

Freedom from Letterness

C.S. Lovett

All things were lawful for Paul ... Putting the letter of the law behind him Paul declared, *“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...”* (Colossians 3:17). As far as he was concerned, the believer, being released from wherein he was held, was delivered from the Law (Romans 7:6). Paul’s chief care was that he did not stumble others in the use of his freedom (I Corinthians 8:13). Apart from stumbling others, however, Paul could do anything and say anything he pleased for the glory of Christ. Here we have a man who truly moved according to **God’s operating principles**, since he was motivated by love rather than the letter of the law. ...

Paul felt free to set aside the old covenant of “THOU SHALT NOT” in favor of, **“WHATSOEVER ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men”** (Colossians 3:23). The old “ministration of death,” as he called the letter of the law, was all right as a “tutor” to guide man’s early steps. But since the fuller revelation had come ... the old legalistic approach was to be abandoned in favor of the new order of Christian freedom (Galatians 3:25). The “glorious liberty of the sons of God” can be employed only when life is governed by **principles** rather than **CONFORMITY TO RULES** (Colossians 2:20-23). ...

While the “chapter and verse” approach is fine during the period of usefulness, it is overruled by the adult concept of living by divine principles. Such a way of life ... is the very ground of freedom and maturity. It is the heart of Paul’s thinking when he declares the sons of God liberated from the legal bondage of the seventh chapter of Romans, *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death,”* he says (Romans 8:2). The freedom he mentions is obtainable only by invoking a higher law or principle. ...

The killing power of this deadly way of living [legalism] is manifest on the faces of those Christians who are constantly striving to keep rules. They are not happy and their lives show it. Far from enjoying the peace of Christ, they are miserable and their misery reaches out to depress those about them. Many are seriously disturbed to the point of mental and emotional breakdowns, largely because they realize the discrepancies in their own lives. ...

Instead of being bound to biblical rules, he [the mature believer] is released to live by biblical principles. He is free to do anything he pleases as long as it does not injure others and is done as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:17). The mature believer need not be ashamed of anything he can ask God to bless, regardless of rules to the contrary. Paul must have been thrilled to teach, "Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Romans 14:22). It can be taken without argument that the supreme principle of Christian living is the Law of love, for it God's own chief motive. All other principles flow from this one. ...

It is a **revelation, not a code**. The purpose of the Written Word is to acquaint men with the Living Word. When they have gained this marvelous insight, they no longer serve the **written details**, but follow the **Living Person**. There is a difference. ...

The principle approach is a freedom from **letterness**, but not a freedom from the Word of God. The Bible remains the supreme authority over the Christian's life for it is the **only** revelation of the heart and will of God. ...

The principle approach is not extra-biblical, it is **deep-centered biblicism** and represents the finest expression of a Bible-controlled life. For one to reach the higher ground of Christian living demands that he have a **Bible-saturated** life. ... There is no other way ... because the Bible is **GOD'S ONLY REVELATION OF CHRIST**.

Christians err when they apply the LETTER OF EITHER TESTAMENT against one another as a standard or measure of a personal righteousness. Since righteousness is by faith, the correct way to judge another person is to behold his faith. Only God can do that. ... At best, human judgements are wide of the mark, for only God knows the real intent of the heart.

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