Paul to now say, *OK, if you are eating and not bothered, you are right. Everyone else, come around!*

But that is not what he says.



# CARING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWING

## 1 Corinthians 8:9-13

**<sup>9</sup> But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. <sup>10</sup> For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? <sup>11</sup> And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? <sup>12</sup> But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.**

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## BOTTOM LINE

I ♥ my  
brother

**1 Corinthians 8:13 (CEV)**  
13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

# BOTTOM LINE

Just because I can,  
and just because I may,  
does not mean I should.

I  my  
brother

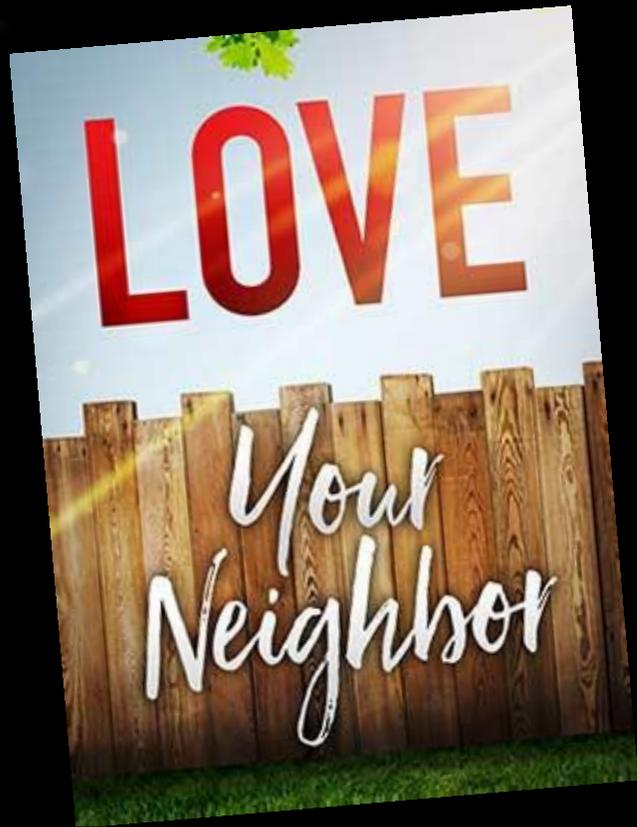
# Living TRUTH

Knowledge is good  
but not enough.



THE LETTERS OF PAUL

# TRUTH *Living*



Loving comes  
before knowing!

THE LETTERS OF PAUL

# Living TRUTH

Making a  
sacrifice for the  
well-being of my  
neighbor is a  
worthwhile.



THE LETTERS OF PAUL