



John Calvin's *Institutes in the Christian Religion* (1541)

A PPA Seminar: Winter/Spring 2018

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Study 15: Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen: Five Ceremonies Falsely Called Sacraments and Christian Freedom - Read pgs. 669-719

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery ... For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:1, 13-14)/ "But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25)

Prayer: "Grant, Almighty God, as your church at this day is oppressed with many evils, that we may learn to raise up not only our eyes and our hands to you, but also our hearts, and that we may so fix our attention on you as to look for salvation from you alone; and that though despair may overwhelm us on earth, yet the hope of your goodness may ever shine on us from heaven..."

Scripture Reading: Romans 6:1-11, 15:1-2; Galatians 4:9, 5:1-4, 13-14; 1 Tim. 4:4-5; James 1:25

1. What are the "five ceremonies falsely called sacraments"? List and briefly define them in your own words. For each one, give a proper biblical understanding. Who alone has the power/authority to ordain sacraments? Why is this important for Calvin's argument? [pgs. 669-706]

i. C _____

ii. P _____

iii. E _____ U _____

iv. E _____ O _____

v. M _____

2. Is Apostolic Succession in any way biblical? Explain Rome's teaching on it, then explain how you understand it after reading Calvin. How should ministers/bishops/pastors be biblically and properly called and ordained? [pgs. 690-99]
3. Why do you think Calvin immediately followed the chapter on the "five ceremonies" with "Christian Freedom"; how they linked? Why was this particularly relevant in the time of the Reformation? Give reasons for this from your reading and reflection. How does this accentuate the importance of Christian Freedom for Christians in every age? [pgs. 707-19]

4. Define Christian Freedom from the Scriptures. What are the three parts of Christian Freedom? Why is this freedom so important for the believer to understand? Explain from Calvin, scripture, and even an experience of your own if you can think of one. [pgs. 707-12]

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

5. Complete this sentence from Calvin and memorize it: “*The life of all Christians should be a _____ on and exercise in _____.*” Does this characterize your Christian life? Why, or why not? [pg. 708]

6. What have been some ways that Christian Freedom has been abused? What could be some real dangers of Christian Freedom, or at least the misunderstanding of it? [pgs. 707-19]

7. How can understanding Christian freedom grant you a blessed, peaceful and joyful conscience? [pgs. 712-13].

8. Explain what Calvin means that Christian Freedom is “never an excuse for self-gratification”? How can self-gratification hurt both the one who practices it as well as others? Honestly, have you ever offended, or been offended by careless Christians? Explain the situation. What wisdom do you gain from reflecting on this? [pgs. 713-16]

9. What “two forms of rule” is man subject to? List and define below. Why is this important for Christians to realize and practice in their daily lives? Briefly, how is this practically lived out? [pgs. 718-19]

i. S _____

ii. T _____

10. Thoughtful Mediation: The Apostle James describes the law as the “*law of perfect liberty*” (James 1:25). Explain in your own words how the law can be perfect liberty and yet a curse and bondage to some. [pgs. 707-19]

11. Thoughtful Mediation: What error with regard to the biblical teaching on Christian Freedom can make one a *legalist*? What error can make one an *antinomian*? How do we avoid *both of these* horrendous errors and bondages?!