

For Our Example (1 Cor 10:1-11:1)

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[0 : 00] So 1 Corinthians 10. For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.

They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them. Their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things are heard as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, the people who sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in reverie, we should not commit sexual immorality as some of them did. And in one day, 23,000 of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did, and were killed by snakes.

[1 : 09] And do not grumble, as some of them did, and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happen to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of ages has come.

So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.

And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I say. It's not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ. And it's not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ. Because there is one loaf, we who are not many are one body.

[2 : 15] For we all share the one loaf. Consider the people of Israel. Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?

No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be participants with demons.

You cannot drink the cup of God and the cup of demons too. You cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy?

Are we stronger than He? I have the right to do anything, you say. But not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything, but not everything is constructive.

No one should seek their own good, but the good of others. Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience. For the earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

[3 : 18] If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. But if someone says to you, this has been offered in sacrifice, then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience.

I'm referring to the other people's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God.

Even as I try to please everyone in every way, for I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.

That's the word of God. And who? Hi, can you hear me okay? Is that coming through?

[4 : 27] Yep. Good afternoon or evening, everyone. Yep, I'm one of the pastors here. For those of you who don't know me, I'm just happy to open up this long chapter.

But here at PCBC English, we don't skip the hard bits and we don't skip the long bits either. But we will summarize as we go, because this is a passage about food.

And when I preach and there's food in the passage, it's really hard, especially for some of you who are close to dinner time or have been starving yourselves all day. So do bear with me. And here we will be explaining what God has to say to us from this passage.

But I don't know about you, but I think 1 Corinthians, when we've been engaging in it since

February or March, but I feel like 1 Corinthians should come with a bit of a warning label, right?

A warning label. Because it seems like we're surrounded by warnings wherever we go in this book of the Bible. I think if you remember back to chapter 3, be careful how you build, right?

[5 : 30] Chapter 3. Or what you build in church will go up in flames. Or chapter 5, hand over that sexually immoral brother to church discipline.

Or it's going to be like mold that destroys the whole loaf. Another warning, right? Flee from sexual immorality. We heard that in chapter 6. Or you won't inherit God's kingdom.

And last week we heard run so you don't get disqualified. I feel like if there was a cover for the book of 1 Corinthians, it would look like some of our warning signs that we see out on the roads or maybe on the things that you buy.

And here in chapter 10, it is filled with warnings as well. And it can be very easy for us to despair.

What next? What now? But Paul is a pastor and he intersperses warnings, serious warnings for us, with assurances as well.

Assurances as well. So we want to keep both of those in mind as we hear from this passage. It may help to remember that the topic at hand in the book of Corinthians these last few weeks has been food, right?

[6 : 39] Topic dear to many of us. But specifically, actually, it's concerning food offered to idols. Now you might tell me, hey, you know, I picked the wrong Sunday to come visit.

I've never had food offered to idols recently. In fact, we live in New Zealand. Why are you talking about this? But this was a live issue for the Corinthians. And actually, it's a live issue for many Christians around the world, isn't it?

Can we, should we, eat in and around the temples of our city? Now, the simple answer, actually, that Paul gives in verse 14 is flee from idolatry.

So no. But you wonder why he takes two whole chapters to get to that point. Why not, you know, just, here's a question, verse 8, sorry, chapter 8, verse 1, and then just answer.

No, flee from idolatry. End of story. Let's move on to the next topic. Paul is doing more than just giving us yes, no answers. He's wanting us as Christians to learn how to wrestle what we call ethics.

[7 : 47] Well, how do we make decisions as Christians in God's world, right? So the presenting issue may be food offered to idols here in the Corinthians.

But for us, it could be all kinds of things. What to eat or drink, yes. How to dress. How to act. What choices to make when you go to the supermarket.

When you are making decisions for your family. And 1 Corinthians 8 to 10 is going to offer us a framework for how to think and live for Christ amidst all the chaos.

What have we learned so far, right? Have we thought of this as one big topic? So far, we've learned in chapter 8 to ask, what is the effect when I choose something or not to do something?

What is the effect on my brothers and sisters in Christ? Because love is more important than knowledge. We heard that in chapter 8, didn't we? And then in chapter 9, we learn to ask another kind of question.

[8 : 48] What is the effect on non-Christians, right? We heard from the Apostle Paul last week, the gospel actually should override my rights. Because we need to cross cultures carefully.

We need to discipline our body diligently. Because the gospel and that going out is more important than my rights or what I'm entitled to. And now in chapter 10, we're going to see that it's also important when we make choices in God's will to ask, what is the effect on my spiritual life?

Because my spiritual health is more important than my freedom. This is hard to take, right? In a culture that has grown up just hearing, just do it, right?

It's on our jackets. It's in the way we live our lives. And yet, Paul is giving us Christian ethics. How do we live in God's will?

And there's two main halves of chapter 10, right? So this is how I want to split it for us. There's a couple of examples, right? Let the failure of the Israelites warn us about fleeing idolatry.

[9 : 54] And then he ends the chapter with a couple of scenarios, okay? Case studies. What do you do when you go to someone's house for food? What do you do when you buy the food from the meat market?

So there's a couple of scenarios that round off what to do with idol food. But ultimately, how do we eat and drink for God's glory? But again, we need to remember, right?

Okay? It's not just examples and scenarios. We want to tie it all together. So perhaps it might help to think of chapters 8 to 10 like a tray of pies, right? You have principle, okay? We heard that from Isaac in chapter 8, right?

And then that extended illustration, chapter 9, right? And then examples in our chapter and then scenarios to end with, okay? I told you there's a lot about food today.

But let's head into this chapter. Paul began in chapter 8. He said, don't eat food offered to idols. What was the reason? What was the reason he gave in that chapter?

[10 : 54] Anyone remember? It might stumble that your brother or sister, is that right? So the word there was conscience, right? We wanted to be conscious of what they were thinking.

Maybe they had a real problem with it. Okay? But what about here in chapter 10? It seems like Paul gives a different but more serious objection. To eat where food is sacrificed to a false god is actually, in fact, taking part in idol worship.

And to explain this, to illustrate this, from verses 1 to 6, Paul starts giving some big, scary examples where God's people defy him, commit idolatry, and are destroyed.

The first story he brings up, you have to look in your Bibles for this, is from verse 1 onwards. Don't be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and they all passed through the sea.

This is Paul, in verse 1 here, speaking of the Exodus generation. The people who left Egypt with Moses. But notice how he's casting that story for Christians and using Christian language.

[12 : 08] Verse 2, have a look. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

That's a very Christian way to describe an Old Testament story. Having journeyed through waters of freedom, these Israelites, they're not just immersed, not just in the sea, but in the cloud.

There was a God's glory that followed them on their journeys, if you remember. Keep looking, verse 3 and 4, they all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink.

It might seem bizarre to us here in this description of the rock being Christ. But here we need to remember, at the very end of Moses' life, he sings in a song of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 2. He tells the Israelites, remember the rock who has followed you through all your wilderness years, the Lord himself. I think that's what Paul is referring to, he's making that connection to rock being Christ.

You see what he's doing? Paul is reading the Exodus story, originally written for Jewish people, and says to a Gentile church, people who aren't Jewish, look how much their story is like our story as Christians.

[13 : 17] They had a salvation story to savor. They had an Exodus journey to remember, an experience of God's Spirit in their midst.

They even had parallel experiences to Christians. Baptism, in a way. A meal with the Lord, in a way. And hear what happened to them.

Verse 5. God was not pleased with most of them. Their bodies hit the floor, and the desert had gone. Warning. Don't think that if you have experienced outward signs of salvation, they have magically protected you from idolatry, from God's judgment.

Because it didn't for Israel, did it? Have a think of the millions of people who left Egypt for the promised land. Have a think.

How many finally reached it from that generation? Just two. Joshua and Caleb. Mostly, everyone else's bodies were scattered in the wilderness. In case we missed the point, verse 6, Paul says to us, These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

[14 : 33] And you see, Paul wants us to hear these stories and say, Don't copy their hearts.

Because if we do, we will become idol worshippers ourselves.

If we do, we are at risk of being scattered, destroyed spiritually as well. Look at verse 11. Paul says exactly the same thing.

These were examples, types, written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come. Some of you have grown up in church and so you have heard some of these stories. But you have not truly heard them until you realize that they are warnings that our hearts would not copy their hearts. The first three quarters of the Bible was not just stories of heroes to copy, but failures that we should turn from, repent of in our own lives.

All right? If your Sunday school teacher only told you, Be like Daniel. Be like David. Be like Moses. You have missed the point, says the Apostle Paul.

[15:45] Don't set your hearts on evil as they did. Paul is urging Christians in Corinth to do this, right? To learn from Israel's example. And in verse 7, he actually quotes Exodus 32, verse 6 directly.

He says, Don't eat food offered to idols. And this refers to the Exodus story. Some of you may know this one. Where the Israelites, at the very beginning of their journey, Even while Moses was up on the mountain receiving God's law, They turned from the Lord to worship a golden car.

They worshipped in its presence, actually, the story says, by eating and drinking and playing. And when it says playing, it's not referring to board games, by the way. And the result is that God destroyed them.

Thousands of them, by sword and by plague. And Paul says, Warning. Don't worship idols. Now the story that Paul brings up, right, is from Numbers chapter 25.

And this refers to Israel's final rebellion in the wilderness. This was even worse than the Exodus story. Actually, notice how in Numbers 25, You see that sexual sin and idolatry are connected together.

[17:07] Right? The people's lust for the Moabite women leads them to eating their food and sacrificing to their idols. Their sin is actually so shameless, the rest of the story, you can read it in your own time, That later in the story, even as Moses is rebuking everyone, There is an Israelite guy, and he has the cheek to find a woman and sin right in front of everyone.

And they are skewed in the act. Paul is taking stories like this, And tells us, We shouldn't commit sexual immorality as they did.

Nor should we test Christ, verse 9. Nor should we grumble, verse 10. When God's people defy him, They are destroyed. Be warned. Why did Paul choose these examples?

He could have chosen many examples from the Old Testament. What did these stories share in common with the Corinthian situation? Actually quite a lot. Right? What were the issues here? Right? Food, Idolatry, Unrepentant sexual sin, Grumbling and division. Does that sound familiar to us? That's exactly the situation, The issues that the Corinthians have been wrestling with.

[18:25] You see, Paul has chosen these specific Old Testament stories To warn the Corinthians and to us Not to share the same hearts as they did. And we need to recognize these kinds of sins, They connect together closely in our lives today as well.

One author, Andrew Wilson, he puts it this way, People who change their sexual partners Will often end up changing their gods as well. Not far from a grumbling heart too Is an idol that we are treasuring more than God.

And the more we test and tempt the goodness of God and Christ, I think the more we are at risk of straying into the arms of another god. One reformer, Martin Luther, he put it this way, You will never break God's other commandments Without first breaking the first one.

You shall have no other gods before me. Before someone falls into pornography, Or sleeps with their partner, Or shouts at their kids, They have already placed something else, Other than God, As their number one.

That is a definition of idolatry, is it not? Or to love human approval, Or comfort, Or pleasure more than God himself, That's going to lead you to other sins.

[19:45] This is serious stuff, is it not? These are warnings for us too. But there's a tension. How can Paul say to Christians, Saved in Christ by grace, That they may fall away?

Did Paul not start the letter saying that They would be blameless in the day of Christ, right? 1 Corinthians chapter 1. How do these warnings fit in with our understanding as Christians That we are saved by grace and kept by Christ?

I think Paul seems to anticipate that we might object. Why warn us? Because in verse 12, he tells us, So if you think you're standing firm, right?

If you think you'll be saved by grace, Be careful that you don't fall. But then he also adds the next verse as well, right? Verse 13.

No temptation has seized you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. Many of us weary Christians, We find hope in this verse, do we not?

[20 : 53] And yet it goes with verse 12. The warnings and the assurances go together. That's the Christian life. You keep rejecting God's will for your life, You will face God's judgment Because it reveals where your heart truly is.

And yet, if you turn back to God, Then you are showing God is faithful To keep you as his child to the end And lead you out of every temptation.

So the answer is both. Be careful. Don't fall into divine judgment. And yet God will help you stay the course. And perhaps through his warnings.

Have you considered that? That the warnings that God gives us Could be a means that he preserves you to the end. If you're feeling proud today, Secure in the way you are living, If there are two ways to live And you are living your way instead of God's way, Maybe you need his warnings today.

These are not my words. These are God's words. Maybe you need to stop the way you're going And repent, turn back to the Lord.

[22 : 06] And yet if you are weighed down right now By the despair that your sin brings, Not again. This is so shameful.

Lord, do I truly belong in this place? Maybe you need God's assurance. Both are true. Both are for the Christian. Have a think.

Which of these evil things from verse 7 to 10 Is the biggest temptation for your heart right now? Do you need a warning? Do you need an assurance?

God is faithful. He offers both to you today in Christ. And it's through this confidence that Paul has In God's faithfulness that moves him to keep going.

He then lovingly answers the question, Dear friends, I love that. Therefore, my dear friends, Flee from idolatry. Paul is not just splitting hairs over what food we can eat.

[23 : 06] Again, it's not the act, But what it represents In our hearts that makes it An idol or not. Alright? Someone's put it this way.

Where you eat and drink, It can be a window to what you worship. And Paul is going to remind his readers That actually, Your dining habits Can carry spiritual meaning.

Have a look. In verse 14 to 17, Paul first gives a Christian example, right? There's a very regular meal that we have as Christians, The Lord's Supper. We'll go into this more in the next chapters, Because he will keep going on this.

But for now, he points out, Look, when we share the bread and the wine, It's more than just filling our bellies, right? Well, we can't fill bellies on the kind of bread and wine that we bring. But it's more than just a meal.

It has spiritual significance. It's a way to show our union with Christ And our fellowship with each other. Meals aren't always just meals.

[24 : 05] And so we can't just live like the world and say, It's just food. It's just drink. It doesn't matter. For the Christian, At least one meal in our life demonstrates Our spiritual unity with each other.

And actually, Paul then keeps going on. He says, Jewish worship was no different either. Okay? In verse 18 to 22, he kind of summarizes, Look, the people of Israel. He talks about people of his own flesh.

For the priest from the Israelites to eat the food Was actually to take part in the sacrifice as well. I wonder if you've been reading the book of Leviticus recently.

All right. Hands up, anyone? No. All right. That's okay. Not surprised. In the start of Leviticus chapter 1, though, Anyone could bring an offering And say that they had to take part in the process. Okay? It says, When you come and offer a sacrifice, You need to put the apron on, Cut the animal, And bleed it, And so on. This was worship that was very self-involved.

[25 : 08] And so, This is what's happening, right? Paul's reminding the Corinthians, right? Don't just brush off eating at the temple. That's to ignore the true character of what you're doing.

At a purely factual level, Yes, those idols are not real. They don't exist. Right? Verse 19 to 20. But, As you take part there, There are spiritual forces opposed to God Who do exist.

And as you pour out your trust In something or someone other than God, That has become your God, And demons have bound you. At the end of the day, You and I cannot serve two masters. We cannot choose both the Lord and an idol in our lives. For the Corinthians, It meant they needed to commit to the Lord's table And stop eating idol food inside a pagan temple.

And now you might be thinking, How does this translate to my life? Right? Every food court in Auckland Doesn't look like the Corinthians' Eating habits and situations.

[26 : 18] And yet, In 21st century New Zealand, There are places of idol worship. Are there not? They may not billow with incense, Perhaps like in the Corinthians' day, But they might say, Binge me.

They might take credit card And ask you to stay a while. They might say, Wear this lanyard Or sign this to belong. And so we need to think broader With the principle.

Ask yourselves, When you join an event, When you take part in activity, When you eat somewhere, With someone, What does it do to me spiritually?

Perhaps there's a co-op game That you'd love to join in. And that's going to push the boundaries Of what is good and evil In your life, In your heart.

And all in worship of pleasure. Perhaps you're going to be invited To attend a wedding. Or take a job offer. And part of that means That you're going to approve A distortion of God's design for marriage.

[27 : 20] Maybe you've been offered a free meal. Or tickets to a favorite concert. Or a hit movie that everyone is watching Comes with sinful strings attached.

What will you do there? The Lord says, You shall have no other gods before me. And so the question to ask is, Is anything being worshipped here Besides God?

How would the Lord feel about my presence? My taking part in this situation? This is what Christians need to ask As we do life together.

Of course, if you're not a Christian, This will make no sense to you Because you'll think, I'm free to do whatever I want. But that is not how Christians live. We have a master, Our Lord Jesus.

And yet if Paul ended the chapter here At verse 22, I think we'd still have a lot of Unanswered questions, right? What does this look like? You know, I, I, I, I, in real life. We might come away as legalist perhaps.

[28 : 23] We might go, I've got some rules now. I can live it out. And I'll be better than you. No, we can't do that. 1 Corinthians 10 is laying out Not just what I must do, But it's giving us a road map To make good, wise decisions.

Because we have three questions, right? Does this love other people in Christ? Does this help to share the gospel With non-Christians?

Does this help me in my own spiritual life? And there are lots of situations Where some of those clash. You can't do one without not doing the other. What do you do in those situations?

And that is why Paul lays out In our last few minutes, In the last couple of verses, Some scenarios that the Corinthians Were facing, all right? And the scenario here is About where food comes from, right?

All right, sure. All right, Paul. I'm not going to go to the temple anymore. But hang on. What's going on? What do I do when food Just enters my house, right? These days we value details About where our food came from.

[29 : 31] Okay? We talk of Kobe beef, Sriracha sauce That actually has the right label on it. Eggs are really expensive now, right? And why is that? It's because every egg Has a little tracker number there.

So you can go and look up online Which farm that this egg was from. And which, I don't know, Which chicken laid it, maybe. There was a food origin issue, though, right? For the Corinthians.

Right? Sure, I won't go to the temple, okay? And eat with them. And yet, And yet, Food offered to idols, Actually, in those days, Didn't just stay in the temple. They'd just get passed out, right?

And then they get sold in the meat markets. And if you're just doing your shopping, What do you do? Do we avoid meat altogether? Alright? Do we check the source Of every animal product we

buy?

You know, become one of those people. You know, always reading the labels, right? Again, Paul lays out a principle before the rule. Look at verse 23. Everything is permissible, But not everything is beneficial.

[30 : 31] Everything is permissible. Hang on. But not everything is constructing. Don't just seek your own good, But the good of others. So don't just ask whether I'm allowed to do it. But also ask whether it's loving.

Just because something isn't banned by the Bible Doesn't make it building up for other people in our context. And this goes for all kinds of questions. Whether you get a tattoo, Whether you drink alcohol, Or learn a sport, Or buy a car.

You've got to filter all of this with, Not just can I do it. Because that's an easy answer. But does it love Those closest to me. My brothers and sisters in Christ.

And so following the principle, Actually, Paul, verse 25, He gives a very surprising answer, right?

What does he say? Eat anything sold in the meat market Without raising questions of conscience.

You see, Christians, Look, we shouldn't join in pagan worship. But it doesn't mean that meat offered in sacrifice Is permanently off limits.

[31 : 33] Here, the situation is that We're not in the temple grounds now, right? Here, we're in a countdown or taiping, right? And Paul just says, Listen to Psalm 24.

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Remember, the meat's not the problem, But what it means, okay? So, take the meat outside of the context Of worshipping a false god.

Go for it. It's the Lord's. To some in Corinth who were Maybe wanting to veer the other way, You can't eat this, this, this, this, this, Right? Actually, Paul says, God made it.

I can eat it. So long as it's done in love For my brothers and sisters. There's two extremes we've heard so far, right? No to eating idol meat at the temple.

Yes to takeaway. Barbecue at home. And yet, here, verse 27 to 30, Paul then lays out another scenario, okay? Helping us think through a case study, right?

[32 : 34] And verse 27 to 30, It sounds a little bit tricky for us. What happens? Because here, there's an unbeliever Who's invited you over. You choose to go.

And, hang on, someone else is coming along. And they're your brother or sister in Christ. A pastor once told me, Try to apply this message a bit more easily to our lives.

You could try to replace idol food with hell's pizza. All right? Top-selling pizzas, Named after the seven deadly sins, If you go there.

But here is a secular business that, I don't know, Profits off portraying good and evil. Right? As evil. And evil is good.

And so, I think there's a clear case, I think, That I'm not going to sign up And rock in and be their VIP customer. Right? I'm not going to be liking them on Instagram anytime soon.

[33 : 30] But let's say, like verse 27, You have a friend, Not yet a Christian, Invites you over dinner. And you know that he's not a Christian. And so, when he says, We're having pizza tonight.

What are you going to do? Are you going to be like, Hang on. What kind of pizza are you going to bring? You know? Don't be that guy. All right? At the same time, You can choose to go or not.

Right? What does verse 27 say? If you want to go, Go for it. But go knowing that it's possible That there's going to be food there That's not in your comfort zone. But if you choose to go, You don't have to grill them.

Right? Where did you buy this from? Right? Is this gluten free? That sort of thing. Enjoy it as a gift from the Lord. But let's say you're there At your friend's house.

You're enjoying a meal. Right? You're not asking questions Because out of love, You really want them to know Jesus. Right? And so, you're not going to put an obstacle in their way. Halfway through the meal, okay?

[34 : 30] Actually, you brought a friend along with you Who is a Christian. Maybe became a Christian two weeks ago. And halfway through the meal, They call you aside. And they're like, Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness. I saw the recycling box.

It's our pizza. What do we do? On the one hand, You could have a conversation with that brother or sister And say, And do a big theological debate And say, Come on.

Okay. Alright. Let me explain to you from the Bible That this is not actually a big deal. Or, You could love them. Right? Because they're your brother or sister in Christ. And just go, Oh, okay.

Alright. I'll stop eating it. For your sake. You know that it's not a big deal. And yet, Out of love, You refrain. Alright?

So just a test case. Just a test case. Alright? Don't just do Bible study with them And try and sort it out there and then. Just for that time. Let it go. For the sake of your Christian brother or sister.

[35 : 30] Can you see how it can be very complicated? Alright? Scenarios. Different questions. I'm sure I've made the wrong decision At some stages of my existence as well.

This is not a once and for all rule. Cut and dry. We need God's wisdom to help us navigate These complex ethical issues.

Alright? And 1 Corinthians 8-10 just talks about one thing. Right? Food offered to idols. It doesn't give us yes, no answers To every ethical question in 2023. Alright? Now we have food courts and Uber Eats.

What do we do? We have Muslim neighbors. What do we do? You might be invited to a same-sex marriage. What do we do? Yet these chapters give us the principles. The questions to ask to love our Christian family.

So that we can win our neighbors for Christ. And so that our own faith is not shipwrecked. Alright? Three priorities, but they're all important. And so an author, Vaughan Roberts, he summarizes the five questions you and I can ask for any scenario.

[36 : 37] Okay? Any gray area or any uncertain scenario. Ask these five questions. Firstly, does the Bible allow it? Okay? That's pretty... You can get yes, no answers for lots of things. Alright?

Because we want to lean into God's will. And secondly, does my conscience allow it? No matter where you are in the journey of following Christ, there are some things that you might find really hard to do right now.

And that's okay. And then ask, as we've heard, what's the impact on my Christian family? Right? Because love is more important than your knowledge. Ask, what is the impact on non-Christians? Because sharing the gospel is far more important than my own rights. And then finally, ask, what is the effect on my spiritual life? Because God's glory is far more important than my freedom.

And Paul ends this chapter by saying, whether yes or no, whatever you do, whatever choices you make, do it all for God's glory.

[37 : 38] Alright? Here in verse 31 is the one-line summary of Paul's teaching on everything, not just food. God's glory is what matters most. If you take part in a festival, do it for God's glory.

If you decline an invitation to an event, but then you want to invite them over later on, do that for God's glory. If your friend is lactose intolerant and you want to keep a soy milk in your pantry, do it for God's glory.

This is how Paul is served in ministry, has he not? Right? He's blameless before Jew and Gentile, he tells us. He wants God's glory before his reputation and comfort.

Before his right to be financially secure. Before even his own eating and drinking preferences. And this is how Paul's Savior, who he's imitating, lived as well.

Recently been reading the Bible with some people. And we just keep seeing that the Son of Man, he came eating and drinking. And he would have had to deal with a lot of these gray areas too, right?

[38 : 46] Eating and drinking with sinners and tax collectors. Serving not himself but others that they might be saved. That's our Savior. And yet he also, if you remember on the cross, he refrains from food.

Even to his last moment. So that he can continue on the path to our redemption, our salvation. On the cross he rejects the sour wine.

He hungers and thirsts. He bleeds and he dies. He carry the weight of all our sins. And so if he gave himself wholly for us.

For the glory of God. All our lives. Could it not be given to the glory of God? For him as well.

Nothing should be off limits to Christ's transforming work.

There's no better counsel than the gospel for navigating all the different challenges of the Christian life. Than to imitate someone like Paul as they imitate Christ.

[39 : 50] Let's pray. Father, we thank you. These are not easy words for us. Where we have failed, would you assure us of your grace in Christ.

Where we are proud in heart. And not willing to yield to your will. Would you warn us and challenge us? Father, we thank you for the Son of Man, Jesus.

Who came eating and drinking. Who loved us to the end. And we ask that by your grace, you would help us to make wise, difficult decisions in every part of our life. For your glory. Your glory alone. In Jesus' name we pray.