– Living a Life of Love and Discernment in Christian Freedom –

Scripture Foundation

> *1 Corinthians 10:23–24*
> *“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial.*
> *“I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive.*
> *No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.*

The Principle of Christian Liberty with Love

Paul teaches that while believers are free in Christ (Galatians 5:1), our freedom must never harm others. Christian liberty is governed not by personal comfort, but by love—especially toward those who are weaker in faith or still seeking Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul addresses believers who were concerned about whether they could eat meat sold in public markets, some of which may have been offered to idols. His answer is both practical and pastoral:

> *1 Corinthians 10:25–26*
> *“Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.’”*

Paul wasn’t giving a license to consume everything sold in a market (e.g., alcohol, idols, or harmful substances). Instead, he was specifically referring to food, and especially meat, which some feared was spiritually contaminated due to its association with idol worship.

Interpreting the Text with Wisdom

If we read this passage too literally, we risk misunderstanding it. Not everything in a market is meant for consumption—some things are harmful, sinful, or spiritually misleading (like drugs, occult items, or alcohol abuse). That’s why Paul clarifies: we must use wisdom and love, not just personal freedom, when making decisions (Philippians 1:9–10).

When Paul said, *“Eat anything sold in the meat market,”* his concern was conscience and witness—not diet or culture.

A Real-Life Application: Cultural Sensitivity in Ministry

Let’s say you travel to China to preach. Locals welcome you and serve traditional food with ingredients unfamiliar to you. You may not recognize certain herbs or meats. In that case, Paul says not to ask unnecessary questions. Just eat what is offered without making a big issue of it—unless you are explicitly told the food was sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 10:28).

Why? Because if you refuse their hospitality, they may feel disrespected. You might appear judgmental or culturally arrogant, even if that’s not your intention. Such reactions can harden hearts and make people resistant to the Gospel.

The core principle is: don’t let secondary issues like food or traditions become stumbling blocks to someone’s salvation.

> *Romans 14:20*

> *“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.”*

Likewise, when someone visits your home, and you serve them food, if they question every ingredient, it may offend you. That same offense can happen in reverse. This is why Paul tells believers to act in ways that build up others—even when they have every right to do something (1 Corinthians 10:23).

Loving the Lost, Not Judging Them

This teaching also applies to how we treat sinners or people with different beliefs. Suppose you’re sharing the Gospel with someone in prostitution. If you begin by criticizing their appearance or lifestyle, you’ll likely offend them and lose any chance of sharing Christ.

Instead, follow Jesus’ example. When He met the Samaritan woman (John 4:7–26), He didn’t start by exposing her sinful past. He began by speaking of *living water* and the kingdom of God. Only later did He gently reveal knowledge of her past—and even then, it was done with compassion.

> *John 3:17*
> *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

We must minister like Jesus—with truth and grace. Don’t prioritize pointing out sin before revealing hope. Let the Holy Spirit convict at the right time (John 16:8).

Reaching Those of Other Faiths

When witnessing to people of different faiths—like Muslims—it’s unwise to lead with confrontational statements such as, *“Eating pork is okay!”* or, *“Jesus is God, not just a prophet!”* These truths are foundational, but they require spiritual revelation and understanding.

> *1 Timothy 3:16*
> *“Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh...”*

Even Jesus' disciples didn't fully grasp who He was right away. Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ came by revelation from the Father (Matthew 16:16–17). How much more, then, should we be patient with outsiders?

Lead with the message of the cross—the reality of sin, the fall of man (Genesis 3), and the redemption found in Jesus. Let people first see Him as Savior. Over time, the Holy Spirit will reveal His full identity.

Spiritual Growth Is Gradual

New believers are like spiritual infants (1 Corinthians 3:1–2). Just as children don't learn everything at once, we shouldn't expect people new to Christ to understand deep theology immediately. We must be patient and loving teachers.

Paul emphasizes this in 1 Corinthians 8:1

> *"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."*

Our goal should not be to win debates or show how much Scripture we know, but to build others up and bring them to Christ.

Seek the Good of Others, Not Just Yourself

This is the heart of Paul’s message in 1 Corinthians 10:24:

> *“No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.”*

Our actions—how we eat, speak, serve, and even correct—should always reflect Christ’s love. We are called not just to be right, but to do what is right for the sake of others’ salvation.

A Final Call to Salvation

If you have not yet given your life to Jesus, remember: salvation starts here and now.

> *John 3:18*
> *“Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already…”*

There is still time to repent and turn to Christ. Surrender your life to Him. Be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), and He will give you the gift of the Holy Spirit.

> *Romans 8:9*
> *“…And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.”*

Seek the Holy Spirit. He is the seal of God upon your life (Ephesians 1:13).

The Lord is Coming Soon!

Walk in love, speak with wisdom, and always seek the good of others above your own.

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