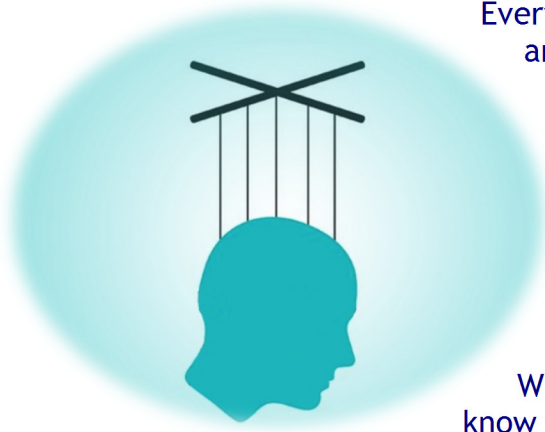


Do We Really Have Freedom of Choice?

John 8:31-32: (NASB) ³¹*So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed him, if you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*



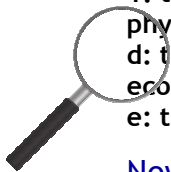
Everyone loves the idea of being free, and in America we especially are reminded of the privilege of liberty at this time of year. Unfortunately, many of us do not really understand what freedom and liberty are - and even more so what they are *not*. In reality, true liberty by very definition has limitations - several limitations. *Liberty* is NOT *license*. Because we live in a time where possibilities seem limitless, we do not like that kind of talk. "Who are you to tell me there is a limit on my freedom?" Well, it turns out the exact same struggle with defining liberty and license happened back in biblical times. What IS liberty? What IS license? Am I really supposed to not only know the difference but live the difference?

Let us start with "liberty" and specifically focus on definition "1d" for our conversation today:

Merriam Webster:

Liberty:

1: the quality or state of being free: a: the power to do as one pleases; b: freedom from physical restraint; c: freedom from arbitrary or despotic control; d: the positive enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges; e: the power of choice... (further definitions not quoted here).



Now "license." The first two definitions are what everyone thinks of when they use the word:

License:

1a: permission to act

1b: freedom of action

2a: a permission granted by competent authority to engage in a business or occupation or in an activity otherwise unlawful, *a hunting license*

2b: a document, plate, or tag evidencing a license granted



The third definition is the one we need to pay attention to:

3a: freedom that allows or is used with irresponsibility. *Freedom of the press should not be turned into license.*

3b: disregard for standards of personal conduct: licentiousness (fourth definition not quoted here).

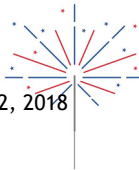
License, for the sake of our conversation, is using freedom or liberty irresponsibly.

The third definition refers to another word we rarely use:

Licentious:

1: lacking legal or moral restraints; especially disregarding sexual restraints - licentious behavior - licentious revelers;

2: marked by disregard for strict rules of correctness



Confusion, Adam Bellow on Liberty vs. License

- A lot people do confuse liberty and license. I would say, in general, (I don't want to over-simplify matters) but there does seem to be (a sense) that freedom is constituted by the maximization of personal liberty. That is, the freedom to do whatever you want, whatever feels good. As somebody who comes out of the 60's myself, I actually have a lot of sympathy with this, "Love the one you're with."*

Freedom to do whatever you want, whatever you think is right, sounds like society today. If you live in a society with laws, rules and guidelines, the thought that no one has the right to impose their thinking on "what I think is right for me," is *license*.

Why is this important? Because the Bible focuses on licentiousness as a major pitfall:

Jude 1:1-4: (NASB) ¹Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: ²May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. ³Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation (essentially our common liberty), I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. (Christ is the foundation to build upon.)

Jude was saying, "The gospel in its complete form was handed out to us at the beginning. We need to make sure we are striving for THAT gospel and not something else."

Licentiousness now comes into play:

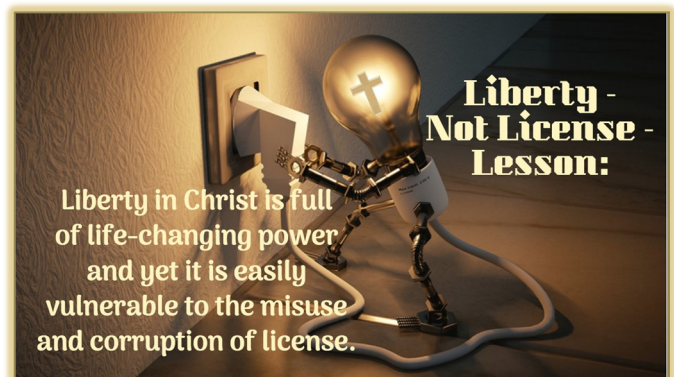
⁴For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation (prophesied), ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into **licentiousness <766>** and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

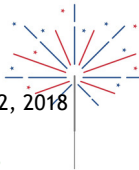
Jude saw something wrong. He noticed certain ungodly persons crept in to their fellowship unnoticed...ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into *licentiousness* - license, something more than liberty. It was now about "what I want to do," not just "what I have a right to do by the constraints in front of me." Jude explained: They took out *liberty* and turned it into *license*, and the result was *denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*.

Licentiousness: Strong's #766, apparently meaning continent

"Liberty" is in the context of self-restraint. "License" is incontinent - unable to restrain ourselves.

"Liberty" is "freedom to..." and "license" is "freedom from..."





How does the New Testament define Christian freedom and liberty? Are they the same or different?

Now that we have been given a sense of what the biblical view of "license" looks like, we can and should now focus on "liberty" in its purest form. Once we define liberty's shades of meaning, we can look at how it is used appropriately and so often how it is misrepresented and misused.

Freedom earned, Adam Bellow on Liberty vs. License

- *But I also think that there is another point of view that has to be taken into account, which is that we cannot be free unless we have mastered our own nature. In some sense we have to ...(political statement edited out) and this is a view that goes go back to the classical philosophers, the original thinkers about virtue and society. The idea was that freedom has to be defined as something that you're not born to but that you earn, that you obtain.*

True freedom or liberty needs to be earned and used appropriately.

Throughout our podcast we would like to take an "American Liberty Moment" and acknowledge the thankfulness we have for the freedom and liberty we have here in America to talk and speak freely about the gospel on radio and podcast for the last 20 years. We will quote some of the founding fathers of America and play portions of *A Fourth of July Prayer* by the Skit Guys.

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death! — Patrick Henry

Introduction, A Fourth of July Prayer, Skit Guys

- *God, on the day we celebrate our nation's birth, we place our faith in You. You are the one who gives us freedom. You have endowed us with inalienable rights. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and may we pursue You with the passion that You first pursued us.*



American Liberty Moment

New Testament words for *freedom*:

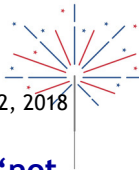
Strong's #1658 unrestrained (to go at pleasure), i.e. (as a citizen) not a slave

Strong's #1659 from #1658 to liberate, i.e. (figuratively) to exempt (from moral, ceremonial or mortal liability)

Strong's #1657 from #1658 freedom (legitimate or licentious, chiefly moral or ceremonial)

The first word carries a physical or civil sense of being free - not a slave, not being held under or restrained:

1 Corinthians 12:13: (KJV) *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or **free** <1658>; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*



The second word carries a very full sense of being made free - not just "not a slave," but being liberated:

Romans 8:2: (KJV) *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me **free** <1659> from the law of sin and death.*

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is liberty. We have been made free on a spiritual level as well, which is a blessing. Unfortunately, liberty can be corrupted by license.

The third word carries the personal application of being liberated - the ability to make personal decisions, think and act on your own within the context of your liberty:

Galatians 5:1: (KJV) *Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** <1657> wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

By implication, if we do not actively hold onto our liberty, we may lose it. Just as in America we have those who protect our freedom, we in Christ also need to protect the freedom given to us in Christ.

Jesus and the apostles were focused on words two and three in our list. They were not nearly as concerned with physical freedom and the equity of society. They understood servitude and slavery to be a temporary condition, contrasted with the deeper personal freedom to be gained in Christ spiritually. They left the civil challenges alone. Their primary concern was grasping *spiritual* "freedom with responsibility."

The faith which was once for all handed down to the saints is the liberty we want as our focus.



Our liberty here in America is based on the first word from our list. How should we as Christians approach that freedom? What should our attitude be?

Our attitude should be one of thankfulness that we have been blessed to live in America. When we look around the world, life can be daunting, even fearful. But we as Christians are ambassadors for Christ. Our true home is in heaven. Let's be respectful of the laws of the land, content with the Lord's providence in selecting our leaders for good or bad, so in God's kingdom we will have learned all of our lessons, personally and collectively, through the experience of sin, evil and death. Then we can be able and ready to help Jesus heal the nations.

License is the freedom with irresponsibility (the misuse of freedom) exposed by Jesus on the part of the Pharisees. Pharisees were bound by the Law, but they had liberty to *abide* by the Law.

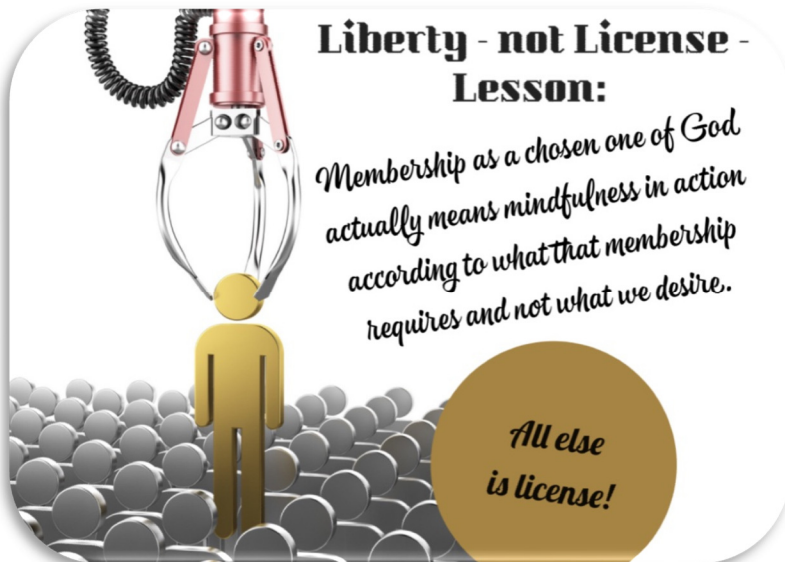
True Christian freedom can only come when we actually abide in the words of Jesus:

John 8:31-38: (NASB) ³¹*So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed him, if you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine;* ³²*and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.* ³³*They answered him, we are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that you say, you will become free?* ³⁴*Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.* ³⁵*The*



slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill me, because my word has no place in you. ³⁸I speak the things which I have seen with my Father; therefore, you also do the things which you heard from your father.

Jesus could read their hearts. Jesus exposed licentiousness in their thoughts and actions.



It does not matter what stage of God's plan you live under. If you lived in the days of Noah, there was a sense of right and wrong and Noah understood. Abraham was following the words of God. If you lived under the Law, it was written down for you and God's will was shown to you. Wherever you are, you need to abide by what God says to have liberty. We must have freedom in the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. We need to abide by the original gospel.

What are some of the major pitfalls for Christians as we personally try to live our Christian liberty?

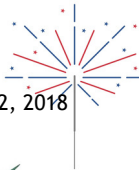
While there is always happiness and smiles enough to go around as we enjoy our Christian liberty, we always need to be aware as well. The fact is our Christian liberty needs anti-virus protection, as it can be easily and often subject to attacks on its integrity. Once liberty's integrity is compromised, license tends to take over.

Is license our flesh vs. liberty our spirit?

License is taking what has been given to us spiritually and applying it with fleshly desires and objectives. The example of The Prosperity Gospel is *license* because it is "all about me" rather than following the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus. "What is God going to give to me?" We are not to misuse our liberty so we can get stuff.



You will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve YOUR freedom. I hope you will make a good use of it. — Excerpt from a letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, April 26, 1777



You have a plan, A Fourth of July Prayer, Skit Guys

- As we celebrate our great nation, we remember the sacrifice and turmoil that this country was born out of and that continues to shape us today. We know that You are not done here. We know that we are far from perfect, and we know that You have a plan. We pause to remember that You are our God and we are the people of Your pasture.



American Liberty Moment

There is a wonderful sense of security in being the people of His pasture. This is a perfect picture of liberty. Sheep are given great love and care but have great freedom as they follow the shepherd.



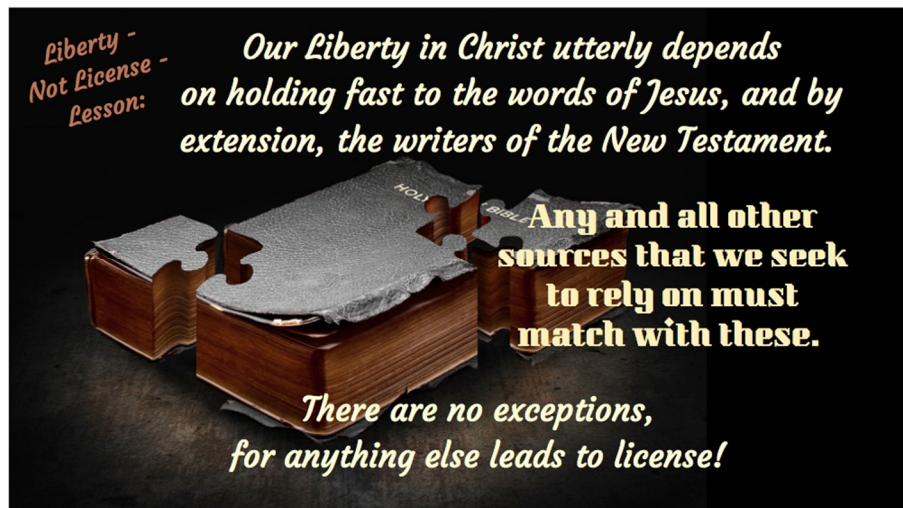
Christian Liberty Danger Zone: Any corrupted form of the Gospel.

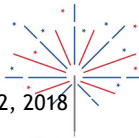
Galatians 1:6-9: (NASB) ⁶I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ⁹As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

In this Christian liberty there is a great sense of constraint. We must be sure we look for and apply our freedom based on the original gospel.

Strive for the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth! How do we do that? James gives us a four-step process:

James 1:21-25: (NASB) (1. Receive) ²¹Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. (2. Prove) ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word (do what you say you believe), and not merely hearers who delude themselves. (3. Act) ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. (4. Remind) ²⁵But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of **liberty <1657>**, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer (remind ourselves that we have this freedom in Christ), this man will be blessed in what he does.





What are some practical ways we can reveal corrupted Gospel teachings?



1. Study the context of the Scriptures. Who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? Who or what is being spoken about?
2. Study the Bible topically. For example, if we want to study the resurrection, we should go to our Bible concordance and look up all the Scriptures that use the word "resurrection" and compare them to learn the harmony of God's plan.
3. Ask if the verse is literal or symbolic. One way to know is if the verse does not seem reasonable if taken literally or if it contradicts other direct statements. An example would be Lazarus being in Abraham's bosom. **For more on this topic, please see June 25, 2018 CQ Episode 1027: "Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible? (Part III)"**
4. Lastly, if any teaching does not harmonize with "the ransom for all" doctrine which was the very purpose of our Lord's sacrifice, the devil has sown lies. A perfect man (Jesus) for a perfect man (Adam) was the price to purchase the human race. *Christ died once for all to be testified in due time. 1 Peter 3:18: (NASB) For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.*



Christian Liberty Danger Zone: The Old Testament Law. The legalistic and ritualistic ways God saw fit to use as He identified sin.

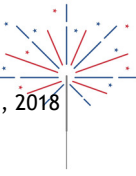
For us now this might be ritualizing the simplicity of the true Gospel:

Galatians 3:1-5: (NASB) *¹You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? ²This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?*

The Galatians received the Holy Spirit, not because they were following the Law, but *by hearing with faith* and then they mixed in *the works of the Law*. Paul called them foolish Galatians more than once because they had liberty functioning well and then they brought the Law back in. *The hearing of faith* was not as tangible as the rituals. If our rituals are not part of the gospel, we should not take part in them. We need to be careful not to add things to the gospel that do not belong. An example for this is tithing. *Tithing is not a Christian principle*; rather, it is a Jewish principle and the idea was brought into the church later. As Christians, we are never told to give a tenth of our earnings. The ritual of tithing helps people feel like they are fulfilling an obligation, but Christian giving is supposed to be from our heart.

Solution:

Galatians 5:1: (NASB) *It was for **freedom <1657>** that Christ set us **free <1659>**; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*



It is wrong for a Christian to be bound by rituals.

Does our liberty in Christ attack or defend the idea of each of us having freedom of opinion?

Because of the staggering number of Christian denominations, multiple Christian opinions therefore exist. Now, all of those opinions are obviously not all correct, so we really need to ask ourselves "Where does my opinion come from?" God certainly does allow opinions but *does not* necessarily bless all of them.

Christian liberty means we have the ability to think things through and draw conclusions. But that also gives us the ability to be wrong.



What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. — Thomas Paine

Help us turn to you, A Fourth of July Prayer, Skit Guys

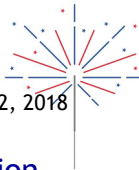
- *Help our country turn toward You. Bring revival to this nation. Give our leaders clear vision and sober minds. Bring peace and justice to our schools and unite us all as brothers and sisters.*



Christian Liberty Danger Zone: The opinions and influence of those who would subvert.

Apostle Paul shares some personal background of his journey in the gospel:

Galatians 2:1-5: (NASB) ¹Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. ²It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles... ³But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our **liberty <1657>** which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. ⁵But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.



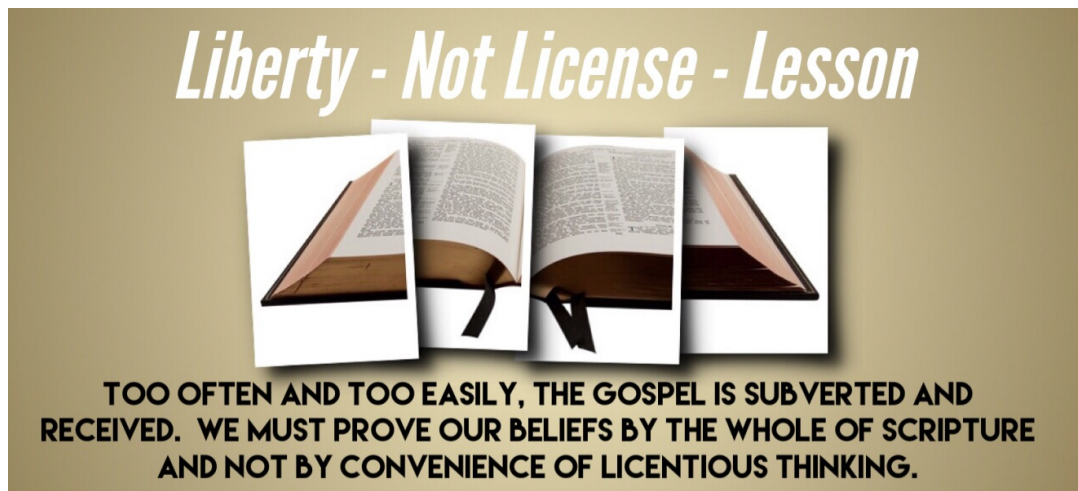
Christian *liberty* said they no longer needed to keep the ritual of circumcision, but *license* said, they had been under it so long it seemed appropriate to keep it. License was taking an earthly or physical view and trying to apply it in a spiritual way. License versus liberty!

Paul did not yield to pressure. *We did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.*

There are **MANY** warnings about such people. We need to especially beware of what we are taught:

2 Peter 2:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸*For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by **sensuality <766>** (licentiousness - lack of restraint), those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, ¹⁹promising them **freedom <1657>** while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.*

The things we struggle with are the things that *enslave* us. An example would be feelings of inadequacy to the point where we do not do things. The inadequacy *enslaves* us.



When we did our 2018 three-part series on hellfire, one of the things we tried very hard to do was to take the whole of the Scriptures (the Old Testament, the New Testament, the history) and put it all together to find what we believe was the true meaning. We do not just look at one verse and say, "That is what Jesus said." We need to look at the context. We must design our belief system in liberty by the whole of what the Scriptures teach.

What about my opinion?

Ephesians 4:15: (NASB) *but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ.*



How should we handle our opinions, especially when we disagree?

A good way to start is by asking yourself a question: "Could I be wrong?" This way we are always willing to see other perspectives without an improper attitude. The law of liberty shows us we are all different and unique and we reason differently than each other. There should never be bitter feelings



against those with different opinions, even if they malign us and hate us. We need to gain victory over every fiber of our being as Jesus taught.

Matthew 5:44: (KJV) *But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*

We must look at ourselves because Christian liberty is based in humility.

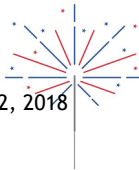


Christian Liberty Danger Zone: Our own habits and desires and their pervasive licentiousness - lack of restraint.

Galatians 5:13, 16-17, 19-23: (NASB) ¹³For you were called to **freedom <1657>**, brethren; only do not turn your **freedom <1657>** into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Stop thinking about yourself and serve others.) ¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Liberty and license are opposed. Spirit versus flesh.) ¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, **sensuality <766>**, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things (We all fall into some of these things, but we must not practice them.) will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

License is comfortable because it is fleshly and familiar. Liberty is not comfortable because it is spiritual, and we must strive for it.





Do we really have liberty in Christ? If God knows the end from the beginning, how are our decisions our own?

We DO have liberty in Christ. What we need to realize is that God's will gives us room to think and act on our own. Our thoughts and actions are not predetermined by God. Just as a good parent may know what their child will do and lets them do it so they can learn, so God as our Father allows our experiences to unfold for our learning as well.

If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or your arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that you were our countrymen. — Samuel Adams



American Liberty Moment

Your kingdom come, A Fourth of July Prayer, Skit Guys

- *God, we ask that Your kingdom would come and come quickly. May peace and prosperity come to Your children living in the land of the free and the home of the brave. Amen.*

God's kingdom IS the only answer. Jesus teaches us to pray, *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* If we leave the "in earth" out, we are missing a huge message about God's plan.

We need to focus on our responsibility as Christians.

We are all tried as a result of our faith. We can stand, or we can fall.

Christian liberty knows this:

1 Corinthians 10:12-14: (NASB) ¹²Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. ¹³No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. (Knowing whatever our circumstances, God is with us, which is very comforting.) ¹⁴Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. (Now, the result of this liberty is to flee from license.)

All idolatry is human license supplanting godly liberty. Idolatry is anything we place our worship in instead of God.

We DO have a choice! It comes down to acting based on liberty or license.

License is first in this text:

James 4:13-17: (NASB) ¹³Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. ¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

What are we supposed to do with our wonderful ideas?

License says, "I will do this my way and in my time." James tells us what to do instead:

¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. ¹⁶But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.



What is the difference between wanting to do it our way versus what James said in verses 15-17?

Liberty says all that I am, all that I do and all that I am blessed with is from God. While decision making may not be a bad thing, we need to wait on God's providence.



Twenty years ago, the idea for doing Christian Questions existed but did not go anywhere until a little door opened. We saw an opportunity and asked the manager at a radio station about the possibility of doing a Christian radio program and he answered, "Sure." It was not the answer we expected but it was an answer that gave us a very definite direction WE did not design. Each time we were blessed with expansion, it was never our idea. We relied on God's will. God closed some doors and opened others.

*Liberty -
Not License - Lesson:*

**Liberty is freedom to be in
His service -
freedom to be directed by
His will and freedom to
follow Jesus' path
of sacrifice.
Liberty is freedom
to choose beyond license.**



Jonathan & Rick

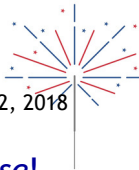
Finally, our ability to choose liberty in Christ pays great dividends which is spiritual growth and maturity:

Romans 8:18-23: (NASB) ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

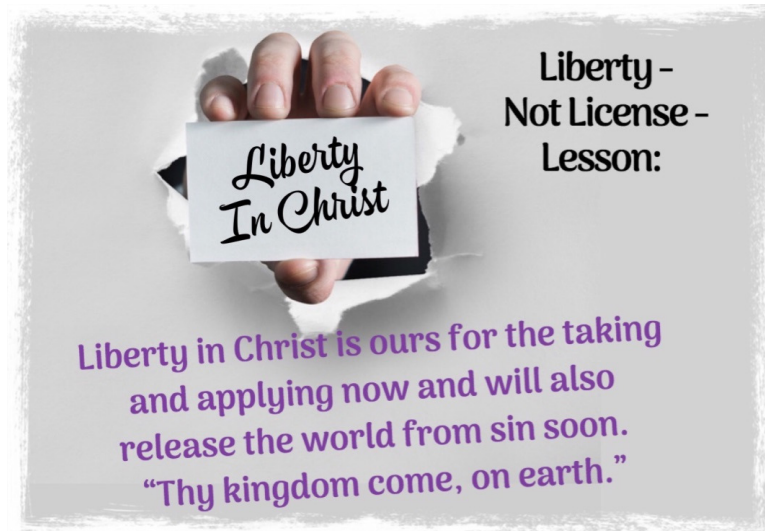
As Christians, we all have trials and difficulties. We should not be looking for the glory now. Now is about following in Jesus' sacrificial footsteps.

The Apostle now shows that the world is stuck in licentiousness:

²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility (pointlessness or uselessness), not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set **free** **<1659>** from its slavery to corruption into the **freedom** **<1657>** of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³And not only this, but also, we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.



*The creation was subjected to futility. What a great way to describe **license**! God allowed the creation to be **subjected to futility**, so hope could be created for something better; so the rest of the world would be set free to the same freedom that we (the children of God) have in Christ. The world is going to have an opportunity for **the freedom of the glory of the children of God**. If we abide in the **liberty** of Jesus and follow in his footsteps, then we can be a part of the liberation and freedom for the rest of the world from the **license** that messes them up.*

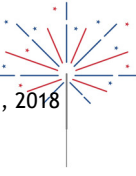


Liberty is ours for the taking. We get liberty in Christ. That means we get the opportunity to be humble, to serve and to do the will of God and follow in Jesus' footsteps in a life of sacrifice. Why? So we can be part of blessing the whole world of mankind for eternity as they go through a Day of Judgment and accountability to prove themselves and be given life as we have been given life.

*So, do we really have freedom of choice?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on July 9, 2018:
What Does it Mean to Glorify God?



God who gave us life, gave us liberty. — Thomas Jefferson

True freedom is entirely misunderstood. It can only be achieved by being subject to the highest righteousness:

Romans 6:20-23: (NASB) ²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. ²²But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

License:

Ephesians 4:17-24: (NASB) ¹⁷So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to **sensuality <766>** for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Liberty:

²⁰But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

The bottom line - it is our choice as to how we live.

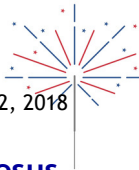
True Christian freedom can only come when we trust God as our ONLY source of goodness:

Psalms 146:5-7: (NASB) ⁵How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, ⁶who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; ⁷who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free.

Psalms 119:41-48: (NASB) ⁴¹May Your loving kindnesses also come to me, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your word; ⁴²so I will have an answer for him who reproaches me, for I trust in Your word. ⁴³And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I wait for Your ordinances. ⁴⁴So I will keep Your law continually, forever and ever. ⁴⁵And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts. ⁴⁶I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed. ⁴⁷I shall delight in Your commandments, which I love. ⁴⁸And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on Your statutes.

True Christian freedom only can come when we are willing to be guided by God's Spirit:

2 Corinthians 3:12-18: (NASB) ¹²Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, ¹³and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. ¹⁴But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. ¹⁵But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; ¹⁶but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.



True freedom for the world cannot be attained until those who follow Jesus have finished their work:

Revelation 1:4-6: (NASB) ⁴John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and released us from our sins by his blood— ⁶and he has made us to be a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

A few more texts that focus on warnings against license and those who promote it:

Romans 13:8-14: (NASB) ⁸Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. ⁹For this, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. ¹¹Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now, salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹²The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore, let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and **sensuality <766>**, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

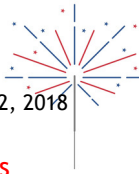
2 Peter 2:10-22: (NASB) ¹⁰and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, ¹¹whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. ¹²But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, ¹³suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, ¹⁴having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; ¹⁵forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. ¹⁸For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by **sensuality <766>**, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, ¹⁹promising them **freedom <1657>** while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. ²⁰For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. ²²It has happened to them according to the true proverb, A dog returns to its own vomit, and, A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.

(Source: On Liberty and License from catholicgraymatters.blogspot.com)

Ask most residents of any "free world" country the question of whether freedom is a good or bad thing, and they will think that you are crazy. The common response would be: "Of course, freedom is good! Are you out of your mind?"

In many cases, however, freedom - at least the kind of freedom most people consider to be freedom - is a very bad thing.

For not all freedom is created equal. There are two distinct types of freedom: liberty and license, and people often get confused between the two. There is a very important distinction to make between these two types of freedom.



Liberty can be defined as the ability to do what is good and proper. More simply, liberty is "freedom of," so to speak. It is the freedom to be virtuous, to do what is right without hindrance.

Liberty is true freedom. In the words of the famous saying, "Freedom is the right to do what one ought." And freedom is impossible to achieve if one is impaired from doing what is morally right.

The nation of America was founded on the premise of liberty. The First Amendment guarantees the right of Americans to speak freely, to assemble, to petition, to publish, and most importantly, to practice their religion in peace, without government interference.

True liberty does not grant a man the right to be a menace to society. It does not grant a person the right to falsely yell fire in a crowded theater, to found a destructive cult that opposes the social order, and to publish lies and slanders in the press (well, not obvious ones, at any rate). The First Amendment does not give someone the power to do whatever he or she wants - one still must operate within the bounds of a moral order, even under a society that promotes liberty.

License, by contrast, means the ability to do whatever one wants. More simply, license is "freedom from." It is the freedom from any restraint whatsoever.

License is false freedom. A total lack of restraint leads to anarchy and chaos, in any society. Imagine a city without traffic lights, stop signs, and policemen. Absolute chaos would ensue.

Now, of course, very few people would argue for complete license - because most people see that there have to be some rules in society. But moral license - the idea that one should be allowed to do and act as he or she pleases - is promoted in society by a host of virulent influences.

Because of these evil influences, modern society is based on the delusion that license is true freedom. Margaret Sanger's infamous slogan "No Gods! No Masters!" is a perfect expression of the license that pervades our culture. Society rejects God and scorns obedience to any moral or natural law.

The irony is, license essentially enslaves one to sin. A person who cannot refuse his own out of control desires is a slave, fundamentally unhappy and bound to a dark master.

Moral license leads to divorce, rampant STDs, illegitimate births, and many other societal ills. The fruits of moral license ultimately prove to be a drain on society and enslave their practitioners in a web of sin and sorrow.

But liberty - the true liberty that a Christian worldview provides - is fundamentally freeing. Kept within the boundaries of faith by Christ, the Christian is free to be truly happy as he or she explores the wonders of God's creation, within the moral bounds which Christ has set. The Christian who follows God's commands is free in a way which those who are slaves to their own desires can only dream of.