

WORDshop Week 6: Freedom

Are you beginning to see how this is building on itself? We are establishing a foundation of freedom, through the Word. We are building on the basics, before moving mountains. We have established that we are forgiven, but now we need to talk about the freedom that flows from forgiveness and how to walk in it. The first step is recognizing that this is a spiritual battle that we must overcome by walking in the Spirit.

Romans 8:1-2, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

2 Corinthians 3:7-18, *“The old way, with laws etched in stone, led to death, though it began with such glory that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses’ face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away. Shouldn’t we **expect far greater glory** under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? If the old way, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new way, which makes us right with God. In fact, that first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new way. So if the old way, which has been replaced, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new, which remains forever! Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away. But the people’s minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. Yes, even today when they read Moses’ writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand. But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. For the Lord is the Spirit, and **wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom**. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.”*

John 8:31-36, *“Jesus said to the people who believed in him, **“You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**“But we are descendants of Abraham,” they said. “We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, ‘You will be set free’?” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. **So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.**”*

Overcoming the sinful nature, by dwelling in the Word, (truth), in Christ, and walking in the Spirit is how we find freedom, but we make the process so difficult. One huge pitfall of trying to walk in freedom is trying to have freedom outside of God’s guidelines and often outside of the realm of common sense. This is true in most areas where we are prone to sin. We try to use the Word to justify what we are doing and call that freedom. The reality is that we are lying to ourselves in order to remain in a bondage that we enjoy. We don’t like the consequences, but our flesh desires the behavior. This is not freedom. Freedom comes from applying the Word to truly set us free. It goes back to praying **Psalm 139:23-24**, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”*

Do we want true freedom or do we want our own way?

1 Corinthians 10:23-31, 23 *“You say, **“I am allowed to do anything” - but not everything is good for you. You say, “I am allowed to do anything”- but not everything is beneficial.** 24 Don’t be concerned*

*for your own good but for the good of others. 25 So you may eat any meat that is sold in the marketplace without raising questions of conscience. 26 For “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” 27 If someone who isn’t a believer asks you home for dinner, accept the invitation if you want to. Eat whatever is offered to you without raising questions of conscience. 28 (But suppose someone tells you, “This meat was offered to an idol.” Don’t eat it, out of consideration for the conscience of the one who told you. 29 It might not be a matter of conscience for you, but it is for the other person.) For why should my freedom be limited by what someone else thinks? 30 If I can thank God for the food and enjoy it, why should I be condemned for eating it? 31 **So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**”*

The context here is different than what we are facing when it comes to dieting and weight loss, but the excuse making process is the same and the principle of how we should approach every action is the same. If it doesn’t glorify God, we need to re-think our position.

Freedom does not always look the way we think it should. In the area of food, we want to redefine freedom as the ability to eat anything, anytime and in any amount – without consequence. However, this definition is a direct contradiction to the Word, because we are to have the fruit of the spirit produced in us, part of which is self control. It also flies in the face of reality. Everyone will have negative consequences, at some point, if some level of self control is not applied to eating and drinking. **When we allow the desires of our flesh to define freedom, we will never truly walk in it.**

What does freedom actually look like in relationship to food and weight loss?

What are some common bondages related to food and weight?

- Fear of being hungry or not having enough
- Binge eating
- Adversarial relationship
- Fear of how you will interact with food
- The diet de jour
- Guilt about to seeing progress

Food is a gift from God. The ability to enjoy it is one of life’s pleasures. Ecclesiastes 2:24 says, “*So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God.*” Yet this is another gift that the enemy steals from us through lies, confusion and “out of control” desires of the flesh. He then adds guilt, shame and all kinds of condemnation to the mix. Food is required to sustain life. We must interact with it. It is no wonder it is such an effective weapon of the enemy.

Next Week:

So, what does the Bible have to say about food? A lot, actually. The desire for food is a surprisingly common topic and theme in the Bible. That desire and a well spoken lie set all of humanity down a dark path of bondage that required Jesus’ death on the cross to redeem. Is it any wonder that desire for food and Satan’s lies can still entangle, distract and limit us today? Let’s take a look at how this desire for food has been illustrated and addressed throughout the Word. Appetite is a far greater spiritual issue than I ever imagined.