

## Do All For The Glory of God

1 Corinthians, Vol. 20

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1 Corinthians 10:14-33

The first two of the 10 commandments show how seriously God regards idolatry. Idolatry is worshiping any facet of the “creation rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25). Idolatry is the religious veneration of persons or objects or the worship of God through improper rites, ceremonies, or symbols. Thus, idolatry can be intentionally spiritual or it can be more subtle in the form of superstition or it can be even more subtle as “secular idolatry.”

Idolatry is \_\_\_\_\_ condemned in both the Old and New Testament. It degrades both God and man by denying the existence of the true God.

Some people claim that an image or a picture is an aid to worship but not an object of worship. But Exodus 20:4-5 states “You shall not make for yourself an idol, *or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them.*”

Paul’s introduction to this section (verse 14) is in the simple form of a command to \_\_\_\_\_ idolatry. Paul is counting on the Corinthians to be able to draw conclusions from what he says. His argument has four prongs: The issue of 1. identification, 2. insidiousness, 3. incongruity, and 4. insubordination.

### I. The issue of identification

VERSE 16: *Cup of blessing* and the *bread* of communion signifies sharing in the blood and body of Christ. The Lord’s table is a symbol of our unity. We are all one united in the common life of Jesus Christ that we share. We are united with Christ, our head, and with each other, His body. It is all made possible because of what His death accomplished on our behalf. Those who participate in communion identify with Christ. The real issue is identification. When you participate in a sacrifice or religious ceremony or ritual, you identify yourself with everything representative of the sacrifice, the altar or the ritual.

### II. The issue of insidiousness

The difference between the Lord’s table and idol sacrifices is the difference between light and darkness, truth and lies, life and death. There actually is a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship between a believer and the living God which is symbolized in communion.

There is something thoroughly insidious about all false religions, sacrifices and rituals. They are the inventions of demons. There is spiritual power in false religions, but they are demons, not God. Satan is the great impostor and counterfeiter and his demons are his emissaries. Do not be sharers in demons!

### III. The issue of incongruity

Verses 20-21 leave no room for debate. It is \_\_\_ possible to partake in both the Lord’s table and idolatrous ceremonies if you know what you are doing. Since the Lord’s table and other rituals emphasize identification with the gods they represent, the mixture of the Lord’s table with an idol

feast in the life of a believer is incongruous. “For what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness, or what harmony has Christ with Belial. . . or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (2 Corinthians 6:14b-15a... 16a).

#### IV. **The issue of insubordination**

Verse 22: Paul has been assuming that the Corinthians did not understand all of this so he has explained it. If the Corinthians did understand this or now that they do understand it, then to participate in idolatry would be to willfully \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. Since you are not stronger than God, it is not wise to do things you know displease Him. Since you know God hates idolatry, it is completely out of line and foolish to dabble in it and see how far He will let you go before He chastens you to teach you the lesson.

IMPLICATIONS: Since idol worship today may not be as obvious as it was in first-century Corinth, it might be easy to overlook the seriousness of this passage. The fact is, however, that we have many subtle forms of idolatry world. We might categorize them as the sacred, the social and the secular.

**Sacred idolatry:** Satan has twisted the meaning of baptism and communion. Satan has convinced some that baptism is not a symbol but it is a saving act. In some circles, baptism is said to be the thing which saves you. Some say you do not have the Holy Spirit until you are baptized by immersion in water. Thus, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ has been turned into a system of salvation by \_\_\_\_\_.

Satan also has taken the Lord’s table and turned it into an idol ceremony. For centuries the Roman Catholic Church has taught that every time the mass is celebrated, Jesus Christ is sacrificed again. They teach that the elements of the Lord’s table, when blessed by a priest, actually become the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This is a blatant denial that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was \_\_\_\_\_ for all.

There are other kinds of sacred idolatry still present in our world. Occult practices and spiritism, worshiping saints, even Halloween has demonic roots. Christian beware and flee idolatry.

**Social idolatry:** Social groups like Masonic Lodges, Job’s Daughters, Demolay, and miscellaneous other lodges actually involve secret rites with very spiritual connotations which a Christian should totally avoid. Transcendental meditation is marketed as a relaxation technique. Thousands have been duped into Hindu worship unknowingly through the practice of TM thinking it is something totally innocent. The Christian is called to mediate on \_\_\_\_\_ but must avoid all other forms. The same is true of Yoga.

**Secular idolatry:** This is anything which usurps the place God should occupy in the life of a Christian. It might be possessions or hobbies or position or wealth or anything else which a Christian does not have in proper perspective. You will need to decide for yourself when something or some activity in your life has become an idol and needs to be dealt with accordingly. Helpful guide:

IDOLATRY	HEALTHY ATTITUDE
1. Usurps God's place	1. Seen in relation to God
2. Turns attention away from true God	2. Turns attention to God
3. Kindles selfishness	3. Kindles thanksgiving
4. Gratifies self	4. Glorifies God
5. Motivated by fear (of loss, calamity, etc.)	5. Motivated by love & thanksgiving to God
6. Focuses on physical material things	6. Focuses on personal relationship with God

### **Principle: Unselfishness**

**VERSE 23:** All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable, neither do all things edify. What kinds of things build Christians up? Peace, love, proclaiming the Word, pleasing one another, equipping the saints, speaking the truth in love, wholesome speech, to name a few. Edification is something the Holy Spirit does through us in the lives of other Christians as we \_\_\_\_\_ one another.

**VERSE 24:** Seek the good of your neighbor, not just your own good.

### **Practice: Eat** (Participate)

**VERSE 25:** Regardless of a heathen sacrifice to an idol, the Christian knows that all food is a provision from the goodness of God. Therefore, its divine origin makes it all right for the Christian to eat. Do not make food a spiritual issue. It is somewhat of a medical/physical issue but it is not a spiritual one. Legitimate issues regarding food are:

1. (and most important) thankfulness to God for providing it
2. avoiding offense
3. stewardship
4. gluttony
5. healthfulness

**VERSE 27:** Social interaction with unbelievers is \_\_\_ prohibited. In fact, it is strongly encouraged in 9:19-23. It is a matter of personal choice. The more interaction you have with nonbelievers the more evangelistic opportunities you will have.

The overall principle is unselfishness. Unselfishness means that in your practice you should be willing to get involved in things which sometimes you might personally not feel comfortable with. The purpose is being unselfish, non-offensive and evangelistic. In other situations, the practice is the opposite.

### **Practice: Don't eat** (don't participate)

**Verses 28-29a:** The principle is to avoid wounding or disturbing the conscience of a weak Christian. To do so would not be profitable because it would not be edifying. If you know that a fellow Christian is squeamish, oversensitive and legalistic regarding issues like cards, movies, dancing, wine, etc., do not do those things in his/her presence. The principle is the same. Build up, don't

tear down, show love and by doing so, \_\_\_\_\_ to educate the weaker brother out of his weakness.

**Principle: Independence**

Develop and hold your convictions as your own. If you can do something with thanksgiving and freedom of conscience, go right ahead and do it. Your only two-edged caution is: 1) do not abuse your liberty by intentionally doing something you know will offend someone who does not agree. 2) do not try to force your convictions (pro or con) on other believers. Trust God to work in someone else's life without you needing to be a deputy Holy Spirit for them.

**Practice: Glorify God**

VERSE 31: We need to be concerned not with asserting our rights but with exercising them in such a way that God is glorified. In other words, when considering whether or not to use your liberty, ask whether \_\_\_\_\_ would get more glory if you do or if you don't. The answer to that question changes with the circumstances.

**Practice: Give no offense**

VERSE 32: The categories *Jews*, *Greeks*, and *church* cover everyone. This requires that you be able to adapt your behavior to the surroundings. It is completely impossible to obey this verse by acting the same all the time. When in Rome, do as the Romans do as long as you don't sin.

VERSE 33 is a summary of 9:19-23.

Do anything you can not to be offensive to people even to the point of not exerting your rights and not promoting your personal convictions. Do it all in order to reach non-Christians.

Paul and his friends switched back and forth from Jewish to Gentile lifestyles. Paul circumcised Timothy to eliminate an obstacle to Jewish evangelism, but he refused to circumcise Titus under pressure from legalists. Yet he never compromised any truth or sanctioned any error.

**Principle: Exemplification**

Verse 11:1: Paul followed Christ's example when it came to the use of liberty, and he says, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. The Greek for imitator means to mimic. \_\_\_\_\_ is much stronger than the idea of simply following.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How clear a picture of Christ-like radical, evangelistic involvement in your world would a person get if he followed you around?</b></p>
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