

“How to be Free”

John 8:31-36

Freedom is a word we hear a lot today. People want to be free. But what is freedom? What does the word, or the idea, really mean? Is it the right to do whatever I want whenever I want? Is it the privilege to live my life with a minimum of control by the government? Or is true freedom something deeper than those things?

Hello friend, I'm J. Mark Horst, your host and this program is *Hope for Today*. It is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel media ministry. Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 21 other major languages. Thousands are tuning in each week to receive spiritual nourishment and blessing.

If you're tuning in for the first time today, we are currently being led through the Gospel of John by the teaching of the late, Dr. J. Otis Yoder. He was the founder, first president, and Bible teacher for *Hope for Today*. He went home to be with the Lord in the year 2003.

But his method of teaching the Bible was such that it never goes out of date. And so, we are rebroadcasting his teaching from John's Gospel. We are confident that, if you tune in each week, you will be blessed by the clear, simple presentation of biblical truth.

In just a few moments, Dr. Yoder will come to share his teaching about Jesus. It's titled, "How to Be Free." But before he does that, let's pray.

Gracious God our Heavenly Father, we come to you in the precious name of Jesus. It is alone through Him that we have access into your holy presence. His blood, shed on the cross at Calvary, is the only sacrifice that is acceptable to you to wash away our sin.

And now, Father, as Dr. Yoder comes to teach us from the Word, open our hearts to receive your truth. Help us to know and experience true freedom. This I ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

We are all very much aware of the fact that liberation movements are everywhere. People want to be free; they want to be independent. I am not criticizing anybody, but I wonder sometimes how these very small nations are going to make it. Often the true meaning of freedom is overlooked. Sometimes the meaning of freedom is distorted, twisted, so people do not really understand what freedom means.

To want what is not good for us is to become misfits and that surely leads to bondage, not freedom. I often think of the way children demonstrate this. They want what is not good for them and in that way create more problems for themselves than they solve.

But the most serious bondage is the bondage of the spirit. And the most joyous freedom is freedom of the spirit. Because we are so fleshly, we often fail to understand this fact: the most joyous freedom is freedom of the spirit.

The way to freedom is set forth in the Scriptures. I have chosen John 8:31-36 for the foundation of this instruction on **HOW TO BE FREE**.

31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

33 *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*

34 *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

35 *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.*

36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Jesus offers several expert **COUNSELS** as to how we can be free in the true sense.

The First Counsel is Continue in My Word.

I want to point out to you that Jesus by making this statement, continue in my word, suggested that this is not a momentary experience, but this is an abiding or a dwelling place. "If you continue (if you live, as it were) in my word then you will be my disciple indeed."

There is a definite relationship: my disciple. This whole idea of disciple and Lord is an exciting idea because it simply means that when you become a disciple of Jesus Christ then He orders your life. You need no longer be so concerned about where you are going or what you are doing because Jesus as Lord of your life will give you direction. There is also a distinct discovery here because Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Oh, people are searching for truth, but they don't find it because they don't search for it at the right place.

Jesus said His word will bring you to truth. Some find it. Praise the Lord! I'm glad to point out to you that truth is found in Jesus' words.

To be free means to continue in the word of Jesus. Don't miss the full force of this counsel. He said if you want to be free then you continue in His word.

The Second Counsel He gives us is Consider Wisdom.

They really denied their condition. They said, "We are Abraham's children. We have never been in bondage to anybody. They fell into a serious state. They thought that family lines can override the spiritual problem. They over emphasized their family background. They ignored the daily situation because at that time they were under the bondage of Rome. The Roman rulers had the say over them, but in their desperation they did not consider the wisdom of Jesus. So He needed to point out to them that true freedom is not in their family line, but true freedom comes in the spirit. So, He showed them that sin enslaves. Sin makes slaves out of people.

Oh yes, my friend, I know that to be true. I have witnessed it. What's more, I have experienced it. Yes, indeed. He pointed out to them that sin enslaves and yet there is hope in the Son. For He said, "The slave does not abide in the house forever, but the Son abides forever." In other words, you can break the bondage of sin if you respond to the wisdom of Jesus.

To be free means to consider the wisdom of Jesus. Sin enslaves. It creates bondage of the spirit, but Jesus can liberate you.

The Third Counsel on how to be free is Confess My Work.

That is the only way, for Jesus said when the Son makes you free, then you are free indeed. Oh, my friend, I want you to catch this in verse 36: "Therefore if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." It is His work to set you free. You can struggle all you want but you will never be free until you are willing to confess His work.

Then you have true freedom! And without a doubt for Jesus said, "You shall be free indeed." Indeed, without doubt. Yes. Praise the Lord! When we come His way then we experience that freedom of the spirit, the most important area where freedom can be experienced.

To be free means to confess Jesus' work. He liberates the spirit. And that's the most important place for liberation to happen, in your spirit and mine.

How to be free then involves accepting the counsels of Jesus: continue in my word, consider my wisdom, confess my work. He said, “If you continue in my word then you are my disciples indeed and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”

My friend, I invite you to find this freedom of which Jesus spoke, freedom of the spirit.

Thank you, Dr. Yoder for showing us from this portion of Holy Scripture how we can be truly free. There are Christ-followers who may be listening to this program who don't have political or religious freedom. And yet, they know the true meaning of freedom. They have found the truth in God's Word that only Jesus can set them free. They have believed on Him for salvation, and they are walking in obedience to His Word.

Now, were you blessed by this teaching by Dr. Yoder? If so, you can request an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, just request it by its title, “How to Be Free.”

The quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. That email address again is, m-a-i-l@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, “How to Be Free.” I'd be happy to send one to you.

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue our study in John's Gospel. And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.

