

## 1 Cor. 10:23-11:1 "More Meat"

**For the Children:** In the Old Testament it was hard for God's people to deal with Gentiles. Close contact with Gentiles could make you "unclean." If you ate at their house, much of their food might be "unclean." We do not need to worry about things being "unclean" any longer. But when we are in the company of unbelievers, we do need to take care that they know we serve and obey God first; and that we want to show love to our neighbour. We need to show that we want them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. We should not eat or drink or do anything that would hinder that. **Questions:** Why did God drop the laws about clean and unclean things in the New Testament? How can we now properly use the things God gives us in this life e.g., food and drink? What are some ways we might be tempted to be a bad witness in the presence of unbelievers?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: Principles of Eating**

- 1) The Two Main Principles: Like all of God's law, those covering our eating are based on 2 main principles: glorifying and serving God out of whole-hearted love for Him; and love of neighbour as of self. The apostle tells the Corinthians to follow his example in this, but only because he, in turn, was imitating the Lord Jesus (11:1).
- 2) Spelling Out the Principles: These 2 main principles can be fleshed out into 4 others: follow God's Word in how we eat e.g., without gluttony; do not lead others to revile God's Name because of how we eat; eat with thankfulness to our Provider; and do not lead fellow-believers to sin by following our example – especially those with a weak conscience.
- 3) Application to Everything: This approach can be applied to all created things. "All things are lawful" (vss. 23-24) i.e., part of God's good creation. All such things have a good and proper use, especially now that the OT ceremonial law is not required of us. That does not mean every use of such things is profitable or edifying. We must seek the proper use of each thing – for God's glory and our neighbour's welfare.

#### **Second Point: Application to the Meat Market**

- 1) No Third Degree in the Market: OT believers had to take care not to eat unclean food or have close contact with unclean people in the market-place. Christians do not need to have such concerns. Therefore, it is better not to investigate the background to what is purchased from the market e.g., whether it has been offered to idols previously – lest we lead ourselves to develop a conscience-problem where none needs to exist. For thankfulness to God sanctifies the use of such food to us (1 Tim. 4:4-5).
- 2) Not All Is Helpful: That is not to deny that some things purchased in the market-place may be a hindrance to us e.g., drugs. Some items may run afoul of other Biblical commands. Where a purchase may lead ourselves or others into sin, we had better abstain.

#### **Third Point: Application to the Unbeliever's Table**

- 1) Eat What's on Your Plate: Again, when we visit with unbelievers, we do not need to go making issues re the background of the food etc. We have greater freedom in this, too, than the OT believers enjoyed.
- 2) An Exception: However, if your host makes a point of saying the food is idol-food – as a kind of challenge - then you may have to abstain (vss. 28-30). Otherwise, he might conclude that you have compromised your faith. In abstaining, we are seeking to discourage the other person from wrongly judging and slandering us and the faith. A similar situation could arise in the home of a believer with a weak conscience. The point here is not to remove the Christians' freedom with a rule about food offered to idols; but concern for the Lord's reputation and the Gospel – the desire that many may be saved (10:31-33).

### **Conclusion:**

