

It's All About the Glory of God

(1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1) "23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 26 For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner 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, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— 29 I do not mean your conscience, but his.

For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

Today's text is a summary statement of chapters 8-10. The overriding theme is the Christian duty to subordinate rights to love.

In chapters 8-10 Paul has dealt with three issues.

Chapter 8—Subordinating my freedom to eat food sacrificed to idols for the sake of my brother or sisters conscience.

(1 Corinthians 8:1–2) "1 Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. 2 If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know."

Chapter 9—Paul's example. Rather than stir up doubts about the motives for his church planting work, he freely gave up his right to earn his living from the gospel.

(1 Corinthians 9:12)b "We have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ."

Chapter 10—The limit of Christian freedom. Our freedoms do not extend to attending an idol feast.

(1 Corinthians 10:14–15) "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say."

Main Idea: Use your freedoms to glorify God.

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

BILLBOARD:

1ST Enjoy your freedom for the Glory of God.

2nd Limit your freedom for the Glory of God.

3rd Please (or disappoint) everyone for the glory of God.

4th Imitate Paul as Paul Imitates Christ.

A. ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 26 For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience.

We Christians have tremendous liberty. Think about clothing. Mormons must wear silk underwear which they can never remove. Jeans only in public for women. Orthodox Jewish men wear skull caps. Muslim women wear the Hijab. Sikhs wear turbans.

Christians have no dress requirement except modesty.

How about food? Jews have special dietary laws. Muslims must eat Halel meat. They can't drink alcohol or eat pork. Mormons can't drink coffee, coca cola, or alcoholic beverages. Catholics fast from meat on Friday.

Christians can eat and drink anything.

How about special days? Roman Catholics must attend mass every Sunday and on eight additional feast days each year. Muslims must observe two holy

days each year. In addition they must fast for forty days during Ramadan. Last, they must make a pilgrimage to Mecca at some time during their life.

Christians have no special days or pilgrimages to observe.

We could go on and on. The important thing is the glorious freedom that Christian believers enjoy. Because of the lack of rules and regulations Christianity easily exports into foreign cultures.

The point of this text is simple: God wants us to enjoy our freedoms. He does not want us to add rules that limit our freedom.

Anecdote: Spurgeon and D. L. Moody.

Anecdote: Bible and Beer with unbelievers.

Don't add dress codes. Don't add rules about musical instruments in worship, times or places for worship, tatoos, etc.

B. LIMIT YOUR FREEDOM FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— 29 I do not mean your conscience, but his.

For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

Our freedom has two limits.

First, the conscience of others. Scripture is clear. The great govern principle of the Christian life is love. Love for God and Man fulfills the requirements of the law.

(Galatians 5:13–14) "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.""

In this case, Paul is asking the Corinthian church to forgo their right to eat meat sacrificed to idols. He expects love to motivate them.

Don't invite a Mormon to Starbucks. Christian female missionaries in Pakistan wear the Hijab.

Don't be overly anxious about this principle. You can't please everyone.

Anecdote: A. Begg at P. F. Changs.

Second, Our freedom is not absolute. The clear commands in scripture to do or not do something limits our freedom. This includes sexual purity. It includes the permanence of Christian marriage, sex roles in marriage, the need to be part of a worshipping congregation, participation in the sacraments, etc.

It includes what movies you attend.

It also includes the ten commandments, except for the Sabbath. It includes the duty to submit to all lawful authority.

In this case, Paul told the Corinthians that participation in an idol sacrifice was a form of prohibited idolatry.

Summary: Limit your freedom when it glorifies God.

C. PLEASE (OR DISAPPOINT) EVERYONE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

Paul wants us to please everyone, but there is a limit. We are not allowed to *change* or *compromise* the gospel to please others. This has been the trend of the seeker sensitive movement. We never *deny* the gospel to please others. We never *compromise* the will of God to please others. How do we know when to compromise and when to stand firm?

We can, and should, compromise things indifferent, i.e. meat sacrificed to idols, taking pay from those we serve, marriage, etc.

Anecdote: Don't serve wine at dinner if an anxious Christian is coming.

We can't compromise absolutes, i.e. things God commands us to do or not do.

We can boil all of this down to motives. Paul is asking God's people for about a hyper-level of selflessness. The glory of God and the good of others should always motivate us. There is no room for self in this picture.

Here are some other places in the NT where Paul makes the same point.

(Colossians 3:23) "23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,"

(Ephesians 6:5–8) "5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free."

(Colossians 3:17) "17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

(1 Peter 4:11) "11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Disappoint everyone for the glory of God.

D. APPLICATION: IMITATE PAUL AS HE IMITATES CHRIST

1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

Where do we get this kind of love?

The key is beholding the glory of Christ at the foot of the cross.

(2 Cor. 3:18) "Beholding the glory of God we are transformed into his image from one degree of glory to another."

Paul can say this because he has beheld the glory of Christ and it has changed him.

Kevin DeYoung suggests that this is our greatest need.

The biggest need in your life, and in mine, is to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

I'm convinced that more evangelism, more prayer, more fruitfulness, more holiness will flow from the fountain of our lives only when we start drinking more deeply of Christ.

If you want to be more merciful, look upon Jesus who cried out at the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

If you want to be more loving, look upon Jesus who ate with sinners and welcomed repentant prostitutes and tax collectors into the kingdom.

If you want to be purer, look upon Jesus whose eyes are like flames of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

If you want to grow in grace, look upon Jesus who reinstated Peter after he denied his Lord three times.

Our main problem is not lack of time or resources or the annoying people in our lives. Your main problem and my main problem is that we do not see enough the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We are not amazed. We do not stand in awe. We are not rendered speechless in his presence.¹

Where did Paul see the glory of God? He saw it in the Incarnation culminating in the cross of Christ.

(Philippians 2:5–8) "5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, (doulos) being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

How has it affected him?

(2 Corinthians 4:5) "5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."

(Galatians 5:13) "13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

¹ "What We Need Most" Kevin DeYoung, May 31, 2017 Gospel Coalition.

