

Flint Hills Bible Church
Biblical Soul Care Sunday School
Christian Liberty

I. Introduction

Rights and Liberty are core values in American society. Politics is so hotly contested in large part because our government is founded on the recognition and defense of individual rights and freedoms. So when we consider the concept of Christian liberty and our rights as believers, we often import these cultural ideas.

1. What are the dangers of mixing American rights and Christian rights?
2. How has the individual emphasis in our culture affected the American church?

Objectives:

Today we want to consider what Christian liberty is, and how it affects our decision making in our Christian lives.

II. What is Christian Liberty?

What are we free from?

John 8:31–36 (ESV) — 31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” **33** They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never 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 practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

3. What is Jesus setting His people free from?
4. How does He set us free?
5. What were some in the audience putting their confidence in?

Romans 6:6–14 (ESV) — **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For one who has died has been set free from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. **10** For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. **11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. **12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. **13** Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. **14** For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

6. Here Paul teaches us that we are free from sin, but he provides more detail. What about sin are we set free from?
7. How does this freedom become evident in Christian living?
8. What are we to do with our freedom in Christ according to this text?

Colossians 2:13–14 (ESV) — **13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Romans 6:23 (ESV) — **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

9. In these well known verses, Paul gives another facet about our freedom from sin. What is it?

Taken together, we see that Christ sets His people free from the power of sin, and the penalty for sin! There is one more aspect to our Christian freedom for us to consider:

Galatians 3:10–11 (ESV) — **10** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” **11** Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Galatians 5:1–4 (ESV) — **1** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. **2** Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no

advantage to you. **3** I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. **4** You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

Romans 7:4–6 (ESV) — 4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. **5** For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. **6** But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

10. What is Paul teaching us about freedom in these texts?

11. How were the Galatians being tempted to misuse the law?

12. How have Christians died to the law?

Thought question: So if we are free from the OT Law, what is it good for anymore? Why not forsake it and just read the new testament?

Romans 7:7, 12-14, Gal. 3:21-23

Summary: Scripture teaches that we are free from the power and the penalty of sin, as well as the keeping of the Mosaic law with all of its ordinances and laws. Christ has kept the law perfectly for us, and then died in our place to pay our penalty. Now we are free from sin! But what do we do with this freedom? Are we free to do whatever we want now? No! Let's survey key texts to understand what we are free to do.

What are we free to do?

Some will take the information above and wrongly claim that we are free to do whatever we want to do now because Jesus has set us free from all the judgments for sin and the requirements of moral purity. Let's examine what Scripture teaches us about the purpose of our freedom.

Galatians 5:13 (ESV) — 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Romans 6:15–18 (ESV) — 15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! **16** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to

righteousness? **17** But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, **18** and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

13. Since we are no longer slaves of sin, what are we?

14. Are there any other options for people? Can someone be a “carnal Christian” who does not serve and obey Christ?

Romans 8:5–8 (ESV) — **5** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. **6** For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. **7** For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. **8** Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

15. What are the implications of this truth for people who profess faith in Christ, but show no fruit of repentance from their sin and love for Christ?

So we are free to become slaves of Christ! We are slaves to whom we obey. Now that we have the components of Christian Freedom down, we can now consider the implications of this freedom in daily living. This is often where the conversation begins amongst Christians - How does my Christian liberty affect my daily decisions?

This is also where Christian liberty can have some overlap with the Conscience. Remember that Conscience is God’s gift designed to help us avoid sinful actions, thoughts, and attitudes. It also condemns us and drives us to repent when we fail.

As we have discussed in previous lessons, Scripture does not tell us exactly what choices to make regarding a host of decisions we make daily. So this is where Christian liberty comes into play. Let’s consider how we can make decisions for the glory of Christ!

Limits On Christian Liberty

1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV) — **12** “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.

16. What important consideration does Paul make when deciding if he will use his Christian liberty?

As we read through 1 Corinthians 9 and 10, make note of how Paul models the use of his rights in the following verses.

1 Cor. 9:4–7. What rights are described here?

1 Cor 9: 12-15:

1 Cor 9:19-22:

1 Cor 10:23-24:

1 Cor 10: 23-24, 31-33:

Example of Misuse of Freedom:

1 Cor. 10: 14-22

Summary: My use of Christian liberty is not to indulge my flesh or to love the things of this world. It is to aid me in pursuing Christlikeness, and to build others up!

In considering the use of our freedom in Christ, we can ask some helpful questions derived from the texts we have read:

- a. Does this activity promote spiritual growth?
- b. Will this cause me to be dominated by unhelpful habits or patterns of thinking?
- c. Does this activity help me please Christ?
- d. Does this activity help me encourage my brothers and sisters?
- e. Does this activity help me display and preach the gospel?