

FREEDOM IN THE SPIRIT

Isaiah 61:1,2, and 3 says, “ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed and qualified me to preach the Gospel of good tidings to the meek, the poor, and afflicted; He has sent me to bind up and heal the brokenhearted, **to proclaim liberty** to the (physical and spiritual) captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound.

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (the year of His favor) and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.

To grant (consolation and joy) to those who mourn in Zion—to give them an ornament (a garland or diadem) of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment (expressive) of praise instead of a heavy, burdened, and failing spirit—that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

2nd.Cor. 3:17 says, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (emancipation from bondage, freedom). “

Knowing your spiritual identity and position in Christ is the essential truth that will set you free. He whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

READ: 2nd Cor.3: 3-8 and 17 and 18

V3 ... you are a letter from Christ/written with the Spirit of the living God...on tablets of human hearts

V5... not that we are qualified and sufficient in ability of ourselves... can't trust ourselves if left to our own devices, but we can sure trust God (v4).

Any power, ability and sufficiency we have are from God and we need to remember and acknowledge that. When we do so, it releases a greater channel of the outpouring of His Spirit within us to those around us.

V6... Because of the Christ and His Spirit Who lives within us, we each have a ministry-à a dispensing ministry-à the only drug we dispense should be the

H-S-P (as per P.R.) We are not to dispense any other “letters” of the law. The code of the Law kills... (cause it's not by works that we can earn our rights to freedom, none of us could possibly live up to all the 'do's and don'ts') but it is the Spirit Who makes us alive and sets us free.

There are some places of worship &/or religions (J.C. of L.D.S. and many others) that claim if you want the truth, the “truth” is that you can't drink any beverages that have caffeine in them such as coffee, tea, hot choc., pop and etc. if you do then there is a dispensing of g-u-i-l-t, c-o-n-d-e-m-n-a-t-i-o-n, or j-u-d-g-e-m-e-n-t.

Or if you want to get to heaven you must.... Wear a hat to church on Sunday, you must part your hair on the left side only, you must knock on doors in pairs in the hopes that 144,000 will get to heaven, you must definitely stop that habit you have and then MAYBE God will let you into His heaven.

That is not the Spirit that sets us free but a spirit that tries to put us into bondage.

Again, v17 (read) and v18

V18... the veil has been removed (we are no longer separated from God or have a screen that keeps us from seeing) so that as we look into the face of the Lord we are being transformed more and more into His likeness and He keeps going "BHAM" and gives another degree of His glory to us, a greater outpouring of His Presence, His Spirit, freedom in Him.

So, freedom *from* what? freedom *to* what?

Rom. 8:1,2 says " therefore, (there is) now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live (and) walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit.

1st step to freedom is of course that Jesus is Lord of our lives and we follow after Him.

For the law of the Spirit of life (which is) in Christ Jesus (the law of our new being) has freed me from the law of sin and of death."

Rom. 8:15 says we have freedom **from** fear, freedom from a spirit of slavery that puts us into bondage to fear. We have freedom **to** receive our adoption from the Father in heaven and the freedom **to** call Him Father. We belong to the Lord of heaven and earth. We gain a sense of belonging. And when we feel that we fit in or belong, then we can begin to trust and to have the freedom to be real, to make mistakes and to allow the Lord to make us into who He has created us to be.

1Peter 1:2 tells us that we have freedom from fears, agitating passions and moral conflicts. (Amp.)

Let's take a look at 2nd Peter 1:2-7 (Amp).

V2... peace (per Webster's New International Dictionary) = freedom from fears, agitating passions and moral conflicts. And may that freedom (His peace) be multiplied to you in the full, personal knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

DEFINITIONS:

Agitating à to disturb the feelings of, emotional disturbance or excitement

Passions à suffering, destruction, agony, emotions such as hate-grief-love-fear-joy, extreme compelling emotion, intense emotional drive such as great anger, rage or fury OR enthusiasm or fondness such as a passion for music, the suffering agony of Jesus beginning in Gethsemane and ending in the Cross.

Moral à manners or customs, capable of making distinction between right and wrong in conduct, good or right in conduct or character, principles, standards or habits with respect to right or wrong in conduct.

Conflicts à to be in opposition or to clash, emotional disturbance, struggle.

Fears à what are some of the fears that paralyze you or keep you from being free? We'll look at some of these in a couple of minutes but first let's consider a couple of ways that our fears deceive us. We have an enemy, the devil or Satan who likes to roar like a lion and strike terror into our hearts if we'll let him. His intimidation tactics are meant to rob and steal our joy and our faith in God so that we will try to get our needs met through the ways of the world or our flesh. Fear weakens us, it causes us to be self-centred and it clouds our minds so that all we can think about is the thing that frightens us.

V4...through His promises we may escape/get away from/ be free from moral decay (rottenness and corruption). We can share and receive the divine nature of Almighty God.

We have the freedom to do a lot more than we could ever have done left to our own devices. (v5-7).

We have the freedom to:

Exercise our spiritual faith muscles to develop virtue.

Develop knowledge (intelligence).

Develop self control, steadfastness (patience, endurance), godliness.

We are free to develop brotherly affection and then to develop Christian love.

Key word here is "develop"... that is we do not become perfect and godly and free overnight. It takes time and it is a process. Holy Spirit is our counselor and teacher... He often uses other people to help us learn His ways.

Eg. First born again à clothes à skimpy etc., the Lord used people in a parking lot à conviction of the Spirit.

A 'knowing' takes place and that's what speaks to us about changing. It just doesn't feel right anymore and so you want to do things differently. There is no condemnation when it is the Lord by His Spirit who is bringing us into freedom.

Or church ladies my choice to walk into freedom (convicted, judged, condemned – the "law") -- gossip biddies who talk more about their standards of what a Christian is than what the Bible actually says.

We have freedom or permission to forgive ourselves and let ourselves "off the hook" for past mistakes we have made. Just as Jesus said to the woman accused of adultery "I do not

condemn you either, go on your way and from now on sin no more". (Jn.8:11)

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.

We are free to receive love and to give it. We are free to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth.

We are free from thinking we have to be perfect before we can be a "good" Christian. Why is it that we are afraid to admit it when our lives don't perfectly match up to Scripture? Don't we know we are forgiven and God accepts us for who we are? It's His unconditional love and acceptance that sets us free to be ourselves. Those who feel driven to earn God's love and acceptance will struggle with perfectionism and will find it tough to admit failure. We can't possibly model perfection 'cause we're not perfect! We can only model growth.

We can be free from thinking that we have to "give up" all the things we like to do ie. cigarettes, movies, parties, dancing. Our thinking changes and a metamorphosis begins to take place. Those things that are important to us when we come to the Lord will eventually become faded and less appealing as we learn of Him and delight in pleasing Him, as we become more and more freed up because of His Spirit. After I first accepted Jesus I was up to that altar all the time! I was on my knees asking the Lord to take anything away from me that was not pleasing to Him. I wanted more of Jesus and to be free in every area.

The responsibility of living free in Christ rests with each individual believer. Repentance, believing, submitting to the Lord and resisting the devil cannot be done by someone else for you or me. We have to WANT to be free and then the Lord can use others to help minister other areas of freedom if needed. (myself/demonic influence/set free).

Most people caught in any spiritual conflict have a distorted concept of God or false beliefs about Him and who He really is. These ideas or concepts may originate from a variety of sources.

TRUTH about God is filtered through such things as ignorance, false prophets and teachers, blasphemous mental thoughts, unhealthy interpersonal relationships during early childhood years, or role models of authority figures, esp. parents.

LIES people may believe about God are things like:

He's hateful and unconcerned/ mean and unforgiving/ conditional approval/ absent when needed/ takes away, a 'killjoy'/critical and unpleasable/rejecting/unjust, unfair, partial/ unpredictable and untrustworthy.

Do you or have you struggled with any of these thoughts about who God is to you? (fears, agitating passions, moral conflicts)

HIS TRUE CHARACTER THE TRUTH IS:

He is loving and caring/ full of unconditional grace/ He is present and available, always/ giver of good gifts/ nurturing and affirming/ accepting/ just, fair and impartial (no favorites) /

steadfast and reliable

When our understanding and our beliefs about God are clouded then we are all tied up in knots, bound and living in “un-peace”. (agitating passions and moral conflicts along with a big dose of fear).

People in conflict may also have some false beliefs about themselves.

Do you know who you are in Christ &/or do you understand what it means to be a child of God? Do you question your salvation or think that your Christian life doesn't work for you the way it does for others? Do you suffer with mental anguish, anxiety, feel unloved, worthless and rejected?

In our natural state of being we learn ways to cope with life or defend ourselves that may not always be mentally or emotionally healthy. These are the types of things that can try to keep us from being free and create more internal conflict and agitation!

Can you identify any defense mechanisms you have learned to use to protect yourself?

- lying
- denial (conscious or subconscious refusal to face the truth)
- fantasy (escaping from the real world)
- emotional insulation (withdrawing to avoid rejection)
- regression (reverting to less threatening times)
- displacement (taking out frustrations on others)
- projection (blaming others)
- rationalization (making excuses for poor behaviour or justifying actions)

These are called strongholds or patterns of thinking that are like fortresses in the mind. When you and I become Christians, there's been no CLEAR button pushed to get rid of the old fleshly habit patterns of thought.

Hence, we are in desperate need for MORE of the Spirit of the Lord so that we can get free from old, wrong ungodly patterns of thinking. We can be transformed because we have the mind of Christ within us and because His Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.

2nd Cor. 10: 3-5 tells us That the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds(fortresses), that we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing that would raise itself up against the knowledge of God and that we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Now we talked briefly earlier about fears. What are some of the fears that affect you and your life, your thought patterns? Fears that the devil uses to keep you from walking by faith?

Is it?....

- fear of death
- fear of Satan
- fear of failure (success)
- fear of rejection by people
- fear of disapproval
- fear of becoming/being homosexual
- fear of financial problems
- fear of never getting married
- fear of the death of a loved one
- fear of being a hopeless case
- fear of losing salvation
- fear of having committed the unpardonable sin
- fear of not being loved by God
- fear of never loving or being loved by others
- fear of embarrassment
- fear of being victimized by crime
- fear of marriage
- fear of divorce
- fear of going crazy (having alzheimers)
- fear of pain/illness
- fear of the future
- fear of confrontation
- fear of specific individuals (list)
- other specific fears that come to mind

You can renounce those fears out loud so that whatever has been kept in the dark is exposed in the light and the power of darkness cannot overtake the power of light.

A sample prayer could go something like this:

I renounce the (name the fear) because God has not given me a spirit of fear. I choose to live by faith in the God who has promised to protect me and meet all my needs as I walk by faith in Him.

(Ps. 27:1; Matt. 6:33,34; 2nd Tim. 1:7)

Our faith must be based on the solid Rock of Jesus Christ and His Word because He is trustworthy and true. If we believe in what is not true, then how we end up living will not be right.

Declaring truth out loud (you hear the word and it goes in deeper) can be helpful to renew the mind with truth and replace any lies you may be believing.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim liberty...

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.

Do you want freedom? Do you want liberty?

Statement of Truth

1. I recognize that there is only one true and living God who exists as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. He is worthy of all honor, praise, and glory as the One who make all things and holds all things together. (Ex. 20:2,3; Col. 1:16,17)
2. I recognize that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. I believe that He came to destroy the works of the devil, and that He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them. (John 1:1,14; col. 2:15; 1Jn. 3:8)
3. I believe that God demonstrated His own love for me in that while I was still a sinner, Christ died for me. I believe that He has delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to His kingdom, and in Him I have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Rom. 5:8; Col. 1:13,14)
4. I believe that I am now a child of God and that I am seated with Christ in the heavenlies. I believe that I was saved by the grace of God through faith, and that it was a gift and not a result of any works on my part.
(Eph. 2:6,8,9; 1 john 3:1-3)
1. I choose to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. I put no confidence in the flesh, for the weapons of warfare are not of the flesh but are divinely powerful for the destruction of strongholds. I put on the full armor of God. I resolve to stand firm in my faith and resist the evil one. (2nd Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-20; Phil. 3:3)
2. I believe that apart from Christ I can do nothing, so I declare my complete dependence on Him. I choose to abide in Christ in order to bear much fruit and glorify my Father. I announce to Satan that Jesus is my Lord. I reject any and all counterfeit gifts or works of Satan in my life. (Jn. 15:5,8; I Cor. 12:3)
3. I believe that the truth will set me free and that Jesus is the truth. If He sets me free, I will be free indeed. I recognize that walking in the light is the only path of true fellowship with God and man. Therefore, I stand against all of Satan's deception by taking every thought captive in obedience to Christ. I declare that the Bible is the only authoritative standard for truth and life. (Jn. 8:32,36; 14:6; 2 Cor. 10:5; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Jn. 1:3-7)
4. I choose to present my body to God as a living and holy sacrifice and the members of my body as instruments of righteousness. I choose to renew my mind by the living Word of God in order that I may prove that the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect. I put off the old self with its evil practices and put on the new self. I declare myself to be a new creation in Christ. (Rom 6:13; 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:9,10)
5. By faith, I choose to be filled with the Spirit so that I can be guided into all truth. I choose to walk by the Spirit so that I will not carry out the desires of the flesh. (Jn. 16:13; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18)
6. I renounce all selfish goals and choose the ultimate goal of love. I choose to obey the two greatest commandments: to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love my neighbor as myself. (Matt. 22:37-39; 1 Tim. 1:5)
7. I believe that the Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, and He is the head over all rule and authority. I am complete in Him. I believe that Satan and his demons are subject to me in Christ since I am a member of Christ's body. Therefore, I obey the command to submit to God and resist the devil, and I command Satan in the name of Jesus Christ to leave my presence. (Mat. 28:18; Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 2:10; James 4:7)

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

I am accepted:

John 1:12
John 15:15
Romans 5:1
1Corinthians 6:17
1Cor. 6:20
1Cor. 12:27
Ephesians 1:1
Eph. 1:5
Eph. 2:18
Colossians 1:14
Col. 2:10

I am God's child
I am Christ's friend
I have been justified
I am united with the Lord and one with Him in spirit
I have been bought with a price—I belong to God
I am a member of Christ's body
I am a saint
I have been adopted as God's child
I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit
I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins
I am complete in Christ

I am secure:

Romans 8:1,2
Rom. 8:28
Rom. 8:31-34
2nd Cor. 1:21,22

Col. 3:3
Philippians 1:6

Phil. 3:20
2Timothy 1:7

Hebrews 4:16
1John 5:18

I am free from condemnation
I am assured that all things work together for good
I am free from any condemning charges against me
I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God
I am hidden with Christ in God
I am confident that the good work that God has begun in me will be perfected
I am a citizen of heaven
I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, of love, and a sound mind
I can find grace and mercy in time of need
I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me

I am significant:

Matthew 5:13
John 15: 1,5
John 15:16
Acts 1:8
1 Cor. 3:16
2nd Cor. 5: 17-20
2nd Cor. 6:1

I am the salt and light of the earth
I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit
I am a personal witness of Christ's
I am God's temple
I am a minister of reconciliation
I am God's co-worker

Eph. 2:10
Eph. 3:12
Phil. 4:13

I am God's workmanship
I may approach God with freedom and confidence
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens
me.

Pastor Leslie
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Some excerpts taken from the Bondage Breaker by Neil Anderson