

# WEIGHING DECISIONS IN AN AGE OF DIVISIONS

## —MESSY ( BUT BEAUTIFUL) CHRISTIANITY, WEEK 35—

*1 Corinthians 10:23-33 (NIV, NLT)*

### A<sub>1</sub>. SEEK THE \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR “\_\_\_\_\_”

<sup>23</sup> “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.

<sup>24</sup> No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

### B. CHOOSE \_\_\_\_\_ IN \_\_\_\_\_,

### BUT IN A WAY THAT \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>25</sup> Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, <sup>26</sup> for, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”

<sup>27</sup> If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.

<sup>28</sup> (*But suppose someone tells you, “This meat was offered to an idol.” Don’t eat it, out of consideration for the conscience of the one who told you.* <sup>29</sup> *It might not be a matter of conscience for you, but it is for the other person.*)

*For why should my freedom be limited by what someone else thinks?*<sup>1</sup> <sup>30</sup> If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

### A<sub>2</sub>. \_\_\_\_\_ GOOD \_\_\_\_\_ ( =THE \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_ ),

### NOT YOUR \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>31</sup> So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. <sup>32</sup> Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—<sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>11:1</sup> *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

<sup>1</sup> I included verses 28-29 from the New Living Translation, because I think it helpfully uses parentheses to show that the last part of verse 29 is probably a continuation from 27.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ (=the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_) Not \_\_\_\_\_

### Some Questions to Ask in Difficult Decision-Making:

*Consider the Bible: Does this decision involve any moral issues God has addressed, or is it a neutral issue where I can choose freely?*

*Monitor the “Flesh”: does a given choice please my selfishness or does it rather come from a desire to honor God?*

*Consider the Model of Jesus (and Paul!): How does this decision match the self-sacrificing example of Christ (and Paul!)?*

*Think of Others First: How will this decision impact other people, whether good or bad, particularly in pointing to or away from Christ?*

*Consider Wisdom: How does a practical godly wisdom, like seen in the book of Proverbs, weigh in on this issue or one like it?*

### On the Confusing Logic in 10:29-30 (Garland, *1 Corinthians* 499-500)

The best alternative takes the questions in 10:29-30 to be responses to 10:27 after a parenthetical interruption in 10:28-29. Paul gives the Corinthians the latitude to attend a banquet thrown by an unbeliever without raising any question on the ground of conscience. He then interrupts this thought with a parenthetical observation. If someone announces that the food has been offered in sacrifice, they are to abstain. The conscience *does* come into play in this situation—that is, the conscience of the other. Paul then returns to the thought in 10:27 to explain why it is permissible to eat whatever is served at an unbeliever’s house. If one can partake with thankfulness to the one true God, how can one be denounced for eating that over which one has said a prayer of thanksgiving? When someone specifies that the food is sacrificial food, the situation is different; the Christian must not eat. In all other cases, the Christian may eat even if the food may have been sacrificed to an idol without the Christian knowing it.

The freedom in 10:29 refers to freedom “from the power of idolatry.” Chrysostom (*Hom. 1 Cor. 24.5*) understands the uncleanness to reside “not in the food but in the intentions of the sacrifice and the attitude of receivers.” Paul’s counsel proposes that the Christians need worry only about their own intentions in eating food. If it is food that they can give thanks to God for, then it is permissible. He does not envision that libelous charges will be circulated by others because they ate in an unbeliever’s home. He means, “Why should anyone denounce such behavior by a Christian who genuinely gives thank for this food and has not intentional connection with idolatry?”