

# CHAPTER 14

## FREEDOM: NOT ANTINOMIANISM

**F**or 20 years, my family lived in San Jose, California. It is located at the southern end of the San Francisco Bay in Silicon Valley and is enclosed on three sides by mountains. To go to the beach, there were two main ways. One way, the shortest, was only 20 miles, but it was on a winding, dangerous road up and over a mountain. The other way, the longest, was about 40 miles, but went through two passes and was a relatively safe drive.

When my daughter was in high school, we did not allow her to drive her car over the mountain or go with any friend if they drove to the beach in that direction. She would have to drive around the long way. It was my rule and was non-negotiable. You can imagine the peer pressure from her friends. “What do you mean, you cannot go over the ‘hill’ to the beach? You have to be kidding!” But, it was also a character building experience! Nevertheless I would hear, “Why can’t I go the short way like everyone else?” Then, I would repeat my concern about the hazardous conditions of that road. She knew I loved her and I had her best in mind.

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In the same way, believers should have confidence in the good intentions of their heavenly Father when He established rules. We might not completely understand, but His ways are always for our good, our protection, and our growth. God wants us to trust Him.

### Nomism

As the title of this chapter indicates, biblical freedom is not antinomianism. You might be thinking to yourself, “what is antinomianism?” It comes from a Greek word *nomos* that means *law*. The added suffix *ism* designates adherence to a particular practice or principle, while the prefix *anti* specifies being against something or someone. Hence, antinomianism (anti + *nomos* + *ism*) means to be *against the practice of law keeping*. In the same sense antiterrorism is to be against the practice of terrorism.

Notice the chapter title again. It says that freedom is *not* against keeping the law. While most would assume that freedom must be against all laws, because true freedom would necessitate having no restraints. Nevertheless that is not biblical thinking. In the Scripture freedom is always associated with keeping the law. A brief review of the Scriptures is important.

#### **Old Testament Nomism**

##### *Intention*

As we discussed in chapter 12, there always have been rules that God expected His people to keep. In the Old Testament beginning with Adam and extending to the Nation of Israel, it was always man’s responsibility to obey God. They were expected to demonstrate a law-keeping or *nomistic lifestyle*.<sup>1</sup> It is important to remember that the Mosaic Law was given to a redeemed nation (justified before God through faith), as they left Egypt. The Law was their *rule of life*—the means for successfully living in communion with God and in community with one another.<sup>2</sup> It was the very means of experiencing fellowship with God.

The commands, both the dos and don’ts, were to focus their

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attention toward the law-Giver. God's Words were to be *internalized* ("to inscribed My commandments on your mind," Prov 3:3; 7:2-3), with the Word being fleshed out in life by loving God and loving others—the very essence of the Decalogue. Consequently for those focused on the law-Giver, they "wanted to" keep the Mosaic Law!

### *Perversion*

While that was God's intent of the Mosaic Law, we find, particularly in the Gospels and Acts, that many Jewish religious leaders had twisted the Law from a *God-focused lifestyle* to a *rule-focused lifestyle*. In so doing, they created a legalistic system enabling individuals to supposedly amass merit and favor with God.<sup>3</sup> Misguided, they promoted a *legalistic way of living* based on the presumption that men's works could both establish a relationship with God ("getting in") and also sustain fellowship with God ("staying in"). This approach focused on rule-keeping, "having to" keep an *externalized* Mosaic Law. They were *doing the right thing* unfortunately *for the wrong reason*.

### **New Testament Nomism**

#### *Intention*

Even though the established Mosaic religious system was fundamentally legalistic, there remained those in Judaism who...

understood Torah observance not as merit-amassing, but as a gladsome response to a loving God who had acted on his people's behalf and who asked that they in turn identify themselves as his people by keeping his ordinances.<sup>4</sup>

When these individuals with a Jewish heritage trusted in Christ, they were no longer under the Mosaic Law (Rom 6:14-15). Yet, some, but not all "first-century Jewish Christians were certainly 'nomistic' (i.e., expressing their Christian convictions in their lifestyle in ways compatible with Jewish traditions)."<sup>5</sup> In fact...

the apostles had evidently not disturbed converted Jews who wished to pursue their ancestral lifestyle under the Mosaic

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system. They were free to do so if they desired, and—as we learn from Acts 21:15-25—there were many of them who so desired.<sup>6</sup>

They were Jewish Christians continuing to live out a *God-focused nomistic lifestyle*.

At the same time another nomistic lifestyle came into view in the New Testament. Christians are “no longer under [Mosaic] law but under grace” (Rom 6:14).<sup>7</sup> Notice that a transition occurred from one rule of life to another for those in Christ. We are no longer under the Mosaic Law’s authority, but instead under grace as the rule of life. One author saw it this way...

If...*nomos* in Rom. 6:14,15 is a reference to the *Mosaic economy* (contrasted with the Christian economy, referred to by one of its chief characteristics, grace), then believers could very well be freed from obligation to *nomos* while being required to observe the “commandments” (now mediated through Christ and the apostles).<sup>8</sup>

“To put it another way, we are not under the Old Covenant [under the Mosaic law], we are under the New Covenant [under grace and the law of Christ].”<sup>9</sup> While no longer obligated to the Mosaic Law, we are now “under the law of Christ” (1 Cor 9:21) as our rule of life. Even though the New Covenant was initiated at Pentecost, its final and complete fulfillment awaits the return of Christ when God “will write [inscribe] them [His laws] on their hearts [minds]” (Heb 8:10).<sup>10</sup> As with the Saints of old whose responsibility was to inscribe the “Mosaic Law” in their mind (Prov 3:3; 7:2-3), in a foreshadowing manner Christians likewise are to inscribe the “law of Christ” in their mind.<sup>11</sup> Internalized, this new rule of life (“law of liberty,” James 1:25; “law of Christ,” Gal 6:2) sets forth the responsibilities of the Christian for a successful *God-focused nomistic lifestyle, doing the right thing for the right reason*.

### *Perversion*

In the Old Testament, God’s intention of a God-focused life

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degenerated into a rules-focused lifestyle. Unfortunately this same pattern took place in the Church and continues even to today. In Galatians Paul addressed this issue. “Galatians is principally concerned with [Jewish] ‘nomism’ or whether Gentiles who believe in Christ must also be subject to the directives of the Mosaic law.”<sup>12</sup> Notice that the concern was not if Jewish Christians could “pursue their ancestral lifestyle.” Again, “Paul saw it as perfectly legitimate for Jewish Christians to express their faith in Jesus through the traditional Jewish practices.”<sup>13</sup> In this case, however, the issue was whether Gentile Christians are required to follow the Mosaic Law as their rule of life.<sup>14</sup>

With respect to the Christian life in both Galatians and Romans, Paul contrasts the [Mosaic] law with grace as two antithetical governing principles “when conceived as rules of life for God’s people.”<sup>15</sup> The Judaizers, Jewish Christians, which came to Galatia must have assumed that the freedom in Christ possessed by these Gentile Christians would certainly lead to license if they didn’t have the moral compass of the Mosaic law. They neglected to understand the purpose of the law of Christ as the rule of life under grace.<sup>16</sup> Remember...

The New Testament speaks of the “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25), the “royal law” (James 2:8), the “law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2) and the “law of the Spirit of life” (Rom. 8:2). It is, of course, the specific commands of the New Testament that compose the law of Christ, and it is not difficult to remember that there are hundreds of such commands. They cover every area of life and they are so definite that they may be termed a law. And they are a vital part of what it means to be “under grace.”<sup>17</sup>

Paul stood firmly against the demand for Gentile Christians to be under Jewish nomism, an external obedience to a set of rules, for living the Christian life. Rather than placing themselves under a Jewish law-centered way of life, Gentile Christians were to center their focus on God. As a result of internalizing the law of Christ, the believer is instinctively and naturally *doing the right thing for the right reason*.

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### Legalism

To understand the meaning of legalism we first must understand what legalism is *not*. “It is of primary importance to understand that legalism is not the presence of laws.”<sup>18</sup> Law-keeping doesn’t automatically or necessarily indicate a form of legalism. As explained under nomism, whether in the Old or New Testament God’s people were intended to live lives focused on God. On the other hand, those who sought a rules-oriented life are the primary candidates for the designation of legalism. Since legalism can be defined as “the view that one is justified or sanctified by keeping God’s laws,”<sup>19</sup> the issue is the *why you do*, what you do—your motivation.

Make note of the following. “It cannot be emphasized too strongly that having to do something is not legalism, but the wrong attitude [motivation] toward doing it is.”<sup>20</sup> That was true of the law of Moses as well as for the law of Christ. In fact, both a legalist and a non-legalist keep laws and “both give a least outward conformity to the law under which they are living.”<sup>21</sup> And as a final note, since biblical legalism has to do with rules found in the Bible, “a preoccupation with a lot of negative rules which are not explicit in the Bible is not legalism at all.”<sup>22</sup>

#### **Justification Legalism**

Galatians 2:16 and 21 clearly spoke to this issue: “A man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus” (v 16). “If righteousness comes through the Law [Mosaic Law], then Christ died needlessly” (v 21). If there was any basis of salvation other than Christ’s work on the cross, then man’s work could possibly be a means of salvation. But that is a biblical impossibility. Only by placing one’s faith in Christ for eternal life is rebirth possible and thus being declared righteous (justified) before God. Biblical faith is not tricky or complex. Rather it’s merely trust, a persuasion of the truthfulness of Christ’s promise of eternal life.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, works are *not* a means of gaining, proving, keeping, or assuring salvation. In fact, to commingle any idea of works with faith is unsupportable from Scripture.

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The events that led up to the Council of Jerusalem concerned justification legalism. “Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’” (Acts 15:1). Clearly these men, presumably from the Pharisaical sect, taught that Gentiles could not experience salvation unless they followed the Mosaic Law as well as place faith in Christ. Notice the justification-legalism requirement: “got to” obey in order to “get in” a saving relationship with God. This legalist is, therefore, *doing the wrong thing for the wrong reason*, trying to amass merit to *gain* God’s favor.

### **Sanctification Legalism**

When the Judaizers came to Galatia, they required Gentile Christians “to accept a Jewish nomistic lifestyle” in order that they might “have clear guidance as to what is right and wrong, and so be able to live a life that pleases God.”<sup>24</sup> This is the identical contention of the believing Pharisees at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:5), but different from the Pharisees in Acts 15:1. These converted Pharisees felt “that even Gentile Christians definitely needed the [Mosaic] law as their rule of life.”<sup>25</sup> Paul responded that Christians are no longer under [Mosaic] law. Rather, the law of Christ was the rule of law for Gentile Christians. In fact, for a Gentile Christian to strive to keep the Mosaic Law as the rule of life is legalism.<sup>26</sup> Notice then the sanctification-legalism demand: “got to” obey in order to “stay in” fellowship with God. This type legalist is, therefore, *doing the wrong thing for the wrong reason*, trying to amass merit to *retain* God’s favor.

Paul’s personal life as a Christian, which he explained in Romans 7, gives us insight into his former legalistic lifestyle. Crying out he proclaimed, “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?” (v 24). His predicament was the product of fleshly rule-centered choices, a result both of his Pharisaical tradition and his infancy in Christ, colliding with his desire to do the right thing. This misguided pursuit of life led to failure and frustration. That is until he progressively assimilated the biblical principles of being free from sin (6:7, 18) and being free from the Mosaic Law (7:4, 6) in concert with

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living with respect to the Spirit's influence (Rom 8:4-5). Consequently, he progressed from a "got to" to a "want to" mind-set, with internalized truth overflowing into life choices and behavior. Nevertheless, up to that point Paul lived with a Jewish Christian's legalistic perspective, *doing the right things for the wrong reason.*

### License

When Paul penned chapter 5 of Galatians, he once again pleaded with his Gentile converts to "not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" (v 1b). While slavery evidently referred to their former paganistic worldview, Paul explained that to place oneself under the Mosaic Law "was a renunciation of freedom and a return 'again' to slavery" (vv 2-12).<sup>27</sup> Then Paul moved on from legalism, adopting a Jewish nomistic lifestyle evidenced in "the works of the [Mosaic] Law," to the next section of the letter addressing license, adopting a lawless way of life evidenced by "the works of the flesh" (vv 19-21a).<sup>28</sup>

Paul stated the threat of lawlessness to Christian freedom: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh" (v 13). Remember there are restrictions, those dos and don'ts, in the "law of Christ." All are the commands of Christ and the apostles. These instructions, given to guide us for living a fruitful Christian life, are referred to in the Great Commission when Jesus said, "Make disciples...teaching them to observe [obey] all that I commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Nevertheless, the inclination to sin in each of us has a way of swaying those now freed from sin to choose self-indulgent, self-gratifying, self-exalting behavior. At that moment we are lawbreakers. Seeking to satisfy our own wants, love for self over takes us. When sin becomes the pattern, we are living a lawless lifestyle. "Not to obey the law of Christ is lawlessness;" it is license.<sup>29</sup>

### Liberty

We Americans claim "to live in the land of the free" and say, "You can do anything you want to do in this country." Well, sort of! If you



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want to drive a car, you must be a certain age and pass both a written and performance test before you can drive anywhere. If you want to start a business, you best consult lawyers and accountants to make sure you follow every state statute. Unfortunately we Christians possess that American “can-do-it” spirit when we say, “We are free in Christ!”

Believers in Christ have indeed been set free from sin (Rom 6:7) and the Mosaic Law (7:6). That is set free positionally. Nevertheless, being set free, based on the work of Christ, doesn’t automatically translate into everyday life. That was Paul’s line of reasoning in the latter portion of Romans 6. There he taught that in practice we became slaves to whatever/whomever we obey (vv 16, 18). If we are influenced by our propensity to sin, we will be self-indulgent, becoming slaves of sin. On the other hand, if we engage in godly behavior as we live according to God’s rule of life, we are slaves of obedience and righteousness. Paradoxically, freedom and slavery go hand in hand. Rules are part of our liberty in Christ.

In Romans 8 Paul addressed the choices each believer confronts each day—to live with respect to either our sinful flesh or the Spirit (vv 4-8). While the influence of the flesh comes from the world, the Spirit’s influence is through the Word as He teaches and leads the believer. Obviously, each Christian must choose—sin or righteousness—flesh or Spirit.

When we turn again to Galatians 5, the biblical concepts of liberty, legalism and license intersect. Verse 1a sets the stage: “It was for freedom that Christ set us free.” A more accurate translation would be “For freedom [liberty] Christ set us free [liberated us].” Notice that Christian freedom from sin is understood as the very purpose for which the believer is liberated.<sup>30</sup> Unbelievers are spiritually dead in their sins and therefore live “indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph 2:1-3). Nevertheless, when God “made us alive,” saving us (vv 5, 8), our unregenerate self “was crucified with [Christ], in order that our body of sin might be [rendered inoperative], so that we would no longer be slaves to sin” (Rom 6:6). As discussed previously, when a person is made alive, God frees him from sin, rendering sin’s pull on the believer potentially inoperative. Consequently, he is no longer in bondage to sin. But as the latter portion of Romans 6 explains,

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the believer has two options: be a slave of God and righteousness or be a slave of sin—please God or please self—love God or love self (vv 16ff).

Back to Galatians 5:1a. “Christ liberated us” from sin so that we might experience “freedom.” The Christian is *free to make choices* that please God or satisfy himself. Christian freedom is a sanctification issue, not justification. That is why Paul warns Gentile Christians *first* not to be obligated to the Mosaic Law, meaning *legalism* (vv 1b-4), and *second* not to pursue lawless behavior, meaning *license* (v 13). In verse 13, Paul reminded them, “You were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Notice that freedom brings an “opportunity” for either loving self or loving others.

### Legalism, License, and Liberty Compared

We have addressed how liberty, legalism and license relate to one another. Now consider how they are different. *Legalism* is associated with the “law of Moses” and is manifest by “the works of the law,” keeping the Law. *License* involves one’s “fleshly inclination to sin” and is demonstrated in “the works of the flesh” (Gal 5:19-21a). *Liberty*, when directed toward righteousness, relates to the “law of Christ” and is shown by “the fruit of the Spirit” (vv 22-23a). On the other hand, when liberty is centered on sin, it results in either legalism or license.

When the actions of a Christian, *what you do*, are compared (see chart 14-1), keeping the law is associated with both legalism and liberty. They differ in respect to the influencing agent: legalism is influenced by sinful flesh leading to slavery to sin, while liberty is influenced by the Spirit resulting in slavery to God. Since license does not recognize any of the law’s demands, being swayed by sinful flesh, the outcome is naturally slavery to sin. Notice then *why you do* what you do (see chart 14-2). Legalism is driven by self-love and accumulating merit to gain God’s approval. Not requiring anyone’s approval, license is concerned only with self-interest. On the other hand, liberty redirects the interest of a person from himself to God and others.

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**14-1** *Why You Do, **WHAT YOU DO!***

	What		Influence		Result	
	Keeps Law	Violates Law	Respect to Flesh	Respect to Spirit	Slavery to Sin	Slavery to God
<b>Legalism</b> (Unbiblical Requirements)	X		X		X	
<b>License</b> (No Requirements)		X	X		X	
<b>Liberty</b> (Biblical Requirements)	X			X		X

**14-2** ***WHY YOU DO,** What You do!*

	Loving Self	Gaining Merit	Loving Others	Loving God
<b>Legalism</b> (Unbiblical Requirements)	X	X		
<b>License</b> (No Requirements)	X			
<b>Liberty</b> (Biblical Requirements)			X	X

### Antinomianism

While at seminary I cleaned swimming pools to support our family. On the first day I went to clean a particular pool I opened the

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gate that led to the pool's pump. Unbeknown to me the gate not only led to another enclosure where the pump was actually located but it opened up to an enormous dog run. That's when I met them—two large Labrador Retrievers, one tan and the other black. Since that breed is typically friendly, I wasn't concerned as they began to sprint toward me. At a distance of some twenty-five feet I noticed the large white teeth of the black one. Now I was concerned. In fact, so concerned I made a hasty exit.

I went to ask the owner if there was another way to the pump, thinking he could either control the dogs or allow them inside while I cleaned the pool. The owner assured me they both were harmless and loved people. He said, "The black one actually smiles when she sees someone." No, I had not noticed the wagging tail, only the teeth. From that day on the dogs and I were great friends. My biggest problem was keeping them out of the pool.

### **Gaining Perspective**

With new information, your perspective may change. A big dog that shows its teeth may not be bad at all. The same goes for your understanding of the Scripture. You might hold a position on a particular theological issue, but after study and consideration you may conclude your previous understanding needs to adjust to match the author's original intention.

My hope is that the following discussion will clearly provide the distinction between the two major ways antinomianism is perceived. The controversy centers squarely on one's view of salvation—how one is saved. Consequently, the perspective you hold is of critical importance.

As we delve into these two different approaches, we need to keep in mind that antinomianism (anti + *nomos* + ism) means to be *against the practice of keeping the law*. But that concept must be filtered through the backdrop of biblical nomistic lifestyles found in the Old as well as the New Testaments. And in addition, we need to consider that biblical freedom is *not* against the practice of keeping the law, but rather it always requires it. Holding these issues in equilibrium is difficult in the best of circumstances. Nevertheless you must decide which viewpoint actually can keep them in balance.

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### **Theological Approach**

#### *Position*

One proponent of this Theological Approach wrote, “It is important to understand the term *antinomianism* in its theological sense.”<sup>31</sup> He went on to distinguish his own theological bent regarding so-called antinomians, *those against the practice of law keeping*, and wrote (numbers added for reference to key words or phrases)—

1 Most antinomians...minimize the relationship between obedience and faith...2 Antinomians do not necessarily despise the law of God; they simply believe it is irrelevant to saving faith...3 In short, antinomianism is the belief that allows for justification without sanctification...4 antinomianism tends to see justification by faith as the whole of God’s saving work...5 Antinomian discussions of salvation typically omit any consideration of practical holiness. 6 They emphasize justification by faith and Christian freedom to such an extreme that they become unbalanced, fearful of talking about personal righteousness, obedience, the Law of God, or anything but the purely forensic aspects of salvation.<sup>32</sup>

As stated the theological view essentially holds the position that antinomians differentiate between justification and sanctification to the extent that they neglect to address personal holiness for salvation.

#### *Evaluation*

From the extended quotation above, we will select key words or phrases in order to evaluate this viewpoint.

#### Law of God (2, 6)

When this spokesman refers to the Law of God, he is addressing the Mosaic Law, particularly the moral law.<sup>33</sup> The argument for this position is based on another theological assumption, understanding that the instructions within the Mosaic Law are segmented into moral, civil, and ceremonial categories and that only the moral commands continue to

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be valid for the Church today.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, the civil laws, which concerned interrelationships in Israel, and the ceremonial laws, which addressed worship, are no longer valid today. From this perspective, not only must the questionable assumption that the Mosaic Law have three parts be accurate, but even more troubling this position is essentially identical to the Judaizers in Galatians. Gentile believers must be under the Mosaic Law, at least the moral aspect, and must embrace the Jewish nomistic lifestyle, which as you recall is *sanctification legalism*.

### Justification without Sanctification (3)

Saying that antinomians teach justification without personal holiness, this advocate holds the view that justification and sanctification must be combined for salvation. Antinomianism is supposedly characterized by the following—

- *minimize the relationship between obedience [sanctification] and faith [justification]* (1)
- *allows for justification without sanctification* (3)
- *see justification by faith as the whole of God's saving work* (4)
- *discussions of salvation typically omit any consideration of practical holiness [sanctification]* (5)
- *justification by faith...unbalanced...[regarding] personal righteousness, obedience, the Law of God [sanctification]* (6)
- *justification by faith...[is] purely forensic [judicial] aspects of salvation* (v 6)

This view holds “salvation” to be a mixing of justification by faith and sanctification by holy living (see 5, 6 and the next issue).<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the Theological Approach neglects to clearly distinguish justification from sanctification. Obviously they are related: justification (judicially declared righteous) comes before sanctification (living righteously) can become a reality. Justification is *the basis for* sanctification. Salvation is *God's work*, providing spiritual life to the spiritually dead, while sanctification is the *believer's work*, choosing to live righteously as influenced by the Spirit. The biblical requirement is

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that life must first be possessed before it can be lived out. That is *not* the view of the Theological Approach.

### Saving Faith (2)

Tied to the above issue for those who adhere to this view, “saving faith” is a complex term that combines faith with works. This is the reason they say that antinomians “simply believe [the law of God] is irrelevant to saving faith” (2) and “see justification by faith as the whole of God’s saving work” (4). Their position is that works are necessary for salvation since “saving faith” requires them. I hope you understand that this reasoning is a form of *justification legalism*. Combining faith and works in their term *saving faith* would indeed require works for salvation. On the other hand, biblical faith is a persuasion, simply placing trust in Christ for eternal life, no works are required to gain, sustain, or assure eternal life. In fact, Ephesians 2:8-9 teach that salvation is the exclusive work of God, not by any works of man but through simple trust in Christ.

### Fearful of Talking about Personal Righteousness (6)

The supporter’s words indicate that antinomians are “fearful of talking about personal righteousness, obedience, the Law of God” (6). I submit this is a true statement for “real” antinomians since they are living a lawless lifestyle. But those aren’t the folks this proponent is addressing. Rather, his concern is salvation—a *justification legalism* issue. Those who clearly and biblically distinguish justification and sanctification certainly understand that believers are commanded to live a godly life. But *coming to faith*, justification, and *living by faith*, sanctification, are related but distinct. For those God regenerated based on Christ’s work on the cross, He desires them to live according to His Word reflected in personal holiness.

### Christian Freedom (6)

This view connected “justification by faith and Christian freedom” (6) together as one in the same. Nevertheless, “Christian freedom” biblically relates to choices, whether right or wrong. Whereas license

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is unrestricted freedom or lawlessness, “Christian freedom” refers to restricted liberty with the law of Christ as the believer’s rule of life. “Christian freedom” is biblically used in reference to sanctification, not justification.

### **Biblical Approach**

A straightforward reading of Scripture distinguishes justification (declared righteous) from sanctification (living righteously), as well as differentiates faith from works when referring to salvation in Christ. *Coming through faith to* Christ relates to justification, while *walking by faith with* Christ deals with sanctification. In addition, the Scripture is unambiguous in explaining that Christians are no longer under the Mosaic Law, whether it involves moral, civil, or ceremonial parts. Now Christians are under the law of Christ, a new rule of life to be naturally and spontaneously expressed through personal holiness.

So to whom does biblical antinomianism refer? At the beginning of this chapter, we said that antinomianism (anti + *nomos* + ism) means to be *against the practice of law keeping*. Since keeping the law has no part in justification, one can biblically associate antinomianism with justification. The Christian’s lifestyle relating to sanctification is altogether a different matter. Since God desires a Christian nomistic lifestyle, the designation of *antinomianism concerns Christians who practice lawlessness as a way of living, misusing their freedom*.

### Christian Freedom

Christian freedom is not void of law. The “law of Christ” is the believer’s rule of life for a Christian lifestyle. Though liberated from sin in order to experience Christian freedom and being able to please God, that freedom allows the believer to choose sin as well as righteousness. Making godly choices leads to living life to the fullest with Christ. On the other hand, poor decisions can be the path to legalism or license and the forfeiture of a life that pleases God.