

06.23.2024 - All for the Glory of God

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As we've been looking in 1 Corinthians, the last couple chapters we've noticed that there was a problem in the church of Corinth. Corinth had a lot of temples to false gods, they had idol worship, and the people would take meat, offer it to the idol, and then sell it to be eaten, and part of their sacrifice was eating the meat offered to the idols. And then people started getting saved, they started accepting Christ as their Savior by faith, and the problem arose, what are we going to do about meat now? Because all the meat has been offered to an idol.

And numerous times in 1 Corinthians, Paul discusses this, so it must have been a big problem. But we can apply it to our life today, and as we look at this section here, verses 23 to 33, we're going to notice something. I don't know about you, but almost everyone I know has a goal for their life, or some guidelines they want to live by, or a basis that they want to live by.

I think it pretty much covers everybody. Some people just, their goal is to be rich. Some people want to be popular.

Some people want to be powerful. That's all the politicians, for all of those. Sometimes our goal is just to survive from day to day.

Yet, for a Christian, this section tells us what your overreaching, your number one goal should be, to give glory to God. And so whatever we do, as we're going to see in Scripture, it means giving God the glory. So as Paul starts off in this section, we have to understand that when Paul starts talking about doing things, not doing things, he's not talking about sinful things or immoral things.

He's more talking about things that may not be wrong per se, yet for some people they may be considered wrong. And those are the people we have to take into account. You know the old saying, no man's an island, is not true in Christianity.

We must all look out for each other. I believe that's the purpose of what Jesus said. If you're my followers, you will what? Have love, one for another.

We need to care for one another. And this applies both to caring for those that are believers and even those that are unbelievers, as we're going to see. So for all things not immoral, we do have freedom.

In verse 23, Paul says, *all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me. All things edify not.*

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Verse 23 and 24. Here, notice that we have freedom as believers to do things we may not have done as unbelievers.

We have freedom to know that when I leave this life, I'm going to be in heaven. Now we don't have freedom to sin. We discussed that a little bit last week.

But we do have freedom in Christ. We do have the, it's like we don't have to apply the law daily to our lives, the Ten Commandments, in order to be saved. But the law is written on our hearts so that we have the freedom to know what is right and what's wrong, and then do the right and shun the wrong.

But we have to understand that even though he's not talking about things immoral, things wrong per se, we have liberty, but we have to understand liberty is not a license. You can't say, you know, I've trusted Christ as my Savior. By grace, I've been saved through faith.

Now if I go out and sin, don't matter, I'm going to heaven anyway. No. If you read any bit of Scripture at all, you'll find out that's not true.

Although I've known Christians that feel that way. Oh, I sinned a little bit, ain't no big deal. It is a big deal because you violated God's desires.

So as we deal with people, either believers, whether they're weak believers, strong believers, whether they're unbelievers, he's going to give us some ideas of how to do so. Here in verse 23, he says, *all things are lawful, all things are not expedient, all things are lawful, and all things edify not*. Here's two rules to help us to decide.

Any situation, especially when you're dealing with other people, but it could also be in your own life. You feel like doing something and you're asking yourself a question. Man, should I be doing this? First question, is it expedient? In other words, does it work together for the good of everybody? Is it a worthwhile endeavor? Is it something that will not embarrass either you or the Lord? Is it expedient? Many things, although they may seem harmless, could be hurtful to someone who is either weak in the faith or close to the faith.

I remember a story years ago, I hope I get it right, about a pastor's meeting in some big hotel, a whole group of pastors that got together for a week of learning and fellowshiping and exhorting one another. And one of the pastors had been talking to the desk clerk, and every day he witnessed to him. And he was getting closer and closer for the desk clerk to understand and maybe accept the Lord.

The last day, this pastor went to the desk clerk as he's checking out and says, have you decided to trust the Lord? And the desk clerk said, no, I'm not going to do that. And he goes, why? He says, well, you'd almost convinced me that trusting Christ was important, that being a Christian and living a Christian life was important. Then as I'm checking out pastors, I found so many of you pastors who'd signed up for pornography pay-per-view on the TV that I said to myself, what's the use? They live the same way I do.

And so we have to be careful. How many times have we said something, done something that we thought, well, that's real holy, and yet it didn't draw someone closer to Christ and drew them further away. Remember, God does call us to be holy, but not holier than now.

And there's a difference. And so here he says all things, first of all, is it expedient? What am I, if what I'm doing, if one of the believers I know or someone I've been trying to witness to, will it drive them further from Christ or closer to him? Second one is, does it edify? That means building somebody up, either in faith or building them up in love, building them up in their worship for God. In Romans chapter 15, verse 1 and 2, it says, *we then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. Everything we do should be done to try to build people up, especially on other believers. Ephesians 4:29, let no, even in what we say, *let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is the good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

When you're talking to a group, the things you say and the way you say them, do you draw them closer to Christ or not? I see this especially in my life, others' lives, and the way we, if you still have kids in the house, how do you treat your kids? Are you always yelling and screaming at them? Does that build them up? I'm not saying you shouldn't correct them, but there's a difference in how we do so. You know, I heard a story once of another illustration about a guy had been trying to invite his neighbor to church, and the neighbor kept saying no, and finally guy says, why won't you go to church with me? He says, I see what you say to your kids before trying to get them in the car. And he says, I don't need to go there to be able to act like that, I act like that already.

So let no corrupt communication, nothing that will be for less than building up somebody else. How about listening to others? First Timothy 1:4, *neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in the faith.*

Have you, you know, I mentioned this a lot, I'm addicted to Facebook, especially groups, Christian groups and pastor's groups where we have discussions. And sometimes when I read what some people believe, I want to get involved and go, what are you thinking? Sometimes I just, I honestly, I go, show me the verse that backs that up. But sometimes we listen to all these fables, listen to all these false teachings, and we realize that does nothing to build other people up.

So two rules to help us decide how to deal with other people. Does it edify? Is it expedient? Now he goes on to tell us in verse 24, *that no man seek his own but every man's another's wealth.* Our affections, or I'm sorry, our actions can affect other people.

Philippians 2:4 and 5. It says, *look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which is also in Christ Jesus.* And Philippians 2:21, *for all seek their own, not the things which are Christ Jesus.*

When we're dealing with other people, we have to think about them. We have to think, am I acting like Christ when I deal with these people? Say, well, they're just a bunch of sinners. They don't really care.

God cares. And God knows that maybe you're the one that's going to lead them to Jesus Christ. But if you act like a sinner yourself and say, I'm saved, they're going to just thumb their nose and go, I don't see the big deal. Why should I do that? So we have to look every

man on his own things, but on others, so we can help build them up, help encourage them. Then he goes on to discuss a little bit about what to do if you're invited to dinner. You have an unbeliever, or maybe a very weak believer, that invites you to dinner, and they may be serving some things, some meat that they bought that was offered to idols.

Well, Paul's recommendations are very clear. First of all, in verse 27, if any of them that believe not bid you to a feast and you'd be disposed to go, I almost look at disposed to go as meaning you have no other choice. You ever had dinners like that? It's like, man, I can't say no.

Whatsoever said before you eat, asking no question for conscience sake, but if any man saying to you, this is offered to sacrifice to idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake, for the earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof. Conscience I say not thy own, but of the others, for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I be by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that which I give thanks? Paul's here saying, listen, somebody invites you over to dinner, and you know the meat they're serving was offered to idols. Don't bring it up.

Just eat it, is what he's saying. Just eat the meat. Because if you bring it up, and you start the discussion, what's going to happen? Now you're going to get that person start thinking about sacrificing to idols and pull them further from God.

He says just, and I know for some of you it's kind of hard, just keep your mouth shut. Don't ask any questions. However, if they volunteer, how's that meat? It was offered to idols.

He says, don't eat it. He says, if they don't tell you, it's okay to eat. Earth, everything belongs to the Lord, right? But if they do tell you, don't eat it.

Why? Well, it's because we're looking out for the conscience of somebody else. Because we don't want people worshiping idols. We're trying to lead them to the Lord, right? And so we see this in our world today.

Maybe not worship to idols per se, but things that people worship that they may try to get you to do also. And you want to turn to Romans chapter one. Well, see, this is what's happening a lot.

In Romans chapter one, starting with verse 23, it says, *they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like the corruptible man and the birds and four-footed beast and creeping things. Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie. And listen, and worshiped and served the creature more than the creator who was blessed forever and ever. Amen.*

So many times people worship the creator or creation, the creature and they forget that God's the one who created them all. This could affect us in many different ways.

And it could cause us, if we're not careful, to discuss things with people that may anger them, may not. I don't know what your views are personally. Let's say climate control, climate change, all right? It's changing.

What's a Christian's perspective? God says the earth is yours. Take care of it. But on the other hand, sometimes they get a little crazy.

And some of the rules we have, you can check this yourself, I was reading the other day. In China, they've just built 149 coal-fired plants to make parts of batteries and solar panels to sell to the United States so we feel good about ourselves.

Check the Weather Channel. This is my favorite. They can't tell what the weather's going to be today or tomorrow. How can they tell me in 10 years what it's going to be? Does that mean we don't take care of our environment? We don't take care of our world? Yes, we do.

We try to do the best we can. But let's not be crazy about it. I know some people don't eat meat.

That's fine. But if they don't for their own religious purposes and they come to your house and say, you know, we're only having salad, don't say, where's the meat, if you know they don't eat it. Just eat the salad.

Because our purpose is to look out for their conscience, their moral compass, not your own. You know or you should know what's right and wrong. The Word of God tells us.

You should know you have freedom to do things like eat meat offered to idols. So you don't do it for your own conscience, you know better. But if they don't know better, you may be pushing them further and further from God because you make a big deal out of it.

Sometimes we do things in the name of religion that just totally frustrates me. You know, I hate the fact that there were a Baptist church. Remember that Baptist church that was waiting for planes to fly in with dead soldiers and sailors on it? And then they would hold protests there and say it was because America was so bad that's why these people died.

How does that edify and build people up? I know a church is that if they find out someone's homosexual, they just assume you can just die. We don't care. No, they're a soul that God wants to see saved too.

Do we agree with their lifestyle? No, it's not according to Scripture. But they're still a person who Christ died for and they need him. So many of the things we do, just stop and ask yourself, if I do this or don't do this, how am I affecting what they think about God? I know that's a lot sometimes, but that's what he's saying.

What I'm doing, how will it affect what that person thinks about God, their conscience? But then he goes on and kind of summarizes everything in verse 31. *Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.* How can we do the glory of God? That means the way you honor God, the way you praise God, the way you worship God, everything should be done with God at the forefront.

What does God think about what I'm doing? Does he get honor from this? Does he get glory from this? And it says, whatever you eat or whatever you drink, whatever you do, it's for God's glory. You know, I mentioned before my favorite verse I've had for a long time. I heard Will here quote it a couple of weeks ago, Colossians 3:23, *whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men.*

So everything we do, we want to give God the glory. So everything we do, we say, I'm not doing it for my boss. I'm doing it for God.

I'm not doing it for my family. I'm doing it for God. Will they get good from it? Absolutely.

But God gets the glory. Everything we do should give God the glory for our good. And it's pretty plain.

Whatever you do, eating, drinking, do it for the glory of God, being able to praise him. I'll be honest with you. When you get done doing something, it's a whole lot more fun to praise God for allowing you to participate than doing something he don't want and have to ask his forgiveness because you sinned.

One of them, you can look him directly in the face and the other is like a little kid, you come looking down at the floor, ashamed of what you did. Do all for the glory of God. In fact, he continues, give none offense, neither Jew or Gentile or Church of God.

None offense doesn't mean, that just means don't on purpose try to offend people. It gets harder and harder when you try to share the word of God not to offend people, but try not to offend them. Learn to say things from scripture in a way like the Bible tells in Ephesians, speaking the truth in love. And that's how we do it. God has given believers the responsibility to share Christ with the world. And so we are to act like Christ in the world.

Will you offend people sometimes? Yes, it's inevitable. But do you do it on purpose? I hope not. Why? You know, it's like we talked about the dinner.

You don't get invited to dinner going, you're serving some of that meat offered to idols. Well, if you do, I'm not coming. No, that's offensive.

Because if you invite them to meal, you're saying, why? Remember when Jesus was invited to meals with sinners? Why did he go? So he could tell them about himself. And maybe we'll get the opportunity if we're invited to meals with sinners, not to participate in their sins, but not to agree with their sins, but to be able to share the good news of Jesus Christ. And that's what he tells us here in verse 33.

Even as I please all men and all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Everything we do, we do for the glory of God so that people will trust Jesus Christ. That's our purpose on earth.

I don't know if you knew that, because personally, the day I got saved, I wish he'd have taken me to heaven. It has saved a whole lot of heartbreak, but he didn't. He said, all right, now you are my representative on earth.

You are an ambassador for Christ. You are left here to see people trust me as savior also. But if you go about trying to get your own profit, your own way all the time instead of mine, it's not going to happen.

If you go around trying to prove that you're holier than everybody else, it's not going to happen. Instead, we have to look out for other people, consider their feelings, consider what they think, not to agree with their sin, never to agree with their sin. However, realizing that they are a sinner just like you were.

Their sin may be different than yours is, but if they die in their sins, they're still going to hell. You know, the homosexual, you say, well, there are some churches go where they deserve to go to hell. They don't deserve to go to hell any more than the old lady.

All she ever did in her life was lie. They need Jesus Christ. And so Paul is saying, listen, you want to lead people to Christ? Do all for the glory of God.

When you deal with people, try your best to do things that are expedient for their good, to do things that will edify, build them up and think about the other person. As I was working on this message, I thought to myself, over the years, if all of the people who had called themselves Christians had been concerned with how other people see Christ instead of just trying to make their way number one, think how much different the world is today. You're not your own.

You belong to Christ. So let's live that way. Amen.

And let's start thinking about, before you say something, before you do something, what is the effect on the person I'm dealing with? Just be like Christ. Let's bow our heads. I don't know how the Lord spoke to your heart today.

The most important thing is, do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? If you were to die today, would you be in heaven? You're that sure you're salvation. If you're not, you need to get things right with the Lord. Jesus Christ came and died on that cross, shed his blood and was buried.

He rose the third day and he did it all so that when you trusted what he did for you by faith, your sins are forgiven. Then once they're forgiven, you're expected to live a certain way. Now you start thinking about how other people see Christ.

Now you start acting in a way that other people see Christ through you. And the way you talk, the way you act, the way you respond, are you doing it the right way? Are you doing it the way Christ wants us to? Let's go to Lord in prayer. As I'm praying, you can pray.

You know what's on your heart. You know what you need to talk to the Lord about. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank you for your word and what it teaches us. We thank you, Lord, that we are told to love one another. And in this section, we're taught how we can do that.

We can do that by caring enough for the other person, especially for unbelievers, that the things we do will not drive them from you, Lord, but draw them to you. Help us, Lord, to be the kind of people you want us to be. Help us, Lord, to be children, your children, that go out and reach the world one person at a time.

We're thankful again, Lord, for working in our hearts. We're thankful, Lord, for the salvation we have. We're thankful, Lord, that you forgive sins.

And we're thankful, Lord, we're able to gather together to praise you. In Jesus' name, amen.