

Lessons in Liberty

Liberty and Morality

Liberty Is Not License

Text: 1 Peter 2:11-17

Introduction:

1. The Bible has much to say about the idea of liberty.
2. God created man to be free – to exercise his free will motivated by the love of God.
3. However, many seek to use their liberty to do anything and everything that they desire, without any consideration of ethics or morality.
4. Does liberty grant one the license to practice wickedness and commit sin?

I. Freedom and Example (1 Peter 2:11-12)

- A. In this passage of Scripture, Peter wrote about the godly life and how it is manifested in the world.
- B. Followers of God are “strangers and pilgrims” in this world.
 1. Christians are sojourners, without the right of citizenship.
 2. They are simply passing through a temporary dwelling.
- C. Because of this, the Christian must not become attached to or ensnared by the things of the world.
- D. Instead, the Christian must live differently than the citizens of the world and become an example of godliness.
- E. This is done by using one’s freedom to live a life of honesty.
 1. The word for ‘honest’ means, “Beautiful, excellent, admirable; good, or virtuous.”
 2. Thayer defines it as: “Excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well adapted to its ends; such as one ought to be; beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, and hence praiseworthy.”
- F. The world may make accusations against a Christian, but the example of his life proves them unfounded.
- G. Liberty enables the child of God to be an example to the world!

II. Freedom and Submission (1 Peter 2:13-15)

- A. The practical nature of a godly example is found in submission.
- B. The Christian must submit to the laws of the land as a good citizen.
- C. The motive for such submission is the authority of Jesus as King.
- D. By doing right, the Christian’s action will silence the accusation of his enemies.
- E. Liberty enables the child of God to serve the Lord and to overcome wicked accusations by a godly life.

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- III. Freedom and Morality (1 Peter 2:16-17)
- A. Though Christians are made free by the blood of Christ (John 8:32-36; Rom. 6:18, 22; Gal. 5:1, 13; Jam. 1:25; 2:12), they are free as the servants of God.
 - B. Freedom in Christ does not mean that man can do whatever he desires or chooses.
 - 1. He must still obey the laws of the land.
 - 2. Certainly, he must still obey the laws of God!
 - 3. True freedom is found only in submission and service to God.
 - C. One's freedom is never to be used as a veil for hiding sin.
 - D. Instead, liberty enables the child of God live an ethical and moral life that pleases God and honors man.

Conclusion:

- 1. John Adams stated: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. ...Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."
- 2. George Washington proclaimed: "Virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government."
- 3. James Madison wrote: "To suppose any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without virtue in the people is a chimerical idea."
- 4. These words echo the sentiments of God: true liberty is found only in morality.