

*In search of...*



# Truth & Right

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## Liberty

The apostle Peter writes that Christians are to behave in this world "as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God" (1 Pet. 2:16). While the New Testament employs several different Greek terms which are translated as "liberty" in English versions of the Bible, "liberty" may generally be defined as, "The condition of being free from restriction or control" (American Heritage Dictionary).

Each July 4 is set aside in these United States as a

celebration of liberty. "Independence Day," as the fourth of July has come to be called, marks the commemoration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, which formalized the intent of the American colonists to secede from England.

While the church is not authorized by Christ to celebrate "Independence Day," or any other civic holiday for that matter, the New Testament does frequently make reference to the concepts of

liberty and freedom (cf. Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 2:4; James 2:12). In fact, the liberty in Christ of which the Bible speaks is infinitely more profound and definitely more important than the form of liberty which is annually celebrated on the fourth of July.

At the outset of Jesus' earthly ministry, Luke records the following incident which took place in the synagogue in Nazareth:

"And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'" (Luke 4:17-21). Nothing could be more apparent than that Jesus Christ came into the world in order to bring spiritual liberty to mankind. Consider the following concerning true liberty:

### **1. Liberty from sin is**

**found in Christ.** To the saints in Rome, the apostle Paul writes, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts" (Rom. 6:12). Sin is personified in Scripture as a tyrannical master holding mankind under its grip of power. But the tyranny of sin is cast off in a relationship with Jesus Christ, as Paul goes on to state, saying, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). One is granted liberty from the spiritual death, condemnation, and guilt of sin through Jesus Christ (8:1). While freedom from an oppressive government may increase one's earthly joy in the short term, freedom from sin provides eternal joy (6:23).

**2. Liberty from sin is received when one obeys the gospel of Christ.** Concerning freedom from sin, Paul writes, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16-18). When one is "united

together in the likeness" of the death of Christ in baptism (6:5), he is then set free from the oppressive guilt of sin (6:3-6). Concerning those who have been baptized into Christ, Paul further writes, "For he who has died has been freed from sin" (6:7).

**3. Liberty in Christ must be maintained.** Paul warned the Galatian Christians against returning to the tyranny of sin by seeking to enforce the Law of Moses rather than the Law of Christ, saying, "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). The liberty which is possessed by those in Christ is not license to live however one may please, but instead grants one the privilege of living in such a way so as to please the Lord. In other words, freedom in the Lord is not to be confused with freedom from the Lord. Liberty in Christ is maintained by following after the "perfect law of liberty," which is the gospel of Jesus Christ (James 1:25). As Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:21-32).

**Conclusion.** The liberty that is available to all men in Christ is a wonderful blessing that should continually be

celebrated by His people. At the same time, we must strive to use our spiritual liberty in a manner which pleases Him. "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" (Gal. 5:13). Are you free in Christ?

David Dann

Brother Nathan Marshall recently put together this image to inspire people to think about God and how they treat Him in their lives. What does it make you think about?

IS THIS THE WAY YOU VIEW GOD?



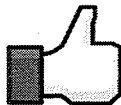
**HAVE HIM YOUR WAY®**

GOD ISN'T FAST FOOD. SO, WHY TREAT  
HIM THAT WAY?

GALATIANS 1:10 "FOR AM I NOW SEEKING THE APPROVAL OF MAN, OR OF GOD? OR AM I TRYING TO PLEASE MAN? IF I WERE STILL TRYING TO PLEASE MAN, I WOULD NOT BE A SERVANT OF CHRIST."

HIS WORD. HIS WAY. HIS TRUTH. HIS SON.

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# Bible Twelves

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- Joshua set up twelve Stones at Gilgal after crossing the Jordan
- When Jesus was twelve years old He was in the Temple
- Jesus called the twelve Apostles to follow Him
- More than twelve Legions of angels could have been sent
- Manasseh was twelve when he became king of Judah
- Jairus' twelve year old daughter was raised from the dead
- In Revelation, the New Jerusalem had twelve Foundations
- The land Inheritance was divided among the tribes of Israel
- Jacob had twelve Sons and one daughter
- Twelve spies were sent into the land of Canaan
- A woman with a Blood disease for twelve years was healed