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## Bible Knowledge Commentary - 1 Cor 10:14-11:1

### c. The Application to Idolatry ([10:14-11:1](#))

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c. *The application to idolatry* ([10:14-11:1](#))

**10:14-15.** The **therefore** (dioper) introduced Paul's application of Christian freedom to eating food sacrificed to idols. He gave advice in three areas: (a) meat in the pagan temple ([vv. 14-22](#); cf. [8:10](#)); (b) meat in the marketplace ([10:25-26](#)); (c) meat in the home ([vv. 27-30](#)). His advice on the first count was uncomplicated—**flee from idolatry** (cf. [6:18](#), “flee from sexual immorality”). He believed that the rhetorical questions which followed would lead **sensible people** like the Corinthians (cf. [4:10](#)) to agree.

#### [10:16-17](#)

**10:16-17.** Paul's point in these verses about the Lord's Supper was like that made earlier ([5:6-8](#)). The collective worship of Christians at the Lord's Supper expressed the unity among the members and their **participation** (koinōnia, “fellowship”) **in the blood of Christ** and **in the body of Christ**. The **one loaf** of bread, of which **all partake**, pictured their unity as members of the **one body** of Christ.

#### [10:18](#)

**10:18.** Likewise in the worship of **Israel**, the participants identified with what was sacrificed and with each other.

#### [10:19-21](#)

**10:19-21.** The same was true of pagan worship. It was true that **an idol** was nothing ([8:4](#); cf. [Ps. 115:4-7](#)), but the ultimate reality behind pagan religion was demonic. Pagan **sacrifices** were **offered to demons, not to God**. Through his minions “the god of this age” blinded unbelievers and kept them from the truth ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)). There could be no union for good between Christ and Belial ([2 Cor. 6:15](#)). So those who were the temple of God ([1 Cor. 3:16](#); [6:19](#)) should shun the temple of idols (cf. [2 Cor. 6:14-18](#)). No magical contamination was conveyed, but the corrupt character of the participants would be harmful for believers ([1 Cor. 15:33](#)). Being **participants with demons** was unthinkable for those who are participants with Christ ([10:21](#); cf. [v. 16](#)).

#### [10:22](#)

**10:22.** Most importantly such behavior displeased God (cf. [Deut. 32:21](#)). Did the “strong” Corinthians ([1 Cor. 8:7-10](#)) require the same discipline as Israel? ([10:7](#); [Ex. 32:28](#), [35](#))

#### [10:23-24](#)

[10:23-24](#). The principle of freedom (**everything is permissible**; cf. [6:12](#)) was to be regulated by love for others. Activities that are not **beneficial** or **constructive** or that do not promote **the good of others** (cf. [10:33](#)) should be avoided.

#### [10:25-26](#)

[10:25-26](#). For a Christian who bought meat at a market with the intent of eating it at home, Paul recommended that selections be made without reservation. No one could contaminate what God had made clean (cf. [Acts 10:15](#)) since **everything** belongs to Him ([Ps. 24:1](#)).

#### [10:27-30](#)

[10:27-30](#). For a Christian who accepted an invitation to another's home Paul recommended eating from all the fare without scrupulous reservation. But if another Christian guest piped up (cf. [8:7-13](#)) that the food had been part of a pagan **sacrifice**, the knowledgeable Christian should defer to the uninformed scruples of the weaker brother. To exercise his rightful freedom to eat might cause the brother with the scrupulous **conscience** to follow that example and cause him to sin (cf. [Rom. 14:14-23](#)).

A knowledgeable Christian did not need to alter his convictions to accord with the conscience of a weaker brother ([1 Cor. 10:29b](#)), but he did need to alter his behavior when in the weaker brother's presence. Otherwise the weak brother might act against his conscience and harm himself (cf. [8:11](#)), which would bring denunciation on the strong brother. What the knowledgeable Christian could enjoy privately **with thankfulness** became in the presence of the weaker brother a contemptible act eliciting condemnation (**why am I denounced** [blasphēmoumai] **because of something I thank God for?** cf. [8:12](#); [Rom. 14:16, 22](#)). An echo of [1 Corinthians 8:13](#) concluded the matter.

#### [10:31-11:1](#)

[10:31-11:1](#). The principle which summarized Paul's response to the question of eating food offered as a pagan sacrifice was an application of the command to love God and neighbors. Christian behavior should be **for the glory of God**. Also it should build up the church of God by leading some to new birth ([v. 33b](#)) and others to maturity in the process of salvation (justification, sanctification, glorification; cf. [1:30](#)). Christians should avoid behavior that would cause others—**whether Jews** (cf. [9:20](#)), **Greeks** (cf. [9:21](#)), **or the church of God... to stumble** (lit., "fall"; cf. [10:12](#)). (Interestingly this reference to Jews separate from the church shows that the NT church did not replace the Jewish nation. This argues strongly for premillennialism.) The One who perfectly exemplified love for God and others was Christ (cf. [Rom. 15:3](#); [Phil. 2:5-8](#)). Displaying the same spirit in his ministry, Paul urged the Corinthians to **follow his example** in this matter of food from a pagan sacrifice. They should allow their freedom to be regulated by love.