

## Faith, Family, and Freedom - the Cultural Mandate

### “The Product of God’s Presence”

2 Corinthians 3:16-17 AMP

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Freedom is a lot like beautiful cut-flowers, because when you buy them, they've been severed from their life source. They're beautiful until maybe four or five days later, then they turn brown and the petals start falling off. Eventually they start to rot and decay and even smell a little bit until eventually they're good for nothing but to be thrown into the trash. This is the same way that *biblical* freedom operates in our life, in our family, and in a nation. If it's severed from the source of its life that created it in the first place, it will remain for a while, it'll give the appearance that it's still alive, but if enough time goes by after freedom is severed from the place it comes from, it will eventually wither and fade, and then it dies.

Freedom isn't just something that can be given and then left alone, it's something that must be sustained. Why should we care about freedom? Freedom is something worth fighting for. God's *biblical* freedom is worth fighting for. Freedom will always have to be contended for. So, where does freedom really come from and how is it sustained?

2 Corinthians chapter 3:16 AMP

*“But whenever a person turns [in repentance] to the Lord, the veil is stripped off and taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (emancipation from bondage, freedom).”*

Freedom and true liberty cannot exist in any other condition except in the presence of God himself, because freedom comes from *him*. It was his idea and only he can sustain it. If his Spirit is in us, so are liberty and freedom. If his Spirit is at the center of our family and governs our family, there will be liberty as well. As families multiply and share that liberty from generation to generation and it's multiplied across a nation, freedom also begins to manifest in that nation, because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Real freedom comes into focus when the veil is taken away and we see as *God* sees and *think* like *he* thinks, when we begin to love what he loves and hate what he hates, and when we take his Word as the instruction point for our lives, our families and even our own governance. Because where God is, *freedom* is, and where he is *not* there *it* is not. Like a cut flower, when he initially comes into a person, a family, or a nation, he brings with him prosperity, blessing, freedom, and life.

Then, at some point, a person cuts himself off from God and cuts him out of the center-point, or a city takes him out of the schools, out of the courthouse, and out of the city square, and, just like cut flowers, it doesn't die immediately, but it's like, *"Hey, we can have freedom and we didn't need God this whole time. We're doing great!"* - until enough time goes by and it all begins to wither and fade and then it dies. *Why?* - because only God's presence can provide and preserve freedom. The miracle of Scripture is that even if we've been severed like a cut rose from the Source of freedom and the life of God, we can be reconnected to the Savior.

Our family can be restored and reconnected with the Savior back in the center, and he *can* bring back life that's begun to fade. Even when God is removed from a nation, he can be brought back into the nation and that freedom and the life of that freedom can be restored once again. We're beginning to see bits of this happen as the Church seeks his face in America. Moses in the Bible understood this principle.

Exodus 33:15 NLT

*"Then Moses said, 'If You don't personally go with us, don't make us leave this place...'"*

God had delivered the Israelites out of slavery and bondage and brought them into liberty and freedom. They were no longer slaves after four-hundred years. Then, God drove them through the Red Sea, out into the wilderness, and out to the mountain to meet with him. He not only provided the freedom, but he was the Source of their continued and sustained freedom. He said, *"I want you to get to know Me."* And God's heart broke because as he came down from the mountain to get to know the people, the people said, *"We don't really want to get to know this God. Moses, you go do it for us."*

And while they did that, they literally severed the rose right then and there. They didn't realize what they had done, but they began to lose their minds a little bit. While Moses was continuing to live in the presence of God, the people were down in the valley getting crazy ideas like, *"Hey, why don't we fashion a calf out of gold and pretend that it's the God who delivered us out of slavery? We'll start worshiping it and dancing around it and throwing parties and being debaucherous and doing crazy things."*

Moses came down and saw all this and broke the ten commandments because he was so mad at the people. And God said, *"Hey, if the people don't want Me, then I won't go with you. I'll send you to the Promised land. I'll send an angel to go with you, but I'm not going."* Moses replied, *"I'd rather have the desert and the wilderness with Your presence and the freedom that You bring than to have the Promised land without Your presence."* *Why?* - because the promised land would not be a blessing without the Sustainer of the freedom that brought them there.

What would it look like if we out lived our life that way? *"I'm not making a move. I'm not making a decision. I'm not taking a job. I'm not doing anything until I connect with my Savior, and I hear from heaven on it. I'm not doing anything in my family until Jesus is in the center and we consult him for wisdom. Because, how is my family or my life going to be free apart from the One who brings and sustains that freedom?"* What if we live this way as citizens of our nation? What would happen? Freedom is the result of the righteousness of Christ alive and operating in people and in families and in nations. It is the gift of grace, and, ultimately, freedom is the product of his presence.

Psalm 119:45 AMPC

*"And I will walk at liberty and at ease, for I have sought and inquired for [and desperately required] Your precepts."*

Liberty always requires a *liberator* - not just to get us *out* of bondage - but to keep us out. This is the problem and the pitfall that so many Christians and Christian families walk into. They consult with the Liberator long enough to get them *out* of trouble and then they go on as if they don't need him anymore and they get right back into it. But the evil spirits who had assignments against us will see that we're free and swept clean but no longer have the Liberator to protect and sustain us. Then they'll go, *"Hey, let's get go get seven more spirits more evil than us. Let's go wreck this person's life and family. Let's go wreck this nation."*

Isaiah 61:1 AMPC

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed and qualified me to preach the Gospel of good tidings to the meek, the poor, and afflicted; He has sent me.... to proclaim liberty to the [physical and spiritual] captives..."*

The biblical definition of freedom is "the opportunity to live, to thrive, and to flourish as God designed and as he intended." Freedom is not an external condition - it's an internal disposition that changes everything. It's an invitation with clearly defined parameters and road signs that point to both blessings and consequences, and it's an open door, an option, and an opportunity to choose life or death.

God says, *"Hey, I'm laying before you this day, life and death. I lay them both before you, and I recommend you choose life."* Every parameter of freedom is contained in the Bible. Bondage and slavery begin with lies and confusion - a fog or a veil covering our ability to see accurately. But whenever a person, a family, or a nation turns to the Lord in repentance, God will remove that veil.

Today in the church of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to live in, manifest, and bring with us, both physical and spiritual freedom, everywhere we go. It affects us, our families, our workplaces, our city, and our nation, because we are carriers of the Holy Spirit. Wherever we show up, God shows up, and therefore freedom shows up. Whenever we walk into a building aligned with and carrying the Spirit of God, freedom walks in the room with us. And freedom begins to have an effect on everything and everyone around us. This is why a nation thrives when the people of God, filled with the Spirit of God, show up and *engage* rather than *disengage* culture.

A society cannot have liberty or freedom if there is not a Christian population bearing the Spirit and the image of God in culture. If we don't show up as the image bearers of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of God, freedom will cease to exist where we're absent because God's people are commissioned to walk in freedom and to be bearers of it wherever they go. Wherever God's people have shown up, freedom follows them. In virtually every single country, the first hospital, the first school, the first adoption agency, the first food bank - you name it - was always started by Christians, and all those things are instruments of freedom. When God's people who live and walk in liberty show up, the manifestations of freedom start breaking out everywhere.

2 Thessalonians 2 6-7 NKJV

*"And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way."*

The United States and Israel specifically in our world today are the glitch in the matrix of restraining global tyranny. If it weren't for the outpost of freedom built upon a heritage of the Word of God and a foundation on covenants with God, there would not be the restraint of global tyranny that's trying pervasively to unite the world in rebellion and opposition to God. John Adams said, *"The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the governing of any other."*

Without a Christian worldview and values, Western civilization - and the extraordinary progress, prosperity, freedom, and equality it has produced - do not emerge. The fullest expression of that civilization has been the United States of America, a nation founded and rooted in biblical truth, who crafted a constitutional republic unlike anything the world had ever seen. Without a creator who gives moral structure and defines right and wrong, we have no basis for an ordered or free society that assigns value to human life, to say murder is wrong, or any of it. There is then no freedom.

Since the Tower of Babel, Satan has been trying to unite the world to oppose God. It's because of freedom in nations like ours and like Israel that had a covenant with God who said, *"I'm making an everlasting covenant with you, Abraham, and your generations after you for land and a lineage, and ultimately for a Lord and Savior who would come through that lineage to bless the whole world."* It's the apple of God's eye. It's the evidence of his covenant, and Satan would love nothing more than to destroy what seems to be the faithfulness of God.

When the pilgrims and the Puritans came over here on the Mayflower before they set foot on land for the first time, they decided to make a covenant with God called the Mayflower Compact. In that compact, they covenanted with God saying, *"We're flawed and we'll probably mess this up along the way, but our purpose and our intention right now is to honor God, to live in a land to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to establish this as an outpost of the kingdom of heaven where true biblical freedom can reign."* God heard and he honored that.

When Elizabeth Willing Powell had a conversation with Benjamin Franklin at the beginning of this whole experiment, she said, *"Well, doctor, what have we got here? Is it a republic or is it a monarchy?"* And Benjamin Franklin said, *"It's a republic, if you can keep it."* In other words, you're going to have to fight for and contend for this. You can't be lazy and lax and passive about this, but hold on to the way that we're constructing this thing right now - the eternal Truth on which we're going to build this thing.

The purpose of government in God's view exists for one reason only, to preserve and protect the freedoms and the rights that he provides that are unchangeable. That's the only function of government. Now we've bloated and expanded it to become all kinds of things it was never supposed to be, and we've severed some of the flower there, and we need to reconnect that thing and get it right. But, if we'll do this God's way, it'll preserve and protect it, but it won't change it because the rights and the freedoms come from God. Only God can bring freedom, and it all happens by the consent of the governed.

That means it's up to us. That means our rulers are here to serve the will of the people under the authority and the rights of God, which means the people have to first be under God - one nation under God - one family under God, and one person under God. At that point, the rulers become responsible to the people, the consent of the governed. Nobody had ever constructed a nation this way before.

Thirty-four percent of all of the founding documents and quotes from our founders and everything that was used to form this nation came from the first five books of the Bible - directly from the scriptures as well as some from the New Testament. It is by far the most directly cited source in the entirety of the foundation of America without question. All the ingredients of freedom that have defined the United States of America at its best are directly from Scripture. They weren't just good ideas that men came up with.

In Numbers chapter 14, the Israelites were on the cusp of the Promised Land. After spying it out, they found it full of giants. It was scary, dangerous, and risky. When the spies came back, ten of them reported just that. They said, *"We can't do this. It's too dangerous. We need to play this safe."* But two of them said, *"We are well able."* However, the people listened to the ten and began freaking out. They said, *"Why has God brought us to this country to kill us, our wives, and children? Our wives and children are about to become plunder. Why don't we just head back to Egypt? We'll take the false safety provided to us from the predictability of slavery over the risk and the danger of venturing into the freedom that God has offered us."*

A million people were about to sell their freedom, cut the flower, and go right back to the bondage because it wasn't safe. It was *risky*. Following Jesus is not the safest thing we can ever do. It's probably the *riskiest* thing we can ever do, and the most dangerous thing, but we're with the One who will keep us safe through it all. Our submission to God's will, his Word, and his ways is freedom. With God, there is freedom in submission, and there is bondage in rebellion - the opposite of Satan told Eve and what he tries to tell us. The truth is, where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there is freedom*. God wants *freedom* for your heart. He wants freedom for your family, and for everyone around you ...*wherever you show up*.

## **Prayer**

*Father, thank You for Your Word. We need a greater taste of Your freedom today. We need it in our life, in our family, and in our workplace. Lord, You and You alone provide and preserve freedom. We turn to you right now in repentance and humility and say, forgive us for where we have rebelled against You. Forgive us for where we've sought our own way and any other wisdom than Your own. God, we turn back to You. Lord, we reconnect the flower to the Vine that gives it life right now by faith. And Lord, we're asking that You would cause freedom to explode in us right now - that You would break off bondage, addiction, slavery, heartache, and trauma, God, as You bring the freedom that only You can bring, we seek You for it. In the name of Jesus. Amen*