

- I) V23 INTRO: All things are lawful for me but not all things are helpful
CONTEXT
- II) Paul has been writing concerning what has been called Christian Liberty
He has been teaching the Corinthians that **liberty** in Jesus is not **license**
- III) It is telling for me to see that this is something he had to repeat
In ch. 8 he had written concerning food that had been offered to idols
He made it clear that it was not sinful for a believer to eat this food
- IV) The reason it is not, in and of itself, unlawful is because we are free in Jesus
We know that an idol is nothing, and we know we worship the true God
- V) Because of this, we know that food itself does not commend us to God
1 Co 8:8 **Food does not commend us to God**; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse!
- VI) The reason why a believer would abstain from certain foods is out of love
If our fellow believer is stumbled by our liberty, we should not stumble them
We should not do something that would make our fellow believer stumble
- VII) In this part of his letter he returns to teaching them about their Christian liberty
He makes it clear that our freedom in Jesus **is intended to edify**, not undermine
- VIII) Paul shares what believers should understand about their Christian Liberty
If we understand what love and liberty really are, we will be able to glorify God
Jn 15:8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.
- TO DEVELOP THIS PAUL CONTRASTS TWO THINGS**
- IX) **Self-service** with **service to God**, illustrated by two verses
V24 Let no one seek his own **but the other's** well being
V31 Do all to the **glory of God**
- X) Glorifying God through **dying to self** is a central part of being a believer
Concern for others is **a visible evidence** of regeneration
1 Jn 3:18 Beloved, let us not love with words or speech (something said) but with actions and in truth

PAUL BEGINS

- I) V23 **All things** are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful
Some believed **God's grace** gave them permission to do as they liked
- II) This was especially true in areas of living **not specifically addressed** by Scripture
Obviously, believers are not free to do anything clearly forbidden in the bible
God's grace has changed everything, and he would not undermine grace
PAUL ADMITS
- III) In light of the Grace of God, he was free to do **all things**
All things are lawful for me
WITH THAT SAID
- IV) **Spiritual edification** must be chosen over **self-gratification**
WHY?
- V) V23 All things **are not helpful**, all things do not edify
Helpful: To be *profitable* (spiritually)
Edify: To promote growth in Christian wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness
HIS THOUGHT
- VI) Freedom in Jesus is intended to build us up in our faith, not diminish us
It shouldn't negatively affect us or undermine another believer
- VII) We are free in Jesus, and should never become entangled again in bondage to sin
Our freedom in Him is intended to build us up, not return us to bondage!
Ro 6:13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.
- VIII) Paul's exhortation is that they exercise spiritual discipline, not indifference
He desires them to mature in their faith
2 Pe 3:18 *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*
- IX) This growth is the result of spiritual discipline and not through accident
He had illustrated this in ch 9 when he wrote concerning athletic discipline
The athletes didn't receive medals simply because they showed up!
WHAT WOULD DISCIPLINE LOOK LIKE
- X) **First:** They will be edified by *personally* remaining hungry for God's Word
Ac 20:32 The word of His grace...is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified
APPLICATION

- I) **First:** Set aside time to spend with the Lord, in His word
Personal time reading the scriptures and meditating on them transforms you
Ps 63:1 O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You;
My (weak body) flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water
- II) **Second:** Give ear to God's Word as it is taught
One of the best ways to know the word is to determine to obey what it says
Jn 13:17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
Lu 11:28 Blessed are those who hear God's word and obey it
- III) **Third:** We are edified when we love and serve others
(He already said) 1 Co 8:1 Knowledge puffs up but love edifies
This is what Paul develops in the next verse
- IV) V24 Let no one seek his own but each one the other's well being
We have been given liberty, but how is our liberty to be used
- V) Seek to minister to others, and use your freedom for service
Gal 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as
an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- VI) Our Christian love propels us to care for others
When we die to self, it opens us up to care for the needs of others
Phil 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the
interests of others.

HE RETURNS TO THE QUESTION OF FOOD

- VII) V25-26 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market asking no questions for
In ch 8, Paul had addressed this: Some of the meat had been offered to idols
- VIII) It was then put up for sale in the shambles, or the butcher's stalls
People would buy the meat, take it home and prepare it for meals
HIS THOUGHT IS
- IX) If it does not bother your conscience, then feel free to buy it and take it home
This is consistent with other passages on the subject
1 Ti 4:4 Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is
received with thanksgiving
Titus 1:15 To the pure all things are pure

- I) **WHY DO THIS?**
- II) V26 For the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness
It all belongs to the Lord, and He has given us freedom to use it
Buying at the market is not participating in idolatry: It is simply meat
OK, BUT WHAT IF YOU GO TO SOMEONE'S HOUSE TO EAT
- III) V27 If any of those **who do not believe** invites you to dinner and you desire to go
If an unbeliever invites you to eat with them, **then eat**, and don't question them
WHY CAN I DO THIS?
- IV) Freedom in Christ allows you to eat
Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.
- V) V28 But if anyone says to you this was offered to idols do not eat it for the sake of
What if **another believer** at the meal informs you that it was offered to idols?
Don't eat it, don't stumble your fellow Christian
- VI) Why restrict your freedom? To them it may appear that you approve of idolatry
- VII) V29 You do not eat for **his conscience's** sake, not your own
With love for them be careful not to go to extremes, exalting your rights
If you have a fellow believer offended at your eating, then do not eat
- VIII) This is also commanded in the book of Romans
Ro 14:14-15 As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am **fully convinced** that no food is unclean **in itself**. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then **for him** it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting **in love**. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.
V20-23 Do not destroy the work of God for the **sake of food**. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that *causes someone else* to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or *to do anything else* that will cause your brother to fall. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.
- IX) V29 For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?

- I) On one hand, I am not living my life by someone else's personal standards
I need to exercise my faith and live under a clear conscience
Jas 4:12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and destroy. But **who are you to judge** your neighbor?
- II) This would include all believers: we live under grace and strive to please God
ON THE ONE HAND
- III) Don't cause a weaker believer to stumble, or judge you because of your behavior
We should modify our actions for the sake of others
ON THE OTHER HAND
- IV) Do not modify your understanding of God's grace
A weaker brother may be legalistic but **their legalism** shouldn't make us legalists
CONCLUSION
- V) Be sensitive to their concerns, but keep solid in God's liberty
Ro 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.
- VI) V30 If I partake with thanks why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give
My freedoms in Jesus are not to be judged by someone else's standards
I express my freedoms in w way that it doesn't give others opportunity to judge
WHAT IS THE KEY
- VII) V31 Therefore whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory
I can live a life that brings glory to God, or dishonor to Him
- VIII) The key to growing in maturity is to simply seek daily to be pleasing to Him
Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with your whole being, as for the Lord and not for men
PRACTICAL
- IX) This is how you can live a life that is pleasing to the Lord
We seek God's will through the bible and prayer
We determine to learn to love others, which reveals our relationship to Him
We develop integrity and honesty, revealing integrity and honesty
Jas 1:22 Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves
- X) If I stumble people, and they enter into sin I have dishonored Him
- XI) Jesus commanded us to love one another
This means that we should exercise freedoms with a sense of responsibility

- I) Our focus is no longer on our own pleasures or freedoms
Our focus is on how we can encourage and build up other believers (12:24)
Heb 10:24-25 Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching
- II) 11:1 Imitate me just as I also **imitate Christ**
Jesus did not come to please only Himself
Ro 15:3 Even **Christ did not please Himself** but, as it is written: The insults of those who insult You have fallen on Me
- III) The example of Jesus is that He pleased the One who sent Him
Jn 6:38 I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but to do the will of Him who sent Me
PAUL'S EXHORTATION
- IV) I am not seeking my own profit, but the glory of the Lord: **Imitate me** in this
Love Jesus, and love His brethren
FINALLY
- V) What is the fruit of imitating the life of Paul?
Phil 4:9 The things which you **learned** and **received** and **heard** and **saw** in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.
- VI) **Learned**: The things that I have taught you, biblically
Received: Taken for yourselves; have associated with
1 Co 15:1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.
Heard: Listened to and comprehended
The things he taught them privately and preached openly in the pulpit
Seen: Example, what they have observed in his manner of life
- VII) The fruit is fellowship with God, and His peace and presence will bless you
In the Corinthian church, if they follow his example there will be less division
Col 3:14 Over all these virtues put on love, which is the bond of perfect unity