

THE JUDGMENTS OF CORINTH

Part 5

“Avoiding the Judging of Liberty”

1st Co. 10:23-33

INTRODUCTION

It was Martin Luther who stated:

“Be careful not to measure your holiness by other people's sins.”

The same can also be said concerning another believer's liberty.

No topic has been less spoken about in Christendom than improperly judging the liberty of other saints. It is quite easy to make others conform to our conscience in matters where Scripture is silent. Scripture is clear that the judging of sinful behavior and disputes among believers are necessary within the church. But, the choices of believers, where Scripture is silent, is between the believer and the Lord, alone. Today, we will consider liberty and the problem of judging another's liberty.

I. THE BELIEVER HAS FREEDOM IN CHRIST.

A. The word “freedom” is from the Greek word *eleutheroo* which is used in Scripture in the verbal form of that which liberates one from bondage; or in the noun form of one who is liberated from bondage to a thing.

1. The verb notes the act of being liberated.
 - a) It is used of creation being made free from the bondage it is currently under. Rom. 8:21
 - b) “The truth” liberates those who are in bondage to the sin nature. John 8:32 (The Son makes it possible); cf. Gal. 5:1; Rom. 6:12, 22
2. The noun form is used to indicate those have been set free from some kind of bondage.
 - a) The believer today is seen as being free (from the sin nature). 1st Pet. 2:16
 - b) It is used of the doctrine concerning liberty. Ja. 1:25

B. The Corinthians had conflict over the proper use of freedom. 1st Co. 8:1

1. Correct knowledge does not always translate to proper use of freedom. 1st Co. 8:1-4
2. Improper use of liberty can lead to the stumbling of a “weaker” brother. 1st Co. 8:9-13
 - a) His conscience can be emboldened to eat when he is not confident about eating. 1st Co. 8:10
 - b) Going against his conscience can lead to the stumbling of the believer.

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- c) Going against his conscience can lead the believer to sin. 1st Co. Rom. 14:23

II. PAUL REMINDED THE CORINTHIANS THAT NOT ALL FREEDOM IS BENEFICIAL TO ALL BELIEVERS. 1 Co. 10:23; 6:12

A. The word *beneficial*, **that is that which is profitable; brings a benefit; provides the best for a particular situation; doesn't add anything**. John 16:7; 1 Co. 7:35; Acts 20:20

B. Not everything that is permissible *edifies*. 1 Co. 10:23

1. “*Edifies*” means to contribute something to the **process that brings a believer into a state of spiritual growth**. cf. 1 Co. 14:26
2. Love for the brethren motivates a believer to *edify* the saints. cf. 1 Co. 8:1; Eph. 4:16
3. “*Edification*” transpires as a result of the use of spiritual gifts. 1 Co. 14:3,5,12
4. Misuse of what's permissible can undermine *edification*. Rom. 15:1-2

C. Things that are permissible have the capability of bringing one into *bondage*. 1 Co. 6:12

1. “Brought under the power” is the word for *authority* – **where something is acting on a person to cause them to be absent of self-control**. cf. 1 Co. 8:9; 9:12
2. The word “*under*” translated the Greek word *apo* which means to be under neat a thing that governs and controls one's life. cf. Rom. 6:14

III. THE WEAKER BROTHER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO NOT JUDGE ANOTHER BELIEVER'S FREEDOM DUE TO THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.

A. Paul raise the question of the judgment of a conscience by the conscience of another believer. 1st Co. 10:29

1. The use of *hina* (purpose clause) and *ti* (interrogative pronoun) is used here to form an idiom *hinati* which is used in Scripture of a question posed concerning some destructive activity. Acts 4:25 (of the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing); Matt. 9:4 (of the Scribes questioning Jesus' healing of a sick man)
2. The use of the word “judged” is *krinetai* (Pres. Pass. Ind.) -- “**to decide (mentally or judicially); by implication to try, condemn, punish**.” -- Strong's lexicon cf. John 3:18 (used of those not believing who will be judged); 1st Co. 6:2 (of the believers judging the world)
 - a) “By” is the word “*hupo*” -- by means of
 - b) “The conscience of another” -- (textual problem as to whether is *apistou* -- unbeliever or *allos* -- (adjective) that describes one of a different kind. Cf. Heb. 4:8 (of a different day for rest for God's people)

B. Judging of the freedom of a believer could be particularly troublesome if the believer partook under the right motivation. Vs. 30

1. "If" is a first class condition "since
2. "By grace" -- grace is the instrument by how they partook.
3. "Evil spoken of" is the Greek word blasphemos -- "***to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate.***" -- Joseph Thayer cf. 1st Co. 4:13 (of the apostle being spoken evil of); 1st Tim. 1:20 (of Hymenaeus and Alexander attributing things to Scripture that wasn't true)

C. The stronger brother yields so as to not offend the weaker brother. 1st Co. 10:31-33

CONCLUSION