

Freedom: Liberty with Responsibility



Liberty; lacking oppressive and limiting restrictions comes with responsibility. 1 Corinthians 6:12 tells us that “Everything is permissible for me - but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me - but I will not be mastered by anything.” We may not be under the Law of the Old Testament and may be free in many areas “religious” people are not, but that liberty comes with responsibility. Paul also wrote in Galatians 5:13; “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.” We are free, but our love for God and desire to please Him brings some limitations to that freedom.

Biblically, we are not to use our *freedom* to cause others to stumble. Paul wrote of food sacrificed to idols Romans 14 and 1Corinthians 8; and while these Scriptures may speak directly of food, it could be having a glass of wine or a beer, or the way we dress or speak - anything that might cause a weaker Christian to stumble or a non-believer to question the reality of God. One writer said; “Freedom is not the right to do what we want, but the ability to do what we ought.” We are to care about others remembering that Jesus said loving our neighbor as ourselves is the second greatest commandment. *Loving* our spouse means that we love them as the Lord our God would want us to love them - freely and unconditionally.

In marriage, any demands one spouse makes on the other violating *their* freedom is *sin*. Too many times I have heard of husbands demanding some sort of sex that their wives are not comfortable with and even using the submission verses to back up their demands. We have also heard of wives making demands in violation of their husbands’ consciences also. It is sin to demand things of our spouse that go against their conscience. Our freedom in Christ comes with responsibility! Too often husbands and/or wives will allow their own selfishness or flesh rule their lives. Life becomes about one’s own needs, desires, or wants rather than serving one another in love. When we use our freedom responsibly to love our spouse and others, the Lord will bless our efforts. Freedom means to love your spouse responsibly in the way you *ought*.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page: www.fortifiedmarriages.com*

The *Fortified Marriages Manual and Workbook* is a great tool to help couples develop healthy communication and connect with each other.

Book to Check out:

Setting Your Marriage Free: Discover and Enjoy Freedom in Christ Together by Anderson & Mylander

Other resources:

Freedom in Christ (An article about teaching kids about freedom in Christ, but excellent for helping us better understand our freedom in Christ) by various authors - www.focusonthefamily.com