

Select Biblical Topics

Free or Slave BY DESIGN

A SERIES FOR THE MATURE DISCIPLE AND NOT FOR
THE WEAK OF CONSCIENCE

Presented by Bill Ireland



What is Free or Slave?

You are not your own

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

This study will use scripture giving preference to the King James version of the Bible

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Foreword

Freedom is one of Scripture's most profound themes, yet it is also one of the most misunderstood. In a world that equates freedom with self-rule and personal autonomy, the Bible presents a radically different picture: true freedom is found only in Christ, and it is expressed through joyful submission to God's will. *Free or Slave – By Design* invites the mature disciple to examine the two spiritual laws at work in the world — the law of sin and death, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus — and to understand how each law differentiates if you are living in sin or living by faith shaping the destiny of every human being.

This study challenges believers to recognize the seriousness of spiritual bondage, the beauty of redemption, and the privilege of becoming bond slaves to Christ. Through Scripture, word studies, and theological reflection, it reveals that freedom is not the absence of restraint but the presence of righteousness, purpose, and divine empowerment. May this work deepen your understanding of the liberty in Christ after repentance and victory purchased by Christ's blood may it strengthen your resolve to walk in obedience, humility, and faith.

Summary

This study explores the biblical meaning of **freedom**, contrasting physical slavery, spiritual slavery, and the liberating work of Christ. It emphasizes that all people begin life enslaved to sin, bound under the law of sin and death, and unable to live righteously apart from God's intervention.

Key Themes

1. Salvation and the Word-of-Faith

Salvation is described as a process rooted in God's grace and goodness that led to repentance, freeing believers from the penalty of sin and enabling them to live under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. This study will examine faith, hearing God's Word, speaking God's Word, and obedience that are central to experiencing this freedom.

2. Biblical Definition of Freedom

Using the Greek term *eleutheria*, the study defines freedom as liberation from spiritual bondage — not autonomy, but the ability to joyfully serve God. Old Testament themes like the Exodus and Jubilee foreshadow this New Covenant liberty.

3. Physical vs. Spiritual Slavery

The Bible acknowledges physical slavery historically, but the document stresses that spiritual slavery is humanity's deeper problem. Sin enslaves the will, corrupts the heart, and places people under Satan's dominion.

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4. Freedom in Christ

Christ's death and resurrection break the chains of sin. Believers are freed not only *from* sin but *to* live righteously. This freedom is rooted in faith working through love, not in legalism or self-effort.

5. Bondage to Christ

A paradox emerges: those freed by Christ become His willing bond slaves. This voluntary servitude leads to holiness, purpose, and eternal life. Submission to Christ is presented as the highest form of freedom in purpose and righteous living with God.

6. Liberty as a Call to Righteousness

Christian liberty is not license. It is empowerment to walk in the Spirit, resist the devil, and live in submission with God's will. True freedom is expressed through obedience, humility, and love.

7. Conclusion

The study concludes that two laws operate in the world — the law of sin and death, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. Through Christ, believers are set free to fulfill their divine purpose and walk in the light of God's grace.

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Believe the Word

God demonstrates to us that words matter. In fact, His words created all matter. He speaks things into existence. There is a heavenly language of authority and power and majesty. The Bible describes wondrously the word was with God and was God. The Greek rendering of the word “word” is the “logos.” This one term “logos” is one of several Greek words translated as “Word.” Considering the logos there is reasoning and a choice set before us. One needs to decide if the Bible is true. One needs to decide if it is relevant. One needs to decide to connect these preserved words that are quick and powerful so that they can be activated in our lives in obedience to God’s plan for our lives.

In the New Testament book of Hebrews we learn that Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Words spoken in faith can release the power of God in our lives. They can transform our lives as it renews our mind. Call it a mystery but consider that the Book of Revelation says that there is a blessing to the reader who reads the book of that prophecy aloud, see Revelation 1:3 and additionally, the warning that one should not add or take away any of the book recorded by John, Revelation 22:18.

(Revelation 1:3)

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

(Revelation 22:18)

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.

Word-of-Faith

The sanctification process and maturation of a disciple of Christ includes an ever-increasing understanding and application of the word-of-faith. The creative power as spoken and as used in prayer engages the creator and creature in actions of obedience to accomplish God’s will on earth. The “Lord’s prayer” contains the revelation of our responsibility and God’s readiness to have us accomplish His will in our lives. What is required is to be humble and submit our will to serve by faith and please Him – Consider the Lord teaching us to pray from Matthew 6:10 in part – “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” These are not wasted words empty of meaning. How are we to account of an obvious limitation of God’s will in the earth expressed in the Lord’s prayer? Why pray for His will to be done on earth and at the same time acknowledge that His will is done in Heaven? Why the obvious short coming about God’s will failing to be on earth and how it points to us to ask for this? When we pray, “thy will be done on Earth” it is saying, God use me as your servant to bring your will into the earth. His word includes the instructions to ask, seek and knock as described in Matthew 7:7-14.

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What is Freedom?

Definition of Freedom

Strong's Reference: 1657 Greek: ἐλευθερία / eleutheria: Freedom, Liberty

a. liberty to do or to omit things. 1 Corinthians 10:29; from the yoke of the Mosaic law, Galatians 2:4; Galatians 5:1, 13; 1 Peter 2:16; from Jewish errors so blinding the mental vision that it does not discern the majesty of Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:17; freedom from the dominion of corrupt desires, so that we do by the free impulse of the soul what the will of God requires: ὁ νόμος τῆς ἐλευθερίας, i. e. the Christian religion, which furnishes that rule of right living by which the liberty just mentioned is attained, James 1:25; James 2:12; freedom from the restraints and miseries of earthly frailty: so in the expression ἡ ἐλευθερία τῆς δόξης (epexegetical genitive (Winer's Grammar, 531 (494))), manifested in the glorious condition of the future life, Romans 8:21.

b. fancied liberty, i. e. license, the liberty to do as one pleases, 2 Peter 2:19. J. C. Erler

Topical Lexicon

Eleutheria signifies the liberating reality that believers possess in Christ. More than political emancipation or philosophical autonomy, it is the God-given release from every form of spiritual bondage so that the redeemed may serve the Lord willingly, joyfully, and fruitfully.

Old Testament Background

Although the term is Greek, its roots reach back to decisive Old Testament moments: the Exodus, the Year of Jubilee, the prophetic calls to “proclaim liberty to the captives,” and the promise of a new covenant written on the heart. These themes prepare the way for the fuller revelation of freedom in the New Covenant

Free or Slave?

Introduction

The concept of freedom and enslavement holds significance throughout Scripture, spanning both the Old and New Testaments. The Bible speaks of both physical and spiritual enslavement and a spiritual liberty found in Christ. This discussion draws on biblical references to contrast the power of Christ bringing liberty to those who were formally enslaved by sin. Foremost in the New Testament is this comparison of two laws where one is earthly and the second heavenly. Compare for a minute the familiar scripture that said render to Ceasar what is Ceasar's and unto God what is God's and how man is made in God's image – therefore is not man belonging to God as the money to Cesar.

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(Romans 8:2)

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Physical Slavery and Freedom in the Scriptures

The Bible acknowledges the historical context of slavery of a nation or as to being a bonded slave. In the Old Testament, we see the Israelites enslaved under Pharaoh in Egypt (Exodus 1:13-14). God's intervention through Moses brought about their liberation retained as a holy day in the Passover. The angel of death passed over the Hebrews homes when the blood of goats was spread upon their door posts. Here Pharaoh's captives, the Hebrew people, were set free (Exodus 6:6-7). This deliverance is representative of God's redemptive power. It would inform us that God wants us free from oppression even if caused by our own sin and guilt.

The New Testament also addresses slavery in societal contexts, such as Paul's instructions to slaves and masters in Ephesians 6:5-9. Slavery is a reality and it is in modern thought a distraction as moral outrage when there are more severe consequences of man being sinful. It is not to belittle what slavery engenders as to evilness man upon man that is in the World by sin but to consider Satan's hold on man to enslave him spiritually and morally as far worse. What is really at issue is heavenly events that clarify the depravity of man and having an evil heart condition. Whether it is slavery to sin or alive unto serving God, one to death the other to life it becomes what you are yoked to that defines the eternal outcome, evil or good, hell or heaven.

In a physical sense we know there is a great deal to understanding borrowing where the borrower is servant to the lender. That when a debt is satisfied as to a title or a deed one is released of the lien holder. Until then, the borrower is not free, he is bound. The infraction of sinning against God's law makes it clear we are debtors to the law. That debt required an amount that is fashioned after the crime. It was God's love that risked his son like Abraham had. It is Christ who was able to put our debt onto himself on the cross and in essence, we (our sin) killed him. He was the eye for an eye the justice that had to be met. However, the mystery of Christ and having lived sinless meant it was illegal to punish Christ on the Cross as he was not under the law of sin and death being Adamic sinless flesh. A lawful technicality that in the Court of Heaven gave Christ the victory over sin and death and freed us from sin's indebtedness at the high cost of Christ's suffering and death.

We then just need to accept the Gospel and receive the gift of salvation. As it is God's goodness that leads us to repentance and then enter as the redeemed by a submission of our will and a confession of our belief. We are then free from the penalty and then alive unto God. Our destination when guilty to the law was Hell. The place where we rightly belonged given our sinful state under the first Adam. Fortunately, it was God's intention to give his only son to die in

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our place and Jesus body and blood becoming the receipt of redemption so not to be on the day of judgement condemned. The claim can be made by those who by faith accepted the gift of grace, our salvation has in Christ that debt settled.

Spiritual Slavery and Freedom

Slavery to Sin and Satan

The Bible frequently states that Man's spiritual condition is one of slavery to sin and the satisfying of the law for such sin as death. In John 8:34, Jesus declares, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin." Sin enslaves the will, corrupts the heart, and separates individuals from God. This spiritual bondage is further illustrated in Romans 6:20, where Paul describes unbelievers as being slaves to sin, bound to its destructive patterns and ultimately facing death, Romans 6:23. Satan, as the deceiver and ruler of this world (John 14:30), plays a central role in spiritual enslavement of man and indicates that God's will in the earth is for a little while hindered. The Bible describes Satan as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8) and a master who blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4). Those under Satan's dominion are trapped in darkness, unable to experience the truth that could set them free except a door be provided to escape, who Christ is that door. It is man acting in faith as described in the Lord's prayer where man seeking God's will to be done in the earth that reveals that the power of God to save is being made available and to be successful towards redemption.

Freedom in Christ

Man's life as related to the first Adam's sin in the garden is one of spiritual bondage. Yet God's Word in Genesis speaks of the promise pointed towards a future redeemer. The New Testament revealing the resurrection of Christ presented a new law to observe. This new law is one of life and liberty in Christ. Galatians 5:1-6 proclaims, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Jesus' death and resurrection breaks the chain of sin, offering redemption, forgiveness, and new life to all who believe (Romans 8:1-2).

The liberty found in Christ is not merely freedom from sin but freedom to live righteously. In John 8:36, Jesus assures, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." This freedom enables believers to walk in obedience to God's will, liberated from the power of sin and death.

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Bondage to Christ

Bond Slaves to Christ

The New Testament introduces a paradoxical concept: believers, though free in Christ, are called to become His bond slaves. Paul frequently identifies himself as a “servant” or “slave” of Christ (Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1). This servitude is not coerced but voluntary, rooted in love and gratitude for Christ’s sacrificial love (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Just as Old Testament bondservants could choose lifelong service out of affection for their masters (Exodus 21:5-6), believers willingly dedicate their lives to Christ.

Being a bond slave to Christ signifies complete submission to His lordship. Romans 6:22 explains, “But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.” This form of slavery leads not to oppression but to abounding in this life and the next. The believer’s life is realized through faith and obedience to God’s divine purpose.

The Significance of Liberty in Christ

Salvation provides access to the Liberty in Christ that believers experience as children of God. This freedom is not a license to indulge the flesh, but it is a call to serve one another humbly in love (Galatians 5:13). Without a more complete understanding of our salvation life as a new creature in Christ was hidden from view. The fullness of obedience was not experienced and the joy it brings. Growing in grace and maturing the faith brings a new awareness to hearing from and obeying God in holy living. There was a tyranny when under the law of sin and death that prevented righteous living or made excuses for sin as believers. Only being born again can a man become free to pursue righteousness and experience the love of God and the knowledge of God within so we can be bold and be holy as He is holy.

Being a bond slave to Christ means the truth did set you free. Further, this liberty is not to be misused. Submission to Christ as Lord provides direction and purpose. It is a transformed heart of the believer resetting priorities, replacing self-centered desires with a choice of devotion to God and then being able to worship God in Spirit and truth. It is Satan that still tries to deceive the believer he had enslaved to sin, but we are to stop being ignorant of the devil’s devices and now to resist the Devil - so he flees. Man, in obedience to God can walk worthy of the call unhindered walking humbly by faith being obedient and being one with God.

Conclusion

The Bible’s teachings on enslavement and freedom are according to the two laws at work in the earth. In Christ, the law of sin and death was made inferior to the law of the Spirit of life. Jesus reveals a blessed intention by God concerning these physical and spiritual realities. We are instructed to meditate upon the perfect law of liberty and ask for wisdom to the extent that we are to put on the mind of Christ. While physical slavery represents human oppression, spiritual slavery to sin and Satan reflects man’s deeper problem as to man’s hard and sinful heart. Yet,

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through Christ, believers are set free—free to live in righteousness, free to love, and free to serve. This liberty finds its fullest expression not in autonomy but in joyful submission to Christ as bond slaves – to be one with God. Believers can then experience the true freedom that comes from living in submission too and agreement with God’s will, fulfilling the divine purpose. Believers can then walk in the light of God’s grace in a freedom that was purchased by Christ’s blood.

Select Versus

(Romans 8:2)

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

(Matthew 22:20-22)

20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left him, and went their way.

(Galatians 5:5-6)

5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

(Philippians 2:12-13)

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

(Genesis 1:26-27)

26 Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...’ 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

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Prayer: Freedom and Submission

My Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name.

*Thou alone art holy, righteous, and worthy to be praised.
Let Thy name be sanctified in my heart, my body, and my spirit,
for I am not mine own, but am bought with a price.*

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in me, as it is in heaven.

*I submit my will unto Thee, that I may walk not after the flesh,
but after the Spirit, according to the law of the Spirit of life
which is in Christ Jesus.*

Give me this day the bread of Thy truth,

that I may live by every word that proceedeth out of Thy mouth.

Strengthen me by Thy grace,

*that I may hear Thy Word, speak Thy Word, and obey Thy Word in faith,
that worketh through love.*

Forgive me my trespasses,

as Thou hast forgiven me through the blood of Thy Son.

Cleansing me from all unrighteousness,

*and having delivered me from the law of sin and death,
whereunto I was once bound as a servant to lawlessness.*

Lead me not back into bondage,

neither suffer me to be entangled again with the yoke of sin;

but deliver me from the evil one, resisting the devil

who would seeketh to deceive and enslave me again unto bondage.

You have given me strength to resist the devil, wherein

he flees from me having both the peace and obedience to the will of God.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.

I choose this day whom I shall serve.

Being made free from sin, I yield myself unto Thee,

*a willing bond servant of Christ, that I may walk in holiness, humility,
and obedience unto life eternal.*

In the name of Jesus Christ my Lord,

who hath made me free indeed.

Amen

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Index of Scriptures		
Bible Book	Verse(s)	Section/Context in Document
Genesis	1:26-27	Made in God's image and Select Versus
Exodus	1:13-14	Israelites enslaved under Pharaoh; Physical Slavery
Exodus	6:6-7	God's deliverance of Israelites; Physical Slavery
Exodus	21:5-6	Old Testament bondservants; Bond Slaves to Christ
Matthew	22:20-22	Render unto Caesar; Select Versus
John	8:34	Everyone who sins is a slave to sin; Spiritual Slavery
John	8:36	If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed; Freedom in Christ
John	14:30	Satan as ruler of this world; Spiritual Slavery
Romans	1:01	Paul as servant/slave of Christ; Bond Slaves to Christ
Romans	6:20	Unbelievers are slaves to sin; Spiritual Slavery
Romans	6:22	Set free from sin, become slaves of God; Bond Slaves to Christ
Romans	6:23	Wages of sin is death; Spiritual Slavery
Romans	8:1-2	No condemnation; law of Spirit of life; Freedom in Christ
Romans	8:02	Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; Free or Slave?, Select Versus
Romans	8:21	Freedom from restraints and miseries of earthly frailty; Definition of Freedom
1 Corinthians	6:19-20	Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; Free or Slave?, Select Versus
1 Corinthians	10:29	Liberty to do or omit things; Definition of Freedom
2 Corinthians	3:17	Freedom from Jewish errors, liberty in Christ; Definition of Freedom
2 Corinthians	4:04	Satan blinds minds of unbelievers; Spiritual Slavery
Galatians	2:04	Liberty from Mosaic law; Definition of Freedom
Galatians	5:1, 5:6, 5:13	Stand fast in liberty, faith working through love, serve one another; Freedom in Christ, Liberty in Christ
Ephesians	2:8-9	Saved by grace through faith; Select Versus
Ephesians	6:5-9	Instructions to slaves and masters; Physical Slavery
Philippians	1:01	Paul as servant/slave of Christ; Bond Slaves to Christ
Philippians	2:12-13	Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; Select Versus
1 Peter	2:16	Liberty from Mosaic law; Definition of Freedom
1 Peter	5:08	Satan as a roaring lion; Spiritual Slavery
2 Peter	2:19	Fancied liberty, license to do as one pleases; Definition of Freedom
James	1:25, 2:12	Law of liberty, Christian rule of right living; Definition of Freedom

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Workbook Slave or Free

A. Multiple-Choice Questions

1. According to the study, true biblical freedom is:
 - A. The ability to do whatever one wants
 - B. Political independence
 - C. Liberation from spiritual bondage to serve God
 - D. Freedom from all authority

2. The “law of sin and death” refers to:
 - A. The Mosaic dietary laws
 - B. Humanity’s fallen condition and bondage to sin
 - C. Roman civil law
 - D. The laws of nature

3. The Greek word *eleutheria* primarily means:
 - A. Emotional expression
 - B. Liberty from spiritual bondage
 - C. Social equality
 - D. Personal ambition

4. Becoming a “bond slave of Christ” is described as:
 - A. Forced servitude
 - B. A voluntary act of love and devotion
 - C. A temporary spiritual phase
 - D. A symbolic metaphor with no practical meaning

5. According to the document, salvation frees believers:
 - A. Only from hell
 - B. From sin’s penalty and into a life of obedience
 - C. From all earthly responsibilities
 - D. From the need for repentance

B. Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

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1. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me _____ from the law of sin and death.”
2. Jesus said, “Everyone who sins is a _____ to sin.”
3. The liberty found in Christ is not freedom *from* obedience but freedom *to* live _____.
4. Believers are called to work out their salvation with _____ and trembling.
5. A bond slave of Christ serves Him out of love, gratitude, and _____.

C. Open-Ended Questions

1. Explain the difference between physical slavery and spiritual slavery in the study.
2. How does the document describe the relationship between salvation, faith, and freedom?
3. Why is becoming a “bond slave to Christ” considered true freedom rather than bondage?
4. In what ways does Satan contribute to spiritual enslavement, and how does Christ break that bondage?
5. How does understanding the two spiritual laws (sin and death vs. Spirit of life) shape a believer’s daily walk?

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Answer Key

Multiple Choice

1. C
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. B

Fill in the Blank

1. **free**
2. **slave**
3. **righteously**
4. **fear**
5. **submission** (or *devotion*)

Group Discussion Question

In your own spiritual journey, where do you see evidence of the “law of sin and death” trying to pull you back — and how does the freedom found in Christ empower you to live under the “law of the Spirit of life”?

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Notes: