

1 Corinthians: The Body of Christ vs. A Body in Crisis
New Pilgrim Baptist Church Bible Study
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Unity Over Worship (1 Cor 8-11)

“Getting Worship Right Part 2: Staying away from the Devil’s Table” (1 Cor 10:14-33)

Contextualization

After Paul takes a moment to explore how he sacrifices for the salvation and blessing of others, he moves right back to his discussion of idolatry. Now, he appeals to the example of Israel to explain that idolatry ran amok among the people of God once. We need to do whatever possible not to let it happen again. Paul will explore this theme prior to more specifically addressing not only the issue of idolatry but also other aspects of worship and communion in the church.

- **The Bread and Cup are our Communion with Christ (vv. 14-17)**

Paul challenges the members of the Corinthian church to recognize the importance of the bread and the cup. A smart person would recognize that they bread and cup are essential to their fellowship with the Almighty God. It is symbolic of and gives us access—through obedience—to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other bread but the one that Jesus gave.

- **The Tables of Christ and the Devil (vv. 18-22)**

Paul explains that all believers have been called to priestly status. We all share in the altar of Christ and, therefore, have been given the ability to eat the most holy things. But the flip side of that is that when we eat unclean things, we share in the malevolence of which we ate. When we eat food offered to an idol, with bad intent, we share in the table of the demons. Idols are representation of demons. Eating food offered to idols puts us in communion with them as the bread and cup help us commune with Christ.

- **Let Christ’s Conscience be your Guide (vv. 23-33)**

Paul gives this solution to the dilemma of eating idol food. Those who find themselves in the marketplace can eat whatever they choose. But this is only in ignorance because the “earth is the Lord’s and the fullness therefore.” That is, all things belong to God and with prayer and thanks, one may eat, even if it has been offered to an idol. But, if someone tells you, “this has been offered to an idol,” the believer should not eat it because, “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” In other words, Paul makes it clear that even the mundane act of eating should be submitted to the Lordship of Jesus. When someone sees us eating food offered to an idol, knowing it has been offered to an idol, it carries significance that can turn people back to idolatry. So, Paul says, stay away from it. Our goal as believers is to do everything we can do to please God and win people for Christ. That is why we were born. We must adopt a conscience, a decision making paradigm, that guides us to sacrifice for the sake of Christ and for the salvation of others, all for the glory of God and for the salvation of the world.