

ARE YOU FREE?

By

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For 200 years the terms, “Liberty” and “Freedom”, have been resounding throughout the land and world-wide wars have required the blood of millions under the banner of such freedom. In spite of all the blood poured out for man’s liberty, it is a rare thing to find a person who truly is free, who lives and breathes with a free spirit, and who daily realizes the joy of freedom in his own life.

Men like Henry Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson helped set the stage for the modern false freedom with dreams of life in Utopia without restraint. Modern education has contributed to the falsehood with the doctrines of humanism, and evolutionism, the result of which is permissiveness with each person “free” to do what he desires as long as it does not harm someone else. Drug use, sex between consenting adults, abortion and a great number of acts hitherto condemned are now accepted and advertised as steps to liberation.

Overflowing prisons, hospitals and mental institutions as well as a generation of youth without roots and direction are the evidence of the search for liberty and freedom.

National freedom — political, social and religious — under the constitution does not guarantee freedom from the bonds that enslave most people. When Christ spoke of freedom, He had no reference to a national freedom, even though this was greatly desired by His hearers. Yet He said, “If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

According to Jesus the first step to freedom is knowledge of truth. “You shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32). This is not truth about Mars or the Moon or biology or electronics, but the truth about man and his function under the Creator.

PURPOSE. There is no freedom where one is trying to accomplish a purpose contrary to that for which he is designed! Before man was created God had already created heaven and earth, plant and animal life, and a particular environment governed by fixed laws. For example every seed was to contain life by which it could reproduce itself. This is a fixed law that never changes — evolutionary theories notwithstanding. Other laws, such as the law of gravity and all so-called “laws of nature,” were established by God before man appeared. God then created man to live in this fixed environment. He was free to live as long as he lived by the rules governing his world and his life.

It was Satan who suggested to Eve and Adam that they could “liberate” themselves from God’s fixed laws. Eating of the fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” simply meant becoming their own god, deciding for themselves what was right and wrong. The shortest route to freedom was to cast off the restraint, to do away with God’s rules and make up their own. This is the advice of modern humanists and liberators and it still comes from Satan, who Jesus labeled a liar and the father of lies.

Adam and Eve were not long in realizing the deception. Immediately they found that something had happened to their bodies. Contrary to traditional myth, their sin was not sexual. God had blessed the sexual union of husband and wife from the first. Neither

were the leaves simply to cover their sex identity, as many artists depict, but as much of the body as possible because death had begun. The fear that followed their rebellion against God's law was terrifying because of what they saw in themselves as a result. First they hid. Then they tried to cover their bodies. What had happened not only affected them spiritually, alienating them from God, but it also affected their bodies so that they were utterly ashamed to look upon themselves, and afraid to be seen by God. God explained, at least partially, what was going on when He told them that now they would die (Gen. 3:19). So, now they were aging and, as Hebrews 2:15 puts it, they were in the bondage of fear because of death already beginning to work in them.

Our first parents found that freedom is not realized by abandoning the laws which are fixed to govern the creature God has made. "Whosoever commits sin is he bondservant of sin (John 8:34).

A cow is free as long as she remains in the pasture, eats the grass, and drinks the water provided. She is restrained by a fence, of course, and her diet is greatly limited. Yet she is free to give milk, to give birth to her young and nourish them, and fulfill her purpose. But suppose someone leaves the gate open and the cow wanders out of the pasture, down the road and into the city. Her life becomes a terrifying experience as she is endangered by traffic, beaten by irate land-owners when she stops to graze on their lawns, finds no watering trough to satisfy her thirst and suffers painfully from a swollen udder and the want of milking. What she thought was freedom is found to be frustration and when finally back in her own pasture she is relieved to be truly free. No one is free when living contrary to the Creator's purpose for his life.

Have the freedoms which make Americans able to live with the highest standards really improved our lives and made us happy? Obviously not. The philosophy of humanism that man is a mere biological creature who can set his own rules, has resulted in deep anxieties and moral slavery. "Whosoever commits sin is the bondservant of sin" (John 8:34). Created with the potential to greatness, even the potential to become immortal, man has also the potential to great evil, and the more he seeks liberty from God's rules, the more he becomes enslaved to the deceitful and destructive rules of man and the lies of Satan.

The way of the transgressor is hard because he is working against the purpose for which he was created, and is under the ultimate sentence of death.

The truth is that man's purpose is to do God's will, to reflect His image, to bring glory to Him, and receive eternal life. True freedom is to live completely in harmony with the Creator's design.

INNOCENCE. While we have not experienced the dramatic confrontation with Satan as Adam and Eve did, we stand in the position of "guilty" before God because we are sinners, having failed to measure up to the "image" of God which He intended at creation. We are not only under the bondage of the aging process that ends in death, but also under the sentence of the second death at judgment, for God does not give immortality to rebels and sinners. For every law of God that is broken there is the sentence of final and irrevocable death (Matt. 10:28, Luke 12:4-5). How can we be free from guilt and this horrible expectation of judgment?

The truth is that Christ completely frees us from sin and its punishment by His death. Innocence cannot be realized by mere reformation and determination to do better! The penalty for sin must be met according to God's just law: "The wages of sin is death"

(Rom. 6:23). Jesus met the terms of justice by submitting to the execution on the cross, dying FOR us. Forgiveness means that the charges are dropped because justice has been met by Christ on our behalf (II Cor. 5:21).

This means freedom from the guilt and the consequence of sin. God forgives completely on the basis of Jesus having taken the rap for our sin. “And if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”

FREEDOM FROM FEAR> With the sentence for sin already served by Christ there is no more fear. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).

Unlike Adam and Eve, the Christian feels no need to hide from God, but can confidently approach Him as “Father,” knowing that He hears our prayers, that He provides for our lives and that in all circumstances works all things for our own good and ultimate fulfillment of His purpose (Heb. 10:19–22, Rom. 8:28).

Death no longer threatens! Christ has already sustained the judgment-death for every saint. He died our death! Therefore on the judgment day each Christian will be raised as Jesus was raised and made immortal as He is, to live in the new creation according to God’s original and eternal purpose (II Tim. 1:10, I Cor. 15, I John 3:2).

John writes: “We shall be like him!” At last we shall be totally in his image. The purpose of God will be accomplished, and with it our own purpose for existence.

Whatever the outward circumstances in the world we are FREE to please God and do His will. Millions go through life “wishing” they knew the will of God. But He has already revealed it. The mind of God is revealed in the Scriptures. One who reads the Bible will know what he should or should not do for he learns what pleases the Creator and what displeases Him. Jesus lived free from anxiety and frustration because He could say, “I do always the things that are pleasing to my heavenly Father.” Know the truth of God’s word, and the truth will make you free.

Adam typifies the kind of freedom being sought today by those whom Satan deceives into ignoring our defying God’s rules. The result is fear, anxiety and death. Jesus, called the “second Adam,” demonstrates the way to true freedom, by obedience to God.

“And if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” There is no other way.

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