

**Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 2:16-17** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Granted Some Freedom, Together With Mandates From God

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READ: 1 Peter 2:16-17, with vv.9,12-15 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - God has designed and intends that we true believers are to be living in holiness, possessing a deep sincere brotherly love for one another, spiritually maturing in the faith, and serving God effectively. (vv.1:15,22; 2:2,5)
  - - Even though we true believers are essentially foreigners to the non-believers around us, our living in comprehensive goodness, producing good deeds, and submitting to every authority can have an attraction and substantial impact upon them becoming open to hearing about God. (vv.2:11,12,13-14)
  - - God uses our good 'submitting to authorities' and our 'doing good' as means to testify to non-believers that our goodness comes from His intrinsic goodness. (vv.2:13-15)
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v.16 - READ

[Lesson Question: Collectively brainstorm the meaning and ramifications of each phrase in verse 16. Be sure to also include content regarding the obvious link between the words "free", "freedom", and "servants". You can use the assistance from appropriately applicable cross-reference verses from 1 Peter and elsewhere in the Scriptures.]

SECTION POINT: God grants us freedom that is to be used appropriately as we live as His servants.

**"Live as free men,"**

- - As "a chosen people... belonging to God", therein we true believers are "free" and we "are called to be free". (v.9; Galatians 5:13)
- - We have been "called out of darkness" - called out of the enslavement of "sin being [our] master", and brought out of being under the enslavement of being convicted by the Old Testament "law". (1 Peter 2:9; Romans 6:14)
- - And now we have been brought "into His wonderful light" - brought into God's freedom by means of God's "grace" (undeserved favor), to be free from the enslavement of sin and the condemnation by the Old Testament law. (1 Peter 2:9; Romans 6:14,22)
- - So now "as [being] free", we true believers are to conduct ourselves "in a manner" that appropriately reflects that freedom we have been given graciously by God. (Strong's #5613 in 1 Peter 2:16)
- - For example, "as [being] free", we are to choose to willingly "submit... to every authority instituted among men" - in effect and in a sense willingly enslaving ourselves to human authorities that are over us, "[because of] the Lord's sake". (v.13)

**"but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil;"**

- - A mandate and warning are given here to not pervert or misuse our freedom from God - "not use [our] freedom as a cover-up for evil".
- - From the weakness of our sin nature, we are tempted, enticed, and lured into taking something good that God has given us, and we find ways to exploit that goodness from God to "cover" and hide our perpetrating and perpetuating of doing "evil", for our own carnal purposes, gratification, and gain.
- - Our freedom from God is not a license or permit to do all the evil that we want to do. (cf. Romans 6:1-2)
- - "Using our freedom" from God "as a cover-up for doing evil" is, in effect, re-enslaving ourselves to that which God has set us free - willfully returning to harmful effects and consequences of being enslaved to sin.

### **"live as servants of God."**

- - 'Rather than' re-enslaving ourselves to sin with its harmful effects and consequences, God has a better way for us true believers - "as servants of God", "slaves" to Him and therein "reaping" substantial blessings and "benefits" that result from "holy" and righteous living. (from Strong's #0235, omitted in *NIV*; Strong's #1401; Romans 6:22)
- - To be and exist "as [a genuine] servant of God" means that we cannot be a slave to evil - we cannot serve these two masters; we can serve one or the other, but not both. (cf. Matthew 6:24)
- - To be a genuine "servant of God" furthermore implies that we comprehensively are a servant of Him - willingly and fully serving God according to His will, as He supplies opportunities during each day.
- - In order to be a genuine "servant of God", we do not hold anything back, anything in reserve, anything that is off-limits to submitting to God.
- - As a genuine "servant of God", we must be totally submitting, comprehensively submitting, and fully yielding to God - fully and intentionally yielding to His control of our thinking / speaking / behaviors / actions, and fully yielding to His will for us for each moment of each day. (cf. Romans 6:13)
  
- - An interesting dynamic to note here is that our freedom came at a price to God - "[we] were bought at a price" and therein "[we] are not [our] own". (1 Corinthians 6:20,19)
- - This dynamic of being bought by God and not having exclusive ownership of ourselves sounds just like the historic phenomenon of slaves being bought by new (human) masters.
- - Those slaves were legally purchased as property of a (human) master, and therein they did not have self-ownership nor self-determining rights.
- - In effect, their full compliant service was purchased and duly owed to the (human) master who purchased them.
- - As evident in the context of verses 18 and 13-14 and the Greek definition of "servant" in verse 16, that kind of wording of 'slave being purchased by a human master' was intentionally utilized here in verse 16 to describe God's purchase and ownership of true believers - "a people belonging to God" (v.9).
- - Therein in an appropriate and legal sense, we true believers should not consider that we have self-ownership or self-determining rights.
- - Instead, we should consider that God owns us and He owns our rights of self-determining.

- - Furthermore, we should consider that our full compliant service was purchased and is duly owed to our divine master who purchased us, and particularly so because He paid such a high price for each of us - an unfathomable lingering torturous death on a cross.
  - - Our divine master grants us freedom, but that freedom has attached conditions, limits, expectations, and assignments, as evident here in verse 16 for example.
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## v.17 - READ

[Lesson Question: Collectively compile an expanded description of each phrase in verse 17. Analytical thinking, common sense, logical conclusions, situational awareness, and experiential wisdom will be helpful in accomplishing this task. And of course, you can use the assistance from appropriately applicable cross-reference verses from 1 Peter and elsewhere in the Scriptures.]

SECTION POINT: We are to genuinely possess and extend respect, love, reverence, and honor - as God instructs in verse 17.

### **"Show proper respect to everyone:"**

- - This command is all-inclusive - it applies to "everyone", to all humans.
- - We true believers are to always extend respect to all humans.
- - Therein, we are to recognize and "value" all humans as being worthy and deserving of our "respect", esteem, "honor", high regard, and considerate treatment because foremost they are fellow humanoids, regardless of their sex, race, age, language, culture, religion, lifestyle, appearance, and etcetera. (Strong's #5091 with *AHD* - to 'honor', to 'respect', to 'prize')
- - This valuation of humans is to form and comprise one's attitude that is then coupled with action - valuing, possessing, and extending "respect" and honor to each of them.
- - Of course, this extending of "respect" and honor to every human precludes possessing or hiding or "covering-up" any underlying negative attitude or regard that is condescending, arrogant, haughty, contemptuous, disdainful, scornful, and etcetera. (v.16)
- Our respectful and honoring attitude and regard for every human needs to be genuine and pure, even if their behaviors are, for examples,;
  - - - - hurtful (v.18 - "with all respect... also to those who are harsh");
  - - - - judgmentally ignorant, foolish, and in error (v.15 - "ignorant talk of foolish men");
  - - - - gossipy accusatory (v.12 - "live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong...").
- - It is interesting to note here that by God mandating that we "show proper respect" to every human no matter if they inflict harm on us, we true believers are 'Called To [appropriately respond to situations in which we] Endure Unjust Suffering' - the recommended theme of the Book of 1 Peter.
- - Also interesting to note that by possessing and extending "respect" and honor to every human even when they are hurtful to us, we testify about our divine master - "declaring the praises" of His character, His values. (v.9)
- - And we testify about our faith, which "the pagans... may see" originates from our divine master - demonstrating the strength of our faith, and making visible a virtuous quality of our faith. (v.12)

## **"Love the brotherhood of believers,"**

- - Another command here is "love the brotherhood of believers", which is previously stated in verse 1:22 that expands to include "sincere love" and "love one another deeply, from the heart".

- - Likewise implied here, every person in "the brotherhood of believers" is worthy of and deserves our respect, honor, and also explicitly our "love".

-- In order to better analyze this command, perhaps "the brotherhood of believers" can be distinguished in 3 categories of persons that typically exist in a church or ministry:

### 1. Leaders (those persons who function in a leadership role):

- - The leaders function at the top of and usually out in front of church and ministry groups, so we see them frequently and watch them closely.

- - We expect them to be shining examples of what a "servant of God" is suppose to be but they are not perfect.

- - Their flaws, shortcomings, and sin nature manifestations are easy to see, due to their high visibility functioning and extensive involvement that their leadership position thrusts them into.

- - Therein, it is easy to become dismayed and critical of them because some of their behaviors are distinctly contrary to the godly virtues that they themselves teach and promote.

- - Our obligation from God here is to genuinely possess and extend "love" to each of the leaders in our "brotherhood of believers".

- - We need to always be mindful that our ministry leaders are in process of progressively becoming more sanctified and holy - just like all of the rest of us believers are.

- - And therefore, we must actively and persistently resist temptations to be critical of the leaders in our "brotherhood of believers".

### 2. Ordinary workers (those persons who do the logistical work):

- - Our expectations of ordinary workers are considerably lower than that for ministry leaders, and so we are not shocked when their sin nature manifests frequently.

- - But yet it is difficult to be patient with them because they have been taught the Scriptures and thereby they know how to live in righteousness but they are failing significantly in some or many areas.

- - Likewise being obligated to genuinely possess and extend love to each of the ordinary workers in our "brotherhood of believers", we are to choose to "love" them and have deep compassion on them, like Jesus had on the crowds that followed Him.

(Matthew 14:14; 9:36; Mark 6:34)

- - Being always mindful that the ordinary workers in our "brotherhood of believers" are for whatever reasons currently stuck or enslaved in their frequent sinful behaviors, we wait patiently for them to mature in the faith.

- - And we bear with them in love and respect so that peace and unity in the Body of Christ is maintained and ministry is appropriately conducted. (Colossians 3:13,12)

### 3. Pew occupiers (those persons who do essentially nothing more than fill a seat in the pew):

- - For those persons of the pew occupiers who are indeed true believers, we need to drastically lower our expectations of them to near zero, because they are choosing not to produce fruit for the Kingdom of God.  
- - Therein, our respect and love for them is primarily based on hope that one-day they will choose to clean up their life and start producing fruit for the Kingdom of God - that somehow they will become motivated to substantially mature in the faith. (1 Peter 2:1-2)  
- - Meanwhile, we "love" them profusely and look for ways to "spur [them] on to love and good deeds". (Hebrews 10:24)

- - As a general statement of reality, the ones that are easy to love - are easy to love.  
- - The ones that are difficult to love - will likely remain difficult to love, so we love them nevertheless.

### **"fear God,"**

- - The next command here is "fear God".  
-- For true believers, to "fear God" carries two aspects in its meaning:  
- - - - extreme respect - to the extent of bordering just barely short of being substantively "afraid, frightened, or terrified"; (Zodhiates #5399 on p.1449)  
- - - - "revere" - "to recognize, regard, and express with great awe, admiration, adoration, worship, devotion, love". (Strong's #5399; AHD - 'revere', with Zodhiates #5399 on p.1449)  
- - In order to be established properly in the spiritual heart of true believers, this kind of 'extreme respect' and 'revere' of God obviously necessitates a fairly substantial and correct understanding about God.  
- - It also necessitates a fairly substantial and correct understanding about the position or standing that true believers have before God.  
- - Therefore, ample teaching directly from the Scriptures pertaining to appropriate "fearing God" is required in order to attain this understanding about what "fearing God" should be for true believers.  
- - And to the contrary by default, very little or no teaching about "fearing God" will leave true believers to their own natural assumptions or to their past acquisitions from worldly sources about "fearing God", which they were exposed to before they became a true believer.  
- - For true believers, a balanced, healthy, scripturally-correct "fearing God" is a crucial and indispensable core component and motivation for attaining spiritual maturity that bears much fruit for the Kingdom of God.  
- - It is prudent to note here that "fearing God" is profoundly different for non-believers, which for them involves facing the certainty that the wrath of God will be forced upon them in the form of being eternally severely punished for all of their sins - if they do not properly place their faith in Jesus before the moment they die on this earth. (John 3:16-18)

### **"honor the king."**

- - The final command listed in this verse is "honor the king".  
- - The "king" is the person at the top of the government that rules over the country that we are located in.  
- - By implication, honoring the "king", or president, or prime minister would include honoring all of the political persons at all levels of the governmental system that govern, rule, and exert authority over us.

- - To "honor" can be defined as: "to hold in respect; to show respect to; to esteem; to confer distinction on; to accept as valid"; "to appreciate; to recognize the value of". (AHD - to "honor", to "prize", from Strong's #5091)
- - From this definition, to "honor" the king or political authority person is firstly a regard that we develop, based on evaluation from observations of the person and his/her governing activities.
- - Upon forming and establishing a regard, we then naturally produce comments about that political authority person, which derive from and reflect our evaluation of that person.
- - In some cases or at times, we may proceed further, beyond making comments, into taking an action that likewise reflects our evaluation of that person, for example passing around a joke or cartoon picture about that political authority person.
- - To "honor the king" or politician is fairly easy when we like what he/she is doing.
- - The problem here arises when we do not agree with or strongly oppose his/her policies, or programs, or handling of crises, or moral values, or personal conduct, and etcetera.
- - Fueled by our disagreement of or strong opposition to that political authority person, we naturally resort to extending about that person dishonor, disrespect, slander, exaggerations, falsehoods, disparaging, ridicule, disdain, scorn, mocking, and perhaps even disobedience, anarchy, rioting, rebellion, and etcetera.
- - For this command to "honor the king", a reasonable conclusion would be that everything that true believers engage in regarding political authority persons is to comprehensively conform to all that God mandates for the behaviors of His true believers.
- - All of our regard, our comments, and our actions towards political authority persons and governmental systems need to be honoring and respectful, in addition to being submissive, for example as cited in verse 13.
- - It is interesting to note here that by God mandating that we appropriately respond to and endure all that political authority persons and governmental systems impose on us, in a way, we true believers are being 'Called to Endure Unjust Suffering' - the recommended theme of the Book of 1 Peter.

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BIG IDEA: God grants us true believers some freedom, together with mandates of service, respect, love, reverence, and honor that He also has for us.

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#### APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

- - For those of you here who are true believers, are you consistently conducting yourself in an appropriate manner in regard to the freedom that God has graciously given us?
- - Or are you perverting that freedom in order to accommodate your own hidden sinful purposes or agenda? Think about this for a few moments and be honest with yourself. Do you have hidden sinful purposes or agenda? In this church or a ministry?

- - Also be completely honest with yourself about this one, too: Are you a genuine "servant of God"?
- - Or are you a pretender? Or are you partially a "servant of God" - when it is convenient for you, or acceptable to you, or within your comfort zone?
  
- - Do you serve God comprehensively, fully yielding to His will?
- - Or do you hold back, or hold as off-limits some aspects in your life that you do not want to be in submission to God or in service to God? Think about this for a few moments and be honest with yourself.
  
- - Are you entirely respectful to everyone? Always?
- - Or do you secretly harbor an underlying negative attitude and regard for certain kinds of people?
- - Or worse yet, do you openly perpetrate disrespect to people sometimes, for example to store clerks who messed up your order or your purchase?
  
- - Do you have a genuine and deep love for all of the believers in our brotherhood? If so, are you sure?
- - Or do you harbor a critical attitude towards those believers whom you dislike or who are difficult to get along with?
  
- - Do you genuinely and appropriately fear, respect, and revere God?
- - Or from this teaching, do you need to adjust and refine your fear of God so that it aligns better with what the Scriptures say and mean?
  
- - Do you always have an "honoring" regard of all political authority persons and governmental systems, with comments and actions that likewise extend honor towards them?
- - If this question riles you up, then the truth is your answer is "No", and indeed you at minimum harbor at least some dishonor towards them. So now what are you going to do about your breaking of this command to God to "honor the king"?
  
- - For those of you who are not true believers, even though the numerous commands in these verses sound restrictive and controlling, be aware that all of them fall within God's requirements of righteous living that He holds for humans, and for which He will hold each human exhaustively accountable for on Judgment Day. (Romans 14:10-12)
- - Also be aware that following these commands is for our good, our benefit - not only for us personally but for other people around us, and in some cases the benefits lasting for eternity.

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