

1 Corinthians 10:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Analysis

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God—This verse provides the comprehensive principle governing all Christian behavior. **Whether ye eat, or drink** directly addresses the food controversy but **or whatsoever ye do** (panta, πάντα, "all things") universalizes the principle—every activity, decision, and moment exists for one purpose: **the glory of God** (doxan theou, δόξαν θεοῦ).

God's doxa (δόξα, "glory/honor/splendor") is His revealed excellence and majesty. To glorify God means living in ways that display His character, honor His name, and advance His kingdom. This transcends negative ethics (avoiding sin) to positive purpose—actively making God look glorious through every dimension of life. Eating, drinking, working, resting, relationships—all become worship when oriented toward God's glory.

Applied to the idol-food controversy: don't merely ask "Is this permissible?" but "Does this glorify God?" If eating harms a brother, confuses pagans, or associates you with demons, it doesn't glorify God—regardless of your theological sophistication or clear conscience. This God-centered criterion resolves the tensions of vv. 23-30: when freedom and others' consciences conflict, ask which course magnifies God's glory more. Usually, self-limiting love displays God's character better than liberty-asserting rights.

Historical Context

Ancient philosophy sought the highest good—Stoics in virtue, Epicureans in pleasure, Aristotelians in flourishing. Paul posits a higher telos: God's glory. This theocentric orientation relativizes all other goods and provides a unified principle for ethics. For Corinthians debating food, honor, and freedom, Paul offers a singular focus: make every decision, including mundane ones like meals, about displaying God's excellence to the world.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How would asking "Does this glorify God?" change your decision-making in areas where Scripture doesn't give explicit commands?
2. What mundane activities (eating, working, entertainment) could become worship if reoriented toward God's glory?
3. In what areas are you most tempted to pursue your own satisfaction rather than God's glory?

Interlinear Text

εἴτε	οὖν	ἐσθίετε	εἴτε	πίνετε	εἴτε	τι
Whether	therefore	ye eat	Whether	drink	Whether	whatsoever
G1535	G3767	G2068	G1535	G4095	G1535	G5100
ποιεῖτε	πάντα	εἰς	δόξαν	θεοῦ	ποιεῖτε	
do	all	to	the glory	of God	do	
G4160	G3956	G1519	G1391	G2316	G4160	

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 3:17 (References God): And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Colossians 3:23 (Parallel theme): And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

1 Peter 4:11 (Glory): If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Deuteronomy 12:18 (References God): But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.

Deuteronomy 12:7 (References God): And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

Deuteronomy 12:12 (References God): And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

Luke 11:41 (Parallel theme): But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

1 Corinthians 7:34 (Parallel theme): There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.