

FREE INDEED

BUT JUST WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



SO IF THE SON MAKES YOU FREE, YOU WILL BE FREE INDEED.

(JOHN 8:36 LSB)

DEFINING TERMS

FREE: To be free in human terms generally means that a person is not under the control of or subject to the power or domination of another and is independent; being able to act or do as one wishes without compulsion or arbitrary restriction; release from slavery, imprisonment, captivity; living in the way that you want in society without oppressive restrictions or subjugations imposed by an outside authority over one's way of life, behavior, or political views.

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF FREEDOM: The Bible speaks of freedom in the realm of human society and government, but the emphasis regarding freedom is in relationship to sin, righteousness and judgment. In the Bible you will find two categories of people. Those who are *slaves of sin* and those who have been *freed from sin* through Jesus Christ *and are slaves to God*. The concept of absolute freedom—"I can do what I want, when I want"—is contrary to biblical teaching and contrary to the reality of life. There is no such thing.

1. The most fundamental principle in regard to knowing the truth is abiding in God's word and following Jesus, 8:31-32.

- (John 8:31–32 LSB) So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "**if you abide in My word, then** you are truly My disciples; 32 **and** you will know the truth, **and** the truth will make you free."

A. Abiding in God's word authenticates a person as someone who follows Jesus ... truly his disciple.

B. To abide in God's word means that you obey, keep, continue in and live in God's word.

Abide ... μένω [meno] ... to continue; to continue a certain state, condition, or activity; to remain; in reference to place; not to depart.

The genuine disciple continues, abides, in the word of him who is the incarnate Word, yielding to it entire acquiescence, **as the absolute reality of things**, as the truth about God and man. [Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). *St. John* (Vol. 1, p. 360). Funk & Wagnalls Company.]

The primary duty of a believer is indicated in the exhortation of Jesus, "Remain in my word." That is the mark of a real disciple. Μείνητε signifies a settled determination to live in the word of Christ and by it, and so entails a perpetual listening to it, reflection on it, holding fast to it, carrying out its bidding. [Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 133). Word, Incorporated.]

C. The person who abides in God's word follows Jesus (absolute reality) and will come to know the truth.

- (Hebrews 5:14 ESV) But solid food is for the mature, for those **who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil**.

Truth only can set the mind free from its bondage under ignorance and prejudice and evil habit. If the Light of the world shines into the dark places of the heart, the chains erewhile misunderstood will not only become visible, but will be broken. Godet beautifully says that "**the empire of sin in a human heart is based upon an illusion, a fascination. Let truth shine, and the spell is broken, the will is disgusted with that which seduced it—'the bird escapes from the net of the Fowler.'**" [Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. (1909). *St. John* (Vol. 1, p. 360). Funk & Wagnalls Company.]

D. The person who follows Jesus will be set free to live in the absolute reality of who he is in Christ.

E. Following Jesus is a relationship of loving, joyful obedience to God in keeping his commandments.

- (John 14:21 LSB) **He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.**
- (John 15:10–11 LSB) **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love ... 11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.**
- (1 John 2:3–4 LSB) **And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**
- (1 John 5:3a LSB) **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.**

2. True disciples of Jesus have been set free from slavery to sin and follow Jesus, 8:33-34.

- (John 8:33–34 LSB) They answered Him, "**We are Abraham's seed 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.**"
- (Romans 6:6 LSB) Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, in order

that our body of sin might be done away with, **so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.**

A. People who do not abide in God's word are delusional about their freedom and even what freedom is.

Delusional: Characterized by or holding false beliefs or judgments about external reality that are held despite incontrovertible evidence to the contrary.

B. People who do not abide in God's word are blind to the truth that they are enslaved and blind to whom or what they are enslaved.

C. People who do not abide in God's word become hostile when someone tells them the truth they hear from God.

- (John 8:40 LSB) **But now you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God.** This Abraham did not do.

D. People who do not abide in God's word cannot hear God's word.

- (John 8:43 LSB) Why do you not understand what I am saying? **It is because you cannot hear My word.**

E. People who do not abide in God's word cannot hear God's word because they are not of God.

- (John 8:47 LSB) **He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.**

F. Every person who has not genuinely believed in Christ for the forgiveness of sins and received the gift of salvation is a slave to sin.

3. True disciples of Jesus are free indeed, 8:35-38.

- (John 8:35–38 LSB) And 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.** 37 I know that you are Abraham's seed; yet you are seeking to kill Me, **because My word has no place in you.** 38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.

A. Those who only profess to know God are slaves who will ultimately be evicted from the house.

B. The true disciples of Jesus will remain forever in the household of God.

C. Those who are free indeed live in the freedom of their new identity and their new reality.

D. Following Jesus is a continuing process of walking in the presence of God and being freed from sin.

FREE INDEED

What does that mean?



I. To be free indeed means to be free from the sin that has enslaved humans since the rebellion of Adam.

A. God commanded Adam to **not eat** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- (Genesis 2:17 LSB) But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.**

B. God did not give Adam a choice. Think about it. Satan is the one who offered the choice.

C. Adam defied God causing sin to enter the entire world and enslave everyone.

- (Romans 5:12 LSB) Therefore, **just as through one man sin entered into the world,** and death through sin, **and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.**

D. Adam and Eve were **not** acting as moral free agents but as deceived, disobedient slaves to sin.

- (2 Corinthians 11:3 ESV) **But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.**

- (1 Timothy 2:13–14 LSB) For it was Adam who was first formed, and then Eve. 14 **And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into trespass.**

II. To be free indeed means we have been freed from our slavery to sin and have been given power and authority to live in our new reality as slaves to God in his kingdom of righteousness.

- (Romans 6:17–18, 22a LSB) But thanks be to God **that though you were slaves of sin,** you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were given over, 18 **and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.** ... **But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God,** you have your benefit, leading to sanctification, and the end, eternal life.

A. The person who is enslaved to God is blessed with the benefit of righteous transformation in preparation of our new reality—eternal life with God in his glory.

B. This person reckons his old self dead and crucified

with Christ and lives by faith in the Son of God.

- (Galatians 2:20 LSB) I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- (Romans 6:6 LSB) Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.
- (Ephesians 4:22–24 LSB) To lay aside, in reference to your former conduct, the old man, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24

and to put on the new man, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

III. We stand firm in our freedom (our new reality) by living in the love of God and not for ourselves.

- (Galatians 5:1 LSB) It was for freedom that Christ set us free. Therefore, stand firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.
- (Galatians 5:13 LSB) For you were called to freedom, brothers; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- (1 Peter 2:16 LSB) Act as free people, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as slaves of God.

CONCLUSION: HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE FREE INDEED?

- I. We know we are free indeed when we walk by the Spirit because walking by the Spirit is following Jesus and following Jesus is the will of God.
- II. When we walk by the Spirit, we do not carry out our own desires but are led by the Spirit.
 - (Galatians 5:16–18 LSB) But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.
- III. When we walk by the Spirit, the luscious, abounding fruit of the Spirit flourishes in our lives giving us strong Spirit-to-spirit affirmation and testimony that we are those who live free indeed.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ...

(Galatians 5:22a)

A. Love ... The Holy Spirit pours God's love into the heart of the person who rejoices through suffering.

- (Romans 5:3–5 ESV) Not only that, but we

rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

B. Joy ... The Holy Spirit fills the person who loves and believes in Christ with unsearchable, unfathomable, glory-filled joy.

- (1 Peter 1:8 LSB) And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

C. Peace ... The Holy Spirit guards the heart and mind of the one who brings every anxiety to God in prayer with the unfathomable peace of God.

- (Philippians 4:4, 6–7 LSB) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ... 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

