

How to Decide Questionable Things? – Part 2

1 Corinthians 10:14-33

Third question: Could this action hinder another believer in his or her spiritual walk? vs. 23-33

1. When trying to apply God's wisdom to the details of your life, this is a question that a **mature** believer always asks himself.
2. There is much more to consider than simply **your** personal happiness and fulfillment. An immature Christian asks all the wrong questions.
 - Do I have a **right** to do this? Will this make **me** happy? Will **I** enjoy this? Will this lead to **my** personal fulfillment? Will this meet **my** needs?
3. In the subject of eating meats offered to idols, Paul says, "All things are lawful for me." In other words, "I have a right to eat anything I want to eat."
cf. **1 Timothy 4:4-5**
4. But then Paul says, "But just because I have a **right** to eat anything, doesn't necessarily mean that it is a good idea."
 - If something is "*expedient*" it simply means that it is for the best long-term advantage.
 - If something "*edifies*" it builds up, and it doesn't tear down.
 - Paul is talking about using your liberty wisely in light of how it will affect others.
5. The Gentiles in the church at Corinth knew that they could eat anything - it was lawful. But the Jews in the congregation had a conscience (due to their culture) that said, "Eating meats offered to idols is evil, wicked, and wrong."
 - Paul says, "There is no Scripture verse that says that this is wrong, but I want to exhort you to consider your brothers and sisters in Christ and how it will impact **them**."
6. Verse 24 is an admonishment to live your life in light of others and their needs. Don't just seek after what will meet **your** needs, but seek after those things that will enrich him, be for his best welfare, and edify him. vs. 33
7. So when deciding questionable things, the question is not simply, "Is this right or wrong Biblically?" The question has to also be, "Will this offend a weaker brother or sister in Christ and be a hindrance to him or her?" vs. 32 cf. 8:9
8. Please understand the principle Paul is teaching: Just because there may not be a Scripture verse, that doesn't necessarily mean that something is right or appropriate to do. It can depend on the situation you find yourself in.
9. Paul covers three different scenarios in verses 25-30.
A private setting - vs. 25-26
 - From the context, we can deduce that the shambles was like a modern day meat market. It's very possible that they sold meat that had been offered to idols and meat that hadn't been offered to idols.
 - Paul's instruction is, "Find a good piece of meat, buy it, take it home, and eat it."
 - Don't worry about what may have been chanted or prayed over the meat. It is inconsequential to the believer. **1 Timothy 6:17**
 - In verse 26, Paul quotes **Psalms 24:1** as a basis to enjoy your Christian liberty in Christ. God put it here, it belongs to Him, so eat up and enjoy!

A public setting with lost people - vs. 27

- If you go to a social setting which involves unbelievers, whatever they put before you, eat it and enjoy it.
- Don't offend them by putting them through an interrogation about where the meat came from. Paul said, "Don't ask any questions - just eat and keep your mouth shut."

A public setting with lost and saved people - vs. 28-29

- If a brother brings it to your attention that the meat has been offered to idols, Paul taught that you should refrain. Why is this? For the sake of that brother's weak conscience.
 - This is called living unselfishly and living by grace. **Romans 15:1-3**
 - Paul uses **Psalms 24:1** again. So he used it once as the basis to enjoy your Christian liberty and then used it as the basis for refraining from use of your liberty.
 - Here is the point: as far as God is concerned, He doesn't care if you eat it or you don't eat it (8:8). **You** must make some wise choices based on the situation you are in and the needs of others around you.
10. Paul anticipates the question that would immediately arise: "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?" vs. 29
 11. Why do I have to live in light of somebody else's conscience? Paul answers the question in verse 30. It is because you can live by grace with a thankful, clean heart before God, and still be evil spoken of and lose your testimony.
 - This can happen by living carelessly and flaunting your liberty without regard to your brother or sister in Christ. You can do right before God, but still be wrong and hurt people.
 12. So what is the conclusion of the matter? vs. 31-33
 - I must live my life to the glory of God, doing everything by faith in Him. vs. 31
 - But I must also be conscious of those around me and be willing to lay something aside rather than offending them and being a hindrance to them. vs. 32
 - Paul lived this kind of a life and was such an example to the Corinthians and to us. vs. 33

In Conclusion:

1. How do we deal with questionable things in our lives? How do you decide when you are confronted by something and you ask yourself, "Is this right or wrong to do?"
2. Paul gives three key questions and teaches you the correct response based on your answer to the question.
 - Does this action clearly violate one of God's commands? If the answer is "yes," what should our response be? **Flee from it!**
 - Does this action glorify Satan's program in any way? If the answer is "yes," what should our response be? **Separate from it.**
 - Could this action hinder another believer in his or her spiritual walk? If the answer is "yes," what should our response be? **Refrain from it.**

