

Bible Study Group Notes

1 Corinthians 10.23 – 11.1

THE BIG PICTURE

We come to the final study in our series, *God's guidance for life's decisions*. Across 1 Corinthians 8-10, Paul has not given us a secret technique for discovering God's will. Instead, he has taught us to ask wiser questions as followers of Christ. So far we have asked: Will this wound another Christian? Will this help or hinder the gospel? Will this strengthen or weaken my soul? Now Paul gathers everything together with the biggest question of all: *Can I do this for the glory of God?*

In this final passage, Paul shows that Christian guidance is not mainly about finding the minimum line of obedience, but about learning to live every part of life – even ordinary eating and drinking – under the lordship of Christ and for the glory of God.

INVESTIGATE

Read 1 Corinthians 10.23 – 11.1.

"Will this help?"

1. What does Paul mean when he says, "not all things are helpful"? How is this different from merely asking, "Is this allowed?"

"Will this build up?"

2. What does 10.23-24 teach us about seeking the good of others?
3. How might a choice be permissible, but not build up another Christian?

"Can I give thanks?"

4. What freedom does Paul give in 10.25-27? Why does the situation change in 10.28-30?
5. How do these verses hold together thankful freedom and concern for conscience?

"Can I do this for the glory of God?"

6. Why is 10.31 such an important summary verse for the whole series?
7. What kinds of ordinary activities does Paul include under the glory of God?
8. What does Paul mean by "Give no offence" in 10.32? What does he not mean?
9. How does Paul's example in 10.33 reflect the way of Christ?
10. Why is 11.1 the fitting conclusion to the whole section?

CASE STUDIES

For each case study, ask: *“What questions would you encourage this person to ask about the decision in front of them?”* Try using the four questions from the whole series: Will this wound another Christian? Will this help or hinder the gospel? Will this strengthen or weaken my soul? Can I do this for the glory of God?

- A. Someone is deciding whether to take a promotion. It would bring more money and influence, but also longer hours and less space for church, family, prayer, and hospitality.
- B. A student is choosing what to watch online. The programme is not obviously forbidden, but they know it often leaves them spiritually dull, cynical, or tempted.
- C. A couple are planning their household budget. They want to be wise and responsible, but they also sense they may be using “prudence” as a cover for avoiding generosity.
- D. A Christian wants to post online about a disputed issue. They think they are right, but they know the tone could easily become sarcastic, tribal, or needlessly inflammatory.
- E. Someone is wondering whether to start dating a person who is kind and attractive, but not a Christian and not interested in following Jesus.
- F. A church member has been asked to serve in a ministry. They feel busy and unsure, but also wonder whether they have become too protective of their own comfort.
- G. Someone is invited to an event connected with another religion or spiritual practice. They want to honour their friend, but do not want to give the impression that all worship is the same.
- H. A Christian is thinking about buying something expensive. They can afford it, but they are unsure whether it reflects gratitude, wisdom, status-seeking, or escape.

REFLECT & APPLY

11. Which of the four guidance questions from this series do you most need to engage right now?
12. Is there a current decision where you have mostly been asking, “What do I want?” rather than, “What will glorify God?”
13. What would practically change this week if your first concern became not “How much of my life may I keep for myself?” but “How much of my life can display the goodness of God?”

PRAY

- Thank God that all of life belongs to Him.
- Ask Him to shape our decisions so that they are helpful, loving, thankful, and God-glorifying.
- Pray that Christ would become more beautiful to us than comfort, preference, or self-interest, and that our ordinary lives would increasingly reflect His goodness and grace.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for this month are available in church or on the WhatsApp group.