



Making Godly Decisions (1 Cor. 10:23-11:1)

What does it cost? . . . Do I really want it? . . . Do I really need it? . . . Do I really want to do it? . . . How do I feel about it? . . . Will it bring me pleasure or make me happy? These are the types of questions that come into our minds when we make decisions. Generally we consider what we want and how it will affect us.

While the questions above are fair questions to ask they cannot be the entire criteria we use in our decision making as Christians. Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 10 that even though some things may be lawful to do, they are not profitable. There are some things that may be legal, but not helpful. As Christians our decisions must be made not solely on how the decision will affect us, but also how it will affect others.

These verses form the end of the topic concerning the eating of food sacrificed to idols. Paul has shown that an idol is nothing. There is only one God and he is not represented in idol worship. While the food itself is not contaminated a Christian should refrain from eating the meat because the faith of a weaker brother might be harmed. Additionally, a Christian should flee from idolatry and eating this meat shows a Christian to be participating in an activity associated with an idol and demons.



Now Paul continues in a similar vein by asking: “Is it helpful? Does it build up others?” Does it glorify God?

I. Limitations on Christian Freedom

Paul makes two statements of fact and then provides two limitations. First he says, “*All things are lawful*” and then says “*but not all things are helpful.*” Second he says, “*All things are lawful*” and then says “*but not all things build up.*”

- 1. How do we know if something is lawful or not?**
- 2. What kinds of things are not helpful?**
- 3. What does it mean to be “built up?”**

The principle to remember is that even if something is lawful, it is not permissible if it harms a neighbour. Paul says that no one should “*seek*” his own good, but rather his neighbour’s good. The tense of the verb “seek” shows that it is a continual process. A Christian is to continuously seek how he can best help others live for Christ.

II. Application for the Corinthians

1. Meat in the marketplace. Since there is nothing wrong with the meat itself a Christian could buy meat in the marketplace as long as he did question the origin of the meat. It may or may not have been sacrificed to idol, but the meat was not contaminated even if was used in idol worship.

If they questioned the origin of the meat and found that it had been sacrificed to an idol their conscience could be harmed. The conscience is that part of a person which commends or condemns a person in their decisions.



Meat Market in Corinth

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In verse 26, Paul gives the reason why the meat was good to eat. It is part of what God has created. God’s creation is available to his people to use and enjoy. So long as a Christian purchased the meat and did not know if was from the temple of an idol he was free to eat and enjoy it. There was no need to try to determine the origin of the meat.

2. Meat in Private Homes.

Verse 27 gives the same rationale for eating meat in private homes. If a Christian is invited to eat in the home of an unbeliever, and he decides to accept, he should eat the meat served without asking the origin of the meat.

4. What lessons do we learn about Christians associating with non-Christians in verse 27?”

If the host at the meal informs his Christian friend that the meat had been offered to an idol in sacrifice the Christian should refrain from eating. If he eats the meat, it might be interpreted that he is condoning idol worship. Paul understands that eating the meat might not harm the conscience of the believer, but it could harm the conscience of the unbeliever. A Christian should be willing to limit his liberty when it could harm the conscience of another believer or an unbeliever.

5. Why would an unbeliever be concerned with whether or not a Christian ate food sacrificed to an idol; especially if he were serving the meat?

A Christian might say, “I am thankful for the meat and eat it with thankfulness.” However it is not acceptable to eat this meat that could harm the faith of another. The Christian may be “denounced” for eating this meat. The Greek word translated as denounced is the word *blasphēmoumai* which is where we get the English word blaspheme. The Christian may be blasphemed, slandered, or or maligned. A Christian must be willing to limit his liberty for the sake of others.

III. Limiting Liberties the Glory of God

- 6. Why would it not be possible to eat the meat, a host says was sacrificed to an idol, to the glory of God?**
- 7. What is the “glory of God” as it is used in verse 31?**
- 8. What three groups does Paul urge the Corinthian Christians not to offend?**

Paul’s entire purpose in this section is to say that eternal destiny of others is so important that Christians must be willing to limit their liberties. It should be the heart’s desire of every Christian that men and would be saved. Paul stresses that he had given up liberties and that the Corinthian Christians should imitate him even as he imitates Christ.

- 9. What liberties did Christ give up?**
- 10. Provide some practical examples of how the teaching of 1 Cor. 10:23-11:1 can be applied today.**