



Have you ever entered someone's home and upon entering it, you have thought, "This person must love Pinterest"? Men, I don't assume most of you have thought this, but go with me here. Maybe you've even said it to the person and then they say, "Oh yes, I *love* Pinterest. That's where I got most my ideas." Your assessment was correct. Or, maybe you've gone to someone's home and you see an outbuilding with a lot of tools or a basement with a large work station for woodworking. All of a sudden, you think, "This person must love woodworking." You ask them and they agree and begin to tell you about what they are working on or what they have worked on. They show you pictures.

In either of these scenarios, you made a judgment based on what you saw – a judgment that seemed pretty obvious. If someone has sacrificed a lot of money to buy wood-working tools, they probably like wood-working. If someone has dressed up their home in a certain way and sacrificed money to do so, they've probably been influenced by at least one Pinterest picture. And, let me add this. These people who love these things probably do not see spending their money as much as a sacrifice as they do a necessity and opportunity. They see something new as an *opportunity* to do something more.

Why do we view the things we love as necessities and opportunities? Because what we love and who we are closely connect. And what we love, we will sacrifice for – but the sacrifices are opportunities! This is true – to the ultimate degree – with the Lord. If you understand who Jesus is, he changes you radically. His calls to sacrifice and lay down your life for others are not viewed as burdens and drudgery. They're viewed as opportunities and necessities! Why? Because you have a mission. And, it's not like Jesus' mission merges with other missions in your life. Jesus is so gloriously great that his mission is over *every single other thing* in your life. In fact, Jesus says, you can't love God *and* money. The Scriptures tell us we aren't to love our family more than Jesus. Why? Because knowing Jesus changes us so that we love God's glory supremely and, as a result, we want all others to know God's glory as well. Therefore, everything becomes subservient to this end.

But, sometimes we can become forgetful. We can forget the tremendous love of the Savior for us. The Savior who came into this world to rescue sinners from the eternity of Hell and grant us a renewed and restored relationship with the Triune God. We can forget that he took the wrath in our place – and we deserved it. We can forget his love, mercy and grace. We can forget that all blessings have been granted to us, not because of how good we've been, but because he is so kind. Simply through turning from our sins and turning to him for grace, he's granted all grace to us!

You can tell you've become forgetful then by how you view "sacrificing" for the Lord. If sacrificing for the Lord becomes a drudgery or becomes a "Why do I have to do this?" kind of mentality, you've forgotten. Your love for the Lord has lessened, and I think you ought to be concerned. This is actually what has happened in Corinth. They've tried to merge Jesus with their cultural desires, and Paul has been teaching them for chapters on their need for self-sacrifice. But Paul speaks of self-sacrifice as a good thing – because it is! Through sacrifice, we display our love for Jesus and take up the opportunities God has given to us to be lights in this world!

So, Paul is reminding the Corinthians of the implications of knowing and loving Jesus – the implications of the gospel on their lives. And here at the end of chapter 10, Paul brings the Corinthians all the way back to center. He gives a mantra they ought to have always – as opposed to the cultural mantra they’re used to declaring. They say, “All things are lawful,” but Paul says, “All to the glory of God.” You see, they’re more interested in their freedom and rights than they are in displaying God’s glory to the world. But, what’s better? Is God’s glory better or your freedom and rights in this world? When God’s glory comes up against anything, God’s glory always wins! Through sacrificing even our freedom and rights, we reveal to the world, the superior value of God. This is what Paul is again emphasizing, and I believe Paul’s big idea in these verses is that we are to **Seek God’s glory and the good of others, not self.**

Look with me at verses 23-24: 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.**¹

Seek the good of others is the emphasis of these two verses, but do you notice what Paul says in verses 23-24. He actually made this statement earlier in this letter as well. In the ESV, you have quotation marks around “All things are lawful” because it’s believed that this was a mantra of the secular culture. This is not a statement regarding Christian liberty (i.e. – Jesus died on the cross and set us free from the law; therefore, all things are lawful). This is a statement that’s kind of like our modern statements like, “Have it your way” or, “You can be whatever you want to be” or, “Do whatever feels right” or, “I have the right to do whatever I want.” All things are lawful. You know, within a nation like ours where we have many freedoms, even we as Christians can become sidetracked with our rights more than seeking to display God’s glory. Instead of loving our enemies, we can lambast them. Have you ever done that, like me? If so, you’ve cried a similar mantra.

But what’s so bad about this mantra? Well, the emphasis is on *you*, and with the emphasis on you, you then decide what your rights and freedoms are. But if you’re the center of your mantra, where does that leave God and others? So, look at these verses again to read Paul’s response. You can say you can do whatever you want, but not all things are helpful for others. Not all things build up others. Therefore, because your actions affect others, you shouldn’t seek your own good, but the good of your neighbor. Now, if at this moment you’re thinking, “Well, who’s my neighbor,” remind yourself of the story Jesus told when the pious people asked him the same question. He used an illustration of a Samaritan (someone they considered as lesser humans). What type of person do you look down upon or make fun of? Even they are your neighbor! Paul explicitly states here to *not* seek your own good. Don’t live your life pursuing after your good.

What?! That can’t be right! Oh, but it is. And he goes on and says to seek the good of your neighbor. This is part of your mission as a Christian. And here, I can say, “But that’s sacrificing a lot! Why do I have to do that?” Or, if I think, “But it’s not a sin to think of myself,” I have to realize I’m trying to justify me. I’m not thinking about my mission. I’m losing sight of Jesus. I’m not viewing God’s ways as opportunities and necessities. I’m thinking *me, myself and I* are the greatest good and goal. This is probably how the Corinthians felt as well.

Ok, so if our mantra shouldn’t be “All things are lawful,” what should it be? Read verse 31: ³¹**So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**² All to the glory of God, not,

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:23–24.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:31.

“I have the right and freedom for this,” but, “How do I take the opportunities in life to reveal the superior worth of God in *everything* I do.” This verse is one of my favorite verses in the entire Bible – and knowing the context better now, since I’ve been preaching in 1 Corinthians, I love it all the more! You see, the Corinthians seem to be thinking food is no big deal. They can eat the meat offered to idols. They could probably also eat it in the temple. Food isn’t a big deal. And, in one sense, it’s not a big deal. But, because God’s glory and his salvation of us is such a big deal, we have the opportunity to reveal his glory in everything – including the things that seem mundane (like eating). Think about this – your eating of food, your changing of diapers, your conversation with a co-worker can all matter for *eternity* because Jesus set you free to live for God’s glory! Don’t you want to live like this?! Make his glory known.

That’s why Paul emphasizes that we are to seek other’s good, not our own. Why? We have all good in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We don’t need to fight for or seek our own good any longer. God has given us all. Therefore, let’s now look outward to others. Our mission is their good – which doesn’t simply mean that they would have a white picket fence and be middle-incomed. It refers to their godliness! That they would know Jesus and then live in community with other believers in Jesus who help one another grow in godliness. I don’t have to seek my good. You don’t have to seek your good. We together can seek other’s good! And, in living this way, people can see we must have something great that has set us free from this self-centered way of thinking.

But what does this look like practically? Paul gives some examples to the Corinthians by using the food situation again. In verses 25-30, he shows that in a conflict of conscience, we are to seek the good of others. And, in verses 31-11:1, he states that in all things, we are to glorify God. These are the two points. So, let’s start with the first point.

1. In a conflict of conscience, seek the good of others (vv. 25-30).

Do I say, “I have the right?” or “All things are lawful” or do I sacrifice myself for the good of others? Paul lays out a few examples for the Corinthians so they can know that the answer is to defer to others, and in doing so, you’re actually living in the freedom of the gospel. Let’s read verses 25-26: 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.”³

I think we first see that in seeking the good of others, we are to **Align your conscience with the Word and gratitude**. First scenario Paul gives addresses the question, “Can I eat meat sold in the market?” This might seem like a weird question. Is it like saying, “Can I eat meat sold at Meijer?” No. It’s not the same. Meat offered to idols, or leftovers from sacrifices were sold in the market. They could be buying meat offered to idols and thus are they supporting the idolatry? Are you supporting the temple services and also the temple prostitution? Or, even worse, are they participating in the idolatry itself? We can understand situations like this, can’t we? If I know some organization supports something sinful, do I buy something that could support that organization and thus lead the funds to something sinful? This is at least similar to the Corinthian’s concern.

So, maybe Paul will say, “Yep. Don’t buy from the market.” But he doesn’t. He actually says, “Don’t raise a question on the ground of conscience?” Now here you could say, “Ok, but my conscience won’t let me eat that food.” And what does Paul reveal about our consciences by quoting verse 26? Our consciences

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:25–26.

must be trained by the Word of God! If your conscience is wrong, you aren't to live with it being wrong. You are to call the Word of God to bear on your conscience so it aligns with the Scriptures. Here we have Paul quote "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." God owns all things, and provides us with food. All food ultimately belongs to him, and he brought it to our tables through various means. Even if people have done sinful things, God in his providence has provided for his children! Therefore, I can eat it with thanksgiving to God.

This moves us to verse 30: ³⁰If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?⁴ Not only are we allowed to eat the meat, but we ought to be *thankful*. God has provided us all the food that we have. In a country of abundance like ours, we can take for granted the plenty we have with food, but never take it for granted. Instead, be in awe with how much God has bountifully blessed us. Each meal is provided by his providential care. Therefore, if you thank God for the food you eat, you're not worshipping idols. If you thank God for what you have before you, you are revealing God is the One who deserves all the glory! So, in seeking the good of others, align your conscience to the Word with gratitude! That magnifies God.

Secondly, we see in these verses that in seeking the good of others, **Do not promote idolatry to someone else's conscience (vv. 27-29)**. Let's read verses 27-29: ²⁷If 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. ²⁸But 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— ²⁹I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience?⁵

What if someone, who doesn't follow Jesus, invites you to their house? Can you eat what they give you? Yes! Again, Paul brings up conscience that ought to be guided by the Word. Don't ask where the food came from. That's too nit-picky. Instead, simply rejoice in the fact that God has provided you food. He works all things, even evil, together for good. And, feeding his children is a good thing. But then in verse 28, Paul gives a qualification. If someone tells you the food has been offered in a sacrifice, don't eat it. The scenario seems to be that the host might mention it. And, the only real reason why they might do it is because they worship that idol. So, in mentioning it, they're promoting their idolatry. In you eating the food with them, you're revealing you're joining in their idolatry.

In this scenario, Paul says not to do it. But he's explicit here. When he says "for the sake of conscience" in verse 28, it's not about your conscience. It's about the other person's conscience. Their conscience is bound to idolatry. You don't want to encourage their idolatry. So, don't partake.

Ventura, what are the applications for us here? In what ways could you tacitly lead people further in their idolatry? They're pronouncements of sin and you simply go along with it because you don't want to make waves. But by your tacit approval, you are enabling their conscience to be more bound. Listen, that's not our mission as Christians. Our mission is to help people to see the bondage of idolatry and the freedom found in Jesus! Don't enable their conscience to continue in rejection of Jesus. Even if that means you can't eat the food they put before you (which, by the way, would have been a significant thing to do in that culture). I personally don't know what this means for you, but ask the Lord what this means in your work, in your neighborhood, in relationships with family and friends. Do not promote idolatry. That's not loving and seeking the good of others.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:30.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:27–29.

In all of this, Paul moves to the second point:

2. In all things, glorify God (vv. 31-11:1).

Paul lays out four principles in the next four verses. These principles ought to guide us in our relationships with others around us. And, again, instead of our mantra being, “Well, I’m free to do this,” our mantra gets to be, “All to the glory of God!” So, now, with anticipation, let’s see what it means to live with the glory of God as our aim:

Point to the glory of God (v. 31). If we are not to lead people to idolatry, the opposite then would be true. So, Paul writes in verse 31, “³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”⁶

As I said earlier, God is not One who has given you salvation and then you can do whatever you think is best for your life. Some people compartmentalize Christianity as a part of their lives. No. Paul says elsewhere that Jesus *is* our life (see Col. 3:4). Well, if Jesus is your life, then people ought to see it, right? Like noticing someone loves Pinterest or wood-working, people ought to clearly see that you love Jesus. How? You point to him in all your actions and words. In the mundane things like eating and drinking, you seek to make God’s fame known! What a privilege! What a joy! Christ has set us free to glorify God! Let’s live in such ways that we ask God to open our understandings on what this looks like in all areas of life. In whatever, do *all* to God’s glory. The next point in verse 32 is:

Do not lead people away from God (v. 32). Paul reiterates what he has already stated. But it’s helpful that he uses different verbiage. Verse 32 states, “³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God. . . .”⁷ The word “offense” is misused in our culture. We define “offense” as anything that bothers us or makes us feel negative. That’s not what offense means here. “Offense” means to cause someone to stumble away from the right path. Biblically, Paul uses this word in other places to refer to leading people to stumble and fall so that they miss Jesus completely. So, that’s why I’m saying here, “Do not lead people away from God.” There are ways we can act, talk, behave that causes the world to be offended by Jesus. Now, they’re responsible for their rejection of Jesus, but we are responsible for how we portray the message of the gospel to the World. So, ask yourself if unbelievers see a beautiful Savior when they hear how you communicate.

I hope you have unbelieving friends. Maybe you can ask them sometime their perspective on how you talk. Listen to them. Maybe ask them their perceptions of Christians. This might help you to learn how to better communicate so that you don’t add a stumblingblock in front of the gospel. I know this takes work and effort, but it’s a sacrificial opportunity, isn’t it? So, let’s move to the next point:

Seek the spiritual advantage of everyone (v. 33). Verse 33 states, “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.”⁸ Paul sought to please everyone! By the way, this obviously doesn’t mean that he sought to make everybody happy. He just told them to *not eat meat* if someone said it was sacrificed in the temple. That wouldn’t have pleased people. So, what does he mean by “please everyone?” It means not seeking his own advantage,

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:31.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:32.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 10:33.

but seeking their advantage. Which is what? Their good, which may lead to salvation. I'm reminded of Romans 2 which says that God's kindness is meant to lead to repentance. We are to imitate this of the Lord. We are to show kindnesses to people that would lead them to understand God's Truth and Grace. We are to seek after people's spiritual advantage – everyone's spiritual advantage – whether white or black, male or female, poor or rich, child or adult, republican or democrat, American or Iraqi. All people need Jesus, and Jesus came to draw all people to himself! And, he put us on mission to speak his truth that they might be drawn to him.

Ventura, do you live as though you're on mission in Holland, MI? You have the gospel message. You have a treasure. As Ben preached last week, you and I are the light of the world. We are reflecting the light of Jesus. And we do this through our words and our actions! Paul states to live for the glory of God is to seek the spiritual advantage of *everyone!* Think through, process through, be proactive in seeking the advantage of others. And finally,

Imitate Paul inasmuch as he imitated Christ (11:1). Have you ever thought of Paul and said to yourself, "Wow, what an amazing guy!" And maybe you thought of him as a superior Christian. I've done that, and I've found that when I do that, I basically excuse myself from following in Paul's steps because I think that Paul is an impossible standard. But Paul didn't see himself that way. Instead, he states that the grace of God was at work in him. He's the worst sinner he knows, but God's mercy is great! The same is true for all of us. You can hear Paul call us to a mantra of "In all things, God's glory," and say, "That's too high. I can't do that," but let's ask a different question, **Is God's powerful grace unable to empower you to live this way?**

To that, we must answer NO! God's grace is sufficient for us. We can live this way because our God has given us Christ. And, by the way, the ultimate point of Paul here is Jesus. He doesn't say to follow him in all things. He says to follow him as he follows Christ. God has given us other human beings to be an example of Christlikeness. When we read of Paul and how he suffered, was rejected, was shipwrecked, and yet Paul still loved and served, we see images that point us ultimately to Jesus, who suffered, was rejected and loved us! **The love of Jesus compelled Paul, and Paul says to the Corinthians (and to us) that this love should compel us, too! We have the opportunity to sacrifice. We have the opportunity to show the world that God's glory is supreme! Let's take the opportunity and seek God's glory and the good of others, not self.**

And, even as we close our time together, I want to urge you that if you have not turned from your sin. If you're weighed down by sin and guilt, turn to Jesus today! He took all the shame and guilt. You don't have to bear it! God says that everyone who calls on Jesus for rescue is rescued. If you have more questions on this, please talk to me, or anyone here, about what it means to trust Jesus. And, if you're a believer and you're seeing how your mantra is not God's glory in all things, feel free to talk to someone here as well. We need each other in this journey to Heaven's shores! We can pray for each other and help each other! May God be praised.

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