

I Have the Right to do Anything, But . . .

Scripture Reading — 1 Corinthians 6:12

“I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. — 1 Corinthians 6:12

As our verse for today shows, some people twisted the teaching about freedom in Christ to mean that Christians were free to do anything they pleased. Similarly, some others had reasoned that they should go on sinning so that the grace of God’s forgiveness could increase (Romans 6:1).

No, says Paul. We have died to sin, and our freedom in Christ does not mean that everything we can do is good for ourselves or for others. We must still be wary of committing sin, which offends God and others.

On the matter of building up wealth, Paul would say, it was permissible, but his lifestyle showed that he did not use that right. As Paul describes his situation in 2 Corinthians 6:10, he was “poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.” C.S. Lewis points out in his book *The Abolition of Man* that many people in history have seen the value of forgoing some things that might well be permissible. For example, Lao Tzu, a sixth-century-B.C. Chinese philosopher, said, “To have little is to possess. To have plenty is to be perplexed.”

We might not take a vow of poverty like some monks, using a piece of rope for a belt or living in hollow trees for minimal shelter. But we must be careful that affluence does not master us so that we are free to spread the love of God in Christ, the riches of eternal life in him.

Prayer

Lord, open our eyes, that we may be aware of what shackles us. May you alone be our Master—and as we serve you, may we help many grow rich in the love of Jesus. Amen.

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