

1 Corinthians 8:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

Analysis

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge (ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνῶσις, all' ouk en pasin he gnosis)—Paul pivots from theology to pastoral reality. Not all believers possess the mature understanding that idols are metaphysical zeros. **For some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol**—the phrase "conscience of the idol" (syneidesis tou eidolou) describes believers whose syneidesis (συνείδησις, "conscience, moral consciousness") remains traumatized by their idolatrous past.

These "weak" believers intellectually affirm monotheism but psychologically cannot escape associations between meat and demon-worship. When they eat, **their conscience being weak is defiled** (μολύνεται, molynetai, "is stained, polluted"). The pollution isn't metaphysical (the meat is neutral) but psychological and spiritual—they sin by acting against conscience (Romans 14:23, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin"). The "strong" must limit liberty to avoid pushing the "weak" into sin.

Historical Context

Many Corinthian converts came from pagan backgrounds involving temple prostitution, mystery cult initiations, and animal sacrifices to demons. These

experiences left deep spiritual and psychological scars. Recent converts ("unto this hour" suggests proximity to conversion) struggled to separate cultural practices from spiritual reality. The "weak" weren't intellectually deficient but spiritually traumatized—their past held them captive.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Who are the "weak" believers in your church whose consciences differ from yours on matters of Christian liberty?
2. How do you balance truth ("idols are nothing") with compassion for those whose past experiences make certain actions spiritually dangerous?
3. Where might you be pushing someone to violate their conscience by flaunting your freedom?

Interlinear Text

Ἄλλ'	οὐκ	ἐν	πᾶσιν	ἡ	γνώσις·	τινὲς	δὲ	τῇ
Howbeit	there is not	in	every man	G3588	that knowledge	some	for	G3588
G235	G3756	G1722	G3956		G1108	G5100	G1161	
συνείδησις	τοῦ	εἰδώλου	ἕως	ἄρτι	ὥς			
conscience	G3588	of the idol	unto	this hour	it as			
G4893		G1497	G2193	G737	G5613			
εἰδωλόθυτον		ἐσθίουσιν	καὶ	ἡ	συνείδησις	αὐτῶν		
a thing offered unto an idol		eat	and	G3588	conscience	their		
G1494		G2068	G2532		G4893	G846		
ἀσθενὴς	οὕσα	μολύνεται						
weak	being	is defiled						
G772	G5607	G3435						

Additional Cross-References

Romans 14:14 (Parallel theme): I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

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