Following Jesus in Ordinary Life

Week 8 | Romans 12:1–2; 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1 | November 1, 2026

Use this guide on your own or with a group. If you are on your own, write down what you notice. In a group, talk through the questions and leave room for quiet reflection.

Begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see where God's mercy meets everyday life and how following Jesus shapes the choices we make there.

Read and notice

Read Romans 11:33–12:2. Mark "mercies," "bodies," "worship," "conformed," "transformed," "renewing," and "discern." Then read 1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1. Watch how Paul responds to "All things are permitted" and how he handles different settings.

Begin with mercy

Romans 12 begins with "therefore." Read back into 11:33–36. What has God done before Paul asks anyone to respond? Why do you think Paul begins with God's mercy?

Offer your actual life

When Paul says to offer our "bodies" to God, what parts of everyday life come to mind? How is this bigger than offering God only our thoughts or beliefs? What does it tell us about worship?

Paul says, "Do not be conformed…but be transformed." What is the difference? How does renewal help us recognize what God wants?

Watch Paul work through a real situation

"All things are permitted" was probably something the Corinthians were saying. Paul does not simply say, "No." He asks deeper questions. What questions does he ask instead in verses 23–24? How do they change the way freedom is used?

In verses 25–27, Paul says believers may eat food from the market or at an unbeliever's home without investigating it. What reason does he give?

Then someone points out the food's connection to sacrifice. The food itself has not changed, but eating it now sends a different message. Paul says not to eat for the other person's sake, while verses 29–30 still affirm the believer's freedom. Why might a free Christian choose not to use that freedom?

See where the case leads

In 10:31–11:1, Paul moves from eating and drinking to "whatever you do." What does he want believers to seek? How does this one example guide other scenarios in life? How does the life of Jesus inform Paul's response?

Paul's example is ordinary on purpose. Eating and drinking are not usually what we call "spiritual," yet Paul brings them under God's glory and a neighbor's good. No part of life is outside God's mercy or the call to follow Jesus. Where do you see Romans 12's renewed discernment happening in this meal? How does mercy keep discernment from becoming anxious rule-keeping?

Try it together

Scenario 1. A group is planning a celebration where alcohol will be served. Most see nothing wrong with having a drink. Then someone explains that alcohol has become dangerous in their life and asks whether the group could celebrate without it this time. Some say, "We should not give up something permitted because one person struggles." Others say, "Then we should never serve alcohol."

Scenario 2. An extended family has always celebrated Christmas with a generous gift exchange. This year, one family member admits that money is tight and the tradition has become stressful and embarrassing. Some say, "No one is forcing anyone to spend more than they can afford." Others say, "Then we should stop exchanging gifts altogether."

Stay with the cases.

What questions need to be asked first? What is each response trying to protect? What might each side be missing? What changes once the group knows more about the weight or burden another person is carrying?

Keep your Bible open.

Look back at Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 10. What is permitted in each case? Is that the only question a disciple asks? What would be beneficial and build others up? How might those with the most freedom let concern for another person's good shape the way they use it?

Now think of a situation in your own life where "It is allowed" or "I did nothing wrong" has felt like the end of the conversation. Who else is affected? What could you do that would build them up and reflect the love of Christ? What is one faithful next step?

This week: Once each day, pause before an ordinary activity and pray, "By your mercy, this life is yours." Think about the people your choice may affect. Ask Jesus to show you how to use your freedom in love.

For further study, read Romans 6:12–19; 12:3–21; 14:1–15:7; 1 Corinthians 8:1–13; and 9:19–23.

Remember the Center

The Gospel

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ: through his life, death, resurrection, and reign, God saves us by grace through faith, gathers us as his people, and will make all things new. (See Gospel Catechism for a more comprehensive explanation).

Disciples

Disciples are: united with Jesus; being formed by the Spirit to be like Jesus; joining Jesus in his kingdom work.

Closing Prayer

Merciful God, you have given us life in Jesus Christ. Teach us to offer our everyday lives to you. Renew our minds so we can recognize what is faithful. Free us from fear and self-interest. Teach us to love you and our neighbors in the ordinary places where we live. Amen.