

1 Corinthians 10:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Analysis

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved—Paul offers himself as example of offense-avoiding, glory-seeking love. **I please all men** (areskomai pasin, ἀρέσκω πᾶσιν) doesn't mean people-pleasing compromise (Galatians 1:10) but missionary accommodation—adapting behavior to maximize gospel reception. **In all things** specifies comprehensive application, though within gospel boundaries (he didn't compromise truth to please people).

The motivation is crucial: **not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many** (to tōn pollōn, τὸ τῶν πολλῶν, "the good/benefit of the many"). Paul's adaptability served others' salvation, not personal advantage. This echoes v. 24's principle (seek another's wealth, not your own) and Jesus's incarnational mission (He pleased not Himself but became servant of all, Romans 15:3, Philippians 2:5-8).

The ultimate purpose: **that they may be saved** (hina sōthōsin, ἵνα σωθῶσιν). Every ethical decision, every cultural adaptation, every freedom-limitation aims at gospel advance and souls' salvation. This evangelistic urgency governs Christian liberty—don't assert rights at the cost of someone's eternal destiny. This verse transitions to 11:1's imperative: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Paul's self-giving love imitates Christ's redemptive self-sacrifice.

Historical Context

Paul's missionary practice exemplified this principle: he lived as a Jew among Jews (Acts 21:20-26) and as a Gentile among Gentiles (Acts 17:22-34, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). This flexibility required secure identity in Christ—only those confident in the gospel can adapt culturally without compromising theologically. The Corinthians, by contrast, asserted freedom without considering evangelistic impact, hindering rather than advancing the gospel through cultural insensitivity and moral compromise.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's example challenge you to limit personal freedom for the sake of others' salvation?
2. In what specific ways could you "please all men" (cultural adaptation) without compromising gospel truth?
3. What would it look like to make "that they may be saved" the governing principle of your daily decisions and relationships?

Interlinear Text

καθὼς κάγὼ πᾶσιν πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τῶν
Even as I all all please things not seeking the profit
G2531 G2504 G3956 G3956 G700 G3361 G2212 G3588

ἐμαυτοῦ σύμφερον, ἀλλὰ τῶν τῶν πολλῶν ἵνα
mine own profit but the profit the profit of many that
G1683 G4851 G235 G3588 G3588 G4183 G2443

σωθῶσιν
they may be saved
G4982

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 1:10 (Parallel theme): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:24 (Parallel theme): Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

2 Corinthians 12:19 (Parallel theme): Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.