

## HOW TO USE OUR FREEDOM

### 1 Peter 2:11-25

As we just celebrated our freedom we also celebrate our right or authority to be self governed. However, God established the home, human government, and the church, and He has the right to tell us how these institutions should be ran. God wants each of us to exercise authority; we must be under authority. Satan offered Adam & Eve freedom without authority, but they ended up losing both freedom and authority. The Prodigal Son found his freedom when he yielded to his father's will.

Peter gives us three excellent motives for setting aside our personal freedom for submission to God who is our highest authority.

- For the sake of the lost.
- For the sake of the Lord.
- For the sake of ourselves.

Peter reminds believers that the world is watching your life to see if your walk matches your talk. They are longing to see the real deal, that you live with integrity. ***"People who do not believe are living all around you...live such good lives that they will see the good things you do and will give glory to God..."*** (vs. 12, NCV)

Peter says the world is going to determine if you're the real deal by how you handle three areas of your life. I have freedom to live my life how I choose, but I must realize my life is not my life. I must submit my freedom to the authority of God.

#### I. **Stay away from temptation.**

***“I urge you...to live in this world as strangers and temporary residents to keep clear of the desires of your lower nature, for they are always at war with your soul.” (vs. 11, Ph)***

**A. Don't get comfortable here in this world.**

***“...you are strangers...”***

1. We are citizens of heaven living in the United States.
2. We are resident aliens.
3. Like the patriarchs of old, we are temporary in this life traveling to the heavenly city. ***“By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”***  
***(Hebrews 11:9-10)***

**B. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul.**

1. We are soldiers involved in a spiritual battle.
2. There are sinful desires that war against us and want to defeat us.
3. Our real battle is not with people around us, but passions within us.
4. If we yield to these sinful appetites then we will start living like the unsaved people around us, and our witness will be ineffective.

**\*NOTE** The word “war” has the idea of a military campaign. We do not win a battle and the war is over. It is a constant warfare, and we must be on our guard.

**C. We are to be witnesses to the lost around us.**

1. The word Gentiles is not just speaking of a race of people, but unsaved people.

2. They are watching us, speaking against us, and looking for excuses to reject the gospel.
3. If we are going to be fruitful and faithful witnesses, we must live lives of integrity.
4. It carries the idea of being more than honest and doing right things, but living an admirable and honorable life.
5. I often refer to our church as a “beautiful church family.”
6. We want to live above reproach.

**\*NOTE** A couple of weeks ago we saw that our future is secure. We can't lose our salvation. One might say, “If I believed that, I would sin all I want!” I do! I sin more than I want. As a matter of fact, I don't want to sin at all. I long to be holy as God is holy. ***“Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil; live as servants of God.” (vs. 16)***

7. Jesus changed my want to!

I am often asked, “Can Christians dance?” My reply is, “Some can and some can't.” I never could! So many Christians want to know how much sin they can have and still be a Christian. That's not the right way to look at it. That's like seeing how close I can get to the edge of a cliff and not fall into a crevice. Integrity says, “I'm choosing to stay away from it.”

8. Integrity says my life backs up what I say!

***“It is God's will that your good lives should silence those who foolishly condemn the gospel without knowing what it can do for them, having never experienced its power.” (vs. 15, LB)***

9. God's will is that you live life above reproach.
10. We need show & tell Christians.
11. I can't control lies told, but I can live so they have to make things up to accuse me of.

## **II. Show respect for authority.**

***“For the Lord’s sake, yield to the people who have authority in this world: The king, who is the highest authority, and the leaders who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and praise those who do right.” (vs. 14, NCV)***

**A. Submission is a mark of a believer.**

1. Submission is an attitude of selflessness.
2. When you come to a yield sign, what does it mean? You let the other car go first.
3. I don’t have to have my way all the time.
4. I don’t live demanding my rights.
5. Yielding is not weakness, but self-control.
6. Insecure people have to be in control and have their way every time.

**B. God allows government.**

1. Even a bad government is better than every man doing what’s right in his own eyes.
2. We respect them for “the Lord’s sake.”

***“Show respect for everyone. Love Christians everywhere. Fear God and honor the government.” (vs. 17, LB)***

- Show respect for everyone. There should be no prejudices. Everyone matters.
- Love fellow believers period. We are brothers & sisters.
- Fear God and honor government. Jesus said, ***“Render unto God what is His and to Caesar what is his.”***

**\*NOTE** When Peter wrote this Nero was in charge. He was not a bad person; he was mentally ill. How do you do that? You honor the position, not the

personality, and pray for both: acceptance is not approval. When do you not submit? When the question comes between obeying God or them. I obey God even if it brings negative consequences. ***“Be good servants to your masters, not just to good masters, but also to bad ones. What counts is that you put up with it for God’s sake when you’re treated badly for no good reason.”*** (vs. 18-19, *The Message*)

### III. Seek God in suffering.

#### A. Nothing reveals our character more than pain.

***“This is the kind of life you’ve been invited into, the kind of life Christ lives. He suffered everything that comes His way so you would know that it can be done, and also how to do it, step by step.”*** (vs. 21, *The Message*)

1. Peter says Jesus is our model.
2. How did Jesus handle pain?

***“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.”*** (vs. 22-23)

3. That is exactly the opposite of our culture.
4. We may not memorize scripture, but we know our attorney’s name and number.
5. We live for a paycheck; we save for everything.

#### B. Jesus lived with an eternal perspective.

1. He lived the way He did because He knew this was temporary.
2. He knew God was going to balance the books.

***“...He suffered in silence, content to let God set things right.”*** (vs. 23, *The Message*)

3. God says, ***“Vengeance is mine. I shall repay.”*** Who can settle things right; you or God? God!

4. Leave it in God's hands. God vindicates the righteous.  
That's a motivation for living with integrity.

**\*NOTE** God is not saying be a doormat and let people walk on you. Sometimes it is right to fight. Jesus in righteous anger cleansed the temple. I rarely get angry over ungodly justice. I get upset over what I like or don't like. The acid test of our faith is how we react when treated unjustly.

***"A man does a fine thing when he endures pain, with a clear conscience towards God, though he knows he is suffering unjustly." (vs. 19, Ph)***

Jesus said this, ***"You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world...let your light shine before man, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13, 14, 16)***

### **C. What is your testimony in your world?**

1. What would your kids say?
2. What would people at work say?

Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a spirit-filled Christian? Do you know how the Nobel Peace Prize started? The newspaper erroneously wrote about his life instead of his brother when his brother died. He was called the merchandiser of death. He invented dynamite and made weapons. He was shocked at what his reputation was. He decided to award peace the rest of his life.