



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

July 16, 2023

"Just Because You Can..."

"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others."
[1 Corinthians 10:23-24]

The Believer's Freedom

In this passage, the Apostle Paul addresses a specific issue in the Corinthian church, where some believers were asserting their rights without considering the impact on others. While the context may differ from our modern circumstances, the underlying principle remains relevant: being mindful of how our pursuit of rights can inadvertently harm our relationship with God and others. And there are other concerns:

- The assertion of rights above all else can lead to a self-centered worldview
- We risk creating divisions and disregarding the call to love our neighbors as ourselves
- We can forget the importance of loving and serving others, despite our differences

When we ignore the effects of our actions on others around us and on the world, our "individual rights" can even become idolatry. Idolatry is anything that takes the place of God in our lives or that we value more than God. When we insist on doing what we want without regard for others, we are putting ourselves above God and His will. We are making our unfettered rights into an idol.

Your Bible and the Newspaper

It doesn't take long to find court cases in the news involving individual rights and freedoms. We are very used to hearing ... and even using ... words like "I can express my opinions openly because it's my right to freedom of speech" or "I can practice my religion freely because it's my right to religious freedom" or "I can protect myself because it's my right to self-defense." All those statements are true to a point. At what point do they become a legal issue?

Here's a Quick Test

Ask yourself these questions when you read an article about individual freedoms and rights in court cases. Is the plaintiff (or defendant)...

- using rights and freedoms to glorify God or to serve themselves?
- considering the impact of their actions on others?
- putting the needs of others before their own?

In today's society, we live in a culture that emphasizes individualism and personal autonomy. The pursuit of personal rights and freedoms is highly valued. However, when the exercise of these rights becomes an end in itself, it can overshadow the well-being of others and the greater good. And remember, "just because you can, doesn't mean you should." - *God's Peace, Vance*

Prayer box: let us pray for healing and comfort for Ed, Barb, Robin, Joyce, Lynn, and Bill; for those couples who are struggling in their relationships; for those suffering from extreme weather and unhealthy air, especially those affected by flooding in the Adirondacks; and let us give thanks for the volunteers and others who rushed to help recover from the Adirondack floods! Lord, hear our prayer!