**In Chapter 8 of this letter to the Corinthian church, Paul deals with what appears to be a simple matter – apparently, some of the believers were dining at the temples of idol gods (verse 10), and others were questioning this practice. Paul’s response brings up the matters of Christian liberty and conscience. Paul spoke on these topics to other churches (see Romans Chapter 14 and Galatians Chapters 4 and 5) and touches on them again in Chapter 10 of this same letter.**

**In Paul’s day, there was no regulatory agency like the USDA to inspect food. The purity, safety, and quality of foods (especially meats) varied widely. The best meats were found in the temples where specially selected animals were sacrificed. Any leftover portions were offered for sale to the general public. Some in the Corinthian church objected to eating this meat because it had been offered to idols. Others had knowledge – they knew that idols were meaningless and had no problem eating this high-quality food.**

**The chapter opens with a comparison between KNOWLEDGE (a source of pride in the Corinthian church) and LOVE, the lack of which was a root cause of their many problems. Later on, in the great “Love Chapter” (13) Paul fully develops this teaching.**

1. **Read verses 1-3. What was the next question (after marriage) did Paul address? (v. 1) Answer: “… things to .”**
2. **What did Paul say that “we all have”? (v. 1) Answer: “We all have .”**
3. **What potentially negative effect can having only “knowledge” produce? (v. 1) Answer: Knowledge (without love) can cause one to become “ “.**
4. **What POSITIVE effect does Christian love (charity) have? (v. 1) Answer: Charity (with knowledge) “ “ the church. (See also Ephesians 4:11-16; I Thessalonians 3:11-13; II Peter 1:5-8)**
5. **Paul gives a word of warning to those in the church who think that they have knowledge. What did he say to them? (v.2) Answer: “If any man think that he knows any thing, he knows as he ought to know.” (Proverbs 26:12; Isaiah 5:21; Galatians 6:2-3)**
6. **What does Paul say about the person who loves God (over and above mere knowledge)? (v. 3) Read Ephesians 3:14-19; I Peter 4:7-8; II Peter 1:5-7**
7. **Read verses 4-8. This is the heart of the “knowledge” that Paul is referring to in the earlier verses, that he expects all Christians to have. What should all believers understand about idols (v.4)? Answer: “An idol is in the world, and that there is God but ”.**
8. **What was the situation in Paul’s day concerning other “gods”? (v. 5) Answer: there were “gods” being worshipped in the world. (See also Acts 17:16-23; Romans 1:22-23; Colossians 3:5)**
9. **What was the situation in Paul’s day concerning “us” (the church)? (v. 6) Answer: “There is God, the , OF whom are , and Lord Jesus Christ, BY whom are , and by .” (See also Colossians 1:12-20; Hebrews 1:1-3)**
10. **Was this “knowledge” common to all people, even in the church? (v. 7) Answer: . What would happen if person who ate meat offered to an idol thought that it meant something? Answer: “their conscience, being , would be .”**
11. **Does what we choose to eat or NOT eat have any impact on the quality of our relationship with God? (v. 8) Any thoughts?**
12. **Read verses 9-13. Paul summarizes (for now) his teaching on this issue. What can happen if we exercise our Christian liberty in the presence of someone who is weak in their conscience? (v.9-10) Answer: It can become a to them. (See Romans 14:13-15)**
13. **What can happen to the weak Christian’s faith if s/he sees another Christian (one who has knowledge) exercising their liberty? (v. 11) Answer: their faith might .**
14. **Is it a sin if our behavior causes another Christian’s faith to be destroyed? (v.12) Answer: My conduct might their , which makes it a against .**
15. **What should this cause us to do? (v. 13) Answer in your own words.**