

## Sermon Summary | Sunday 24th May 2026 | 1 Corinthians 10.23–11.1

In 1 Corinthians 10.23–11.1, Paul brings together his teaching on God’s guidance for life’s decisions. In the grey areas of life, Christians often want to ask, “What am I allowed to do?” But Paul teaches us to ask a bigger question: **can I do this for the glory of God?** His summary command is clear: *“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* This means God’s guidance is not only for dramatic crossroads, but for ordinary life: meals, conversations, habits, hospitality, entertainment, money, friendships, and the use of our freedom.

First, Paul asks: will this help? The Corinthians liked to say, *“All things are lawful.”* In one sense, they were right. Christian freedom is real. We are not saved by rule-keeping, and Christ has set his people free. But freedom is not enough. *“All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful.”* The mature Christian does not ask only, “Is this allowed?” or “Can I defend this?” but, “Will this help me love Christ, resist sin, serve others, pray, and become more like Jesus?” Some things may not be obviously forbidden, but they may still leave us spiritually dull, anxious, angry, envious, or self-protective.

Second, Paul asks: will this build up? Christian freedom is never merely about me. Paul says, *“Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour.”* The question is not only whether something is good for me, but whether it strengthens others in faith. A mature Christian does not treat others as an inconvenience to personal freedom, and a tender-conscienced Christian must not use personal preference to control others. Paul is calling the church to use freedom in love, because Christ died not only for me, but also for my brother and sister.

Third, Paul asks: can I give thanks? When discussing meat sold in the marketplace, Paul does not teach an anxious, suspicious Christianity. He quotes Psalm 24: *“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”* Creation belongs to God. Food, hospitality, friendship, and ordinary gifts may be received with gratitude. Yet gratitude does not cancel love. If eating becomes associated with idolatry, confusion, or compromise, love may require restraint. Christian freedom is neither fear nor selfishness. It is thankful enjoyment under the lordship of Christ.

Finally, Paul asks: will this glorify God? To glorify God is to display his worth, beauty, trustworthiness, and supremacy. This means nothing in the Christian life is meaningless. A cup of tea offered to a lonely neighbour, an apology after a sharp word, a refusal to join in gossip, a meal enjoyed with thanksgiving, or a freedom laid down for someone else’s good can all be done for the glory of God.

Above all, Paul points us to Jesus. Christ never used his freedom selfishly. He lived wholly for the Father’s glory and gave himself wholly for our good. At the cross, he laid down his rights, bore our sin, and sought the salvation of many. Christian guidance is therefore not finally about a checklist. It is about becoming like Christ: people whose freedom is useful, whose choices build others up, whose enjoyment is thankful, and whose lives display the glory of God.

### Questions for personal reflection

1. In one ordinary area of my life — spending, speech, entertainment, hospitality, work, or relationships — am I asking only, “Is this allowed?” or am I asking, “Will this help, build up, and glorify God?”
2. What would change this week if I stopped asking, “How much of my life may I keep for myself?” and began asking, “How much of my life can display the goodness of God?”