

What is Your Aim? 2

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Let's open God's word to 1 Corinthians 10. What is your aim for this year? What's your goal? Do you have one? Well, you have one, but what is it? And God sets before us the right goal, a properly ordered universe and a properly ordered life.

1 Corinthians 10 verse 23 through 11, verse 1, and find that on page 1,783 in your pew Bibles, 1,783. Here, Paul is using an argument that the believers were using to say, "We can do anything we want now that our sins are forgiven," And Paul is opposing that argument.

23 'Everything is permissible' [that's what you're arguing]--but not everything is beneficial [is God's answer]. 'Everything is permissible'--but not everything is constructive. 24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. 25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.' 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. 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' sake-- 29 the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? 31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God-- 33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Verse 31, here's the principle in the midst of the issue, the specific issue, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." How's that for the perfect New Year's resolution? Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.

So, brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ, what's your aim? What's your aim for 2019? Jason and Yanaka say, "Our aim is to get married." Well, I hope you have a higher aim than that. What's your aim for 2019? What do you mean setting aims and goals. I thought, James, you read that last night, was telling us to stop that planning. Remember how he spoke against those who were speaking like this, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why," he said, "you don't even know what's going to happen tomorrow, let alone the whole year." So what's this business of setting goals and making plans and having an aim?

Well, what's the alternative to what James is saying, no planning at all? Not having any goals for 2019? Just drifting aimlessly like leaves being blown by the wind across the yard, across the field without any direction? Taking life as it comes? Going with the flow? Becoming a passive pawn who sits and waits for something to happen? Is that the alternative? No. James is not arguing against planning but presumptive planning that believes in the myth of infinity, the insanity of human infinity as if I control time and I have the power to create. That's what he's arguing against, presumptive planning. Then he goes on to say, remember, "When you make plans, make sure that these plans please the Lord, and submit your plans and your life to the Lord's higher plan and say Deo Volente, if the Lord wills we will live and we will do this or that." That's a worldview too, to submit everything you have planned for this coming year, and I hope you have plans, to submit them to the Lord's plan for your life and for this world and to his control. And there's a worldview in that, and that simply is making God's glory your aim, and that's what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 10. The key is to commit and submit your whole 2019 and your whole life and future to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior who rescued you from vanity, and your Lord, who now rules your life and to whom you give your life as a thank offering, and that's the heart and soul of the Christian life, and the only good way to live this year, the only way to expect God's blessing, is to dedicate your whole life to the glory of God. So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

That's the right aim for you and me in 2019 and that's what we want to look at this morning. What's your aim? Let's see the target that God has put before us, and let's focus our lives on that target, secondly. Let's see the target. What's your aim for 2019? Here it is, "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God." Aim every day, every moment, every word, every thought, every action, every attitude, aim it at the glory of God as your target, the right target for your life.

First, a word about the context here of verse 31. Paul's urging Christians not to live for themselves. "Hey, everything's permissible. Now that I'm forgiven, I can do whatever I want." Doesn't care if it hurts somebody else. It doesn't matter. No. Don't live for yourself anymore. God didn't save you to please yourself or to do anything for yourself. No, not even eat and drink for yourself. Not to do anything without asking two questions. 1. Will this help or harm my brother, my sister, my neighbor? Verse 24, "Let no one seek his own good but the good of his neighbor." And the second question, how will this action, this eating, this drinking or whatever you or do, how will it promote the glory and honor of God? Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. These are the two questions we

must always ask in this specific issue of whether it was okay to eat meat that was sacrificed to an idol. You didn't sacrifice it, but it was being sold at the market, you bought it and you ate it, or a neighbor fried it up and invited you over for supper. It's okay. Don't raise questions of conscience, but if somebody else is with you for whom that be a stumbling block, don't do it for your neighbor's good, but above all, for God's glory. God, who has undertaken to save that person, don't put a stumbling block in front of him or her.

That's the specific issue, but the general point here covers all of life everywhere, all the time, not only in Corinth in the year 60 AD. It covers us all today. Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. That's the right target. It points to the great problem of our lives, outside of Christ we're missing the target. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Our lives are aimed at the wrong thing outside of Christ. That's what sin has done to us. That's the fantasy we talked about last night of the one who says, "I'm great. I'm powerful. Life is all about me. I'm the best proper focus I can think of for my own life. As pronounced in the 'Humanist Manifesto,' man is the measure of all things." And that's severely twisted and irrational because it's obvious we're so weak and puny and can't give ourselves even one breath or even take one step without God. We can't be the measure of all things. That's a lie, and yet that's the satanic deception that holds our culture and our hearts captive and that's the very essence of sin.

There's a lot of focus today on how sin hurts us and there's a place for that, but ultimately the biggest issue is what it does to God. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, that's the biggest issue with sin, we rob God of his rightful glory, we rob God of his rightful honor, his rightful worship and supremacy and centrality of his rightful place in our lives. And that's the greatest blasphemy and the greatest problem of not seeing the right target and thinking of ourselves as the target, the glory that we are to aim for, but here's the gospel: God loved his enemies, this world that has turned on him and attempted to delete him from our lives and consciousness. He loved his enemies in this way: he sent his Son to save us from the death and condemnation and eternal pain and suffering we deserve. He sent Christ to live among us as the one who gets it right. When we were all busy going our own way and focusing our lives upon ourselves, making ourselves the target of our existence, Jesus came and did it right, the perfect man, the righteous man, the sinless man who lived to the glory of God and died for the glory of God from the heart out of love, honoring the Father in everything he said and thought and did. And the gospel is not only that he showed us the right way to live a properly ordered life focused on the glory of God, but when we believe in him he gives that to us and he makes that ours. Good news.

In Jesus, we're directed to the right target again. He says, "No, this way," and he turns our lives around so we are no longer twisted and distorted and ruined, but ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven. And not only that, Jesus came to die and to pay the price of all that we have stolen from God when we've robbed God of his glory. We owe him an infinite debt of wrath, of punishment, and Jesus said, "I'll take that." He lived for God's glory, but he died for God's glory too, and when you believe in him, all your sins of robbing God of his rightful glory is forgiven and you're clean, and you're set at the beginning of the year

armed with his life and with his death, his doing and his dying, to have your life set aright, and mine, and directed at the right target, the glory of God. That's what Jesus came for and that's why we believe in him.

What a blessing to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and that's the target, the glory of God. What does the glory of God mean? The glory of God means his beauty, his centrality, his supremacy, his weight, his value, his importance. That's the glory of God. He's the center of the universe. He's the center of your life. Do you see that? Seeing that, put your life the right way, in the right order, brings blessing. Not seeing that brings destruction, ruin and above all, the wrath of God. All our lives through Christ are brought back to their right target to live for the centrality and the supremacy and the absolute value and importance of the one true God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to put our whole lives at his feet.

That's what it's all about. That's what 2019 is for. That's why God gave it to you today, a new year, a new day, to promote his glory, to honor his reputation, to show forth his attributes in your life, and, secondly, we then at the beginning of the year need to find our focus there. Here's the target clearly set before us and we so quickly lose our focus, don't we? We get up in the morning and suddenly it's all about me and I forget that the glory of God is my aim. And we need to resolve this year every day and every hour through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who rescued us from having a life turned in upon ourselves and brought us into a life that's focused on God, we need, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be reminded every day again of this proper aim and focused on that every morning at the beginning of the day. By the way, check out the daily Bible reading challenge as a way to focus every day. Again, if you already have a good Bible reading plan that's working, don't let anything get in the way, but if you don't and you're searching, check out ligonier.org to find a variety of Bible reading plans that hopefully will suit your situation in life and your best way of reading the scriptures.

But focus, make the promotion of God's honor and name the focus of all you say and do, even if it's just eating and drinking, even if it's just the tiny things. Often it's the tiny things that get us messed up in the day, aren't they? The tiny things. But also the big things, where we will study, where we will apply for a job, how we will handle this particular trouble. It's really amazing how the Bible itself directly applies this situation, "Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God," in so many different ways. And so, I have 13 Bible texts, 13 applications of this passage, 13 different ways in which the Bible tells us to glorify God and I hope to have you out of here by noon. 13.

1. How do we focus on the glory of God? Philippians 2. Jesus came to earth, he humbled himself to death, even death on a cross. God exalted him to his right hand and he reigns there so that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. That's the first and most fundamental way to glorify God this year, bow the knee to Jesus. Give your life to him. Confess your sin. Tell him you are wicked and you cannot save yourself and now you will submit to him as your Savior and Lord, but also confess that he is Lord. Be public. Let others know. Let it show. That every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the

Father. You want to glorify God? Honor his Son. God said, "Whoever honors my Son honors me because I love my Son." Faith is the first way to glorify God and the most fundamental and most important way, and it's the root and fountain of all the other ways. Without faith all other attempts to glorify God go nowhere.

2. Worship. In Revelation 14, the angels say with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory." How do you give him glory? "And worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and the springs of water." The psalmist says, Psalm 96, "Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts." You want to bring him glory? Take an offering, come into his courts. Psalm 66, "Shout with joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name. Give to him glorious praise." You want to bring him glory? Come in to worship and sing. Worship God, resolve to worship God to his glory. Come faithfully because like your tithe dedicates all the money and gifts God gives to you, so your worship dedicates all the time and life God gives to you. Never miss this coming year. Will you resolve that? Never miss unless you must because God is worthy of your worship. You want To aim at God's glory? Worship is the second most fundamental way to do that.

First is believe, faith. Second is worship. Third, seek personal spiritual growth. John 15. Jesus said, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." You want to glorify the Father? Pray that you will bear much fruit this year, that you'll grow in all the fruit of the Spirit, that you'll be transformed more and more to become an imitator of God, be conformed to the likeness of Christ, and by this you will glorify the Father. Earnestly pursue repentance this year of all your sins. You see a sin that's invading your life, that's hindering you, slowing you down, go for it, kill that sucker, get rid of it, fight it, that will bring glory to God because that will enable you to bear fruit. And desire this fruit of the Spirit to grow in you, "By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit forth."

Fourth, brotherly love and welcoming one another, generous hospitality. Remember that verse, right, Romans 15:7, "Therefore welcome one another as Christ welcomed you," but do you remember the rest of that sentence? "Therefore welcome one another as Christ welcomed you," remember how that ends, Rick? "For the glory of God." That's how that ends. He welcomed you for the glory of God. Jesus saved you from your sins, washed you clean, brought you into the family of God into the church, gave you a rich welcome because that glorifies God when we become part of this family. Now, as Jesus welcomed you, you open your heart, and your eyes, and your hand, and your home to one another. Break out of that small clique in which you have made your unhealthy shelter. Get out of that dark corner where you're hiding your scared self, and reach out to one another in new and scary and daring ways to the glory of God in 2019. That will glorify God. He loves his family. He gave you a rich welcome through Christ and he loves to see us imitate that welcome for one another.

5. Witness to the world. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and do," what? "Glorify your Father who is in heaven." You want to glorify God? You want to aim for his glory? Let your whole manner of life, your way of

talk at home and work, your way of dealing with your classmates on the bus and on the playground, let your whole way of life point others to God and lead them to surrender their lives to him in faith and bow down before him in worship. And resolve today for this coming year, never to say anything that would be a reflection, a poor reflection of God to your neighbor. Never. But only that which shows the beauty of his attributes, his goodness, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, love, mercy and truth in you, through you. Witness to the world.

How else do we glorify God? 6. Using your gifts in the church. 1 Peter 4:10 and 11, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks," do you have a speaking gift, "one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves," do you have a serving gift, "as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." Why use your gifts to serve one another? So that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Resolve to use your gifts in the church. Depend on God's strength to do so, so his body may be built up, his name may be glorified. Find a need and fill it. Be ready to help whenever and wherever called upon as much as you are able. And don't do it to boast in yourself or to look good in front of others, but to thank God who gave life to you and put you and his family.

7. Glorify God by being a Christian husband. Ephesians 5, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Do you want to honor Christ? Do you want to glorify God? Love your wife sacrificially. Stop being harsh with her. Be kind and considerate toward her. Seek to do her good, to help her flourish in her calling, to develop in her gifts, to grow in her godliness. Not for your sake, so life will be easier for you, but for God's glory. May he prosper you husbands in this aim and bring much blessing to your home as you honor God this way.

8. Wives, do you want to glorify God? Submit to your husband, says Paul, as to the Lord. Not for your own sake, not even for your husband's sake, but for the Lord's sake, as he submitted to God the Father, and he has become your head, honor him as your head by submitting to your husband. And do all you can to support your husband and encourage him and respect him and build him up in his godly leadership and headship in your home. And may he prosper you, wives, in this aim and bring blessing in your home as you honor God this way.

9. Children. Children, make God's glory your aim by obeying your parents. Colossians 3, "Children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases dad." Oh no, "for this pleases the Lord." Did you hear that? Not because your dad wants you to, not because your mom wants you to. Children, obey your parents because Jesus wants you to. He loves it when you do. It's a picture of him when he subjected himself to Mary and Joseph, and this you're like him because through your parents' leadership in your life, God plans to reach into your heart and change you, train you, shape you, save you. You want to please the Lord? You want to glorify him? Obey your parents.

10. Servants, employees. "Whatever you do," Colossians 3:23 and 24, "work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." The best motivation for going to work this year and for doing your work this year, and for working hard this year, and for doing the best you possibly can at work this year, is by not working for your boss and by not working for your company, but by working for the Lord and glorifying him as your ultimate Master, and know that you're giving this day, this hour, this oil change, this website design, to him and you are showing his ingenuity, ingenuity and wisdom and his honesty and faithfulness and kindness when you work faithfully and you're serving the people he made.

11. Employers, masters. Colossians 4, "Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven." Businessmen and employers, remember to represent Christ your Master well as you direct your employees and manage your company. Give him glory in the way you treat people, especially when things go wrong. Always put people above money and God above all. I hold you in high esteem, businessman, because you have talents and skills and know-how from God that I have no clue about. May God prosper you and your employees in your work in 2019 and show himself through you.

12. Christian modesty and purity. 1 Corinthians 6, "Flee from sexual immorality...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." Be sure to use your body in a way that glorifies God reserving sex for marriage, cultivating love within your own marriage, not coveting or desiring another person's spouse. God is pure and faithful and you want to glorify him, you be pure and faithful in all your relationships whether you're married or single. Show forth his attributes. Aim for his glory through Christian modesty and purity. And one more way, in the way you suffer. 1 Peter 4, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler, yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God." Did I read that right? If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in that name and rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings. Who knows what you might have to suffer this year, or what I might have to suffer, what grief, what sickness, what persecution, what unfairness, what disappointment, what heartache. When God calls you to suffer this year, let us be sure that we suffer in a way that brings glory to his name. We glorify him when we trust in him in our suffering. We rely on him. We give our tears to him. We see and rejoice in his goodness. We ask him that we might grow through our suffering. But above all, that we will show his attributes, his glory to others in the way we handle trouble.

Well, the applications are really as wide and deep and high and long as life itself. How do you glorify God? Even in the way you eat and drink, and whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. God is a glorious God and he saved you in Christ to live out this glorious life with this glorious aim. Don't waste 2019 but live to God's glory. It's impossible to live for God's glory and not have a blessed year. It's impossible not to live for God's glory and to live to have a blessed year, but you may be absolutely sure of this, if you seek God

and his glory, he will prosper you. He'll prosper your marriage, your family, your work, your study, your friendships, your worship, and he will prosper his kingdom and his church through you. Make God's glory your aim every day and hour in 2019. Amen.

Let's pray together.

Our Father in heaven, with great joy we stand in your presence as your beloved children and holy servants. When we were servants of Satan and our lives were turned in upon ourselves, distorted, twisted and miserable, you came and rescued us from his tyranny, you pulled us out of the miry clay, you washed us in the blood of Christ, you set our feet high upon our rock, you elevated us into your blessed presence to live in your household and enjoy your lavish gifts, and especially to enjoy that new life of living full-time for that holy and noble purpose of the glory of God in the service of our neighbor. You set our lives free in Christ who's all our righteousness, and through whose mediation we give every work to you. Lord, give to each one that special gift of faith in Christ that frees him from his sin and brings him into your presence, that enables him to glorify the Father by bowing the knee to his Son, and fill us with your Holy Spirit to offer ourselves gladly to you in 2019 with a service that's as long and deep and wide and high as life itself. Help us to aim for the glory of God in everything we do and say. For this we're too weak in ourselves. Lord, sin, Satan and the world never stop attacking us and try to pull us away from our calling and entice us to live for ourselves. We need you. We need you, Lord, every hour. Empower and equip and embolden and instruct and correct and help us the whole way each day. Help us to offer worship to you this year, to gather in your house and offer ourselves to you in love and praise that glorifies God. Help us to witness of you in word and deed so that through us others may fall down before the glory of God. Help us to step outside of our safe space and welcome one another into our hearts and lives and homes as Christ welcomed us to the glory of God. Help us to use our gifts readily and cheerfully as elders and deacons, as pastor and all God's people to the glory of God. Help us to grow in faith and knowledge and in every Christian grace and in all the fruit of the Spirit so that we might glorify the Father by bearing much fruit. Help us to bring glory to you as wives who submit to our husbands, to honor and glorify Jesus as our Savior and head. And help us to bring glory to you as husbands who love our wives sacrificially, to glorify the love Jesus showed us when he gave up his life for us. As children, help us to glorify you by honoring our parents in order to please our Lord and Savior who made us his very own. Help us as employees to bring glory to your name by going to work and doing our work as your willing diligent servants. Help us as employers to bring glory to your name by treating our employees and clients kindly as representatives of our Master in heaven. Help us all to glorify you with our bodies in the way we eat and drink, and especially by living pure and chaste lives whether married or single. And help us to glorify you in the way we respond when you call us to suffer. Help us to rely on you, rest in you, to suffer for your sake. O Lord, may it be a year of progress for us, a year of grace, a year of preparation for holier service above, a year of storing up treasure in heaven as we live for you here daily on earth for soon you will come and take us away. May each of us be found in Christ looking for your return on the clouds of heaven that we may face our Judge and Maker unafraid because our Judge is our Savior

who already stood trial for us in our place under the judgment of God. We praise you, Father. We glorify you through your Son and in your Spirit. Amen.