

Part 1

23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 26 For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

Part 2

27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— 29 I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? 31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. 11:1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1)

So what is actually going on here?

I think what Paul is really saying, what God wants to confront in us today:

How important are your rights and freedoms to you?

We side with our rights and freedoms most of the time, I don't blame us. It's bred in us. It's our human nature, as Americans.

I think if we were honest, a lot of us cling too tightly to our freedoms, to our rights, and I just can't get away from this truth: it's undermining our effectiveness as ministers of the Gospel. And here is why: when we put our rights before people, we are still living in rebellion. It's just a spiritualized version of it.

[illustration] box

Call to deeper surrender.

This is the question I keep coming back to, what would it look like for you and me, for the church, to handle our rights and freedoms the way Paul does? The way Jesus does? What would it look like if, at the end of the day, people won out over my rights every time?

This is a big one, a hard one, but I think it would change so much about us, about how we see every opportunity, and especially how people see Christians and the Church.

My mind jumps to a place, a horrible horrible place, where you can see exactly what entitlement (which is really what *clinging to rights* is in the first place) you can see exactly what entitlement births, and that place is the DMV.

Collective groan

[illustration] I spent a lot of time at the DMV. No one gives up their spot in line. ...

This is not theoretical, this affects all the practical things in our lives.

It might be a huge thing, but most of the time I think it's a collection of small things, that communicate a huge truth about who we are and what's important to us.

Money

Time - extra work

Calling customer support

Neighboring

It might be a huge thing, it might be a very small thing, but are we looking for those chances?

[illustration] Meg at Winco

Now you might say, "That doesn't really sound like freedom to me. The very rights I have been given I need to give up? That doesn't make sense." And you would be right, if we were looking at it through the world's eyes.

One thing we know about Jesus:

Jesus loves to flip things on their heads, you know?

If you want to gain your life, you will lose it.

If you want to become great, be a servant, become less.

To find life, die to yourself.

When an enemy hurts you, turn the other cheek, respond in love.

To become rich, give everything away.

You are never more free than when you are laying down your rights for the benefit of those around you, because in those moments, you are never more like Jesus.

If our goal is to be like Jesus, what is our relationship with our rights and freedoms? Do they win out? Or do people? Jesus would say people. Paul would say people. That we should be the first to give up our spot in line, to lay down our rights, in the big and small things.



LIVING TOGETHER IN LIBERTY

NEVER MORE FREE | 1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-11:1
FEBRUARY 3, 2019 | PASTOR KYLE BELDEN



GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1 What is your natural bent & personality? Are you more likely to scope out the situation and adjust your actions based on those around you, or are you more likely to say, "This is who I am – get used to it!"?
- 2 What has been the most challenging part about the decision you made to follow Christ?

With freedom in Christ comes great responsibility (insert Spiderman reference here). As new creations in Christ, we need to choose things that further God's kingdom and mission, over things that hold us back. Choosing the kingdom is at odds with our nature. It means allowing someone else to rule and lead our lives. It requires abandoning our will and control. At the end of the day, we have to ask ourselves: "What's more important to me - my liberties, or people?"

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1 Someone read **1 Corinthians 10:23-26**

²³"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. ²⁴Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. ²⁵Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

What is Paul saying in verse 23? How would you make the same statement in your own words?

How did your priorities change when you became a follower of Jesus? In what ways have you sacrificed personal convenience or even physical comforts to be Jesus' disciple?

Verse 24 summarizes Paul's lifestyle of self-restraint and admonishes the believers in Corinth to practice the same lifestyle. Jesus taught that being His disciple meant denying oneself (see Mark 8:34). Such an attitude demonstrates Christ's love and helps us in our task of pointing others to Jesus with our words and actions.

What is the danger of not putting limits on how we exercise our freedom in Christ? Read Romans 14:17. How do the three characteristics in this passage - righteousness, peace, and joy - help us set limits on our personal freedom?

Christian liberty will get a bad name if love does not guide it. Non-salvation issues like food consumption should never be a major concern in our lives. Our focus should be on promoting righteousness, peace, and joy in the body of Christ. Above all, our actions should serve Christ and help other Christians grow and flourish.

2 Someone read **1 Corinthians 10:27-11:1**

²⁷ If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience - ²⁹ I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? ³⁰ If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? ³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. ¹ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

How do you know if your actions are glorifying to God?

While what we eat or drink can never make us acceptable to God or make us better than someone else (1 Corinthians 8:8), everything we eat or drink - everything we do - can bring glory to God. Ask yourself if what you're doing glorifies God and follow up with a couple more questions: Does what God teaches me in His Word encourage or discourage what I'm doing? Is what I'm doing the most loving thing that I can do? This is how we honor Him in all things. Getting in the habit of measuring everything you do by the standards laid out in God's Word, you'll develop a decision-making process that pleases God and grows you spiritually.

How are the glory of God and the good of others connected in 10:31-11:1?

Suppose a friend pointed out Paul's words, "I also please all men in all things," then said, "I thought we were to please God in all things." How would you respond?

LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

1 In what ways does the spread of the Gospel motivate you to give up your rights and your sense of entitlement?

2 Looking back at this week's teaching and study, is there anything you want to adjust in your life in order to make sure that your actions bring glory to God and help people walk closer to Jesus rather than further away from him?

3 Paul makes a strong case that when it comes down to it, your rights and freedoms - even those given or allowed to you by Jesus - don't trump the people that He puts in your life. We need to know that the law of love always wins out over our rights, privileges, freedoms. **At the end of the day, what wins out - my rights to my time, money, freedoms, desires, or is it people? What about people who don't have our best interest at heart?**

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank God for showing us the way to live and what it means to show His love to others. Ask God to lift up each person in this group and ask Him to help us trust Him and follow His ways instead of trusting ourselves with our choices. Ask for His help to put others before our preferences and to ask for His grace when we mess up and the willingness to receive that grace so He can restore us.

NEXT WEEK'S MESSAGE SCRIPTURE

LIVING TOGETHER IN WORSHIP: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

Prepare for next week's message and group discussion by reading through this passage a few times this week and write down any insights or questions you have before meeting with your home group.

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to record down the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!

COMMENTARY FOR 1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-33

10:23-24. Paul returned to the discussion of not harming others but rather building them up by seeking what was best for them. He wanted to emphasize once more the basic principle that should govern all Christian conduct. Paul echoed another of the slogans being used by the puffed-up church members in Corinth. This "freedom" group loved to emphasize that everything is permissible. They may have been misapplying this conviction not only to actions such as eating temple meat but also to clearly forbidden behavior such as sexual immorality. In their twisted thinking about God's grace, forgiveness, and Christian freedom, they saw no reason to rule out any behavior.

Paul contended that a question believers ought to ask about any action is not whether it's "permissible" but whether it's "helpful." This term referred to the need for all matters to build up other Christians, not to confuse, anger, or in any way cause them to stumble in their faith.

10:25-26. In what may seem a surprising twist, Paul said seeking "the good of the other person" (v. 24) meant a believer who objected to buying meat that had been sacrificed to idols should not interrogate the meat sellers in order to certify that the meat had no association with idolatry. Why? Most likely because such questions would seem hostile and alienate the nonbelieving Greeks at Corinth, thus hindering the gospel's advance. Paul offered scriptural support for this position from Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it." Therefore, partake of the meat out of gratitude and a clear conscience.

10:28-29a. Paul prohibited eating meat if someone bothered explicitly to point out that it had been offered to an idol. In this situation, the food's history did matter because the person who pointed it out (whether they be a nonbelieving Gentile or a Christian of weak conscience) apparently felt that a Christian eating such meat would be compromising his allegiance to Christ.

10:29b-30. After a parenthetical interruption that explains an exception to one's freedom (vv. 28-29a), these rhetorical questions introduce the basis for the believer's freedom to eat whatever is given them without questions of conscience.

10:31. Paul had counseled his readers about how to handle their differences on matters of appropriate & inappropriate behavior. In conclusion, he gave them a general principle that Christians are to do everything for God's glory.

10:32. We should not use this principle to engage in behavior that is intentionally detrimental to other people. While it might be impossible to avoid offending all people all the time, Paul's point was that Christians are to be considerate of others and even put their perspectives ahead of our rights. By specifying the "Jews or the Greeks or the church of God," Paul emphasized that principle applied regardless of whom Christians were dealing with.

10:33. Paul was not a "people pleaser" in the sense that he would compromise the faith just to get along with others. His position was a restatement of the principle that he would adapt his approach as needed to see people get saved.

Paul returned to the question of Christian liberty in chapter 10 and repeated the need to take into consideration our effect on others before we act. He generalized his argument against eating meat sacrificed to idols by saying "whatever you do, do everything for God's glory." As believers and servants of God we are to make His will supreme in our lives. Whatever pleases God and shows our subjection to His will glorifies Him. God wants us to love others and to encourage them in their obedience to Him. Sometimes this demands sacrifice and surrender of our rights.

Paul urged believers to "give no offense" to anyone. He specifically mentioned three groups Christians were not to hinder by their actions. "The Jews" probably refers to Jewish unbelievers. Paul encouraged Jewish Christians to be sensitive to their adherence to Old Testament law in order to gain a hearing. An example in Paul's ministry was the decision to circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3) when he joined Paul in evangelizing Jews. Paul never submitted to Jewish laws when there was the possibility of making law rather than grace the means of salvation (Gal. 2:3).

The second group Paul urged believers give no offense to were "Greeks," or Gentile unbelievers. In 1 Corinthians 10:27 Paul instructed believers not to question the source of meat served to them by unbelievers at a meal. The purpose was to avoid unnecessarily offending them. However, if they made it known the meat had been sacrificed to idols, the believers were not to eat it as a witness to the unbelievers (v. 28). The emphasis is again on making choices and setting an example that would lead the lost to Christ and away from idolatry.

The third group was "the church of God." The focus here, as in chapter 8, was a concern for weaker Christians. The concern for the Jews and Greeks was not to hinder their hearing the gospel and being saved. For the church of God the concern was for their sanctification and spiritual growth. Christians are to deny themselves for the purpose of evangelism and discipleship.

Paul stated a general principle in his aim not to give unnecessary offense to the lost or saved by saying, "I also try to please all people in all things." This statement must not be taken out of context. He was not promoting a situational ethic in which we go along with whatever crowd we happen to be in. He was not saying that he allowed the expectations of others to always control his decisions. He specifically was saying that he denied himself ("my own profit") for the profit of many. Paul's desire was to do nothing that would hinder anyone from being saved. If it meant self-denial, he gladly yielded what pleasure he may have gained for the sake of gaining a better hearing for the gospel.