



Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

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WebPage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: askoffice@askelm.com

Dear Associates and Friends,

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The title of this month's article uses a phrase that I do not like. The presentation by Dr. Ernest L. Martin is, "[Does Man Have a Free Will?](#)" from a 1983 audiotaped lecture that I transcribed and made into an article. This was the second article I have published about free will. The first was a 1995 lecture titled "[Free Will and Predestination.](#)" That article dealt specifically with salvation and its relation to free will.

This month's article asks the question whether free will exists for man and then discusses "free will" (if any) from your individual perspective and relates free will to your actions in everyday life. Are your smallest actions predetermined by God and under His control? Or, as a believer in God and Christ's resurrection are your actions in life entirely of your own control and volition? How free are you in your life?

Together, these two articles give a comprehensive biblical understanding of freedom, its limits, our wills, God's will, and how we should live within our limitations — physical, moral, and spiritual.

The concept behind the phrase "free will" is a philosophical construct probably beginning soon after Adam was created. Jewish and Christian theologians use the philosophical term in religious discussions and debates. The phrase "free will" does not occur anywhere in the Bible, yet it is commonly used. Dr. Martin uses the phrase in his two presentations for convenience and because it is conventional. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th edition defines "free will" as "**the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion.**"

As I point out in my July 17, 2010 Commentary "[Freedom Versus Choice](#)," we do not have freedom regarding what is important from God's point of view before we are believers in Christ. In general, what we have in life is "choice," not freedom. Most people consider freedom and "free will" to mean that constraints are absent or minimized in our lives. That is certainly not the case. Most of life's constraints remain no matter what our situation in life. Birth, physical limitations, and death, are just three of hundreds, probably thousands of constraints that we have in life over which we have no control.

Biblical Freedom

Biblically, before we were called of God we were not free but slaves — slaves of sin. If we possessed any freedom at all it was that we were free from something very important. The apostle Paul tells us how we were free: "**For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness**" (Romans 6:20). Yes, we had complete freedom from righteousness. It was impossible for us to perform any acts that God would count as righteous in regard to our salvation.

As believers our status has totally changed:

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end [the consummation] everlasting life [life eonian]."

• **Romans 6:22**

Before we were believers we were free from righteousness. Now we are free from sin. Quite a change! Note what else Christ has made us free from, and why we are no longer condemned before God:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. [Why?] For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

• **Romans 8:1-2**

We do not begin to be free until God opens our understanding to believe Christ's life, righteousness, death, and resurrection from the dead. You are no longer free from righteousness. Now you are capable of performing righteous acts for the benefit of other people and, as you will read in Dr. Martin's article, you begin to accrue reward for those righteous acts, if done for the right motives.

"... freedom in Christ is the true freedom of man's humanness. This true nature, not 'supernatural' but increaded, does throw light on human life, which in its manifold variations is in all sorts of ways enslaved to the powers of darkness. Man's nature, as God meant it to be and as He restores it and will restore it, stands before us in Jesus Christ — in the freedom in Christ — full of the rich perspectives of 'freedom from' as well as 'freedom for.'"

• **G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God***¹

Thank You

Everything that you do for ASK is voluntarily done by you, whether that be your contributions, book purchases, encouragements to us (by phone, email, or letter), or by your prayers on our behalf. If you feel compelled by God to do these things, rejoice also in that. We all benefit. We at ASK want to be proper servants of God. Any offering you are able to give helps pay for teachings that are available to the world, as God leads people to His truth.

We are extremely grateful to God and to you all. You sustain us and help us to continue doing what we voluntarily do, yet love to do — serving up excellent teachings that assist you in understanding biblical teachings in a clear and simple way. These teachings will help you to become more free in your lives, and protect you from domination by men who make claims to be Christ's ministers yet set themselves as mediators with God which is impossible for them to do. There is no human who is a mediator between you and the Father other than Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:4–6).

As children of God we have, as Paul phrases it, a **"glorious liberty"** (Romans 8:21). Therefore, stand fast in the liberty that you have in Christ: **"For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then, and be not again enthralled with the yoke of slavery"** (Galatians 5:1, Concordant Literal Version). With freedom comes responsibility:

"For you were called for freedom, brethren, only use not the freedom for an incentive to the flesh, but through love be slaving for one another."

• **Galatians 5:13, Concordant Literal Version**

Freedom brings great responsibility. Like many gifts, it is easily abused. It takes education to learn how to properly use freedom. Of course, we are not left without instruction available to us. We are to study the truth of God. Studying and then acting in accord with that truth will bring an increase of your individual freedom. This is exactly what Christ tells us:

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. ... If the Son therefore shall make you free [through His truth], you shall be free indeed."

• **John 8:32, 36**²

Use your freedom wisely and fully. Study and become more free as you learn more of the truth of God, using your freedom properly. Thank you for everything. God bless you all.

David W. Sielaff
david@askelm.com

¹ G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 329.

² See Dr. Martin's presentation "[What Is Truth?](#)" which shows that the concepts of truth, freedom, and God's will are all intricately interwoven with each other. See also Dr. Martin's article about religious institutions past and present, and how they operate in the world, "[Religion Is Slavery, Christianity is Freedom.](#)"