



From the Pastor

July 2020

How Free Are You?

It is July. This is the month we celebrate our Independence Day. We celebrate our freedom from England.

It is also a day when we get together with friends and family to cook out and later watch fireworks. Well, that sure has changed this year. These activities have been severely curtailed.

What are we free to do on this day of freedom? According to the apostle Paul we are free to do whatever we want. Follow me as we walk through a part of his first letter to the believers in Corinth.

Corinth, at the time of Paul, was a very active city. It was a major trade route and was a capital of industry. It also was a city that held the temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, so it was known for its worship of idols and immorality.

In this city Paul says to the believers that you are free to do anything you want, BUT... Look at what he says.

²³ "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up.²⁴ Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any



question on the ground of conscience.²⁶ For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."²⁷ If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience.²⁸ But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—²⁹ I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience?³⁰ If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God,³³ 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 10:23-33 ESV)

The believers were free to do anything, but there was a lot that was not good to do. We are in the same situation; we are free to do anything. However, not everything is good for us or for others.

I find in the passage the following guidelines for my freedom:

1. Not everything I can do is good for me.
2. I need to look out for others.
3. Current social mores do not determine what I can and cannot do.
4. My freedom should not offend others.
5. Everything I do must be done to the glory of God.

In our current world of Covid-19 restrictions and racial unrest, we need to live lives that are free from this world. However, that freedom must be expressed with the greatest of care.

In Him and for His glory,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Art". The word "Pastor" is written in a cursive style, and "Art" is written in a more stylized, blocky cursive.