

ROMANS
Lesson 159–January 11, 2015

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a worldwide Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark. What is the proper use of freedom?

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What is the proper use of freedom?

It's a great question for us believers in Christ to ask ourselves because the Lord Jesus Christ makes it clear, through the apostle Paul's work, exactly how He would prefer for us to use our freedom...Paul exhorts us in Galatians, Chapter 5, Verse 1...

GAL 5:1

It was for freedom that the Lord Jesus Christ set us believers in Christ free; therefore keep standing firm in the freedom and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

The Lord's offer is simple. Slavery or freedom? It's your choice! Bondage to the law or life in the sphere of My grace? It's your choice. The use of freedom is really the use of your free will...the use of your volition. What is volition?

VOLITION

The ability to choose

You have the ability to choose. You have free will. You can act independently from God. You can act independently from others. You can choose. As a Pastor, I stand here each week for one purpose, to encourage you to use your free will to your own benefit by teaching you the Will of God and the Word of God. At best, my position as Pastor is a position of

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influence. I can encourage you, exhort you, implore you to do the right things for yourself. Unfortunately for you, I cannot coerce your free will. If I could, the coercion would always be centered on you using your freedom for your own benefit. Oh, if I could only get you to always do the right thing! Parents...can you relate? Oh, if I could only get myself to always do the right thing. But alas, I make great decisions for you and I'm not always good at making the best decisions for myself. The spirit is willing but "the flesh" is weak!

You are always being encouraged to use your freedom. You are being encouraged by God to use your freedom to "take advantage" of Him in this way...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 1)

To use someone or something that is favorable to your success for positive gain

You are being encouraged by Satan, the enemy of God, to use your freedom to "take advantage" of God in this way...

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF (Meaning 2)

To exploit...to use someone or something for selfish ends

What's your choice? What IS the proper use of your freedom? This is the question that weighs heavily on the hearts of all people, every moment, especially on the hearts of believers in Christ. As a believer in Christ you have a body, a soul, and a spirit. Located in the body is "the flesh," a part of you that is completely antagonistic to God. This part of you wants to be under the law. This part of you also is so antagonistic to the law, it seeks immediately to break the law. Another part of you, as a believer in Christ, is "the spirit," a part of you that wants to obey God. This part of you enjoys freedom and grace and knows how to use it properly. It's the part of you that responds positively to God. Lying between the two is your soul, with its volition...with its free will...with its ability to choose.

In this lesson we'll begin our look at Romans Chapter 6 with an eye on how we use our freedom. Welcome to a place where the freedom in you..."the

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spirit” in you...is encouraged to do good...in obedience to the One who set you free...the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Welcome to the study of His Word.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

When You Suffer

Let’s begin our worship of the Lord with an opening song. Here’s June Murphy to sing...WHEN YOU SUFFER.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We’re grateful to you, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Thank you for the suffering we experience in this life, most of it self-induced, especially the suffering we experience when we use our freedom against ourselves...thank you for always protecting us in those circumstances...thanks for keeping us from destroying ourselves...

Teach us about freedom today, and in the coming days...encourage us to take advantage of our freedom in the sphere of your grace...help us to avoid using our freedom for selfish ends...teach us to value others more than we value ourselves...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ’s name...Amen.

TODAY’S STUDY

What is the proper use of freedom?

Turn in your bibles to Romans, Chapter 6 where we continue our study of Paul’s letter to the Romans, a foundational biblical work that teaches us the Christian Way of Living. The letter opens by dealing with a subject near

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and dear to our hearts and to our everyday, moment by moment experience...this question...

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What is the proper use of your freedom?

You are free. Do you use your freedom well or do you use your freedom against yourself? Perhaps the best treatise on freedom ever written is the book of Galatians where Paul challenges the believers in Christ of first century Galatia to reflect on the manner in which they use their freedom, which could be used to keep the law or which could be used to live in the sphere of grace. Many of the believers in Galatia had this philosophy...

ONE USE OF FREEDOM

I have freedom. God forgives me for all my sins.
Whoopee! What can I get away with?

Okay...now this is the moment when you should gasp, and ask, “How could they do that?” After all, isn’t that what we do when we hear of the maladies of others? We ask, “Can you believe they would do that?” Then we gasp. And then we do the very same thing they are doing ten times in a row. The believers in the Galatian region of first century Asia Minor aren’t the only ones who abused their freedom. In the twenty-first century world, we are doing it, too! Here’s what God has to say to those who think they are getting away with the abuse of their freedom...Galatians, Chapter 6, Verse 7...

GAL 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Hosea, Chapter 8, Verse 7...

HOS 8:7

For they (those who abuse their freedom) sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind (the tornado).

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For those of you who ask yourselves, “What can I get away with?” The answer is, in the Lord’s plan for your life, “Nothing!” Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verses 6 and 7 say...

HEB 12:6

For those whom the Lord loves He also disciplines (corrects), and He scourges (with a whip) every son whom He receives.”

HEB 12:7

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as a parent deals with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

Discipline from God is evidence of your status as the child of a King. Proverbs 13, Verse 24 says...

PRO 13:24

He who withholds his rod (of discipline) HATES his son, but he who loves his son disciplines him diligently.

Discipline from God is evidence of His unconditional love for you. Proverbs 3, Verses 11 and 12 say...

PRO 3:11

My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe His reproof...

PRO 3:12

...for whom the Lord loves unconditionally He reproves, even as a father corrects the son IN WHOM HE DELIGHTS.

What is reproof? It is an expression of disapproval. You are not to change your countenance when you are being reproved. It’s God’s way of letting you know the difference between the narrow road that leads to life and the broad road that leads to destruction. God is intensely interested in you using your freedom properly, to “take advantage” of Him for your benefit.

Paul closed the fifth chapter of Romans with a deep insight...Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 20 and 21 made us all aware of the reason God gave us the Mosaic Law...

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ROM 5:20

The Law came in (alongside of sin) so that the transgression (of the law...the acts of law breaking) would increase (abundantly); BUT where sin increased (abundantly), grace abounded all the more...

ROM 5:21

...(the Lord provided grace abundantly in the presence of sin) so that, as sin reigned (as king) in death (because we are born “in Adam”), even so (by means of His) grace (we believers) would reign (as king) through righteousness (because we are now “in Christ”) to eternal life (the resurrection life) through our union with Jesus Christ our Lord.

No matter how much sin increases in your life, a flood of God’s abundant grace comes in behind sin. God is always willing to give us another chance. That’s why the apostle Paul realized in Second Corinthians Chapter 12 that even though he has a body, and even though his body contains “the flesh,” which would torture him for all of his days in his earthly body, that God’s grace is sufficient for him because it would flood him abundantly!

As we turn our attention to Romans Chapter 6, Verses 1 and 2, Paul is asking you to consider the proper use of your freedom...

ROM 6:1

What shall we believers in Christ say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

ROM 6:2

May it never be! How shall we believers in Christ (such ones as we...the children of a King), who died to sin (as an established fact at the moment of our salvation), still live in sin (as if sin is still our master)?

We died to sin. Sin’s power over us was broken at the moment of our salvation. Are the children of a King to act like heathens? Are the children of a King to act like pagans? May it never be! God forbid it! Not no way...not no how!

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What is the proper use of your freedom?

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Let's read Romans Chapter 6 together as we investigate this question.

<READ ROMANS 6>

Romans Chapter 6

Take a five-minute break and we'll take a deeper look at the ways we use our freedom.

BREAK

*Awesome is the Lord Most High
Somewhere Over the Rainbow*

Welcome back! What is the proper use of your freedom?

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What is the proper use of your freedom?

That's the question we are asking ourselves. In doing so, we are dealing with the first questions Paul raises in Romans, Chapter 6, Verse 1.

ROM 6:1

What shall we believers in Christ say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

In other words, should we, as believers in Christ, use our freedom to commit sins? Is sinning, now that we have been given God's grace, the proper use of freedom? If your parents are wealthy, should you spend money like it is going out of style? I have seen the children of wealthy parents waste money when their parents are paying for things and then become frugal tightwads when they are spending their own money. Is that the proper use of freedom? If someone buys you something, should you mistreat the thing that has been bought? My mom bought many of my clothes from Goodwill Industries. She was shocked when I treated the clothes as if they were purchased new from a retail store. Is that the proper use of freedom? When you make a mistake, how do you use your freedom? Do you pull out the rubber hose to beat yourself up? Or do feel free to be encouraged by a mistake? I think

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many athletes misread a coach's reaction to a mistake. Most times when a coach reacts to a mistake they are so focused on winning the game they forget to be soft on the athlete. The athlete misreads the reaction as, "I can't make any mistakes." Coaches would love mistake free games. That's a great way to win, but it seldom happens. Athletes should ask the coach why they are reacting the way they do to mistakes.

By the way...when you are responsible for someone and the person makes a mistake, how do you react? What is the message your reaction sends? How do you use your leadership freedom?

The fact that God uses His freedom to grant us grace when we were sinners is an unfathomable concept to "the world," mostly because they would NEVER be graceful in any circumstance. The "world" holds people accountable. The world sees God's grace as a license to sin. The world thinks Christians are wimps because we "take advantage" of grace. They think we don't want to be accountable. The world sees grace as the freedom to do whatever they want. Free will is actually the reason we can do whatever we want. If you notice, when you are using your freedom improperly, God does not come down on you right away as "the world" claims he does. Ecclesiastes, Chapter 8, Verse 11 says...

ECC 8:11

Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

Romans, Chapter 6, Verse 1b...

ROM 6:1b

Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

Only a fool would think so. The fool says, "If God floods us with grace when we sin, why not sin more so we can get more grace?" It's equivalent to saying, "Since my parents are paying for everything, then I shouldn't really care how much I spend." Only a fool would think so. It's a pretty selfish view of the world. That's what Paul is dealing with in this first verse...the selfish among the Romans. The selfish ones say, "God has given us..."

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GOD HAS GIVEN US

Righteousness
Peace with God the Father
Justification
A Reign in Life
Life in the Sphere of Grace

“...why not exploit it for selfish ends?”

Only a fool would think so. What do slaves usually do when they are freed? They usually go right back to slavery! When we become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we switch “federal heads” ... we abandon Adam as our federal head and adopt Christ as our federal head. We move from being “in Adam” to being “in Christ.” Yet we seldom change lifestyles. We continue to run the “in Adam” lifestyle and present ourselves as available for the deeds of “the flesh.” We keep listening to the dead old man. Is that the proper use of freedom? Only a fool would think so.

From childhood, the Lord puts us into a classroom of freedom called the family. He places us under the guardianship of parents who help us learn how to live. We are completely dependent on them.

As teens, we learn how to make great decisions by making mistakes, using what we have been taught by our guardians. We learn a measure of independence.

If we’re lucky, we go to college, where we learn critical thinking skills so we can learn how to make great decisions by making mistakes, without the interference of our parent’s direct supervision. We REALLY learn independence if our parents let us. Most parents continue to interfere in a teen’s development while they are in college with the “I don’t want them to have it as hard as I had it” philosophy.

Finally, we become adults. You’re on your own. If you haven’t learned to enjoin others for help by this time, life can be quite a bummer. If you think about it, childhood, the teen years, and the college years are intensely selfish times for people. There is a lot of misused freedom during these times, and a lot of damage to our psyche, which must be undone at a point. What is the

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proper use of your freedom?

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What is the proper use of your freedom?

God expects us to use our freedom to place our complete faith in Him. Do you? God doesn't want us to use our freedom as Satan, His enemy, tempts us to...do you avoid listening to the kingdom of death?

The Promises of the Lord Jesus Christ

When God makes a promise...
it's a guarantee!

2PE 2:20-21

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own private interpretation, // for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men carried along by God the Holy Spirit spoke directly from the exact thinking of THE God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2TI 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness // so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2TI 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

CLOSING SONG

He's Been Faithful

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

THANKS - INTERCESSION - PETITION

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And we pray that You continue to shape the messages from this pulpit that are an accurate reflection of Your unconditional love, Your glorious Person, Your lucid thinking, Your impeccable work, and Your magnificent essence...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit, in Christ's name, Amen.

Thanks for coming...for watching...for listening!

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