**1. Motivate**

What are some rights or freedoms as a citizen of the country you call home?

* speech,
* press,
* bear arms,
* religion,
* search and seizure,
* trial by peers
* voting

Which of these rights (if any) would you be willing to give up if you believed that exercising it might harm someone else?

* speech (cannot cry “fire” in a crowded place if there is no fire, cannot disturb peace)
* guns (restricted in certain situations, i.e., public transportation)

A video introduction is available at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_6u2vwh74> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, better to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/24w8utbj>

**2. Transition**

Personal freedom is a big deal in our culture

* Today we consider what we have the right to do
* AND how our actions in doing these things will impact others
* Let your responsibility to others drive how you exercise your rights.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 What Is Beneficial to Others

Listen for a qualifying statement.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (NIV) "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is constructive. 24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

In what way is Paul’s opening statement in verse 23 true?

* generally, a person *can* do anything they want to do
* they just have to realize there exist consequences
* spiritually we are set free from a list of do’s and don’ts for our salvation

So, how did he qualify it?

* not everything is beneficial
* not everything is constructive
* seek the good of others

Why might the statement need such qualifying or balance when applied to the life of a believer?

* some people will take the “everything is permissible” statement and run wild with it
* there’s a sense in which it just isn’t true
* there are times when we should be seeking the good of others over ourselves

When is it hard to seek the good of others over yourself in your daily life?

* when the other person is a jerk
* when you are sick
* when the other person has mistreated or abused you
* you are tired, worn out
* when you know they will not appreciate it
* when the other person will take advantage of your kindness

How does focus on the Kingdom of God change the way we see our rights?

* the Kingdom of God is the realm where God rules
* when God rules in our lives, we give up our rights to Him
* He will be given the right to direct your actions and attitudes

How does Christian use of freedom contrast with our society’s idea of freedom?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Society’s Concept of Freedom | The Believer’s Concept of Freedom |
| * do whatever you want
* no restrictions
* live it up, you only live once
* you deserve whatever you want
* the world owes it to you, take it
* always live to pamper yourself
 | * free from the penalty of sin
* free from the power of sin
* look forward to freedom from presence of sin
* free of the feeling of guilt
* enabled to live to glorify God
 |

3.2 Don’t Offend Others Unnecessarily

Listen for when not to offend unnecessarily.

1 Corinthians 10:25-30 (NIV) Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." 27 If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake-- 29 the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

Paul asks the question, “Why should my freedom be judged by another’s conscience?” What does it mean for your freedom to be “judged by another person’s conscience”?

* when someone else’s beliefs are forced on you
* if you don’t agree with them and do what they want, they will make life miserable for you
* “if you loved me you would do what I want”
* you are a bad person if you don’t agree with my conscience, my thoughts on right and wrong
* can occur in a family relationship
* occurs all too often in the area of politics in today’s world

Paul talks about the problem of whether or not to eat food offered to idols. What practices today are similar to this early church conundrum?

* popular music – different varieties of rock music (heavy metal, etc.), some forms of country western
* some forms of public dancing (maybe the places are the issue more than the dancing)
* some forms of entertainment (even some TV programs)
* certainly, any kind of alcoholic beverage
* styles of dress
* places to go for entertainment (in times past this has included bowling alleys, pool halls, skating rinks, honky-tonks, theaters)
* eating at places which have a bar or serve alcohol (even though you don’t drink)

Why would being considerate of others be more important than knowing and claiming you are theologically correct in the actions you choose?

* your correctness could be flaunted in someone’s face
* it is a form of pride to “know” are right and look down on people who just “don’t understand”
* loving one another is better than having knowledge, love builds one another up
* limiting your actions because you don’t want to lead someone astray shows your love

How did Paul counsel the Corinthians to regard food sacrificed to idols?

* an idol, itself, is nothing but a piece of wood or stone or metal
* just because a piece of meat has been set out before it does nothing to the meat
* the only true deity is Jehovah God

How could weaker believers be hurt by seeing more mature Christians do something the weaker believers considered wrong?

* they might drift back into their former pagan ways – your partaking of meat offered to idols implies to them that they were OK
* they might become involved in other activities that actually are wrong
* they would violate their consciences and feel guilt – if your conscience believes something is wrong, and you do it anyway – is that sin?
* Satan would accuse them of not being Christians at all … rob them of victorious living
* consider a parallel of my not eating a brownie before supper because my preschool grandson would not eat his meal if he ate one first

How should we limit our freedom out of sensitivity to weaker Christians?

* if it will tend to cause them to violate their consciences, then avoid it
* in some cases, it might be better to avoid it than to make an issue and purposefully irritate them
* in other cases, if they don’t know, they won’t be upset – don’t flaunt your knowledge or freedom (is this a form of “don’t ask, don’t tell”?)

3.3 Do What Gives a Witness for Christ

Listen for another reminder how to act.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 (NIV) So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God-- 33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

In contrast to the assertion in verse 24 *(Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others*.), what should motivate the believer’s actions?

* verse 24 speaks of actions done with other people in mind
* do things for their good
* this passage speaks to glorifying God as being the motivating factor
* glorifying God is the overriding factor
* there might be times when seeking the good of others over yourself could be harmful to you, thus, not glorifying to God

Whom are believers to try to influence?

* fellow believers – build them up as fellow members of the Body of Christ
* people who are unbelievers – treat them with kindness to attract them to Christ
* when we claim to be Christians, we should act like Jesus did with kindness and compassion

What are some practical ways we can glorify God in our day-to-day living?

* daily communication with God
* apply God’s Truth to our lives
* bring your problems to the Lord
* tell Him you are trusting Him for the situation
* fill your mind with God’s Truth, not the lies of the worldly culture around us
* personal and corporate worship
* share God’s Truth with others
* involved in spiritual ministries

What types of personal sacrifices might a believer choose to make in order to share the gospel?

* give up your time and energy to an outreach program in your church
* willing to teach small children’s classes
* involved in your church’s 24-hour prayer ministry
* praying and giving for worldwide missionary work
* participating in a missions trip
* involved in relief efforts when people have suffered from some disaster

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Read.

* Choose to read God’s Word daily, so you can know better how to represent Christ.
* The more clearly you see Jesus, the better you can reflect Him.

Glorify.

* Live your life on mission.
* Live in such a way that you are intentional in giving God the glory in all aspects of your life.

Engage.

* Engage with your neighbor or coworker in a spiritual conversation.
* Invite the person to get coffee or lunch.
* Steward the relationship in a way that you can paint an accurate picture of Jesus.

Word Search Puzzle

Well … Happy INDEPENDENCE Day. But some of you may be INTERDEPENDENT on each other for help. This won’t be easy. Humph! Those words go every which-a-way, up, down, right, left, and yes … even diagonally. If you finish by Tuesday, you get a free pass on that book report. There is INTERDEPENDENT help at <https://tinyurl.com/24w8utbj> and other INDEPENDENT activities for the family.

MEAT
NOBODY
OFFERED
OTHERS
PERMISSIBLE
PLEASE
QUESTIONS
RAISING
SACRIFICE
SAKE
SAVED
SEEK
SEEKING
SOLD
SOMETHING
STUMBLE
THANKFULNESS
TOLD
UNBELIEVER
WHATEVER
WHETHER

ANYTHING
BENEFICIAL
CHURCH
CONSCIENCE
CONSTRUCTIVE
DENOUNCED
DRINK
EARTH
EAT
EVERYBODY
EVERYTHING
FREEDOM
GLORY
GOOD
GREEKS
INVITES
JEWS
JUDGED
MARKET
MEAL