

Further texts and discussion

Paul addresses the issue of Corinthians eating in pagan temples from two fronts. We have already seen how he calls such practices the worship of demons (10:14–22).

He also sees the problems it creates within the community and the strain it puts on the consciences of other believers (10:23–24). In spite of this, Paul recognises that believers cannot retreat from the world (1 Cor 5:9–10), and that turning down social occasions would be impractical. In fact, he encourages them to eat meat under certain circumstances – when buying from the *macellum* and when invited to a dinner by a friend or patron.

*Numerous commentators understand the phrases indicated in speech marks to represent the kinds of things the Corinthians are claiming.

10:23 *“All things are lawful,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. 24 Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, 26 for “the earth and its fullness are the Lord’s.” 27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience...*

Questions

- ▶ Why might your character be concerned or unconcerned by eating meat that had previously been offered to Graeco-Roman gods? (v. 23)
- ▶ How might your character be encouraged or challenged to seek the advantage of their fellow Christ-worshippers? (v. 24)
- ▶ What kinds of social occasions can you imagine your character participating in, outside of the group of Christ-worshippers? Might some be hosts as well as guests?
- ▶ Who might be the ‘someone who informs you’ be and how would their identity impact your character’s ability to follow Paul’s advice?

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