

# The Great Lie



**Bro. Kory Cunningham**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:10–22**

I want to see if you can identify this popular Disney film. So, there's a little girl, she's a mermaid, and she lives under the sea. She has life under the sea and everything's great, but she has a desire not to live under the sea, she wants to live on land. She swims to the surface and sees this guy named Eric, immediately falls in love, and she decides she wants to become a human and marry this guy of her dreams. So she goes to her dad, King Triton, creator and ruler of the sea, and she says, "Hey dad, I want to become a human and marry Eric." He says, "Well honey, you're a mermaid so you belong under the sea." And she says, "Okay Dad, you're the creator, you made me in the sea; that makes sense." Then she swims under the sea for the rest of the movie, enjoying all of life under the sea. Does anybody remember that movie? Anybody? No, it didn't happen, right? That's not the movie. There's a movie sort of like it that we know, but it goes a little bit different. It's sort of same plot...there's a mermaid who falls in love with a guy named Eric. She wants to become a human and live above the sea. She goes to her dad or dad says no. So she goes to like a demon figure and makes a deal, becomes a human, marries the guy, everything goes great. There are a lot of more details but in the end, the

dad realizes she is actually right and he was actually wrong all along. That's the little mermaid, right? We love the movie, we sing the movie, but there's also a message behind the movie that we just have to believe is also a message that our culture would present, and it's this—you do whatever you want to do. You're an individual, you have desires, whatever your desire leads you to, do that thing because whatever that thing is that is going to make you ultimately happy. So freedom is taking all of the constraints of life off asking what do I want most, pursuing that thing that you want most, and when you get it, you'll be happy. And everyone that stood in your way, at the end will say we were actually wrong, you were right all along.

That's sort of the message that we also swim in, even in our modern culture. But I just want you to know this morning that this is not a new development. It's actually what we're going to call the great lie. The great lie is that freedom is doing whatever you want to do. It's casting off all constraints, following your own desires—that is what freedom is—whatever you want, just go do it and at the end of that, you'll be happy. What we're going to see is that's not just a modern lie; that's one that goes all the way back to the garden, for one...*Hey Adam and Eve, don't live under God's Word in His creation, you do whatever you want. You be the rulers of your own destiny. Let your desires take you wherever they lead.* But it's not just a lie of the garden, it's also what Peter faces right here in chapter 2 of his letter. He is dealing with some false teachers who are saying...*Hey, I want you to be free, and freedom is abandoning the way of God and the Word of God and doing what your desires lead you to. If you will follow your desires, then you will be free.* And so what we deal with right now, it's not new; it's what's always been. It's the temptation not to live under God's Word, but to live above God's Word to do what you want to do. That is where true freedom is found. So what I want us to see is the lie that these false teachers are selling to a congregation and why Peter is taking it head-on. So let's read the lie they are promoting in verse 19.

## Scripture

***"They [false teachers] promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved."***

This is what the lie that these false teachers are promoting. We're going to walk through a lot of scripture because Peter is not happy with these false teachers. I just want to begin by saying this is not a particular message that I enjoy preaching. I always like to see the best in everybody. Even these false teachers, I want to think they might've been okay guys, but that's not Peter's bent. He is attacking these false teachers and we're going to see that, and we know that's one of a pastor's responsibilities. We see in Acts chapter 20 that Paul would tell this group of pastors, here's what you should do—you should feed, lead, and protect the sheep. One of the ways we protect the sheep is to tell them when bad theology comes in, when people are teaching wrong things, when wolves come to attack the sheep. As shepherds, you have to point that out.

So Peter is sensing some wolves have come in to the congregation, they're promoting bad ideas, and the bad ideas are going to lead to your destruction; they're not going to lead to your flourishing. He is going to attack these false teachers and he is going to really do it in two ways. Number one, he is going to attack their character, who these men are, and you're going to see these are really bad guys. Then number two is their influence...what they are doing in this congregation, what they are teaching, and what they're selling. Just think about what they're teaching first. Here's what they're promising, they're promising freedom. We're going to see their version of freedom is to disconnect your life from God's Word. Disconnect from the commandments, from the rules; just do what you desire. Whatever you want, whatever you desire, go for that because that's what freedom is. No constraints, if you're in water just come up to the surface and everything's going to be great. Cast off constraints, do what you want to do, that's freedom. But the problem is the people who promote freedom, notice what Peter says about them, "They themselves are slaves of corruption." So those that say freedom is found in doing whatever you want, they're the people who are doing whatever they want

and it's not led them to freedom, it's actually led them to be slaves of their desires.

Then Peter sort of gives an example of what slavery looks like. It's "for whatever overcomes a person to that he is enslaved." So our version of freedom—cast off constraints, do whatever you want, determine your own life, whatever that looks like for you, pursue that path—at the end of it, you'll be free and happy. What the Bible says is that's not freedom at all; that's actually slavery. It's slavery to yourself; it's slavery to your own desires. Think about what Paul said in Romans chapter 6. He would say none of us is free. We're actually slaves to someone, you're either a slave to yourself, or you're a slave to God. Those are the two options. If you're a slave to yourself, you just do whatever you want. Your desires roll over you, your desires carry you; you follow your desires. Well in that scenario, you're not free you're just doing your desires, so your desires are your own master. The other alternative is to be a slave to God, to actually bring yourself under God where He is your master. You're not doing whatever you want you're doing what God's Word says. You are living in line with God's Word because you believe that more than what you want, God knows best for how you're made, how you are to flourish and find happiness at the end of this life, so you're going to go God's way not your own.

Here's what I want you to see before we begin to walk through this passage...none of us are actually free, we are all slaves to something. That's what Peter is saying. Whatever overcomes you, to that you are a slave. Whatever you're ruled by, whatever propels you, whatever pulls you, to that you are a slave. You are either a slave to yourself and your desires, or you're a slave to God, His Word and provision over you. We're going to see that as one leads to destruction and death, the other leads to flourishing in life. So the reason Peter wants to bring this up to this church is he wants them to have the right master. These false teachers, as we saw two weeks ago, have already denied the master, Jesus, who bought them. They've denied him. They're now their own masters and Peter's saying don't do the same. Don't deny Jesus as master. Make Him master; live under Him because He actually knows best for you. He's got the best

plans for you. He knows how you were made and how you're going to flourish. So that's your choice—who are we going to listen to, our desires or God's Word? Because I promise you, they will conflict all of the time. Our daily life is a conflict between our desires and God's Word because we want to do all sorts of things that are not good for us. You have to say those desires aren't good, what I need to do is live under God's good Word.

Let's walk through this passage together and see how Peter first exposes the false teachers for who they are. We're going to see the character of the false teachers. These false teachers are proud; they are arrogant. Notice what it says in verses 10–11, “Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might in power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgments against them before the Lord.” They're bold and they're willful; they do not tremble. They are fearless, they are proud. If you put bold and willful together, Douglas Moose says it's arrogant audacity. They're arrogant about their lives. They know best, they know what is true, they know what is right; there is this arrogance among these false teachers. And notice they also don't tremble. They don't have a sense of reverence or fear, even for things that they should probably have a little fear of.

Peter said they do not tremble when they blaspheme “the glorious ones.” Now, when I first read that I just skimmed it, and I saw glorious *one* and I thought that's Jesus. In other words, you can't blaspheme Jesus. That's a bad idea. You should tremble in fear before the Lord. But then, I saw it's not glorious one, it's glorious *ones*, and I thought who are the glorious ones? Is that us, those who follow Jesus? That was my first thought. But then, the angels are brought in...and the angels don't blaspheme these glorious ones, even though they're going to be judged by God, so we're not the ones who are going to be judged in destruction before God. So who then are these glorious ones? Well, it seems to be most likely, especially if you compare it with Jude (v. 8), that these glorious ones are evil spirits—it's Satan or the demonic realm. That would be the glorious ones, these beings who are very glorious, but they rebelled against God so they are in a fallen state. These false teachers are blaspheming, they are

making fun of, they are taking lightly these evil spirits who are at work among them, and Peter says not even the angels are doing that. Not even the angels are going before God and poking fun of the demonic realm because they know the demonic realm is very powerful. So even though angels are more powerful than these false teachers, they're doing things and pronouncing blasphemy on things they should not do, so they're very proud. It's as if he's saying that in their own arrogance they are talking about Satan who is arrogant. How arrogant do you have to be when you're making fun of Satan for being arrogant when you are the most arrogant one? So they're bold, they're willful, they're arrogant, they take things lightly, they're not taking serious the demonic realm, they're not taking serious the judgment, even things that angels are like, you probably shouldn't poke fun at that. But these are the false teachers—they're arrogant, they're not worried, they're at ease.

The second thing we see is they're irrational. Verses 12–13 say, "But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage of their wrongdoing." So not only are they bold and prideful, but now we see that they're like irrational animals. They're like those that are just born of instinct. In other words, they're not living their lives actually thinking through... *Well, this decision that I make, is it a good decision? Is it a decision that's going to lead to flourishing? Is this a good decision for me, for my family, and for my community? Is this a good thing?* Instead, they're irrational. They're not thinking; instead they are just doing whatever their instincts are leading them to. They're not letting their mind lead them places; they're letting their flesh lead them places. In other words, they're acting like animals. And even in Greek culture, you have non-believers, non-Christians, these people who are not connected to Jesus, they don't have the laws and the commands—but you'd have people like Aristotle who can look at humanity and be like... *You know, I don't think we should just do whatever we want to do.* Because when people do whatever they want to do, they do some pretty crazy things.

So, we're going to categorize what's good behavior and what's bad behavior. So let's talk about virtue and vices. A vice is just whatever you want. A vice maybe juicy, it's fun, it's good, it's what I want right now, immediately, and I'm going to go after that. The problem is a vice is not a good thing. In contrast, you have virtue in Greek culture. A virtue may not be the thing you most want, but it's the thing you should do. Like, I shouldn't do this and I should do that, because it's leading to my flourishing, it's leading to a better life for me and the community and those around me. So we want people that pursue virtue rather than vice. Even in the culture that Peter's speaking to, you have the Epicureans and you have the Stoics. The Epicureans think life is just one big party, just pursue pleasure, do whatever you want; that's where life is. The Stoics think that's going to lead to destruction, so whatever you want, just suppress that and don't do anything fun. Neither of these groups is a Christian worldview; their views come from just people looking at people and saying we probably shouldn't act like animals, just however we want...because we're not very good animals. When you look at the animal kingdom, most animals do out of instinct, it's just sort of normal life. When we as people do whatever we want, it's really bad. We have to sort of cage ourselves knowing there are some things we should say are wrong, and some things we say are right...and we should purpose do the right and we should probably not do what's wrong.

Now, even non-Christians see the advantage to not doing whatever we want. But these false teachers—they're like shaking all of it off saying I'm going to just do whatever I want like an irrational animal, whatever my instinct tells me, that's what I'm going to do. We're going to see they're doing some pretty awful things. They're acting like animals, so in other words, they are ruled by their desires. As human beings, we should be able to rule over our desires. We should be able to rule over our desires to pursue what's good. They're not. They're letting their desires rule them. That's why Peter says they're slaves of corruption. And notice that they're going to be caught in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage of their wrongdoing—so they're born to be caught and destroyed. It's saying if you're going to act like an animal and just do whatever you want to do, what's the fate of animals? Well, most animals are raised to be slaughtered

and eaten. So if you're want to live like an animal and just do whatever you want, then judgment is coming. Don't be animalistic; be an image bearer of God, pursue virtue, put on those things that the Spirit has given you as we looked at in chapter 1.

And then notice their way. They're destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage of their wrongdoing. In other words, here's the lie—if you'll just do and pursue, and get that thing that you ultimately desire, even though you know it's bad, if you just get it then you'll be happy and everything will be great. Do you know what the truth is? If you pursue something that's against God and against His ways, the path actually is destruction, and you will suffer wrong for that wrongdoing. If you're in a marriage, you know what you're supposed to do in the marriage—stay committed to your wife, committed to your husband—but you start thinking what you really desire is the person you work with. So let's just throw off God's Word, throw off God's commands, and go for the person you work with, thinking if you get them then everything will be great. Well, what happens in that path? We know it's destruction, it's suffering wrong for that wrongdoing. It leads to chaos, it leads to misery, and it leads to not flourishing and not happiness. So the lie is just pursue what you want no matter what God says about it because in the end you'll be happy and it'll all be great. That is a lie. When you walk away from God's way, it's destruction and you'll suffer wrong for the wrong. So what do we do? We obey the right master. You say, "God, you say no to this so I'm going to say no to this. You say yes to this so I'm going to say yes to this. I'm not going to be ruled by my own desires. I'm not going to be an irrational, unthinking animal driven by my own passions. Instead, I'm going to walk by the Spirit and obey you."

They're not only irrational, but these false teachers are insatiable. I mean, these are not good guys. Notice what it says in verses 13–14, "They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin." They're kind of getting piled on, right? I told you, like these are not good guys. Peter is bringing them up because they are not acting appropriately, and he doesn't want the congregation to be



fooled into thinking this is what they should also do. These are the ones promoting freedom, but as we see, they're actually slaves to their own sin. You can see it by their character and their behavior. They're insatiable, and they count it pleasure to revel in daytime. Revel is to indulge, to enjoy. It's to be without constraint, just going for what you want and what you desire. Peter says they're reveling in the daytime. In other words, it's in public, it's broad daylight. They're not trying to hide it. It's not secret; it's not in the dark. They're enjoying it, they are proud of the things that they are doing.

Peter also says these guys are those who are coming to the feast with them. Now, what is that feast? It could be just a feast that the church is holding, but most scholars would point to this probably being the Lord's Supper. So these guys are teachers, teaching the ways of God, and they're coming to the Lord's Supper. They're identifying as a Christian—here's the cup, here's the bread. I'm taking it. I'm believing in Jesus, His death, burial, and resurrection. I've got my sins forgiven. I'm one of you—but then in broad daylight, they are doing things that clearly break commandments. They're reveling, they're enjoying, they're doing things that you shouldn't do in broad daylight, and they're counting it pleasure.

Now that word, pleasure—we get the word hedonism from it, so hedonism by definition is the pursuit of pleasure. Again, Epicureans are like, go for it. Hedonism, pursuit of pleasure, that's where life is. Stoics say no, suppress your pleasure, then you'll be happy. None of them works. So you have crazy people who are having broken lives, and then really sad people who are doing it right, and neither one of those works. Now, John Piper would say hedonism is not always a bad thing because pleasure is not a bad thing. God created you to seek pleasure. He wants you to seek pleasure; He wants you to be happy. He's given that to you as a gift. At His right hand are pleasures forevermore, Psalm 16 says. But Piper says what we need is Christian hedonism. It's the pursuit of happiness in God, and adding that 'in God' changes everything. You're not stoic, you're not a Epicurean; you're a gospel believing Christian who is pursuing joy and happiness in God under His Word, following what He has said for your life. You have desires that lead you to the places God has said to go. That's

where true happiness and true freedom is found, pursuing pleasure in God. But these guys are pursuing pleasure in ways outside of God and they're doing it open for everyone to see. Notice they're blots and blemishes. We're supposed to be spotless; we're supposed to be holy. They're not; they're blots, they're blemishes, and they're reveling in their deceptions. They're happy with their lies.

Peter says, "They have eyes full of adultery." So, they're walking into the Lord's Supper and their eyes are only thinking about one thing. Presumably, every girl that they see, they are thinking about only one thing. Their eyes are full of adultery. It's the only thing they can contemplate and think about. Then notice this little description, "insatiable for sin." They are reckless, can't get enough, indulgent—all they want, all they think about, all they process is sin. Now remember, these are the guys saying if you'll come with us, you'll be free. Do these look like free men? Do these look like men who are actually living as human beings in a flourishing life? Or, does it look like they are men who are completely enslaved to their passions and sins? See, what they think is freedom is actually slavery. They can't even act normal with the Lord's Supper, that's how corrupt these men are. Yet they're promoting a lie to the congregation, and what's going to happen is the congregation is going to believe them and participate and follow their way. That's why Peter is coming after it, and he's saying this is not freedom this is slavery. Freedom is not as an animal, living on instinct, doing whatever you want to do. It's coming under God's good Word.

So now, we're going to see what they actually do. That's who they are, but now we're going to see their influence over the church. First, "They entice unsteady souls." That's what they do. That's what they're coming after. Here's what it says in verses 14–16, "They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness."

Let's talk about Balaam for a minute. We've seen him in the Numbers 20–22. We see Balaam and Balak, and Balak hires Balaam to go curse Israel. Balaam goes and tries, but he can't curse them and he heads out. All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord with a sword appears on the road in front of Balaam to stop his way but only his donkey sees the angel. So his donkey turns aside and goes into a field. Balaam can't see the angel so he hits the donkey to turn it back to the road. The angel stands in its path, the donkey turns again, and again Balaam hits the donkey. This happens a third time, and the donkey speaks...*Dude, there's an angel with a sword. I'm not going!* Balaam is like...*Okay donkey.* They have this Shrek moment where the donkey talked, he talks back, and it seems like that's normal. Finally, God opens Balaam's eyes and he sees there's judgment, there's an angel with a sword...*Thank you donkey for not killing me!* So Peter uses Balaam as an example of a guy who only thought about gain. He only thought about his own desire, and if you read the prophets, he actually led Israel in some ways to sexual immorality. Peter's saying the false prophets you're listening to are like Balaam, and you remember Balaam, the donkey was smarter than he was—that's kind of a play on words. That's the story he's using.

But now, let's see what they're actually doing. It says they entice unsteady souls. That's what these false prophets are doing. Now, don't ask me who the false prophets are today that are doing this...I don't know, I'm just telling you what Peter is saying these guys were doing in his culture. You're going to have to figure the part about who we apply that to today. So don't ask me, I don't know, I'm just talking about Peter with his congregation. This is what *they* were doing. They were enticing unsteady souls. Now, what does it mean to entice? It means to lure. That's the imagery. So if you're a fisherman, it's a lure. If you're a hunter, it's a trap. You're trying to bait an animal to do something that it should not do. Let's just use the fishing example. If you throw a hook in water and reel it in, most fish won't bite a hook. They're like...*Hmm, that looks like death. No thanks.* So as a fisherman, you want to make a hook look really, really good, so you get a hook with all of these things around it that make it look juicy and appetizing. So we use this lure that goes around the hook that looks good so the fish will think it's something that's tasty. The fish will inevitably see

the thing that looks tasty and it will go for it. It will bite it. That's a lure. And we've been pretty creative on lures. I think at one time they probably looked like a minnow, but now, have you seen our lures? Fish should be smart enough not to fall for them. When they see these lures that flashes and sparkles and has spinners on it, and it is green, red, and purple, they should be like...*I've never seen that in the water before. That looks like it's from Mars. I probably shouldn't eat it.* Right? The lures we use today are pretty comical, but for some reason it looks tasty to the fish, and they're going to bite the lure. They have no thought of what's going to happen next. The only thing they can think about is that flashy, spinney thing looks really good and tasty, so they bite it and it's a moment of pleasure, I'm sure...and then it's pain because the angler is ripping. All of a sudden, you have a hook in a mouth and the angler is now reeling that fish in.

That's the idea. These fall teachers are coming with flashy words, good arguments, and good logic for why this is actually best now. Yeah, the commandments of God were good at some point, but now you have a different way of life, another way to pursue happiness, you have other things to do. So they're using their teaching to lure people to think... *Yes, that does make sense! I actually want to do that, and if you're saying I can do that, then that sounds better than not doing that.* So the lure sounds good. And notice who they throw the lure to—unsteady souls. In chapter 1, he's told us to stand firm, to be steadfast in the faith. That's to have sure footing, to know the gospel, believe the gospel, to know what God has said, to know you've been redeemed, to know you're a new creation, to know who Jesus is. That's to be a person who's standing on your two feet so the winds of doctrine that come that are not true, you know they're not true and you don't follow them. But the false teachers, they're able to entice the unsteady souls. They are the ones who really aren't spending time with the Lord, they're not really pursuing, they're not really studying their Bibles, they're not really walking with the Spirit. They're just kind of in this thing and they're unsteady, they're unsure, they don't really know. Then this lure comes along, and the lure is here's freedom, do whatever you want. Notice, Peter says they're forsaking the right way. These people are going astray and they're pulling others to go astray from the way Jesus would want them to go, so they're enticing these people with lures.

But not only are they enticing unsteady souls, they're enticing, particularly, with sensual passions. Notice what it says in verse 17, "These are waterless springs and mist driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved." Waterless springs—they're promising thirst is going to be quenched if you believe them, but they actually don't have water in them. They won't actually satisfy the desires you have.

Verse 18 says, "For, speaking loud boast of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh, those who are barely escaping from those who live in error." They're enticing with sensual passions of the flesh. In other words, we as people have passions, we have desires, we have things that we want and these false teachers are taking those desires, those wants, and they're luring them, they're enticing them to be spent in ways that God would forbid. They're enticing our flesh. This idea to be sensual, to do things that we should not do is this enticement of our flesh. And notice who they're enticing. Those who have barely escaped, those who live in error—this would've been people that are living in Greek Roman culture. So they have just escaped a culture that's living in error, a culture that has gods who are sensual. And then, they have people who follow them who are also sensual, and most of their religious practices involve sensual activities. Roman culture was filled with a lot of sensuality. They've escaped that. They've escaped this way of living and they're now coming to King Jesus, but now these false teachers are saying...*Do you know what's really fun? It's to keep doing the things you once did.* They're like...*But doesn't Jesus say no to those things? ...Well no, you've got Jesus; you've been forgiven. He'll forgive you. He understands. He's good. I promise. Just go and pursue what you want however you want it, and the end of the film, Jesus will be like you were right all along. My bad, you were right.* So, there's this enticing, this luring by your own passions of the flesh to get you.

Some of you who have just come to Christ, who've just got out of behaviors and lifestyles and things you did that were against Christ—and now these false teachers are saying you can have it all. You can have Christ in the world. They both actually belong together. There is no wrong way and right way. It's just the way you want. They're enticing them to enjoy all the things that Christ in fact died for. They promise freedom, but

they're actually slaves. Verse 19 says, "They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved." Their basic message is you can be free. Free like them. Well, do they really look free? I mean their eyes are full of adultery; they're insatiable for sin. They can't stop sinning, they're indulgent, they do whatever they want; does that look like freedom or does it look like slavery? It's slavery. It's slavery of corruption. That's exactly what Peter is saying, "For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved." Whatever overcomes you, whatever rules over you, that is your master. So the reality is you either you have one of two masters—your master is either your desires or your master is God. Those are the two options, because those two will rule over you. Either you'll be ruled irrationally by instinct, by your desires, or you'll be ruled by God and God's Word. See again, what's their message? You can be free and here's what freedom looks like...cast off all the restraints and do whatever you want to do, and at the end of that, you'll be free and happy and fulfilled. Everyone, including God, will acknowledge you are right all along. That's what freedom looks like. But the Bible says that's not freedom at all. That's actually slavery. That's being ruled by your own desires and it will lead you to moments of happiness and pleasure, but it's the path of destruction that leads ultimately to death. That's why Peter's saying—please don't listen to the great lie being told to you that freedom is doing whatever you want no matter what God's Word says. That's not freedom that is slavery...from the garden to 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, also to our current moment. Freedom's not doing whatever you want; freedom is living in line with God's Word. Like a fish is only free in water. A fish that swims in water is free. The fish that jumps up out of water, he is not free. He might have chosen him out of water, but now he's in air and air is not where he was created to be. He is not free. He is now dead. We as people are only free swimming under God's Word. Outside of that, we are dead. We've have to know that. We've got to believe that because it counters everything we are being taught.

So let's just think about desires for a moment, because that's what is all going on here. These false teachers—just live by your desires. Whatever you want, do that. Here is the modern lie when it comes to desires. There have always been lies about desires all the way through, but here's the

modern lie—desire is identity. That's the modern lie that we're believing. Whatever we desire, it's not just a desire it's who we are. It's our identity that becomes our very person. So whatever we desire, that's who we are. We think freedom is claiming that desire and our identity. When those align, then we're going to be free. The problem is having a desire as your identity is not freedom. It is slavery to yourself; it is slavery to that desire. Because the truth is, our desires are not our identity. God Himself defines our identity. We are image bearers of God. What He says about us is the most true thing about us, so the truest thing about you is not what you feel; it's what God says. You have to believe that and trust that and lean on that. The truest thing about me is what God says, not how I feel. So we have to believe that first, the lie that our culture promotes that desire is identity.

But we have to see that desire is part of us, but it's not all of us. We all have desires. So we have to ask the question when it comes to our desires...is my desire good or is my desire bad? Then, how do we know if our desires are good or bad? Well, you can't be the determination if your desire is good or bad; that makes you the master. Instead, you have to bring your desire under God's Word. I have a desire, this is what I want, so what does God say? Does God say yes or no? And if God says yes, then follow your desire. If God says no, then you have decision to make. Who's my master? Is my master my desire, or is my master God? See, you're not free—you're slave to something, either your desire or to God. You have to make a decision in that moment.

Now, our desires must be checked with Scripture. I'll just give you an example. Let's say you're person who has a desire for intimacy, but you are a single person. Is desire for intimacy good? Let's go to the Bible. Yes, intimacy is a great desire. God made it. God created it. It's for good, for pleasure, for procreation. Yes, that is a good desire, but I'm single. So what I love to do is to look at my phone at inappropriate images and pictures because that desire gets met when I look at those. So that's my desire, man. I love viewing things. So is that okay? What do we do with that action? We bring it into God's Word. What does God say about this? God's Word, we call that lust, and lust is not love. So have a desire, I know

how to meet it, but God says no to that way of meeting this desire. Who's your master—your desire, or God? If God says no, what do you say? Well, if God's your master you will say no to that desire.

What if you're in a relationship and you have a desire for intimacy? I've got a girlfriend, or I've got a boyfriend and we've got a whole lot of desires together. What does the Bible say? Two couples dating, can they participate in those kind of desires? Well, the Bible always calls that fornication and it's actually forbidden. You can't do that until marriage because sexuality is like a fire ring; it's only appropriate in marriage. The marriage is the fire ring; it's beautiful in the fire ring, outside of it's like a forest fire. It burns everything and destroys everything. So it's a desire that I want that I'm just dating, I'm not married, what does God say? God says no; therefore, who is your master, your desire or God? If God's your master, you'll say no to that. If your desire is your master, you'll say yes to that.

What if you have desires for the same sex? That's my desire, it's what I want, it's what I want to pursue. We bring that desire under God's Word, and what does God's Word say? 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 2 calls it a defiled passion and an unnatural desire. Romans 1 says that from the beginning men and women were created for marriage, for procreation—male and female—for marriage. We see that's a wrong desire in God's Word. So what do we do? Well, if I'm a follower of Jesus, who's my master—my desire or God?

I'm in marriage but I don't like my spouse, I would rather have someone else. You've got a decision to make. What does God say? God calls that adultery. Do I choose God, or do I choose my desire?

See, in all of these scenarios, there is a choice. Who is our master? We are slaves of something. But you'll have all sorts of people that will tell you different things. You have a culture that tells you differently. You'll have Christians who will say if you pray about it and God doesn't take a desire, then you're free to express it. The gospel says deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. There are a lot of desires that you want that God says no to, and He's not going to take those from you. He's going to say crucify them, walk in the Spirit, don't indulge the lust of the flesh. It's not



freedom giving into desires apart from God. It is actually slavery. It won't lead you to flourishing and happiness; it will lead to a life apart from God. Peter says freedom is not doing whatever you want—that's not freedom that's slavery. The truth is you're enslaved by whatever overcomes you. So I just want to ask, what's overcoming you? What is the desire you have that is against God's Word that you want and you're tempted to want it more than God? The decision every moment is who is my master? Am I going to believe God or believe my own desires? Because you'll choose to serve one of those, you can't serve both. You can't serve yourself as master and God as master. Peter's trying to get a congregation to see that these guys claiming freedom are not free, and they're not giving you a real version of freedom. Freedom is living in line with God's Word. So the question for us is what will we do? We have all the messages of culture, all the messages around us. That's very clear. Just do whatever you want. That's where freedom and happiness is. Whatever constraint the Bible has on you, or people have on you, just get rid of it. So what are you going to choose to believe? The voices of culture, the voices of teachers, or the voice of God's Word that says freedom is actually found in living your life in harmony with God...that sometimes life really is better under the sea.