

# Studies in 1 Corinthians-08 1 Cor 10

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-control and moral responsibility in the life of the believer, as seen in the example of Israel's experience in the wilderness.*

**Duration:** 53:30

**Scripture:** Exodus 14:22, Exodus 16:15, Exodus 17:6, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 10

**Topics:** "Idolatry", "Self Control"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the golden calf from the Bible, where the Israelites engaged in idolatrous feasting and dancing. He emphasizes that this seemingly tame act was actually a pagan orgy and a result of sin in the human heart. The preacher also highlights the connection between idolatry and sexual immorality. He then relates this story to the importance of self-control in the life of a believer and the responsibility that comes with privileges. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that every word of God has instruction for us, even if it isn't directly written to us.

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## Transcript

George and Violetta. Actually, I was speaking at Bethany last Sunday and George interpreted into Romanian for me. On Monday, his wife was loading some bicycles.

She was going to take the children. They have five children. She was going to take the children out bicycling and she was loading the bicycles into the back of the van.

The van was on a steep driveway. One of the kids inside disengaged the transmission. She tried to stop the van from rolling but it couldn't and it just dragged her to her death.

It went down the driveway across the street, smashed into a van in the driveway across the street and pushed that one into the garage door. She was killed. She was dead by the time help could get to her.

Her husband and five kiddies. I think the funeral was Wednesday. There were 56 cars in the funeral procession.

That's a lot. I think the whole Romanian community was in a state of shock over it. So, I just mentioned that in case anybody does want to have fellowship, especially with the funeral expenses, and certainly be in prayer for George and his family.

Now, every Sunday we're going to be speaking here, we'd like to learn a new chorus. Actually, these choruses aren't new. They're quite old but this generation doesn't know them.

First time my grandfather heard this one, the tears ran down his dib. Oh, I love to hear his voice saying, you belong to me. Carolyn's going to play it.

Why don't you play it through once while they're getting it, Carolyn. You really date yourself, dear friends, when you raise your hand. You too, Dave Ferguson.

Okay, let's try it. I'd love to hear his voice. Oh, I love to hear his voice saying, you belong to me.

You are not your own with the price you're bought and you're mine eternally. And I love to hear him say, I have saved you by my grace. And when you get to glory, it will then be grander still for I shall see.

Time will be very much better, so let's just try it again. Ready? Oh, I love to hear his voice saying, you belong to me. It's all coming from this side.

Did you notice that? The volume is all coming from here. Let's see if you can do better. The last time now.

Ready? Oh, I love to hear his voice saying, when I get to him, it will then be grander still for I shall see his face. Thank you very much. We'll have another one next week, Lord willing.

Thank you, Carolyn. We're going to continue in our studies of 1 Corinthians. That's where we left off the last time I was here.

And today we pick up at chapter 10, 1 Corinthians chapter 10. And I'll read the first portion of it. We won't read the whole chapter, but we'll try to get through the chapter.

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud. All passed through the sea. All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

All ate the same spiritual food. And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them.

And that rock was Christ. But with most of them, God was not well pleased. For their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Now these things became our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters, as were some of them. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did. And in one day 23,000 fell. Nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents.

Nor murmur, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed by the destroyer. Of all these things happened to them as examples. And they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you, except such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.

But will with the temptation also make the way of escape that you may be able to bear it. The subject of the chapter, in one word, is idolatry. It doesn't seem to be in those first verses, but that's really what the chapter is all about, idolatry.

And I want to think about that with you for a few minutes as we start. We all know that the Bible forbids the worship of idols. Idolatry is the ultimate insult against the great God.

You think of God creating man in his own image and likeness, and then man turns around and makes graven images of man, or birds, or four-footed beasts, or creeping things, and worships them as his God. I say it's the ultimate insult against God. It's not only an insult, but it's a sheer form of stupidity, isn't it? Imagine men worshipping something like that, that happens to be a rhinoceros.

It was made by man. It can't see. It can't hear.

It can't talk. It can't walk. It can't eat.

What can it do? Imagine people worshipping graven images. Yet they do. And most of them are pretty horrible.

This one is fairly good-looking by contrast, but if you've seen many idol images, they're pretty fierce-looking, and nothing that would really draw out your affections to them. Usually, when we think of worship, we think of worshipping someone greater than ourselves, don't we? Isn't that the idea of worship? You worship somebody greater than yourself. But in idolatry, man is worshipping the work of his own hands, something less than himself, something with less intelligence or no intelligence, whatever.

And he carries his God instead of his God carrying him. It's not only the ultimate insult against God. In some senses, it's the ultimate insanity too, isn't it? Imagine.

The Bible not only forbids the worship of idols, it forbids the manufacture of idols. This incidentally isn't a real idol, but I'm using it as an illustration of that. If an idol is my God, for instance, if that thing is my God, it really doesn't make too much difference what kind of a life I live, does it? And you read that very clearly in Romans chapter 1, which we're not going to turn to, but it tells how man rejects the knowledge of the true God and gives himself over to the worship of idols.

And as he worships idols, his moral life declines. Now, if that's God, what's the matter with anti-Semitism? If that's God, what's the matter with apartheid? If that's God, what's the matter with discrimination, racial discrimination? If that's God, what's the matter with sexual immorality? The answer is those things don't matter if that's God. And of course, that's why man likes idols, because there's no moral responsibility connected with them.

That's his God, and he can live the way he wants to. And he abandons the knowledge of the true God and gives himself over to idolatry, and his morals decline and decline and decline. And you'll find that characteristically, when the Bible speaks about idolatry, it links it with immorality.

It does in this chapter that we're talking with. Idolatry and immorality go hand in hand. But that's not all.

That's not the whole story. The Apostle Paul tells us, by inspiration of the Spirit of God, that behind the idols that men worship, there are demons. There are spirit beings, evil spirit beings.

That's absolutely true. That's why people in idolatrous nations and idolatrous cultures live in fear. They live in a bondage all their lives, a fear of death, as it were.

Paul says, the things that men sacrifice to idols, they sacrifice to demons. Now, the Corinthians, to whom this letter was written, had been pagan idolaters. That was their background.

They really didn't have a Jewish background. They didn't have a background in the Old Testament scriptures. They were just saved from raw heathenism.

They knew about idolatry from the word go. They had been pagans. And they had offered food to idols.

They had come with their sacrifices to the idol, to the pagan temple. This is rather interesting. I remember my last trip to Hong Kong, going up an escalator in a modern apartment building, just as nice as anything in San Francisco.

And here on the floor, to the side, as I reached the top of the escalator, there was a plate of food. And I said to my friend, who was a missionary there at home, what's that? Oh, he said, somebody is making a sacrifice to the Spirit. And he said, every once in a while, somebody comes along and secretly moves the food around so that they'll think the Spirit has come.

And this is what was taking place in Corinth. They were offering food to the idols. They would bring, for instance, beef to the pagan temple.

And, of course, the priests would eat some of that beef. And sometimes they'd have a big pagan feast there in the temple. But, you know, with that many people, it was always an awful lot of meat left over.

A lot of food left over, especially meat. And the priests could take that meat down to the butcher shop and sell it there. And you might go down to that local Safeway and buy some of that meat.

You wouldn't even know it was meat that had been offered to idols, but some of it was. What the priests didn't eat and what people didn't eat at the pagan feast there would find its way to the meat market and it would be for sale. And, of course, this raised problems for the Christians.

Once you become a Christian, for instance, would it be all right to go to a wedding in one of these pagan temples? Or some sort of a social event? Or would it be all right to go to one of those pagan feasts in one of those idolatrous temples? Or would it be all right to go down to the meat market and buy some of that meat that had been offered to idols? It's very hard to know, actually. Because the very fact of offering meat to idols doesn't change the texture of the meat in any way. It doesn't change the protein content of the meat in any way.

And this raised some real questions for those Corinthian believers. And, of course, that's what 1 Corinthians was all about. It's answering questions that were facing the Corinthian Christians.

And Paul is taking them and answering them one by one. And as we look at the chapter, we want to think, well, what's it got to do with us today? We don't have pagan temples like that. We don't have people taking a succulent roast beef and offering it to idols, do we? And when we go down to the Lucky's, we don't worry whether the meat was offered to idols or not.

We know it wasn't. So, when you read a chapter like the 10th chapter of 1 Corinthians, you have to ask yourself that question. What has it got to do? Are there any abiding principles for us? And, of course, we

know there are.

Every word of God is pure. And everything in the Bible has instruction for us, even if it isn't written directly to us. It has instruction for us.

And that's what we're talking about here in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Not very easy to see, is it? Well, we'll make the best of it. First of all, Paul here speaks about, he's talking about the necessity of self-control in the life of the believer.

And he goes back to Israel's experience. And he's going to rehearse some of the marvelous privileges that Israel had as a nation. But privileges bring responsibility, don't they? And men are expected by God to live up to the light that God gives them.

Let's just look at the verses with that in mind. Thanks, Matt. Maybe the other ones, too.

Does that help any? Now, if we just help the temperature, we'd be all set. Is there anything new about that, Matt? Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea. The emphasis here is on the word all.

In these verses, you must, when you read the verses to yourself, always emphasize, put those words all in bold faith. All our fathers were under the cloud. What does that mean? Well, the cloud was the glory cloud that led them through the wilderness.

It was a manifestation of the presence of God, and it had to do primarily with guidance or also with protection. The cloud is known as the Shekinah cloud. It was a great glory cloud that accompanied the children of Israel through the wilderness.

And it spoke of guidance. The instructions were, don't move till the cloud moves. And when the cloud moves, you move.

Guidance. Incidentally, that's good for us, too. Don't move till the Lord tells you to move.

And when the Lord tells you to move, don't stay back. So, all of the fathers enjoyed the blessing of divine guidance and all passed through the sea. That speaks of deliverance.

This, of course, is the Red Sea experience. And what a marvelous thing that was. To the Jewish people, this was the greatest display of power in the Old Testament era.

In the history of the Jewish nation, how God parted the waters of the Red Sea, and the people passed over. Drishad and Pharaoh and his army attempting to do it. The waters came in.

Actually, Pharaoh escaped, but the people were all drowned. Now, it says, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. This speaks of identification.

It's not to be thought of in connection with Christian baptism. It has nothing to do with that. But it simply means that they acknowledged Moses as their leader at this time.

And they were identified with him. And that was a wonderful privilege to be under the leadership of this great man of God. Actually, he was a representative of God.

And being under his leadership and being subject to him was the same as being subject to God. All ate the same spiritual food. Of course, that food was the manna, wasn't it? What a marvelous thing.

Traveling 40 years through the wilderness and they never hungered. I often think of Desert Storm and what a feat of logistics it was to provide for that army. For all the people of that army, you know, food and clothing and everything that was needed.

Marvelous, really. Well, here you have a marvelous feat of logistics here where God provided manna for them. It's spoken of as spiritual food.

That doesn't mean it was non-material. Of course, it was material. They could touch it.

They could gather it. And they could feast on it, too. Marvelous provision of God.

And it says not only that, but they drank the same spiritual drink. So, they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. Water.

What's more important than water in a desert? And here are the children of Israel marching through the desert. They never lacked for water. Wherever they went, that stream is going.

And they can draw from it all the time. A stream that flowed from a rock and the rock represented the Lord Jesus Christ. He's our spiritual food and He's our spiritual drink as well.

I think the word spiritual here has, including other things, the idea of supernaturally provided. Supernaturally provided. When we think of something as being spiritual, we think of it as being non-material.

It's not the thought here at all. In the resurrection, we'll have spiritual bodies, but they'll be material bodies. That's spiritual in the sense that they'll be adapted to life in heaven, which these present bodies are not.

Now, the contrast in verse 5 is between all and most. He's been emphasizing the word all in these first four verses. But now he says with most of them, God was not well pleased.

Actually, that wilderness became a gigantic cemetery, didn't it? All the men of war, 28 years of age, that came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness. All of them. All the soldiers, 20 years of age or more, who came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness.

And some others perished too, including Moses himself. But with most of them, God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. And Psalm 90 is kind of interesting in that connection, because you see dear old Moses there in Psalm 90, and he's looking around, and all he sees is headstones.

Headstones there in the desert. He says, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place for all generations. So teach us to number our days that we might incline our hearts unto wisdom.

Give permanence to the work of our hands, he says in Psalm 90. Wonderful to hear that psalm that is generally accepted as having been spoken by Moses. Now, what was that all about? Why this terrible catastrophe on those people in the wilderness? Paul goes on to explain.

Now, these things became our examples. Ah-ha. These things are historical events, but they're also examples for us.

God is trying to teach us something through the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness. To the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Satisfied with food from heaven, and water never failing.

And what did they say? If we could only have some of the leeks, and the onions, and the melons, and the garlic of Egypt. Weren't satisfied with what God gave them. They wanted the food of Egypt.

Which means that they came out of Egypt, but Egypt didn't come out of them. They still had Egypt in their hearts. And it's possible, I think, for those who are true believers, to be delivered in a sense from the world, and yet to have a lot of the world still about them.

Still hankering. It seems to me that many people, especially people brought up in Christian homes, and they get converted, they sometimes feel disadvantaged. They feel, eh, if I could just get a taste of the world.

And oftentimes you see that. You see people, young people brought up in Christian homes, and they're saved by the grace of God, and they want to go out into the world and see what the world is like. And God lets them.

God allows sin to work itself out, doesn't he? And sometimes it's a very bitter lesson to learn that all that the world has to offer does not satisfy the human heart. They lusted after evil things. He says, don't become idolaters as some of them were as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

What's the matter with that? We sit down to eat and drink all the time and rise up to play, don't we? Yeah, but you have to see it in its context. It has to do with the golden calf. It has to do.

Moses is up on the mountain, Aaron is down below, and they're making a golden calf, and it's an idolatrous feasting and an idolatrous dancing that's going on there. It sounds so tame, doesn't it? They sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. It's not tame at all.

These people were engaging in pagan orgies. And all of this had to do with, man, that's a great God. Looking down and seeing people worshipping the image of a four-footed beast made of gold.

How stupid can man be? It shows you really the results of sin in the human heart. Nor let us commit sexual immorality. Isn't that interesting? We noticed before, didn't we, in our introduction that idolatry and sexual immorality are linked.

Well, here they come in adjoining verses, don't they? That's true today. You know, there are churches that practice idolatry today. You know that.

Wherever you see it, watch out. Immorality. Nor let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did and in one day 23,000 fell.

This is when the children of Israel went into the daughters of Moab and committed immorality. Very displeasing. Going into your enemies.

What a terrible, what a terrible violation of God's holy word. It says in the Old Testament, it says that 24,000 fell. It says here 23,000 fell.

And people who are critics of the Bible say, ah, we found a contradiction in the Bible. 23, 24. Big difference.

People don't read the Bible. It says in one day here, in one day 23,000 fell. It doesn't say that in the Old Testament.

Total of 24,000 but in one day 23,000. People who criticize the Bible should read it. Read it carefully.

And they find that all of these difficulties evaporate. E.H. Carroll said that when he was young he could find a thousand contradictions in the Bible. He said, now that I'm old I have been able to resolve 995.

And he said, I think if I had a little more sense I could resolve the other five too. And that's true. Years ago a man named Francis Newman wrote to Darby and told him of all these contradictions of the Bible.

And Darby wrote a book called *The Irrationalism of Infidelity*, which he answers them one by one. Answers them one by one. I can't say that I can answer them all, but I know there is an answer to them all and most of them have been answered already.

Nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents. Nor murmur as some of them also murmured and were destroyed by the destroyer. And so here you have really different chapters in the history of the children of Israel.

Lust for food. Immorality. Complaining.

We hate this light bread. That's what they said. We hate this light bread.

Imagine hating something that God has provided in such a marvelous way for them. Then rebellion. The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, which you read about in Numbers as well.

I think this has lessons for us too. Complaining. God doesn't like it.

He doesn't like murmuring and complaining. I said to the manager of my building some time ago, what a beautiful day. He said, yeah, but just think what it's going to be.

He couldn't enjoy the beauty of the day thinking that it might rain sometime in the future. The other side of that picture, I had a friend in Chicago, his name was Jim Humphrey. And I said to him, how are you, Jim? And he said, it would be a sin to complain.

I never forgot that. It would be a sin to complain. He always said that.

That should be our attitude. Let's avoid tempting Christ. Murmuring.

Complaining. Now, notice what it says in verse 11. Now, all these things happened to them as examples and they were written for our admonition unto whom the ends of the age have come.

Isn't that wonderful? God kind of used the children of Israel as an object lesson, didn't he? And experiences they went through are experiences common to life. And so he records them down in the word of God so that subsequent generations of the people of God might look back and learn from the history of

the children of Israel. It's the best way to learn, to learn from the Bible, not from experience.

But sometimes fools will learn in no other way. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. Apparently there was that attitude among the Christians.

We're immune, you know. We're impervious. We're not subject to all the frailties that the Israelites were.

Apparently there was that spirit of self-sufficiency among them. And Paul says be careful. I think that it has been said, and I agree with it, the greatest deterrent to sin is the fear of sin.

It's when we lose the fear of sin that we're most subject to fall into it. The greatest deterrent to sin is the fear of sin. But certainly when we feel confident, you know, it couldn't happen to me, we see somebody else falling on his face, but we think, well, it couldn't happen to me.

That's when the danger is the greatest. I was looking over my prayer list this morning and here's a note that I received from a dear young fellow in the Philippines. And he's begging me to pray for him.

He said, I feel so weak. I feel so frail in this whole area of sexual temptation. He said, please pray for me.

It's a good thing to feel that way, isn't it? The safety in feeling that way and in soliciting the prayers of God's people. And then that wonderful verse, verse 13. I like that so much.

No temptation has taken you but such as is common to man. Sometimes we think we're unique. Well, the preacher certainly doesn't know.

I'm going to answer it. A man called me on the phone the other day and he shared with me a problem that he's having in his life. He said, I don't like to share this with you because he said, I'm afraid you won't think so well of me.

I said, you know what I think of you? When you tell me something like that, I think, well, he's made of the same stuff I'm made of. He's made of dust and I'm made of dust. And we need the same sustaining Savior, one as the other.

He thought I was sitting up on the seat of the scornful, something like that. Not at all. As faith answers to faith in water, so the heart of man to man.

We're reflected in one another. And the temptations we have are common to man. Common to man.

Get that squarely in your mind. God is faithful. What does it mean? It means he will not allow us to suffer beyond what we can bear.

He will, with the temptation, provide a way of escape that we might be able to bear. There's sufficiency. The only time we yield to temptation is when we don't cry to the Lord, isn't it? We don't say, Lord, save me.

Whenever we do that, Jesus. Mind you, verse 13 is not some sort of divine magic. It doesn't mean that the human will isn't involved, because it is.

Here, as in so many places, there is that marvelous converging of the divine and the human. God expects us to do our part and he will do his, too. We can't dally around with sin and temptation and expect God to deliver us.

But if we're close to the word of God and close to him in prayer and walking in fellowship with him, confessing sin as it comes into our lives, walk softly before the Lord all the days of our lives. God will give us grace to bear the testings of life. And you know, there's a special reward for resisting temptation, isn't there? James tells us that.

I don't think we think of that so often, but it's true just the same. You think of people who've lived lives of godliness, 60, 70, 80 years, and all the temptations, all the times they've said no. Well, it's all registered.

It's all registered and God has a special reward for people like that. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. That's what I say.

Sometimes in this chapter, especially in the opening verses, it doesn't sound as if he's talking about idolatry, but that's the underlying theme throughout. Flee from idolatry. Let me just get the next transparency up.

It's a man stated. And then he's going to be talking about eating at a pagan temple. Eating at an idolatrous feast in a pagan temple.

Your unsaved friends there in Corinth invite you to come. Of course, you want to win them for Christ. And what are you going to do about it? I speak as to wise men.

Judge for yourselves what I say. He's going to use three arguments here, and they all say this. Participation means fellowship and worship.

He's going to use three illustrations. First of all, the bread and the cup at communion, Christian communion. Then the food that the priest ate at the altar in the Old Testament.

And then, of course, eating at an idolatrous feast. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion? Another word for communion is fellowship. Fellowship.

What fellowship means sharing in. Is it not the fellowship or communion of the blood of Christ? Is it the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body. We all partake of that one bread.

And what he's saying is when we come together and we break bread at the communion service and take the cup, we're expressing fellowship with the Lord. We're expressing union with the Lord. And identification with the Lord.

Can't get around it. That's what it's all about. Secondly, Israel and the temple services.

Observe Israel after the flesh are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar. The priest ate the food there in the temple. And it identified them with the altar.

And the altar, of course, identified them with God. With the Lord, God of Israel. And so he's saying, look, when you eat in a situation like that, you're identifying yourself with all that it speaks of.

That brings him to the great point. What I am saying then, what am I saying then? That an idol is anything? Or what is offered to an idol is anything? You know, what is it? Just a carved image. Nothing, you know.

He's not denying the existence of idols. But he's denying the reality of what they stand for. He knows that idols exist.

But no real God there. Powerful God. And what is offered to idols? You can change the food, any.

But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. And I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. In other words, he's saying when you go to a pagan ritual, idolatrous ritual, you go to that pagan temple, and eat the food in a service connected with idolatry, you're fellowshiping with demons.

That's what he's saying. You're fellowshiping with evil spirits. The Christian in communion identifies with the Lord.

The Jews at the temple identified with God. Those who eat these meals offered to idols identify themselves with demons. Verse 21, you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.

You cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons. Now, he doesn't mean a physical thing here. You could.

I suppose you could. You could come to the worship service here and then go to a pagan temple and participate physically. He's saying the two things are morally and spiritually incompatible.

That's what he's saying. They just don't fit together. Forget it.

Don't try to marry those two things. You can't be sincere in both. You cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons.

Now, the Lord's table here, believe it or not, is not the same as the communion service. Sometimes we use them. Christians use those two terms interchangeably.

The Lord's table, the Lord's supper. They're not the same. What's the difference? Well, the table, of course, is where all the blessings are put out.

And the Lord's table includes the sum total of all the blessings that the Lord has for his people. That's what it is, the Lord's table. It would include the Lord's supper, but that doesn't exhaust it.

Everything in the way of blessing that God has for those who trust in him is included in the Lord's table. And the table of demons, everything that demons would have to offer. Well, what do they have to offer? Sometimes they have miraculous healings, sometimes.

Many things like that. The two things are morally incompatible. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? The idea is there.

When you try to do those things, when you try to mix those unmixables, you're asking for the Lord's anger. That's what it means. Jealousy.

Is the Lord jealous? Yes, in a good sense, the Lord is jealous. He's jealous of the affections of his people. He doesn't want to see the people loving vanity.

That's what idols are, they're vanity. God wants to have first place in the life of his people. Paul says here in verse 23, all things are lawful for me.

You know, you have to read your Bible carefully. Does that mean all things absolutely? No. Paul is here speaking about matters of moral indifference.

He's speaking not about fundamentals here, but he's speaking about things that are not in themselves wrong. That's what he's speaking about. And you must understand that Paul doesn't think that idolatry is lawful for him.

He doesn't think immorality is lawful for him. There's a great area, for instance, things that are not condemned in the word of God and would be permissible for Paul to do them and for Christians to do them. But that's not the test.

He says all things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify. And so he says, look, you can go down to the meat market and you can buy some meat.

And so what? Supposing it had been offered to idols. It doesn't make any difference. You can eat it.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness of the law. He quotes Psalm 24, verse 1, which we had in the earlier class. It's okay to do that.

But then suppose you go to a home and this food is served. And the man next to you says that that meat had been offered to idols. And you know by the way he said that that if you eat it, it would stumble him.

You know that by the way he said that. What are you going to do, Paul? Just don't eat it? You see, it's lawful for him to eat it, but not if it stumbles somebody else. He has a right to eat it, but he has a greater right to forego that right rather than hurt somebody else.

That's what he's saying here. Now let's read it. Let no one seek his own but each one the other's well-being.

Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake. For the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness. If any of those who do not believe invite you to dinner and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you asking no questions for conscience' sake.

Perfectly all right. But if anyone says to you this was offered to idols, do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you. And for conscience' sake.

For the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness. Perfectly all right for you to do it, except if it's going to hurt somebody else, you don't do it. But I have a clear conscience about it.

I know Paul says that conscience' sake, not your own, but that of the other. The meat may be tender, but his conscience is tender too. And you've got to respect that.

And so what? You know, so what? A few slices of roast beef compared to the value of a soul that the Lord is working in, huh? Paul brings that out in Romans chapter 14. Destroy not with your meat him for whom Christ died. What a serious thing.

To be so concerned with a few pieces of meat that you're willing to hurt somebody else. Conscience' sake, not your own, but that of the other. Why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? A person might say that.

I've got liberty to do it. Why should I be deterred from doing it by somebody else? If I partake with thanks, I mean God gets thanks of it, why should I worry about what somebody else thinks? Paul says you have to worry about what somebody else thinks. Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

It's one of the great foundational principles in all of Christian life. When we eat, we should eat to the glory of God. When we drink, we should drink to the glory of God.

Whatever we do, it's wider than eating and drinking. It's whatever you do. That means whatever I do, I should be able to bow my head and say, Lord Jesus, be glorified in what I'm about to do.

That's what it means. Now, I tell you, if I follow that through life, it's going to make my life different, isn't it? You'd never learn these things in idolatry, would you? Churches that have idolatrous practices don't produce holiness. They produce the very opposite.

Give no offense either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God. Here, Paul divides all humanity into three classes. That's true today.

Everybody in the room today is either a Jew, a Gentile, or a member of the church of God. Which, incidentally, is one of the strongest proofs for the pre-millennial position in the entire Word of God. We're not the Israel of God, as so many claim today.

We're the church of God and distinct from the Jews. And then Paul says, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved. Here, Paul is saying, look, if I can make any concessions, I'll make them in order to win men to Christ.

It doesn't mean he would violate any scriptural principle, because he certainly wouldn't do that. But if he could make some legitimate concession, he would be willing to do it. I didn't put this on, I should have.

I get so involved in what I'm thinking. Actually, the first verse of the next chapter really belongs to chapter 10, and I think it's better if you read it that way. Let me read verse 33 and then verse 1 of chapter 11.

This is 33 of chapter 10. Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved. Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Imitate me in that way. A thing may be lawful for you, but it might not be helpful. It may be lawful for you, but it might not be edifying.

Now, we didn't have time to say, what's the practical application of that to us today? What areas are involved in this? And I'm not going to take time just now, because our time is just about gone.

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