

“DON’T BE IGNORANT” (Part 3)

About Your Christian Liberty (1 Cor. 10:1-13)

INTRO: A dramatic, powerful passage. Verses 1, 12 is the theme: Watch out for the danger of spiritual pride. Paul reaches back to Israel’s past and the Corinthians’ present to tell us to not be ignorant of this danger. The Corinthians had (like the Israelites of old) become spiritually proud. Such an attitude made them (and us) vulnerable to falling into sin that could ultimately disqualify them from spiritual usefulness. These Corinthian Christians believed they were free to do whatever because they had been saved by God’s grace. After all (Jn. 8:31-32; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:1; 1 Pet. 2:16). They wrongly reasoned their so-called maturity permitted them to participate in questionable activities and remain unstained. Paul writes to warn them (and us) to not be ignorant of the danger of spiritual pride and abusing their Christian liberty. Question: How far does Christian freedom go in regard to behavior not specifically forbidden in Scripture (Gray Areas)?

I. THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY ARE *STATED* (1 Cor. 8:1-13)

- A. (8:1-6) Though I am free in Christ to do something (not forbidden), it doesn’t mean that I should. Ex: ? Alcohol, TV, Movies, etc.
- B. (8:7-12) My Christian liberty should never be abused and cause another Christian to stumble or endanger my walk.
- C. (8:13) I must be willing to limit my freedom in Christ for the good of other believers.

II. THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY ARE *ILLUSTRATED* (1 Cor. 9:1-10:13)

- A. (9:1-27) *Positively*, Paul uses himself as an example of limiting his freedom.
 - 1. (9:1-14) Paul was free to be supported but deferred to do so.
 - 2. (9:15-23) Paul relinquished his freedom for a greater reward!
 - 3. (9:24-27) It requires discipline and self-control to give up our freedom to show love for others and to protect self.
- B. (10:1-13) *Negatively*, by the Israelites who abused their freedom.

In the past the Israelites abused their freedom. They were overconfident and spiritually proud. They lived too close to the edge, fell into sin, and were disqualified from serving as a witness. Now, the Corinthians were dangerously close to repeating this same mistake. Paul now gives a second reason why believers should limit their God-given freedoms. The first reason was for the sake of not causing others to sin (LOVE). Paul now gives a second reason to sometimes give up our rights for the sake of not causing self to sin (USEFULNESS). Israel’s failure, wilderness wandering, and divine discipline are a perfect example of what happens when we abuse our God-given freedom by failing to exercise self-discipline (9:24-27). All entered the race, only two got the prize (Joshua and Caleb). Now, the Corinthians were in danger of repeating the same mistake of abusing their Christian liberty. Paul didn’t want the Corinthian church, nor us, to be ignorant of this fact – *A failure to limit our God-given freedom in Christ for the sake of loving others and protecting self can result in divine discipline and disqualification from serving as an effective*

witness for Christ. Watch out for spiritual pride! Israel should serve the Corinthians and us as a perfect example of failing to limit your God-given freedoms in Christ through a lack of self-denial and self-discipline (10:6, 11). Both the Corinthians then and Christians today enjoyed similar blessings of God’s grace. Liberty is never a license to sin, and should never lead to overconfidence that offends others and endangers self.

- 1. (vv. 1-4) Their ADVANTAGES were Great
 - (v. 1b) All under cloud – divine guidance (Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-20)
 - (v. 1b) All passed...sea – deliverance (Ex. 14:15-16, 21-22)
 - (v. 2) All baptized into Moses – authority and leadership (Ex. 14:31)
 - (v. 3) All...some food – provision (Ex. 16:4-5)
 - (v. 4) All...some drink – more provision (Ex. 17:5-6)
 - Apply – Much like the Corinthians and us.
- 2. (vv. 5-10) Their ABUSES were Greater (“most”? All but 2!)
 - (v. 6b) craved past evils of Egypt (Num. 11:1-6, 31-34)
 - (v.7) Participated in idolatry (Ex. 32:1-6, 27-28)
 - (v.8) Immorality (Num. 25:1-9)
 - (v.9) questioned God’s faithfulness and discipline (Num. 21:4-6)
 - (v.10) grumbles to leadership (Num. 16:41-49)
 - Apply – Much like the Corinthians and some today
- 3. (vv. 11-13) the ADMONITION
 - (v. 11) learn from the past
 - (v.12) what happened to them can happen to you (us)
 - (v. 13) Take “the way of escape” from the temptation to become spiritually overconfident and abuse Christian liberty. The fact we are free to do something doesn’t mean we should. Ask these questions about every gray area when we have no clear command:
 - (1) Other believers: Will doing this provide a loving example that builds others up? (Jn. 13:34-35; 1 Cor. 8:9, 13; 10:23-24; Rom. 13:10)
 - (2) Personally: Will doing this grow me to be more like Christ or could it cause me to fall into sin? (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23)
 - (3) Lost: Will doing this make me a more believable Christian and better witness for Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-22; 10:32-33)
 - (4) God: Will doing this honor Christ and give glory to God? (1 Cor. 10:31)

CONC: Don’t be ignorant...about how you manage those “gray areas” (questionable doubtful, tricky). If we fail to manage them in ways that show love to others and protect self, we will become over confident and spiritually proud – and abuse our liberty in Christ. The question is not, “Am I free to do this, but can I *not* do this for the sake of other believers, myself, a lost world, and to honor God?”