

Christians Drinking Beer: Freedom or Folly?

One time a friend who was visiting a church I use to attend in Florida went to a party on a boat. She was appalled that the people who went to church were drinking beer. She was a recovering alcoholic who struggled in this area and was so turned off that she didn't come back.

This article isn't about whether Christians should or should not drink beer. I spent hours trying to explain to my friend that Christians had different standards when it came to drinking alcohol. She didn't care. She had an excuse to not follow God.

Their freedom turned into their folly.

“But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble” (1 Cor. 8:9, NLT)

Their freedom to drink beer caused a woman who was exploring Christianity but struggled with alcohol addiction to leave. The folly of freedom is that a Christian's freedom to drink beer could make a recovering alcoholic stumble in their faith.

Freedom is an American virtue. We're proud that our ancestors traveled across the ocean to be free from religious oppression. They left friends, family, jobs and home for an unknown land.

Deep within every person is a cry for freedom. Yet the folly in freedom is that there's a cost. Freedom without a price is the great American myth.

The prophet Jeremiah was not popular with Israel because he brought a message declaring captivity by their enemies. The people wanted peace and freedom, yet they worshipped other

gods and broke covenant with God who made them a nation. They were deceived into thinking that there would be no consequences for their actions.

When God Sets You Free From Him

God set an edict that every seventh year they were to set their slaves free. Jeremiah 34 states that they set their slaves free to follow God's law, and then turned around and captured them again. Jeremiah prophesies that since they broke God's law in regards to setting their slaves free, that God was setting them free from Him.

"Therefore this is what the Lord says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim 'freedom' for you, declares the Lord—'freedom' to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth" (Jer. 34:17, NIV).

He sets them free to reap the consequences of disobeying Him. They now have freedom to "fall by the sword, plague and famine." Freedom always has a price, and the people paid dearly when the Babylonians laid siege on Jerusalem and captured them.

The Purpose of Freedom

I've seen way too many people who wanted to be free from their families, free from their marriages, free from their kids and free from their responsibilities. Their freedom usually leaves broken hearts behind them, shattered lives and dreams and a lot of hurt and pain. Their freedom becomes their folly.

My hope is to bring freedom to others to love God. I want my life to make it easier for someone to serve God, to see Him and love Him. Of course that costs me because I can't say everything that I want to say or respond to every fad or whim. I try to live my life based on eternity.

I'm not perfect by any means at this. Just ask the people who are closest to me. But I work hard at trying to help others find freedom in Him. I never want God to say to me, "I set you free from Me."

Instead, I want the freedom He has given me to build up people. I'm free to love Him. I'm free to serve Him. I'm free to be all that He has called me to be. And that's true freedom!

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