"Should I or Shouldn't I ?"

I Corinthians 10:14-11:1

8-20-2023

Introduction: v.14,15

*** When facing a decision about whether or not we should do something we need to ask ourselves the right questions!**

I. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>ASSOCIATE</u> me with evil? *(vv.16-22)*

II. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>BUILD ME UP</u> in the Faith? *(v.23)*

III. ***If I do this...***
Will it be <u>HELPFUL</u> to others or purely <u>SELFISH</u> for me? *(v.24)*

IV. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>CONFUSE the CONSCIENCE</u> of others? *(v.25-30)*

V. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>GLORIFY GOD</u>? *(v.31)*

VI. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>STUMBLE</u> any non-believer or Christian? *(v.32)*

VII. ***If I do this...***
Will my <u>EXAMPLE</u> be one that others can follow? *(v.33, 11:1)*

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V. 14

"Wherefore" - After a two-chapter parenthesis, Paul now concludes a subject he began discussing in 8:1: specifically, the believer's response to food offered to idols.

"Dearly beloved" - The truths Paul expresses come from a heart of love.

"Idolatry" :

--Worshipping <u>any image</u> is idolatry (Dt. 4:14-19)

--Worshipping <u>angels</u> is idolatry (Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10)

--Worshipping <u>demons</u> is idolatry (Rev. 9:20)

--Worshipping <u>dead men</u> is idolatry (Ps. 106:28-29)

--<u>Covetousness</u> is idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5)

"Flee idolatry" - Run from it; keep as far removed from idolatry as possible (as one would flee from the flowing hot lava of a volcano or from the falling timber in a burning forest, so we should <u>run</u> away from anything associated with idolatry). The RCC not only refuses to flee from idolatry; they have in fact promoted it!

V. 15

The Corinthians, who prided themselves in their wisdom, should have enough discernment to evaluate and embrace what Paul now says.

*** When facing a decision about whether or not we should do something we need to ask ourselves the right questions!**

I. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>ASSOCIATE</u> me with evil? (vv.16-22)

V. 16

"Bless" - to give thanks

(Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we give thanks for what those elements represent.)

Paul here is telling us <u>what</u> we are sharing in, <u>not how</u> we are sharing in it.

Therefore, to compare with other Scripture, the <u>sharing</u> (partaking) in the blood and body of Christ in the Lord's Supper is only a sharing in it by way of *"remembrance"* (cp. Lk. 22:19; I Cor. 11:24, 25).

Since it is a symbol of Christ's blood and body, sharing in the Communion elements identifies the partaker with Christ Himself.

The word "communion" (*koinonia)* means to fellowship; it speaks of an intimate sharing together.

Every time we have the Lord's Supper, we fellowship with Christ and associate ourselves with His shed blood and pierced Body which He sacrificed on Calvary.

V. 17

"For" - introduces a reason which validates verse 16.

Paul is saying: The reason we are so closely associated with Christ in the Lord's Supper is because we are in fact <u>one</u> with Him (all believers are united with each other because of our common partaking of that *"one bread"* - Jesus Christ Himself.)

"We are all partakers of that <u>one bread</u>" - This is not a reference to the different pieces of unleavened bread we all consume at the Lord's Supper, but to the singular person of Jesus Christ Himself; He is the *"true bread from heaven"* which if a man partake of by faith, he instantly becomes one with Christ (John 6:32-35 - *"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father given you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and given life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth in me shall never thirst."* Cp. v. 48-64)

V. 18

"Israel after the flesh" - Paul is not using this expression to distinguish that nation Israel from the true Israel, the Christian church, as some suggest (Morris, p. 146). Rather, he is distinguishing between unregenerate Israelites who still offered up carnal sacrifices and regenerate Israelites who were no longer involving themselves in the Old Testament sacrificial system (cp. Hebrews).

Every time a national Israelite ate something off of God's altar, he was associating with that altar and everything it stood for.

V. 19

Paul asks rhetorical questions expecting a NO answer.

He is not saying that the idol has any reality in it by exhorting us to not associate with it.

Anyone who worships idols is in fact worshipping demons (cp. Dt. 32:17), since the idols owe their origin to the demonic host who spawned their existence in the minds of men. Demons can even cause an idol to take on human characteristics (such as speaking, shedding tears, movement; cp. Rev. 13:15).

V. 21

Verse 21 is similar to Christ's statement: *"No man can serve two masters..."* (Mt. 6:24).

There are some who:

--sing the Lord's song on Sunday and dance to the devil's music on Monday.

--praise the Lord on Sunday and speak like the devil on Monday.

--serve Christ on Sunday and serve the flesh Monday - Saturday.

V. 22

For a believer to associate with anything connected to Satan is to be unfaithful to God and thereby to commit spiritual adultery against Him.

Such divided affection and loyalty would make Him jealous; yea, it would be to fight against Him.

What's the point of verses 16 - 22? It is simply this: Just as sharing in the Lord's Supper associates the eater with Christ, and just as sharing in the meat on the Temple altar associates the eater with the Temple -- in the same way one who shares in eating things from a pagan altar is associating with that demonic altar and all it represents.

Anything which would associate me with the world (or worldliness), evil, rebellion, etc., is wrong for me to be involved with.

"You are known by the company you keep." You become associated with them.

We guard our language, dress, appearance, diet, recreation, etc., because we don't want to be associated with the world or evil.

Our identity is with Christ; therefore any behavior, attitude, activity, or place which would detract from our Christ-likeness should be shed like a leprous garment.

II. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>BUILD ME UP</u> in the Faith? (v.23)

"Lawful" - Perhaps referring to Roman law; the laws of the land may allow something, but this does not make it right. (There is <u>no</u> civil law against foul language, adultery, pre-marital sex, viewing x-rated videos at home, being arrogant, etc., but none of these things are profitable for the Christian.)

"All things are lawful" - If the reference is to God's Law, Paul is saying, "In the realm of <u>non-moral</u> issues, all things are lawful."

"Expedient" - beneficial, advantageous, profitable, useful.

If it does not benefit us spiritually, physically, or emotionally, and/or if it does not benefit the cause of Jesus Christ, it is <u>not</u> for us to waste our life on!

--The question is <u>not</u> merely "How does it hurt me?" The question should be "How does it help me?"

--Our concern is <u>not</u> merely whether or not it is negatively sinful, but we should consider whether or not it is positively good.

Whatever we spend our time on, we are actually exchanging a part of our life for. We are actually giving part of our life up for it. What we live for, we are actually dying for. So if it isn't worth dying for, it isn't worth living for.

"Edify" - (akin to "edifice") - speaks of that which <u>builds one up</u>.

--If the practice will not advance my life spiritually, I should not spend my life on it.

--If the practice will not enhance my walk with Christ or draw me closer to God, perhaps I should reconsider doing it.

The question is not merely "Does it tear me down?" The question is: "Does it build me up?"

III. ***If I do this...***
Will it be <u>HELPFUL</u> to others or purely <u>SELFISH</u> for me? (v.24)

Is what I am doing purely <u>self-centered</u> or <u>selfish</u>? Or did I consider the ramifications my choices and decisions will have on <u>others</u>? Will my decision have a positive impact on my spouse, children, fellow-Christians?

Phil. 2:4 - *"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*

(SEE Romans 15:1-3)

IV. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>CONFUSE the CONSCIENCE</u> of others? (v.25-30)

V. 25
"Shambles" - meat market

"Asking no questions" - Such as, "Do you know if this meat was ever offered to an idol?" (what you don't know won't hurt you or anyone else in such cases)

V. 26

What exactly might have happened to the meat between the cow and the market was not to be a fussy matter to be over-scrupulous about. The point is, it has its source in God and is okay to eat. If God gave it to you, eat it and give Him thanks (cp. I Tim. 4:4).

V. 28

"For the earth is the Lord's. . ." - Paul repeats this truth for the second time (cp. v. 26) to show now that, if anyone chooses not to eat (for conscience's sake) he will not starve, for God has much more to give to him ("He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the wealth in every mine").

The point is this: Whatever you choose to give up for the sake of others, God is sure to replace it, because he owns all.

V. 29

We should never knowingly do anything that would violate the conscience of another [i.e. something that might be construed as sin in us might lead them to sin and violate their conscience.]

Areas of Christian liberty should never be abused so as to violate the conscience of another believer.

V. 25-30

If an unbeliever or weak brother sees in a strong believer's actions a moral or doctrinal compromise, such may lead that person to justify his own deviant actions.

Paul is not calling on us to project false appearances. He is <u>not</u> saying that we should appear to be something we are not (Jesus rebuked this hypocrisy - Mt. 6:2-16; Mt. 23:2b). Rather, Paul is saying we should <u>not</u> appear to be something that we are <u>not</u>. We should not convey a false impression.

As Paul said to the Romans, *"Let not your good be evil spoken of"* (Rom. 14:16).

V. ***If I do this...***
Will it GLORIFY GOD? (v.31)

"Whatsoever" - Includes every activity we do; every place we go; everything we partake of.

"Do all" - Nothing excluded; there ought not to be a distinction between the secular and the sacred for the Christian, for "all ground is holy ground."

"The glory of God" - We ought to do everything so that God would shine; that He would be magnified; that His principles, precepts, and program would be credited, praised, and honored.

A question which should be continually popping up in our minds throughout every minute of every day is the question, "Does this glorify God?"

--Does my attitude toward my children or spouse today glorify God?

--Are my thoughts glorifying God?

--Will this decision glorify God?

--Will this purchase glorify God?

--Is my language glorifying God?

--Are my actions glorifying God?

Should any area of our lives be "off limits" to God?

If not, then we should not mind if He has front row seats to every activity we do!

Will others have a better view of God by the picture they see of His working in our lives? (Mt. 5:16 - *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*).

VI. ***If I do this...***
Will it <u>STUMBLE</u> any non-believer or Christian? (v.32)

"Give none offense" - Don't do anything which will hurt, harm, cause injury, or stumble anyone else.

If one person falls into sin or descends into hell because they stumbled over some inconsistency in your life, you will answer to God for that!

"Jews" - national Israelites

"Gentiles" - Greeks

"The church of God" - believers

No matter what nationality or ethnic background, no matter what religious background, no matter whether lost or saved -- we should never be a stumbling block to them.

May nothing in our lives ever be an <u>obstacle</u> to the salvation of any sinner or to the edification of any saint!

Jesus paid taxes so as not to offend the tax collectors, though He is Lord of all the earth and people should have paid tribute and taxes to Him (Mt. 17:27 - *"Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.)*.

Jesus said: *"And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."* (Mk. 9:42).

VII. ***If I do this...***
Will my <u>EXAMPLE</u> be one that others can follow? (v.33,11:1)

V. 33

Although Paul did not accommodate his message to please men (cp. Gal. 1:10), he did seek their spiritual pleasure or welfare (Gromacki, p. 130).

Although most people live for selfish pleasure (regardless of what their actions might do to others), Paul's life was one characterized by unselfish love for others.

He lived in such a way so as to never do anything which might hinder the Gospel.

What are you willing to change about your life that others might be saved?

11:1

This verse is really the conclusion to chapter 10.

Paul sought to pattern his life after Christ's earthly example, Who relinquished His rights to certain privileges so that He could never be misunderstood or held in contempt.

Paul says model, mimic, imitate, or copy me to the degree that I model Christ. Is your life truly Christ-like? Are you worth modeling?

Titus 2:7-8 says that you young men should *"In all things [be] shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."*

What kind of <u>example</u> are you setting?

Do you want your kids to follow in your steps?