Dear Open Door Family,

There I was sitting on the deck at the table under the big maple tree in our backyard. I really enjoy those early mornings as read and meditate on God's Word. I can hear the sounds of birds and the wind in the trees. But on this day, every now and then something would come fluttering down onto the table, pieces of dried grass and twigs; then there was a plop of something like mud. This was not what I was expecting; it had never happened before. So I looked up in the tree and from where I was sitting straight up around 40 feet two birds were building a nest and as the birds worked on it bits and pieces of various things were hitting the table. Although I had the right to sit there, and nobody could force me to move, I had to decide if it was really wise to continue sitting there. After getting plopped on a couple of more times I decided that I would move until the nest building was officially over. Paul reminds us as Christians that though we may have a lot of freedom in our lives, not everything leads to godliness.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (JBP) As a Christian I may do anything, but that does not mean that everything is good for me. I may do everything, but I must not be a slave of anything.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (HCS) "Everything is permissible for me," but not everything is helpful. "Everything is permissible for me," but I will not be brought under the control of anything.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (JBP) As I have said before, the Christian position is this: I may do anything, but everything is not useful. Yes, I may do anything but everything is not constructive. [24] Let no man, then, set his own advantage as his objective, but rather the good of his neighbor.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (HCS) "Everything is permissible," but not everything is helpful. "Everything is permissible," but not everything builds up. [24] No one should seek his own good, but the good of the other person.

Although I have freedom to do many things as a Christian, the one thing I must be careful of is that I never become a SLAVE of those things which I wish to do. It is easy to let things get out of balance in our lives. I love to read and I enjoy spy thrillers and westerns but if ALL I do is sit around and lose myself in that fantasy world it can become a stumbling block to me and rob me of a close walk with the Lord Jesus. That is why Paul says: "You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Cor. 6:20) Another challenge for us when thinking through the freedom we have in Christ comes from a series of questions later in the book. No matter what the activity may be we should ask: Is it Helpful? Does it Build up? Is it Useful? Is it Constructive? Does this help me seek the GOOD of others first? If not, then I must be very careful. Jesus died for me to forgive me - SO THAT - I could live for Him and Honor HIM in my daily life. If I choose to do those things which do not build up, those things which enslave me, then I am NOT honoring Jesus Christ in my body as I should.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to measure everything that I do in light of Your Word. Thank You for the Freedom I have to enjoy all things. Please keep me from using that freedom to become enslaved to anything but You. May YOU be my only Master. Please Lord, use Your Word and Your Spirit to make me more and more sensitive to those things in my life which do NOT honor You.

Pastor Mark Kieft

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