

A Plate Full of Faithfulness:

How Food Reveals and Reforms Our Faith

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by David Schrock

"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him," is John Piper's famous dictum fusing God's passion to be worshiped and man's passion to be happy. Yet, spoken into our hyper-individualistic culture, this glorious truth might lead some to think glorifying God is an individual's task.

In truth, God is glorified as we use our freedom to serve others. We cannot glorify him if we care nothing for our neighbors or God's creation. This is the point of 1 Corinthians 10 where Paul concludes his instruction about food sacrificed to idols by saying we are not to seek ourselves, but the good of others. God is glorified in eating and drinking that aims to strengthen others, not just ourselves. Likewise, if eating and drinking are shaped by the gospel, then it stands to reason (once again) that every area of life must be gospel-shaped.

In this week's sermon, we consider a theology of food and drink and all of life as Paul finishes his discussion about food sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1. You can listen to the sermon [here](#). Discussion questions and resources for further study are below.

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Is a sermon about food relevant or needed? How much does the Bible speak about food? Have you ever considered the relationship between food/drink and faith? If so, how or where?
2. What is the overarching principle of this passage? Where do we see it (hint: vv. 23-24 and vv. 32-33)? How do the five "eat" commands relate to this overarching principle? Where else do we find this principle at work (see Romans 13:8-14; Philippians 2:1-11).

3. What does Psalm 24:1 (quoted in v. 26) teach us about creation? How does a strong of creation help our understanding of salvation (see 2 Cor 5:17), evangelism, and worship (see below)?
4. What does 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 teach us about drunkenness and gluttony? Anything? What does overuse of food or drink reveal? How else might we misuse food and drink today? What would a biblical "theology of food" consist of today?
5. Why is serving others essential to glorifying God? What part does the church play in the believers commitment to glorifying God? What role does savoring God play in serving others-both in personal motivation and others-centered aims?
6. Why does Paul conclude with his words, "Imitate me, as I imitate Christ" (11:1)? What is Paul's example with food and drink? What is Jesus' example?
7. How can we use our meals to glorify God and serve others? What is one practical application from this message?

For Further Study

Articles

- [How Should Christians Engage Culture?](#) by David Schrock
- [The Doctrine of Creation: A Necessary Part of Our Worship and Evangelism](#) by David Schrock
- [A Biblical Theology of Food and Drink](#) by Nicholas Batzig

Books

- [Desiring God](#) by John Piper ([online](#)) - see especially Piper's chapters on love and suffering, where he applies his "Christian hedonism" to others-centered service
- [A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, and Mission Around the Table](#) by Tim Chester
- [The Things of Earth: Treasuring God by Enjoying His Gifts](#) by Joe Rigney
- [Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating](#) by Norman Wirzba

Soli Deo Gloria, ds