

## **Am I Free?**

**By David Wright**

In our culture personal freedom is the ultimate value. Americans are immensely proud of their liberty to speak, write, worship, travel, work, and live as they please. It is this freedom that all of us will celebrate on Monday.

While personal liberty is a great thing, attaining absolute freedom is impossible. Any freedom we enjoy is counterbalanced by certain limitations. Consider, for instance, our cherished freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment. Americans can say what they think. Even the lowliest person may openly criticize the President, a Supreme Court Justice, or a U.S. Senator. However, this liberty means that we ourselves may be publicly criticized by political adversaries. A citizen is free to share his thoughts, but he cannot express his opinions with no risk of censure or hostility.

The same principle is operative in relation to spiritual freedom. Paul says that “our old self was crucified with [Jesus] so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin” (Rom. 6:6-7). Freedom from sin is a wonderful thing, but our liberty is not absolute. When we decide to turn our back on sin, we are at the same time choosing to turn our face toward the Lord. Paul thanks God that “you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness” (v. 18). In other words, we cannot be free of sin and free of submission to God at the same time.

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