

“FETTERED yet FREE”

“I will always obey your law, for ever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.”

-Psalm 119:44-45

Paul emphatically writes in Galatians 5:1, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” This verse is meaningful to an addict that spent countless days and years in bondage to substances that led us into places and behaviors that were inconceivable. In our pursuit of ‘freedom,’ we found the opposite. We became shackled and bound. The yoke of oppression suffocated us into lifelessness—we had become slaves to sin.

Scripture specifies clearly that we are all sin addicts and slaves of iniquity. Isaiah wrote in chapter 64, verse 6 of his book: “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.” John mentions in the eighth chapter of his gospel, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.” The ‘good’ thing about addiction is that our sin and the consequences of it become very evident. Eventually, there is no questioning whether or not we are sinners. There is no hiding the devastation, misery, and ugliness of addiction.

This is where the good news comes in—not just for drug addicts—but for all of us sin addicts. Though we are all guilty, there is a wonderful plan of redemption and freedom that was designed by our Creator. Ezekiel explains the regeneration process in detail: “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities. [...] I will give you a new heart. [...] and I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws.” John adds to this new reality by saying, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

We have been freed from sin, addiction, and death. We are now free to joyfully and willfully obey the law of God and His Spirit. Initially, the Law appears as constricting. We want to throw it off so we can be ‘free.’ What we eventually discover is that the only path to genuine freedom is through being slaves to God. Paul profoundly describes this paradox in Romans 6:17—“But thanks be to God that, though we used to be slaves to sin, we have come to obey from our heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed our allegiance. We have been set free from sin and we have become slaves to righteousness.”

In being bound to Him, I am now more free than I have ever been. By His grace, I walk about in freedom. Because of His Spirit that resides within me and the regeneration that is taking place, I now follow His decrees. I delight in Him and His Law. I am fettered, yet free.

“For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” — 2 Corinthians 3:17



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