

SACRIFICES TO TODAY'S IDOLS:  
A CHRISTIAN REACTION TO MODERN MARKETPLACE BOYCOTTS

BY  
JACOB D. UNGEMACH

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DIVINITY

PROF. STEPHEN GEIGER, ADVISOR  
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

MEQUON, WI

APRIL 2, 2024

## CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	II
ABSTRACT.....	III
INTRODUCTION .....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	2
THE PROBLEM STATED.....	3
A History of Christian Boycotts .....	4
The Modern Christian Boycott .....	7
The Corinthian Problem .....	14
KNOWLEDGE.....	17
The Incomplete Nature of Knowledge .....	18
Knowledge Misapplied.....	19
Knowledge Applied.....	21
CONSCIENCE .....	23
A Matter of Conscience .....	24
The Conscience at Work.....	26
The Weak Conscience .....	28
Burdening of the Conscience.....	29
Defending the Weak Conscience.....	31
UNITY .....	34
Misunderstandings of Unity .....	35
Unity Applied .....	37

LOVE.....	38
Love for the Fellow Believer.....	38
Love as a Dinner Guest.....	40
CONCLUSION.....	43
Areas for Further Study .....	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	45

## ABSTRACT

In recent years, Christians have increased their engagement in the economy through tools like economic boycotts. As Christians consider how they use their money in a God-pleasing way in the marketplace, how do they react to differing approaches among the body of believers? As Paul addresses the issue of meat sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, he sets up a biblical example for approaching issues of adiaphora. As Paul guides us through our modern marketplace approach, we apply the concepts of knowledge, conscience, unity, and love to give glory to God in our decisions.

## INTRODUCTION

“I’m boycotting that.” Is there a certain store that comes to mind? Do you think of a coffee shop you used to go to? Perhaps you still go there while others choose to boycott it. Maybe it’s a clothing brand. You wear it, but you know other Christians who would never be seen with that logo. Is it a beverage? Your conscience can’t stomach an association with the company’s morality, but you still have friends who buy it because it’s their favorite. Should Christians “boycott” that?

In a free-market economy, consumers have the freedom to make economic decisions. You choose a car. You browse for a house. You shop at this grocery store or that one. Naturally, shoppers have conversations about their decisions. Even Christian shoppers discuss their economic choices and marketplace decisions. But what happens when Christians begin to discuss the morality of their marketplace decisions? Things quickly become confusing. A conversation about a streaming service can cause another Christian to question your morality. Or you hear about the store that someone else shops at with knowledge of the company’s advertising strategy and start to squirm. How should the Christian approach the modern marketplace?

Marketplace decisions and boycotts could be made based on knowledge and understanding of the economy. The conscience could also steer an individual in the choices they make. But the Christian’s marketplace decisions should not be made solely upon knowledge or conscience, but also in conjunction with unity and love.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no formal literature written on the intersection between Christianity and boycotts. There are, however, several books that address the parallel topics of Christian economics and Paul's idol-meat address. In the area of Christian economics *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World* by Daniel Bell, Jr., addresses a Christian perspective on the modern United States economy. Regarding 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, Peter David Gooch's *Dangerous Food* served as an excellent source of knowledge on the Corinthian idol meat problem. He addresses the issue primarily from a cultural perspective, but this aids in drawing parallels with the modern economy. Modern marketplace stories were taken from major news outlets and activist sites. Scriptural analysis was aided by many commentaries, books, and articles that dealt with the scripture of 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 directly or with relevant scriptural topics.

## THE PROBLEM STATED

American Christians living within a capitalist society are often faced with a dilemma. How does Christian morality inform our purchase decisions? When should a Christian choose to buy or not buy? As Christians wrestle with these questions more and more, there appears to be a disconnect. “The moral life in any age, let alone a capitalist one, is plagued by the disconnect between belief and practice. This is to say, holding right beliefs or ideas is no guarantee of right actions.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, is it impossible to live a moral life, especially when one considers the modern marketplace?

Rather than despair, many Christians have decided to use the power of the market to express their beliefs. The modern phrase “vote with your dollars” reflects this thought. “When we spend money, we ‘vote with our dollars’ in some sense. When a business acts in ways that we feel are immoral, taking our business elsewhere is a natural free-market response.”<sup>2</sup> Whenever this form of economic freedom exists, Christians are faced with this practical dilemma. While this dilemma may feel like a new one, it isn’t new at all. Christians have organized formal protests to “vote with their dollars” throughout the years to create social and societal change.

---

1. Daniel Bell Jr., *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 20.

2. Alan Noble, “Should Christians Participate in Boycotts?” Christian Research Institute, March 30, 2020, <https://www.equip.org/articles/should-christians-participate-in-boycotts/>.

## A History of Christian Boycotts

While it may feel like the movement for Christians to boycott is exclusively new, this is perhaps the result of some recency bias. Certainly, issues related to marketplace boycotts have been front-and-center in recent years, but the connection between Christianity and boycotts in the public sphere stretches back much further than recent memory. In an article reporting on a boycott in 1996, Dale Buss references Christian boycotts from as far back as the 1970s. “Two decades ago, concerned Christians focused their efforts on getting sexually explicit magazines off the shelves of convenience stores.”<sup>3</sup> While many consider the modern market to be “un-Christian”, Christians fifty years ago perceived the marketplace in the same way by fighting against products and advertisements that were morally objectionable.

### Nestlé

One of the most successful organized boycotts involving American Christians took place in the 1970s. In 1978, Christians spoke out against the Nestlé corporation and called for a nationwide boycott. While one might expect this boycott to involve candy, it had nothing to do with sweet treats. Rather, this boycott revolved around Nestlé’s promotion of baby formula in third-world countries which caused devastating results:

The lives of hundreds of thousands of infants could be saved each year in the 1980s by the promotion of breastfeeding, said James Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF. The World Health Organization indicts the infant formula industry: “The promotion, marketing, and distribution of breastmilk substitutes can. . . contribute to the overall discouragement of breastfeeding and contribute to underfeeding, malnutrition, and vulnerability to infection.” The current corporate drive to replace breastmilk with a profitable artificial product is convincing women perfectly capable of producing

---

3. Dale Buss, “Holding Corporate America Accountable: Christians Press for Greater Responsibility from Businesses,” *Christianity Today*, October 28, 1996, 76.



wholesome, plentiful breastmilk to become consumers of expensive, imperfect, and sometimes lethal infant formula.<sup>4</sup>

Regardless of the moral intentions of the company, the result of their marketing could be directly linked to loss of life.

Many American churches sprang into action through both political and economic channels. “On November 10, 1978, the National Council of Churches voted to join a massive boycott led by 32 Protestant and Orthodox Christian denominations. As part of their resolution, they called on the U.S. Government ‘to encourage breastfeeding and to refuse to support the promotion of infant formula’ in U.S. development assistance programs for Third World countries.”<sup>5</sup> Finally, in 1984 after a seven-year boycott, the boycott was lifted. Nestlé had conformed their advertising to the World Health Organization’s standards and was moving away from targeting third-world countries.<sup>6</sup> The efforts of these Christians were met with success.

### The 90s

The tug of an ever-shifting American culture led to more boycotts in the 1990s. Where a boycott like the one against Nestlé involved concerns of exploitation and harm, many of the boycotts in the 90s shifted toward cultural defense. As one author shares in *Christianity Today*, the issue was tied to both *internal* and *external* morality. “Today, religious activists have stepped up their

---

4. “Babies Means Business,” *New Internationalist*, April 1, 1982, <https://newint.org/features/1982/04/01/babies>.

5. Huckabee, Tyler. “The Forgotten History of the American Church’s Most Successful Boycott.” *RELEVANT*, October 7, 2021. <https://relevantmagazine.com/current/nation/the-forgotten-history-of-the-american-churchs-most-successful-boycott/>.

6. “Nestle Boycott Being Suspended,” *The New York Times*, January 27, 1984, <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/01/27/us/nestle-boycott-being-suspended.html>.

efforts by taking on some of America's largest corporations. These moral conservatives have also broadened their emphasis, going beyond such products as books, films, cigarettes, and alcoholic beverages to companies' internal policies and business practices."<sup>7</sup> The concerns of morality involved *what* a company offered (external) and *how* a company acted (internal).

The most notable Christian boycott from this time involved the major entertainment corporation, Disney. In June of 1997, an official boycott statement was passed by one of America's largest church bodies. "Messengers (delegates) to the Southern Baptist Convention voted overwhelmingly June 18 to boycott the Walt Disney Company, including its theme parks, Disney stores, and the ABC television network, which is owned by Disney."<sup>8</sup> The motivation for this boycott was linked to Disney's external morality. Many believed the company should have higher standards of morality due to its ties to family programming. "Many Southern Baptists object to Disney's policy of giving health benefits to same-sex partners of employees, 'Gay Days' at theme parks, and the release by Disney and its subsidiaries of controversial books and films like 'Pulp Fiction' and 'Kids.'"<sup>9</sup> The Southern Baptist Convention was attempting to turn the massive, cultural ship named "Disney" away from worldly things and toward a Christian morality.

Did the boycott work? The AFA certainly claimed "success" when their boycott was lifted nine years later in 2005. "The article cited three hopeful signs that contributed to the lifting of the boycott: the pending departure of Disney chief Michael Eisner; the split between Disney and Miramax films; and Disney's involvement in the film production of the Christian classic

---

7. Dale Buss, 76.

8. "Southern Baptists Vote to Boycott Disney," *Christian Century*, July 2, 1997, 623.

9. "Southern Baptists Vote for Disney Boycott," CNN, June 18, 1997, <http://www.cnn.com/US/9706/18/baptists.disney/>.

“The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” by C.S. Lewis.”<sup>10</sup> Additionally, this boycott invoked change within the families involved. “Richard Land, president of the SBC’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said American families are more sensitized than ever to the entertainment industry’s ways.”<sup>11</sup>

Yet, concerning the overall morality of the company, Disney still acts objectionably according to the standards laid out by the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1990s. The same lifestyles that the SBC spoke out against in the 1990s have been supported outwardly in recent years:

Over time, the company has made efforts to embrace LGBTQ fans in more visible ways, although it wasn’t always so progressive and still faces criticism for representation. It added same-sex celebrations to Disney Fairy Tale Wedding packages in 2007; released an “It Gets Better” video supporting the community in 2011; launched a collection of consumer products supporting LGBTQ groups in 2018 and put on Magical Pride, a park-sponsored event for LGBTQ fans in Paris, in 2019.<sup>12</sup>

While the concern of the SBC in the 1990s was a genuine one, protecting Christian families from non-Christian beliefs, it does not seem that the SBC was successful in its change.

### **The Modern Christian Boycott**

In recent years, boycotts have been common in the public sphere. Christians have found reasons to boycott countless companies. “Over the years, groups have called for boycotts of companies and products such as American Airlines, The Gap, Burger King, Clorox, Crest, Ford, Hallmark

---

10. “AFA Ends Disney Boycott It Launched in Mid-1990s,” *Baptist Press*, May 24, 2005, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/afa-ends-disney-boycott-it-launched-in-mid-1990s/>.

11. “AFA Ends Disney Boycott It Launched in Mid-1990s,” *Baptist Press*, May 24, 2005, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/afa-ends-disney-boycott-it-launched-in-mid-1990s/>.

12. Hannah Sampson, “Conservatives Want to Cancel Disney. It’s Not the First Time,” *Washington Post*, April 18, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/04/18/disney-boycott-theme-parks-lgbtq/>.

Cards, Kraft Foods, Microsoft, the Walt Disney Company, IKEA, Pampers, Target, the Campbell Soup Company, and many more.”<sup>13</sup> The majority of these boycotts, like those of the past, have been tied to the morality of the company involved. As one considers the Christian as a consumer, this attempt to avoid morally objectionable companies might still be considered faith in action. “These calls for boycotts stem from a belief on the part of some Christians that all believers have a moral obligation to boycott any company that supports sinful behavior such as homosexuality or abortion. Their motivation is a noble one, for they are attempting to follow the biblical mandate to obey God’s Word and to not love the things of this world.”<sup>14</sup>

There comes difficulty, however, with categorizing these social actions as exclusively “Christian” in nature. For example, what began as a Christian effort to defend Christmas was eventually absorbed by politics. “In 2015, Starbucks was boycotted because its holiday-themed cups were simply red rather than a more explicitly Christmas design. Then presidential candidate Donald Trump connected this design choice to the ‘war on Christmas’ and said, ‘Maybe we should boycott Starbucks.’”<sup>15</sup>

Within this realm of public boycotts in which Christians have been involved, two stand out in modern history: Target and Bud Light. The call for the boycott of these companies has been common in both Christian and political activism.

---

13. Robert Rothwell, “Can Christians ‘Do Business’ with the World?” *Ligonier Ministries*, September 15, 2013, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/can-christians-do-business-world>.

14. “Can Christians ‘Do Business’ with the World?”

15. Noble, “Should Christians Participate in Boycotts.”

## Target

Target has faced several organized boycotts from Christian activists. These boycotts have been aimed especially at the company's public actions which support the LGBTQ community. First, the issues involved the restrooms. "In 2016, Target was boycotted for allowing transgendered customers to use the bathroom of their gender identity."<sup>16</sup> What began as general concern eventually became an organized protest from the American Family Association, a group that prides itself on being "on the front lines of America's culture war."<sup>17</sup> From the AFA Target boycott statement, the boycott was less about the LGBTQ community and more about concern for families<sup>18</sup> and safety:

The Target boycott, launched in April 2016, is a direct result of Target announcing that men who identify as women could access the changing room and restroom of women and girls. This policy is a direct threat to women and girls as sexual predators may take advantage of this policy to gain access to their victims. Your action is critical because we've heard from insiders that other companies have hesitated to change their bathroom and changing room policies because of the success of the AFA Target boycott. AFA believes that, with enough pressure, pro-family advocates can stop this insanity before more women and children become victims. Remember, too, your prayers and gifts are the lifeblood of this organization.<sup>19</sup>

The call to families and parents for the good of their children helps explain the magnitude of this boycott. Concern for children's safety is universal. While the motivation for such concern may

---

16. Noble.

17. "AFA.Net - About Us," <https://afa.net/who-we-are/about-us/>.

18. Per the AFA's Core Values, much of the company's focus is on families. Also included in their value statements are Evangelism, Marriage, Morality, Sanctity of Human Life, Stewardship, and Religious Liberty. This helps further clarify why family is at the forefront of their boycott here. They do not view societal morality and family as two separate issues, but rather as core values that coexist. To learn more about the AFA visit <https://afa.net/who-we-are/mission-vision-values/>.

19. "Special Update From Tim," <https://www.afa.net/hf2008/>.

not be universal, appealing to Christian morality and families has helped this effort. To date, the protest has gathered more than 15,000,000 signatures.<sup>20</sup>

More recently, Target has faced backlash due to its Pride Month collection. Outrage similarly can relate to concerns for children and families. “This week Target became the latest company to rethink its approach after facing criticism for its Pride collection, which included clothes and books for children that drew outrage from some on the right.”<sup>21</sup> While these issues are also trumpeted by the political right, the line is often blurred on these types of issues of morality.<sup>22</sup> In response, anger has led to more action: “Angry shoppers who want Target to get ‘the Bud Light treatment’ are calling on women to join them in their efforts to tank the company’s profits and to stop shopping at the world’s seventh-largest retailer.”<sup>23</sup> Target’s sales were down in the second quarter of 2023. “Second quarter comparable sales declined 5.4 percent.”<sup>24</sup>

Boycotts not only impacted the bottom dollar but also the brand’s merchandising. Before the boycott, Pride-related products were displayed in the front of the store. The backlash changed this strategy, however. “In reaction to the backlash, Target chose to scale back its LGBTQ+

---

20. Statistic gathered November 27, 2023. For an updated number visit <https://www.afa.net/target2>.

21. Jordyn Holman and Julie Creswell, “Brands Embracing Pride Month Confront a Volatile Political Climate,” *The New York Times*, May 25, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/business/target-pride-lgbtq-companies-backlash.html>.

22. See the AFA once again. While this company is Christian, many of its “culture war” ideologies are also hot-topic political issues on the right. This in many ways becomes a cart-or-horse situation. In other words, the religious views for societal morality which are held by the AFA are almost indistinguishable from political commentary.

23. Katherine Fung, “Target Boycott Hinges on One Key Group,” *Newsweek*, May 23, 2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/target-boycott-hinges-one-key-group-1802212>.

24. “Target Corporation Reports Second Quarter Earnings,” <https://corporate.target.com/press/release/2023/08/target-corporation-reports-second-quarter-earnings>.

merchandise and displays. The brand shifted its Pride-related products from highly visible front displays to less conspicuous locations within their stores. This move displayed a striking incongruence with Target's long-standing support for the LGBTQ+ community, which had detrimental effects on the brand."<sup>25</sup> Target recognized the significance of this move in their public relations and offered a rationale for the change. "Since introducing this year's collection, we've experienced threats impacting our team members' sense of safety and well-being while at work. Given these volatile circumstances, we are making adjustments to our plans, including removing items that have been at the center of the most significant confrontational behavior."<sup>26</sup> While Target attributed the change to safety and not boycotts, the company made the change many appealing for a boycott had hoped for.

### Bud Light

Another boycott which began in April 2023 was pushed by the conservative right in the name of public morality. "Since the beginning of April, conservatives have boycotted Bud Light over its support of a transgender influencer. Anheuser-Busch, the beer brand's parent company, is still reeling from the backlash nearly two months later."<sup>27</sup> Bud Light was incredibly popular across America. It was the beer of tailgates and NFL Football. Yet even a brand as engrained into American culture as Bud Light faced backlash due to its advertising campaign. "America's

---

25. Katya Skogen, "Unpacking the Target Boycott: Navigating the Complex Landscape of LGBTQ+ Inclusivity and Brand Loyalty," *Collage Group* (blog), October 20, 2023, <https://www.collagegroup.com/2023/09/28/cultural-fluency-summit-2023/>.

26. "Target Statement on 2023 Pride Collection," accessed January 29, 2024, <https://corporate.target.com/press/statement/2023/05/target-statement-on-2023-pride-collection>.

27. Katherine Fung. "Target Boycott Hinges on One Key Group." *Newsweek*, May 23, 2023. <https://www.newsweek.com/target-boycott-hinges-one-key-group-1802212>.

former longtime No.1 beer has been hit by a backlash from right-wing media and anti-trans commentators since April, after sponsoring transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney.”<sup>28</sup>

This boycott began with a literal bang. Musician Kid Rock shared his thoughts by posting a video online in which he fired an assault rifle at several cases of Bud Light, ending his video with strong language and inappropriate hand gestures toward the parent company Anheuser-Busch.<sup>29</sup> Sales slumped in North America, as consumers chose to take their money elsewhere. “Revenue fell \$395 million in North America during the period, compared to the same time a year ago. That figure included sales in Canada, where revenue rose, suggesting the slump was isolated to the United States and that the losses on Bud Light may have been even greater.”<sup>30</sup> This loss represents a 10.5% decrease in year-over-year sales from the same quarter in the previous fiscal year.<sup>31</sup>

Boycotts do not exclusively seek to cause a company financial pain. Boycotts hope to create a reaction or action by the company involved. Anheuser-Busch CEO, Brendan Whitworth released a statement on April 14, 2023, just days after the start of this boycott:

As the CEO of a company founded in America’s heartland more than 165 years ago, I am responsible for ensuring every consumer feels proud of the beer we brew. We’re honored to be part of the fabric of this country. Anheuser-Busch employs more than 18,000 people and our independent distributors employ an additional 47,000 valued colleagues. We have thousands of partners, millions of fans, and a proud history supporting our communities, military, first responders, sports fans, and hard-working Americans everywhere. We never intended to be part of a discussion that divides people. We are in

---

28. Michelle Toh, “Bud Light Controversy Cost Parent Company about \$395 Million in Lost US Sales,” *CNN*, August 3, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/03/business/anheuser-busch-revenue-bud-light-intl-hnk/index.html>.

29. “Kid Rock Shoots Bud Lights amid Anger over Trans Campaign,” April 4, 2023, <https://nypost.com/2023/04/04/kid-rock-shoots-bud-lights-amid-anger-over-trans-campaign/>.

30. Toh, “Bud Light Controversy Cost Parent Company about \$395 Million in Lost US Sales.”

31. “Bud Light Sales Slump Following Boycott over Anheuser-Busch Promotion with Dylan Mulvaney,” *CBS News*, August 3, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bud-light-anheuser-busch-dylan-mulvaney-beer-sales/>.



the business of bringing people together over a beer. My time serving this country taught me the importance of accountability and the values upon which America was founded: freedom, hard work, and respect for one another. As CEO of Anheuser-Busch, I am focused on building and protecting our remarkable history and heritage.<sup>32</sup>

Following this backlash and decline in sales, Anheuser-Busch appears to be trying to right-ship by changing some executive positions. “Anheuser-Busch InBev's U.S. chief marketing officer is leaving the beverage giant following public backlash over a promotion that led to a sharp drop in sales of Bud Light, one of the company's most important products.”<sup>33</sup> Additionally, Anheuser-Busch InBev's<sup>34</sup> Third Quarter Reporting not only shared the company's decline in revenue but also their commitment to focus on their brand's American image. “To support our long-term strategy, we continue to invest in our megabrands, wholesaler support measures and key partnerships including the NFL and Folds of Honor, as well as new activations in college football and the NBA. In Beyond Beer, our spirits based ready-to-drink portfolio continued to grow volume by strong double-digits, outperforming the industry.”<sup>35</sup> It appears the company's main goal going forward is to reshape its image to reattract its previous customers. If the change in marketing was the goal of the boycott, Anheuser-Busch heard the message.

---

32. “Our Responsibility to America | Anheuser-Busch,” <https://www.anheuser-busch.com/newsroom/our-responsibility-to-america>.

33. Elizabeth Napolitano, “Anheuser-Busch Exec Steps down after Bud Light Sales Slump Following Dylan Mulvaney Controversy - CBS News,” November 16, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bud-light-anheuser-busch-marketing-chief-steps-down-boycott-dylan-mulvaney/>.

34. This is the international company that owns and operates Anheuser-Busch and Bud Light.

35. AB InBev, “AB InBev Reports Third Quarter 2023 Results” (Brussels, October 31, 2023), <https://www.ab-inbev.com/news-media/press-releases/>.

### The Corinthian Problem

From the perspective of a modern consumer, marketplace decisions might seem like an exclusively modern problem. With the prevalence of advertising and an economy that is based upon consumerism, it may surprise many to find that consumer choices are not new. The issues facing Christians today regarding conscience, choice, and purchases were relevant in the Corinthian church. In the words of 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses issues dealing with the Corinthian marketplace. Our modern marketplace issues are not typically about the product, but what a specific company supports and your connection to that support in buying. For the Corinthians, the issues were also connected to culture. However, the concern was not about the place from which they were buying, but rather the spiritual quality of the products they bought. This was at the center of their concern about meat sacrificed to idols.

Idol food, εἰδωλόθυτος, was a part of the culture in which these believers lived. Pagan sacrifice and ritual joined the people together. The meat then was sold in the marketplace.

In Paul's day, pagan sacrifices were religious acts that involved the family. Animals brought to the priest were slaughtered and sacrificed to the gods. Certain parts were burned on the altar, other parts were taken by the priest, and the rest of the consecrated meat was returned to the family that had offered the animal as a sacrifice. At other times, consecrated meat was sold in the markets. Christians then bought the meat and consumed it in their homes.<sup>36</sup>

Pagan sacrifice was prevalent in the community. This meant that the meat was also commonplace. But how did the sacrificial meat affect the Christian community? This is the main thrust of Paul's address concerning idol meat:

Paul speaks of problematic food bought at the market or served by a host. This too is idol-food, even if Paul does not label it explicitly as such. It raises problems because it has once been used in a non-Christian rite, and some portions either taken to market to be sold or served by a host (who in turn had either used the food in a sacred rite or bought

---

36. Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 261–62.

such food at market). Here the connection between idolatry and idol-food lies in the food's history and not in the present use of the food; in the present the food is put to secular use (if such an anachronistic distinction is legitimate) but its sacred past remains religiously significant.<sup>37</sup>

Does something bought from the marketplace retain its religious significance? Should Christians be involving themselves with this type of purchase at all?

The social significance of this food was not limited to the marketplace and dinner invitations. The temple courtyard in Corinth also served as a meeting place for the city. It was a "dinner hall" of sorts where events were held:

A more ambiguous situation was provided by the great courtyard surrounding the foundation of Lerna, a pleasant place for relaxation attached to the Sanctuary of Asclepius. Under the sanctuary's main building have been found three dining rooms opened onto the courtyard. Because Lerna was such a desirable public place, it is likely that some Christians in Corinth would have defended their right to eat there, whether of their own accord or in response to an invitation. As Gooch concludes: "Even if there was unanimity concerning the wrongfulness of sharing in the table of demons, the dining rooms of Lerna would present an awkward cast."<sup>38</sup>

Were Christians to avoid this place altogether? How were they to navigate these social situations which others could view as sinful?

These Christians seemingly had two options: to purchase the meat or dine in the halls or to abstain completely from things connected to paganism. Like Christians wrestling with questions of conscience and morality surrounding their purchases in the modern market, Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 8–12 help these believers to navigate life in a pagan society. Yet, Paul's approach to this societal problem is not based completely upon the Christian's relationship with the market or even with the product. Rather his focus is on the Christian's relationship with God

---

37. Peter D. Gooch and Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8-10 in Its Context* (Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1993), 55.

38. Gregory Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2000), 272.

and other Christians. This is where the Corinthians are like the modern consumer. The similarity is not found in the thing purchased or even navigation of the marketplace, but rather the impact marketplace decisions make on onlookers. For the Corinthians and us, Paul shows that assumptions about knowledge and conscience as exclusive, reliable decision-makers are incomplete. Rather, the decisions made by a Christian must also be informed by unity and love.

## KNOWLEDGE

“*We know that ‘We all possess knowledge.’ But knowledge puffs up...*”<sup>39</sup>

Paul begins a new section of his letter to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 8 with his words Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων — “now concerning idol meat.” But what makes this shift especially interesting is Paul’s starting point for this discussion of meat. He doesn’t begin with a discussion on culture or economic theory in Corinth. Rather, he begins with knowledge. First Paul quotes the slogan of the Corinthians who were engaged in buying and eating idol meat. “‘We all possess knowledge’ seems to be a slogan from the Corinthians congregation. ‘We know that we all have knowledge.’ Many scholars conclude<sup>40</sup> that the last part of this sentence is a quotation taken from the letter which the Corinthians had sent to Paul.”<sup>41</sup> Assuming these are the words of the Corinthians, they then serve as a type of rationale for their decisions. But what was this knowledge they were arguing for? It was not merely earthly knowledge but spiritual knowledge. “Even though Paul fails to explain the term *knowledge*, we deduce a few facts from the context. The Corinthians believed that idols were nothing and that God is one. Thus, they knew that this one God is Father.”<sup>42</sup>

---

39. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:1.

40. While many scholars agree that this is a quote from the Corinthian congregation, a few are in favor of viewing these words as those of Paul himself. For a description of the divided view, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000., New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

41. Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 262.

42. Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 262.

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 8:4 further explain this knowledge. "We know that 'An idol is nothing at all in the world' and that 'There is no God but one.'"<sup>43</sup> From Paul's address of the Corinthian knowledge, we can piece together what their argument from knowledge was: We know that there is one God. Thus we know there are no other "gods". Because there are no other "gods" this meat cannot be sacrificed to anything. Therefore, there is no harm in eating this meat at all. In the defense of these believers, their argument was based on a knowledge of God. However, Paul's words here cut at the problem: knowledge alone is incomplete.

### **The Incomplete Nature of Knowledge**

How is it possible that knowledge of the true God would not be enough to inform the decision to partake in εἰδωλόθυτος? Because even this knowledge can be used with the wrong attitude of the heart. "Paul reacts to the attitude of a church member who supposes that knowledge is everything. The emphasis is on the verb *suppose*, a verb that reveals the haughty stance of the Corinthian who glorifies knowledge. By itself, knowledge is always limited in scope, extent, and depth."<sup>44</sup> With knowledge alone as a guide, this group of believers would run into a few problems in themselves. First, their knowledge was not complete and could not be complete. While they were informed spiritually about the oneness of God, they were acting in ignorance of other spiritual principles which Paul will highlight. Second, relying on this knowledge led to arrogance:

From their catechetical instruction, the saints in Corinth had learned not to fear idols nor the so-called deities behind them. These entities had lost their reality. Thus the more sophisticated members of the congregation seem to have operated with a broad

---

43. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:4.

44. Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 263.

interpretation of the circumstance in which they thought they could eat idol food. In the face of this complacent attitude, Paul begins his pastoral response with this general truth: “Knowledge puffs up”. The possession of a superior degree of religious knowledge did not guarantee that those who had it would take the right attitude toward the issue of idol meat. For the acquisition of expertise —be it religious, philosophical, or whatever— tends to inflate a person with a sense of superiority over others.<sup>45</sup>

Paul’s concern for knowledge then leads to this conclusion: knowledge of any kind can lead to arrogance and can be misapplied.

### **Knowledge Misapplied**

Knowledge, even spiritual knowledge, can be used arrogantly. For the Corinthians, Paul describes this knowledge as “puffing up”. The group possessing knowledge in Corinth had set itself apart through this arrogance. From this place of arrogance, knowledge can be used to the detriment of others. “Once one’s theology is properly in hand, it is especially tempting to use it as a club on others. And in this case, it happens from the theological right as well as from the left. This does not mean that knowledge is either irrelevant or unimportant, but it does mean that it cannot serve as the primary basis of Christian behavior.”<sup>46</sup> This is to say, knowledge must be used. But knowledge is not an end in itself. Whichever camp this knowledge might fall into, it can be used in an ungodly manner when it is the starting and ending point of the conversation of Christian morality.

To parallel the Corinthian problem, how might knowledge be used incorrectly regarding the issue of consumer choices among Christians? On the one hand, a group of Christians

---

45. Gregory Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2000), 277.

46. Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 369.

advocating strongly against implementing boycotts or over-concerning oneself with the ethics of the marketplace could argue that scripture never gives a direct command to avoid businesses that endorse objectionable morality:

Other Christians argue that Scripture does not place such a moral obligation on all Christians. These Christians point out that the aforementioned commands deal with love of the world's system of thinking—that is, its evil worldview. They say that boycotting any business that is associated with non-Christian ethics in any way goes beyond the biblical meaning of separation and, if taken to its logical conclusion, would require that Christians abandon the world. Christians would not be of the world—which is good—but neither would they be in it—which is not good.<sup>47</sup>

There are parts of this knowledge that can be correctly applied. A proper understanding of the separation between a business's decisions and an individual's actions is appropriate. But to categorically state that the choice to not buy or boycott is wrong misapplies scriptural knowledge. A Christian may find themselves in a situation where their knowledge of a company's practices might lead them to opt for another option. There is weakness in this knowledge if a Christian assumes that there is no reason to concern themselves with the morality of the business they endorse with their dollar.

Knowledge might be misapplied in the other direction too. Consider the believer who is looking at the marketplace through the lens of another scriptural principle: viewing their marketplace decisions as intrinsically linked to the businesses they buy from. “These calls for boycotts stem from a belief on the part of some Christians that all believers have a moral obligation to boycott any company that supports sinful behavior such as homosexuality or abortion. Their motivation is a noble one, for they are attempting to follow the biblical mandate to obey God's Word and to not love the things of this world.”<sup>48</sup> For this Christian, their concern

---

47. Robert Rothwell, “Can Christians ‘Do Business’ with the World?”

48. Robert Rothwell.



is to avoid even the slightest possibility of sin. This is certainly a good thing! But knowledge is misapplied when this believer inseparably links their morality to the practices of a company. This Christian views their marketplace decisions as more than just consumer choice, but an inevitable moral link tied to the company they purchase from. This approach takes this scriptural principle too far since it fails to acknowledge Paul's later comments concerning the conscience and Paul's later principles in 1 Corinthians 10.<sup>49</sup>

### **Knowledge Applied**

Knowledge is not altogether useless. Rather, knowledge used on its own can lead to pitfalls that are dangerous when used on its own. Used appropriately, knowledge considers others and concedes that it is not the ending point, but rather just the beginning. "His [Paul's] first concern is with the attitude that lay behind their behavior and argument. The abuse of others in the name of 'knowledge' indicates a total misunderstanding of the nature of Christian ethics, which springs not from knowledge but from love."<sup>50</sup>

Yet the Christian must make choices in the marketplace, and to make choices, knowledge is involved. While considering that knowledge is not the final factor in making decisions, it may still be used as a servant. It is impossible for the Christian, even with knowledge, to avoid all sinfulness in the world. Paul recognizes this and even states this impossibility earlier in his letter to the Corinthians. "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or

---

49. These principles will be explored further in the sections on Conscience and Love.

50. Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 362–63.

idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.”<sup>51</sup> Often, knowledge is simply used to inform preference as you make marketplace decisions. “Consider that when you choose not to shop at a supermarket because their produce is poor quality, you don’t tell your friends that you are ‘boycotting’ the store. You simply don’t shop there. We decide about how to best steward the resources God has given us. Our motivation stems from our consumer preferences.”<sup>52</sup> Preference, knowledge, and wisdom all work together to help make these marketplace decisions. And as knowledge remains servant to the Word of God, the decision remains God-pleasing.

---

51. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Co 5:9–10.

52. Noble, “Should Christians Participate in Boycotts.”

## CONSCIENCE

*Since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.*<sup>53</sup>

The conscience has become a rather mysterious thing. Often it is described as an inner voice. It has been portrayed as an angel on one shoulder, with a demon on the other. This image almost creates the idea that the conscience is a magical voice found within each person. This is misleading. The conscience involves the evaluation of worldly circumstances using spiritual knowledge to determine whether something is in line with God's will. "The word conscience means, 'Together with knowledge.' The knowledge spoken of is spiritual knowledge. There are two kinds of religious knowledge, first, the natural knowledge of God inscribed in every person's heart, and then acquired spiritual knowledge."<sup>54</sup> Every individual has a conscience it is a divine gift. But the voice is not the voice of God himself. "Conscience is not the voice of God in man; conscience is man's own voice. Conscience is man himself speaking as a moral being to himself."<sup>55</sup> Since this is the voice of man, sin can impact the reliability of this inner witness. The conscience works as it applies the law of God to a person's choices and actions. The difference in application of the conscience comes from differing knowledge. This can even include different knowledge among Christians in their understanding and application of the law, whether correct or incorrect.

---

53. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:7.

54. J. Raabe, "The Conscience," *Northwestern Lutheran* 64 (1977): 357.

55. Alfred Rehwinkel, *The Voice of Conscience* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 7.

This understanding of what the conscience is helps us to understand one of Paul's other concerns for the Christian congregation: the role of the conscience. As Paul affirms the knowledge, "There is no God but one," he only begins his address to this group of confident Christians. Because while one conscience says, "eat" or "buy", the other might say "don't eat" or "avoid." Paul is not directly concerned with the consciences of these Christians, but rather how their actions impact those whose consciences, in line with a lack of knowledge, have informed them differently.

### **A Matter of Conscience**

When a matter is neither commanded nor forbidden this knowledge is not always shared among all Christians. When this is the case, the issue can become a matter of conscience. For the Corinthians, Paul points to the matter of idol meat and explains that this matter is not essentially spiritual, but rather it becomes a spiritual matter due to differences in understanding. Regarding food itself, Paul says, "But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do."<sup>56</sup> Neither side is condemned nor affirmed in their choice. "Paul is determined that both the elitists and the 'weak' need to understand that eating this idol food has no effect on their status before God."<sup>57</sup> The issue is not the action, but the understanding of those who believe the action of eating the meat is inherently a spiritual issue.

In the pattern of Paul's argument, what then might be considered a matter of conscience? First, we must identify that a thing is neither commanded nor forbidden. In his 2001 Symposium

---

56. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:8.

57. Paul Gardner, *1 Corinthians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 377.

essay, Michael Schultz gives a strong starting point for analyzing our situations. “In seeking to put our finger on a comprehensive scriptural definition of adiaphora, we need to bear three things in mind. Is this thing that I am free to do or not do 1) beneficial? 2) addictive? 3) edifying?”<sup>58</sup>

With each measurement for adiaphora, Schultz encourages careful discernment. For example, while one might argue for the benefit of something from their viewpoint:

I am likely venturing onto thin ice if I autonomously decide that one or another free thing is absolutely, positively beneficial. ... Are those in the position of regarding the use or disuse of this free thing saying that it will preserve good order, that it is truly worthy of the profession of the gospel, that it will edify the Church? Does my use or disuse honor the experience of the Church or am I going off on my own? Determining benefit is no small task as the believer works with adiaphora.<sup>59</sup>

This certainly does not mean that there is no such thing as adiaphora, but it does emphasize the importance of careful consideration. The same careful consideration applies to the remaining two. “Not only must I be able to take something or leave it on a strictly individual, personal or private level, I must also be able to take it or leave it as the situation may demand.”<sup>60</sup> As a Christian evaluates what decision they will make regarding a marketplace option that is neither commanded nor forbidden, it is natural that this evaluation will lead to differing results. These differences do not need to be evidence of sin. They might demonstrate personal applications of faith and knowledge in the life of the believer:

A critical issue for determining what is and what is not adiaphora is the matter of conscience. This matter becomes extremely critical when we recognize from the beginning that what one Christian under God may be perfectly free to do, another under God may not, and vice versa. This is not a wishy-washy cop-out as far as being clear on God’s will. This is not turning everything gray. For a variety of reasons, consciences can

---

58. Michael D. Schultz, “The Scriptural Foundation for Our Christian Freedom” (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Symposium, Mequon, Wisconsin, 2001) 17.

59. Michael D. Schultz, 18.

60. Michael D. Schultz, 19.

be either very sensitive or very insensitive. If the matter at hand is truly neutral, this range of sensitivity allows for a wide diversity of practice in matters of adiaphora.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Conscience at Work**

Is the decision to buy or boycott truly a matter of conscience? First, consider the Christian's relationship to the modern market compared to the Corinthian problem. Modern churches are faced with the same questions as those in Corinth. Like the Corinthians, we ask, "Where are the lines to be drawn between acceptable accommodation to the realities of the culture and unacceptable compromise?"<sup>62</sup>

Christians have naturally reacted differently to situations as their consciences are at work. The conscience of some may see the wickedness of the world associated with a brand or company and feel that full avoidance of this company, if not boycott, is necessary. "What motivates involvement in such boycotts? Two major reasons, heeding conscience and changing society. When conscience motivates a boycott, we simply avoid buying products from companies whose policies violate our values. These values include standards of morality, human dignity, or social and environmental well-being."<sup>63</sup> Christian consumers behaving in this way may simply be making decisions according to preference and the knowledge they have about a company. However, if a Christian were to claim that buying from any company associated with any amount of evil was sinful, this would become an issue of conscience for the individual since their

---

61. Michael D. Schultz, 17.

62. Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 142.

63. Esther Bruland, "Voting with Your Checkbook: What Every Christian Should Know about Boycotts," *Christianity Today*, August 19, 1991, 18–19.

knowledge would not be properly weighing biblical principles concerning things neither commanded nor forbidden.

On the other hand, the consciences of others see a further separation between their purchasing and the morality of a company — seeing this type of economic separation as further than what scripture has called for: “[Others] say that boycotting any business that is associated with non-Christian ethics in any way goes beyond the biblical meaning of separation and, if taken to its logical conclusion, would require that Christians abandon the world. Christians would not be of the world—which is good—but neither would they be in it—which is not good.”<sup>64</sup> This Christian also navigates the marketplace freely using knowledge and conscience. However, their view of separation between market and purchaser might lead to choices that are different than the previous example.

Considering the number of companies and the morality of each, the Christian consumer could reach a view that is cynical toward the economy. This argument might sound like, “Nothing is good, so why does it matter anyway.” This argument could, in some ways, be validated. Consider the effect of the number of companies to buy from, the changing economy, and the relative morality of each on the conscience of a Christian consumer which results in boycotts: “The proliferation of boycotts could also lead to bewilderment and the paralysis of consumer conscience. Even those who favor boycotts, properly used, feel that the attempt to support so many worthy boycotts is becoming a new form of legalistic self-righteousness.”<sup>65</sup> Through the number of different ways that a Christian can react to a free matter in the market,

---

64. Robert Rothwell, “Can Christians ‘Do Business’ with the World?”

65. Esther Bruland, “Voting with Your Checkbook,” 20.

making marketplace decisions based on conscience informed only by evidence of marketplace morality is not the solution.

### The Weak Conscience

Paul categorizes the Corinthians into two different groups. The first group is that Paul speaks of having “knowledge.”<sup>66</sup> This knowledge group is often called the “strong”. These are those who do not see an issue with the consumption of idol meat. Paul refers to the other group as “ἀσθενής” or *weak*. More specifically, Paul calls their *consciences* weak.<sup>67</sup> But what does it mean to have a weak conscience? First, it seems that these Christians are those who have converted from paganism recently. This leads to their view concerning idol meat:

They remember the hellish bondage of pagan religion. They see such religions and their sacrifices as tools of the devil. When they see meat on their plates which had been offered first to idols, they have a hard time asking Jesus to bless that food. They think it is much better to avoid it altogether. They feel so strongly about this that if they do eat such food, it deeply troubles their consciences.<sup>68</sup>

Additionally, these Christians are considered *weak* because in navigating this issue of conscience they can be influenced into sinning. “To say that a brother has a weak conscience means that he is more easily influenced by the behavior of others.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, not only is their *understanding* of the situation weak, but their *decision-making* is also weak or easily influenced because of this

---

66. Recall the knowledge and argument of this group: “There is only one God. Idols do not exist. Our consciences therefore should not be bothered.”

67. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:7.

68. Glen L. Thompson, “The Concept of the Weak Brother in the New Testament and in the Church Today,” 2.

69. Gregory Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, 282.



lack of knowledge. And for these Christians, being influenced in this way will lead to costly results.

### **Burdening of the Conscience**

Paul's concern is not with the rights of either group in Corinth. Rather, he is concerned with an outcome that leads to sin. With a lack of knowledge or incorrect knowledge, a weak Christian can follow those with correct or complete knowledge into doing something free, yet sin against their conscience. "If in this state of doubt, the weak Christian were to follow the example of the strong brother, the brother who exercises his Christian liberty, he would provoke upon himself the condemnation of his conscience and risk eternal damnation. For Scripture tells us that anyone who goes against his conscience, even if his conscience is in error, is sinning."<sup>70</sup> While the action might not be inherently sinful, since the Christian's conscience said, "this thing is wrong" but they acted differently, this is a sin against conscience or the "burdening of conscience." In other words: a Christian's lack of knowledge in adiaphorous matters can lead them to sinning against their conscience.

This is more than merely hypothetical. Paul even lays out a specific situation in which this might happen in Corinth. "For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols?"<sup>71</sup> For the weak Christians, the struggle increases since they are influenced by the strong:

---

70. Timothy Mueller, "Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:14-33" (Winnebago Pastoral Conference, Markesan, WI, 1986), 11.

71. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:10.

As soon as they give in to pressure from friends and join them for a meal in an idol's temple, the old associations begin to reassert themselves. They find they are not able to regard the meat simply as a gift from the Creator. The meat has been offered to idols. So their conscience is defiled; they eat and go home feeling guilty because they have participated, at least outwardly, in a ritual of worship of a false god.<sup>72</sup>

Where then does the rubber hit the road for a modern Christian facing marketplace issues? As Paul concerns himself with the weak Christian, we might consider how and where knowledge differs for Christians in the marketplace. For example, a Christian may be willing to shop at Company X with knowledge that their morality is separate from that of the company. They also might consider their morality merely a strategy for gaining customers and not unethical for Christians to partake.<sup>73</sup> A Christian without this same perception of the economy, one who would normally choose to act oppositely, might be influenced to follow suit. In doing this they might bring guilt upon themselves and sin against their conscience. In this relationship between strong and weak, "Paul's concern that the brother not be destroyed may be applied even more broadly in areas of Christian ethics... It is one thing to thumb one's nose at pharisaical Christians; it is quite another thing when one's 'Christian freedom' becomes the occasion of another's spiritual ruin."<sup>74</sup> "Have your Christian freedom," Paul says. "But don't disregard the effect your actions can and will have on another." Because of this relationship between the

---

72. Gregory Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, 285.

73. Consider the market's interest in generating revenue. This may ultimately be the motivation behind such an endorsement. Regarding controversial advertisements in the Colin Kaepernick age, Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst for retail at The NPD Group shares, "Controversial endorsements tend to generate a lot of hype. These kinds of statements and brand partnerships make for a big impact on brand selling." ("Nike Sales Are up 31 Percent as Fans Buy into Kaepernick as Spokesman," NBC News, September 10, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/what-boycott-nike-sales-are-31-percent-kaepernick-campaign-n908251>.)

While understanding a company's marketing approach does not diminish the company's immorality, this understanding may serve to embolden the Christian who already sees their morality as completely separate from that of the businesses which they interact with.

74. Gregory Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, 289–90.

strong and the weak conscience, Christians have further reasons not to make marketplace decisions looking only at their own knowledge or conscience.

### **Defending the Weak Conscience**

Christians who consider themselves “strong” cannot act only according to the knowledge that informs their conscience. They must consider the consciences of those who are weak. What good is it for the Corinthians or any Christian to act in this way if this is to the detriment of a brother or sister's faith? “Now in the field of adiaphora... not all things are spiritually ‘profitable’ and not all things spiritually ‘build-up.’ For it is absurd to insist on doing things just because they are lawful when these things bring no benefit, when these things do not build up and further the Christian life but rather spiritually hurt, harm, damage and destroy the soul of others.”<sup>75</sup> The relationship of the strong with the weak means that the Christian should be concerned with the consciences of those considered “weak”. This is a relationship that takes patience and practice:

Paul now points out what the stronger Christian’s relationship with the weaker Christian is to be like. It is one that is to be a patient relationship. He must remember that the weak brother is a brother in the faith, that his weakness results from the lack of knowledge in the realm of Christian liberty, and that the stronger Christian will not want to do anything that will lead the weaker one to sin against his conscience. If the strong were to offend the weak in this way, he may destroy God’s creation of faith within the weaker one and thus he would definitely be sinning against God.<sup>76</sup>

Patience is of the utmost importance, especially when the ultimate result of acting only according to one’s conscience is the destruction of the faith of another. Then the situation ceases to be adiaphora since sin is involved.

---

75. Timothy Mueller, “Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:14-33,” 9.

76. Timothy Mueller, “Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:14-33,” 15.

Paul's words here are specifically for the strong in defense of weak consciences. Paul frames himself in the situation as one to be followed. "Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall."<sup>77</sup> Paul is not concerned with rights or even the knowledge of the strong. Rather, he goes out of his way to defend the weak by even avoiding what he might rightly partake in when it causes issues for the weak. It is as if Paul is saying, "If there is any question at all in our Christian circles about anything being improper for a Christian to eat or drink, I would rather remove such things permanently from my diet than take a chance on offending a fellow Christian."<sup>78</sup>

"Paul is willing to go to any extreme to avoid hurting the conscience of anyone for whom Christ died. And if that extreme means not to eat meat for some time, Paul readily adapts."<sup>79</sup> From Paul's words to the strong Christian, a modern Christian who might consider themselves "strong" might adapt in two ways: First, consider the measures you may have to go to defend the conscience of a brother or sister. This Christian might be one who believes that the only proper way to deal with immorality in the marketplace is to avoid it altogether. For the "strong" it may mean willingness to give up this thing for the good of that brother or sister.<sup>80</sup> Second, Christians must have a willingness to adapt. If your decision to partake in some part of the marketplace actively causes a brother or sister to stumble, adapt. This is the privilege you have to serve the

---

77. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:13.

78. Glen L. Thompson, "The Concept of the Weak Brother in the New Testament and in the Church Today," 3.

79. Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 276.

80. Recall Schulz's considerations for adiaphora. His second example: "addictive or not" thus serves as a healthy measurement for whether or not something might be considered adiaphora. The Christian must be willing *and able* to leave something behind for the conscience of a brother or sister.

weak. This is also a unique benefit to the capitalist market. You possess the ability to change your buying practice for the good of one with whom you share the faith.

## UNITY

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”<sup>81</sup>

When wrestling with issues of knowledge and conscience, it can seem like there is simply no unity between differing groups. Take, for example, Christians who have strongly differing views on the marketplace. Why should Christians concern themselves with other Christians who act differently? For Paul, the answer to this question for the Corinthians and the modern Christian is found in what holds the groups together: unity in faith.

As Paul begins his address to the Corinthians, he addresses first what the “strong” and the “weak” have in common. “For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.”<sup>82</sup> Paul’s words disprove the existence of the gods of this world to which meat had been sacrificed in Corinth.

This statement from Paul is knowledge that is held by the whole Church. This statement reads like a type of creed. While the application of this knowledge may differ for the groups, it is the foundational belief that unifies the church at Corinth. They share in the unity *of faith*. “First, the formulae ‘one God’ and ‘one Lord’ stand in specific contrast to the ‘many gods’ and ‘many lords’ of the pagans. This means that the emphasis is not on the unity of the godhead, but on the uniqueness of the only God. The God whom Christians worship as Father and Son stands in

---

81. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Deut 6:4.

82. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 8:6.

singular contrast to all others who might be thought to be gods but are not.”<sup>83</sup> The greater contrast seen in the life of a Christian is the difference between a believer and an unbeliever. For Paul, this confession is central. “[Paul] is going back to the foundations and laying the claim that the people defined by *this* formula of belief form a new family with a new code of family behavior.”<sup>84</sup> From faith flows practice, and the unique unity that a Christian has is not found in uniform practice in adiaphora, but in unity in belief.

### **Misunderstandings of Unity**

Should unity in belief lead to unity in actions, however? This may be the assumption of some. Often, unity expects shared identity, which in turn can expect shared practice. “The experience of unity is not about simple similarities. It’s about identities, shared identities. It’s about tribe-like categories that individuals use to define themselves and their groups, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, and family, as well as political and religious affiliations.”<sup>85</sup> Where these many facets of unity come together to form group identity, the expectation is that beliefs and practices are the same among members.

The “strong” might overemphasize knowledge to their advantage. Similarly, the “weak” can overemphasize unity in the interest of their argument. Consider an argument for the necessity of boycotting based on the conscience of the weak: “We [Christians] should consider boycotting, then, as a matter of Christian principle: Ask yourself if you can, in good conscience, continue to

---

83. Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 374.

84. David Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 375.

85. Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, (New York: Harper Business, 2021), 364.

give your money (which is really the Lord's) to a company selling LGTB apparel to children that was made by a Satanist designer (aka Target)?"<sup>86</sup> Found within this statement is a loaded question, one which seeks to bind the conscience and create uniformity. Where the conscience of the "strong" may not have been bound nor had the need to be bound, this question seeks to do so.

Herein also lies a difficulty with formal, Christian boycotts. Boycott is not always merely a choice to buy or not buy. The choice to buy or not buy is an application of knowledge and preference.<sup>87</sup> Often boycotts also involve public discourse and a perceived, mandatory call to action:

Importantly, because you have to announce boycotts publicly for them to have any real effect. ... When you post on Facebook about your choice to boycott Target, your friends are unlikely to take a sincere interest in understanding your perspective. They will see your statement for what it is: an announcement that your disagreement with a business is so profound that you will try to coerce them to change.<sup>88</sup>

Not every Christian who joins a boycott sees it as something necessary for all Christians to take part in. This can be done in a God-pleasing manner. But should a Christian participate in a boycott thinking that all Christians must act in the same way in a case of adiaphora, this believer's knowledge is incorrect. Uniformity, not unity has become the focus of this believer who misapplies knowledge. Weakness might be seen in this individual's struggles in seeing a Christian whose choices differ. Sin against conscience might even occur as this believer struggles to wrestle with differing marketplace decisions.

---

86. William Wolfe, "When Should Christians Boycott a Company?," *The Christian Post*, August 20, 2023, <https://www.christianpost.com/voices/when-should-christians-boycott-a-company.html>.

87. Recall "Knowledge Applied."

88. Noble, "Should Christians Participate in Boycotts?"



## Unity Applied

How then does unity influence the Christian's actions? First, we note that the foundational unity of faith is not changed by differing approaches to indifferent matters. "Such disagreements do not affect our standing with God, hence again the two sides should be able to live within the congregation in loving harmony."<sup>89</sup> Many approaches to indifferent matters can and should exist. Additionally, unity informs Christians to keep brothers and sisters in the faith in mind when they make decisions.

Those who might be considered part of the modern "strong" faction must keep in mind that their actions and decisions are not independent. The unity of faith that we share makes our actions interdependent. Perhaps this means thinking twice about shopping for a brand or at a store that has been publicly boycotted. While the matter may still be indifferent, your choice to partake does affect the weak due to the unity of faith we share.

Finally, even with so much tension in the marketplace, we find joy in the unity that we share. "As we deal with one another as Christians, as we rejoice in the firm knowledge and unity which our Lord has granted us, we will also note that consciences often act differently. Although our spiritual knowledge is one in principle, our conscience (in the wider sense) will also be affected by other things, such as our emotions, our earthly relationships, the customs and habits we have learned from our youth."<sup>90</sup> Where consciences are rightly informed by scripture, the outcomes can and will still look different.

---

89. Glen L. Thompson, "The Concept of the Weak Brother in the New Testament and in the Church Today," 12.

90. J. Raabe, "The Conscience," 259.

## LOVE

*“No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.”*<sup>91</sup>

Describing adiaphora by using terms like “Christian liberty” or “Christian freedom” can inadvertently create a posture that looks to the self. Consider the language of “freedom” and “liberty”. While these terms are rightly used to identify that the issue is no longer commanded nor forbidden, Christians misunderstand what this freedom is when they see it as only something interested in *self*. This is often the posture toward freedom and liberty in an American context – these are our God-given rights! But just as unity showed the Christians that their actions are not independent of effects on the body of believers, love also informs a Christian in marketplace decisions. “When applying Christian liberty in any situation, we must always keep in mind the welfare of others. Self, in other words, is not to be the object of our actions. The principle of Christian liberty must include the welfare of others as Paul points out. It excludes all selfish regard which cares nothing for the interest of other people.”<sup>92</sup> “Self-good” is not in Paul’s view at all. Rather, he wants us to look out for the good of others by showing love to them. But who should this love be shown to?

### **Love for the Fellow Believer**

Concern and love for the fellow believer have been in Paul’s crosshairs throughout 1 Corinthians 8. Now, in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul reiterates what the Christian approach and attitude to the

---

91. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 10:24.

92. Timothy Mueller, “Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:14-33,” 9.

marketplace should be and how love is shown to the fellow believer in this context. This teaching is difficult because it must allow two seemingly contradictory truths to exist. First, there is Paul's Psalm 24:1 truth that "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." Paul is once again applying godly knowledge to the situation in Corinth. He even agrees with the Corinthian's decision to eat meat as found in 1 Corinthians 10:25:

Paul now turns to another major issue for the young church in its attitude to food offered to idols: what should their policy be when shopping at the Corinthians food market? Should they pick and choose among the foods and only buy what had not been offered to idols? Paul's reply is unambiguous: 'You may buy and eat anything. And don't ask fussy questions! Their freedom was based on a clear recognition that there is no idol in the world, no God but the one Creator of all, and no Lord but Jesus, through whom all things exist. So they should have no scruples and raise no questions "for the sake of conscience" because no matter of conscience is involved.'<sup>93</sup>

As modern Christians approach the marketplace, they should not seek out or search for opportunities to bind their own consciences. This truth still applies! These things are still the Lord's!

But this truth is neither the starting nor ending point for Paul. Acting in this way exclusively only seeks out the self, which Paul warns against first. "'All things are permissible,' but all things do not edify.' Paul repeats the slogan but this time he gives a different response, the negated verb to edify. The work of edifying is always action performed for the benefit of someone else."<sup>94</sup> Love considers the permissibility of an action as secondary to its effects upon others.

Christian love would have me consider the possible outcomes of my actions in the marketplace. Rather than thinking first of my own preferences and reacting to the troubled

---

93. Gregory Lockwood, *First Corinthians*, 250–51.

94. Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 351.

conscience of another, love seeks to edify. In this edification, the building up of another is considered first. This means that I will consider how my choice will affect my neighbor before I take action, not once the action has already been taken. With the edification of a fellow believer in mind, knowledge is now informed by love.

### **Love as a Dinner Guest**

Paul also applies this love to the relationships Christians have with unbelievers. By the nature of a marketplace issue involving pagan sacrifices or even modern moral dilemmas, Christians cannot and do not exclusively interact with other Christians. How, then, does love apply as the Christian also considers their relationship with an unbeliever? Consider Paul's example of dining in the home of an unbeliever. Participation with this person in a seemingly harmless way could cause issues for other believers and your witness to the unbeliever:

There are two kinds of eating Paul finds unacceptable: eating that breaks partnership with the one true God and one true Lord and eating that harms a brother. Eating in an idol's temple is unacceptable if it causes a brother to perish from his weak consciousness, as is eating at the invitation of a non-believer if it has a similar effect. Other eating is permissible: if the sacred history of food served at a non-believer's is not pointed out it is permissible to eat it. All food at market may be bought and eaten, and no questions of conscience are to be raised over it.<sup>95</sup>

While the conscience of the believer is often in view, also consider the conscience of the unbeliever. Where the conscience does not possess the same Psalm 24:1 knowledge, election to participate in what an unbeliever considers to be a "gray area" may cause them to wonder what the Christian faith is about:

The matter of adiaphora with reference to one's neighbor is not simply a matter of use vs. non-use or observance vs. non-observance, but why and under what circumstances you

---

95. Gooch, *Dangerous Food*, 75.

would or would not do something. Under certain circumstances you should, under certain circumstances you shouldn't, and since the matter is free, you can rightly go both ways without being accused of practicing situation ethics. The issue is not, "What can or can't I do?" but, "How can I show loving concern to my neighbors, all of whom are at different places on the spectrum when it comes to strength of faith and levels of knowledge?"<sup>96</sup>

Love would even have you consider the knowledge and conscience of the individual with whom you are dining when that person is not a Christian.

The Christian who is in a capitalist society with a free market can uniquely show love in their use of money. Where human desire would have us look first to *self*, Paul instructs Christians to do the opposite. Yet we must consider the fact that this is not the normal function of our economy:

The economy of desire that is capitalism forms human desire so that it is quintessentially self-interested. Rejecting the notion that there is a shared good or common purpose that ought to shape how we labor and use material goods, *homo economicus* is an interest maximizer. In contrast, Christianity proclaims that there is indeed a good that unites all of humanity, that there is a love in which we are all invited to share... For this reason, when Christians contemplate our life's labors, we do not rightly think in terms of how our interests may be maximized or in terms of what we *want* to do. Rather, our work is a matter of vocation or calling. We are called to work for the common good.<sup>97</sup>

While many might only seek the good of self in their economic choices, the free market presents the opportunity to look outward and to seek the good of others.

How does love impact the Christian's attitude toward boycott? First, they must consider whether a boycott is the most loving path forward. "Before considering a boycott, a group should make sure it is seeking a just and reasonable action from the offending party. Further, a boycott should be enacted only after all other lesser means of persuasion have been exhausted."<sup>98</sup> Is the effort of a boycott being unfairly enacted upon a business or group that is not able to change?

---

96. Michael D. Schultz, "The Scriptural Foundation for Our Christian Freedom," 22.

97. Daniel Bell Jr., *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World*, 165.

98. Esther Bruland, "Voting with Your Checkbook: What Every Christian Should Know about Boycotts."

While a public boycott points out evil in a business or corporation, it is likely not the best first step. Paul's call to "look out for the good of others" does not condone sin, but the ultimate good of others must be considered. The ultimate good that the Christian seeks is not simply to create a shared, public morality, but rather to lead souls to Christ.

The possibility for a boycott to become or appear unloving to the unbeliever is one final hesitancy that a Christian might have. While the morality of a business is important, boycotts may hinder our ability to proclaim to others, should actions appear unloving. "Christians owe the nonbelieving public a little less action and a lot more thought. Believer-initiated boycotts have their place, but only when integrated into a biblical agenda of reconciliation between God and his people and between one another."<sup>99</sup> The morality of the world is important, but far more important is our witness. While we may be able to convince businesses to make changes for the better that are in line with our ethics through boycotts, this will not necessarily translate into winning souls. Since both morality and winning souls for Christ are important, Christians will carefully consider how and where these two intertwine and consider their impact.

---

99. Roberto Rivera, "Mad at the Mouse," *Christianity Today*, February 5, 1996, 12–13.

## CONCLUSION

*“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”<sup>100</sup>*

Where does this leave the Christian consumer? While even Christians may want a simple answer to whether they should buy, boycott, or abstain in the marketplace, the solution is never that simple. Every individual will be tempted to skew in the direction of one analysis of the marketplace or another. Knowledge can properly serve a Christian when it is in line with scripture. Yet knowledge is not the only player. Those with scriptural knowledge must also consider the consciences of those who are “weak”. Unity recognizes that Christians share a common faith which supersedes difficulties in Christian life and practice. The issue is that with any single one of these evaluations for your marketplace decisions dominating, it can blur out the others and something more important.

Think of Paul’s concluding words. After showing errors to both sides and considering scenarios with the Corinthians, he leaves them with encouragement not just for their relationship with idol meat or even one another, but rather he shifts their focus back toward God. With the glory of God as our focus and goal in everything we do, it shifts the way we evaluate every situation. Now, actions are no longer dominated by the individual’s rights or opinions. With this view in mind Christians first consider how God would have them approach every situation. And as we consider the marketplace while balancing these principles, we recognize the difficulty. Yet, as we consider God’s greatest glory in his Son, we rejoice in the opportunity to serve him and one another with our economic choices. To Him alone be the glory.

---

100. *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Cor 10:31.

### Areas for Further Study

There is certainly much more study that can be accomplished in the intersection between economics and our Christian faith. These are just a few areas of study I interacted with marginally in this study that may benefit from further research. *The Effect of Modern Advertising on the Christian Mind*. This might serve well in qualitative research. Advertising and media consumption have a major impact on the Christian's view of the economy and economic decisions. How does this change from person to person? This might also serve as an alley for research in behavioral economics. *Christian sub-culture and Economics*. There is currently a major push for a parallel economy that seeks to support only Christian businesses. In the world of general economics and Christianity, I think either *Minimalism or Consumerism and the Christian* could be interesting studies. There is currently a greater push to be anti-market by participating less. This new lifestyle seems like a form of new monasticism. What should the Christian's opinion of minimalism be?



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AB InBev. "AB InBev Reports Third Quarter 2023 Results." Brussels, October 31, 2023. <https://www.ab-inbev.com/news-media/press-releases/>.
- "AFA.Net - About Us." Accessed November 27, 2023. <https://afa.net/who-we-are/about-us/>.
- "AFA Ends Disney Boycott It Launched in Mid-1990s | Baptist Press," May 24, 2005. <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/afa-ends-disney-boycott-it-launched-in-mid-1990s/>.
- "Babies Means Business," *New Internationalist*. April 1, 1982. <https://newint.org/features/1982/04/01/babies>.
- Bell, Daniel Jr. *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Bruland, Esther. "Voting with Your Checkbook: What Every Christian Should Know about Boycotts." *Christianity Today*, August 19, 1991, 18–21.
- "Bud Light Sales Slump Following Boycott over Anheuser-Busch Promotion with Dylan Mulvaney - CBS News," August 3, 2023. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bud-light-anheuser-busch-dylan-mulvaney-beer-sales/>.
- Buss, Dale. "Holding Corporate America Accountable: Christians Press for Greater Responsibility from Businesses." *Christianity Today*, October 28, 1996, 76–79.
- Cialdini, Robert B.. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. New York: Harper Business, 2021.
- "CNN - Southern Baptists Vote for Disney Boycott - June 18, 1997." <http://www.cnn.com/US/9706/18/baptists.disney/>.
- Fee, Gordon. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. The New International Commentary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Fung, Katherine. "Target Boycott Hinges on One Key Group." *Newsweek*, May 23, 2023. <https://www.newsweek.com/target-boycott-hinges-one-key-group-1802212>.
- Gardner, Paul. *1 Corinthians*. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.
- Garland, David. *1 Corinthians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

- Gooch, Peter D., and Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion. *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8-10 in Its Context*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1993.
- Hays, Richard. *First Corinthians*. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 1997.
- Holman, Jordyn, and Julie Creswell. “Brands Embracing Pride Month Confront a Volatile Political Climate.” *The New York Times*, May 25, 2023, sec. Business. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/business/target-pride-lgbtq-companies-backlash.html>.
- “Kid Rock Shoots Bud Lights amid Anger over Trans Campaign,” April 4, 2023. <https://nypost.com/2023/04/04/kid-rock-shoots-bud-lights-amid-anger-over-trans-campaign/>.
- Kistemaker, Simon. *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993.
- Lockwood, Gregory. *First Corinthians*. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia, 2000.
- Mueller, Timothy. “Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:14-33,” 8–16. Markesan, WI, 1986.
- Napolitano, Elizabeth. “Anheuser-Busch Exec Steps down after Bud Light Sales Slump Following Dylan Mulvaney Controversy - CBS News,” November 16, 2023. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bud-light-anheuser-busch-marketing-chief-steps-down-boycott-dylan-mulvaney/>.
- “NESTLE BOYCOTT BEING SUSPENDED.” *The New York Times*. January 27, 1984, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/01/27/us/nestle-boycott-being-suspended.html>.
- “Nike Sales Are up 31 Percent as Fans Buy into Kaepernick as Spokesman,” *NBC News*. September 10, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/what-boycott-nike-sales-are-31-percent-kaepernick-campaign-n908251>.
- Noble, Alan. “Should Christians Participate in Boycotts.” Christian Research Institute, March 30, 2020. <https://www.equip.org/articles/should-christians-participate-in-boycotts/>.
- “Our Responsibility to America | Anheuser-Busch.” Accessed November 3, 2023. <https://www.anheuser-busch.com/newsroom/our-responsibility-to-america>.
- Raabe, J. “The Conscience.” *Northwestern Lutheran* 64 (1977): 357–62.
- Rehwinkel, Alfred. *The Voice of Conscience*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1956.
- Rivera, Roberto. “Mad at the Mouse.” *Christianity Today*, February 5, 1996, 12–13.

- Rothwell, Robert. "Can Christians 'Do Business' with the World?" Ligonier Ministries, September 15, 2013. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/can-christians-do-business-world>.
- Sampson, Hannah. "Conservatives Want to Cancel Disney. It's Not the First Time." *Washington Post*, April 18, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/2022/04/18/disney-boycott-theme-parks-lgbtq/>.
- Schultz, Michael D. "The Scriptural Foundation for Our Christian Freedom." Mequon, Wisconsin, 2001.
- Skogen, Katya. "Unpacking the Target Boycott: Navigating the Complex Landscape of LGBTQ+ Inclusivity and Brand Loyalty." *Collage Group* (blog), October 20, 2023. <https://www.collagegroup.com/2023/09/28/cultural-fluency-summit-2023/>.
- "Southern Baptists Vote to Boycott Disney." *Christian Century*, July 2, 1997, 623–24.
- "Special Update From Tim." Accessed November 3, 2023. <https://www.afa.net/hf2008/>.
- "Target Corporation Reports Second Quarter Earnings."  
<https://corporate.target.com/press/release/2023/08/target-corporation-reports-second-quarter-earnings>.
- "Target Statement on 2023 Pride Collection."  
<https://corporate.target.com/press/statement/2023/05/target-statement-on-2023-pride-collection>.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Thompson, Glen L. "The Concept of the Weak Brother in the New Testament and in the Church Today," 1991.
- Toh, Michelle. "Bud Light Controversy Cost Parent Company about \$395 Million in Lost US Sales | CNN Business." CNN, August 3, 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/03/business/anheuser-busch-revenue-bud-light-intl-hnk/index.html>.
- Wolfe, William, and Op-ed contributor. "When Should Christians Boycott a Company?" *The Christian Post*, August 20, 2023. <https://www.christianpost.com/voices/when-should-christians-boycott-a-company.html>.