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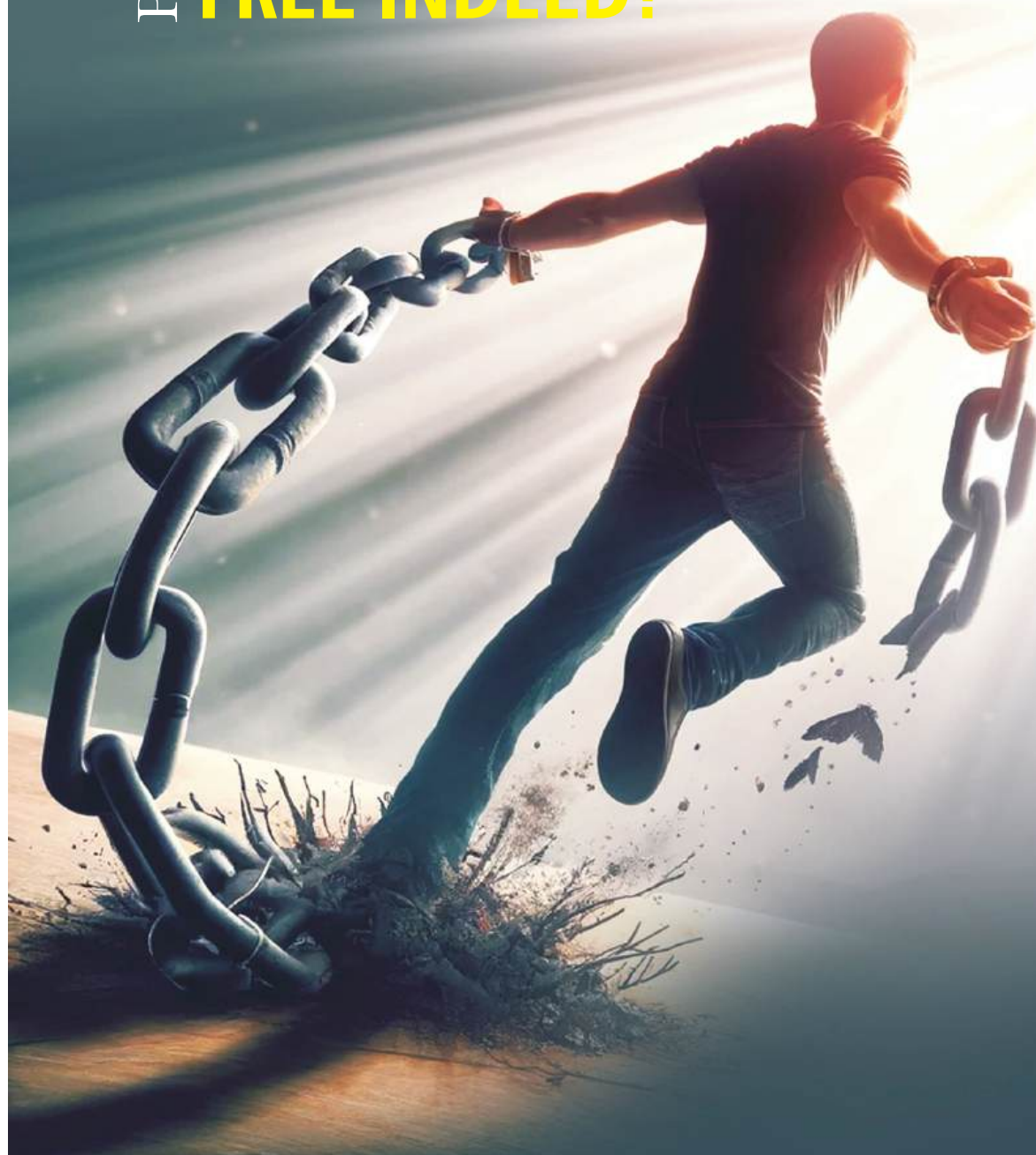
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GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical for spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement

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Freedom: Valued yet Abused?

Freedom is something that everyone values and upholds world over. But the paradox is, many who appreciate and advocate freedom, silently support those who curtail freedom elsewhere! In other words, there is a hypocritical double standard seen in many champions of liberty. So, despite statements and celebrations over independence, many suffer under various forms of oppression in several lands. That means not all in the free world are experiencing liberty.

The same thing is true about the spiritual freedom we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, which we rightly declare. We may sing and preach about liberty, but do we experience the same in our day-to-day lives?

In the latest issue of 'Grace & Peace' we are focussing on the various aspects of a believer's freedom in Christ. As usual, this writer gives an overview of the major truths involved, like false freedom, spiritual bondages, the possibility of enslavement again, sustained freedom, and finally the essential restrictions to avoid abuse of freedom.

Based on Paul's writings to Galatians, **Dr. Joel Albert** beautifully expounds two conditions in the life of a believer that can enslave him again. First, 'the slavery to sin: A lax attitude' and then 'the shackles of religion: A legalistic attitude'.

Bro. Paulson Joshua has dealt with 'Believer's Freedom in Christ' in an exhaustive yet concise manner under three headings – The meaning, the practical ways, and the examples.

Bro. David Manchala's study outline entitled 'Seven Blessings in Christian Liberty from the Book of Colossians' is a brief introduction to the book and a glimpse of the wonderful work of Christ in liberating us from various slaveries.

Finally, **Bro. Aby Kuruvilla** looks at the theme of freedom from the Gospel perspective. After briefly explaining how the Lord Jesus Christ could unshackle a believing sinner from the penalty and power of sin, he calls upon the reader to trust Christ and find true freedom. The writer does not forget to mention the truth that liberation from the presence of sin will take place only at the second coming of Christ.

As we go through this issue of Grace & Peacemay the Lord graciously help us to experience spiritual freedom in all its fullness.

Once again, we sincerely appreciate the encouragement given by the readers as well as all those who support from behind the scenes.

With earnest prayers and Christian love

Bro. Nelson Thomas

Are We Free Indeed?

John 8:36

It's true that everybody values freedom and celebrates it. Generally, we oppose any form of oppression vehemently. Yet the scripture reminds us that one could be under spiritual bondage and be unaware of it.

Christ's conversation with certain Jews who 'believed' in Him clearly reveals this fact, John 8:31–59. When He referred to the freedom they will experience as a result of knowing the truth, they objected to it.

They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have **never been in bondage** to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" (John 8: 33)

It was an utter lie to claim that Abraham's descendants have never been in bondage. They were under the bondage of many oppressors in the past, like Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc. Even during the days of Jesus Christ, they were ruled by Romans.

The Lord Jesus went on to explain and prove their slavery to sin and Satan: Jesus answered them "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (v. 34)

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be **free indeed.**" (v. 36)

"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you." (v. 37).



Their words and deeds amply testified that the wicked one dominated them. The word of God had no place in their lives. However, as the conversation progressed, they tried their best to claim their godly heritage, even a divine origin, v.41. Then the Lord Jesus revealed the most startling reality,

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” (v. 44)

This further infuriated them. They called Him a ‘Samaritan and demon-possessed’, and finally, they picked up stones to throw at Him, vs 48, 59. That additionally proved beyond doubt how fiercely they were controlled by the wicked one.

A CHALLENGING EXAMPLE

The above-mentioned episode unequivocally exhorts everyone who claims to be ‘believers’ and ‘followers’ of Christ to examine their true status in the eyes of Christ. Assuming to be free yet being under spiritual oppression is deception both for self and to others. Do our words and actions exhibit what we claim to be? Are we free indeed? It is not enough to have an intellectual knowledge and a vocal rendition of the spiritual freedom gospel offers. True experience and enjoyment of a believer’s liberty in the Lord Jesus must be visible in every aspect.

On the contrary, if one is habitually dominated by unscriptural, ungodly dispositions, he or she needs sincere introspection. A true born-again child of God can never continue to sin enjoying its passions and pleasure, 1 John 3:9. Because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, he or she will feel the pain of conviction, subsequently repent, and be restored to the Lord.

HYPOCRISY UNVEILED

Sad to notice that many who claim to be God’s own children, holy and separated fail miserably in their practical lives. On one hand, they make speeches as an angel from heaven, on the other hand, they practice shamelessly a worldly way of life. Is it not hypocrisy at the worst, which the Lord Jesus denounced often?

Even a casual reading of the scripture teaches that a believer’s words, deeds, and attitude must be worthy of the Lord, not according to the pattern of the world outside. When this commitment to a godly way of life is missing, it’s wise to pay attention to the scriptural admonitions, as in our passage of consideration.

Many other New Testament passages refer to the possibility of false faith and assurance. Many believed in Jesus Christ seeing His miracles, but the Lord did not trust them, John 2:23–25. Later, some of His ‘disciples’ deserted Christ, denouncing His teaching (John 6:66). Apostle John later wrote about such deserters, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us” (1John 2:19).

Notice the words of Christ, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt 7: 21 – 23).

EXAMINE NOW

Paul’s admonition also is worth mentioning: “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves,” (2 Cor. 13:5). Let us not be deceived; all those who willingly sin, are in bondage of sin. Whomever we obey, his slaves we are. A man is the slave of anything that has conquered him (John 8:34; Rom 6:16; 2Pet 2:19).

Seriously and sincerely let’s examine, ‘Am I free indeed?’ Consequently, before too late find true deliverance from the manifold bondages in which man could be trapped in.

G&P

FREE, YET IN BONDAGE!

Is it possible to be free yet in bondage at the same time? Can a believer who is free from the penalty of sin be a slave to it? Is a believer who is saved by grace be under the shackles of tradition?

All these questions can be answered by two beautiful passages from the scriptures. In Galatians chapter 5 and Colossians chapter 2, Apostle Paul mentions two broad areas wherein believers can find themselves in bondage though they are free and have liberty through grace. Let us consider an example that we are all familiar with.



‘TRYST WITH DESTINY’

On the eve of India’s independence, 77 years ago, the first prime minister of India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru started his speech by uttering the now famous words *“Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.”*

Fast forward to the present day, as citizens, not just in India but in any free country in the world, any ordinary citizen may agree with those very famous words uttered by the late prime minister but on a personal level, we can think of at least two types of individuals who would not be able to say that about themselves

Consider a man who has committed a heinous crime and is incarcerated in a prison for his crimes. Of course, he is in a free country but is in bondage because of his sins. Secondly, consider a free citizen who is in deep debt which he is not able to repay. And though he can roam around freely, he is bound by the debt in his life which he cannot pay back. Well, he could pay back his debt but the burden is too much to bear, causing him to suffer mentally and emotionally.

Apostle Paul shares two such conditions in the life of a believer, which is very much a concern in the present day and age. Both these conditions are two extremes but the source and the effects of both are very much similar. They are as follows -

- **The slavery to sin: A lax attitude**
- **The shackles of religion: A legalistic attitude**

1. SLAVERY TO SIN: A LAX ATTITUDE

This is one extreme when it comes to the spiritual life of a believer. Many of us think that if we are free from the penalty

of sin and since there is no condemnation on us, we can live as we want. Spiritual freedom or liberty is not like that!

Consider the example that we saw about being citizens of a free country. Yes, we are no longer under an evil master but we have a Lord whom we serve! Just like there are laws, rules and order in a free country, we need to know that we do not live as we please. That would be called anarchy, a condition where everyone does what they want without maintaining any decorum or regard for law and order.

BONDSERVANTS

I find it fascinating that many great men of God call themselves bondservants of Christ in the scriptures! They are not slaves but bondservants. Simply put, they are not oppressed into slavery by their master but they wholeheartedly decide to dedicate their lives to serve their good and loving master!

And just like the servant in the Jewish household would voluntarily let his ear be pierced to show his lifelong allegiance to his master, these men of God became bondservants of Christ, dedicating their lives to His service.

What they did not choose is to be slaves of sin. Now this is something that we need to know very clearly. A person who is a slave to sin does not realize that he is in slavery. They may feel that they are free to do what they please but before they realize it, they find their lives controlled by that sin and its effects. The later verses of Galatians 5 mention the clear contrast in being controlled by our flesh vs being led by the Spirit!

FLESH DICTATES

Sadly many Christians let their fleshly desires get the better of them. One of the most common issues in the life of a modern-day Christian is not realizing or accepting that we are letting our flesh dictate us.

Secret sins, immoral relationships, rebellion against authority, different standards in the assembly and different social circles, and the list goes on and on. Before mentioning the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit, Paul very specifically mentions to use our liberty to serve one another.

He stresses the importance of brotherly love because where there is flesh and sin, Christian love will never flourish. For a believer, the reins should always be in the Lord's hands. He leads us in the right way.

However, when we look into the initial verses of Gal 5, Paul mentions a yoke of bondage! He was speaking here about the Judaizers who claimed that, to be saved, adherence to Mosaic Law was also necessary. It is the other extreme which can be understood as follows -

2. THE SHACKLES OF RELIGION: A LEGALISTIC ATTITUDE

This may sound odd to a devout believer but careful consideration of the scriptures will make us understand that the Lord wants us to live our Christian lives based on truth instead of traditions, sound doctrine instead of dogmas set by men and to follow the will of God and not works of piety.

SCRIPTURE ALONE

Simply put, our lives are supposed to be led by the leading of the Lord through the scriptures that he has breathed his breath into (2 Tim 3:16-17). No other edict of men, an organization or a separate rulebook is supposed to be considered by a Christian as the will and word of God.

Additionally, many of us think that going regularly to meetings and tithing is all we need to do to be good Christians. We pay more attention to the physical aspects than the spiritual. What would be the use of going to every single meeting without applying the word mentioned in it? What would be the use of giving a small percentage of what we have for the sake of the Lord without giving ourselves and our time to the Lord first?

The issue that Paul deals with is somewhat very similar. People are so busy crossing their t's and dotting their i's, so to speak, that they forget the spiritual significance of everything that they do!

It is necessary to remember the 5 'solas' of evangelical Christianity:

- ▶ 'sola scriptura' (Scripture alone)
- ▶ 'solus Christus' (Christ alone)
- ▶ 'sola fide' (faith alone)
- ▶ 'sola gratia' (grace alone)
- ▶ 'soli Deo gloria' (glory to God alone).

Anything else would shackle us to legalism thereby making us lose the joy of Christian living.

TRUE SERVANTS OF CHRIST

The Christian life was never supposed to be a religion full of dogmas. It was and always will be the one true way of life based on the foundation of the word of God alone! We mustn't bind ourselves in the shackles of religion but instead, take the yoke of the Lord which is light!

We will not be bound to traditions but instead dedicated to the ministry of the Lord. He is a Master who not only provides for the needs of His servants but He bears and shares their burdens, and rewards them for the little that they do for Him!

May the Lord help us to stay away from the bondage of a lax or a legalistic attitude, to understand the true meaning of freedom and liberty in Christ to serve Him in His field and vineyard.

G&P

STUDY

Bro. Nelson Thomas

Spiritual Bondage

Scripture speaks of several spiritual bondages man could be entangled in. Let us consider briefly some of those oppressions so that we may value the freedom we have in the Lord Jesus as well as, be away from such snares.

1. BONDAGE OF SATAN, LUKE 13:16

Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, he has been controlled by Satan. Of course, Satan does it in various ways and forms. In Luke 13:10–16, we see the Lord heals a woman with a disabling spirit. He says that she was not just a patient, but “a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years”. (cf. Mark 5: 8, 9; 2Tim 2:16).

2. BONDAGE OF SIN, JOHN 8:34

Sin, as a tough master, controls man, and the wage paid by sin is death (Rom 6: 6, 17, 18, 20, and 23). Yes, sin always promises freedom and pleasure (2 Peter 2:19). Only at the convicting work of the Holy Spirit does one realize the ugliness and burden of sin (Rom 7:24).

3. BONDAGE OF LEGALISM, GAL 3:13; ROM 8:2

The God-given law was abused and adulterated. God's holy requirements were given as a mirror and a guardian (James 1:22–25; Gala 4:1–5). The intention was to bring conviction of their sins and challenge them to seek the Saviour.

But by misinterpretation and adding man-made traditions, the law became a yoke, to control fellow-beings like an animal (Mark 7:8, 9; Gal 5:1; Acts 15:10). Moreover, it's bondage to cling on to the shadow when the reality is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:1; Colo. 2:16, 17).

4. BONDAGE OF MAN, 1COR 7:23

Sinful man wants to dominate his fellow-being, (Mark 10:42; 3 John v.9). The weak among men tend to fear the strong. So, many try to please man more than God. They think it is easier to say 'no' to God than to man. Such fear of man is a snare that hinders one from being a true servant of Christ, Prov. 29:25; Gal. 1:10.

5. BONDAGE OF MATERIALISM, MATT. 6:25, 31

Several people are obsessed with themselves and their needs, like what to wear, eat, drink, etc. This addiction to things and devices leads to untold psychological oppressions, like anxiety, worry, jealousy, etc., 1 Tim 6:10.

6. BONDAGE OF THE PAST, PHIL 3:13

Too many are haunted by the past, like disappointments, wrong decisions, and other painful experiences. They are unable to forgive themselves or others. Remembering those hurting moments and the people who inflicted these upon them, their mind is filled with anger, grudge, and self-pity. It's also mental bondage, taking away the joy and peace of man.

7. BONDAGE OF FEAR OF DEATH, HEB. 2:15

Another burden that sinful man faces is the dread of dying, because he does not know what is beyond death. So, both the unfortunate past and the uncertain future keep man in bondage.

FREEDOM – MESSIAH'S MISSION

Praise be to God! As far as a born-again believer is concerned, he has freedom from all these satanic traps in the Lord Jesus Christ. The very purpose of Christ's incarnation was the liberation of man from his bondages (Luke 4:18, 19; cf. Isa. 61:1). He fulfilled the demands of the Law, and defeated the wicked one by His death on the cross. Now, no one needs to be under the bondage of the evil forces (cf. John 8:36; Rom. 6:6, 7, 18; Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 Peter 1:18 etc.).

G&P

ANECDOTE

LIBERTY UNDER CONTROL

Dr. Ironside tells the story of a Muslim convert from India, doing business in the US, who hesitated to eat pork during a Sunday school outing. It was a surprise to the believer who was serving the food. “Why Mr. Ali”, She asked, “you surprise me, are you still under the law that you cannot eat pork? Don’t you know that a Christian is at liberty to eat any kind of meat?” And Mr. Ali replied, “I am at liberty, my dear young lady, to eat it, but I am also at liberty to let it alone. You know I was brought up a strict Mohammedan. After every three years I go back to India to render an account of the business to my father. He is really the

head of the business, and to have a visit with the folks at home.

Always when I get home I know how I will be greeted. When I and the friends will all be sitting inside the house, and my father will come to the door, when the servant announces that I’m there, and he will say, ‘Mohammed, have those infidels taught you to eat the filthy pig meat yet?’ ‘No, Father,’ I will say, ‘pork has never passed my lips.’ Then I can go in and have the opportunity to preach Christ to them. If I took one of your sandwiches, I couldn’t preach Christ to my father the next time I go home”

Source: Unknown

PRACTICAL-2

Bro. Nelson Thomas

CAN A BELIEVER BE UNDER ANY BONDAGE AGAIN?

Apostle Paul’s warning to Galatians is noteworthy. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, **and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage**” (Gal 5:1).

“Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery” (Gal 2:4).

He makes it very clear that if believers are not careful, they will be entangled again in bondage. There is someone secretly looking for an opportunity to bring believers back into bondage. Is it contrary to the security of salvation the New Testament teaches? No, not at all.

Security of Salvation

The Lord Jesus repeatedly referred to the believer's eternal security (cf. John 5:24; 6:47; 10:28, 29 etc.). Anyone who repents and trusts the atoning work of Christ is forgiven and saved once and for all (Heb. 10:12, 14). Satan can never take away our salvation, nor can he possess a true born-again believer.

Not only Christ saves us by grace, He keeps us too by grace, Tit. 2:11–14; Jude v. 24. This is not based on our feelings but on the word of God. Ultimately, the security of salvation emanates from our position in Christ (Eph 5:30).



However, the enjoyment of our position in the Lord Jesus Christ depends upon our obedience and faithfulness. It is in this aspect that Paul warns the Galatians of the possibility of being entangled in bondage again.

There are plenty of New Testament passages that warn saints against such devices of the evil forces (2 Cor 2:11; 1 Cor 7:5; Eph 4: 27; 6: 11, 12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; etc.). If we allow it, our enemy can disturb the enjoyment of our spiritual freedom and make our life miserable.

HIS TRAPS

a. Bondage of sin, Rom 6:12, 14

“Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts... For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

If we permit, sin is more than happy to reign in our bodies. Because sin always longs to control

man (Gen 4:7). Anyone who willingly yields to sin proves his slavery to sin. Of course, a born-again child of God is conscious of the diabolic acts of the enemy, and he will never continue to serve sin (1 John 3:9).

But often, as someone suggested, “sin enters as a guest then becomes a friend; you get to know each other and like each other- then becomes a servant. It promises to serve you and to give pleasure. But servant becomes a master and that master becomes a tyrant and that dictator becomes a destroyer.”

Let us be aware of the subtlety of sin and be conscious of sins that easily entangle us (Heb. 12: 1). Never take sin casually, for it leads to bondage again. Often, we are vigilant about certain sins, but neglect sins like evil attitudes and disobedience. Both, sins of commission as well as sins of omission are serious flaws before the holy God.

b. Bondage of man, Gal 1:10

Fear of man always hinders a consistent Christian life (Pro. 29:25; John 5:44; 12: 42, 43). We may be tempted to please man more than God, especially when carnal men will try to dominate and control even godly people (Gala 2: 11, 12; 3John v.9). Apostle Peter puts it well, “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (1Peter 2:17).

c. Bondage of legalism, Gal 5:1; Acts 15:10, 28

Paul's warnings in the book of Galatians are in this context. Judaizers wanted the believers from gentile backgrounds to follow the Mosaic rituals apart from faith in Christ. Apostles and elders dealt with the issue immediately and declared it was a burden. Even today many think they are spiritual only when strictly following certain man-made traditions. Such observances of human preferences - even if with a good intention - thinking, that makes them holier than others is a yoke. We should not be enslaved again to human ideologies and assumptions (Colo 2:16–18, 21).

d. Bondage of self, Mat 6:25, 31

The most common and least bothered bondage of many today is an obsession with self. They are always focused on their comfort and fulfilment of desires and needs. They spend more time thinking and devising ways to impress others and achieve their goals. Such self-centered ones are plagued with a lot of emotional struggles and oppressions like:

- i. Worry, anxiety, tension, etc. (cf. Matt 6: 25, 27, 31, 32; Phil 4:6).
- ii. Regret over the past failures, disappointments, wrong steps, etc. (Phil 3:13).
- iii. Fear of present and future.
- iv. Inferiority complex and victim feeling.
- v. Superiority complex and pride

Self-centered ones easily hurt themselves and others. They argue and fight over simple things. It affects their social and interpersonal relationship. Yes, there are many more such slaveries with which the enemy may trap a believer. Only through constant study of God's word and internal transformation one can escape these practical enslavements. **G&P**

OUTLINE

Bro. David Manchala, Hyderabad

Seven Blessings in Christian Liberty from Colossians

The church at Colosse was likely established around 62 AD during Paul the Apostle's third missionary journey, when he spent three years in Ephesus. Paul himself didn't plant the church, but rather a Colossian named Epaphras who returned to Colossae after hearing Paul's message in Ephesus.

It can be studied in:

- Chapter 1- Complete Christian and His Lord
- Chapter 2 - Complete Christian and His Liberty
- Chapter 3 - Complete Christian and His Life
- Chapter 4 - Complete Christian and His Labours

The theme of the Colossian epistle is to focus on enjoying the blessings of Complete Christian Liberty. In the Colossian Assembly, four dangerous men have risen and confused believers. As a result of their teaching, these believers were not able to enjoy their complete Christian Liberty, one is confusing them by his words (2:4), the next one by his **wisdom (2:8)**, the third one by his **works (2:16)**, the fourth one by his **worship (2:18)**

“Christ plus something” it is not the Complete Liberty

“Christ minus Something” it is not the Complete Liberty

“Christ plus Zero” is True Complete Liberty

We were liberated because of our faith in Christ's death, burial and resurrection (Colossians 1:13-23)

Here I would like to outline the **Seven Blessings we believers enjoy in Christian Liberty**

1. Liberated from the Slavery of Dominion of the Darkness (Col. 1:13)
2. Liberated from the Sins and Self (Col. 2:11,12)
3. Liberated from the Sanctions of the Law (Col. 2:13,14)
4. Liberated from the Satanic powers (Col. 2:15)
5. Liberated from the Sabbath and Seasons (Col. 2:16)
6. Liberated from the Superstitions (Col. 2:21)
7. Liberated from the Symbols and Stars (Col. 2:23)

Thank God, once we were like dead Lazarus but by believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ we were quickened, got life, loosened for liberated life. May we enjoy Christian Liberty to its fullest extent. **G&P**

PRACTICAL-3

Bro. Nelson Thomas

How to escape enslavement again?

Our salvation is by God's grace through faith, but its practical enjoyment and fruitfulness depend upon our faithful obedience to the Lord. Let us consider very briefly 5 essentials, to keep on experiencing the freedom that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **Abide** in Christ, because it is He who delivers us, John 8:36; 15:4.
2. **Know** the truth, John 8:32. Ignorance keeps us in servitude, knowledge liberates us, (cf. John 17:17; 2Timo 2:25, 26; Isa 5:13; Hos 4:6). Know and experience our position and privileges in Christ. Abide in His word, John 8:31; Psa. 119: 44, 45.
3. **Obey** the truth, Rom 6:17, 18. Mere awareness is not enough, act on it. It is when we obey God's word we get further enlightenment, John 7:17.

4. **Yield** to the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor 3:17. The Spirit of God continues to reveal divine truths and empowers us to put it into practice, John 16:13; Gal 5:10.
5. **Present** ourselves to God, Rom 6:13, 20. True freedom is the freedom to live in God's perfect will. So, when we reckon ourselves to be bond-slaves of Christ, we experience freedom in its reality, 1Cor 7:22. Be under the yoke of Christ which is easy and His burden which is light, Matt 11:28.

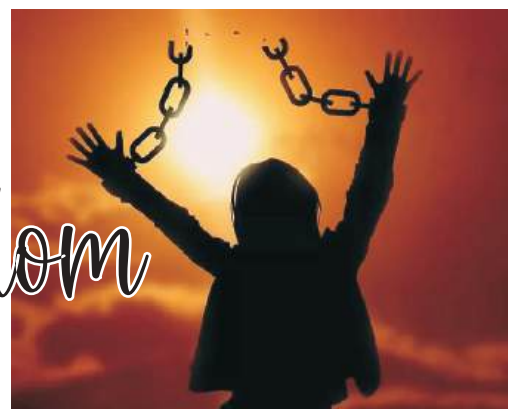
Any failure in these areas would lead to bondage under another yoke. Let's constantly examine our position regarding these five basic requirements and keep on enjoying our freedom in the Lord.

G&P

STUDY-2

Bro. Paulson Joshua, Kochi

Believers' Freedom in Christ



1) TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST ABOUT THE FREEDOM HE GIVES

Jesus Christ taught about the freedom He offers to those who follow Him, emphasizing liberation from sin, fear, and spiritual bondage. In John 8:31-32, He said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

This profound statement highlights that true freedom comes from knowing and living out His teachings. Jesus came to free us from the power of sin and the guilt it brings, offering forgiveness and a new beginning.

2) PRACTICAL WAYS A BELIEVER ENJOYS FREEDOM IN CHRIST

- i. Freedom to Worship (John 4:24). Enjoy praising Him by singing and Bible reading with prayer and personal worship without fear. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
- ii. Freedom to Serve Others (Galatians 5:13). Helping others in their needs with food and money and acts of kindness. "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."
- iii. Freedom to Share the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20). Telling others about Jesus and teaching them about faith. "Go and make disciples of all nations."

- iv. Freedom from Guilt and Shame (Romans 8:1) Living free from the burden of past mistakes, knowing God forgives. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
- v. Freedom to Live a Holy Life (1 Peter 1:15-16) Making good choices that reflect God's standards. "He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct."
- vi. Freedom in Prayer (Hebrews 4:16) Praying confidently, knowing God listens and answers. "Approach God's throne of grace with confidence."
- vii. Freedom to Experience Joy and Peace (Philippians 4:4, 7) Feeling peace and joy no matter what's happening around you. "The peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- viii. Freedom in Using Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). Using talents like teaching the word of God, evangelizing, and counselling to serve others for enlightenment to others. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all."
- ix. Freedom to Forgive Others (Colossians 3:13). Letting go of bitterness and forgiving those who hurt you. "Forgive as the Lord forgave you."
- x. Freedom to Make Godly Choices (Romans 12:2) Making decisions based on God's will, not just on what others say. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."
- xi. Freedom to Love Unconditionally (1 John 4:7-8). Showing love and kindness to everyone, no matter who they are. "Let us love one another, for love comes from God."
- xii. Freedom to Live Fearlessly (2 Timothy 1:7). Living without fear, knowing God is in control. "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

3) EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO ENJOYED FREEDOM

- i. **Moses** - Freedom to Lead and Serve. Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, serving God and his people with humility and dedication (Exodus 3:10). Despite his initial reluctance and feelings of inadequacy, Moses followed God's calling and led his people to freedom, showing the power of trusting and obeying God.
- ii. **Joseph** - Freedom from Bitterness. Despite being sold into slavery by his brothers and later imprisoned unjustly, Joseph chose to forgive and serve faithfully wherever he was (Genesis 50:20). Joseph rose to become second in command in Egypt and saved many from famine, demonstrating forgiveness and trust in God's plan.

- iii. **Daniel** - Freedom to Worship and Pray. Even under the threat of death, Daniel continued to pray to God openly and faithfully (Daniel 6:10). Daniel's steadfast faith led to miraculous protection in the lions' den, showing the power of worship and prayer even in dangerous circumstances.
- iv. **David** - Freedom from Guilt and Shame. After his sin with Bathsheba, David repented and experienced God's forgiveness, continuing to serve as king with a renewed heart (Psalm 51:1-2). David's heartfelt repentance and subsequent renewal illustrate the freedom from guilt and shame that comes with God's forgiveness.
- v. **Ruth** - Freedom to Make Godly Choices. Ruth chose to follow Naomi and the God of Israel, leaving her homeland and embracing a new faith and people (Ruth 1:16). Ruth's loyalty and faith led to her becoming the great-grandmother of King David, showing how godly choices can lead to blessings and fulfillment.
- vi. **Esther** - Freedom to Stand Courageously. Esther risked her life to save her people from destruction, demonstrating courage and faith in God's deliverance (Esther 4:16). Esther's bravery and strategic action led to the salvation of the Jewish people in Persia.
- vii. **Nehemiah** - Freedom to Rebuild and Restore. Nehemiah led the efforts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, trusting in God's provision and protection (Nehemiah 2:17). Nehemiah's leadership and faith in God enabled the successful rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, restoring the city's dignity and security.
- viii. **Hannah** - Freedom in Prayer. Hannah fervently prayed for a child and, upon receiving her son Samuel, dedicated him to God's service (1 Samuel 1:27-28). Hannah's heartfelt prayers and faith resulted in her being blessed with Samuel, who became a great prophet.



This freedom manifests the courage to worship openly, the grace to forgive others, and the strength to endure hardships with joy. It also empowers us to serve others selflessly, make godly choices, and live without fear or shame.

By embracing these freedoms, believers can navigate life's challenges with confidence, knowing they are supported by God's unwavering love and guidance. This means prioritizing prayer, worship, and Scripture study, trusting in God's plan, and making decisions that reflect His will.

G&P

Freedom and Restrictions

Gal 5:13; 1Peter 2:16

Have you considered the difference between a river and a swamp? The river is confined between banks, whereas the swamp is not. Because the river is restricted on both sides, water flows freely and forcefully, which makes it lively. Because swamp has no boundaries or restrictions; therefore, it's thin and stagnant. Today, in the name of freedom we want to break all restrictions. We forget that such a life could be stagnant and stinky.

Abuse of freedom is phenomenal worldwide. In the name of personal liberty, people do whatever they like to do, disregarding the moral and spiritual implications. The result is a new generation with confused values and moral standards.

Whether political or spiritual, any freedom is not actually to do anything, but to do the right and live under the rule. As far as a believer is concerned, he is a slave to God, Rom. 6:18, 22. When the Corinthian believers were copying this worldly way of life under the slogan, "all things are lawful for me", Paul presented to them six boundaries that could help them in their free life in Christ.

1. Be away from people whose life is a dishonor to Christ, 1Cor 5:11 cf. 2Thes 3:6; Tit 3:10; 2John vs. 9–11.
2. Be away from the lifestyle of natural as well as carnal men, 1 Cor 3:3. Living according to the passions of the flesh is forbidden for the saints, Eph 4:17–19; 1 Peter 1:14. 3. Be away from anything that will harm us – physically, mentally, and spiritually, 1 Cor. 6:18–20. 4. Be away from anything that will trouble a fellow believer, 1 Cor. 8:13, 16; 10:12. Remember, there are occasions when even what seems right and legitimate, are not good for a follower of Christ!
5. Be away from anything that will affect our trust in the Lord, 1 Cor 10:23. Wasting our time, energy, and resources for anything that is not edifying is forbidden for a believer (Heb 11:24–26).
6. Be away from anything that will hinder us in glorifying God, 1 Cor 10:31. Before any action, there is only one question we have to ask, 'Can I do it for God's glory?' Of course, there are much more similar instructions found in the word of God that set a limit on our lives. A child of God who constantly searches scriptures and endeavors to live under the boundaries set by God will be lively and fruitful.

G&P

Freedom from Bondage

A major focus in the ministry of Jesus was “to preach deliverance” and “to set at liberty” (Luke 4:18). The Bible tells us how he healed a woman who was sick for twelve years, and thus delivered her from her bondage of disease. He freed a demoniac who was kept bound in an isolated place, and thus delivered him from his bondage of demon possession. He restored the sight of a blind man, and thus delivered him from his bondage of disability.

Even today people experience different kinds of bondages. But there is one bondage that is greater than all these. That is the bondage of sin.

Lord Jesus said, “Whosoever commits sin is the slave of sin” (John 8:34). Whether minor or grave, intentional or unintentional, every sin that we do reveals our affinity to sin. However much a man shows himself as pious, yet the wickedness that breeds in his heart is not alien to him. We all need deliverance from this bondage of sin.

TWO FACETS

Freedom from sin can be sought after in two aspects. First from its power. Second from its presence. The latter is in a sense where sin has no influence on us. That is possible only with a change in this natural body and circumstances. Freedom from

the power of sin is when our sinful nature can no longer dictate us. This can be experienced only if there is born within us another nature that is greater than our natural man.



Christ Jesus came into this world to give mankind freedom from sin, Satan and death. He taught, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” He also taught, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” And further, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (Mark 2:17; John 8:32, 36). ‘The truth’ leads us to ‘the Son’ Jesus Christ, who is both qualified and able to free us.

Jesus Christ, being the Son of God, was supernaturally conceived and came in the likeness of man. Therefore, the sin-stricken nature did not exist in him. The scriptures describe him as one who knew no sin, did no sin and in him is no sin. He is separate from sinners, and therefore qualified to deliver us from sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5; Heb. 7:26).

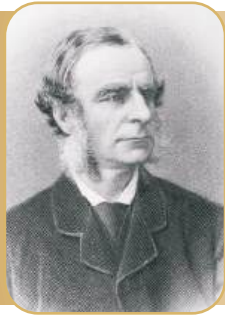
THE BASIS

The consequence of sin is death, as per the holy standards of God. This is our bitter cup to drink, for we all are sinners in the sight of God (Rom. 6:23, 3:23).

However, Jesus Christ died in our stead for our sins. In his death, He paid fully the ransom for our freedom. He was buried and rose again from the grave on the third day and is now in the presence of God. Having gained victory over death, He is able to deliver us who come to him for rescue (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

The moment we trust Christ Jesus for our salvation, we are given a new nature. Sin loses its power over us. Furthermore, every believer is assured of deliverance from the presence of sin when the Lord returns for his own.

Yes, the Lord will return to this world, soon and for judgment. Everyone who has rejected him will be condemned to eternal damnation. Let us take heed and come to him while it is called 'today', and experience true freedom from sin that comes only through Christ Jesus. **G&P**

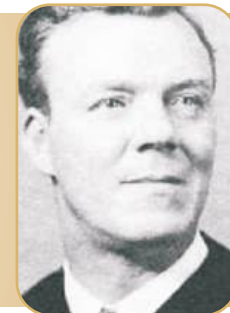


“There are two freedoms – the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.”

Charles Kingsley

“May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please but as the opportunity to do what is right.”

Peter Marchell



“Free will carried many a soul to hell, but never a soul to heaven.”

Charles Spurgeon

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