

#### 4.12.21 - Free

We are going to explore being free. The verse is **John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.** We are going to assume that if you are not free, you have not found the truth. What are we made free from? Are we set free from persecution? The disciples got their truth direct from Jesus and they were all persecuted. Even Jesus who was called the Truth was persecuted. Are we made free from committing sins? We (Jim & Tom) have not been made free of committing sins and we know no one who has been made free of that problem. Since we have a free will, the choice to sin is always available. Are we made free of the consequences of sin? Your life and those around you should tell you that we are not free of suffering for dumb actions like hitting the wrong nail with a hammer or losing control of our car and wrecking it. Alright, what are we made free from? We are made free from condemnation before God when we believe the finished work of Jesus for past, present and future ungodly activities. We also have a new nature that wants to do what pleases God. Our job is to renew our minds to live like our new nature. Therefore, we are free from restrictions that are not God approved restrictions. Of course, we are going to apply the verse to naturism concerns.

Does God require you to wear clothing? Do you feel free wearing clothing? Before you answer, do not add shame to the question. That is not the freedom we are talking about here. Some on that latter. Imagine a warm spring day bright sunlight in a secluded area. No one to put a shame trip on you. You just want to check how the flowering spring plants are doing and get some sun and air on your body. Which would feel better/freer...with or without clothing? If you have never been naked except to take a shower, you might give the wrong answer for this question. You have noticed that athletic games are played with the least amount of clothing allowed by law to reduce the restriction of clothing on their movement. Certainly, you have noticed that a swimsuit is a restriction or bothersome. Swimming at a pool with a filter system was not allowed wearing clothing till synthetic fibers were invented. The lint clogged the filters. Clothing when not needed to protect the body is an unnecessary restriction. In these situations, clothing does not make us free. Clothing whenever possible may not be God's truth. We are designed to be naked with the intelligence to know when the body needs covered and how to cover the body when necessary.

Does clothing solve the lust problem? If you are trying to fix the blame on someone else, it gives you an out. My lusting is caused by her lack of clothing or how she accents the lustful parts of her body with her clothing. Now you are not to

blame. Does fixing the blame fix the problem? Do you still lust, or do you just check to see if the women are following the anti lust dress code? Are you free of the bondage caused by lusting? We are reasonably sure you did not break the habit/addiction by blaming clothing or the lack of clothing. You are still not free. Blaming is not the truth that makes you free.

What is the truth about lusting you ask? You have a free will. You choose to lust or not to lust. Yes, that is like telling a man struggling in water too deep to stand on the bottom with the current carrying him away from shore, "Get out of the water or you will drown." It is no help at all.

Lust is a learned behavior. When society tells the women that they need to cover their chest, they also tell the men they should lust if they see a woman's uncovered chest. Aaron Frost in his book, Christian Body: Modesty and the Bible, shows that different parts of the woman's body were covered by different societies to prevent lust. It is completely arbitrary what needs to be covered to prevent lust which suggest that none of the body needs to be covered to prevent lust. Naked societies had very little trouble with sex crimes till they adopted clothing which caused sex crimes to increase. Lots of non-sexual nakedness will reprogram your mind. You will know what is being hidden and more important, you will break the connection of nakedness and sex.

Does clothing make you feel better about your body appearance? Does clothing hide your unattractive features? Can you hide being overweight? Can you find people with your unattractive feature even with clothing on? If the answer to the last question is "yes", then your clothing is not hiding your unattractive feature either. Can you make a fair comparison of how your naked body (we assume you see yourself naked from time to time) rates with other clothed bodies? It would be like comparing two badly battered cars, one with a cover and the other with all its dents and scratches showing. The one with the cover could look worse than the one without, but the cover would hide that. You are comparing your body with all the flaws showing and highlighted in your mind with a body that may have more flaws than yours but covered. Your uncovered body will usually not come in first in your judgement. You will not be free of a bad body image until you compare yourself with other naked people and realize they live with flaws as big as yours or larger and still think they are made in God's image.

How will we know we have found the freedom God made for us? There is no nice quick answer for that question. If you have an addiction you are bound, but you may like the addiction. Everybody you know has the addiction and you do not

want to be different and not fit in. God will unlock the cell door and pay the fines, but He will not force you to leave the prison. The trouble with life is we do not always know we are in prison. The illustration I like is called "training fleas". You put the fleas in a jar with a lid. After the fleas bang their heads or bodies on the lid often enough, they only jump high enough to miss the lid. After that you can remove the lid and the fleas will not jump out of the jar. Our training may extend over generations. That is the way we have always done it means that if the-way-we-have-always-done-it is changed, you will hit your head on the lid.

You should feel free from guilt before God, but your well-meaning friends may convince you that you are guilty because you do not follow their beliefs about God. The Holy Spirit and the Bible will give you discernment when you seek it concerning your position as compared to theirs. You may find that others can be right on rare occasion.

Does God set us free from peer pressure? The simple answer is no. We need peer pressure to avoid trying extreme activities like showing up naked at a church service. Yes, it is against the law in most states, but you can plan to leave before the police show up. For most people it is peer pressure more than the police that keeps them from doing something like that. Of course, you could simply find a naturist church to attend and then...problem solved.

Just like peer pressure keeps us from doing dumb or bad stuff, it prevents us from doing good things that do not fit the group norm like going to a naturist activity. Now it is the Holy Spirit vs. peer pressure. Your free will gives you the deciding vote. You have to choose. We have peer pressure for bad, peer pressure for good and the Holy Spirit for good and our new spirit forming the mind of Christ in us. How do we choose?

The first part of choosing is to study in order to rightly apply the Word of God. The bad pressures will lead you away from a relation with Jesus. If scripture does not seem to discourage the activity, but you think you may have missed something or misapplied some verses, seek advice from someone you can trust. Sometimes God will ask us to go forward depending on Him like a free fall into His arms. This will never go against scripture and your advisor should mention this option if it is possible for the activity you are considering. Sometimes you will be set free from the peer pressure to stop you by knowledge alone. When you know that you know you are not afraid to move on regardless of what people think.

What happens if I learn what to do, but I just do not want to do it? It will not change your standing with God if you are saved. He loves the Jonahs who go the opposite way and the prodigal son who wastes His resources just like the Josephs and the Johns. You can pretend that you do not know what to do even to the point of preventing others from doing what you were led to do. What Jesus said about the Pharisees comes to mind: **Mat 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.** Basically, you are going to miss out on some of the joy of following God's leading.

I recently saw a picture from a lady who has decided to live her life as much as possible as God intended despite some of her family's and friend's objections. She was visiting a naturist resort and the smile on her face told all that was needed. She was made free! She was enjoying life as God intended...free from the shame and guilt that her friends want to place on her! Free from the restrictions that Satan would like place on her. Free from the judgment that her family or the "religious" crowd would like to place on her. She was FREE and she was full of Joy! It was written all over her face.

Will you make the decision to follow God and His way or will you live under the legalism and peer pressure that others place on you? Our recommendation is to join this wonderful lady and enjoy the freedom that comes from living as God intended from the very beginning!