

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

1 CORINTHIANS: A BEAUTIFUL MESS

1 Corinthians 9:1–27

DISCUSSION 1: THE CONSCIENCE

1. What are ways our conscience can be seared, self-justifying, untrained, or centered on the self? What are dangers of a conscience not shaped by the gospel, submitted to God, and loving others first?
2. Rather than assuming your conscience is informed by the Bible, how can you intentionally study Scripture to apply biblical truth, principals, or wisdom to all of life? Why is doing so in dialogue with other believers—who might disagree or apply things differently—also important?
3. What are questions we might ask ourselves to give pause and consider if we're more concerned about serving and loving others or exercising our rights and freedoms?
4. How is Paul an example in 1 Cor. 9 of laying down "his rights" or what he could claim so as not to create any offense toward the gospel?

DISCUSSION 2: WEAKER AND STRONGER

1. Did Paul view eating meat as a sinful act (in and of itself) or something Christians are free to do? Does that change if a weaker brother or sister or view the act as sin (meaning is it sin for them if they think it is wrong but go ahead and do it)?
2. When it comes to expression of our liberties between the strong and weaker brother or sister, must the strong give up their freedom altogether or is it primarily in reference to when they're around the weaker brother or sister? Why might that be important?
3. Why is it important we not judge others in matters of personal conscience as well as cultivate humility and love? What are ways to do this?

DISCUSSION 3: FREE TO SERVE

1. Read 1 Cor. 9:19 and Gal. 5:13. How can we use some of our freedoms to serve others (in ways that we likely would not choose)? What are specific examples of how we might do this today?
2. Read 1 Cor. 9:19-23 again. How is Paul an example for us of making our gospel witness and ability to serve others of much greater importance than expressing our rights, enjoying our freedoms, or sharing our own thoughts? How might we apply this to our relationships, conversations, use of social media, and how we view issues of conscience and Christian Liberty?
3. How does the section on self-discipline (9:24-27) relate to the preceding section (9:1-23)?
4. What are some unbiblical someone might practice discipline? What are biblical ways to practice discipline and self-control?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

You can watch our recent forum at penningtonpark.com/church-resources/

Christian Liberty

- “4 Principles for the Exercise of Christian Liberty” by Sinclair Ferguson
- “A Gospel-Centered Church Understands the Place of Christian Liberty” by Erik Raymond
- “Pastor, Defend Christian Liberty” by Caleb Greggson
- “Christian Liberty” by Dan Dodds in *Tabletalk*, June 2019.
- *On Christian Liberty* by Martin Luther
- Jonathan Leeman seminar (audio) on “Pastors, Politics, and Christian Liberty”

Conscience

- *Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ* by Andy Naselli and J. D. Crowley. You can read a review of this book by Mitch Chase.
- “12 Principles on How to Disagree With Other Christians” by Andy Naselli
- “Politics, Conscience, and the Church” by Jonathan Leeman or *How Can I Love Church Members with Different Politics?*
- “Christian Conscience and Preference” by Ryan Eagy
- (Video) “Applying the Bible to Conscience Issues with Andy Naselli” by Logos