

I Can, But Should I?

Dr. Stephen G. Tan | 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, 10:23-33

MESSAGE

Watch the sermon. As you watch, use the outline to follow along or take notes on anything that stands out to you.

NOTES

For many followers of Jesus, the freedom we have in Christ is synonymous with the ability to make our own decisions and choose our own path in life and to do whatever we want, whenever we want. But Scripture reminds us that “All things are permitted, but not all things are of benefit. All things are permitted, but not all things build people up.” (1 Corinthians 10:23, NASB). We know that in matters of biblical truth, there can be no compromise. But how do we navigate the gray areas? When dealing with matters not directly addressed in the Bible such as the type of music you listen to, the movies you watch, smoking, gaming, or drinking alcohol, how do we discern the answer to “I can, but should I?”

Four Principles to Help Us Wisely Discern What to Do in “I Can, But Should I?” Situations

1. The Principle of Liberty (v. 8:1-8)

- Unless specifically addressed in the Bible as something we can't do as Christ-followers, then we have the freedom in Christ to do it.
- *Ask the question: Is it prohibited in the Bible or do I have the freedom to do it?*

2. The Principle of Responsibility (v. 8:9-12)

- One of the strongest evidence of spiritual maturity is not how much we exercise our liberty and freedom, but how we restrain our Christian freedom for the sake of others and for the sake of our Christian testimony.

- *Ask the question: How does it affect my testimony to other Christians and to the world?*

3. The Principle of Love (v. 8:13; 10:23-30)

- You may have the right to your opinion and freedom to exercise your personal convictions and preferences, but because of the example of Jesus Christ, love for others must take priority over being right or exercising your rights.
- *Ask the question: Am I willing to give up my rights to help others in their spiritual journey?*

4. The Principle of Motivation (v. 10:31-33)

- Your life's purpose is to be more Christlike and draw people closer to God.
- Examine your (or other people's) motivations regarding decisions and preferred action with regards to gray areas. Are you/they trying to understand the Christian faith and genuinely trying to grow in your/their spiritual walk? How many are going to be affected by those decisions?
- *Ask the question: Does it glorify God, edify my life, and is Great Commission-focused?*

REFLECT and DISCUSS

1. Take a few minutes to talk about the message. What part of the teaching had the most impact on you?
2. In what gray areas are you struggling to make the right decision?
3. As you reflect on these given principles and guidelines to make a God-honoring decision, how would you strive to be discerning and wise in the decisions you make?
4. How could you develop an attitude of “whatever I do, it should be for the glory of God?”

PRAYER

Close your time together with prayer.