

Freed to Love: Putting Others First

1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 (ESV)

Student Devotional

We live in a culture that celebrates personal freedom. We hear things like:

- “Do what makes you happy.”
- “Live your truth.”
- “It’s your life—nobody else gets a say.”

But Paul gives us a different perspective: **Freedom in Christ isn’t about doing whatever we want—it’s about using our freedom to love others well.**

The Corinthians were focused on their **rights**, but Paul challenged them to **think bigger**—to ask not just, “*Can I do this?*” but “*Should I do this?*”

As you go through this devotional, ask yourself: **How can I use my freedom in a way that makes Jesus known and builds others up?**

Day 1: Just Because You Can Doesn’t Mean You Should

“‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up.” (1 Corinthians 10:23, ESV)

Think About It:

Imagine you just got a credit card with **no spending limit**. You’re free to buy whatever you want—new clothes, the latest tech, an all-inclusive vacation. Nobody is stopping you, and technically, you’re not breaking any rules. But just because you **can** spend recklessly doesn’t mean it’s a **wise** decision. In the end, maxing out your credit might leave you stressed, broke, and regretting your choices.

Paul is making the same point. The Corinthians were saying, “*We have freedom in Christ! We can do whatever we want!*” And Paul agreed—they **were** free. But he challenged them with a bigger question:

- **Is this choice actually beneficial?**

- Does it help others grow in faith?
- Does it bring glory to God?

Christian maturity isn't about **pushing boundaries**—it's about **using wisdom**. It's about **choosing what's best** over what's merely *permissible*.

Pray It:

Lord, help me use my freedom wisely. Teach me to ask, *“Does this build others up?”* instead of just, *“Am I allowed to do this?”*

Do It:

Think about a recent decision—how you spent your time, your money, or your words. Was it **helpful**, or just something you were free to do? Today, choose something that **benefits** your faith, your relationships, or someone else's spiritual walk.

Day 2: Seek the Good of Others, Not Just Yourself

“Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.” (1 Corinthians 10:24, ESV)

Think About It:

Have you ever been part of a group project where one person **only cared about their own grade**? They did what benefited **them**, not what helped the team.

That's how many of us live—we make decisions based on **our own comfort, convenience, and preferences**.

But Paul tells us to think **bigger**—to ask:

- How does this affect the people around me?
- Am I helping others grow in faith, or am I just focused on my own freedom?
- Am I making choices that reflect Jesus' love?

Paul isn't saying we should **let people walk all over us**. But he is saying that **love > personal preferences**.

Pray It:

Jesus, help me have a heart that puts others first. Show me ways I can seek **their** good instead of always focusing on **mine**.

Do It:

Look for **one way** today to **prioritize someone else's needs over your own**. Maybe it's **letting a friend choose the restaurant, helping a co-worker, or choosing to listen instead of making the conversation about yourself**.

Day 3: Live for God's Glory in Everything

**"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
(1 Corinthians 10:31, ESV)**

Think About It:

Paul takes something as basic as **eating and drinking** and says, *Even that can glorify God*.

That means:

- **The way you speak**—can glorify God.
- **The way you spend your time**—can glorify God.
- **How you treat people**—can glorify God.
- **What you post online**—can glorify God.

It's not just about **avoiding sin**—it's about **actively making choices that reflect Jesus**.

Think about it: If someone followed you around all day, **would your life make God look good?**

Pray It:

Lord, I want everything I do—big or small—to bring You glory. Help me live with that mindset every single day.

Do It:

Pick something **ordinary**—eating, working, texting—and **do it for God's glory** today. Maybe it's **praying before a meal, speaking kindly, or making a Christlike choice online**.

Day 4: Remove Barriers to the Gospel

"Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 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 Corinthians 10:32–33, ESV)

Think About It:

Paul isn't saying to **water down the gospel**—he's saying we should **remove unnecessary barriers** that might push people away from Jesus.

It's like this:

- If your **attitude** makes people avoid Christianity, you need to change it.
- If your **habits** make non-believers skeptical, you need to rethink them.
- If your **freedom in Christ** confuses or discourages a new believer, **you might need to lay it down.**

Paul's goal was clear: **Make it as easy as possible for people to see Jesus in him.** Can the same be said of you?

Pray It:

Jesus, help me remove anything that gets in the way of others seeing You in me. Make me aware of how my words and actions affect the people around me.

Do It:

Think about someone in your life who **isn't a Christian** or who **struggles with faith**. Ask yourself: *Is there anything in my life that might be a stumbling block for them?* If so, take a step to change that today.

Day 5: Follow the Example of Christ

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1, ESV)

Think About It:

Paul could say, *“Follow me,”* because he was **following Jesus**.

The reason he was willing to **give up his rights** was because **Jesus did it first**.

If Jesus could **lay down His life for us**, we can **lay down our preferences, pride, and comfort** for the sake of others.

Pray It:

Jesus, thank You for sacrificing everything for me. Help me live with the same love and humility, putting others before myself just like You did.

Do It:

Today, find **one way** to follow Jesus' example—maybe by **forgiving someone**, **serving when it's inconvenient**, or **choosing humility when you could fight for your own way**.

You're Ready for Class!

This week, you've seen that **freedom in Christ isn't about doing whatever we want—it's about using our freedom to love others well**.

So here's the challenge:

How can you use your freedom this week to serve, encourage, or build someone up?

Come to class ready to share—and let's commit to living like Jesus, putting others first!

Before We Gather

- What are some “freedoms” Christians might have—either spiritually or culturally—that need careful use so we don't unintentionally harm another believer's conscience?
- Why is it important to consider not just whether something is “allowed,” but whether it's truly beneficial for others in the body of Christ?
- How can doing “everything for God's glory” reshape the way we approach ordinary tasks, relationships, and choices each day?
- Think of a time you wrestled with whether to use a personal freedom. How did you decide, and what did you learn about loving others through that experience?
- How can our church maintain unity by helping one another stay faithful, without turning into legalists who micromanage each other's choices?
- Which everyday routines—work, school, social media use—could become more Christ-centered if you deliberately aimed to glorify God?