

# SPIRITUAL WELLNESS #1 - FREEDOM

Sermon by Todd Lester

April 23, 2017

## FREEDOM IS...

1. A \_\_\_\_\_  
Colossians 1:13-14, Ephesians 1:7

2. \_\_\_\_\_ TO GOD  
Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12

3. THE POWER TO \_\_\_\_\_  
Romans 6:6-7, 2 Peter 1:3a

4. LIVING WITH \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Peter 1:18a (NIRV)

5. NO FEAR OF \_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_  
Hebrews 2:14-15, Colossians 1:13

## HOW TO LIVE FREE

1. ALWAYS SUBMIT TO \_\_\_\_\_  
2 Corinthians 3:17, 1 Timothy 2:6

2. ALWAYS TRUST THE \_\_\_\_\_  
John 8:31-32, Psalm 119:45

3. ALWAYS USE MY FREEDOM TO \_\_\_\_\_  
Galatians 5:13, Galatians 5:1

## Precious Time

God has given us a precious gift: the time to live. Maybe that's why now is called "the present." Complete the following three sentences about precious time—sharing your answers with the group.

MY IDEA OF A GREAT TIME IS ...

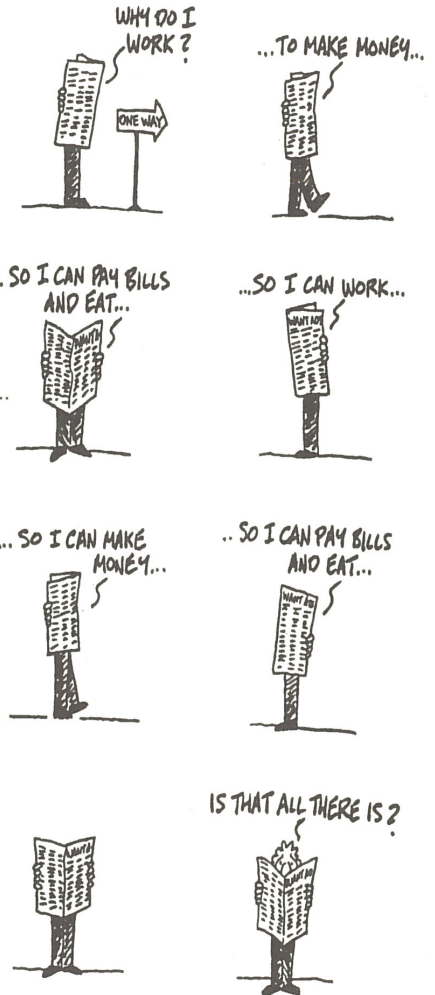
- ☐ a quiet evening at home
- ☐ watching movies
- ☐ a hot bath after a long day
- ☐ reading a good book
- ☐ a delicious meal
- ☐ a night out
- ☐ a brisk walk on a fall afternoon
- ☐ a day shopping with friends
- ☐ hard work that pays off
- ☐ watching an exciting sports event
- ☐ attending an inspiring concert

WHAT MAKES A BAD TIME FOR ME IS ...

- ☐ crummy weather
- ☐ Mondays
- ☐ mood swings
- ☐ paying bills
- ☐ boring work
- ☐ heavy traffic
- ☐ conflict with others
- ☐ my team losing
- ☐ lousy financial news
- ☐ being alone on a weekend

IF I KNEW I HAD SIX MONTHS TO LIVE, I WOULD SPEND MY TIME...

- ☐ doing exactly what I'm doing now
- ☐ seeing the world
- ☐ writing my memoirs
- ☐ finishing my "big project"
- ☐ giving everything away
- ☐ being very angry
- ☐ loving everyone more
- ☐ climbing Mt. Everest
- ☐ being with friends and family



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## ***FREEDOM IS...***

### **1. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE**

Colossians 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Ephesians 1:7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.

### **2. PERSONAL ACCESS TO GOD**

Hebrews 4:16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God.

There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Ephesians 3:12 Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence.

### **3. THE POWER TO DO RIGHT**

Romans 6:6-7 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

2 Peter 1:3a By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life...

### **4. LIVING WITH PURPOSE AND MEANING**

1 Peter 1:18a (NIRV) You were set free from an empty way of life...

Colossians 2:20a You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.

### **5. NO FEAR OF DEATH OR THE DEVIL**

Hebrews 2:14-15 Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.

## ***HOW TO LIVE FREE***

### **1. ALWAYS SUBMIT TO GOD'S SPIRIT**

2 Corinthians 3:17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

1 Timothy 2:6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

### **2. ALWAYS TRUST THE TRUTH**

John 8:31-32 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."

Psalms 119:45 I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your commandments.

### **3. ALWAYS USE MY FREEDOM TO SERVE OTHERS**

Galatians 5:13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

Galatians 5:1 So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

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## Icebreaker/Introduction

The 'Precious Time' activity is meant to get us looking at the freedom we have related to time. Give a few minutes for participants to fill in responses (more than one is allowed in each section) and then share some together.

Ask if there was anything from this week's message that stood out – either a point that was made which really resonated with them, or perhaps a question or difficulty that came up for them.

Todd talked about the importance of freedom to many who have come to Canada in the past. Do you think that we take our freedom here for granted? What are the best things about living in Canada? What particular freedoms do you think are most important?

Would you agree with Todd's statement that many people are not living lives of freedom? Do you think that they realize it? What were some of the things Todd mentioned can bind people up? (stress, worry, fatigue, boredom, bitterness, guilt, resentments, regrets, fears, anxieties)

## ***FREEDOM IS...***

### **1. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE**

**Focuses on Colossians 1:13-14, Ephesians 1:7**

Discuss Todd's statement that doctors say guilt and resentment are two of the most destructive emotions in our lives.

Would you say that you mostly live with a clear conscience? Why is that and/or how do you maintain that? (eg. do you deal with issues that come up or tend to ignore them?) What kind of personal impact does the fact that Jesus died for your sins have in your daily life?

### **2. PERSONAL ACCESS TO GOD**

**Focuses on Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12**

Todd asked 'why don't we take advantage of this freedom more often?' Share about your prayer life – do you pray at specific times in a day, or more likely throughout the day, or not much at all? What is one specific and practical thing you could do that would open up more access to God for you?

### **3. THE POWER TO DO RIGHT**

**Focuses on Romans 6:6-7, 2 Peter 1:3a**

Is the freedom to do whatever you want a good thing or a bad thing (or something else)? What limits do we have on our freedom?

Would you agree that we need a power greater than ourselves in order to fight our negative/sinful tendencies? Romans 6:7 says that we are set free from the power of sin – why does it sometimes still seem to have a hold of us?

Todd talked about how we often feel that we need freedom from ourselves (from being afraid, nervous, angry, impatient, disorganized, unloving, selfish). Do any of these struggles resonate with you? How can the Spirit's power help with these challenges?

### **4. LIVING WITH PURPOSE AND MEANING**

**Focuses on 1 Peter 1:18a (NIRV)**

What were some suggestions Todd gave about how people try to fill their emptiness (a pill, a bottle, television, porn; or even good things like a good cause, a relationship, a job, a hobby)?

Where do people find meaning and purpose today? What influence does culture play in this? Would you agree with Todd's statement that many very insignificant things (eg. celebrity fashion) seem to be quite important to people?

Where do followers of Jesus find their meaning and purpose in life?

### **5. NO FEAR OF DEATH OR THE DEVIL**

**Focuses on Hebrews 2:14-15, Colossians 1:13**

Discuss Todd's statement that people avoid talking or thinking about death. Why do you think this is true? Do you give death much thought? Are you afraid of dying? Why or why not?

Satan is called the father of lies (John 8:44). What are some of the lies you feel he has perpetuated in the world or in your own life? Why do we not need to fear him?

## ***HOW TO LIVE FREE***

### **1. ALWAYS SUBMIT TO GOD'S SPIRIT**

**Focuses on 2 Corinthians 3:17, 1 Timothy 2:6**

What were some examples of questions Todd suggested we can ask of God's Spirit in our daily lives? (Lord, what do you want me to do right now, what do you want me to say, who may need encouragement today, how do you want to interrupt my life?) What are some ways you could apply these to your own life?

### **2. ALWAYS TRUST THE TRUTH**

**Focuses on John 8:31-32, Psalm 119:45**

Can you think of an example in your own life when you trusted your feelings over God's word? What was the result?

Todd said that whenever we doubt God's Word we are in trouble. What are ways that you are taking in God's Word? What are some other ways/opportunities for you to get into the Bible?

### **3. ALWAYS USE MY FREEDOM TO SERVE OTHERS**

**Focuses on Galatians 5:13, Galatians 5:1**

Read Galatians 5:1. Todd said that some churches do get caught up in 'slavery to the law'. What do Christians sometimes get 'legalistic' about? Have you fallen into the trap of legalism on some issues? What do you think it means to be a 'slave of Christ'? (Ephesians 6:6)

Todd shared that as we grow in Christ we can experience more and more freedom, causing life to become more open, beautiful and meaningful. Have you experienced this? Are you less anxious or fearful or bitter about some things than you were 5 years ago?