

Department: Truth and Freedom  
Article: The Price of Freedom (Part 1)  
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There is a price to be paid to be free.

To be alive or to be free—which is better?

There is a lot involved in being free! Free to move around without undue restriction. Free to work in a job or profession of one's own choosing. Free to take a wife or husband of one's choice. Free to have a family without governmental interference in the number of children a couple may have. Free to live in the community of one's choice, to attend the school one prefers, to decide what food one will eat. Free to associate with friends one prefers to be with, to speak, in an appropriate and peaceable setting, what one believes without fear of imprisonment or to attend an organized non-violent assembly without government interference. Free to assemble and worship the One Who gave us our being. This kind of freedom comes at a price.

- **Freedom: Once enjoyed, it will require vigilance and sacrifice to insure it remains.**

To have the freedom to make the above choices in life is a prized possession. Who wants to be constrained to obey a tyrannical government? For certain, freedom requires vigilance and a willingness to stand up against those who are hostile against it.

Freedom is born out of a passion to be free. But history has shown that it is not easy to keep a fire going. People soon forget the price that was paid to obtain it. They come to believe it belongs to them by virtue of existence. The fire dies down; the enemy creeps in, often unawares. Suddenly freedom is threatened! Will the new generation be willing to pay the cost that may be required to maintain its blessing in their society? What are the people of a nation willing to sacrifice for?

There are times when sleep must be denied in order to ward off the enemy who would steal from us. In regard to freedom, one may wonder how many there are who have enjoyed it, but are blind or indifferent to the tactics of the enemy to steal it from them. If blind, who will arouse them and alert them to the craftiness of the enemy? And what if most are not willing to pay the price that is required to drive out the enemy!.. What then?

Not a few in each of the western nations are well aware that freedom has been under attack; yet the majority do not realize that there is grave danger it may be lost in this generation! Many nations have been involved in conflict. The number of third world nations with some weapons of mass destruction has been increasing, as has been the possibility of a regional conflict expanding into a world-wide conflagration. What is to

become of this prized treasure? Can it still be salvaged in free societies? How is true freedom maintained?

What people do not covet freedom from open violence by radical groups that rely on the use of arms to gain their objectives. What freedom loving parents want the government to be in a position to indoctrinate their children in what ever the state may choose, even so far as to turn them against their parents. The freedom that parents covet that enables them to teach their children the religious and moral values they prize—are they willing to die to maintain that privilege? Or are they so intimidated they are willing to “roll over and play dead?” Yet, most people today do not realize that these freedoms that are so prized, and that have been enjoyed by many for many decades, are a product of the true freedom that comes as a blessing of the Almighty upon those who honor Him.

Freedom—the absence of coercion or constraint in choice or action. Freedom—liberation from ungodly restraint or from the compulsory power of wicked persons who have gained control of the government and the military in a land. Freedom—with the right to marry the person of one’s choice and to raise a family wherever one chooses to live. Freedom—the privilege to make choices in one’s personal and private life as to whom one will serve and where one will work. Freedom to travel, to come and go without government monitoring, freedom from enslavement to an oppressive system of taxes, freedom—which enables the pursuit of one’s dreams to fulfillment--what a precious gift freedom is! Lets look at how freedom comes.

It certainly does appear that the majority of people in the western world do not consider as what price freedom has come. The fire of passion to maintain freedom is at low ember. The memories of the many who have died to gain and preserve the blessing of freedom in society have faded. O, some still have vivid memories. But most do not. Freedom has always been one of the most cherished privileges known to man. Yet the trend of our times shows how few people there are who understand, even care to know, what makes freedom possible. Modern society is largely centered in getting and having and the gratification of the appetites of the senses and of the flesh.

- **Man is at war with man and God because he lives unto himself.**

Freedom cannot be sustained long in this framework of living. It is selfishness that keeps the fearful the captive of the enemy, and corruption leads to more corruption. Thus the reason for the warning:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves.... (2 Timothy 3:1-2a)

...neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (Matthew 7:18b)

Where the Lord Jesus does not rule in the hearts of men, morality is sacrificed, and the security of life, freedom, and property endangered. True freedom can only be enjoyed in connection with submission to the Spirit of God. Freedom from coercion or constraint

may be won by physical force, but it will not last based on a continual use of such force. History testifies to this fact. Those whose hearts are still in Egypt are slaves to a ruthless taskmaster. These are willing to surrender their wills to the will of the Creator. True freedom is not only freedom from coercion, but it is freedom from the enslavement of sin and the power of death. Such freedom is known only by those who live to serve the Savior of man.

Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)

Stand fast in the liberty, in the freedom, with which Christ has set us free. In this freedom it is necessary for men to guard themselves from the temptations to do evil, and that they do not submit themselves again to a yoke of slavery. God wants people free of all that would hinder their spiritual growth, or that would hinder His purposes from being worked out in the lives of those who love Him. He wants people free in spirit, soul and body to live to Him and to bring healing to others in their communities. Satan would keep people in bondage to thwart God working out His purposes in the earth.

Freedom is an essential aspect of the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, although God will not coerce anyone to obey Him, to be set free does not mean that God's child is free to do anything he pleases. The freedom that Christ Jesus gives is to be used to do His will on this earth, and not to live to self will. Those who live to self are not free; they are still in bondage to sin and serve vanity and pride. God sets people free to secure the purposes of the kingdom of God. When God grants a nation freedom of movement, enables it to be free of oppressive government, and of invasion by foreign enemies, it is with this purpose in mind—that within the freedom He gives His child learns true obedience to Him in love.

When people take advantage of the freedom they are given, and use it to attain their own selfish ends, they sow to the losing of it. To live in rebellion against God is to live a slave to sin. To live being a slave to sin denies man of personal dignity and forces him to be subject to man rather than to God.

- **Most people work to live and gain rather than live to contribute.**

Most of the people of the industrialized nations live a hurried lifestyle. In their desire to gain things they serve darkness rather than light. It is natural and easy for a man to get caught up in materialism by an inordinate appetite to the things that please the senses. This is what his fallen nature demands of him. The flesh does not want to yield to the things of the Spirit as these require that the self-life be crucified. Therefore, most men and women, being slaves to self and sin, have little interest in those things which are important to the kingdom of God. And for freedom to be retained in society, there must be enough folk who are willing to deny self in order to gain God's favor on the nation.

For decades the western nations have been going the way of heathen lands and ignoring the demands of the Creator to obey His commandments and His statutes. His word has

been pushed out of the arena of most of the secular educational institutions because it is considered offensive. Many claim that Christianity is a religion of intolerance and must be rejected in favor of humanism—the belief that man is capable of deciding for himself what is of value in life. With a humanistic outlook of life it is no surprise that most have come to be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. To be occupied in hard work in order to provide for one's needs, to gain wealth to purchase a house and support a family, and to be able to travel and explore and have fun—what could be wrong in that?

So much is wrong with the humanist's approach to life! Is the One who gave us our being to be ignored that we may do as we please on the earth? Is this not His world? Does He not have any right to expect to be honored by those whom He has created and given the breath of life to? Does the Owner of the vineyard have no right to expect a harvest from what He has planted? What folly for man to ignore His Creator? How long will freedom last where the people cease to be aware of what makes freedom possible?

Most of the world's population give little consideration to why man was placed on earth. We believe only a few really believe man is the result of evolution from some elementary life form. Yet, men and women are so caught up in the routines of life that they have little interest in seeking to know what God requires of man. God is hardly considered at all. Men and women will take any of the blessings that are to be given out—as long as there are no unacceptable strings attached.

Man wants ease and affluence, comfort and pleasure. Some cultivate fame and power to dominate others. So much of what is done in this world is marked by selfish ambition, meanness, and superficiality or mediocrity. In general, the character of most men and women lacks moral depth and spiritual insight—displaying in the daily routine of life little consideration of what may transpire when this life is o'er. So many live in indifference to God's existence and oblivious to His demand for holy living. But this is certain:

- **How you live in this life will determine where you will spend eternity.**

This is a fast-track generation—rushing to and fro, ever looking for something new to get excited about. This is only one of many indicators of moral and spiritual decline in society. True freedom is born of resting in Jesus—a resting from striving after that which does not profit. The truly fulfilled life is marked by a steadfast desire to please the Lord, and an inner and outer life that is continually engaged in learning and doing what the Lord commands.

A fabulously wealthy king once wrote:

O vanity of vanities...all is vanity.  
I have seen all the works (the things) that are being done under  
the sun and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That  
which is crooked (as in nature) cannot be make straight...I spoke  
to my heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have

gained great and always greater wisdom above all those who were before me in Jerusalem, and my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom and knowledge, madness and folly; I perceived that this also is a grasping after the wind. For in much wisdom is grief, and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow. (Ecclesiastes 1:1,14-18)

I said in my heart, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure; and lo, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What does it issue in? I sought in my heart to nourish my body with wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom, and to lay hold on folly to see what it was good for the children of men that they should do (it) all the number of the days of their life. I made for myself great works; I built houses; I planted vineyards. I made gardens and orchards, and planted therein all kinds of fruit trees. I made water pools to water the forest that brings forth (sprouting) trees. I procured servants and maidens, and had servants (who were) born in my house; also I had great possessions of herds and flocks above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; I got men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, mistress and mistresses of all sort (a harem which turned away his heart—See 1 Kings 11:3)

So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever my eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion of all my labor.

Then I looked on all the works my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold, all was vanity and striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun (in regard to all this that he had done).

Then I saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness; and I perceived that one event happens to them all. (They all die.) Then said I in my heart, As it happened to the fool, so it happened to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.....

Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule

over all my labor wherein I have labored, and wherein I have shown myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.  
Ecclesiastes (2: 1-11,13-15,18-9)

What is in view in this sorry tale is the vanity of a very wealthy and blessed king, blessed greatly by God, being given great wisdom and a position of power, yet not being satisfied with that, in his striving to experience every pleasure the world can give he grievously violates the rules laid down for a king?

What is portrayed in his vain undertakings **is a picture of a world which forgets God.** These portions of Scripture demonstrate that regardless of what a man does on the physical plain to satisfy his every appetite, it does not truly satisfy. The essential part which makes for meaning in life is left out for that glitter and glamour of the world of fleshly men which brings ruin. King Solomon was brought back to reality. This can be seen at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes. We believe it was due to the grace of God at work in his life and circumstances that preserved him from being lost forever. God is to be praised for delivering him from his folly. Solomon went so far as to collect unto himself 700 wives and princesses, and 300 concubines, as well as hard to imagine wealth and luxury to satisfy his every fleshly desire.

Solomon was brought to acknowledge that this had all been in vain, that he had lived indifferent to the Lord. In his summation concerning life, he gave counsel that all men and women give themselves to reverence the Lord and to keep His commandments as this was the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13-4). God had allowed him in his folly to sink so low, knowing that the wisdom he would gain in experience, would be of great benefit to those who would read of his folly and who would be willing to profit from the record of his error and the wisdom he gained from his experiences in his life of rebellion.

Surely you see what was the great error in all that he did! He lived to himself, to satisfy his own evil pleasures, and forgot God. He did not take Him into his counsel in all that he did; or, if he did consider the commandments of God, he was not minded to do them. After his fling with everything the world had to offer, he learned from experience that God knows best, that His way is the only way for man to truly prosper in every aspect of his being.

- **The mysteries that defy the world, the world can not solve in human wisdom and strength.**

Regardless of how much optimism the world may exude, it will ultimately descend to pessimism; for the enemy is out to destroy man, and man in his own strength is no match for him.

If the human journey, which begins in vanity, ignores the wisdom of the Creator, and refuses to submit to His rule, it can only end in vanity. The vanity the writer of Ecclesiastes experienced was due to his unwillingness to submit to the knowledge he was given of how life is to be lived; instead of living in the light he had, he allowed the

appetites of the flesh to dictate how he would live. He chose to do evil. In the final chapter of Ecclesiastes he conditions the happiness of man and the destiny that God ordained for him to rest on the duty, the necessity, for man to fear Him and to obey Him.

Let us hear the conclusion of the matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-4)

He sees the world that God created as good, but against that he sees the great evil that man is inclined to commit. Everywhere he looked he saw evil: in the place where there should be justice, he saw wickedness, and in the place where there should be righteousness, iniquity. All around him he saw oppression and inequalities. However, as for God, on His part, he concluded:

He has made everything beautiful in its time...that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever, nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and that God doeth it that men should fear before Him. (Ecclesiastes 3:11,14)

Some of the conclusions Solomon reaches are these:

The fear of God is the foundation of all true virtue, and all lasting joys...Live so in thy youth that old age brings to thee not terrors, but only the desire of relief from the yoke of this earthly life, and the joyful hope of an eternal existence with God...Use the morning of thy life profitably, that its evening may be calm and blissful; sow good seed in the spring-time of thy life, that thou mayest have a good harvest in the autumn. (*Lange's Commentary On The Holy Scriptures*)

Life is not to be lived from a dull, melancholy resignation or despair of life, but from a spontaneous, childlike yielding to the will of the Lord, in an obedient subjection to His counsel as the only reliable guide to life.

Life is to be lived in the joy of the Lord. The joy in life is to be balanced by a thoughtful and conscious remembrance of the eternal judgment of God over all things.

We know for certain that the goal of life on this earth is not to end at death, but is to open up into a such a glorious future for those who love God, that human imagination can not adequately picture the glory that shall be revealed in connection with God's children.

King Solomon, one of the wisest to ever walk upon this earth, was profoundly moved to acknowledge at last that all the inventiveness of man, in science and art, in planting and building, in philosophy and heathen religion, in gaining of great material riches that included the finest of dainty things, and the best of delicacies that can be placed on a table, coupled with the love of women, and the honor that was heaped on him, had not

satisfied the void that was within him. He came to understand in a way he had never appreciated before that:

- **In the fear of God and submission to his commandments is the condition that is necessary for true prosperity—and in this is the highest truth and the surest knowledge to be found.**

How sad and tragic that so many of mankind go the way of vanity.

We see in modern man so many parallels to the vain living of king Solomon. So much of what is done today is marked by superficiality. Man's character lacks moral depth and spiritual integrity. Man lives showing little interest in the after life, not realizing the great danger there is in putting off getting right with his Creator while he still has opportunity to do so. So much of what is done is for the express purpose of satisfying the desires of the flesh of man. But the saying is so very true and well worth pondering:

- **Only one life, will soon be past; only what is done for Christ will last.**

We have made it plain for you to see what is left out of the planning and activities of most men and women: It is giving the Lord first place in one's life. It is committing to experience in one's own life the fulfillment of those purposes for which each was created by God. Fulfillment lies only in centering one's life in accepting and living to please God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. True freedom is known only in living in dependence upon Him.

.....to be continued