

1 Corinthians 10:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

Analysis

Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God—Paul specifies how to glorify God (v. 31): **give none offence** (aproskopoi ginesthe, ἀπρόσκοποι γίνεσθε, "be without offense/stumbling block"). The goal is removing obstacles that hinder gospel reception or harm spiritual growth. Paul identifies three groups requiring consideration: **Jews, Gentiles** (literally "Greeks"), and **the church of God**.

To Jews, offense might involve eating unclean food or violating Sabbath, creating barriers to gospel hearing. To Gentiles, offense might involve Christian behavior that seems antisocial, weird, or morally compromised, discrediting the message. To the church, offense involves wounding weak consciences (8:9-13) or creating division. Love seeks to remove unnecessary stumbling blocks in all three contexts, becoming "all things to all people" (9:19-23) for gospel's sake.

This doesn't mean compromising truth or fearing all criticism—Jesus offended religious leaders by speaking truth (Matthew 15:12-14). Rather, it means avoiding unnecessary offense through cultural insensitivity, flaunting freedom, or indifference to others' consciences. Where the gospel itself offends (the cross is a stumbling block, 1:23), we proclaim it boldly. But where our behavior unnecessarily offends, we adjust for love's sake and gospel effectiveness.

Historical Context

Corinth's strategic location made it ethnically diverse—Jews, Greeks, Romans, various Mediterranean peoples. The church included members from all backgrounds (1:26-29, 12:13). Paul's mission strategy required cultural sensitivity without gospel compromise—don't offend Jews unnecessarily (Acts 16:3, circumcising Timothy), don't scandalize Gentiles unnecessarily, don't wound believers unnecessarily. This navigation required wisdom, love, and gospel-centeredness.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How can you distinguish between offensive gospel truth (which must be proclaimed) and offensive Christian behavior (which should be avoided)?
2. What culturally conditioned behaviors might you need to adjust to avoid unnecessarily offending different groups?
3. In what ways might insensitivity to others' backgrounds or scruples hinder gospel effectiveness in your context?

Interlinear Text

ἀπρόσκοποι γίνεσθε καὶ Ἰουδαίοις καὶ Ἑλλησιν

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|---------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| none offence | Give | neither | to the Jews | neither | to the Gentiles |
| G677 | G1096 | G2532 | G2453 | G2532 | G1672 |

καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ

| | | |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| neither | to the church | of God |
| G2532 | G1577 | G2316 |

Additional Cross-References

Acts 20:28 (References God): Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

1 Corinthians 10:33 (Parallel theme): Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Romans 14:13 (Parallel theme): Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

1 Corinthians 8:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

1 Timothy 3:15 (References God): But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

2 Corinthians 6:3 (Parallel theme): Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

Acts 24:16 (References God): And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

1 Corinthians 11:22 (References God): What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

1 Timothy 3:5 (References God): (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Philippians 1:10 (Parallel theme): That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;