

Why You Don't Experience Freedom in Christ

A bunch of us girls were gathered in my friend's living room, excited, giggling and each one of us talking over all the rest.

Our Bible and the book we were studying for that month: *The Search for Significance*.

After all of these years, I can still remember the title and what the cover looked like.

I didn't want to admit it at the time, not even to myself, but the book hit far too close to home for me.

The truth is: I was afraid to take it in.

I was afraid that if I truly believed that my worth and value didn't depend upon my capabilities, my performance and my ability to succeed in life, I'd be forgotten. I'd be invisible.

I was afraid that if real freedom in Christ meant that God wouldn't love me more if I was a "good Christian" and did all of the Christian things, then I'd become one of those "greasy-gracey people".

Just like the proverbial circus elephant whose chains that kept him tied to the iron post have been taken off, but he just keeps walking round and round in a circle, completely unaware that he's free ... or maybe afraid to venture too far from what has been familiar.

Freedom can sometimes be intimidating when you've been bound for a long time.

I genuinely wanted everything God had for me, but I was my own

worst enemy, my loudest critic.

Nothing I did for God was ever enough. Just when I was sure I was going to hit the mark this time and really feel that sense of satisfaction deep inside, suddenly some invisible something upped the ante and it was no longer enough.

Defeated, I'd set out to try to hit the moving target that was the pleasure of God...

Never knowing the truth.

It was a chilly morning in late April when my alarm went off.

I grabbed my Bible, my kids' bucket of colored pencils, a pen, a stack of Post-it notes, my tablet and headphones and sat at the table.

I opened my Bible to Galatians, found one of my favorite Bible teachers and set out to really understand what Paul was saying in this important letter.

An hour later, I just sat staring at my Bible. Dazed. Mind blown.

I could slowly feel something inside of me begin to unlock. Missing pieces of the word "freedom" were coming together, and by the end of May, I had learned the most important lesson I've ever learned in my Christian life.

Worth.

Significance.

Value.

Satisfaction.

God's pleasure.

God's blessing.

I will never earn any of these. I don't even have the capability to earn them, and if I could then Jesus died for no reason at all.

I have worth, significance and value because of Jesus' blood. That's it. That's the whole story and there is no sequel.

I have God's pleasure and blessing because He created me, He loves me—that's it. There is nothing more to be added.

And I no longer have to fear becoming a "greasy-gracey person" because of this one commandment, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Jesus also said, "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:14).

Here's the thing:

Freedom in Christ means that we understand that our justification (a five-syllable word that means "just as if you've never sinned") doesn't rely on your ability to do anything. It has nothing to do with you at all!

We are justified by grace alone, by faith alone, through Jesus Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.

But we keep God's commandments because we love and honor Him, we want to glorify Him, and we want a growing relationship with Him.

You see how freedom changes our motives?

I no longer "do good Christian things" so that God will love me more, I keep His commands because **I** love Him.

And that new motivation is a game-changer.

I am now free to receive the love and validation of God without fear of missing the mark, without fear of not making the cut.

Living free in Christ involves understanding two important

things: my justification and acceptance by God rests solely in the blood of Jesus and I will not use this freedom as an excuse to live in the flesh, because that is, in and of itself, bondage. Rather, I will keep God's commandments because Christ has set me free, therefore I will choose to do what I ought to do, not what my flesh wants to do.

The delicate balance of Christian freedom.

It's not either-or, it is a balance of both: freedom from earning God's pleasure, but pleasing Him by keeping His commands. {eoa}

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