

Christian Liberty is True Freedom

We all like to be free to do what we want; and yet, the law of sin, which is our human weakness, hinders our freedom and has more control over us than our own willpower.¹ The freedom to do anything that we believe will make us happy or content ends in slavery to that thing instead of bringing us the contentment that we are seeking. Contentment does not come from satisfying our lusts because they cannot be satisfied. We will always want more of what we crave. Those who seek pleasure for their happiness, get addicted to their pleasure. People love the pleasure, but resent not being able to fully control it. Smokers try to quit, but many can't. This is true of all addictions.

Paul describes our weakness as doing the things that we don't want to do, and not doing the things that we should be doing. We are all born subject to this law of sin whether we believe that it exists or not because it has been passed down to us as a result of Adam and Eve's transgression. Ordinarily, it is accepted as a basic part of being human, but people usually resent the fact that their lives are not fully under their control. They generally blame the object towards which they are weak, but the object itself is not the problem. It is the lust for the object that subjugates and corrupts a person.² This lust manifests itself in many ways. It does not have to be something that is ingested such as alcohol because things like gambling or reading books can also be addictive. Gaining strength over the lust for the object is more effective than removing the object itself. There are objects that you cannot fully remove such as food when overeating is a weakness.

There is a yearning for emotional freedom in all of us. I don't know of any exceptions. People rationalize hanging on to

their weaknesses because they have not found a remedy: so they make excuses; but, God can strengthen us from them. Peace and strength from the Holy Spirit are the means for arriving at this strength.³ Liberty and strength happen through Christ when His Spirit is within us; but, this liberty should not be used as an excuse for pursuing lusts.⁴ Paul tells us to “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”⁵

Freedom to sin hinders our freedom to make objective choices and to be led by the Spirit. I don't know of anyone who doesn't resent being jerked around by their addiction to their pleasure and doing what they don't want to do, and not free to do the other things that they could be doing. We crave freedom from the addiction to a pleasure even though we crave it. How can we be free from this? Who will free us from our addictions or any other uncontrolled tendencies such as worry, anger, and unforgiveness? The choice is to go to God for peace and strength, or to remain alienated from God and enslaved because we lack God's peace and strength. We never lose our impulse to serve something; but, it is a choice between serving God which results in freedom and eternal life, and serving sin with its slavery and death.⁶ Either God becomes our master; or the things that enslave us will remain our master. God can lift us out of this dilemma only when we humble ourselves toward Him.⁷

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¹ Cf. Romans 7:14-8:2; Matthew 26:41; 2Peter 2:19

² Cf. 2Peter 1:4; Ephesians 4:22; Romans 8:21

³ Cf. Galatians 5:22-23

⁴ Cf. 2Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:13; 1Peter 2:16

⁵ Galatians 5:16

⁶ Cf. Romans 6:6-7, 11-23; Matthew 6:24; John 8:34-36

⁷ Cf. 1Peter 5:5-7; Philippians 4:6-7; James 4:5-10; Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:25-27; 11:28-30; Psalms 37:7; 55:22; Isaiah 26:3-4; 30:15; 55:6-9; Galatians 5:16-25; Romans 13:14; 6:13; 8:28; and John 6:63