



# True Freedom

John 8:31-36

## *Desire for Freedom*

When we listed things that people desire, “freedom” was mentioned. “Freedom” may be defined as “the state of not being constrained, afflicted, controlled, dominated, oppressed, enslaved or imprisoned.”<sup>1</sup>




## *Questions about Freedom*

1. What kinds of “freedom” do people desire? Freedom from what? Freedom to what?
2. Do you think freedom is always good? Explain.

## *Misuse of Freedom*

We can use our “freedom” to make wrong choices and do wrong things. God told the first man:

 “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”  
(*Genesis 2:16-17, NIV*)

*To do the right thing*, the first man (Adam) was “not free” to disobey God. But as a human being, Adam had the “freedom” to obey or disobey God. Adam (and Eve) chose to disobey God and do the wrong thing. Human beings have been making wrong choices ever since. This is “sin.”<sup>2</sup>

## *Need for a Deliverer*

Because of human sin, we live in a fallen world – a world full of *bad* things that constrain, afflict, control, dominate, oppress, enslave or imprison us. Thus we need to be “delivered” (set free)!

As a result of their sin, God’s people (Israel) were deported from the “promised land” and taken captive by their enemies. Prior to the Jews’ captivity in Babylon, the prophet Isaiah spoke of One who would “proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners.” (*Isaiah 61:1, HCSB*)

When Jesus began his earthly ministry, he read these words from Isaiah and said, “Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled” (*Luke 4:21, HCSB*). The promised Deliverer is Jesus Christ!<sup>3</sup>

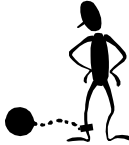


## *How to be Set Free*

Jesus made great claims about himself and his relationship to his Father (God the Father). Many of Jesus’ fellow Jews rejected him, but many believed in him. Read John 8:31-36.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Freedom’ can refer to release or separation from any constraining, restricting or undesirable condition or situation. One definition is ‘the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants.’ Absolute (unlimited) freedom is not possible because constraints and limitations are part of the created order.


<sup>2</sup> ‘Sin’ may be defined as any attitude or action opposed to God’s authority and moral will. Adam’s sin has infected all of his descendants (all humanity) so that all are morally corrupted. All are captive to the power of sin, unless set free.

<sup>3</sup> The freedom that Jesus offers is firstly spiritual. Complete freedom will be realized in the future perfected kingdom.

3. True disciples of Jesus “hold to” (believe and remain faithful to) his teaching (8:31). What is the result of holding to Jesus’ teaching? (8:32)
  4. “The truth will set you free” has become a popular saying. What do people usually mean by this saying? Many people believe that education “will set us free.” What do you think?<sup>4</sup>
  5. In this passage, Jesus’ saying has a particular meaning. What does it mean to be “set free by the truth?” What kind of “slavery” is Jesus talking about? (8:34) Why is it so bad? To what degree is humanity affected by this “slavery?”<sup>5</sup>
- 
-  “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)... the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23, NIV).
-  Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, NIV).
6. How do the Jews respond to Jesus’ offer of freedom? (8:33) Why do they respond this way?<sup>6</sup> Do people today respond in a similar way?
  7. What can we do to know the freedom of Jesus in our daily lives?<sup>7</sup> Be specific.

### *Set Free to Serve God*

True freedom is *not* freedom to continue in sin, which shows slavery to the forces that oppose God (Romans 6:1-23). True freedom is freedom to serve God willingly and joyfully. True freedom is a *new life* indwelt by the Holy Spirit, inspired and enabled to do God’s will.

 “...you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God” (Romans 6: 22).

### *Reflection & Application*

- Have you admitted the need to be “set free?” Do you need to trust in the Deliverer (Jesus)?
- Brothers & sisters, are you truly living in the freedom of Christ? Reflect on Romans 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> ‘The truth will set you free’ is the motto of several universities. In the philosophical sense, the saying means the truth (knowledge of facts) will liberate us from the bonds of ignorance. This is true, and applies to our understanding of the good news of Jesus. However, education alone cannot ‘set us free’ from *spiritual* bondage. Our problem is not merely intellectual; it is spiritual, and relates to our moral condition and relationship with God.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus says ‘everyone who [continues in sin]’ is a ‘slave to sin.’ Everyone enters life in slavery to sin. We are controlled by our sinful desires, and the result of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The ‘truth’ offers freedom from both the controlling influence of sin and the result of sin (which is ‘spiritual death’ – separation from God, the Source of life). The ‘truth’ is connected with Jesus himself, who died on the cross for our sin, and was raised from the dead thereby defeating sin and death. Through faith in Jesus, we are united with him in his victory over sin and death. This is true freedom!

<sup>6</sup> They don’t feel they need what Jesus is offering. They feel secure as ‘Abraham’s descendants.’ They are relying on their ethnic/religious status, not realizing that a true relationship with God (and true freedom) is realized through faith in Jesus. Those who rely on their status, descent or achievements are blinded to their real needs, and the real solution.

<sup>7</sup> In general, we must be true disciples, holding to the truth, including the truth of the gospel applied to our daily lives.