

## **The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians**

### **Free In Christ And Considerate of Others**

1 Corinthians 10:23-30

#### **1. Evaluate Your Freedom** (v.23)

There is a vast number of things which Christians are free to do. After verifying that a particular activity is not intrinsically sinful (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-10), there are several criteria to aid the Christian in assessing whether or not to engage in that activity.

##### **A. Will This Enslave Me?** (1 Cor. 6:12)

Non-sinful activities have the ability to become sinful for the Christian if he or she begins to be controlled by them. A Christian should be careful to avoid being entangled by freedoms (cf. Heb. 12:1).

##### **B. Is This Advantageous?** (1 Cor. 10:23a)

This is a consideration of whether an activity is ultimately beneficial or not. One's own personal benefit or enjoyment in an activity, though important to consider, is not the focus of this qualification, but rather the focus is for the effect that this action will have upon others (cf. vs.23, 33).

##### **C. Does This Build Up?** (1 Cor. 10:23b)

Edification is a word which carries the idea of construction, of building structures (Matt 7:24; 16:18). Actions which we are free to do ought to be evaluated on whether or not they contribute to the building up of others (1 Thess. 5:11; cf. Eph 4:29). Will This Enslave Me? (1 Cor. 6:12)

#### **2. Examine Your Motivations** (v.24)

The rationale for something is done may be as important as the action itself. Paul instructed that a Christian is not to be self-centered in exercising his freedom. This selflessness is to be modeled both after Paul and of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil 2:3-5).

#### **3. Enjoy with Integrity** (vs.25-27)

God has given us all good things to enjoy (1 Tim 6:17; Jam. 1:17) and it is good for us to enjoy them (Ecc. 5:18-20). The dietary restrictions of the Old Covenant are not a binding obligation for the Christian (Mk. 7:18-23; Acts 10:9-16).

#### **4. Abstain with Ability** (vs.28-30)

If someone is advocating that an area of freedom must be avoided in order to be saved, Christians are not to back down from the expression of that freedom (cf. Gal. 5:1, 13). If a concern over the use of freedom is not one which impacts justification, it is better for the Christian to refrain from making use of his freedom in Christ. A Christian ought to easily and joyfully choose to not exercise the freedom that we have in Christ in order to guard a brother's conscience and the testimony to unbelievers (Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11-13; 10:19).