



“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

Are All Things Lawful? (1 Corinthians 6 and 10)

How many times have you heard, or even said, the phrase “all things are lawful but not all things are helpful? If you are familiar with it, you likely know it comes from 1 Corinthians 6:12 or 1 Corinthians 10:23 which read:

1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (ESV)

“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.

Many have understood this verse to mean that the Torah no longer applies because all things are lawful. They aren’t saying that the Torah is removed, but that it no longer has any authority over them, they are permitted to do all things and are not under the law.

Unfortunately, others have used these verses an excuse to continue in their sinful behaviors; often times these are the individuals who try to claim grace as an excuse to sin. Such a belief is what leads to trampling the spirit of grace and making the sacrifice of Messiah worthless. This is not a viewpoint this teaching intends to address.

Our focus will remain with the first group who believe these verses remove their accountability to the Torah. Is this understanding correct? If so, what does that look like in practical application?

Are All Things Lawful?

The statement begins by saying that all things are lawful, so what does that look like? Well, in practical terms, it’s understood to mean that we no longer have to keep the appointed times, there are no more dietary instructions, we no longer have to stone adulterers, etc.

That seems fair enough to some degree, but what about the rest of the laws?

If all things are lawful, then is it now lawful to murder someone; is it now lawful to rape, steal, and be sexually immoral (like homosexuality and bestiality, for example); is it even lawful to worship other gods, speak to the dead, practice witchcraft?

But wait a minute, didn't Messiah and Paul state many of those things are sins? Even in the same chapter Paul tells the Corinthians that sexual immorality is wrong. Verse 18

1 Corinthians 6:18 (ESV)

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

Did you see how Paul even calls sexual immorality a sin, which is still breaking the law of God?

“every other sin” (which implies sexual immorality is a sin as well) “the sexually immoral person sins against his own body”

In fact, literally 2-3 verses prior to verse 12, Paul goes through a list of things that are a sin and will prohibit people from entering into the kingdom of Heaven.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (ESV)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Yeshua points out how idolatry is wrong in Matthew 4.

Matthew 4:8-10 (ESV)

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.””

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul warns again not to fall into idolatry and sexual immorality.

1 Corinthians 10:6-8, 14 (ESV)

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry

It should be clear from just these few verses that “all things being lawful” cannot literally mean that EVERYTHING is now lawful. There are still restrictions. We need to use discernment when reading the Scripture, doubly so when reading Paul. After all, Peter did warn us about how Paul can be confusing and lead us into the same errors as the lawless.

2 Peter 3:14-17 (ESV)

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. **There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.**

Another interesting thing to note with 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 is how it appears that Paul is actually quoting someone when he says the words “all things are lawful”. We know these words are not found in Scripture, nor could we find them in the Talmud.

This would lead us to believe that it must be a contextual statement. Paul appears to be responding to something going on in Corinth where people were using this phrase.

Let’s read them again, but this time note how Paul says those words, but then appears to be bringing correction.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)

“All things are lawful for me,” **but** not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” **but** I will not be dominated by anything.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (ESV)

“All things are lawful,” **but** not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” **but** not all things build up.

Paul is teaching a lesson to someone who is misusing the phrase “all things are lawful”. We know Paul still supports obedience to the Creator from other places in his letters. Therefore, it would not make any sense for him to be suddenly saying that everything is now lawful, that obedience to the Torah is no longer important.

For more on Paul’s understanding of whether or not the Torah applies, please see our Pauline Paradox series.

So, after all of that, should we stay with an understanding that all things are lawful, as in the Torah no longer applies to us? We don’t think so.

Are All Things Lawful? Yes!

So what does Paul mean when he is agreeing with the phrase “all things are lawful”? We really need to understand the context of the letter Paul was writing up to this point. We are not going to cover it in depth in this teaching, but we will hit upon a few high points.

In chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians we see Paul referring to an issue of division within the congregation. This division seems to have a root in pride and arrogance with boasting and stems from whom they followed or from their level of knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:10-14 (ESV)

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

As in chapter 1, chapter 2 speaks about the wisdom of the Creator being greater than the wisdom of men. In chapter 3 Paul admonishes those in Corinth about how they are living in the flesh, not in the spirit. He continues to remind them that they really have no room to boast.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (ESV)

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

Verses 21-23

So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

As we come to chapter 4 Paul changes gears a little bit. He tells them how servants of Christ need to be faithful with what they have been given. He tells them how they should not pronounce judgment until the Lord comes as he will bring to light any darkness.

When we put this all together, we see that none of them should be arrogant or boastful; none are truly better than any other.

1 Corinthians 4:5-7 (ESV)

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

He even goes as far as to remind them that they should not go beyond what is written! He made special note that there are still boundaries! Chapter 5 refers to one of those boundaries being broken, sexual immorality. In fact, what is done is a heinous thing and it's something specifically prohibited in the Torah.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2 (ESV)

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

This is found in the Torah in Leviticus 18; once again showing that all things being lawful does not mean the Laws of God no longer apply.

Leviticus 18:6-8 (ESV)

“None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the LORD (YHWH). You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

Paul has once again reminded them how they have no right to boast. At end of chapter 5 Paul makes reference to a previous letter and how the Corinthians should stay away from sexual immorality.

In fact, he states that they should even refrain from a brother, as in a like-minded believer, who was practicing sexual immorality. He even admits that they should not be judging someone by the Torah if they were not a believer. Instead, leave that judgment for the Father. They should, however, be judging one another according to the Torah. He is differentiating believers practicing sexual immorality from those in the world who practice it.

Based upon the beginning of this chapter, they had clearly not been doing this correctly. This brings us up to chapter 6 where it starts out talking about how believers should be able to work out grievances amongst themselves without involving the “law” (or courts) of society, or what would be the Greek culture and society.

Yet, the believers in Corinth were taking their grievances to the secular courts; they couldn’t even trust themselves to be fair and righteous. They had greater trust in the law of the land than in one another.

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 (ESV)

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

Paul expected the believers in Corinth to be able to handle their own disputes amongst themselves. They had the Torah (what was written as mentioned in chapter 4), yet they weren’t able to judge each other fairly as they were even wronging and defrauding one another. He then continues:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (ESV)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice

homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Yeshua HaMashiach) and by the Spirit of our God.

Why do you think that sexual immorality was such a problem with the Corinthians? What was the underlying problem here? Culture. The Greek culture and law under which they lived permitted such things as prostitution and casual sex. Sex was considered natural and normal, not really any different than eating and drinking.

While the Torah forbid such things, their Greek culture and law of the land did not. Much of what Paul was teaching against in the previous verses was permitted and even encouraged.

This is the mindset and the culture that the believers in Corinth had to overcome. This appears to be why Paul is using the phrase “all is lawful”. There must have been some arguments or defenses being used stating that they were following the law.

The law they were referring to was the law of the land, **not the Law of God**.

This is why Paul states that yes, all things are lawful, BUT not all things are helpful. Yes, all things are lawful, BUT he shouldn't be dominated by anything. This last one is likely referring to addictions and fleshly indulgences such as alcoholism and maybe even sexual addictions.

Just because something may be legal does not necessarily mean it's a good idea. For example, it's perfectly legal to purchase 50 cheeseburgers and eat them all in one sitting; it's not, however, a very good idea. It's perfectly legal for a 21 year old to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages; this doesn't mean it's a good idea to become an alcoholic and to get crawling-on-the-floor drunk every night.

Similar context should be carried through into 1 Corinthians 10 as well. Remember, we find a similar statement by Paul here.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (ESV)

“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.

It was lawful for people to eat meat sacrificed to idols. In fact, it wasn't necessarily even against the Law of God, the Torah, to eat meat bought in the marketplace. However, it wasn't necessarily helpful or profitable. This was especially true when around a “new believer” or someone who was “weak in the faith”. This is why all things may have been lawful, but they weren't necessarily helpful to the new believers.

We cover this in greater detail in our teaching titled “[Meat Sacrificed to Idols](#)”.

Even if we are living more “righteous” in some ways than others in the body, it is not a reason for us to think of ourselves as better than them or superior in any way. Such thoughts lead us to become prideful and arrogant. Even if we are more mature in the faith, we should not flaunt that maturity and do things that could tempt others or to give them the wrong idea.

Most of us wouldn't invite someone out for alcoholic drinks if we know they struggle with alcoholism or are working to abstain. It is no different here.

In conclusion, over the years many have taught 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 as indicating that the Law of God, the Torah no longer applied. They have taught that this is part of the freedom they received through Christ. To be fair, there are many Christian teachings out there that do not teach it that way, but do actually teach something very similar to what we have just presented, minus the statements of the Torah still applying.

For more on the freedom found in Messiah, please see our short teaching titled "[Why Is Christ Freedom?](#)"

From a practical perspective, Paul's statement of "all things are lawful" cannot possibly refer to the Torah no longer applying. Within the same letter Paul refers to the breaking of specific commands found in the Torah as something that is bad.

We also saw how applying that logic cannot be applied across the board because that would then permit things such as idol worship, murder, and adultery among other things.

We had to bring in the context of the whole letter to the Corinthians. There was division forming within the body based upon who they followed and there was a large amount of arrogance because of it. We found out that what Paul was really fighting against was the culture and the law of the land where sexual immorality and other such behaviors were permitted.

Paul was agreeing that the law of the land permitted the behaviors, but that did not make them the right behavior. If a behavior, even if lawful according to the Torah, would harm another by leading them into a temptation to fall back into their pagan ways, then it should be avoided. This was the exact situation referred to in chapter 10.

Living a life set apart is what we are called to do. The nations, society around us, should see us living differently from them, not doing the same things just because it's "legal". Our goal is to shine the light of the Word to the nations, to do that, we have to be living the Word of God, not just talking about it.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminatoTodo.net

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/119Ministries#

1) Mainpage banner text.

According to some the words "all things are legal" means the Torah no longer applies. If this is true, then we can now murder, commit adultery, and worship idols without it being a sin. Does that sound like something the Creator would say? We don't believe so.

- 2) FB banner text (Short sentence or two)
Is God okay with us committing adultery, murdering others, and worshiping other gods? That's what Paul would be teaching by saying "all things are lawful" if it means the Torah no longer applies.
- 3) Viral graphic text. (Something thought provoking)
Adultery. Murder. Idol Worship. Profaning the Name. Are all of these things now legal according to 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23?
- 4) A short summary of the teaching for the Vimeo description
Many like to teach that when Paul says that "all things are lawful" he is saying that the restrictions found in the Law of God no longer apply. If this is true, then we can murder, commit adultery, and worship other gods without any issues. Does that really make sense and sound like something God would tell us? Join us as we examine 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 to see what's really being said.
- 5) A short summary of the teaching for the YouTube description
Many like to teach that when Paul says that "all things are lawful" he is saying that the restrictions found in the Law of God no longer apply. If this is true, then we can murder, commit adultery, and worship other gods without any issues. Does that really make sense and sound like something God would tell us? Join us as we examine 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 to see what's really being said.

Keywords

Are All Things Legal?, lawful, not all things are helpful, profitable, beneficial, society vs bible, legal vs lawful, torah

Key Scripture Verses

1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:23

- 6) Number of Video Files