

# 1 Corinthians 10:25

by St. John Chrysostom

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of considering the impact of our actions on others and seeking the common profit in Christian living.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 10:26-27, 1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1

**Topics:** "Selfless Love", "Christian Virtue"

---

## Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the importance of considering others before ourselves, using the example of eating food sacrificed to idols. He emphasizes the need to seek the profit and well-being of our neighbors, even at the expense of our own comfort or preferences, in order to glorify God and avoid causing others to stumble. Chrysostom highlights the selfless actions of biblical figures like Moses, Abraham, and Paul, who prioritized the benefit of others over their own safety or desires. He stresses that true virtue lies in caring for the needs and salvation of those around us, following the example of Christ in sacrificial love and service.

---

## Transcript

Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

Having said that they could not drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devils, and having once for all led them away from those tables, by Jewish examples, by human reasonings, by the tremendous Mysteries, by the rites solemnized among the idols ; and having filled them with great fear; that he might not by this fear drive again to another extreme, and they be forced, exercising a greater scrupulosity than was necessary, to feel alarm, lest possibly even without their knowledge there might come in some such thing either from the market or from some other quarter; to release them from this strait, he says, Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question. For, says he, if you eat in ignorance and not knowingly, you are not subject to the punishment: it being thenceforth a matter not of greediness, but of ignorance.

Nor does he free the man only from this anxiety, but also from another, establishing them in thorough security and liberty. For he does not even suffer them to question; i.e., to search and enquire, whether it be an idol-sacrifice or no such thing; but simply to eat every thing which comes from the market, not even acquainting one's self with so much as this, what it is that is set before us. So that even he that eats, if in ignorance, may be rid of anxiety. For such is the nature of those things which are not in their essence evil, but through the man's intention make him unclean. Wherefore he says, asking no question.

## 1 Corinthians 10:26

For to the Lord belongs the earth and the fullness thereof. Not to the devils. Now if the earth and the fruits and the beasts be all His, nothing is unclean: but it becomes unclean otherwise, from our intention and our disobedience. Wherefore he not only gave permission, but also,

## 1 Corinthians 10:27

If one of them that believe not bids you, says he, to a feast, and you are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

See again his moderation. For he did not command and make a law that they should withdraw themselves, yet neither did he forbid it. And again, should they depart, he frees them from all suspicion. Now what may be the account of this? That so great curiousness might not seem to arise from any fear and cowardice. For he who makes scrupulous enquiry does so as being in dread: but he who, on hearing the fact, abstains, abstains as out of contempt and hatred and aversion. Wherefore Paul, purposing to establish both points, says, Whatsoever is set before you, eat.

## 1 Corinthians 10:28-29

But if any man say unto you, This has been offered in sacrifice unto idols; eat not, for his sake that showed it.

Thus it is not at all for any power that they have but as accursed, that he bids abstain from them. Neither then, as though they could injure you, fly from them, (for they have no strength;) nor yet, because they have no strength, indifferently partake: for it is the table of beings hostile and degraded. Wherefore he said, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake. For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Do you see how both when he bids them eat and when they must abstain, he brings forward the same testimony? For I do not forbid, says he, for this cause as though they belonged to others: (for the earth is the Lord's:) but for the reason I mentioned, for conscience sake; i.e., that it may not be injured. Ought one therefore to inquire scrupulously? Nay says he for I said not your conscience, but his. For I have already said, 'for his sake that showed it.' And again, v. 29, Conscience, I say, not your own, but the other's.

2. But perhaps some one may say, The brethren indeed, as is natural, you spare, and dost not suffer us to taste for their sakes, lest their conscience being weak might be emboldened to eat the idol sacrifices. But if it be some heathen, what is this man to you? Was it not your own word, 'What have I to do with judging them that are without?' 1 Corinthians 5:12 Wherefore then do you on the contrary care for them? Not for him is my care, he replies, but in this case also for you. To which effect also he adds,

For why is my liberty judged by another conscience? meaning by liberty, that which is left without caution or prohibition. For this is liberty, freed from Jewish bondage. And what he means is this: God has made me free and above all reach of injury, but the Gentile knows not how to judge of my rule of life, nor to see into the liberality of my Master, but will condemn and say to himself, 'Christianity is a fable; they abstain from the idols, they shun demons, and yet cleave to the things offered to them: great is their gluttony.' And what then? it may be said. What harm is it to us, should he judge us unfairly? But how much better to give him no room to judge at all! For if you abstain, he will not even say this. How, say you, will he not say it? For when he sees me not making these inquiries, either in the shambles or in the banquet; what should

hinder him from using this language and condemning me, as one who partakes without discrimination? It is not so at all. For you partake, not as of idol-sacrifices, but as of things clean. And if you make no nice enquiry, it is that you may signify that you fear not the things set before you; this being the reason why, whether you enter a house of Gentiles or go into the market, I suffer you not to ask questions; viz. lest you become timid and perplexed, and occasion yourself needless trouble.

1 Corinthians 10:30

If I by grace partake, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Of what do you 'by grace partake?' tell me. Of the gifts of God. For His grace is so great, as to render my soul unstained and above all pollution. For as the sun sending down his beams upon many spots of pollution, withdraws them again pure; so likewise and much more, we, living in the midst of the world remain pure, if we will, by how much the power we have is even greater than his. Why then abstain? say you. Not as though I should become unclean, far from it; but for my brother's sake, and that I may not become a partaker with devils, and that I may not be judged by the unbeliever. For in this case it is no longer now the nature of the thing, but the disobedience and the friendship with devils which makes me unclean, and the purpose of heart works the pollution.

But what is, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? I, for my part, says he, give thanks to God that He has thus set me on high, and above the low estate of the Jews, so that from no quarter am I injured. But the Gentiles not knowing my high rule of life will suspect the contrary, and will say, 'Here are Christians indulging a taste for our customs; they are a kind of hypocrites, abusing the demons and loathing them, yet running to their tables; than which what can be more senseless? We conclude that not for truth's sake, but through ambition and love of power they have betaken themselves to this doctrine.' What folly then would it be that in respect of those things whereby I have been so benefited as even to give solemn thanks, in respect of these I should become the cause of evil-speaking? But these things, even as it is, say you, will the Gentile allege, when he sees me not making enquiry. In no wise. For all things are not full of idol-sacrifices so that he should suspect this: nor dost you yourself taste of them as idol-sacrifices. But not then scrupulous overmuch, nor again, on the other hand, when any say that it is an idol-sacrifice, do thou partake. For Christ gave you grace and set you on high and above all injury from that quarter, not that you might be evil spoken of, nor that the circumstance which has been such a gain to you as to be matter of special thanksgiving, should so injure others as to make them even blaspheme. Nay, why, says he, do I not say to the Gentile, 'I eat, I am no wise injured, and I do not this as one in friendship with the demons'? Because you can not persuade him, even though you should say it ten thousand times: weak as he is and hostile. For if your brother has not yet been persuaded by you, much less the enemy and the Gentile. If he is possessed by his consciousness of the idol-sacrifice, much more the unbeliever. And besides, what occasion have we for so great trouble?

What then? Whereas we have known Christ and give thanks, while they blaspheme, shall we therefore abandon this custom also? Far from it. For the thing is not the same. For in the one case, great is our gain from bearing the reproach; but in the other, there will be no advantage. Wherefore also he said before, for neither if we eat, are we the better; nor if we eat not, are we the worse. 1 Corinthians 8:8 And besides this too he showed that the thing was to be avoided, so that even on another ground ought they to be abstained from, not on this account only but also for the other reasons which he assigned.

1 Corinthians 10:31

3. Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Do you perceive how from the subject before him, he carried out the exhortation to what was general, giving us one, the most excellent of all aims, that God in all things should be glorified?

1 Corinthians 10:32

Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the Church of God: i.e., give no handle to anyone: since in the case supposed, both your brother is offended, and the Jew will the more hate and condemn you, and the Gentile in like manner deride you even as a gluttonous man and a hypocrite.

Not only, however, should the brethren receive no hurt from us, but to the utmost of our power not even those that are without. For if we are light, and leaven, and luminaries, and salt, we ought to enlighten, not to darken; to bind, not to loosen; to draw to ourselves the unbelievers, not to drive them away. Why then do you put to flight those whom you ought to draw to you? Since even Gentiles are hurt, when they see us reverting to such things: for they know not our mind nor that our soul has come to be above all pollution of sense. And the Jews too, and the weaker brethren, will suffer the same.

Do you see how many reasons he has assigned for which we ought to abstain from the idol-sacrifices? Because of their unprofitableness, because of their needlessness, because of the injury to our brother, because of the evil-speaking of the Jew, because of the reviling of the Gentile, because we ought not to be partakers with demons, because the thing is a kind of idolatry.

Further, because he had said, give no occasion of stumbling, and he made them responsible for the injury done, both to the Gentiles and to the Jews; and the saying was grievous; see how he renders it acceptable and light, putting himself forward, and saying,

1 Corinthians 10:33

Even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.

This is a rule of the most perfect Christianity, this is a landmark exactly laid down, this is the point that stands highest of all; viz. the seeking those things which are for the common profit: which also Paul himself declared, by adding, even as I also am of Christ. For nothing can so make a man an imitator of Christ as caring for his neighbors. Nay, though you should fast, though you should lie upon the ground, and even strangle yourself, but take no thought for your neighbor; you have wrought nothing great, but still standest far from this Image, while so doing. However, in the case before us, even the very thing itself is naturally useful, viz; the abstaining from idol-sacrifices. But I, says he, have done many of those things which were unprofitable also: e.g., when I used circumcision, when I offered sacrifice; for these, were any one to examine them in themselves, rather destroy those that follow after them and cause them to fall from salvation: nevertheless, I submitted even to these on account of the advantage therefrom: but here is no such thing. For in that case, except there accrue a certain benefit and except they be done for others' sake, then the thing becomes injurious: but in this, though there be none made to stumble, even so ought one to abstain from the things forbidden.

But not only to things hurtful have I submitted, but also to things toilsome. For, I robbed other Churches, says he, taking wages of them; 2 Corinthians 11:8 and when it was lawful to eat and not to work, I sought not this, but chose to perish of hunger rather than offend another. This is why he says, I please all men in all things. Though it be against the law, though it be laborious and hazardous, which is to be done, I endure all for the profit of others. So then, being above all in perfection, he became beneath all in condescension.

4. For no virtuous action can be very exalted, when it does not distribute its benefit to others also: as is shown by him who brought the one talent safe, and was cut in sunder because he had not made more of it. And thou then, brother, though you should remain without food, though you should sleep upon the ground, though you should eat ashes and be ever wailing, and do good to no other; you will do no great work. For so also those great and noble persons who were in the beginning made this their chiefest care: examine accurately their life, and you will see clearly that none of them ever looked to his own things, but each one to the things of his neighbor, whence also they shone the brighter. For so Moses (to mention him first) wrought many and great wonders and signs; but nothing made him so great as that blessed voice which he uttered unto God, saying, If You will forgive their sin, forgive; but if not, blot me also out. Exodus 32:32 Such too was David: wherefore also he said, I the shepherd have sinned, and I have done wickedly, but these, the flock, what have they done? Let Your hand be upon me and upon my father's house. 2 Samuel 24:17 So likewise Abraham sought not his own profit, but the profit of many. Wherefore he both exposed himself to dangers and besought God for those who in no wise belonged to him.

Well: these indeed so became glorious. But as for those who sought their own, consider what harm too they received. The nephew, for instance, of the last mentioned, because he listened to the saying, If you will go to the right, I will go to the left; Genesis 13:9 and accepting the choice, sought his own profit, did not even find his own: but this region was burned up, while that remained untouched. Jonah again, not seeking the profit of many, but his own, was in danger even of perishing: and while the city stood fast, he himself was tossed about and overwhelmed in the sea. But when he sought the profit of many, then he also found his own. So likewise Jacob among the flocks, not seeking his own gain, had exceeding riches for his portion. And Joseph also, seeking the profit of his brethren, found his own. At least, being sent by his father, Genesis 37:14 he said not, What is this? Have you not heard that for a vision and certain dreams they even attempted to tear me in pieces, and I was held responsible for my dreams, and suffer punishment for being beloved of you? What then will they not do when they get me in the midst of them? He said none of these things, he thought not of them, but prefers the care of his brethren above all. Therefore he enjoyed also all the good things which followed, which both made him very brilliant and declared him glorious. Thus also Moses -- for nothing hinders that we should a second time make mention of him, and behold how he overlooked his own things and sought the things of others:-- I say this Moses, being conversant in a king's court, because he counted the reproach of Christ Hebrews 11:26 greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; and having cast them even all out of his hands, became a partaker of the afflictions of the Hebrews;-- so far from being himself enslaved, he liberated them also from bondage.

Well: these surely are great things and worthy of an angelical life. But the conduct of Paul far exceeds this. For all the rest leaving their own blessings chose to be partakers in the afflictions of others: but Paul did a thing much greater. For it was not that he consented to be a partaker in others' misfortunes, but he chose himself to be at all extremities that other men might enjoy blessings. Now it is not the same for one who lives in luxury to cast away his luxury and suffer adversity, as for one himself alone suffering adversity, to cause others to be in security and honor. For in the former case, though it be a great thing to exchange

prosperity for affliction for your neighbor's sake, nevertheless it brings some consolation to have partakers in the misfortune. But consenting to be himself alone in the distress that others may enjoy their good things -- this belongs to a much more energetic soul, and to Paul's own spirit.

And not by this only, but by another and greater excellency does he surpass all those before mentioned. That is, Abraham and all the rest exposed themselves to dangers in the present life, and all these were but asking for this kind of death once for all: but Paul prayed Romans 9:3 that he might fall from the glory of the world to come for the sake of others' salvation.

I may mention also a third point of superiority. And what is this? That some of those, though they interceded for the persons who conspired against them, nevertheless it was for those with whose guidance they had been entrusted: and the same thing happened as if one should stand up for a wild and lawless son, but still a son: whereas Paul wished to be accursed in the stead of those with whose guardianship he was not entrusted. For to the Gentiles was he sent. Do you perceive the greatness of his soul and the loftiness of his spirit, transcending the very heaven? This man do thou emulate: but if you can not, at least follow those who shone in the old covenant. For thus shall you find your own profit, if you seek that of your neighbor. Wherefore when you feel backward to care for your brother, considering that no otherwise can you be saved, at least for your own sake stand thou up for him and his interests.

5. And although what has been said is sufficient to convince you that no otherwise is it possible to secure our own benefit: yet if you would also assure yourself of it by the examples of common life, conceive a fire happening any where to be kindled in a house, and then some of the neighbors with a view to their own interest refusing to confront the danger but shutting themselves up and remaining at home, in fear lest some one find his way in and purloin some part of the household goods; how great punishment will they endure? Since the fire will come on and burn down likewise all that is theirs; and because they looked not to the profit of their neighbor, they lose even their own besides. For so God, willing to bind us all to each other, has imposed upon things such a necessity, that in the profit of one neighbor that of the other is bound up; and the whole world is thus constituted. And therefore in a vessel too, if a storm come on, and the steersman, leaving the profit of the many, should seek his own only, he will quickly sink both himself and them. And of each several art too we may say that should it look to its own profit only, life could never stand, nor even the art itself which so seeks its own. Therefore the husbandman sows not so much grain only as is sufficient for himself, since he would long ago have famished both himself and others; but seeks the profit of the many: and the soldier takes the field against dangers, not that he may save himself, but that he may also place his cities in security: and the merchant brings not home so much as may be sufficient for himself alone, but for many others also.

Now if any say, each man does this, not looking to my interest, but his own, for he engages in all these things to obtain for himself money and glory and security, so that in seeking my profit he seeks his own: this also do I say and long since wished to hear from you, and for this have I framed all my discourse; viz. to signify that your neighbor then seeks his own profit, when he looks to yours. For since men would no otherwise make up their mind to seek the things of their neighbor, except they were reduced to this necessity; therefore God has thus joined things together, and suffers them not to arrive at their own profit except they first travel through the profit of others.

Well then, this is natural to man, thus to follow after his neighbors' advantage; but one ought to be persuaded not from this reason, but from what pleases God. For it is not possible to be saved, wanting this; but though you should exercise the highest perfection of the work and neglect others who are

perishing, you will gain no confidence towards God. Whence is this evident? From what the blessed Paul declared. For if I bestow my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing, 1 Corinthians 13:3 says he. Sees thou how much Paul requires of us? And yet he that bestowed his goods to feed the poor, sought not his own good, but that of his neighbor. But this alone is not enough, he says. For he would have it done with sincerity and much sympathy. For therefore also God made it a law that he might bring us into the bond of love. When therefore He demands so large a measure, and we do not render even that which is less, of what indulgence shall we be worthy?

And how, says one, did God say to Lot by the Angels, 'Escape for your life?' Genesis 19:17 Say, when, and why. When the punishment was brought near, not when there was an opportunity of correction but when they were condemned and incurably diseased, and old and young had rushed into the same passions, and henceforth they must needs be burned up, and in that day when the thunderbolts were about to be launched. And besides, this was not spoken of vice and virtue but of the chastisement inflicted by God. For what was he to do, tell me? Sit still and await the punishment, and without at all profiting them, be burned up? Nay, this were the extremest folly.

For I do not affirm this, that one ought to bring chastisement on one's self without discrimination and at random, apart from the will of God. But when a man tarries long in sin, then I bid you push yourself forward and correct him: if you will, for your neighbor's sake: but if not, at least for your own profit. It is true, the first is the better course: but if you reach not yet unto that height, do it even for this. And let no man seek his own that he may find his own; and bearing in mind that neither voluntary poverty nor martyrdom, nor any other thing, can testify in our favor, unless we have the crowning virtue of love; let us preserve this beyond the rest, that through it we may also obtain all other, both present and promised blessings; at which may we all arrive through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; Whom be the glory world without end. Amen.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-chrysostom/1-corinthians-1025/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**