

# Bible Reading

Romans 6:1-2

Romans 6:15, 18

I John 2:3-6

I Peter 2:16

Titus 2:11-12

Galatians 5:13

I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23

Philippians 4:8

# Review Questions

Read Romans 6:1-2 and Romans 6:15. What is the Bible answer to those who would use their liberty as a license to sin?

According to I John 2:3-6, what is an evidence that someone has been born into the family of God?

In I Peter 2:16 we are taught to use our liberty in a right way. According to this verse, how should we use our liberty?

What are several principles given in I Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 that should guide our choices in life?

From Philippians 4:8, what are the scriptural filters that God gives to guide our attitudes and actions?

Lesson 7

# The Abuse of Liberty

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Romans 6:1

The doctrine of Christian liberty is both precious and perilous. It can be used rightly, yet it can also be abused. To abuse our Christian liberty is not a trifling matter; it is a serious theological danger. Romans 6:1 enables us to understand that grace is never a license to sin but rather liberty to serve Christ, not self.

The theological term for the misuse of Christian liberty is *antinomianism*, which means “against the law.” This teaching is a recurring perversion of Scripture and has unfortunately become commonplace in Christianity today. It says that, since we have been freed from the Law, we are no longer obligated to any requirements of the Law itself, even the Ten Commandments. This teaching brought about the normative interpretive position which states, “If it is not specifically forbidden in Scripture, it is permissible.” The normative principle reduces the expectations of a Christian to live a holy life that is different from an unbelieving world.

Notes

*When misapplied, liberty becomes a weapon with which to harm others.*

*Christian liberty exists not for self-expression, but rather for Christ-centered obedience.*

Notes

### The Purpose of Christian Liberty

In Romans 6:1, the question is asked, “*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*” The emphatic answer is given in verse two, “*God forbid.*” This expresses the moral impossibility of using grace as a cloak for our own sinful behavior. The believer has been united with Christ in His death and resurrection, he has undergone a genuine change in his relationship to sin itself. Sin no more has power to force him to behave in a way that is disobedient to Christ.

*Christian liberty is not autonomy; it is a change of allegiance.*

Romans 6:15 asks, “*Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?*”

Paul again entirely rejects this idea, exclaiming, “*God forbid.*” To be “*not under the law*” means freedom from the old curse and old covenant—not freedom from obedience to Christ. The grace of God does not do away with righteousness; rather, it establishes it.

### The Perversion of Christian Liberty

In our day, there is a distortion of grace that leads to unbiblical behavior. Antinomianism teaches that believers are not obligated to obey the moral law of God because they are now under grace. However, I John 2:3-6 teaches that obedience is the evidence of knowing Christ. We are justified by faith; yet, as true believers, we also should desire to keep God’s commands.

The Bible stands against those who would use their liberty as an excuse for hurting others. I Peter 2:16 says, “*As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*” Christian liberty is not only the

avoidance of sin but also the calling of the believer to pursue what is excellent, pure, praiseworthy, and pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of searching for permissibility, true grace brings an inner desire to please the Saviour.

### The Principles of Christian Liberty

The Word of God is filled with clear principles to guide us, rather than an exhaustive listing of “do’s” and “don’ts.” Bible principles enable us to measure our behavior by eternal measurements that are not dated. Notice the following questions or tests that help us follow scriptural principles:

*The timeless Word of God directs us through principles.*

#### Test #1 – Is it Expedient?

I Corinthians 6:12 states, “*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient....*” To be “*expedient*” means to be practical or helpful. Will this choice result in helping or hindering my walk with Christ?

#### Test #2 – Is it Edifying?

I Corinthians 10:23 says, “*...All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*” The word *edify* means “to build up.” Does this strengthen my Christian walk? Does it build up other believers?

#### Test #3 – Is it Exemplary?

Philippians 4:8 gives a filter by which we can measure our words, attitudes, actions, and choices. We should honor Christ and be examples whom others may follow.

*Do not use your liberty as an excuse to do as you please.*

Notes