

## Real, Biblical Freedom

As Americans, we know a great deal about freedom. We love and cherish freedom. After all, we live in “the land of the free!” Freedom grants certain rights and demands certain obligations. Our rights or privileges are based **not** upon our own desires, but upon the **limits** placed on society and the resulting **order**. Just so, we live in peace because of “law and order.” Law is that legislation formulated and handed to the people. Order is that law enforced. The result is peace in a civilized society. The opposite is chaos, anarchy, rebellion and turmoil. Every straight-thinking person wants the former, not the latter.

As Christians we can enjoy the best freedom. This is the freedom which is rich beyond compare and endures forever. This is the freedom from sin, the freedom as found only in Christ! Sadly, American Christians understand more about national freedom than they do spiritual freedom. This is fairly easy to prove. In fact, you can prove this to yourself even now as you read. Do you agree with the basis of freedom in our country as described in the first paragraph? If so, you are capable of understanding spiritual freedom. But, are you willing to apply these same two principles of law and order? Are you willing to recognize that spiritual freedom is based upon law, the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21) and upon order or enforcement of that law, effected through obedience (Hebrews 5:9; John 8:36)?

Too many believe in a different form of freedom. Many who claim to be Christians preach and teach a freedom that is based on what they call a freedom **from** law, a freedom built upon a perverted view of God’s love and grace, a “law of no law.” They say, “We have the right to believe and practice as **we** choose.”

This rebellion against God’s law is also a form of freedom. It is the freedom Paul speaks of in Romans six, “*For when ye were servants of sin, ye were FREE IN REGARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS*” (Romans 6:20). When anyone, Christian or not, presents themselves to sin as obedient servants, they are free regarding righteousness. Of course, we understand that Paul is teaching that **this** kind of freedom is actually bondage to sin!

Do not be fooled into believing in this sort of “freedom” as though you may live as you please, while naming the name of Christ. “*For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only {use} not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to*

*another*” (Galatians 5:13). Please understand that when one becomes a Christian, he is called to freedom, but not to freedom **from** law, nor to do as **he** pleases! Remember the words of Galatians 5:16,17: “*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that YE MAY NOT DO THE THINGS THAT YE WOULD {i.e., the things that you please}.*”

## PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

“*Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life*” (Proverbs 4:23). This short passage tells us that we are responsible for what happens to and within our hearts, and thus we are responsible for our faith. We are free before God, but we must act responsibly. Perhaps the greatest text dealing with freedom from sin is John 8:32 wherein Jesus said, “*and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” This freedom came when we became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). Especially do we find the connection between obedience and freedom in these lines by Paul’s pen: “*Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness*” (Romans 6:16-18). The point here is that freedom leads us to duty. Take notice of the duty-call in freedom: “*For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another*” (Galatians 5:13).

We are obliged to answer to God, obviously, but also to answer to **ourselves!** Since we must be true to ourselves, we must...**stay saved.** Here is how. We must **stay in the light.** Paul said we have been “*delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love*” (Colossians 1:13). Thus, as John said, “*And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and **walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we***

have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7).

We must **stay clean**. Since the time of baptism, when God said your "heart was sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having my body washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22), we must therefore "cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1), and then continue to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

We must **stay within the Truth**. Jesus said, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32). After all, "truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:21). Let us never be guilty of "receiving the grace of God in vain" (2 Corinthians 6:1).

We must **stay in the love of God**. The Lord's brother said it very simply: "keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). Jesus Himself said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (John 14:21).

We must **stay busy**. This is the thrust of Paul words to the Roman brethren, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may **prove** what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1,2). We must be good stewards of what God has given us (1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10).

We must therefore **stay wise**. The words "be not deceived" appear five times in the Bible, once in the Old Testament, and four times in the New. One of the New Testament occurrences deals with being deceived by others; the other three deal with self-deception. There are 15 other distinct warnings about others who will try to deceive us. Thus, we must be on guard. We are free...but not to serve ourselves. We are free to serve God and our brethren. Let us be sure to maintain our personal accountability before God and our own conscience.

# RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

SUNDAY MORNING	BIBLE STUDY	9:30 A.M.
	WORSHIP	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY EVENING	WORSHIP	6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.
Preachers:	Robin W. Haley James Grayson	614-751-1082 614-409-0941

December 13, 2009

Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

### Wednesday's Wisdom:

*"Memory is a blessing. Good memories give opportunity to thank God. Bad memories give opportunity to repent, and to guard against old sins."* Richard Bates

**Fellowship meal today** followed by the men's business meeting.

**Cookie Exchange:** Tuesday, 12/15 at Melanie Haley's home, 6:30pm

**Ladies' Night:** Thursday, 12/17 at Lee Hall's home, 7pm

**Open House:** Sunday, 12/20 at Robin & Cheryl's home, 2pm