

## **For God's Glory**

### **- I Corinthians 10:23-33**

- **We have begun a New Year & I know that many of you have a lot of expectation & goals that you will seek to accomplish this year.**
- **There have also been a lot of commitments made that probably will not last to the end of the month for a lot of people.**
  - Quit bad habits.
  - Get in shape & lose weight.
  - Reading their Bible every day.
- **But as we begin this New Year, there is a passage of scripture I hope we can memorize & make a part of our everyday life.**
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
- **Tonight, we are going to be talking about some very important aspects of our Christian faith. This is a subject that is a little deep for some young Christians or new converts; however, the principle must be followed. This is an area of controversy among many even in the religious community, yet if we want to honor God with our lives, I believe this area is worth addressing.**
- **As a Christian, one of our greatest honors is representing Jesus Christ.**
  - If you profess to be a Christian, people identify you with Christ.
  - They associate this church with holy things that are pleasing unto God.
  - And so our lives and our testimonies should always be pleasing unto God & give a clear picture to the world as to Whose we are & Who we represent.
- **There are several things that I want to commit to this coming year & I pray that you will join with me in as we begin 2014.**

#### **I. Be An Encouragement To The Church (vv.23-30)**

- **In this passage of scripture, Paul is addressing the freedoms that we as Christian people have b/c of Christ.**
  - In this particular passage, he is discussing the issue of meat that has been offered to idols.
  - It was not uncommon in Paul's day for meat to be offered to some pagan idol or god and then in turn be taken to the market & sold to both believers & non-believers.
  - This created absolutely no problem for Paul & many of the Christian believers. The problem that Paul was addressing was the instance of a stronger Christian choosing not to eat this meat that had been offered to idols in an effort to encourage & support the weaker brother.
  - Spiritually speaking, there was absolutely nothing wrong with Christians eating meat that had been purchased at the market, even though it had been offered to idols.
  - The problem at hand was some of the weaker Christians did not understand fully the freedom that they had in Christ & it was causing some to stumble in their faith.
    - It is for this reason in 8:11-13 Paul writes, "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."
  - Though something according to scripture's commands may not be wrong, it is wrong principally if it causes a weaker brother to stumble in their faith.
    - Now, this is an area that deserves some very careful dissection here b/c the topics surrounding this verse of scripture almost has no end.
  - Paul says it is a mark of maturity when we balance our freedom with responsibility.
- **So I said all that to say this, I believe we have a responsibility to our fellow Christians in the church to encourage one another, to build others up in the faith and to seek to bring them closer to God through our lives.**
  - There was nothing physically wrong with the food b/c it had come from God.

- The problem was this seemed as though it was a “double standard” for many of the weaker Christians and Paul in essence asks the question, “Is it worth risking their faith to indulge in the pleasures of life?” Answer – NO!
- No possession, no activity, no desire is worth causing others to falter in their faith.
- What may be right may not be right when circumstances and the effect are considered.
- I found this little test some time ago, not even sure who the author is, but it gives a by verse breakdown of how we can determine if something is worth doing or not.

1. Is it expedient or edifying? (v.23)

- a. Expediency in the principle. Some conduct may be correct but it is not helpful to others.
- b. Edification in the principle. Some conduct may be correct but it does not profit spiritually oneself and also others.

2. Does it seek the good of others? (v.24)

- a. We are not to be consumed with our own desires only, but to be a help & a guide to others.

3. Does it violate our conscience? (vv.25-26)

- a. Personal opinions, rules, and regulations that disturb the conscience should not be pressed and made an issue

4. Does it hurt the conscience of another believer?

- a. If our activity or choices offend another brother or sister in Christ, we should not participate in it.
- b. This is sort of the test that controls all others. Even if it does not affect our own conscience, we are to act for the sake of others.
  - i. Romans 14:13 – “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.”
  - ii. Romans 14:21 – “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”
  - iii. I Corinthians 8:9 – “But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.”

- **Then comes the big question I have been waiting for you to think about. “But why should our freedom be determined by another person’s conscience?” Paul says in v.31 ...**

## II. Glorify God In All Things (v.31)

- **With the bold statements that Paul is making, he expected to have some who would argue that it wasn’t fair for them to sacrifice on behalf of others.**
- **His reply introduced the second responsibility we have: We are responsible to glorify God in all things.**
  - We cannot glorify God by causing another Christian to stumble. It’s one thing if something doesn’t harm our own conscience, but we should not dare use our freedom in Christ in any way that will injure a fellow Christian.
    - Romans 14:17 – “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”
    - Bearing the criticism from others for doing something I see no wrong in would not be worth the activity.
- **Living for pleasure never will bring pleasure, but living for God will bring pleasure as a side effect—not by seeking *it*, but by seeking *Him*.**
  - The Bible tells us that in His presence there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore (see Psalm 16:11).

- **We need to remember that we live for the glory of God. The apostle Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth, " Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31).**
- **If I can't do a certain thing for the glory of God, then I shouldn't be doing it. I should be able to write "Hallowed be His name" over any pursuit I have in life. If I can't say that of what I am doing, then I should not be doing that thing.**
  - Can you write that over your marriage right now? *Hallowed be His name.*
  - Can you write it over your career and business ethics? *Hallowed be His name.*
  - Can you write it over what you fill your leisure time with? *Hallowed be His name.*
  - Can you write it over the language you use at work or around friends? *Hallowed be His name.*
- **It doesn't matter what your vocation is. If you are a builder, then build for the glory of God. If you are a mother, then be one for the glory of God. If you are a musician, then play for the glory of God. Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. That is why you are here on this earth. And if you live for God's glory, then you will know God's pleasure.**
- **Life is preparation for eternity. We were made by God and for God. And He wants us to practice on earth what we will do in eternity.**
- **Are you living for God's glory? Or, are you living for your own?**

### **III. Seek To Win The Lost (vv.32-33)**

#### **a. We Should Have A Passion For The Lost**

- i. This is something that I believe a lot of Christians struggle with.
  - 1. Not loving people.
  - 2. Not caring for those who are less fortunate.
  - 3. Not having sympathy for those in need.
  - 4. But having a sincere passion to see people come to know Christ.
- ii. One of the things that I want more in my life this year is a stronger passion for the lost souls of people.

#### **b. Our Lives Should Encourage Others To Follow Christ**

- i. When Paul wrote, "I please all men in all things", he was not suggesting that he was a compromiser or a man-pleaser. He was affirming the fact that his life and ministry were centered on helping others rather than on promoting himself and his own desires.
- ii. Our actions, our words, our lives should not only glorify God, but should invite others to come to know the same loving God that we know and encourage them to live their lives for Him.