

# 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

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**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

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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

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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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

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Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ γνῶσις· τινὲς δὲ τῇ  
Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge some for G3588 G1108 G5100 G1161 G3588

συνείδησις τοῦ εἰδώλου ἔως ἥρτι ὡς  
conscience of the idol unto this hour it as G4893 G3588 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

ἀσθενής οὖσα μολύνεται  
weak being is defiled G772 G5607 G3435

## Additional Cross-References

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**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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