

Tough Questions Series: Do I have to give up freedom to be a Christian?

Galatians 5

March 14, 2010

For freedom Christ has set us free

- Freedom or security?
- Example: sky diving vs. consumer air travel

Humans are not naturally free

- Jesus: “anyone who commits a sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:31-36; cf. Galatians 4:8-9)
- Illustration: pattern of an alcoholic
- We are not called to give up freedom but to leave slavery

Religious conformity is not the path of Christian freedom

- “do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (v1) – Paul is concerned the Galatians are moving away from Christ
- illustration: spring training vs. regular season baseball

Gospel Freedom

- a) walk by the spirit
- b) faith working through love

questions for reflection

- 1) Are you more of an independent spirit or do you tend to play it safe? Are you more willing to sacrifice safety for freedom or autonomy for security? How does that influence your understanding of God and your religious views?
- 2) What things can you not do without? What in your life, if taken from you (or if not acquired) would render your life meaningless and would leave you miserable? What habits can't you break? Consider what things in your life exert a high level of control over you.
- 3) In 1 Corinthians 6:12 Paul responds to questions he gets in relation to Christian obedience. To the statement “all things are lawful for me” he replies a) “but not all things are helpful” and b) “but I will not be enslaved by anything”. How does that direct your thinking on the relationship between being free and yet living within the boundaries of the moral commandments of the Bible?
- 4) Jesus used his freedom to willingly give himself for us – in love – to free us from our slavery. What does it look like to follow him in this? What are ways you can “fulfill the law” by loving your neighbor as yourself?