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## GLORIFYING GOD

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### Part 24 of 1st Corinthians

Pastor Mark Driscoll | 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 | July 16, 2006

A brush of idealism paints the first century church as a nostalgic example of community and perfection. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In this sermon series, Pastor Mark Driscoll teaches on Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth. The Apostle wrote to the Corinthians to untangle the many moral and theological knots they'd created, providing some of the richest theological sections of the New Testament. If you have any questions following this podcast, email [feedback@marshillchurch.org](mailto:feedback@marshillchurch.org). To subscribe to this and other Mars Hill podcasts, go to [marshillchurch.org](http://marshillchurch.org), and here's Pastor Mark with 1 Corinthians: Christians Gone Wild.

We will be in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 10. We're continuing our studies of 1 Corinthians through the remainder of the summer and then we will launch into a series on Jesus for our tenth anniversary this fall. Next week, we're going to get into feminism, lesbianism, women with short haircuts, feminist lesbians, lesbian feminists, lesbians with short haircuts, it'll be awesome. Bring all your friends and then experience profound loneliness thereafter. Love to have you. So, after that, too, in 1 Corinthians, we're gonna get into tongues, prophesy, healings, miracles, all the kinda crazy stuff – so still some good stuff left in the book. This week, we're gonna deal with glorifying God and being good missionaries to our great City of Seattle. So, I'll go ahead and pray. If you've got a Bible, you can go to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 10, Verse 23. If you should've gotten the loop notes on the way in that will help guide our course of study together this evening, and the verses are in there, so hopefully that will be of help to you as well. So, we'll go ahead and pray and thanks for coming out, good to see y'all and we'll get right to work.

Father God, we gather as the church, we gather as your people to open your Word in a city that you love and that we love, God, asking how we can live a life in this city that pleases you and also loves people who disagree with us. And so God, we ask for wisdom and we ask to see Jesus in the Scriptures and we ask for the Holy Spirit to come and to lead us and to guide us and to instruct us and convict us and so we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Well, as we get into it, here's the situation in 1 Corinthians. It's a young church – cool, hip, urban, tattooed, indie rock kinda church in the middle of this town called Corinth that was a lot like Seattle. Everybody was real left-leaning, pro gay, kinda neo-hippie, doing a lotta drugs, lotta sex and this little church was in the middle of this big city, trying to figure out, "How can we be faithful Christians in this city." And so there's a lot of corollary – correlations between 1 Corinthians and what we deal with here in Seattle and our position is we love Seattle; sometimes it's just awkward being a Christian here, right? I mean, it's weird – everybody's having sex except for you guys, because so many of you are single. Everybody's getting drunk except for you, if you're a Christian and, and everybody recycles and everybody thinks they're going to Heaven and everybody's got strong opinions about everything and not too many people are into Jesus and if you hear about Jesus, usually it's in a very pejorative, negative light, because he's, he's not all that popular here, at least not yet, though we're working on that.

And so, when you think about being a Christian in Seattle, there is, there is a lot of conflict and a lot of tension and how to be a faithful Christian who simultaneously loves their city and loves God when the city and God disagree on a lot of very important things – how can you be that mediator in some way, that person in the middle that continues to love God and their city in spite of some of the differences that exist between the city and God and God knew this would be the case. Jesus, before he ascended back into heaven, said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth." What he's talking about is you and I who are Christian being good missionaries to our city, then to our region, then to our state, then to our nation, then to our world and ringing out from our home. And one of the great problems in the history of Christianity has been we love to send Christians overseas to other countries to deal with very peculiar, strange, odd cultures of people, and we don't like to send missionaries to strange, peculiar, odd subgroups of people in places like Freemont, which has some of the most peculiar people in the world and some people will think you know, missions is when we send people to China, because it's all communist well, statistically, we have as many Christians, percentage wise, as China in the City of Seattle. So, if you're gonna send a missionary to China – which we are for – you should also send a missionary to Freemont. And – and that is exactly what God intends and so he plants – has churches planted in urban centers like Corinth and like Seattle and has people who are Christians living in cities like Corinth and Seattle to be good missionaries to the city, to love people, to share the love of Jesus, and at the same time, let this leads is lots of conflict on certain values and certain moral issues and certain spiritual beliefs with the city. And so if you are a Christian and you live in Seattle, you're continually faced with all kinds of questions, like how do I approach the gay issue? How do I approach alcohol? How do I approach cigarettes? Or certain kinds of music? Or certain kinds of clothes? Or sexuality? That alternative lifestyles? How do I, how do I how do I resolve this tension by living in a city faithful to God, still loving the city? And so Paul is dealing as with people in a similar situation and he gives them it's a series of principles that will help guide their life decision-making. So we'll pick up the first one in Chapter 10, of Verse 23, of 1 Corinthians and we'll see what he says to his church and it has direct application for our church.

The first thing he says is, "Everything is permissible," now they had written him a letter and they, they told him, basically, "We he can do whatever we

want.” They had the same kind of flying as a junior high a kid. Right, “I’m an adult now, I can do whatever I want.” And they were wrong. So the first thing we have to ask is, is this permissible? Hey, you’re a Christian, thinking, “Should I drink that alcohol?” “Should I take those drugs?” “Should I smoke that cigarette?” “Should I go to that show?” “Should I hang out at the club?” “Should I, should I watch that film?” “Should I hang out with those people?” “Should I or should I not?” First question, is it permissible? To answer that, we go to the Bible and we say, “Well, does God say that’s not to be done? Well then, it’s off limits.” Secondly, is it legal? Right, is it legal? Not everything’s permissible, you can’t, you know, be drinking and driving, have the cop pull you over and say, “I’m free of Christ.” No, you’re not. You’re not. You can’t do that. That’s against the law. You’re not – you know, that’s not permissible. Also, too, if you’re a junior high, high school student, you’re here, you have parents, gotta obey your parents. You can’t say, “I’m free in Christ,” they said, “Not in my house, with my car and my credit card.” No. You’re naïve, gullible, foolish. You’re – you need to obey me, I – I’m in charge, right? And that’s the way it works. You gotta honor the authority that’s over you. If you go to work, your company, your boss has certain policies and rules. You need to obey those. So the first thing is, is this even permissible? At work, am I defying the company? With my parents, am I defying them, if I’m a kid? Am I defying my church if I’m a member of Mars Hill? Am I defying the Bible? Am I breaking the law? Is it permissible?

And so that takes a whole bunch of things and just automatically eradicates ‘em. Can I get drunk? No. No. Can I, can I be a drug addict? No. Can I be a glutton? No. No. Can I listen to boy bands? No. No! No. No! God forbid, no. The Scriptures are clear on such things and God’s people are to abstain in all ways because we don’t participate with evil. Light has nothing to do with darkness. So the first question is, is it permissible? Is it okay? Now, just because it – something is permissible, like I’m over 21, I can have a beer. I, you know, it’s not against the law to smoke cigarettes. You know, whatever it is, it’s not against the law to go to the club and dance. You know, I don’t dance but is it permissible, yeah, but then the second question is, is it beneficial to do such things? Watch that film. Listen to that band. You know, take that class. Hang out with those friends. It’s what he says at the end of Verse 23, “but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible but not everything is constructive.” So there are things that are acceptable, morally, legally, spiritually, that are not profitable or not beneficial or not constructive, practically. What this means is there’s a difference between things that are sinful and things that are just stupid. Right, like legally, technically, morally, spiritually. I can take, I can take a roofing hammer and whack myself in my Shrek-size head, right? I could do that and technically, I’m not disobeying anything in the Bible, right? I am free in Christ. But it’s not good for me. It’s not beneficial. It’s not helpful for me and it’s not helpful for anyone else. So I’ll put a few things in here that you will all not like because as the services get later, the crowd gets younger, the cigarette butts out front increase, so we’ll talk about it.

Now, cigarettes, Biblically, is it a sin to smoke cigarettes? No, it’s not. Bible doesn’t say anything about cigarettes, so you’re free in Christ to smoke. But, is it beneficial? And if you hope to get better breath, better teeth, better skin, better heart, better lungs, better overall physical health from smoking? Any benefit? Now, one of you will say, “Uh, I read this,” not you didn’t read an article. You don’t read. You know, don’t fool us. Now, I would say – I would put cigarettes in this category. Some of you say, “Ooh, but, but tobacco, in, you know, in cigars and in pipes is totally different than cigarettes, man.” I know, you’re like tobacco Pharisees, I know. You guys have the letter of the law on all this stuff. I understand. And it’s not a sin to smoke, but you gotta ask yourself, “If I smoke, is that good for me?” Right, and in saying this, like probably half the worship team isn’t going to come up after I’m done because they’re all out, right now, honestly, smoking American Spirit cigarettes, missing this wonderful point that I’m making in my sermon. And my point is that just because it’s acceptable, doesn’t mean it’s helpful. Is it a sin to have a cigarette? No, it’s not. If you have a cigarette now and then, you’re gonna kill yourself? No. If you’re a pack-a-day smoker, is that good for you? It’s not. It actually says on the box, you know? Like, in the front, like if you eat – if you smoke this, you will blow up. Organs will fall out of your body, right? You’re like, “It’s not a problem, it’s okay, you know?” It’s like – I mean, – and you know this stuff is bad for you. When it ruins your lungs and you see people on television smoking out of their throat, right? I mean that’s like, “Hm. That doesn’t seem like a good way to go.”

You gotta ask yourself, is this good? It’s not a sin to eat a Big Mac, but if you eat them everyday, you’ll be a big person. It’s not beneficial, right? I saw a dude on the way here, riding a bike. Good idea. In spandex shorts. Not beneficial to any of us. At all. It was horrifying. He’s in front of me, right? I was like, oh. I got a weak stomach, man. I, you know. Not beneficial. It doesn’t help me at all. It’s not good for anyone, you know? It’s visual pollution. To be forbidden.

So the first question is, is it beneficial? And I’m not say- because see, if it’s not a sin, we’re not gonna bring you up on church discipline, we’re not gonna kick you outta the church, if you smoke a cigarette or if you’re Big Mac attack guy, but what we’re saying is you gotta ask, just because I can do it, should I do it? Just because I’m free to do it, is it good for me? Is that a good idea? And we – just because we love you – we’d say, also think of your health, the welfare of others – it’s not a sin, for example, to smoke in front of your kids. It doesn’t say in the Bible, “Thou shalt not smoke in front of the kids,” but it’s obviously not beneficial. It’s not good for them, second-hand smoke. So these kind of issues, we have to think through.

The third question, then is additionally, is it loving? Is it kind? Is it – is it loving our neighbor as Jesus said we should? Verse 24, “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.” Now this is not an American virtue. Love, selflessness, kindness, accommodation of others – see in our country, you are bred, from infancy, “What do you want?” “What’ll make you happy?” “What’ll actualize your potential?” “What’ll give you self-esteem?” Right, they don’t have whole classes on how to love your neighbor; how to be a good citizen. So, the Bible is, in many ways, a kingdom set of values that are counterintuitive to the way that we’re raised. The Bible doesn’t just say well, are you free to do it and is it good for you, then do it. The Bible says also, now too, factor in other people. Your friends, your family, your coworkers, your neighbors, other people. What will they think? Maybe you’re free in Christ to blast your stereo all night, but if you live in an apartment complex, is that really loving your neighbor? Is it really loving your neighbor? No, it’s not. And so as Christians, we also factor in other people because God loves them, too, not just us.

He goes on, “Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, for the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, quote Psalm 24:1” and what he’s saying here is that when it comes to being involved in culture, food and money and power and music and literature and whatever it may be, that there is no such thing as sacred and secular. Some of you were raised in churches or youth groups or such things where you’re told, “Oh,

there is Christian and non-Christian things." No, there's not. Everything on the earth belongs to the Lord. Jesus is sovereign God, he rules over everything. So that means that all the music and all the food and all the people and all the cultures and all the styles and all the tribes and all the teams, they're all under him. That doesn't mean they're all obedient. That doesn't mean they're all godly or good, but it does mean that we can live on the earth in such a way that we redeem everything in a way that honors God. So, music and food and sex and alcohol and friendship and literature call all be appreciated by God's people in a non-sinful way that honors God. So, what that means is, we can be flexible and gracious and accommodating – not to the degree of sin, but insofar as styles are concerned. So when you think, "Should I eat this food?" "Should I drink this alcohol?" "Should I listen to this band?" "Should I go to this club?" "Should I participate in this recreational activity?" "Should I hang out with these friends?" Well is it permissible? Is it just a sin or the breaking of the law? The answer's no, then he can't do it. If it is okay, then the next question is, is it beneficial? Will it be good for me and will it be good for others? And then, additionally, is it loving? Will it be kind to other people? Will it be, will it be accommodating of other people? Will I be a good friend and a good neighbor?

Which leads to the fourth point, which is, is it evangelistic? Right? How will non-Christians think of Jesus, depending upon how you make this decision as to what you should and should not be doing. It says in Verse 27, "If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience." Okay, so I'll give you an example. Let's say, let's say you're a per- let's say you're a dude who used to hang out with your buddies on Friday night and you would eat wings and you'd play poker and you would hang out and eat pizza and drink beer and play cards. Right, and you become a Christian, and your buddies call you up and let's say they're non-Christian guys and they say, "Hey, you wanna come?" Do you have to go? No. Are you free to go? Yeah. So you gotta ask yourself, "Am I free to go, yeah. Is it beneficial? Well, it all depends on how I act," right? If I get drunk and cheat in cards, that's prob'ly not the best witness. Right, that's not a good Christian, right? That's not, that's not right. Ah, so if I go, do I go in such a way that I love my buddies, hang out with them. I don't get drunk. I'm not cheating at cards and I'm being a good friend and a good neighbor. Do I wanna go? Can I go and do those things? Yeah. Yeah. Now, some of you may say, "Well, I shouldn't go because when I used to go, I'd always just get hammered with the guys and we'd end up just having some foul conversations and I don't think I can do that. I don't think I'm strong enough. I think I'm gonna end up getting hammered and having some grotesque conversations about women, so I don't think I should go.

See, it's a case-by-case basis and what happens is that Christians tend to fall into very simple teams because they're lazy. Right, one being, hey don't hang out with anybody who's not a Christian. Just, you know, listen to Christian music. Watch Christian television. Read Christian books. Go to Christian Bible studies. Work at a Christian job. Homeschool your kids and pray for the rapture because you're bored to death. That's one team, right? And the other is, you know, God loves everybody, go get drunk, go get high, go get lucky, go get naked, go get crazy, whatever you want, because God doesn't care and he sure does. And as a Christian, you gotta ask, well, it's not a sin to do some things, depending upon how I act and do I have the strength to act in such a way when I'm hanging out with these people and doing those things, that I'm not gonna get sucked into trouble, but instead, I'll be able to maintain a good witness. That they'll see that I love Jesus and I have certain lines that I don't cross.

So Paul says, first thing, do you wanna go? If you wanna go, go. If you don't wanna go, don't go, but if you do go, how do you act? He says, Verse 28, "But if anyone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience's sake." Kay, now what he introduces here, is the issue of conscience. Now, meat sacrificed to idols in that day was as hot as, you know, gay rights or abortion is today. This was a hot button big issue and it was spiritual. This is identifying certain meat with the worship of certain gods and pagan religious ceremonies and what he's saying is this – you've gotta operate by conscience, okay?

Now, God has given us each a conscience. You have the external witness of Scripture, the early chapters of Romans says, and then you have the internal witness of conscience. So you look at the Bible and you say, "Well, it doesn't say I can't do it," but you check your conscience and say, "But what does my conscience say?" Now, some of you won't drink because, though you're free in Christ, your conscience says no. Some of you won't eat certain food – maybe you're vegetarians. Now, God gives you freedom to eat but you may say my conscience does not permit me to do so. And so as Christians, the moral compass, the rudder on life that God has given us is conscience and what Paul is saying is don't break your conscience, you're gonna need that thing. People without a conscience are sociopaths. They're amoral. They're dangerous. So you need your conscience.

So what this will mean for Mars Hill Church is that when the Bible doesn't say anything, we will leave freedom for people to operate according to conscience. Some of you will drink, some of you will not. Some of you will watch certain kinds of film, some of you will not. Some of you will listen to certain kinds of music and some of you will not and the answer is you're all right because you're all abiding by conscience and Scripture. And the Holy Spirit gives us wisdom because these decisions get very, very difficult and over time sometimes, your conscience will change. I have told you before, I didn't have any alcohol 'til I was 30 years of age because of conscience issues. I felt it was a sin for me and at 30, my conscience changed, so occasionally, I have a drink but I've never been drunk. I don't drink and drive. I don't cause anyone to stumble. There's other things that the Bible says as well need to be heeded and obeyed as far as wisdom goes.

So Paul says if a non-Christian invites you over to dinner, feel free to go and feel free to abide by conscience. Feel free to hang out with them, be at their house, be their friend, enter into certain discussions, answer their questions, be as loving, as gracious, as merciful, as compassionate as possible, but if things turn towards spirituality, that they want you to participate in the worship of someone or something other than Jesus, you have to say no because that is a violation of both Scripture and conscience. It's how he says it. He says in Verse 28, "But if anyone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you," right? To show him that you love Jesus. "and for conscience's sake" so you don't break your own conscience – the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?"

Here's what he's saying – let's say two lesbians invite you over for dinner, kay? You decide, "Cool! I'll go. They're friends of mine, what the heck.

I'm a Christian, they're lesbians, but we both eat. Let's do that." Okay? So you go over to their house for dinner and they sit you down, friends of yours, and they say, "Oh, by the way, we forgot to tell you, we're vegans." Is that okay? What do you do? You eat the vegetables. You don't lie to them. You don't say, "Oh yes, I love vegetables." You say something like, "Oh, look. Those are vegetables." You be honest. "That's a lotta vegetables. Those vegetables. I, that, that is a bunch of vegetables. Yeah." Don't lie. And don't, don't be mean to 'em and don't say, "I'm a Christian. I like meat. You have any meat to go on those vegetables? The best kinda vegetables are vegetables covered in meat." You don't do that. You say, "You know what, there's more important things than meat and vegetables, like Heaven and Hell, so we're gonna keep the big things the big things and we'll let the little things go." That's what he says, you know, if you're gonna be their guest in their house, then you be flexible and you eat whatever they feed you, right? But, let's say then they all hold hands and they say, "Okay, now we're gonna sing our song to the mother earth goddess who gives us carrots and string beans and we're gonna thank her for her divine provision through the sacred womb." You go "Pfft! Not me! I worship Jesus. Now, I'll eat the carrot, but I'm not singing the sky fairy song to the mother womb goddess who made the terra firma. That's not happening because I sing to Jesus and you wanna sing a 'Jesus Loves Me, This I Know,' I'll do that and eat the carrots, but otherwise, I'm just eating the carrots, because that's my team." Right?

Now, what you will hear from people is they're like, "You're one of those narrow-minded, intolerant Christians," you say, "No, no, no, no, no! We believe in diversity, tolerance and plurality, so you must accommodate me so you're not a hypocrite. I'm giving you an opportunity to be consistent with your worldview." It works both ways, quite happily I might add. And so you sit down and you say, "Well, you guys could sing to the mother terra firma goddess who make the carrots and I'm not singing that song. I'm not praying to that god. I'm not gonna do that." Right? "I'm not – that's not my thing. I'm a Christian." So you go as far as you can without sinning or violating your conscience. That's all he's saying. And the question here is, is it evangelistic? What image, what presentation are you giving of Jesus? Now, again, there are two teams, firmly entrenched within Christianity, one is fundamentalistic, one is very liberal, neither of which is very evangelistic because the fundamentalists basically say, "We don't hang out with non-Christians because they do things that God doesn't approve of and we don't wanna look at it. So we don't have gay friends. We don't go to the bar. We don't go to the club. We don't go to the concert. We don't." But then, nobody really gets saved.

Over on the liberal side, they say, "Well, we hang out with gay people. We go to clubs. We go to bars and we don't say anything about sin or Jesus, because it offends people." You say, "But yeah, that offends Jesus when you don't tell the truth and it doesn't really help anyone." It doesn't help anyone to lie and it doesn't help anyone to not tell them the truth by ignoring them. The point at both is we're supposed to be honest about sin, the Bible and Jesus if we're Christians and a liberal, spiritual person who believes that all religions are the same and everybody's going to Heaven and Jesus is just a nice guy. – they're not telling the truth. And the fundamentalist sectarian person who doesn't want anything to do with gay people and lost people and drunk people and drug-addicted people – they're not helping either, because they're not saying anything to anybody. They're just hanging out with their own kind. And the question is, is this evangelistic? How does this represent Jesus? You know, we love our city like Jesus loved Jerusalem and we weep over it as he wept over it. And the question is then, you know, how can we love people, have relationships with them and disagree with them in a way that they still feel loved. This is very complicated and hard. This is the hard part of living in our city. How to say, "I love you, but I disagree with your lifestyle." That's a very hard line to walk. "I disagree with the decisions that you are making." I get this all the time. Right, I get this all the time. I've had gay friends come to me and say, "You're a pastor aren't you?" "Yeah." "Do you officiate weddings?" "Yes I do." "We're having a civil ceremony. Could you officiate?" "No, I can't. I love you, but I do not believe that that is acceptable in the eyes of God and I do not believe that is what God intends, so I can't officiate your wedding." "I thought you loved us." "I do love you but I disagree." I disagree. And I and be your friend and I can go to your house for dinner and I can talk to you and I can answer your questions and we can go catch a game and whatever – but I can't stand up and say, "And God is cool with this, because God isn't cool with this." And if I have to choose between my love for you and my love for Jesus, my primary allegiance is to Jesus and I still wanna love you. So this is a hard place for me."

I get the same thing all the time, you know, in this city, it's ecumenical prayer gatherings. So, they get a Buddhist and a Muslim and a Baha'i and a Jewish guy and a Christian and they all get together for lunch and then they have a prayer meeting, because after all, we all pray to the same God. And I'll say "Well, I'll go to the prayer meet- I'll go, rather, to the lunch, and I'll, you know, I'll eat the lunch and I'll visit and talk and make nice, but when it goes to prayer meeting, I'm out." Because we're all not dialing the same number, we're all not talking to the same guy, right? We're not all the same religion. We're not all going to the same place. We're not all working from the same assumptions. We're different here. I love Jesus, I believe the Bible. You don't love Jesus, you don't believe the Bible. We're just different teams.

And so how is it, then, that you can love people and disagree with them. That you can be their friend without affirming their lifestyle. That you can participate in their culture without blessing their spiritual practices. Boy, this is complicated, isn't it? How many of you young women have got this issue right now? You're like, "Yeah, what do I do?" I mean some of you – there's gals in this church, who – you know, you were the club gal, right? You get dressed up in clear heels, which is like part of the stripper uniform. You'd put on a little tiny skirt and a piece of dental floss for a shirt and then you'd make your hair really big so no one could miss you and then you would come in looking like you been electrocuted to the club, waiting for guys to buy you drinks, well you hang out with your friends. You can go out on the dance floor and grind and break the majority of the commandments and then you met Jesus. And then Friday night comes and your girlfriends call. They say, "Hey, we're going to the club. What time do you want us to pick you up?" You got a decision. Oh boy. Okay, first permissible. "Jesus, should I go to the club? Well, it doesn't say, 'Thou shalt not go to the club.' So I guess I'm free." Now beneficial. "Is this gonna be good for me? If I'm gonna go there and drink a bunch of drinks and end up with some guy and wake up married to Bobby Brown. You know, is that good for me?" Probably not. So, maybe that's not beneficial. You know, "And if I do go, should I go wearing sensible flats and pants and drink a Diet Coke and hand out tracts to dudes who hit on me? Should that be the way that I go?" Wearing a sweatshirt. And – you know, and these are the kinda questions. So as – so for every woman, for example, who comes from that kinda background, some of the women will say, "I can't go. You know, I'm gonna just get – my conscience doesn't allow me. I'm gonna have a couple drinks. I'm gonna be dancing. I'm gonna get in trouble. It's not gonna be good." Other women say, "You know, I'm gonna be okay. I think I can be a good witness. I can

hang out with my friends. I can love them. I could have a good time with them without sinning and I can show them that there has been a change in me.

Dudes have the same thing, right? You got buddies that aren't Christians. They say, "Hey, man, so-and-so's getting married. You wanna go to the bachelor party?" You say, "Cool, I'll hang out with you guys, we'll drink meat and eat meat and we'll drink," but you've had a few drinks if you're drinking meat. "We'll go out, we'll drink a beer. We'll have a steak. We'll smoke cigars. We'll play a little Texas Hold 'Em. We'll shoot pool. That's cool." Then the guys say, "All right, now we're going to the strip club." You say, "Oop! This where I get off. Either we don't go or you go without me but that's the line right there. I can't cross that line because that, that's not acceptable. That's not permissible. That's not beneficial. That's not loving toward my wife or wife-to-be. That's not, that's not a good witness, you know, because Jesus doesn't want me at the strip club. You know, that's not where he sent us, you know? Maybe to the parking lot to hand out tracts, but we're not going in. You know, that's the line for me." And so we have to operate by conscience and wisdom and prudence and this is the hard part of being a Christian in this city. There's two teams. One says, "Do whatever you want, God doesn't care." They're wrong. The other says, "Don't talk to anybody who sins because you don't wanna catch it like a cold," which it doesn't work that way. So you ask these questions. Is it permissible? Is it beneficial? Is it loving? Is it evangelistic? How will non-Christians perceive this? Will I be showing them the love and truth of Jesus simultaneously?

And Verse 31, he's gonna talk about the glory of God. We'll pick that up in a moment, but then in Verse 32, he speaks of the last question, which is, will this tempt someone else to sin and get into trouble? All right? Verse 32, "Do not cause anyone to stumble," anybody to get into sin. So you think, "Should I drink this?" Well, I'll tell you what, if you're out to dinner with a recovering alcoholic, don't order a beer. Do not order a beer. That's not gonna – that's not gonna help anybody, right? If someone is weak in an area, if somebody is tempted in an area, don't. You're just gonna get 'em in trouble. So, even though you may be free, it may not be a problem for you. It may not hurt you at all. It may hurt them and you don't wanna cause anyone else to sin. "Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God," right? Doesn't matter who it is. Gay, straight, black, white, young, old, rich, poor, republican, democrat – it doesn't matter who you're hanging out with – if you're a Christian, you're always thinking, "Am I gonna get you to sin? Am I gonna get you in trouble? Am I strong where you're weak? Am I gonna cause you spiritual harm? Then I'll abstain because I love you and I don't wanna cause any trouble." – even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good, "rather, "but the good of many, so that they may be saved." There's the bottom line. The one thing that matters most to the Christian is whether or not more people will meet, love, follow, worship and serve Jesus. That's the issue.

So when you're hanging out with your non-Christian friends, you're saying, "However, I act, think, do, where we go, what we eat, what we drink – I just wanna do everything I can to introduce them to Jesus so that they will meet Jesus. That's my main priority. So, I'll give up whatever freedoms I need to. I'll be flexible, but I won't sin, because that'll give them a bad picture of Jesus." And what we want is we want a lot of people to meet Jesus. That's what we want. That's what we want. Now, again, the problem is these two teams of the religious right and the religious left – the fundamentalism on the right and the liberalism on the left – neither of which see a lotta people saved because the liberals – those who are just sort of spiritual people – they don't talk about sin, Jesus, the Bible, nothing. Just love everyone in some vague, amorphous way. "Oh, you have an alternative lifestyle? Cool! You wanna have sex? Cool! You wanna get high? Cool! Whatever." No. That's, that's not it. God calls people to repentance. Jesus died for sin, so we must repent of sin. Sin is a problem. Sin is an issue. They don't wanna talk about sin, because it offends people. It's negative. It divides and it's unpleasant but it's true.

And over – same thing on the strong right, in the fundamentalist den. It's like, "Well that's why we don't go to bars and we don't drink alcohol. We don't hang out with non-Christians. We don't know gay people. We just keep to our own kind." Well, neither of which does anybody get saved. Fundamentalists don't talk to lost people. Liberals do – they don't tell them the truth. So that's the city we live in. Highly divided, highly polarized, spiritually. Our question is as missionaries, how can we love people? How can we go to the club, go to the pub, go to the game, go to the recreational activity, listen to the bands, listen to the talk radio show host, watch the films, read the literature, be up to speed and not violate Scripture, not violate conscience, love people – hold the line where we need to hold the line without participating in sin or endorsing sin, so that as many people as possible would meet and fall in love with Jesus in the city where it is very unlikely, statistically, that that would ever occur.

This is complicated, isn't it? How many of you – this is your life? You got friends at work saying, "You wanna come to our same-sex union?" You're like, "Oh boy. What do I say?" You got family members, right, that are shacking up, sleeping with somebody, living with somebody they're not married to. And they want you to pray for them. You're like, "Pray what? That lightning misses? Like, what do you want me to pray? I don't know what to pray." You know, it's very, very hard. It's very hard to manage this tension in this city. "I want to love you. I want to be in community with you. I want to be a friend to you. I want to help you and serve you. At the same time, I don't wanna give you the impression that I bless sin or that God is okay with things that the Bible says he's not." Say, "How do I get out of this?" Paul says it right in Chapter 11, Verse 1. Here's the way out. "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Jesus Christ."

So he says, here's what you gotta do. You gotta keep looking to Jesus. Here's the deal with Jesus. Did Jesus have some bad friends? Yeah, he still does. Welcome to Mars Hill. Right? He hangs out with some bad people. That was the knock on Jesus. He's a glutton, a drunkard and a friend to sinners. All his friends are bad. They're all gluttons, they're all alcoholics, they all cheat at cards. Look at 'em! Look at 'em, they're a terrible bunch. All the gals are just totally loose and all the dudes are just drunken rednecks and – that's not – God wouldn't have those kinda friends. Sure he would. Sure he would. Jesus came, said I'm a physician. I came for the sick, not for the well. That's like going to the hospital, looking at the doctor, saying, "What kinda doctor are you? Everybody in here's sick." All right, "Well, that's why I'm here." You know? "I'm here for the sick people." Jesus hung out with people who were spiritually, morally sick. They were sinners. Women who were sexually outta control. Dudes who drank way too much. People who made their living ripping other people off. Was Jesus their friend? He was. Did Jesus ever approve of what they were doing? Never did. Never did. Did Jesus ever join them in their sin? Did Jesus ever say, "Oh, you're a loose woman. I'm a single guy. We could do this." Jesus ever say, "You guys

are counting cards and making a living and ripping people off and you guys are cheating on your taxes and fudging on your work hours and ripping people off? Well that's cool. I'd like to make some money. I'm a young guy. I'd like to get a house. I'd like to get a start." No. Jesus ever gone out with his buddies and they all get drunk and he say, "Well, I – me too. I'll get drunk. Somebody else could be the designated driver." No.

See, Jesus hung out with guys who drank, but he never got drunk. Jesus hung out with women who were sexually outta control but he didn't have sex with them. Jesus had loving friendships with men but he wasn't gay. Right, Jesus worked a job but he never ripped anybody off. So Jesus, who is God, fully involved himself in culture. That's the theology of the incarnation and he was fully in the culture. He celebrated the holidays. He ate the food. He drank the wine. He hung out. He went to the parties. He had friends, he loved people, but he didn't sin and he didn't lie and he wasn't a coward and he wasn't compromised. And the result was, most people hated him. So, welcome to the Christian life. That is what God calls you to, right? Jesus says woe to you when all men speak well of you. The only people who really love Jesus were those who were repentant. Those who said, "You're right. I am a sinner, I need God." The religious folks, they hated him 'cause he hang out with the wrong kinda people and the people who were sinful, who were drunken and perverted and thieving and covetous, those people who didn't repent, they hated him, too because he was telling them that their lifestyle was unacceptable. And so he says, "Follow the example of Jesus," which means you love everyone, you don't sin, you love God and people without compromising either. You go as far into the culture, like Daniel did, without sinning, knowing that not everyone is going to love you. People from both teams, those who are just sort of vague, spiritual, do-what-you-please, to those who are just hyper sectarian, separatistic, mean-spirited, fundamentalistic Christians – both sides are gonna shoot you. One saying, "You go too far. You have the wrong kinda friends." The other side saying, "You don't go far enough. You don't bless alternative lifestyles. You won't get high with us. You won't sleep with us. You're, you're not, you're not consistently loving in our definition."

How do you get out of this mess? This is frustrating, isn't it? How many of you, right now, this is your life? Are gonna get up and go to work tomorrow and this is your life, right? The person in the cubicle next to you is a dude in a dress, right? Who thinks he's going to Heaven because he recycles. Next to him is the lady with seven cats, right? Next to them is the dude that I saw on the bike with the shorts and some girl in clear heels and they're all gonna wanna go out and have drinks after work and they want you to come. You keep calling in sick, because you don't know what to say, right? You're like, "I don't know man. I don't have a cat, a dress, I don't know what to do. I'm just a total confused ma- I don't know. I don't know what I'm supposed to say."

Well, if we wanna turn this all into theological shorthand, the answer is this – in everything you eat, in everything you drink, in everything you do, with everyone you meet, you live for one reason, that is to glorify God. We'll pull out, now, Verse 31 that we skipped and this is the summation of all that Paul is saying. He says, "So whether we eat or drink or whatever we do," right? Go to work, play on the softball team. Play guitar. Go to the buffet, whatever it is. Whatever you do, "do it," what? "to the glory of God." Okay?

Now, at this point, some of you are checking out, going, "Oh, here we go. Here we go. This is where you tell me to eat white bread, sit on a mat, in some cell, beat myself with a stick and drink muddy water so that God will love me. I'm not going there." Hang in there with me. What does it mean to live to the glory of God? And I know Christians throw this out because we're lazy and we love bumper stickers and we're foolish, right? So, you be like, "I don't know what to do." Right, you always got one guy. "Glorify God, brother!" What the – you know? Hey, what does that mean? What does that mean? What does that even mean, you know? It's nice on a bumper sticker, fits on a t-shirt, you know, but what does that mean? Glorify God. You know? What does it mean?

Well, you know, God is a God of glory. God is glorious. God exists to be glorified. The Bible says that. The Bible speaks of the glory of God as a mega-theme that appears about 275 times in the English translation, 50 times alone in the Book of Psalms. And even to find, to nail down the glory of God is very, very hard. Words like splendor, beauty, magnificence, radiance, rapture, weightiness, transcendence, holiness, honor, excellence, majesty begin to describe a little bit of what it means that God is a glorious God and that all things are for God's glory and that we exist to glorify God. And when people encounter the glory of God, they respond in ways of fear, awe, wonder, worship, dread, respect, conviction, repentance, humility. God is big, we're small. God is good, we're bad. We exist for God, God does not exist for us. That's what you begin to see as people encounter the glory of God. That's their inclination and response.

So the question is, how do you glorify God with your Diet Coke and your Wheaties, right? And your turn signal, like the stuff of life? How do you glorify God in the stuff of life? Well, without Jesus, we quite frankly, wouldn't have any clue how to glorify God 'cause we'd be all abstract principals so, our eternal God, Jesus, comes into human history as a human being and he lives a life that is completely, utterly, consistently glorifying of God without any sin as our example of how a life of glorifying God is to be lived. So we have to look to Jesus. Otherwise, we don't know how to glorify God. Which means you gotta read your Bible a lot and really be digging Jesus, learning about Jesus to learn how to be a good missionary who lives in a culture that isn't about Jesus but lives in that culture in such a way as to honor and glorify God in all things, including food and sex and drink and work and friendship and power and money and all of it.

And so, when the Bible speaks of glory in the New Testament, it connects the person of Jesus very inextricably with the glory of God. I'll give you a few examples. Hebrews 1:3, "The son," that is Jesus, "is the radiance of God's glory." John 1:14, "The Word," that's Jesus, "became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only." 1 Corinthians 2:8 says that Jesus is "the Lord of glory," right? That he is the God of glory and in 2 Corinthians 4:6, it says that "the glory of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ." All right? So, Paul says if you wanna be a good missionary, if you wanna love your city, if you wanna see people get saved, if you wanna see lives get changed, if you find yourself in friendships and working relationships with people who totally disagree with you and their sexuality and their spirituality and their life is not about Jesus and the Bible, it's totally different – and you find yourself in continual scenarios asking, "Should I or should I not do this thing?" "Should I should I not go to this place?" "Should I participate in these ways?" The one question you keep asking is, "Will this or will this not bring the most glory to God? Will

this glorify God?" And if you don't know what the answer is, then you look to Jesus. "Should I have sex with my boyfriend or girlfriend?" No, Jesus was a single guy who was a virgin, even up until the point of his death. Right? "So should I get drunk?" No, no, no. Jesus didn't get drunk. That doesn't glorify God. Did Jesus lie to people? Jesus didn't lie, I shouldn't lie. Did Jesus steal? He didn't steal. I shouldn't steal. If I claim to be a Christian, however I'm living my life, I live it to the glory of God, following the example of Jesus, who glorified God in all times and ways.

Now, let me say this. I am assuming resistance at this point among many of you. Some of you are thinking, "Oh great, save the city. Make 'em all Christians. Be an evangelist. Help other people. What about me? I wanna be happy." I know you wouldn't say it that way, but deep down, that's the, the gut level emotional resistance to living for the glory of God is simply "That doesn't sound like any fun at all." That doesn't sound like any fun – read the Bible, sing praise songs, pfft. You know, I'm young, man, I got a credit card. You know, I – it's happy hour. Hustle up. I understand, right? I understand. And so what happens is there is a, a belief that is so prevalent that you either need to glorify God or go out and have a good time. Enjoy your life, be happy, have joy, have fun. Okay, let me talk to you about this. Let me see if I can bust some myths for you.

Okay, first thing I'll say is this – a lot of this comes from a friend, John Piper, and first thing is this – that you and I were made for the express purpose of glorifying God in all times and places and circumstances. We were made to glorify God. So, birds were made to fly, fish were made to swim, we were made to glorify God. First thing. Second thing, everything in our life is an opportunity to glorify God or to not glorify God. Paul just said in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all," everything, the whole lot of life, "to the glory of God." So, every moment of every day you and I will make decisions that either glorify, honor or dishonor, do not glorify God. All the time. And this means that everything in our life is an opportunity to glorify God and this is beautiful because some of you are here today and here's what you want. You say, "I want to be happy. I'm an American. My country exists for three reasons: life, liberty and me getting happy." Right? "That's why I'm here." Life, liberty and happiness. And I come to Jesus saying, "God, here's the deal. Make me healthy, wealthy and wise, then I'll be happy." Then you go, "I'm sick, broke, and stupid." You say, I'm not, probably, I mean you just don't know, that's how dumb you are. Anyways, now – some of you, then, will say, "Well, this Christianity just isn't working. I'm not healthy, wealthy and wise. It's not working. How am I supposed to glorify God? How am I supposed to praise God? How am I supposed to thank God for my cancer, right? My, my unattractive demeanor, my unemployment, my flat broke life, what – how am I supposed to be happy, praise God in all circumstances? What, are you nuts? Glorify God at all times. Broke. Unattractive. Single. Fired. Sick. Dying. Glorify God. Oh yeah, that's great. That looks great on the bumper sticker. Try doing that. It doesn't work."

Actually, it does. You know what? If your religion is about I glorify God when I'm rich, then when you lose your money, you curse God. If your religion is about I glorify God when I'm healthy, then if you get sick, you curse God. If your religion is I praise God as long as my life looks great, as soon as you start to die, you start cursing God. Your religion cannot, does not work when you need it the very most, the very most. Now, here's the thing. Can you glorify God when you're broke? You can. Jesus did. We worship a homeless guy. I hate to point it out to you, right? This whole thing, you know, come to Jesus, he'll make you rich. It's like, but the homeless guy? I mean, you know, he may not make you rich. Come to Jesus and he'll take away all of your suffering. What, are you kidding me? Didn't you see what they did to the guy? I mean, he got beaten. He got executed. They murdered him. Right, it may not go well for us. Christian means little Christ, right? They may treat you like Jesus. It may not be that great. You say, well, you'll – if you come to Jesus, you'll live a long life. We worship a guy who died in his early 30s. We may not have a long life. We may not make a ton of money. We may not have hot spouse. We may not raise some cute kids. It may not go that great. It may be really hard. You may miscarry. You may get divorced. You may get cancer. You may get fired, I don't know. You say, "Well, how am I supposed to glorify God?" You can, because Jesus did.

I'll give you a crazy one. "For the joy set before him, Jesus Christ," Hebrews said, "endured the cross, scoring at shame." "For the joy set before him, Jesus Christ endured the cross, scorning at shame." What? Jesus was happy getting crucified? It doesn't look like it. He's sweating blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. He's stripped naked. He's beaten. He's mocked. He is absolutely destroyed physically. He is crucified, spit upon, bleeds to death and dies. What's so happy about that? I'll tell you why Jesus was happy. Why was he happy? He glorified God. He died a death that glorified God. He was homeless and glorified God. He was flat broke and he glorified God. He was single and he glorified God. He was a virgin and he glorified God. He was betrayed and he glorified God. His family turned their back on him and he glorified God. He suffered and he glorified God and he died and he glorified God. Now here's the beautiful thing. Christianity actually works for your life. Every other religion will tell you that God gets you out of hard times and our religion tells you actually, no. God may or may not get you out of tough circumstances but even if you go through hard times, God will give you an opportunity to glorify him.

Now, some of you are saying, "I don't wanna glorify God, I want to be happy. I don't wanna get crucified. I don't wanna be broke. I don't wanna get cancer. I don't wanna be divorced. I don't wanna be a virgin. You know? They make movies about people that are virgins and they're comedies. I don't want that. That's not what I'm shooting for." Here's what happens. When it comes to living for God's glory or our happiness, we tend to pick happiness and that's when we sin. Right? Romans 3 says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the," what – "the glory of God." Sin, by definition, is not glorifying God. That's the definition – you, you go – right, you sit down, you say, "That's it. I'm gonna drink a six pack." That's not glorifying God, right? "I'm gonna get naked with somebody I'm not married to." That's not glorifying God. "I'm gonna take money that doesn't belong to me." That's not glorifying to God. "I'm gonna say something that's not true." That's not glorifying to God. Sin is when we're looking at our options, saying, "I can either glorify God or think I need to be happy. I will eat a whole chocolate cake. I will drink light beer and I will get naked. I'll be happy. I'm not gonna glorify God. I'm gonna be happy with a chocolate cake, the six pack and the naked person. That will make me happy." That's why we choose sin. We were made for God's glory.

Everything is an opportunity to glorify God. Oftentimes we choose what we think will make us happy, rather than glorifying God. Here's the hard truth. Do you end up happy? You don't. You don't. Your conscience kicks in, the Holy Spirit kicks in. You're not happy. Isn't it amazing? Most people in our country eat too much, drink too much, have too much leisure time, have too many television channels, have too many breakfast cereals, you know,

live in a decent place, drive a decent car, and they're what? Miserable. Depressed. Suicidal. Going to psychologists, counselors, therapists, taking pills. "I'm not happy." Well what did you try? Tried sex, tried drugs, tried friendships, tried living with somebody, tried making money, tried buying a new house, tried buying a new car, tried getting a dog, so I got a cat, the cat ate the dog, they pooped all over the house, I got sick of it, I went for a drive, got in a wreck, I'm not happy."

I'll tell you why. I'll tell you why. God's glory is your happiness. If you glorify God, you'll be happy. If you don't, you'll be miserable. Because you'll be doing exactly what you were not created to do, so you'll be miserable. See, we – you gotta get this with me. You say, "I wanna be happy." Okay, here's what you really want. You wanna glorify God. That's what you really want. But they don't tell you this if you turn on Oprah, she'll say, "Well what will make you happy?" Huh. Turn on Dr. Phil, "What will make you happy?" Huh. Go to a counselor that's not thinking Biblically. They'll say, "Well what will make you happy?" Ah. What they should be asking you is what would glorify God? What would glorify God? You know, sleeping with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Stealing money? Lying? Getting drunk? Getting high? Looking at porno? Getting divorced? Is that gonna glorify God? No. Then don't do it. Why? Because it'll make you miserable. You won't be happy. You won't be happy. "But I think if I do those things, I will be happy." You won't be happy. I assure you, you won't be happy.

So then my final point – you should pursue happiness. You should make it your goal to be happy. But you shouldn't be so pathetic as to stop and trade in God for chocolate cake, light beer and naked people. You should have bigger desires than that. You got bigger aspirations than that. You sh- if you're gonna go for joy, go, go big! I'll tell you what. I can't promise you today that you'll be rich, that you'll be pretty, that you'll be smart, that you'll be successful, that you'll be healthy, that you'll be healthy, that you'll live a nice, long life. But I can tell you this – that if you want to be happy, you can have God, through Jesus Christ giving himself to you, and you can live a life that glorifies him, even in the hard stuff and in glorifying God, what is very peculiar, is that as God gets his glory, you will get your joy. John Piper says it this way, the Westminster Confession of the Faith is a Reformed confession of faith, it's an older one, from the Puritans, but the first question is, what is the chief end of man? Why did God make us? The answer is, God made us to glorify God and enjoy him forever. John Piper, get to teach with him this Fall, changes that. He says, "Close but not right." The chief end of man is to glorify God by, by enjoying him forever. See, God is glorified when you enjoy him. Even in your suffering or your victories, defeats, your wealth, your poverty, your health, your sickness, your life, your death. That, that if you wanna be happy, God alone will satisfy you. I'm not saying you don't eat, but you eat not as a glutton. You – I'm not saying you don't drink but you don't drink as an alcoholic. I'm not saying you don't have friends. You have friends, but you don't lust after them and fornicate or commit adultery with them. I'm not saying you don't work a job. You do work a job, but you work a job to honor and glorify God, not just because you're gonna get a raise or the boss' approval or financial security, but because it's an opportunity to honor God, to glorify God. And you know what? That will make you happy. You'll have purpose. You'll have meaning. You'll have value. You'll, you'll have significance. You'll have a reason to get out of the bed on Monday morning.

He says it this way, as well. God is most glorified with us when we are most satisfied in him. See, when Paul says, "Do it all to the glory of God," I cannot allow you to think, "Well, pfft. I wanted to be happy, but I guess I need to glorify God." I want you to say, "I wanna be happy, so I better glorify God." And as God's glory and my joy become the two sides of the exact same issue, then I get to live a life like Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit, whereby I say no to sin. I say yes to God. God is glorified. I'm satisfied. Whether or not I'm rich or poor or young or old or smart or simple or healthy or sick, I'm still happy. I'm still happy 'cause I'm doing that which God made me to do. I'm glorifying him. C.S. Lewis, in *The Weight of Glory*, he says it this way, "Our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak." Right? Who's told you that your desires are too weak? That's the truth. "We're half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition. When infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum, because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea." "We," says Lewis, "are far too easily pleased." That's the truth.

You could have God! And you chose light beer? What? You could've had God and you had nudity? You could've had God and you chose gluttony? Or you could've had God and you chose folly, rebellion? Why? Lewis says, "We're too easily pleased." We're like Esau, who trades in his birthright for a bowl of porridge. Right, don't do that. Don't do that. Jesus Christ takes away sin and what does he give us? God. I know some of you here are going, "But I want him to give me a car!" I got something better than a car and I'm not saying it's a sin to have a car and I hope he gives you a car. I hope he gives you a car. Hope he gives you a car with rims, right I don't care. But Jesus will give you God. "Say but I wanted Jesus to give me a spouse." I hope he does give you a spouse. I'd love to see you get married. But whether or not he gives you a spouse, I got something better than a spouse. God. Jesus gives us God. God is our highest treasure, our greatest delight, our deepest joy. Our most profound happiness is that God loves us, that God knows us, that God cares for us, that God has given himself to us and that we get to live for his glory. Not that we have to, but that we get to. That we get to do what we were made to do and finally have a little bit of fun. Finally doing the, the, the singular cause for which we were made.

That's why you read the Bible. You see people that are praising God when they're suffering and they're happy when they're dying and you say, "What's wrong with them?" Nothing. They got it. Some of you say, "But isn't this selfish? Where I go to God just say, 'God I need you, give yourself to me.'" Yeah, it is because we need God. God doesn't need us. We don't go to God with our hands full and say, "Here you go." We come to God with hands empty, say, "I need you. I'm not happy. Apparently, I have been pursuing all of the wrong sources of joy. I thought that light beer, chocolate cake, naked people, and a promotion would give me long, enduring, satisfying soulful depth of joy and it never does. At the most, I squeeze a weekend out and then I'm bummed out again and ticked off." Is anybody here – I mean, is this – are you with me, here?

Response: Yes.

Okay. Both of you? Good. I'm glad this is helpful. Now, now let me say this. Some of you will ask at this point, "What does this have to do with the first half of the sermon?" And that's what I was thinking at first, when I was studying it. I'm like, "This is two sermons that don't go together, you know?" Be a good missionary and live for the glory of God and they actually do go together. You know what? There are, there are religions and

spiritualities and secular psychologies and philosophies all over our city telling people, "We can make you pretty. We can make you rich. We could make you successful. We can make you a winner." And some of you say, "I feel like I'm losing. Or when I do win, I get proud, so I'm a double loser." Christianity would tell you this. Your suffering, it still works. You're not suffering, it works. You're rich, it works. You're poor, it works, right? You're young, it works. You're old, it works. You're living, it works. You're dying, it works. Why? Because it's all about the glorification of God. And what this will cause to have happen in your life is that other people will look at that and they'll be attracted, right? This is how people become Christians. They look at Christians and go, "What? What's up with you?" They say, "How is your life?" Well, you know, it's – this is a problem and this is frustrating. This isn't going so well. This is a pain in my neck and how are you doing?" "I'm happy." "Why? You're ugly, stupid, unemployed, homeless, living at my house. What are you so happy about?" "Well, you know, I feel as though I am still responding in a way that makes Jesus' name great, that glorifies and honors God, whom I love above all else and so it's not in vain. It's for good purpose and even though I wouldn't've chose this course of life, I praise God for it because I am happy and God is glorified and we're both winning."

See, that's what attracts people to our faith. There's nothing like that. There's nothing like that on the earth. So, it's the city looking in saying, "We don't get it with those people. They're a peculiar bunch but we kinda like 'em because they seem to know something that we don't know. They seem to have some source of joy that we have not yet tapped." Yeah, God has given himself to us in the person and the work of Jesus Christ. So I invite you today to nourish your desire for happiness and joy. Yeah, and if you wanna know, okay, is it permissible. Is it beneficial. Is it loving. Is it evangelistic. Is it in the best interests of others and considerate so that it won't cause them to sin, the way you answer all those questions is every single decision you make, you ask one thing, which what? "God, what would most glorify you?" Then you do that. And you know what God will give you as a great gift? Joy. You'll be happy. You'll be happy. You will be happy. Everybody is pursuing happiness. No one is pursuing the glory of God. Sad. It's the only place it is to be found and when God's people get a hold of that great truth, they become absolutely, absolutely attractive to people who look at them with peculiarity and say, "Where does your joy come from? It can't come from your health. It can't come from your family. It can't come from your success. It can't come from your beauty and it can't come from your intellect. Where does it come from?" Oh, God has given himself to you. That is altogether different. And that is what will lead to the transformation of this city. If we live lives that glorify God in all things and in all times at all places at work, at home, at play. And as people see they will see the goodness of God and they'll be compelled to consider him for themselves.

I'm gonna pray for us all. I call you to repent today of weak desires, of trading in God for chocolate cake, light beer, nudity and video games, none of which is in and of itself bad – can be used in a redeemed way – but when joy is down the road, how foolish is it to pull over for a pit stop of sin and to not get to that place of joy that God intends? And then we can go back, we can eat with joy. We can drink with joy. We can play with joy. We can laugh with joy. We can love with joy, without sinning because we know that that wouldn't glorify God and there's no joy in that whatsoever.

Lord Jesus, I pray for my friends who have gathered here tonight. Jesus, I pray we grab hold of this truth that living for your glory and our joy are not antonyms, they are synonyms. That as you are glorified, we are happy. As you are made much of, we have much to delight about. As you are lifted up, our hearts rise in song. Jesus, we confess that we each, in varying ways, have pursued what we thought would make us happy at the expense of your glory and it didn't make us happy and we were doubly miserable and frustrated and depressed and angry. Some of us, even God, shook our finger at you, saying, "You didn't give us what we wanted. You didn't make us happy." Meanwhile, you were giving us you and that just wasn't enough. We repent of our small desires. We repent of our unwillingness to nourish a deep root of desire for true and abiding happiness and we ask that we would walk away from lesser things and that we would come to you today in repentance and in faith. We partake of communion, remembering your body and blood shed for our sin. We give of our tithes and offerings and we sing songs in adoration to you. We may not have all that we thought that would make us happy, but today, may you satisfy us, may you be glorified and may we be your happy people. We ask this in Jesus' good name. Amen.