



The Kingdom Perspective

Two Concepts of Liberty

Hello, this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to “The Kingdom Perspective”.

Philosophers speak of two different kinds of freedom. The famed thinker Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997) called these: 1) Negative Liberty/Freedom FROM and 2) Positive Liberty/Freedom TO.

“Negative Liberty” or “Freedom From” is perhaps best seen in the political freedom we enjoy in the U.S. We have the Constitutional freedom *from* governmental or societal coercion in certain areas of our lives. For example, I have the freedom of religion, speech, etc. without the fear of governmental or societal repercussions. In “negative freedom”, I am free to the degree that I do not experience interference from forces outside of my personal will or desire. This “negative freedom” is the bedrock of our civil rights and individual liberties in our modern Western democracies.

The second kind of freedom is “Positive Liberty” or the “Freedom To”. Such freedom is the ability to do what I am *supposed* to do, or to be who I am *supposed* to be. This kind of freedom implies design. It assumes that I am free only to the degree that I am operating according to my designed purpose. So, for the sake of illustration, a train is free to the degree that it stays on its track, for it was designed to run on tracks. The moment a train goes off the track its ceases to function according to its design and therefore is no longer free.

Now, although, “Negative Liberty” is a helpful political concept and arguably necessary to our ability of exercise our “Positive Liberty”, nonetheless, “Positive Liberty”—the freedom to be who I was designed to be—is the true and highest freedom, biblically speaking.

You were designed by God for “Positive” freedom.

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

“He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?”

~ Micah 6:8 (NASB)

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