



## HOW DO YOU SHOP?

Recently I received e-mail stating that the President of Proctor & Gamble was a Satan worshipper and that the profits they make go to

the Satanic church. For this reason I am supposed to boycott P&G. This rumor has been going around for years and, to my knowledge, is not fact. Still, what should we do about this as Christian shoppers? Suppose you believe you should "Buy American" so you go and buy a Chevy Nova. Then you find out that it has a Toyota engine and a German fuel injection. What are you going to do? I was told that Smith's grocery chain was owned by the Mormons and so we should not shop there? Since Smith's closed, we don't have a problem there. But, what do we, as Christians, do about these things?

In Corinth, in Paul's day, they also had shopping problems. Next to most pagan temples was a meat market. You could go in there and get choice cuts of meat for a reasonable price. The problem was that there was an alley connecting the temple to the meat market - the meat was taken from the altar in the temple. To buy meat offered to idols and make the pagan temple richer or not?

Paul, fortunately for us and the Corinthians, took great pains to answer this question (several chapters!). There is not space to cover his full discourse so let me condense it a bit.

*Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 1 Corinthians 10:25*

He also wrote,

*If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.*

I Corinthians 10:27

The reason for the first statement is that there was a proclamation made in Jerusalem by the leaders of the Church which said,

*But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality." Acts 21:25*

Is this a contradiction? Not at all. Paul explains that we are free as Christians and that there is really nothing wrong with the meat. It is a matter of "what you don't know won't hurt you." If you go into the market and don't ask where the meat came from, you will have no guilt in eating it.

Does this seem like evading the issue? Let's consider the other advice. If you are invited to dinner, don't ask the host where the meat came from - *for conscience' sake*. Whose conscience? Look at the next verse!

*But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness." "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? I Corinthians 10:28-29*

Paul stated this principal very succinctly in, *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.* I Corinthians 10:23

If buying P&G products might cause a weaker Christian brother to stumble in his or her faith, then we should not buy them. In situations like this, however, I don't believe this is the situation. Therefore we should buy things without an undue amount of questioning.

As Christians, the Lord has more important things for us to do than to chase down rumors to see whether they are true or not. To cite Paul once more, *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.* I Corinthians 6:12

Let's spend our time on things which are profitable!

Wayne



