

## **FREE INDEED!**

In John 8:36 Jesus promises that if He makes you free, “you shall be *free indeed*” (*emphasis added*). Now who doesn’t want, even long to be free?! Who would ever refuse such an amazing promise? Sadly, however, if the truth be told far too many of those who go by the name of Christ have yet to experience the freedom Jesus promises to His followers. Their lives do not reflect the freedom Christ secured for them through His death and resurrection. Rather, their lives reveal that their hearts and minds are still held in bondage, still shackled to sin and its consequent suffering, dysfunction, and destructive patterns of thinking and habits of behavior. Some of the sin is their doing, some of it inflicted on them by others; yet regardless of its origin, these shackles of sin keep them from experiencing Christ’s promise of real freedom. Why has this longed for freedom eluded them? Why are they seemingly unable to break free from their shackles and experience the abundant life Christ promises? How is it others have come to experience it, but they don’t? What keeps them from appropriating this wonderful promise? What is the key that will unlock their shackles of sin and its emotionally painful and debilitating consequences?

The answer to this question is found in the same passage as Jesus’ promise that He can free us. In John 8:32 Jesus declares “the truth will set you free.” Therefore according to Him the key that unlocks His promise of freedom is “the truth.” Well, immediately that raises a couple of questions. First, what is this truth He speaks of and secondly, how does this truth set you free? The answer to the first question is rather easy because the Bible clearly teaches that it, as God’s Word, is the truth (Jn.17:17). There is much evidence and scholarship to prove the veracity of this statement and that believing it does not constitute blind faith. Jesus Himself proclaimed that He was the way, the truth, and the life. (Jn.14:6) So the Bible, as God’s Word, is the truth Jesus speaks of; its laws, precepts, and principles are true, as is Christ and His gospel of salvation. These words were true when they were written, they are still true today, and will be true through eternity. Not only is God’s Word true today and always, but as the “living word” (Heb.4:12), it also is relevant and applicable for today and always, which leads us to the second question.

Although the answer to this question is a seemingly simple statement of fact that many of us believe in principle, it is the actual doing it that presents the problem. So how does the truth of God’s Word set you free? The answer is simply by believing it. I can already hear your cries of protest that you do believe and it hasn’t set you free! So I suspect you have probably resigned yourself to the seemingly inevitable fate of having to suffer with the hurt and dysfunction that plagues you until you are released by death and go to heaven. I know because that is where I was for many years in my Christian walk. I believed in Christ, who He was, His saving work on the cross, His resurrection, the whole truth of God’s Word. I had experienced God in very real and tangible ways, yet still remained in bondage to fear, insecurity, and guilt along with their consequent self-destructive beliefs and patterns of behavior. So based on the obvious conflict between my claims of belief and my reality, what was I really believing to be true? How do you determine if what a person says she believes is really what she believes? We all know that actions speak louder than words, and so it was with me. With my mouth I was confessing faith in Christ and His redemptive work in my life, but my thoughts and

actions proved I still believed lies from my past. Lies in that they directly contradicted God and kept me from truly believing and receiving all God's promised blessings for me and especially the most profound and freeing truth of all: that God loved me without reservation, without conditions. I suspect many of you, like me, would confess that you believe in God's love for you, want to believe it, and even think you believe it, but in the deepest and most vulnerable emotional levels of your heart and soul there is this constant nagging doubt, or even outright disbelief, that God could really love someone like you. After all, you know who you really are on the inside, all that you've done and continue to do. Yet, so does God! Read Psalm 139:1-5. There is no avoiding, fooling, or escaping God's scrutiny. Yet, He still loves you! Yes, **you!** Remember it is not about your worthiness, but that of Christ. If His love was based on our worthiness, no one would qualify. To experience the freedom He promises, to be restored to wholeness, and to enjoy the abundant life He put His Son on a cross to secure for you, you must take Him at His Word despite what your heart or head is telling you to the contrary. No matter what you've done, no matter how others have or are treating you, no matter what your circumstances, God **loves you!** Believe it! Let this truth sink into the depths of your heart and soul. Let the balm of His truth heal your crippling wounds and replace them with His love, comfort, joy, peace, and hope. Choose to let the truth of God's love and the truth of His Word silence the lies, the doubts, the sins, the despair, the insecurities, the guilt, the fears, the anger, the painful past, your failings, and the accusations of the enemy that will rise up to challenge you as they always have. Rather than continuing to be imprisoned by these lies, take them captive to the truth of God's Word (II Cor.10:5). This is what Jesus meant in declaring "the truth will make you free" (John 8:32); that by believing the truth, I mean **really believing** it, the destructive thinking patterns of the past will be stripped away and replaced with the truth; your brokenness will be made whole, thus setting you free at last.

As we have seen, it's one thing to say you believe God's Word, and His love for you, and it's another to live like you do. What is going to be the foundational truth of your life: the liberating truth of God's Word, or the enslaving lies of the enemy of your soul? The choice is yours. Don't let doubts or fear of failure keep you helpless and hopeless any longer. God has never let anyone down yet, and you're not going to be the first one He does in all of eternity! Twenty years ago I made the choice to take God at His Word no matter what, and I can testify that when the Son sets you free, you are truly **free indeed!!!** Won't you join me? You will never regret it! Please, I beseech you on God's behalf, don't refuse His gracious offer of wholeness and freedom. All you've got to lose is your hurt, pain, and self-destructive patterns of dysfunction. Although the familiar is oftentimes less scary to us than the unfamiliar, please don't let Satan cheat you for even one more day of all the promised blessings God has for you. Begin today to take back the mental and emotional wholeness his lies have stolen from you already. Know and believe that you don't have to wait until heaven to be free, you can be **free today!** God says blessed are those who make Him their trust, meaning attach themselves to Him (Ps.40:4). As you trust Him, cling to Him, hope in Him, He **will** deliver you. It's just a matter of prayerfully seeking God and His truth, along with His strength to believe it and walk it out daily no matter what.

Prayer:

Lord God forgive me for not believing You like I should. I confess that I have let other voices and experiences become my truth rather than You and Your Word. I desperately want the freedom and wholeness You promise. I don't want to live like a spiritual beggar any longer. I don't want to be cheated out of what You have paid so high a cost to give me through Christ. Please teach me the truth that will set me free, the truth of who You are and all that You've done for me. Then give me the strength each day to choose to believe it over and above the lies that I have been believing. Like the man in Mark 9:24 I cry out to You, I do believe, help my unbelief! I am claiming Your promise of freedom in the name of Christ Jesus, my Lord and Savior. Amen

Follow Up:

In Mark 9:23 Jesus said that all things are possible to the one who believes. Again the key is believing. God's Word is full of warnings about unbelief, of exchanging the truth of God for lies. Romans 1:18-32 clearly outlines the slippery slope into all manner of sin when we do so. Take some time to read that passage. In Galatians 3:1 the Apostle Paul asks the Galatians who had "bewitched" them causing them to doubt and distort the gospel of Christ. There are many voices in this world seeking to bewitch us. Thus it is critical that we arm ourselves against them. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 to learn how to protect yourself in this. Now as you get ready each day, be sure you also remember to dress yourself spiritually by putting on the full armor of God too.

Challenge:

Your number one priority in making freedom and wholeness in Christ a reality is to get to know who your God is, all that He's done, and all that He promises. To do so you *must* be in His Word and praying to Him daily! You can never know someone without spending quality time dialoguing with them. This is the minimum you should do. Your chance for success will be greatly enhanced if you get involved in a Bible teaching church, as well as a Bible study, for growth, encouragement and accountability. The only way God can help your unbelief is if you are actively pursuing a relationship with Him whereby you get to know Him intimately just as you are intimately known by Him.

For Further Study:

Psalm 40; 103:1-5; 119:42; 145:18; Proverbs 2; 3:5-8; 28:26; Jeremiah 29:11-13; John 8:31-36; Ephesians 1:17-19; 3:13-20; Hebrews 3:12-15; 11; 12:1-3; I John 2:1-6; 4:18

*By Debbie Amble...2007*

