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FREE INDEED!

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Free Indeed!

Therefore if the Son makes you
free, you shall be free indeed.

— John 8:36

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FREE INDEED!

Freedom From Struggling

I. Foundation On Freedom

- A. Free (defined/Vine’s) – Free from bondage or slavery, free from restraint or obligation, free to go wherever one likes, free from sin, liberated, to have liberty.
 - 1. Free (defined/Webster’s) – Not imprisoned or enslaved: at liberty, not controlled by obligation or the will of another, not affected or limited by specific conditions or circumstances, free from want, free of jealousy, uninhabited and outspoken, spontaneous, unconstrained, unconfined, not bound, fastened or attached.
- B. Liberty (defined/Vine’s) – A loosening, relaxation, authority and rights, free, to set at liberty.
 - 1. **Psalm 119:45** – . . . *I will walk at liberty and at ease, for I have sought and inquired for [and desperately required] Your precepts.*
 - 2. Liberty (defined/Webster’s) – The state of being free from control or restriction, the right to act, believe, or express oneself as one chooses, a right to engage in certain actions without interference or control.
- C. **John 8:31-32** – If we apply the Truth of God’s Word, it will set us free.
- D. **John 8:36** – He whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

- E. We need to be “free from,” “free in,” and “free to.”
1. Free from various bondages

Examples: Allowing our emotions to control us, jealousy, self-pity, overeating, laziness, fear, etc.
 2. Free in relationships, free in praise and worship, free **in** unpleasant circumstances while we are waiting to be **free** from them
 3. Examples:
 - a. Free to confront
 - b. Free to enjoy food; and yet at the same time, free from overeating
 - c. Free to spend money, and yet free from the bondage to debt
 - d. Free to speak boldly and plainly, and yet free from being ill mannered and rude
 - e. Free to dream great dreams for our futures
 - f. Free to be all we can be
 - g. Free to be ourselves, and yet realizing that we constantly need to be changing
- F. Freedom is a wonderful thing; and yet at the same time, it is a tremendous responsibility.
1. Freedom not only says I can do whatever I desire – but it also says I must take responsibility for my actions.
- G. **I Peter 2:16-18** – Live as free people, yet without employing your freedom as an excuse for sin.

II. Set Free By The Glory

- A. **II Corinthians 3:17-18** – We are liberated (emancipated from bondage) and set free as we behold His glory. And our freedom manifests in progressive realms and degrees of glory in our own lives.
1. We are changed from glory to glory.
- B. What is glory?
1. It is the atmosphere of heaven. Just as air is the atmosphere of the earth, glory is the atmosphere of heaven.
 2. It is the presence of God manifested in our midst.
 3. It is the manifestation of God's excellence and His goodness.
 4. It is the manifestation of His grace and His power.
 5. It is the manifestation of His character duplicated in another.
- C. How is His glory manifested? There are many ways.
1. When we display God's character by acting as He would in a situation
 2. When we walk in love
 3. When we are good to one another
 4. Through praise and worship
- D. We praise until the spirit of worship comes; we worship until the glory comes; and then we stand in the glory.
1. See *GLORY* by Ruth Ward Heflin.
- E. How do we behold His glory, and what does beholding mean?

1. **Behold** expresses a more intent, earnest contemplation. For example: Behold the birds of heaven – does not refer to a glance – but an earnest looking at, which teaches us something and brings revelation. We can learn lessons of faith by seriously watching the birds.
2. When Jesus beheld or looked upon Peter after the denial – it was not a glance – but an intent look that brought revelation to Peter concerning his problems. They had to be confronted if he was to go on and fulfill the call upon his life.
3. We must not get in a hurry during our praise and worship or during our private fellowship with God. We must take our time and not be concerned about the clock.
4. We must beware of formulas that appear good, but have no life in them. We can behold the formula instead of Christ. We can worship worship or worship prayer, and this is wrong.
5. Beholding opens the door for us to see – we may see a bodily vision or a mental vision. We may receive a revelation concerning something in our lives or personalities. You might see Jesus or have a revelation of His love. We may receive a revelation of something we need to do, or something that we need to stop doing immediately.

WE MUST HAVE REVELATION TO WALK IN VICTORY!!

- F. What does **II Corinthians 3:18** really mean?
1. It means to spend enough time with the Lord in His Word and in His presence that, as a mirror, we begin to reflect His glory. **WE BEGIN TO REFLECT TO OTHERS, WHAT HE IS!!!**
 2. (Prop: Bring a full-length mirror for me to use. Hold it in front of me and act as if I become the mirror reflecting the Word of God.)
- G. Beholding eliminates struggling!

III. Freedom From Struggling

- A. What causes us to struggle?
1. Trying to do something ourselves without believing or instead of believing
 - a. Sometimes we need believing **instead** of action.
 - b. Sometimes we need believing **with** action.
- B. Struggle (defined/Webster's) – To exert energy; to be vigorously involved with a task, problem or undertaking; to make a strenuous effort: Strive, to contend against, to compete with, to progress with much difficulty, to move with an effort.
1. **Hebrews 4:10-11** – When we enter God's rest, we cease from the weariness and pain of human labors. Let us strive to enter that rest.
 2. **Hebrews 4:3** – Those who have BELIEVED do enter that rest.
- C. Believe (defined/Vine's) – To be persuaded, to have confidence in, to trust, and rely upon. It is used most frequently in the gospel of John. Matthew uses the verb 10 times; Mark – 10; Luke – 9; and John – 99.
1. John it seems had a great revelation on fellowship with the Master. He referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved; he was the one who leaned on Jesus' breast at supper. John wrote about close fellowship and abiding; he wrote about the Holy Spirit in us.
- D. We hear more about the do-ers than the believers. We seem to hear more about Peter than John.
1. Peter was crucified upside down, and he died. I heard that John was boiled in oil, and they could not kill him.

2. Over the years, I was a do-er and Dave was a believer. You may have heard more about me; but Dave had rest, peace, and joy while I was struggling and frustrated.
3. Now I have learned (and am still learning) to allow Jesus to “do it” through me, while I believe and cooperate with His grace.
4. Believe is a verb – verbs are action words. Believing is action – it is spiritual action rather than natural action.

**BELIEVING IS ACTING IN THE SPIRIT,
WHICH CAUSES GOD TO ACT IN THE NATURAL.**

5. Believing releases us to praise and worship.

II Chronicles: Chapter 20 – Jehoshaphat worshiped, and God defeated his enemies.

E. **Romans 15:13** – Joy and peace are found in believing.

F. What should we believe?

1. Believe in the goodness of God – and that whatever your situation is – it will ultimately work out for your good.
2. Believe that God is greater than your problem, and that with God nothing is impossible.
3. Believe your breakthrough will manifest at any moment.
4. Believe you hear from God.
5. Believe God heard your prayers – and be expecting His answer.
6. Believe healing power is working in your body and that every day you will feel better and better.
7. Believe God gives you favor and that you do not have to “work” at being accepted by people.

8. Believe God loves you and you have a destiny.
 9. Believe God will change you and the other people in your life.
 10. Believe . . . believe . . . believe
- G. I could have gotten under a lot of pressure and really started struggling over this conference – but I heard the Holy Spirit say: BELIEVE! Believe you will have the right messages; believe the Anointing will be present; believe that everyone will leave mightily blessed; believe that all the details will come together; believe that people will have manifested breakthroughs.

BELIEVING ELIMINATES STRUGGLE!

IV. Why Is It So Difficult For Us To Simply Believe?

- A. Two factors make it difficult.
1. Feelings
 2. The mind – mental strongholds and old thought patterns
- B. Feelings
1. We become so addicted to feelings that we live by them. We must have them to support us, or we do not know how to live without them.

WE ABSOLUTELY MUST LEARN TO ACT ON GOD'S WORD WITHOUT FEELINGS.

2. When we are no longer controlled by feelings, then we will be allowed to enjoy more of them.
3. We often believe our feelings more than we believe the Word of God.

(See the wisdom of the disciples in **Luke 5:1-6.**)

4. Feelings have been nominated the believers' number one enemy.
5. The Israelites had the Word of God. They were instructed in what to do, but they did not do it. They followed their feelings, and they stayed in the wilderness. **You may walk in feelings and go to heaven, but you cannot walk in feelings and live in the Promised Land.**

C. Feelings are often dictated by what we see or do not see.

1. **II Corinthians 4:8-9, 17-18** – Paul called his trials light momentary afflictions. He looked to the unseen realm, not the seen realm.
2. **Romans 4:18-22** – Abraham had no reason to hope, but he was strengthened to believe what he could not see through praise and worship.

D. We must make a decision to live beyond feelings. Make a quality decision to base your life on the Word of God.

1. You may feel as if nobody loves you – but say what the Word says, “God loves me, and I have value. He bought me with the precious blood of His only Son, Jesus Christ. I have a future and a destiny. I have favor with God, and He gives me favor with man.”
2. You may feel like quitting and giving up. You may feel that you cannot go on, but KNOW that you can because the Word says He will never allow more to come on you than what you can bear; but with every temptation, He also provides the way out.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but God delivers him out of them all.

E. **Mental strongholds and old thought patterns**

1. Stronghold – An area that is dominated by another person or force.

- a. Mental strongholds are areas of our minds that are dominated by demons through deception.
 - b. Deception develops through lies that are believed.
2. Example: You can never be free from your past!
- F. The stronghold that says you cannot be free from your past – WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY?

- 1. **I Samuel 16:1** – Stop mourning over the past.
- 2. **Isaiah 43:18-19** – Do not have your mind on the past – God is doing a new thing. You will miss it if you don't live in the now!

**STOP TRYING TO RESURRECT A DEAD PAST
AND LET GOD GIVE YOU A BRIGHT FUTURE.**

- 3. **Isaiah 42:9** – *Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.*
 - a. God wants to give you visions for your future.
 - b. He gives beauty for ashes – Give up the ashes!
- 4. **Isaiah 48:6-7** – . . . *I show you specified new things from this time forth, even hidden things [kept in reserve] which you have not known. They are created now [called into being by the prophetic word] . . .*
- 5. **Philippians 3:13** – One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and pressing on to what is ahead.

- G. The stronghold that says you will never change!

- 1. **II Corinthians 5:17** – If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things pass away, and all things become brand new.

You are new spiritual clay; turn yourself over to the Potter and let Him fashion a new vessel, one fit for His glory.

**BELIEVE . . . BELIEVE . . . BELIEVE . . . BELIEVE
IT SETS YOU FREE FROM STRUGGLING!!!**

H. **II Corinthians 10:4-5** – The stronghold must come down.

1. They are torn down by repeated blows against them with the Word of God.

Remember **John 8:31-32** – If you CONTINUE in My Word, you will be My disciples and you will know the Truth and be set free.

2. It does no good to put the Word on top of the stronghold and try to operate in the Word while the stronghold is still intact.
3. **Joshua 1:8** – Meditate on the Word, so you will observe and “do it”; and THEN you will make your way prosperous.
4. **Mark 4:24-25** – You must meditate on what you hear if you desire revelation from it.

I. Begin “BELIEVING” the Word no matter how you FEEL or what you THINK, and you will start seeing results in your life.

1. Believing produces right doing.

Example: You cannot truly believe in tithing without tithing.

V. **Areas That Most People Seem To Struggle In**

- A. Trying to be something or someone that we are not
- B. Trying to do something we cannot do – something we are not called or gifted to do

1. **John 3:27** – Be satisfied with your gifts; they come only from heaven and from no other source.

C. Refusing to accept things that you cannot change

1. A relationship that is dead and gone

If the horse has been dead seven years,
it is time to dismount.

2. Refusing to accept people the way they are and insisting that they not have flaws that are part of their natural personality – ONLY GOD CAN CHANGE PEOPLE!

3. Refusing to enjoy the glory you are in while you are on your way to the next glory God has for you

Learn how to enjoy yourself! Stop struggling with yourself!

4. **Deuteronomy 7:22** – We conquer our enemies LITTLE BY LITTLE.

5. Trying to change circumstances that only God can change

D. Trying to be something you already are creates great struggle.

1. Righteous
2. Anointed

E. Trying to get something you are not going to get

1. Because it is out of God's will
2. Because it is out of God's timing
3. See **James 4:1-3**. You have not because you ask not; or you do ask and do not receive, because you ask with a wrong motive.

F. People struggle greatly in their personal relationship with God. They get in bondage to legalism and dead works, trying to be acceptable to God. (This will be covered in greater depth in another teaching.)

SPECIAL NOTE: We do not obtain freedom from bondages by them going away – we obtain freedom through a fresh new attitude. We change our approach!

G. **Ephesians 4:22-24** – Everything changes when we get a new mental and spiritual attitude.

Freedom From Legalism

I. What Is The Law And How Does It Affect The Believer?

A. **The Law** – Rules and regulations. If one follows the rules, it regulates their behavior and keeps it in line with the desire of the lawgiver. The aim of the Law is to restrain the evil tendencies natural to man in his fallen estate; yet in experience Law finds itself not merely ineffective, it actually provokes those tendencies to greater activity.

1. **Romans 3:20** – The real function of the Law is to make men recognize sin.

2. **Romans 5:20** – The Law increases the trespass.

a. Example: A person may have a tendency to eat too much chocolate, so they make a law hoping to eliminate their problem. But the problem increases. The law that says I can never again eat chocolate makes me want it continuously.

b. The more immature and weak believer sometimes has to live under laws to control his passions. But as he matures, these laws should be laid aside; and he should give himself to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

3. **Romans 7:9** – Paul said he was alive until the Law came. Then sin lived, and he died (was sentenced by the Law to death).

Example: A person can be enjoying exercise until they make a law out of it, and then they begin to hate it because the life has been taken out of it. They now feel guilty if they don't do it instead of refreshed when they do.

B. The Law made men realize their inability, their weakness, and their need for a Savior.

- C. **Romans 5:13-14** – Between Adam and Moses until the Law came, sin was in the world; but could not be charged to men’s account because there was no law to transgress.
1. Sin was there, but men were not taking responsibility for their behavior; therefore, they could not be set free from it. They were trapped in sin.
 2. The truth (faced and admitted) is what sets us free.

See **I John 1:9**. If we admit and confess (our sins), then He forgives and cleanses.
 3. **Psalm 85:10** (KJV) – *Mercy and truth are met together . . .*
- D. It is very important to realize that God cannot help us until we admit our problems and STOP making excuses for them.
1. There may be reasons for our behavior; but when reasons become excuses, we are trapped.
 2. My experience with people who are consistently late for work or other appointments:
 - a. I was late due to traffic.
 - b. I was late due to a last-minute phone call.
 - c. I was late because my alarm did not go off.
 - d. I was late because of the weather.
 - e. I was late because I lost track of time.
 - f. I was late because my clock was wrong.
 - g. I was late because the trash truck was blocking my driveway.
 - h. Because . . . because . . . because

3. The truth is, they were late because they have their priorities mixed up. **They want to do what they want to do instead of what they are RESPONSIBLE to do.**

They may want to stay up late at night – then they have a hard time getting up early enough in the morning, to get finished in plenty of time, to allow for things that may happen that could make them late. They should go to bed, get enough sleep to be fresh in the morning, and be able to get ready without hurrying. **Their WANT TO gets ahead of their WISDOM!**

4. We make excuses in many areas – these are only a few: Appetite, unmannerly behavior, being difficult to get along with, selfish behavior, bad temper, impatience, excess in any area, self-pity, laziness, etc.

E. **Romans 7:12** – The Law is perfect and holy; but in order to keep it, one must keep **ALL** of it.

1. **Romans 7:14** – The Law is spiritual; but we are creatures of the flesh (carnal and unspiritual).
2. **Romans 7:15-18** – I can intend to do right, but I have no power to carry it out.
3. **Matthew 26:41b** – *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

The problem is simply that people are weak and imperfect.

F. Notice the Law is presented with the L being capitalized. God's Names are always capitalized in the Bible. He is the Law – that is why the Law is perfect.

1. We had to have an Intercessor – a mediator between God and man to bring them together – someone who could touch God and also touch man. Jesus came as the Son of God and the Son of Man – fully and completely God and yet fully and completely man.

2. A mediator between unions and companies are supposed to be people who understand and can relate to both parties.

Example: When I had trouble with my daughter Laura, Dave became our mediator. He understood her because he had her personality, and he understood me because he had been married to me for so long.

G. **Hebrews 4:15** – We have a High Priest Who understands our weaknesses and infirmities because He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sinning.

1. Jesus understands me. He has compassion for me, and He helps me.
2. He basically says, “You will never get to God; you have got too many weaknesses. You cannot keep the Law; it is too much for you. I saw your need. You are a sinner with no hope of saving yourself, so I paid the price for your sins. I died in your place, I kept the Law for you, and I fulfilled it. Believe what I am telling you, and YOU CAN BE FREE!”

H. Free from struggling with the Law, free from trying to keep it, and free from continually being disappointed

1. **Galatians 3:10** – All who depend on the Law are under a curse and doomed to disappointment and destruction.

I. **Galatians 2:19** – We must die to the Law before we can live to Christ.

J. **Galatians 2:20** – It is no longer “I” who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

K. I cannot live by the Law and be free – I must live by faith (believing), and faith sets me free from the Law.

L. **Romans 3:21-26** – Right standing with God comes only through believing.

1. There is no peace and joy without righteousness.

2. **Romans 14:17** – The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

II. Two Covenants

A. **Galatians 4:21-31** – Two covenants

1. One produces bondage – the other produces freedom.
2. The one that comes through works of the flesh produces bondage.
3. The one that comes by promise and is received through faith and waiting on God produces liberty and freedom.

B. The child of ordinary birth (the flesh) persecuted the child of faith.

1. I believe our flesh mocks us and tries to persecute us when we decide to wait on God and His promise.
2. See **Genesis 21:1-12**. Ishmael mocks Isaac, and God's instruction was: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son. They cannot be heirs together."
3. If we are trying to be a joint-heir and a slave at the same time, it will never work – MAKE UP YOUR MIND WHICH COVENANT YOU WILL LIVE UNDER!

C. **Galatians 5:1** – Stand fast in your liberty.

III. The Immature Live Under The Law

A. **Galatians 4:1-7** – Minors are kept under the Law of God, but sons are led by the Spirit of God.

B. **Romans 8:14** – . . . *all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.*

1. **Romans 7:6** – We are dead to the Law, and we now live under obedience to the promptings of the Spirit in newness of life.
 2. **Romans 8:2** – The Law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death.
 3. Law (defined/Vine’s 1a) – . . . *The aim of the law is to restrain the evil tendencies natural to man in his fallen estate; yet in experience, law finds itself not merely ineffective, it actually provokes those tendencies to greater activity. The intention of the gift of the Spirit is to constrain the believer to a life in which the natural tendencies shall have no place, and to produce in him their direct contraries. Law, therefore, has nothing to say against the fruit of the Spirit; hence the believer is not only not under law . . . the law finds no scope in his life, inasmuch as, and in so far as, he is led by the Spirit.*
 4. He is either led by the Law or led by the Spirit. If he does not follow the Law of God or the Spirit of God, he is following the flesh in which case he has become a law to himself – and this lifestyle still produces only death and every misery arising from sin.
 5. The Law kills us, the flesh kills us, and only the Spirit makes us alive. If we wish to enjoy our lives, we must follow the Spirit.
- C. When he was younger, I tried to lead my son Daniel by suggestions rather than by laws. I tried to show him my heart, and I desired him to choose to do right because he loved me and respected me.
1. “Dan, you really should pick up your clothes!” (Later):
 “Dan, why didn’t you pick up your clothes? I told you to pick them up!” “No, you didn’t,” he would say.
 “You **suggested** that I pick them up.”
 2. “Dan, you should do your homework early and not leave it until the last night before it is due.”

- a. He would leave it, and then something would come up that he wanted to do and couldn't because he had not followed my suggestion.
- b. I thought I had told him to do it, but he reminded me that I only **suggested** that he do it.
- c. He actually told me that he would have done it had I insisted that he do it. But if I left it up to him, he just followed his flesh.

- 3. People who are immature must have laws. They may know the parent's heart or the boss's heart, but they will not follow it unless forced to – they are carnal and controlled by the flesh.

D. Immature Christians live under the Law.

- 1. Bible reading and prayer are laws.
- 2. Good works and giving are works.
- 3. They expect rewards when they behave good and fear punishment when they fail.
- 4. Nothing is done out of pure desire and to glorify God. Things are not done by faith through grace – they are done through fleshly struggle and frustration. Pride is always present when performance is good and condemnation and guilt when weaknesses manifest. This type of carnal, immature, fleshly believer often burns out from living under the Law.

E. **Philippians 3:9-15** – Paul said the spiritually mature had these desires.

- 1. To be found and known as “in Him,” not having any self-achieved righteousness
- 2. To know Him and the power of His resurrection that equips us to become like Him

3. They press toward perfection continually, but quickly let go of past failures. They have discovered that they cannot “press on” and “hold on” to the past at the same time.
4. These are the convictions of the spiritually mature.

IV. The Law Kills

- A. **II Corinthians 3:6** – We are ministers of a new covenant, not of a legal code.
 1. The Law kills, but the Spirit makes alive.
- B. The Law kills your joy. There is no joy in serving God when we serve Him as one under the Law.
- C. **John 10:10** – The thief comes only to kill, steal, and destroy; but Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly.
 1. The thief is the Law.
- D. **John: Chapter 9** tells the story of the boy born blind.
 1. The Pharisees did not like the healing.
 2. The man did not deserve it in their estimation.
 3. It was done in an unorthodox manner.
 4. It was done on the wrong day.
 5. The whole thing was too simple for their complicated minds.
 6. Then in **John 10:10**, Jesus said: “The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy.”

V. Legalistic People Are Judgmental.

- A. **Luke 18:9-14** – The difference between the Pharisee and the tax collector’s prayers
- B. **Pharisees** – A “self-righteous” sect of the Jews who depended on all their “good works” and who looked down their noses in scorn at anyone who did not follow their rules.
 - 1. Self-righteousness causes judgment.
- C. **Matthew 6:1-13** – Their motives were extremely impure, but they were so busy judging others they never faced themselves.
 - 1. See Amplified and Message translations.
- D. **Matthew 7:1-6** – He is still talking to the Pharisees with his discourse on not judging others.
 - 1. See Amplified and Message translations.

WE NEVER EXPERIENCE FREEDOM FROM OUR BONDAGES UNTIL WE STOP JUDGING OTHERS!!

- E. **Matthew 11:28-30** – An invitation to those with spiritual burnout
 - 1. See Amplified and Message translations.
 - 2. **Come to Me . . .** and you will learn the unforced rhythms of grace – and you will learn to live **FREELY** and lightly.
 - 3. Stop trying to keep the Law and just simply come to Jesus.
- F. A look at Jesus’ attitude toward the legalistic person who follows rules, but whose heart is not in it
 - 1. Read **Matthew: Chapter 23** in *The Message Bible*.

2. Jesus would rather have someone with a heart to be perfect who makes mistakes and admits them, rather than a person with a supposed perfect performance and a proud, judgmental attitude.

VI. Legalistic People Are Hard And Harsh.

- A. **Matthew 11:30** – My yoke is not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing – but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant – and My burden is light and easy to be borne.
 1. Jesus is trying to refresh and comfort those with burnout from attempting to follow the Law.
- B. **Ezekiel 11:19** – I will take the stony heart out of them and give them a heart of flesh (sensitive and responsive to the touch of their God).
- C. **Ezekiel 36:26-27** – I will give you a new heart and put My Spirit in you, and I will CAUSE you to walk in My statutes and to heed My ways.
 1. Following God’s plan, our victory comes BY THE SPIRIT – not by our works.
- D. **Mark 4:5** – The seed sown on stony ground (believers living under the Law with hard hearts) never takes root. Therefore, they never really get victory.

**LEGALISTIC PEOPLE ARE NEVER FREE!
THEY SPEND THEIR LIVES LABORING.**

The Freedom Of Self-Control

I. Visions, Dreams, And Goals Require Self-Control!

- A. Discipline and self-control help you become what you want to be, but you never will if you allow the flesh to rule.
- B. Self-control is not legalism – it is Spirit-led management of your life.
 - 1. Self-control is the manifestation of a good steward – a person who takes what God has given them and does the most they can with it.
 - 2. **Matthew 25:14-28** – The person who has no self-control always ends up with nothing.
- C. **Matthew 25:1-13** – The five foolish virgins lacked self-control. They followed feelings instead of wisdom.
- D. **Ecclesiastes 5:3** – *For a dream comes with much business and painful effort . . .*
- E. Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit.
 - 1. **Galatians 5:22-23** – Self-control (self-restraint and continence) is a Fruit of the Spirit.
 - 2. **Galatians 5:25** – Those who are led and guided by the Spirit will manifest the Fruit of the Spirit.
 - 3. You cannot rightly say, “I am spiritual” or “I am led by the Spirit” or “I am a Spirit-filled believer” unless you are manifesting the fruit.
 - 4. **Matthew 12:33** – You shall know them by their fruit.
- F. **Ephesians 2:10** – God has prearranged a good plan for our lives that we might walk in it.

1. **II Peter 1:3-7** – Self-control is developed and brings us into the fullness of the life Jesus died for us to have.
2. Pictures are developed: Light captures an image, negatives are placed in water solution and must be kept moving; and then gradually the image comes forth as a clear picture.

The correlation: Light comes to us, and we get an image of a better life. We soak ourselves with the water of His Word, we keep moving in the Word; and gradually the new image and new life come forth.

3. Choose at least one area of your life that needs self-control and go home ready to come up higher in that area.

II. Self-Control Is Not Legalism.

- A. **I Corinthians 6:12** – Paul said all things were permissible (allowable and lawful), but not all things were profitable. He said he would not become the slave of anything.
- B. Real freedom is not liberty to do whatever one feels like doing any time they feel like doing it.

The flesh feels like doing a lot of things that will not be ultimately profitable.

1. **I Corinthians 10:24** – *Let no one then seek his own good and advantage and profit, but [rather] each one of the other [let him seek the welfare of his neighbor].*
2. **II Timothy 1:7** – God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of POWER, LOVE, and a SOUND MIND.
 - a. Power against the devil
 - b. Love toward other people

- c. Discipline and self-control toward ourselves
 - d. We are free to love people, and LOVE SEEKETH NOT HER OWN! Love is not selfish.
3. **I Peter 2:16-17** – *[Live] as free people, [yet] without employing your freedom as a pretext for wickedness; but [live at all times] as servants of God . . .*
- a. Show respect for all men (treat them honorably).
 - b. Love the brotherhood. Reverence God. Honor the emperor.
4. WE ARE FREE FROM OURSELVES – free from a selfish, self-centered lifestyle that only ministers death to us!
- a. **I Timothy 5:6** – Self-indulgence renders a person dead even while they still live.
 - b. Self-indulgence is excessive gratification of one’s own desires.
- C. Real freedom is the ability to discipline oneself so that no area of life gets into excess.
- 1. **I Peter 5:8** – Be well-balanced for your adversary, the devil, roams about like a lion roaring in fierce hunger, seeking whom he may devour.
- D. Real freedom can do all things, but does them in moderation.
- 1. **Philippians 4:5** – Let all men recognize your moderation.
 - 2. Eat a candy bar occasionally, but you do not have to eat one every day.
 - 3. Eat a cinnamon bun at the airport occasionally when leaving or returning from a trip, but do not eat one every week leaving and returning home.

4. Exercise diligently, but do not become so legalistic that if one session were missed here and there you would feel guilty and condemned.
5. Keep the home neat and clean, but do not be so rigid and legalistic that the family cannot enjoy living there.
6. Enjoy shopping, but do not become a “shopaholic” that spends money even when you don’t have it.
7. Enjoy watching a good movie on television, but do not spend every evening, all evening, in front of the television.

Without discipline and the fruit of self-control, life gets out of balance – and a door is opened for the devil.

E. **I Corinthians 10:23** – Paul said he could do anything – that everything was lawful; but not all things are constructive to character and edifying to spiritual life.

1. I can watch wrong things on television, but it will not help my spiritual life.

Mark: Chapter 4 says to be careful what you hear. We must be careful what we take in through the eye and ear gates of our soul. The gates and walls of the cities in the Bible were very important. If those gates and walls were torn down, the enemy would surely attack and defeat them.

KEEP YOUR WALLS UP, AND YOUR GATES CLOSED!!

2. I can be a glutton, but it will not help me develop the character of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: The glutton has his or her mind excessively on food. There are many skinny gluttons.

3. I can worry, be jealous, gossip, backbite, and have a bad temper – but it does not edify me spiritually.

Proverbs 14:30 – *A calm and undisturbed mind and heart are the life and health of the body, but envy, jealousy, and wrath are like rottenness of the bones.*

**MY SALVATION IS NOT BASED ON THESE
APPETITES AND PASSIONS – BUT MY VICTORY IS!**

- F. Am I saying we can live in sin and go to heaven? **No!** Emphatically no!
 - 1. **I John 3:8-10** – We cannot practice sinning and be of God.
 - 2. Some people have enough of Jesus to keep them out of hell, but not enough to walk in victory.

III. We Are Free To Be Led By The Holy Spirit.

- A. **Ephesians 2:10** – God has a prearranged good plan for our lives, and we are to walk in it.
- B. The Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus to help us in our daily walk; to help us live consecrated, holy lives; and to stay with us until we are presented to Jesus at the end of our journey on earth.
- C. The Holy Spirit desires to control us, but it must be a control that is willingly given – He will not force us to do the right thing.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit convicts and attempts to convince us of righteousness (the right way of doing things).
 - 2. The Holy Spirit is not here for Himself – He came for Jesus and for us.
- D. **Galatians 5:16** – . . . *walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh . . .*
- E. **Romans 7:6** – We have died to the Law and now serve under obedience to the promptings of the Spirit in newness of life.

1. Promptings – Suggestions or information offered.
2. When Johnny is about to get in trouble, and Mom gives him that certain look – it is a prompting. He is free to go ahead and get in trouble or to obey the prompting.

**HE CAN SOW WHAT HE CHOOSES, BUT
HE WILL ALSO REAP WHAT HE SOWS.**

- F. **Romans 8:2** – The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.
1. I can follow the legal code, and it produces sin and death.
 2. I can follow the Spirit, and it produces life.
 3. In society today the written code is: “I am a human being with rights, and I can do anything I please” – **look around you and see that it is definitely producing death!**
 4. If people in the world today were following the Spirit instead of the flesh, the entire world would be radically different.

THE WORLD IS LACKING DISCIPLINE AND SELF-CONTROL.

**THEY THINK THEY ARE FREE, BUT THEY ARE IN
THE WORST KIND OF BONDAGE!**

IV. Paul Taught Freedom From Legalism, And He Taught Self-Control.

- A. **I Corinthians 9:25-27** – He knew that he had to discipline himself in order to properly teach others.
- B. **Acts 24:24-25** – Paul talked about faith, righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come – all in the same sermon.

1. Felix told him to go away – it seems many people want us to go away when we start teaching them that they cannot do everything they feel like doing.
- C. Kings (leaders) must be self-controlled.
1. **Proverbs 31:4** – *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink . . .*
 2. **I Timothy 3:1-5** – Paul’s letter to Timothy clearly shows that leaders must be prepared to live a life of self-control.

V. Four Major Areas That We Must Apply Self-Control

A. Appetites

1. Food, pleasures, things, sex, etc.
2. **Proverbs 21:17** says, He who loves pleasure shall be poor.

I am not free if appetites control me!

B. The mind (**Romans 8:4-7**) –The **mind** of the flesh always produces death.

1. **Philippians 4:6-8** – You will never have any peace unless your mind is disciplined.

I am not free if my thoughts are controlling me.

C. The mouth

1. **Proverbs 18:21** – *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life].*

I am not free if I cannot control my mouth.

D. Emotions

1. Those who live their life by emotions will live without principle.
2. We cannot be spiritual and be led by emotion.
3. When emotion pulsates, the mind becomes deceived; and conscience is denied its standard of judgment.
4. Emotions will never go away, but you can learn to “manage your emotions.”
5. **I Corinthians 3:3** – For you are still unspiritual, having the nature of the flesh as long as you are under the control of ordinary impulses.

I am not free if my emotions are controlling me.

VI. Closing Thoughts

- A. **II Timothy 1:7** – God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, love, and a sound mind (discipline and self-control).
 1. A lazy spirit is not from God.
 2. A loose spirit is not from God.
 3. Procrastination is not from God.
 4. Carnality is not from God.
- B. Jesus died to make us free – but we are never free unless we enjoy **THE FREEDOM OF SELF-CONTROL!!**

Freedom From Fear And Dread

I. Fear Hath Torment.

A. **I John 4:18** (KJV) – *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

1. Jesus came to set us free from bondage; so naturally, He would desire to set us free from all fear because fear enslaves us and hath torment.

2. **I John 3:8** – For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, to undo (destroy, loosen, and dissolve) the works the devil has done.

B. “Freedom from” does not always mean the “disappearance of.”

1. Fear means to take flight or to run from; it produces FEELINGS of shakiness, dryness of mouth, heart palpitations, etc. It comes with thoughts of disaster and a future filled with dreadful things that we do not believe we can handle.

2. God says over and over “fear not.”

3. He did not mean, “don’t feel fear” – He meant, “when you feel fear, do not run.”

C. God needs faith to work with – Fear hinders what He desires to do in our lives.

1. Satan attempts to counter every good thing God wants to do in our lives, and fear is the number one weapon he uses.

D. **I Kings 17:1-16** – Elijah knew what they needed to do to get out of trouble, but he warned the widow that she would FEEL fear as soon as he presented God’s plan for their deliverance.

1. Frequently, we ask God for His deliverance and help; and when He shows us what to do, we are too afraid to do it.
 2. Satan wants us to run from the will of God.
- E. Satan seeks to keep us in permanent torment – and one of the ways he does it is through a wide variety of fears. These fears can ultimately control our present and future lives.

II. Fear Must Be Confronted.

- A. Confront (defined) – To come face to face with, to oppose, to bring two persons together for examination and discovery of the truth.
1. We might say to confront means to deal with or discover the truth about a person or situation.
 2. In this instance, confront means to come face to face with the devil and his lies and discover the real truth.
 3. **Isaiah 14:12-17** – Satan will one day be exposed for what he really is.
 4. **I Peter 5:8** – Remember he comes in LIKE a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.
- B. Fear gives a negative “feeling” or report about something that has not occurred yet.
1. The devil says: if you step out and try that, you will make a fool out of yourself.
 2. A confrontational person will “step out and find out.” They would rather know than be tormented with “not knowing.”
- C. Example: I grew up in an angry atmosphere and developed a fear of angry people. Anytime I was around anyone who was anything other than overtly happy and peaceful, I became fearful that they were angry; and I feared they were angry with me.

1. I learned in my marriage to confront those fears by asking Dave, “Are you upset about something? Are you upset with me?” Ninety-nine percent of the time he was tired, did not feel very good, or God was dealing with him, etc. – but it almost NEVER had anything to do with me.
 2. I could choose CONFRONTATION OR TORMENT!!
 3. We are afraid of what we will find out if we ask direct questions, and we are afraid of what people will think of us. **We are afraid they will think we are stupid for being afraid.**
- D. “Not knowing” not only torments, but it also leaves room for molehills to become mountains of misunderstanding.
1. Donna had heard some negative reports about how we run our office. Instead of just believing them, she confronted the situation with me.
 - a. Like the definition says, “We came together, examined the situation, and discovered the truth.”
 - b. Sometimes we hear facts – but we need to hear the heart behind them – or we end up believing something that is not truth.
 2. Roxane frequently confronts what could be misunderstandings between us.
- E. Confrontation prevents strife from spreading.
1. **Hebrews 12:14-15** – Watch out for each other and help others stay out of strife; otherwise, it will spread.
 2. **Galatians 5:15** – If strife is not dealt with, it will consume you and your entire fellowship.

Example: Our entire family works together. If I knew two of my children were in strife with each other, I would get them together and confront it. I cannot just say, “Well, that is not my problem.”

It is my ministry; and if I do not deal with the strife, I am not guarding what God has given me.

3. Confront rumors, judgment, complaining, murmuring, discontented, and dissatisfied people. Confront gossip, lies, misunderstandings, etc.

Don't fear them – CONFRONT THEM!

F. CONFRONTATION IS A LOT OF WORK!!

G. Fear and insecurity prevents confrontation.

1. I believe everyone wants to confront. I believe the Spirit that God gives us (His Spirit) is a confrontational Spirit.

The Holy Spirit eventually confronts me on every issue that is incorrect in my life.

2. **II Timothy 1:7** (KJV) – *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear . . .*

H. If you have not been a confrontational person – and you start becoming one – people will have to get used to the new you.

1. Dave did not confront me for years; and when he started, it was VERY HARD on my flesh.
2. If you have a friend who has always had his or her own way in your relationship – and you start giving your opinion more – they will probably oppose you in the beginning.

You will have to be determined to press through some difficult places in order to live free from fears that prevent you from confronting things you need to confront.

- I. Caution: Confrontation must be godly confrontation, and the timing must be correct.
 - 1. Do not confront something to bring comfort to your mind and leave the other person miserable.
 - a. Example: “I need to tell you that for years I could not stand you, and I want to ask you to forgive me!”
 - b. You may feel better, but now the other person may have to fight all kinds of emotions.
- J. **Judges 7:1-3** – Gideon had to confront the fear in his army before God would give him a victory.
 - 1. Many of you may not be experiencing victory simply because you are not **CONFRONTING FEARS** in your life.

III. Dread Is A Relative Of Fear.

- A. **Deuteronomy 1:29** – Dread not, neither be afraid.
 - 1. Learn to recognize dread, realize it is a close relative of fear, and get confrontational with it.
- B. **I Chronicles 22:13** – You will prosper if you keep the ordinances of the Lord. Be strong and of good courage. Dread not and fear not; be not dismayed.
 - 1. Dismay causes discouragement, fainting (giving up), or depression.
 - 2. Often, all of these problems began with DREAD.
- C. Dread drains the life out of you and blocks grace from flowing to you in whatever you may be attempting to do.

1. Dreading everyday jobs does not make them go away – it only makes us miserable while we do them anyway.
 2. Examples: Dishes, laundry, grocery shopping, driving to work or home from work in traffic, cooking, changing the oil in the car, cutting the grass, cleaning up after the dog, etc.
- D. Dread is not faith; and whatever I dread, I certainly cannot do for the glory of God.
1. Do these everyday things have anything to do with our relationship with God?
 2. **Romans 12:1** (*The Message Bible*) – *So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life – and place it before God as an offering.*
 3. **Mark 4:26-27** – . . . *The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed upon the ground, and then continues sleeping and rising night and day while the seed sprouts and grows and increases – he knows not how.*
- We believe for something (plant seed); and then a lot of everyday, ordinary life goes on in between when we planted and when we received our harvest – or when we prayed and when we received our manifestation.
- E. We are not free if we permit dread in our lives.
1. Turn the tables on the devil – take those things that he tries to make you dread and make them sacraments to God.
 2. Sacraments – Something consecrated to God as sacred.
 3. Sacred – Dedicated to or reserved for worship. Dedicated or set apart for one person.

4. Example: Instead of dreading doing the dishes, I can confront dread. I turn the table on the devil by dedicating the act and the time to God, declaring I will do it and do it with a good attitude for His glory.

IV. The Fear Of Man

- A. **Proverbs 29:25** – The fear of man brings a trap.
 1. We become trapped in doing what everyone else wants and never experience fulfillment for ourselves.
 2. We let the fear of what people think, what they say, and what they will do trap us in a life of fear. We lose the freedom to be ourselves, and we become like one of the lizards that change colors depending on their surroundings.
- B. **Galatians 2:11-14** – Paul confronted Peter concerning his conduct. Peter was changing his behavior, depending on who was around.
 1. Paul did say to the Jew he was a Jew and to the Greek, a Greek – whatever it took to win them – but he was not speaking of compromising due to fear of man.
 2. If I am having lunch with four believers who are not Pentecostal, I do not need to speak in tongues over my lunch. I can walk in love with them and pray however they pray.
 3. On the other hand, if I eat lunch with four unbelievers who tell dirty jokes, I do not need to sit and listen.
- C. **Hebrews 13:6** – . . . [*I will not fear or dread or be terrified*]. *What can man do to me?*
- D. **Isaiah 51:12** – It is I Who comforts you. Why are you afraid of man that will die and who is like the grass?
- E. The fear of man traps us in their will instead of God's will.

1. **Galatians 1:10** – *Now am I trying to win the favor of men, or of God? Do I seek to please men? If I were still seeking popularity with men, I should not be a bondservant of Christ (the Messiah).*
2. **John 12:42** – Many of them believed in Jesus, but they feared the Pharisees and would not confess it for fear of being put out of the synagogue.

Verse 43 – *For they loved the approval and the praise and the glory that come from men [instead of and] more than the glory that comes from God. [They valued their credit with men more than their credit with God.]*

F. Approval addiction

1. We crave approval from people. We want their words and their faces to approve of us. WE LOOK FOR THE “LOOK OF APPROVAL” ON PEOPLE’S FACES.
2. **Deuteronomy 1:16-17** – Righteous judgment requires that the judge shall not be afraid of the face of man.
3. **Jeremiah 1:5-9** – God told Jeremiah He had called him and that he was not to fear the faces of man.
4. **Jeremiah 1:17-19** – Do not break down at the sight of their faces.

God is not promising that everyone will give Jeremiah an approving look, but He is telling him not to let it bother him.

**DECIDE TO CONFRONT ALL FEAR AND DREAD
FROM THIS DAY FORWARD!**

HE WHOM THE SON SETS FREE IS FREE INDEED!!

