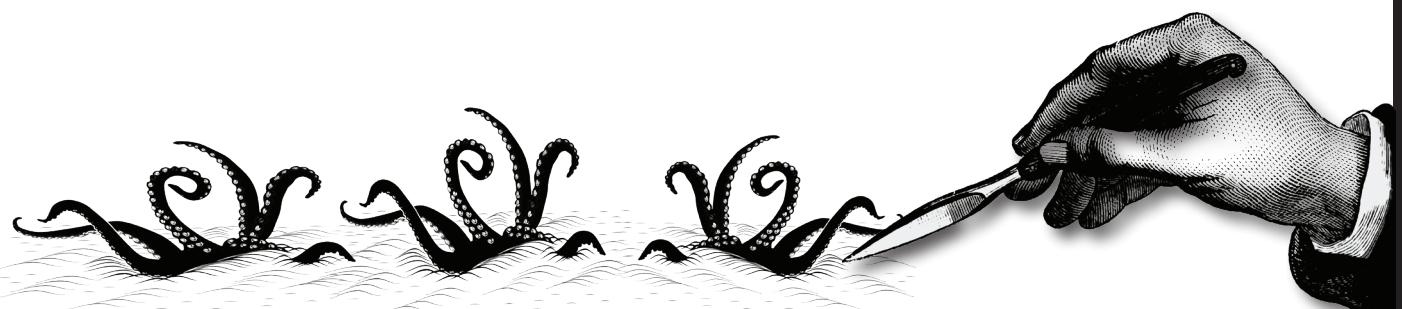


THE BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO FREEDOM IN CHRIST



- Biblical instructions for living in our freedom in Christ.
- A surgical, tactical guide for the successful removal of the tentacles of an “under law” mindset.



□ Bible Fact Sheet: Instructions for the surgical removal of the enslaving tentacles of an “under law” attitude from our minds and hearts so that we may live in freedom and “under grace.”

* Preparing the ground for a proper biblical foundation for freedom living.

As Christians we now have access to the mind of God through his grace, and only now we are able to receive the things of God. We must never assume that we know these things merely because we are Christians.

Before Christ this was impossible. Not merely difficult or hard but impossible. We were imprisoned by our sin, without hope and under the condemnation of our magnified sin through the law. Christ freed us from our sin so we could follow God. Christian liberty has never been about personal liberty but always about our victory in Christ over sin, death and the devil and finding our rightful place as servants of righteousness before a holy God.

We need an attitude of humility that allows God to teach us the biblical concept of freedom and allows him to establish the biblical concept of freedom above the many ideas of freedom that we have been taught since birth.

Philip Ryken gives us this insight: **Americans prize nothing more highly than freedom. The trouble is that they generally want the wrong kind of freedom.** Some speak of freedom in political terms: freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to vote. Others work for freedom from oppressive social structures. **However, what most Americans mainly want is personal freedom.** Sociologist Robert Bellah has concluded that “freedom is perhaps the most resonant, deeply held American value.... Yet freedom turns out to mean being left alone by others, not having other people’s values, ideas, or styles of life forced upon one, being free of arbitrary authority in work, family, and political life.” **In other words, what Americans really want is the freedom to be left alone.** [Ryken, P. G. (2005). *Galatians*. (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (p. 193). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.]

But biblically speaking that freedom does not exist.

In his article—What Does It Mean to Be Free?—Jacob G. Hornberger quotes Johann von Goethe [who] once wrote, **“None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.”** [Hornberger goes on to say that] “Goethe’s statement perfectly captures the plight of the American people in our time.” [And then he asks and answers this question:] **How do Americans acquire such a mindset? The primary vehicle is public (i.e., government) schooling, a system where most children are educated by the state from the time they are 6 years old through graduation at 18.** [<https://www.fff.org/explore-freedom/article/what-does-it-mean-to-be-free>]

We need to “think different.”

In 1997 Apple began their “think different” ad campaign. Yes, some thought the grammar was incorrect, as in it should have been “think differently” but they missed the point. Not just think differently, as in some degree of modification, but to completely change their approach—think different. And I’ve tried to stay away from the well-worn “outside the box” but find nothing that states it better.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we must “think different” and, yes, we must think differently ... different world—heaven rather than earth, different boundaries—infinite rather than finite, different “time zone”—eternal rather than temporal than what first comes to our minds when we think of freedom. We need renewed minds to understand the freedom

for which Christ set us free.

Absolutely critical to our ability to live in our freedom in Christ is a renewed mind. We must (at least to some degree) begin to understand the infinite gap that lies between the thinking of fallen, finite humans—the standard of conformity to the mind of this world—the prevailing social standards, attitudes and practices of the natural mind—and the mind of a holy, infinite, eternal God.

We need to “think different”—different as in as far as the heavens are above the earth different. Way different.

- (Isaiah 55:8–9 NLT) “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”

Even beginning to understand the vastness of the gap between the thinking of fallen, finite humans and the mind of a holy, infinite, eternal God, should compel us to fall at the feet of God and to tremble before his holy word.

Now we are ready to listen. Now we are ready for a biblical foundation.

- * **Laying a biblical foundation for the successful, surgical removal of the enslaving tentacles of an “under law” attitude from our minds and hearts so that we may live “under grace.”**
- * **Believing the clear statements of Scripture and learning a biblical concept of freedom.**

1. Accept a biblical understanding of our absolute need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds and a firm determination to bow before the will of God in all aspects of our lives.

- (Romans 12:1–2 ESV) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

2. Understand that the biblical doctrine of the gospel is not a disputable matter.

The gospel is not a matter of opinion.

Confused and/or false teachers sometimes attempt to portray doctrinal matters as matters of opinion or conviction, or as the NIV so accurately puts it—“disputable matters.”

- (Romans 14:1 ESV) As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions ... “disputable matters” (NIV) ... “doubtful things” (NKJV).

If we are to honor Jesus Christ and his gospel, we will not put the doctrine of salvation on the same par as whether we eat only vegetables or eat meat also.

- (Proverbs 18:1-2 ESV) Whoever isolates himself [“separates himself” (NASB)] seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment. 2 A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.

Adam and Eve thought that their Creator God’s command was a disputable matter, up for debate, so to speak, so they talked it out with the serpent.

- (2 Corinthians 10:5-6 ESV) We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, 6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Paul’s purpose is to destroy the defenses of self-confidence and self-exaltation that have been erected by the self-commendations of those who oppose the progress of the gospel (cf. 10:12, 17-18; 11:4). Many commentators suggest that these “strongholds” were embodied in the powerful rhetoric of Paul’s opponents, who, like the Sophists of their day, were more concerned with impressing the Corinthians with their style of presentation than with the truth of its content (cf. 10:10). **Though their concern for style over substance was certainly part of the problem, the issue was not merely their methods. Paul is on the offensive primarily because he knows that his opponents preach a “different gospel” altogether** (cf. 11:4). What renders their personal appearance so dangerous is that it makes their false “gospel” so appealing. Hence, as a true apostle of Christ, **Paul’s goal**, like an invading army laying siege against its enemy in order to destroy the bulwarks of their city, is **to destroy both their manner and their message**. Having been conquered by Christ himself (2:14), Paul now wages war on Christ’s behalf (10:3-4). Having been made a minister of the new covenant of the Spirit (3:4-6), Paul’s apostolate is a conquering army that can overcome any and every foe. [Hafemann, S. J. (2000). *2 Corinthians* (p. 395). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]

We must not “agree to disagree” or “put up with it” when someone presents “another Jesus” or “a different spirit” or “a different gospel.” **To preserve the truth of the gospel**, we must not only **NOT cooperate with these people** in the name of Christian love and unity, but we must **passionately oppose them and undermine them** if they claim to be doing the same gospel work that we are doing.

- (Galatians 2:5 NIV) **We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.**
- (2 Corinthians 11:4 ESV) For if someone comes and proclaims **another Jesus** than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive **a different spirit** from the one you received, or if you accept **a different gospel** from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.
- (2 Corinthians 11:12-13 ESV) **And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.** 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

***ONE GOSPEL:** There is one indisputable, non-negotiable, not-up-for-debate, not-open-to-discussion gospel and only one. The gospel is not dependent on speculation, conviction or opinion.

- (Galatians 1:6-9 ESV) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace

of Christ and are turning to a different gospel– 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

3. Receive God’s truth and believe that for freedom Christ has set us free.

- (Galatians 5:1 ESV) For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

4. Receive God’s truth and believe that we have been set free from the law of sin and death.

- (Romans 6:18 ESV) And, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.
- (Romans 8:1-4 ESV) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5. Believe God’s truth that we are dead to sin.

- (Romans 6:11 ESV) So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

6. Receive God’s truth that we are no longer slaves to sin but are slaves of obedience to God.

- (Romans 6:17-18 ESV) But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

7. Receive God’s truth and believe that we are not under law but under grace.

- (Romans 6:14 ESV) For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

8. Discern what is the character of the law and the purpose of the law.

CHARACTER: The law is holy and righteous and good.

- (Romans 7:12 ESV) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

PURPOSE: And the purpose of the law is to magnify our sin and kill us, as in our ability to live by our moral code, as in a death blow to our self-righteousness.

- (Romans 7:9-11 ESV) I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

9. Determine to live under grace: Accept and embrace the supremacy and the concrete reality of living under the new administration of grace—the new covenant.

- (2 Corinthians 3:5-6 ESV) Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

***SUPREMACY IS** ... the state or condition of being superior to all others in authority, power, or status.

a. The new covenant of grace far exceeds the law in glory and is permanent, whereas the law is temporary.

- (2 Corinthians 3:8-11 ESV) Will not **the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?** 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the **ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.** 10 Indeed, in this case, **what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it.** 11 For if **what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.**

b. The administration of grace is a better hope which sets aside the weak and useless law.

- (Hebrews 7:18-19 ESV) For **on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness** 19 (**for the law made nothing perfect;** but on the other hand, a **better hope is introduced,** through which we draw near to God.)

c. The new covenant of grace is more excellent than the law and is based on better promises.

- (Hebrews 8:6 ESV) But as it is, Christ has obtained **a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.**

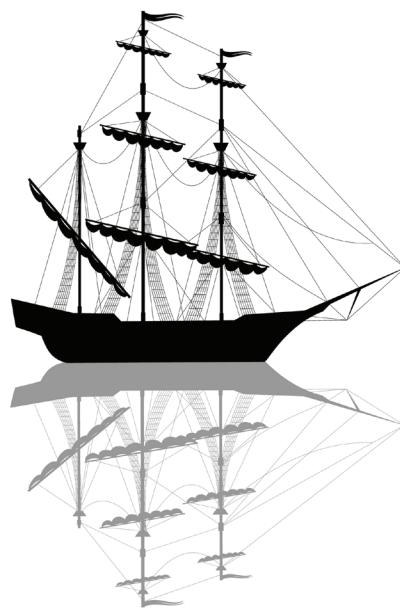
d. The new covenant of grace makes the old covenant of law obsolete. The old covenant of law is growing old and is ready to vanish away.

- (Hebrews 8:13 ESV) **In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.**
- **The new covenant is the true form of the reality of God and his glory but the law reflects only a shadow of the good things to come.**
- (Hebrews 10:1 ESV) For since **the law has but a shadow of the good things to come** instead of the true form of these realities, **it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.**

10. Never submit to anything less than salvation by grace through faith alone.

What happens when you submit to circumcision or water baptism or any work in addition to faith for salvation?

- a. You demonstrate that you are relying on something that you can do.
- b. You demonstrate that you are not completely relying on what Christ has done—his finished work.
- c. You demonstrate that you are a “worker” and not a “believer.” And now you are now required to not only keep your additional work but the entire law.
- (Romans 4:4-5 ESV) Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.
- (Galatians 5:2-3 ESV) I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.



(Galatians 5:1 ESV) For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.