

### **Introduction:**

I chose the passage as my text mostly because of the quote in verse 31, “do all to the glory of God.” I spent a lot of time this last year studying what the Bible has to say about God’s glory and I wanted to understand the context in which that quote falls better. I also chose it because I wanted to understand what this passage has to say about Christian liberty. I also wanted to understand the issue of Christian liberty better because I have always had questions about it. I wanted to know more about what the Bible has to say about Christian liberty in order to apply it to my life. I never understood well prior to this study who Paul was talking about when he referred to the strong and the weak Christians. I decided to study this passage because I think it has implications for all Christians that we need to be aware of. It applies to issues such as the use of alcohol, gambling, and other things that can be done that may be perceived by some to be a hindrance to the testimony of Christ. As Christians we need to know what the Bible has to say about these kinds of issues and how to relate to people in them.

### **Limits of the Passage:**

This section begins at verse 23 as is seen by the fact that in verse 23 Paul transitions to a new topic by taking up the Corinthians idea that all things are permitted. That this section begins at 10:23 as can also be seen by the transition of topic. Paul was dealing with temple meals in 10:1-22, then in verse 23-11:1 Paul discusses food sacrificed to idols. The ending of this passage is clearly 11:1 because the transitional conjunction δὲ identifies a new topic in 11:2.

### **Preliminary Translation:**

23. All things are permitted but all things are not helpful, all things are permitted but not all things edify. 24. Do not let each one seek his own but that of another. 25. Eat everything sold in the market-place not judging on the account of conscience, 26. for the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness of it, 27. if some unbeliever calls you and you wish to go, eat everything set before you not judging anything on the account of conscience. 28. And if someone says to you, this is offered in sacrifice, do not eat on account of that which was made known and conscience. 29. but I do not speak concerning your own conscience but that of the others. For

why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? 30. For if I partake in grace, why blaspheme for that which I give thanks? 31. Whether you eat, whether you drink, or whatever you do, do all things to the glory of God. 32. Be blameless both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God. 33. Just as I also please everyone in everything not seeking my own advantage but that of the many, so that they might be saved. 11:1 Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ.

#### Translation Analysis:

10:23

ESV- but not all things build up.

KJV- but all things edify not.

NIV- but not everything is constructive.

NASB- but not all things edify.

ASV- but not all things edify.

The NIV translates οἰκοδομεῖ as constructive to give the word meaning which is more easily understood. The KJV transposes the word “not” in order to communicate clearly to its audience.

10:29

ESV- I do not mean your conscience, but his.

NIV- the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours.

NKJV- “Conscience,” I say, not your own, but that of the other.

NASB- I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's

Two semantic domains the Nida and Louw lexicon gives for λέγω is speak and mean. The NKJV translates the meaning of λέγω as if it is in the semantic domain of “speaking”. However, the use of λέγω should be taken in the semantic domain “mean.” The NIV perhaps needlessly transposes the sentence order so that λέγω is translated after συνείδησιν.

10:30

ESV- why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

NIV- why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

NKJV- why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?

NASB- why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

The NKJV infers the word “food” from the syntagmatic context of the passage and translates ὑπὲρ as a spatial use. However, ὑπὲρ here is used with a genitive not an accusative. So, in order to capture the correct use of ὑπὲρ it would be best to translate ὑπὲρ as indicating advantage and to therefore not infer “food” from the context.

### **Word Study:**

*Semantic range of συνείδησις:*

BibleWorks cites 30 occurrences of συνείδησις within the New Testament. BDAG gives three different possible meanings for συνείδησις. First, it can mean “consciousness,” where it denotes an awareness of information in regard to something. This use of the word occurs in 8:7a within 1 Corinthians and in Heb. 10:2 and 1 Peter 2:19 elsewhere in the New Testament.

Second, συνείδησις can mean “conscience.” This is the use of the word as it appears in my text in verses 25, 27, 28, and 29 in 1 Corinthians 10. Within the rest of 1 Corinthians this use of the word appears in 8:7,10, and 12. BDAG lists 14 other occurrences in the letters of Paul and 9 other occurrences in the rest of the New Testament. The final meaning of συνείδησις which BDAG cites is “conscientiousness.” This meaning of the word appears nowhere in the New Testament that is cited by BDAG, but does in Hellenistic literature.

Liddell and Scott gives a wider range of the meaning of συνείδησις in Hellenistic literature.

Liddell and Scott gives as possible meanings: (1) knowledge shared with another, (2) communication, information, (3) knowledge, (4) consciousness or awareness, (5) consciousness of right or wrong, conscience, and (6) complicity, guilt, or crime. Searching Nida-Louw in BibleWorks reveals that συνείδησις is given the meanings: (1) be aware and (2) conscience. In regard to the meaning of “conscience” for συνείδησις Nida-Louw points out that συνείδησις may also refer to an organ of the body such as the heart or liver in some instances.

Thiselton gives excellent insight into the research that has been done on *συνείδησις*. There has been much research on *συνείδησις* within Pauline studies. Most notably among these studies is the work done by C.A. Pierce. Pierce was reacting to a view that saw *συνείδησις* primarily as a source of knowledge. He thought that this idea falsified the way that Paul uses the term.<sup>1</sup> Instead, the use of the term is primarily negative. “Conscience” gives rise to the “pain consequent upon the inception of an act believed to be wrong.”<sup>2</sup> Later, Horsley would interpret *συνείδησις* as “consciousness” or “self-awareness.” Eckstein traced the continuity between the Paul’s use of *συνείδησις* and the Old Testament’s use of *לב* (i.e. heart).<sup>3</sup> He argued that it transcends the merely cognitive and include awareness and reflection.

*Paradigmatic context of συνείδησις:*

Paul uses *συνείδησις* over the possible alternative of *σύνεσις*.<sup>4</sup> *σύνεσις* can be used equivalently to *συνείδησις*. However, *σύνεσις* has a wider range of meaning than *συνείδησις* does. *σύνεσις* can mean: (1) insight, (2) intelligence, (3) union, (4) a branch of science or art, and (5) decision or decree.<sup>5</sup> Moulton and Milligan shed further light on Paul’s use of *συνείδησις* in the New Testament. They say, “The deeper sense of “*conscience*,” which the word has in the Pauline writings, is often traced to the influence of popular Greek philosophy: “it is one of the few technical terms in St. Paul which seem to have Greek rather than Jewish affinities,” ...The word would seem, therefore, to have been “baptized” by Paul into a new and deeper connotation, and to have been used by him as equivalent to *τὸ συνειδός*.”<sup>6</sup>

For Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 *συνείδησις* refers to a persons “self-awareness.”

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 641.

<sup>2</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 641.

<sup>3</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 643.

<sup>4</sup> C.D. Yonge, “*An English-Greek Lexicon*” (American Book Company: New York, 1870), 120.

<sup>5</sup> Liddell and Scott, “*Greek-English Lexicon*”, (Clarendon Press: New York, 1996, 1712.

<sup>6</sup> J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, “*Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*”, (Hendrickson Publishers: Massachusetts, 2004), 604.

## Discourse Analysis:

### Verses 23-24

After discussing the issue of temple meals Paul moves on to discuss meat sacrificed to idols. In verse 23 Paul says, “All things are lawful.” Here, Paul may be speaking rhetorically. Greek teachers would use criteria such as the “usefulness” of an action to determine whether or not a course of action should be pursued.<sup>7</sup> He could then be stating this criteria and then answering it by pointing out that not all things are helpful even if they are permitted. Here, Garland’s insight is helpful, he quotes Fee saying that some in Corinth think that their knowledge gave them authority to act as they saw fit.<sup>8</sup> The issue lies then deeper than just the mere question of eating. Paul is trying to correct the errors of the Corinthians. Fee suggests that the Corinthians tried to make temple attendance an adiaphoron, but Paul saw it as an absolute because it was idolatry.<sup>9</sup> The Corinthians had made it a matter of knowledge and rights while for Paul it was a matter of love and freedom.<sup>10</sup> Contrary to the Corinthians “me first” theology which put the individual and their rights above the common welfare of people, Paul opted for a community oriented approach in verse 24 by insisting that we are to seek the good of other people before our own good. Conzelmann brings out well the community aspect of what Paul is saying by commenting on οἰκοδομεῖ. He says, οἰκοδομεῖ is first of all about the upbuilding of the community and not the individual as is seen in Paul’s usage of that term in 1 Corinthians chaps. 12 and 14.<sup>11</sup> Thiselton and Conzelmann agree that the church is being referenced in the phrase, οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ because οἰκοδομεῖ is a word that usually has an ecclesiastical referent.

### Verses 25-26

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<sup>7</sup> Craig S. Keener, *“The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament.”*, (Intervarsity Press: IL, 1993), 474.

<sup>8</sup> David E. Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Baker Academic: MI,

<sup>9</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids: MI, 1987), 478.

<sup>10</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 478.

<sup>11</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1975), 176.

Some people have found conflict between the advice Paul gives in 8:1-13 and 10:1-22 where eating with idols is strongly condemned and with verses 25-26 where Paul seems to take a liberal attitude.<sup>12</sup> This had lead some to argue for 10:1-22 as being a separate letter that was interpolated into the text. This view though has been rejected now. It is unnecessary to hold this view if one knows the historical context well. Paul's admonition to "eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience demonstrates how Paul has deviated from the Pharisaical tradition.<sup>13</sup> To make a determination about whether meat was sacrificed to idols or not was required in Jewish tradition. So the question needs to be asked, "Does Paul acknowledge the right of the people to eat food consumed to idols? Fee and Witherington deny the right to eat at a meal. However, E. Coye Still argues that Paul does permit it. His reasons are that: (1) Paul references "this freedom of yours in 1 Cor. 8:9 without suggesting it defiles a person or is inauthentic and (2) for the analogies of 8:13-9:27 to stand the people must have a right.<sup>14</sup> Another scholar also argues that the weakness of Fee's argument is explaining why Paul speaks favorably toward idol meats in chapter 8. Paul grants some liberty in a cultic context.<sup>15</sup> This is plausible, but I am not entirely convinced of these arguments.

The question also needs to be asked: Would meat be recognizable has having been offered to idols? In regard to this question Thiselton points to the work of Isenberg, who argues that sacrificial and non-sacrificial meat would have been readily distinguishable as the text *Vita Aesopi* and Pliny's *Letter to Trajan*.<sup>16</sup> I think this however is to make too broad of a generalization. My own thought is that if Paul is to be able to make the claim to not raise questions of the meat on the ground of conscience then the meat must at least not be readily

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<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Kloha, *Idols, Eating, and Rights (1 Cor. 8:1-11:1): Faithful and Loving Witness in a Pluralistic Culture* Concordia Journal 30, (July 2004):179.

<http://firstsearch.oclc.org.search.covenantseminary.edu>

<sup>13</sup> Both Fee and Witherington make this point.

<sup>14</sup> E. Coye Still, "Paul's Aims Regarding Idolatry: A New Proposal for Interpreting 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1," *Novum Testamentum* vol. 44 no. 4 (2002): 335.

<sup>15</sup> B.J. Oropeza, *Laying to Rest the Midrash: Paul's Message on Meat Sacrificed to Idols in Light of the Deuteronomic Tradition* *Biblica* 79 no. 1 (1998) 65.

<sup>16</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 783.

recognizable to Paul's addressees upon unexamination. If meat is readily recognizable upon unexamination how does one make sense of Paul's claim? Furthermore, Paul's own claim seems to imply that at least some meat sacrificed to idols is distinguishable from non-sacrificial meat upon investigation. Some such as Murphy-O'Connor argue that sacrificial meat is practically all that there would have been in Corinth.<sup>17</sup> If this is so, then why should Paul need to make such a claim since it would then be most reasonable to assume that the food was sacrificed to idols rather than examining or inquiring about the origin of the food? It may well be that most food in certain markets or in most markets in Corinth was sacrificed to idols but how do we know that this directly applies to Paul's addressees? On what basis do we make such a generalization? I think the evidence does not compel us to accept that sacrificial food is the primary option that Paul's addressees would have had. To accept this is to over-generalize. Conzelmann also cautions that this is too much of a generalization. He says, "It is frequently maintained that in Paul's day practically all meat offered in the market came from animals that had been sacrificed, since a minimum of ritual custom was observed in slaughtering them. Yet this cannot be maintained in such general terms. In any case, Paul's observations are independent of this question, or rather, they render it superfluous."<sup>18</sup>

The phrase διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν raises exegetical difficulties. Does διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν: (1) refer to permissive freedom so that it is translated "because of conscience", or (2) put an obligation on the "weak" to overcome their scruples by acting on the principle that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness of it and upon the principle "everything is permitted?"<sup>19</sup> Fee argues for the first reading because he thinks that the second misses Paul's point that conscience is not involved so investigation is irrelevant.<sup>20</sup> Conzelmann says the same thing as Fee. Garland also supports the first option saying, "As far as Paul is concerned, food outside of the idol's orbit is permitted, so

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<sup>17</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 783.

<sup>18</sup> Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 176.

<sup>19</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 784.

<sup>20</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 482.

he gives them leave to eat anything sold in the public market without investigating its history to certify that it is free from any idolatrous contamination.”<sup>21</sup>

In verse 26 the issue that needs to be dealt with is Paul’s use of Psalm 24:6. Here, Witherington, Thiselton, Fee, Garland, and Carson and Beale all point out that this verse was commonly used within Judaism to argue that blessings should be said at meals. Paul however uses this text contrary to its common use. He uses it to prove that everything can be eaten in thanksgiving. Paul proves this on the basis of God’s ownership of all things and on the basis of His sovereignty as Carson and Beale suggests. Thiselton proposes three uses of the quotation from Ps. 24:6. The three uses are: (1) to lift attention from self and scrupulous anxiety to the sovereign Lord to whom everything belongs, (2) it reminds the anxious that even pagan temples belong to God’s creation over which He reigns, and (3) it implies every gift of God is to be accepted with gratitude as being from God.<sup>22</sup>

*Verse 27:*

Paul goes on to deal with a different situation. He brings up the situation of a Christian being invited to eat with an unbeliever. Here, the command in verse 27, πᾶν τὸ παρατιθέμενον ὑμῖν ἐσθίετε is parallel to Πᾶν τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον ἐσθίετε in verse 25. Here in verse 27, Paul again stresses his desire for the Corinthians to eat what is set before them. Here, Thiselton suggests that the fundamental principle of this verse is living in gospel freedom unless: (1) covenantal disloyal to God or (2) damage to a fellow believer is entailed in it.<sup>23</sup> Fee points out that some have taken the verb “invites” to be used as indicating that the meal could have taken place at the temple.<sup>24</sup> Here, I agree with Fee’s reasons for rejecting such a view. The first reason

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<sup>21</sup> Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary* 490.

<sup>22</sup>Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 785-786.

<sup>23</sup>Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 786.

<sup>24</sup>Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 483.

is that if the meal was in a temple then there would be no reason to investigate the meat, and second Paul forbade attendance at temple meals in 10:1-22.<sup>25</sup>

*Verses 28-29a:*

The main difficulty in verse 28 is the identity of τὸν μὴνύσαντα. Who does it refer to? Does it refer to (1) the host, (2) a pagan guest, or (3) a Christian believer? The difficulty of interpreting τὸν μὴνύσαντα as the host is the use of τις. Why use τις instead of a personal pronoun? Fee points out another difficulty. He says, “Paul’s hypothetical interlocutor speaks from a pagan point of view by referring to “sacrificial meat” (*hierothyton*) rather than the standard Jewish-Christian designation “idol meat” (*eidōlothyton*), which Paul had used earlier in these chapters.”<sup>26</sup> This kind of argument is echoed by Garland and Conzelmann. The third option has problems as well. Conzelmann is helpful in pointing out a problem with the Christian believer interpretation. In a footnote he references the work of Lietzmann. Lietzmann pointed out that if τις refers to a Christian believer that Paul’s remarks in v. 29a are unneeded and that one would expect him then to write in the phrase τὴν συνείδησιν αὐτοῦ.<sup>27</sup> Garland points out that the “weak” believer would not have likely attended such a meal. The weak’s poverty and scruples would have made them unlikely.<sup>28</sup> Fee points out further difficulties with this interpretation. The possibility of offending non-Christians is explicitly mentioned in v. 32 and in v. 33 Paul’s own conduct is taken as the paradigm for Christian conduct reflecting Paul’s concern in 9:20-23 that non-Christians might be saved.<sup>29</sup> The most likely option is the option of the pagan guest. The pagan guest is most likely because of the use of the pagan terminology ἱερόθυτον, the use of the indefinite pronoun instead of a personal pronoun, and the fact that offending non-Christians is explicitly mentioned and Paul’s conduct is the paradigm.

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<sup>25</sup>Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 483.

<sup>26</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 484.

<sup>27</sup> Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 177.

<sup>28</sup> Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary* 495.

<sup>29</sup>Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 484.

In verse 29a Paul clarifies that he is not speaking of taking into concern one's own conscience but the other persons. The most important question here is how we are to understand συνείδησις. Does it mean "consciousness" here or "conscience?" συνείδησις should probably be understood as "consciousness" here. Fee remarks here that Paul's statement here in 29a probably has very little to do with pagan conscience.<sup>30</sup> Thiselton thinks that the main principle here of concern for the other and not an autonomy of conscience.<sup>31</sup>

Verses 29b-30:

In 29b Paul begins to discuss the nature of freedom itself. These verses are notoriously difficult. There are at least six different views on these verses.<sup>32</sup> One view is proposed by Wiese. This is the view that these verses are merely a gloss added by a later scribe. This view is widely rejected. It is pure speculation that has no supporting evidence.<sup>33</sup> Fee offers us the possibility that Paul here is offering a word of defense because this is the issue on which the Corinthian church was judging him.<sup>34</sup> However, as Garland points out in his commentary if Paul is not offering a defense in chapter 9 then this argument is weakened. Instead, what may be going on according to Garland is that Paul uses the "I" for the sake of vividness while a universal application is in view.<sup>35</sup> Barrett points out another way of reading the text. He mentions that it is attractive to find the voice of an objector saying, "why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience?" He then quickly points out two problems with this view. One reason is that if this was the case then the sentence should be introduced by *but* and not *for* and second Paul is giving a reason that the strong Christian should exercise self-control.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 485.

<sup>31</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 788.

<sup>32</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 788.

<sup>33</sup> Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary* 497.

<sup>34</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 486.

<sup>35</sup> Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary* 498.

<sup>36</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) 243.

Paul links what he says in verse 30 back to what he says in verse 26. The dining room setting and the quotation in verse 26 makes certain that Paul is here referring to praying over meals.<sup>37</sup> Barret suggest that in this verse Paul is justifying abstention by the strong.<sup>38</sup> Conzelmann though thinks that this verse is providing an argument for verse 28 through the example of saying grace.<sup>39</sup> Garland suggests perhaps most plausibly that what Paul is saying is: why should some one denounce the Christians behavior for which he does not any intentional connection?<sup>40</sup>

Verse 31-32:

The command here to “do all things to the glory of God” is in keeping with Paul’s Jewish context. Some Jewish scholars. Some scholars taught that everything should be done for the sake of God.<sup>41</sup> Here, giving glory to God requires avoiding εἰδωλόθυτα. The command to “do all to the Glory of God” becomes a litmus test for gauging whether a behavior is right or wrong.<sup>42</sup> The word that Paul uses here for “glory” is δόξα which here is the counterpart of the Hebrew word כְּבוֹד, which means (1) weight, (2) splendor, or honor. What this terminology does is express the reality of God in revelation.<sup>43</sup> Fee points out that by use of the inferential οὖν Paul brings to a close his argument of 8-10 and especially 10:23-11:1.<sup>44</sup> He states that the two things that we are to live up to is “do all to the glory of God” and to “give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God.”

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<sup>37</sup> Barret, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 244.

<sup>38</sup> Barret, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 244.

<sup>39</sup> Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 178.

<sup>40</sup> Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary* 500.

<sup>41</sup> Keener, *Bible Background Commentary*, 475.

<sup>42</sup> Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary* 500.

<sup>43</sup> Raymond F. Collins and Daniel J. Harrington. ed., *First Corinthians*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999) 389.

<sup>44</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 487.

In verse 32 Paul reiterates what he does in verse 31. Fee suggests here that Paul is bringing his instruction back to the concern of vv. 23-24 by use of the imperative in v. 31.<sup>45</sup> Paul here is concerned with not being a cause of stumbling in order that people may be saved. According to Paul then freedom does not mean the ability to do whatever one wants. Freedom is found in living to the glory of God, in living a life for the good of others, and in living a life that puts no hindrances to people's acceptance of the gospel.

Verse 33 and 11:1:

Paul turns to his own example as the paradigm for proper conduct. This is reflective of how Paul sees his role as an apostle of the church.<sup>46</sup> In this verse the word "to please" will likely conjure connotations in our minds of flattery. However, this is not what Paul is talking about here.

Garland points out that the verb here for "please" frequently occurs within the context of being a slave to Christ and that the term needs to be understood in terms of Paul's service to Christ.<sup>47</sup>

Paul is trying to serve Christ and in doing so he serves all people. Fee says well what Paul's intent is he says. "Paul's concern is not that he himself be pleasing to them, but that his conduct be such that he may not stand in the way of their being saved."<sup>48</sup> Paul points to Christ and puts the emphasis on imitation of him. Here in verse 11:1 Paul could be alluding to Christ's example of how he ate with sinners, to his ruling about there being no unclean food, and the willingness of Christ to give up everything for the sake of all people, even to death on the cross.<sup>49</sup>

### **Final Translation:**

23. All things are permitted but all things are not helpful, all things are permitted but not all things edify. 24. Do not let each one seek his own well-being but that of another. 25. Eat everything sold in the market-place not judging on the account of self-awareness, 26. for the

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<sup>45</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 488.

<sup>46</sup> Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 179.

<sup>47</sup> Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary* 501-502.

<sup>48</sup> Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 490.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995) 229.

earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it, 27. if some unbeliever invites you and you wish to go, eat everything set before you not judging anything on the account of self-awareness. 28. And if someone says to you, this is offered in sacrifice, do not eat on account of that which was made known and self-awareness. 29. but I do not speak concerning your own self-awareness but that of the others. For why should my freedom be judged by another's self-awareness? 30. For if I partake in grace, why am I denounced for that which I give thanks? 31. Whether you eat, whether you drink, or whatever you do, do all things to the glory of God. 32. Do not cause anyone to stumble both Jews and Greeks and to the church of God. 33. Just as I also please everyone in everything not seeking my own advantage but the advantage of the many, so that they might be saved. 11:1 Be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ.

### **Conclusion:**

1 Cor. 10:23-11: we see Paul's concern about idolatry in the church. Paul wanted the Corinthians to put away idolatry so that they could live a life that would not cause a hindrance to unbelievers coming to the faith. His desire was for the Corinthians to all love one another and to do what was best for the good of all people not just their own benefit. We need to understand these things ourselves. While we do not have to deal with eating food sacrificed to idols today, we still struggle with idolatry. We tend to put other things before God. We make good things such as work, sex, and money our idols. Often times this idolatry causes a hindrance to unbelievers coming to Christ. For example, the man who professes to be a Christian and has made money his idol will pursue money and may resort to doing something unethical such as cheating employees on their paychecks to get more. This would put up a barrier to accepting the gospel to the unbelieving employees who got cheated. The unbeliever may now think: Why bother with accepting Christ? Christianity does not have any effect on one's behaviors and believer's are hypocrites. We should avoid situations as this by not doing anything that would hinder the salvation of people. We need to do what is best for the good of all people. Finally, all Christians need to make sure that they do not use their freedom in a way that hinders the gospel. Christians today want to define freedom as doing whatever we want. We need to realize that the Biblical

idea of freedom is freedom to live in a way that gives God glory and does not put up a barrier to people receiving the gospel.

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