

Ok, But Not the Best
1 Corinthians 6:9-12
September 7, 2025

When I was GROWING UP in my Southern Baptist church, I was very clear on how SOMEONE BECAME a Christian - You would WALK THE AISLE during the invitation at the end of the service - there in the altar, you would pray with the pastor and COMMITMENT YOUR LIFE to Jesus - You were standing up in front of the congregation PUBLICLY DECLARING your faith in Jesus Christ AS YOUR SAVIOR!

And I did just that on a Thursday evening in April of 1972 - I was 13 years old and in the eighth grade - And let me say, my life WAS CHANGED FOREVER THAT NIGHT! - about 2 months later I WAS BAPTIZED in the pool in the same sanctuary.

At that time, I didn't know all THE THEOLOGY of the Book of Romans - I did not know ALL THE PROMISES of the Book of Ephesians - I certainly did not know all the FUTURE PROPHECIES of the Book of Revelations - No, that night I just knew I WAS A MESSED UP, SINFUL KID who needed a SAVIOR!

In walking the aisle that night, I was doing TWO THINGS - First, I was AGREEING with God that I needed a Savior because I was quite aware THE SIN IN MY LIFE - Second, I was agreeing with God that my life NEEDED TO CHANGE - [I needed to repent!](#)

Though I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING about salvation, I knew those two things - That night, I did BOTH.

Some time later I read, **Mark 1:14-15** **Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."** - Repent and Believe - that was the simple MESSAGE OF JESUS - and I realized THAT WAS EXACTLY what I had done that night.

I hadn't FOLLOWED A FORMULA - though we often TRY TO REDUCE Salvation down to a formula - No, that night I had a CHANGE OF HEART.

Something changed deep down inside my life - That was about 53 years ago, and Jesus is still my Savior - and HE IS STILL WORKING CHANGE in my life today!

In some ways today, I think we DO PEOPLE A DISSERVICE in the church - We try to reduce the Salvation experience DOWN TO A FORMULA - And I get that - We need A SIMPLE WAY to lead people to a RELATIONSHIP with Jesus.

But, in other ways, this MIGHT BE WRONG on our part as pastors - for coming to Jesus is more than PRAYING A PRAYER - it is more than RAISING MY HAND - or walking AN AISLE.

Salvation REQUIRES A CHANGE OF HEART - It is making a decision TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION of my life - It is making a DECISIVE TURN TOWARDS the Savior & to follow Him!

When the Bible speaks of BELIEVING IN JESUS, it is never speaking in terms of JUST MENTAL AGREEMENT - You know, **“I believe Jesus was a real person who walked the earth - Yes, I believe He was even the Son of God”** - The New Testament TEACHES US in several places that the Demons believe those facts - and in response to this knowledge THEY TEMBLE!

When Jesus spoke of believing in Him, He was referring to making a DECISION TO FOLLOW HIM - to surrender your will to HIS WILL - In His words, to become a follower of Jesus was to, **“Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow Him”** - Following Jesus is a LIFE-CHANGING decision!

Here’s an IMPORTANT QUESTION for us all today: **Was BECOMING A CHRISTIAN a life-changing decision for you?**

It may be that you CAME TO CHRIST as a very young person - there wasn’t a WHOLE LOT TO CHANGE when you were 7 years old - but I would be willing to bet AT SOME POINT in your teenage years or later, you HAD TO MAKE A DECISION that you would continue to follow Him.

YOU WERE FACED with strong temptation that you had not faced before - And you had to choose to CONTINUE IN OBEDIENT to the Lord - and in that moment, IT WAS LIFE-CHANGING!

CHOOSING TO FOLLOW Christ means just that: SAYING “NO” to what I want to do - to what I am TEMPTED TO DO - and saying “YES” to Jesus - it’s saying “yes” to RIGHTEOUSNESS and “NO” to Unrighteousness! - this is the very definition of SALVATION - surrendering my life to Christ!

Here in 1 Cor. 6:9, Paul makes a BOLD STATEMENT - **Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.**

Apparently, there were some in the Church in Corinth who were thinking, **“It doesn’t matter HOW I LIVE MY LIFE, as long as I claim Jesus as my Savior, I’m saved - I’m safe - I’m going to Heaven!”** - Paul’s answer to them was simply, **“You are DECEIVING YOURSELF!”**

They had forgotten ONE NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS for Jesus to be your Savior - REPENTANCE - You have to TURN AWAY from the sinful LIFE-STYLE CHOICES you have been making!

Jesus won’t be the Savior of an UNREPENTANT PERSON - for repentance is ALWAYS THE FIRST STEP in the direction towards follow Christ! - I can’t walk in TWO DIRECTIONS at the same time!

WE are either walking in TOWARDS SIN & AWAY from God - Or we are walking AWAY FROM SIN and towards the SAVIOR - WE CAN’T have it both ways - it’s impossible - for Jesus to be our Savior, we have to TURN FROM any life-style of sin and disobedience.

Apparently, there were those in the Corinthian church who MISSED THIS STEP - they were CLAIMING to follow Jesus, but they had never taken even the first step AWAY FROM THEIR SIN!

Paul says of these people EMPHATICALLY, THEY WILL NOT inherit the Kingdom of God! - They are lying to themselves! - In 1 John 2:4, John says the same thing when he writes, **“He who says, ‘I know Him (Jesus),’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”**

John is saying exactly what Paul is communicating - You can't be following Jesus and AT THE SAME TIME walking away from Him living in SIN!

Look at this list of sins Paul describes:

Fornicators - any form of sexual activity BEFORE marriage

Idolaters - worshipping & WANTING something more than God

Adulterers - any sexual activity with someone other than your spouse

Homosexuals - the Greek word was the word was used for YOUNG MALE prostitution - in those day generally these were young teenage boys who gave themselves to adult men.

Sodomites - more typical word for any homosexual behavior

Thieves - those who TAKE what is not theirs

Covetous - those who WANT what is not theirs

Drunkards - those who LIVE under the influence of alcohol or some other substance

Revilers - those who TREAT OTHERS in an abusive, angry manner

Extortioners - those who TAKE BY FORCE something that belongs to another

You talk about an UGLY LIST - Apparently these were THE ISSUES THAT WERE COMMON in Corinth! - and aren't these are some of THE SAME ISSUES we face in America today! - Even within SOME CHURCHES!

This is not Paul's ONLY LIST of sins - Apparently, in the City of Galatia there were OTHER ISSUES that people were dealing with - In **Galatians 5:19-20 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, (all types sexual sins) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Again the list is HEADLINED by sexual sins - but it looks like ANGER, HATRED, SELFISHNESS & JEALOUSY towards others were BIG PROBLEMS there in Galatia - apparently Galatia was a lot like MODERN DAY America - a place with a lot OF MEAN, ANGRY, violent people!

And what is Paul's BOTTOM LINE? - You can't practice (or live a LIFE-STYLE) of these behaviors and expect to go to Heaven when you die! - **You can't accept sin as a normal part of living and claim to be a Christian!**

All of us WILL STRUGGLE with some of these behaviors - but if we JUST EMBRACE THEM as normal and acceptable, we are kidding ourselves if we think they ARE COMPATIBLE with following Christ - You can't be FOLLOWING JESUS and living at peace with sin as a part of your life!

According to Paul, don't expect to GO TO HEAVEN if you **accept as normal, and practice daily any form of sin!**

Let me be clear - We are not talking about STRUGGLES WITH SIN - we all have sin that "so easily beset us" - NO, we are talking about ACCEPTING our sin as OK with God - and living with it as FINE WITH GOD! - this passage should make it clear that IT IS NOT OK with the Father.

But, the NEXT SENTENCE Paul write is one of the most BEAUTIFUL & AMAZING verses in the Bible - **11 And such were some of you!**

Wow, the POWER of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! - What incredible news - YOU CAN CHANGE!

There were individuals in the Church in Corinth WHO HAD STRUGGLED with all of these BEHAVIORS AND ADDICTIONS - But, now they were FREE!

Their lives had been changed through the POWER OF JESUS - they had become NEW CREATIONS - new people - when they TURNED FROM THEIR SIN and surrendered their lives to THE WILL OF Jesus!

Look at what Paul says HAS HAPPENED to these folks - **But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.** - Three incredible things happen to them (AND TO US) when we are saved by God!

First, we are **WASHED** - We are FORGIVEN - We are cleansed from the FILTH OF OUR OLD LIFE - We are MADE NEW - 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

Not, some things - ALL THINGS! - we are cleansed from ALL THAT OLD GARBAGE that was our life before we TURNED TO Christ!

Second, we are **SANCTIFIED** - the word means "SET APART" - because you have been forgiven and cleansed by God, you are now set apart FOR HIS PURPOSES - He cleaned you up so that HE COULD USE YOU to do HIS WILL - so that you could become HIS TOOL - in HIS HAND - to further HIS KINGDOM!

God wants to USE YOU - but He can't if your life is REMAINS FULL OF GARBAGE - He doesn't need us to BE PERFECT - no, far from it - but He does need us to AGREE WITH HIM about our sin!

This is why SALVATION & SANCTIFICATION are necessary companions! - **There is no salvation where there is no sanctification!** - If God is not CHANGING OUR LIVES, and preparing us for HIS USE, we need to be concerned!

Third, we are **JUSTIFIED** - And if you have been around CC very long, you know what this work means - say it with me, **“Just as if I’d” never sinned!**

God treats me as if I WERE SINLESS - Like I am TOTALLY INNOCENT! - Because of the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, God views me as He views Jesus - like I had never sinned, REGARDLESS of the ugliness of my past! - Doesn't that BLOW YOUR MIND!

Folks, it don't get MUCH BETTER than that! - Forgiven and clean - SET APART to be used by God - treated like I had NEVER SINNED to begin with - What more could God do?

Well, How about GIVING US a different way to VIEW LIFE - That is what Paul tell's us God will do next - In the next verse Paul tells us how OUR UNDERSTANDING & VIEW OF LIFE changes after we have been WASHED, SANCTIFIED AND JUSTIFIED.

Before we're saved, OUR CHOICES are between GOOD & BAD - Right and Wrong - Lawful and unlawful - RIGHTEOUS & UNRIGHTEOUS - and most of the time we made BAD CHOICES.

But now I am a Christian - I HAVE TURNED my back on my sin - I have MADE THE DECISION to live a life pleasing to God - Now what are MY CONCERNS? - What are MY CHOICES about now?

In verse 12, Paul tells us - **All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**

It is NOT ENOUGH that God has cleansed me from my past - And can I say just a word about that? - Sometimes when God saves a person, they are INSTANTLY SET FREE from the bondage and the pull of their OLD LIFE - Sometimes we ARE NOT.

Maybe you were a DRUG ADDICT - or maybe you had a UNCONTROLLABLE TEMPER - or you had been actively involved in SEXUAL BEHAVIORS & PURSUITS that were outside the Will of God.

It is possible that the moment you GAVE YOUR LIFE to Christ, He set you TOTALLY FREE from that sin - and you have never LOOKED BACK - I have seen this happen.

But, that is NOT USUALLY the case - More likely, LIKE ME, you have HAD TO BATTLE that sin you have turned away from - You have had to GET HELP from others - You've had to GET AWAY from an old set of friends that were pulling you back into that sin.

You may have had to get involved in a group like FREE INDEED, where you could get THE SUPPORT of others who KNOW & UNDERSTAND your struggle.

If you were like me, you just had to FIGHT & RESIST the temptation to go back there! - maybe for years - not because you WANTED TO GO BACK to the sin, but because you were STILL WEAK in your flesh!

In either case, God's PLAN & GOAL is to give you victory - sometimes it is INSTANT - Most of the time it is A PROCESS that takes time - but, if we are REPENTANT, and this IS THE KEY, God will get us there.

Once we are SET FREE, that is when we get to VERSE 12 - The DECISIONS in our lives change - We start moving past RIGHT & WRONG - past GOOD / BAD - and we begin to move towards making decisions between what's GOOD & what's BEST!

Paul begins by QUOTING a statement that he had probably said to the Corinthians at some point, **"All things are lawful for me"** - Obviously, Paul was NOT TALKING about the IMMORAL behaviors he has just CONDEMNED TO HELL.

No, he was talking about the fact that these Corinthian believers, SPECIFICALLY THE GENTILE BELIEVERS did not have to BECOME JEWS and follow the OT LAW to be Christians - No, they had been SET FREE from the Ceremonial Law of Moses.

In Christ, ALL THINGS had become Lawful - gone were the dietary restriction - the feast and Sabbath Day rituals - the need to KEEP OURSELVES CEREMONIALLY CLEAN.

All those things we've RECENTLY STUDIED in Leviticus - We are free from those because Jesus HAS FULFILLED those Laws!

Now we had been placed under a HIGHER LAW - the Law of Christ - Now we are under the law of **Loving God and loving our neighbors!** - Life is no longer about following a KOSHER DIET - or keeping certain HOLY DAYS - Now life was about LOVING GOD with all my heart - and loving those around me AS I LOVE MYSELF.

Now this HIGHER LAW causes me to have A DIFFERENT SET of priorities - Now I have DIFFERENT CONSIDERATIONS when I am making CHOICES & DECISIONS - I have been saved from the choices of DRUG ADDICTION or ADULTERY or JEALOUSY or HATRED towards others! - Now I'm deciding between WHAT'S GOOD & WHAT'S BEST!

Now, Paul gives us 3 NEW QUESTIONS TO ASK when I am considering whether to do something: First I ask, **Is it helpful to me?** - This word HELPFUL could be translated, **PROFITABLE** - If I do what I am planning, WILL IT BE PROFITABLE to me and to those around me?

AS I MATURE in Christ, hopefully I MOVE PAST battling with RIGHT AND WRONG - Now I am concerned with choosing WHAT IS MOST PROFITABLE for my life and my situation - Good things are not always BEST or most profitable.

Name your favorite hobby - Mine is Golf - it is a GOOD THING - I get plenty of exercise and relaxation when I play - but is it always PROFITABLE? - Is it always the BEST USE of my time? - Sometimes the answer to that question is YES, and sometimes it is NO!

When I play on Fridays with the guys from church, the answer is usually YES! - I get to BUILD FRIENDSHIPS with my brothers in Christ - I get to MEET new brothers and HELP THEM get involved with other brothers - It is great fellowship!

BUT, sometimes when I play, I spend the whole time thinking I should be AT HOME SPENDING TIME with Donna or the grandkids - or preparing for a class I will be teaching - I realize it is NOT THE MOST PROFITABLE use of my time right now - I have not made the BEST CHOICE.

Playing Golf may never be a SINFUL CHOICE - just not the BEST CHOICE - And as a Christian, my goal is NO LONGER JUST GOOD - now my goal is BEST - my goal is to PLEASE GOD with every moment of my day - So, EACH NEW DAY, with each DAILY CHOICE of what I do and how I spend my time, I have to ask, **Is it helpful? Is it profitable? Is this my best choice?**

I was sharing with the Guys at Free Indeed a couple of weeks ago HOW THE LORD had spoken to be about an issue in my life - I had gotten in the habit of WATCHING REELS before I would go to bed each night - Not bad ones - usually they are Golf reels or some clean comedian.

But, I was laying there one night and God spoke to my heart saying, **Is this the best use of your time right before you go to sleep each night?** - I thought, No, probably not - Instead, I started READING THE PSALMS each night before I fall asleep - What a difference it has made for me.

It wasn't that I was doing SOMETHING SINFUL - though you have to be very careful with anything you watch ONLINE - but it was about MAKING THE BEST choice with my time.

What choices are you making THAT ARE OK, but they are NOT THE BEST CHOICE? - As you are growing in Christ, maybe it is time you start asking this question.

Second, Paul says, **All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any** - Can we ALL AGREE that there are some things that are not wrong, but they CAN STILL TRAP ME, AND STEAL MY TIME - in other words, they can BECOME ADDICTING!

For the Christian, this is certainly the CASE WITH ALCOHOL - I won't make the case the ALCOHOL IS FORBIDDEN for the follower of Christ, because it's not - but can we all agree that it is DANGEROUSLY ADDICTIVE.

It is the same with VIDEO GAMES - I can't tell a YOUNG MAN that he is WRONG TO SPEND his time playing the latest game - but I can WARN HIM to be careful of BEING SUCKED IN to a game taking over your life!

Any hobby can be a BLESSING TO MY LIFE - but a hobby can also BECOME A TRAP that sucks me into it's web - I can become FIXATED ON IT and suddenly I CAN'T PUT IT DOWN!

Over time, we can BEGIN TO CRAVE doing the things THAT AREN'T SINFUL - but they are EATING UP MY TIME - they become so important to me that I CAN'T PUT THEM DOWN! - they're STEALING my precious time!

Anything CONTROLLING MY LIFE other than the Holy Spirit is WRONG!
- be careful that you DON'T LOSE CONTROL of your life to even a good thing - there are many, many things that we TAKE OVER your life if you are NOT CAREFUL!

Hobbies - Physical fitness - Relaxation - Dieting - Games - TV - None of these are SINFUL - many of them are GOOD & IMPORTANT - but any are capable of STEALING YOUR TIME and controlling your life!

PAUL WARNS us - Don't become ENSLAVED to anything other than the Holy Spirit of God - He is the only MASTER we want to have in our lives!

Third, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:23 **All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.**

The third question we should ask about ANY CHOICE OR DECISION is **"Will this BUILD UP OR TEAR DOWN those around me?"**

This question brings up my CARE & CONCERN with others around me - Do I think about how my decisions and my actions and my choices will affect others?

I believe far too many of us only THINK ABOUT OURSELVES when it comes to the choices we make - We think: it is MY RIGHT - it is MY FREEDOM - it is MY DECISION - I'm free to do something, so by golly, I'm going to do it!

But, what if MY FREEDOM causes another brother or sister to STUMBLE?
- Don't I have a RESPONSIBILITY TO THEM? - Absolutely I do!

As a christian brother I am called to LOVE OTHERS - Therefore, in every decision I make, I need to think about THOSE AROUND ME! - How will MY CHOICE affect my brothers in Christ - How will THEY INTERPRET what I am doing? - Will it BUILD THEM UP spiritually - or will my EXAMPLE DAMAGE their faith?

There are plenty of things that I might VIEW AS FINE, but that others my struggle with - Just because a BEHAVIOR DOES'NT ENSLAVE ME, that doesn't mean it might NOT ENSLAVE my brother!

I mentioned ALCOHOL EARLIER - Alcohol has NO REAL ATTRACTION to me - IF I weren't a pastor, you could place a GLASS OF WINE in front of me - I could take A SIP OR TWO and move right along.

But, if you put that glass in front of me, I probably won't touch it - WHY? - because I have so many friends THAT HAVE HAD their lives ruined by alcohol - It is a SERPENT that has BITTEN & POISONED so many lives!

If you have that freedom today, I'm not trying to MAKE YOU FEEL GUILTY - that is between you and Jesus - But, I am trying to help you understand the DANGER YOUR FREEDOM might have on another brother or sister - So be careful - make any decision with the WELFARE OF OTHERS at the forefront of your thinking!

Never again DO ANYTHING without considering the affect your actions might have on THOSE AROUND YOU - Your friends - Your Children - your neighbors - your co-workers - they are ALL WATCHING and they WILL BE INFLUENCED in some way by what you do.

If that BURDEN BOTHERS YOU, I'm sorry - but when you DECLARED YOURSELF a Christian, you took on THAT BURDEN - You became part of a HIGHER CAUSE - the CAUSE OF CHRIST - and that comes with a HIGHER CALLING!

Christian liberty is always LIBERTY WITH LIMITS - What are those limits? - Paul gives us 3 QUESTIONS to ask: **Is this liberty going to PROFIT ME? - Is this liberty going to ENSLAVE ME? - Is this liberty going to BUILD UP or HARM those around me?**

These are the QUESTIONS that now become MY FOCUS - As a Christian, I have a HIGHER CALLING - My choices aren't about RIGHT & WRONG, GOOD OR BAD - now they are centered around what is BEST! - What is best for ME - but also what is BEST FOR THOSE AROUND ME!

It's time we ALL GROW UP and embrace the tougher choices - Don't shy away from asking yourself these hard questions!

There might even be a FEW WHO HAVE COME face to face with a tough reality this morning - You have been CLAIMING TO FOLLOW Jesus, but you have NEVER REPENTED of that sin you have been holding on to!

Not only have you never repented of it, you have BRAGGED ABOUT your freedom to live in that sin - BUT, today, maybe for the FIRST TIME you have been confronted with a HARSH REALITY - **“those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God!”**

If that is you, I'm going to be standing right down here during and after the LAST SONG - I want to invite you to COME FORWARD and make the statement that you are READY TO REPENT - You are ready to CHANGE!

Today is YOUR DAY - Today is the DAY OF SALVATION - today is the day you SAY GOODBYE to that sin you have been holding on to for so long.

Let's Pray.