

NOTE: The following is from *Comments on First and Second Corinthians*, Leslie M. Grant, chapter 10, pp 66-67.

The connection here with chapter 8, where this subject began, is evident. If meat was sold in the stores, there was no need to question whether it had been offered to an idol. Certainly this made no difference as to the meat itself, and the Christian has perfect liberty to eat it; "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." And the believer receives it from the Lord, with thanksgiving. Or, if a believer accepts an invitation to a meal with an unbeliever, he is to be fully free to eat what is furnished without question. But if his host, or anyone present, were to tell him this had been offered in sacrifice to an idol, then immediately the issue is raised as to whether he will recognize the idol. His informer certainly has this in view, and therefore the believer is not to eat. This is proper care for the informer's conscience. And again it is said, "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." If my eating would give another the impression that I believed the food was a demon's, and not the Lord's, then I should not eat. So whether eating in the first case, or not eating in the other, the basis of truth for both is identical.

The conscience of another then, not merely my own, should concern me; for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? If I have liberty, let me express it in such a way that the other man's conscience will not judge it. For if my eating would stumble him,

then let me use my liberty *not* to eat, and his conscience will not judge my liberty. If I partake with thanksgiving to God, why should I do it in such a way that another will

have occasion to speak evil of me on account of the very thing for which I give thanks?

So that, as well as the consideration of another's conscience, there is the question of the glory of God involved here. For His glory is certainly a supreme consideration in the way we represent Him before men. "Do all things to the glory of God" is a sobering, steady reminder for our souls. Our conduct should give no occasion of stumbling to any, whether Jews, Gentiles, or the Church of God. They are all God's creatures, and my own comfort and pleasure is secondary to the proper welfare of their souls. Paul was the example in this self-sacrificing attitude of pleasing all men in all things. This is, of course, not pleasing men as subject to their domination, or as merely seeking human approval (as is fully refuted in Gal. 1:10); but as genuinely seeking the purest good of their souls, that they may be saved. He would not compromise the truth of God for anyone, but he would give up his own personal advantage for the sake of any, if it might bring them to God.

End of extract from L. M. Grant

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Begin comments by Ron Canner

These verses bring to conclusion the rather lengthy discussion begun with chapter 8. Self confidence is companion to self indulgence. Self importance is companion to human reasoning. Self indulgence and human reasoning together were the downfall of the Corinthian saints, and an ever present danger to believers today. Regular self judgement, and that only momentarily, is the only self heed we are to pay.

The bottom line is we are not to live for ourselves. We live only for the Lord and for the benefit of others. We are His. We are our brother's keepers and should go to extreme lengths to avoid stumbling another and to bring another to Christ. They are His. We give up our privileges for the sake of other's spiritual advantage and well being. This is to be whether they are saved or unsaved, Jew, Gentile or professing Christian believer. We do this for the glory of the Lord. For, of course, the Lord is glorified when one of His own sacrifices for the

sake of another. That is His style if we can say that reverently. And it is an awesome giving God that has revealed Himself to us in the Person and work of His Son Jesus Christ. We are privileged to reflect His love to others in sometimes very simple ways. And we are privileged to show the lost the way no matter what the cost to ourselves. He paid the ultimate price at the cross. And we are privileged to give up our convenience to gather and shepherd His sheep

Self indulgence and self importance had led the Corinthians to careless partaking of idol sacrifices honoring the demonic host behind the idol. This snubbed the Lord who had died to free them from the power of Satan and his minions. The idol was nothing but wood or metal (or plastic nowadays), the meat sacrificed to idols was only meat, but idolatry was something to flee. The Lord is the only One who is worthy of worship.

Why didn't Paul just give us some commands

that would cover our behavior in the situations covered by chapters 8-10? That's what God did to Israel through Moses. Because it didn't work. Instead it takes a lot of words (three chapters) to explain to us believers, who are not under law but under grace, that we should or shouldn't be doing something. By instructing us this way our liberty in Christ is not compromised and we remain free to make wise, informed, loving, spiritual decisions about activities we might engage in. The underlying principle is:

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

Auxiliary principles that follow from this are:

Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

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

Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ.

That is, follow Christ!!!

Now look at what would happen if we were to state the exhortation in chapters 8 through 10 as a series of Old Testament commandments. Perhaps we would lay down the law and say something like this:

Thou mayst eat whatever is bought in a meat market.

Thou mayst eat anything is set before you.

Thou shalt not attend services or eat anything in an idol temple.

Thou shalt not eat anything that had been sacrificed to an idol.

Thou shalt not stumble a weak person.

Thou shalt not do anything that affronts another person

Thou shalt glorify God in all you say, or do, or think.

Do you think you could keep these if you had to? Maybe some of them. But please note: they do NOT represent what Paul is really teaching here. However, instead of commandments like those above, we are taught in the New Testament not to make rules regarding eating, drinking and other details of life. Why?

26 For the earth [is] the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

He made it all and gave it to man for his blessing.

Acts 14:13 We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not

knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

1Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

1Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Colossians 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

And we can bless men by forgoing what God has made and freely provided for us if doing so is of benefit to them

28 For the earth [is] the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

The questions in verses 29 and 30 can be taken two ways either of which are good for us to heed.

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another [man's] conscience? 30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

One may take vs 29 and 30 as questions Paul anticipates they might ask. Why should my liberty be limited by some other dude's weak conscience? And why would someone speak evil of me for eating something I receive by the grace of God and give thanks for to God?

Alternatively, one might take vs 29 and 30 as an appeal to the conscience to avoid being judged by God and others as selfish because of indulging in something that might stumble someone. Either way the answer is

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

Now Paul exhorts us to follow him as he follows Christ. Could we honestly with a good conscience make such a statement? Well of course, with the proviso "as I follow Christ" we all could, and should endeavor to be able to with no doubts, say follow me as I follow Christ. Let us follow Him together, inspiring one another by our conduct and example.

By Ron Canner, July 2, 2003