

HINDRANCES TO FREEDOM

JOHN 8:32-36

God yearns for you and me freedom-freedom whereby we are not under the control of anything, whether it be worry, anxiety, a feeling of inferiority, a feeling of perfectionism, but rather living a free life, a life that Christ has designed to the point that we can achieve God's absolute maximum in and through our lives and others are so drawn to our lives that they yearn and desire what we possess. But what hinders people from experiencing the freedom that God so richly desires they enjoy?

1. WE CANNOT BE FREE WITHOUT A RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS CHRIST.

One reason why so many individuals remain in bondage to slavery, is the reality that they have never made a genuine confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the days of the writing of John 8:32, many claimed that they were not in bondage in any way- but the real truth was their bondage was invisibly real. They were bound up with regulations that robbed them of the freedom that Christ wanted to bring into their lives. There were rules regarding even the distance one could walk on the Sabbath, there were rules on how to wash your hands just to name two. The truth was, Jesus knew that in spite of the fact of their family heritage, they were bound by all manner of things in their heart. The same holds true today as well. The reality is a person can attend church, sing songs, and never come to know the liberating freedom that Christ desires to bring into his or her life because they have never genuinely and authentically admitted to Christ that they are a sinner. But the truth is, everyone of us are sinners by nature and by choice.

While it may sound like the height of bondage to admit that we are sinners- the truth is, it is at the point that we admit that we are sinners that Christ can enter into our life and give us freedom, and purpose. Sadly, so many people remain in all types of bondage, especially bondage to sin because they have never come to know the freedom that can come through salvation. Without a relationship with Jesus Christ, there can never be freedom. A person can attend seminars, counseling session in the numbers- but the reality will be that the heart will still be in bondage. Since Jesus created us, He and He alone knows how to bring permanent and lasting freedom. The unwise person looks at the cross and declares it to be foolish to place your faith in someone who lived and walked on this earth better than 2000 years ago, but to every believer, the cross is a source of freedom from sin's strong vice over our lives. Christ is the only one that can break sin and sinful habits that have lingered in your life for years.

2. WE CANNOT BE FREE AS LONG AS AN ATTITUDE OF "ANTIBONDAGE" REMAINS IN OUR HEART AND MIND.

Another great hindrance to experiencing true and lasting freedom is found in the reality that in the minds of so many, there is **the feeling and sensing that there is no bondage**. Among those in Jesus' day, their declaration was this, "We are Abraham's seed and have never been in bondage to anyone." The thought of the people in Jesus day was like that of our day- "We are free- we are not in bondage to anyone." But an honest look around us, is the discovery of those who are living with all manner of fears, frustrations and anxieties- which is a real form of

bondage. Many live with the feelings of inferiority- which is a weight of bondage. Still others live and breath with a heart filled with worry and anxiety. Other individuals have the bondage of rejection from childhood that they have been carrying around for years.

The sad reality is this, when a person never comes to admit that there is bondage- then there can be no freedom, there will be no lasting joy, and excitement. But the question must be asked- If Christ set me free- then why are so many believers not being all God has purposed for them to be? When we deny the reality of bondage- we set ourselves up for a life of continual pain and agony. A glimpse over the average Christian's life is not a picture of freedom, joy, and excitement, but one of stress, worry, and all manner of cares that result in physical and emotional problems that can even lead to an early death. For so many believers they will walk to their graves with hearts filled with problems, worries, anxieties, complexes, an unhealthy self-image, a heart laden with false guilt- missing out completely and entirely on the free life that God so richly desired them to have.

3. WE CANNOT BE FREE AS LONG AS WE READ THE BIBLE FOR INFORMATION.

Why is it that so many believers, who have attended church for years and years still remain in bondage? Shouldn't believers who have walked in the Christian faith for years be the ultimate example of a life of freedom and joy? The answer is "yes". Believers who have been saved for years "**ought to be**" examples of freedom and joy! The older Paul became the more excited he became in the Christ that he served. Then what is it that makes the difference? The answer can be found in this one principle. Only God knows the countless numbers of individuals who read the Bible to gain information and facts, but never make personal application of the truths they have read. The reality is a person can spend day after day reading the Bible, gaining facts, information, and an awareness of the awesome stories in Scripture. However, it is another matter all together to read the Scriptures with a desire to know the truths, and principles that are locked within each story of Scripture. Sadly, there are countless thousands who can tell the wonderful stories of Scripture such as Noah, Jonah, Sampson, David & Goliath, Gideon, but are never able to relate the stories to real life and real living.

God didn't give us the Word for information only. Jesus said that freedom only comes when we "know" truth. James put it this way, "...Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (Ja.1:22) One of the greatest hindrances to freedom is the "hearing" or the "accumulation of information" of Bible facts and information without understanding the vital necessity of making personal application. **It is the goal of the devil to keep us from being free and it his goal if we are going to read God's Word, to read it for information's sake only.** The devil never wants us to apply the truth to our lives. If you are reading the Bible for information's sake, that is, to get in your Bible reading, or to read it for Bible study's sake, then you will never know the true liberating freedom that God's Word can bring. A wise person in reading the Bible will ask such questions as: 1) What is God saying to me through this passage of Scripture. 2) What are the principles that God is teaching me? 3) What adjustments are necessary for freedom's sake?

4. WE CANNOT BE FREE AS LONG AS WE HOLD TO THE TEACHING OF OTHERS ABOVE THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE.

Jesus declared that when we know “truth” it is “truth that sets us free. Yet, there is much bondage in the lives of many because of inaccurate teaching that came unintentionally through parents, teachers, and even ministers.

While no good parent, teacher or minister would intentionally mislead a person, the fact remains that there are thousands in bondage through the teaching of a parent. Here is how it works in part- as we grew up, those who instilled values, self-worth, a sense of esteem were our parents. Whatever parents declared and relayed to children, the children accepted that as truth. A child may have been rejected, shunned, scorned, and belittled- and the reality is, that child believes that parents wouldn't reject him unless he deserved it. Therefore the child holds to those attitudes of being shunned, scorned, and belittled even into adulthood. Only God knows the countless thousands of men and women who are not free because they are holding to the teaching that came from parents over and above the truth of Scripture. While parents can unconsciously teach error, and wrong attitudes, the reality is, a child still absorbs that as truth. Because the teachings have come from someone that loves the child, cares for the child, it is not an easy thing to deal with inaccurate teachings that come through parents. The reason so many adults are paralyzed is found in what they mentally believe about themselves. Many, have been programmed with rejection, worthlessness, and/ or the belief that they must “do something” to be loved. *Dealing with inaccurate teaching from our parents is probably the single greatest preventer of freedom.*

Consider it this way- a parent begins the programming process of their child during infant years. The messages that infiltrate the mind of that infant are countless hundreds of thousands. The truth is, it is God's desired plan to set us free from bondage teaching that we have received during our childhood- though that teaching may have been done unintentionally. If we know that Christ wants us to be free and others have taught and programmed us with bondage- the ultimate question is this- whose teachings am I going to hold to? The teachers of others or the truth of Christ?

5 WE CANNOT BE FREE AS LONG AS WE DON'T KNOW THE TRUTH OF WHO WE REALLY ARE IN CHRIST.

Each and everyone of us have an image of ourselves- but the question must be asked- is the image of ourselves in keeping with what we were taught and/or the teaching of the Word of God. The reason so many are not free is found in one statement- “they don't know the truth” from God's viewpoint. Here is the reason that many don't know the truth. You cannot know the truth, when we never mentally and spiritually digest God's Word in our hearts. It is through the Word of God that He sets us free. But when we never take time to read God's Word then we can never counter those attitudes that have been preprogrammed into our thinking- and the result is a life of continual bondage. The truth is God wants to set all who will listen free- but there is a price to be paid. A person must be willing to sit before God with an open heart and allow God to show him or her “the truth” of who they are in Christ.

Never putting God's truth into our minds will result in us never having the ability to counter those inaccurate things that we have been taught or accepted about ourselves. In the sight of God we are loved unconditionally. (John 3:16). In the sight of God, He loves and delights to bestow on us mercy and kindness. (Mic. 7:18-20) In the sight of God, we are His children in whom He has obligated Himself to provide for all of our needs. (Phil.4:19) However, the sad reality is that these truths never get to the very inner core of our being, and the result is that many believers live a life far less than God desires for them. God doesn't wait to condemn us, or degrade us because there is no condemnation or guilt to those who are in Christ. (Rom.8:1) The truth is Christ was never under worry, stress, anxiety, in any way, even though He knew He was walking to the cross. The Bible declares that since that was the lifestyle of Christ- then we are in Him. Sadly, for the people in Jesus day, they would live and die and never come to know freedom, because they would never own up to the fact that they were in bondage. While it may be difficult to admit- a wise person will deal with the real issues of his heart honestly asking God to remove all the bondage that lingers. Is the Father leading you to deal with bondage issues?