

# Freedom

## I. Introduction

### A. What is freedom? Or more importantly, what is freedom to you?

1. Children want the freedom to eat dessert before dinner.
2. Teenagers want the freedom to decide for themselves what is right and wrong, good and bad, what they should be able to do, and what they shouldn't have to do. For example, now days, they see freedom as deciding for themselves if, when, and for how long to play video games. Some of those raised in religious homes see freedom as being able to stay home on Sundays instead of going to church with their parents and sitting through long, boring church meetings.
3. People who live under dictator type governments see freedom as for the people by the people. In the US, African Americans, Jews, Hispanics, Asians, homosexuals, and trans people see freedom as no more discrimination and hate. Some women see freedom as having the right to abort their babies. Some drivers and even some neighbors see freedom as being able to play their music so loud in can be heard a block away. Religious people see freedom as the right to practice their religion without government interference or persecution. And many in our nation see freedom of speech as being able to say whatever we want however we want.
4. I could go on, but the list is long enough to make the point that we all have an idea of what freedom is – even though we may disagree on what it is and what it should include.

### B. Jesus spoke about freedom in **John 8:31-36**, So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” [33] They answered Him, “We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free?’” [34] Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. [35] The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. [36] So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

### C. Among the various truths and principles to be gleaned from these verses, two things are certain:

1. **First:** there is true freedom – and this freedom is freedom of the will. Freedom of the will has been given to us by God so that we can live

- life to the fullest – which means living life according to the will and Word of God even though such a life is seen by many as confining, restrictive, demanding, boring, and cheerless.
2. **Second:** there is a perceived freedom that many see as true freedom, yet it is actually slavery – a slavery that is sold to us by the devil and the world as the freedom to live our best life now. And the reason so many see this slavery as freedom is because it exalts and supports things like self-rule, self-centeredness, self-gratification, pride, personal pleasure, and personal happiness.
- D. According to Webster’s Dictionary, **freedom** is exemption from necessity, both in choice and action. In other words, it is the freedom to do as we will to do.
1. To be **free** – according to this definition – is to be exempt from having to submit to the will of others – to not be restrained, controlled, or compelled. It means being able to follow your own impulses, desires, or inclinations; to determine your own course of action; to have the capacity or power of acting freely. It is, in today’s language, following your heart.
  2. Without question, freedom is a precious commodity. Yet when people use it to enslave others, it becomes a great evil.
- E. We know of tyrants, dictators, monarchs, and rulers who have used their freedom to enslave those under their authority and control.
1. You may even know someone who has used freedom to try and control you or force you against your will to do what they want.
  2. But who would use their freedom to enslave themselves? Who would do something so irrational? The sad reality is, we all have used our God-given freedom to enslave ourselves.
  3. Therefore, I want us to look at true freedom – which we have in God, and compare that to the slavery that has been sold to us as freedom by the devil – a slavery we buy into because it promises to calm our fears, gratify our fleshly passions, and set us free to partake of the world’s pleasures.

F. Pray

II. The freedom of godliness vs the slavery of sin

A. A closer look at **John 8:31-36**,

1. So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him – Let us consider Jesus’ words as if He is speaking directly to us.
2. [31] “If you **continue in My word**, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

- a. To continue in Jesus' words is to become familiar enough with the teachings of Jesus, and the rest of God's word, to faithfully, steadfastly, and continuously live accordingly.
  - b. Those who live like this are true disciples of Jesus.
3. **[32]** and you will know the truth, and **the truth will make you free.**
  - a. It is through continuing to read, study, and apply God's word that we discover truth, and it is in living according to this truth that we enter in to and maintain a life of true freedom.
  - b. It isn't the truth itself that makes us free, as if knowledge is equal to freedom.
  - c. Rather, it is in living according to the truth we know that makes us truly free – for only God's truth leads to true freedom – as we will see in **vs 34**.
4. **[33]** They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"
  - a. Those listening to Jesus were practicing Jews who continued their religious practices in spite of being under the rule of Rome – a nation that worshiped a plurality of gods, including Caesar.
  - b. In other words, though nationally they served a foreign power, religiously they acted as those who are free.
5. **[34]** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.**
  - a. There was no question as to the religious commitment of these Jews – and in that regard they were free, or at least they acted as if they were free.
  - b. However, if they were practicing sin – and we know many of them were according to Jesus' own words about the hypocrisy of the religious Jews – then they were not truly free – because sin enslaves.
6. **[35]** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. **[36]** So **if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.**
  - a. The point is simple, slaves are not permanent members of the family, children are.
  - b. However, if we repent, trust in Jesus' saving work for forgiveness of sins, and proceed to living accordingly, then Jesus will grant us true freedom – which includes freedom from enslavement to sin and the freedom to be as much a permanent member of God's family as Jesus is.

- B. With these truths in mind, I am asking you to consider that we are born with true freedom – not in relation to those in authority over us, but in relation to the exercise of our will concerning righteousness and sin, good and evil, love and hate, God and the devil.
1. For example, neither God nor the devil force us in the direction they want us to go.
    - a. It seems clear that the devil did not force Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. Rather, he talked her into it – which means it was up to her to make the final decision. Eve ate of her own free-will.
    - b. In like manner, God does not force us to live a righteous, holy life. He does not force us to love Him supremely, or love our neighbor as ourselves. The choice is up to us.
    - c. True, He speaks and woes and calls and convicts and threatens us with consequences for rejecting His will and words, but He leaves it up to us as to choose godliness over sin, good over evil, and love over hate in the affairs of everyday life.
  2. The point here is that both God and the devil give us the freedom to choose who we will serve.
    - a. But only God continues to ensure we have true freedom, that we can exercise our will according to what we will, forever.
    - b. Unlike God, the devil calls and tempts and lures us into the kind of thinking, attitudes, choices and behaviors that he knows will enslave us so that we will remain his follower and be eternally damned along with him.
- C. If you do not see the truth in this, consider: how hard is it for the alcoholic to stop drinking, the drug addict to stop taking drugs, the smoker to stop smoking, the overeater to stop over eating, the compulsive gambler to stop gambling, the video game player to stop playing video games, or the porn addict to stop watching porn?
1. And what about you? Have you not found it hard to break a bad habit, to stop being selfish, to let go of pride, to give up having to win, and to stop controlling others for some personal gain?
  2. Have you not found it hard to let go of resentment, to stop frustration and anger from welling up inside of you and rushing out when things don't go as you want?
  3. Have you not found it hard to let go of perfectionism, to put a stop to critical attitudes and words, to stop arguing over petting things just to prove you're right, to stop defending yourself when criticized even when you deserve the criticism?

4. Have you not had a recurring-thoughts, attitudes, desires, ways of saying things, or behaviors that have had such a hold on you it felt like you were addicted?
5. Have you not had to fight hard and long to break a bad habit, to kill off a sinful desire, to put to death an unholy passion, to stop a selfish behavior, or to bring an end to an ungodly thought?
6. If you have, then you understand why Jesus said that everyone who commits sin, or who repeatedly does the same sinful thing, has become a slave of sin.
7. Sin, by its nature, enslaves. It wars against our freedom of will by creating a sense of need in us that is exactly like the sense of need a drug addict has for more drugs.
  - a. And this is what the devil wants to do to you. His goal is to lure you into what he claims is freedom in order to enslave you so that you are no longer free to do as you will to do.
  - b. By the way, an addiction is a strong inclination to do, use, or indulge in something repeatedly with an outcome that adversely affects your life and the lives of those around you.

D. Where am I going with this? My goal is to present information

1. that shows you the difference between true freedom and perceived freedom,
2. that increases your understanding of sin and why it is so hard to leave ungodliness behind and put on Christ-likeness,
3. that affirms that neither God nor the devil make us get involved in good or evil – we have total freedom, just like Adam and Eve, to do good or do evil,
4. that affirms that the devil doesn't play fair, for his goal is to ensnare and enslave us into following him and his ways,
5. and that affirms the unmatched value of God and His ways because He neither forces nor enslaves us to do His will. His way is the way of true freedom – from beginning to end.

E. Therefore, young people and adults, do not think that the world's way, the devil's way, or the way of self-centeredness is the way of freedom. They aren't. For once they pull you in, they enslave you with a slavery that will require the saving work of Jesus Christ, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the truth of God's word, and your own hard work and perseverance to break free of.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Paul said it this way in **Romans 7:21-25a**, I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. [22] For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, [23] but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. [24] Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!
- B. Do you want true freedom to do as you will for as long as you live? Order and live your life according to the word of God, for it is the word of God that shows you the path of life, that tells you what beliefs, values, desires, thoughts, words, and deeds keep you free (*or rather, do not enslave you*). Unlike selfishness and sin, there is no enslaving elements imbedded in righteousness. Therefore, true freedom can be yours if you will enter and live according to the will and word of God.