

LIVING FREELY

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INTRODUCTION

A. We feel held down by inhibitions.
 driven by compulsions.
 locked in by frustrations.

B. We want to be free so we can feel free.

1. Politically: we that are politically free but do not live freely.
2. Financially: we that are financially free but do not live freely.
3. Educationally: we free from ignorance but do not live freely.

We need to feel free.

4. Spiritually: Our spirits must be free, or we are in a miserable bondage.

C. We can have freedom on the outside without necessarily being free on the inside
 or free from ourselves.

I. SUBJECTIVE: the way things seem to us
 we feel about our situation
 we look at it

We live most particularly by the world inside our heads.

A. Not hemmed in

1. Philippians 4:10-19: to be content means to feel free.

No Exit, by Jean-Paul Satre

being locked in a gymnasium; who cares if we are enjoying the game?
 not being able to get out of an unhappy marriage or out of parenthood
 not being able get out of a responsibility

2. Self-centeredness often drives us to want to break out of what seems like a limitation, but it is only a limitation in our minds. It is like a cow that thinks “the grass is greener on the other side of fence.”
3. Paul was trying to live out in his own Christian experience the example of Christ himself: Philippians 2:5-7

4. Paul responded positively, not passively.

B. Not threatened

1. Not passive, but positive: Philippians 1:12-21

Paul took hold of the situation positively and worked with its possibilities.

He was living freely despite his imprisonment. He converted the guards.

He wrote.

He received and sent guests and directed missionary efforts.

He converted Onesimus the slave.

2. Not fighting back

Paul harbored no bitterness or anger even though death was in the offing for him, and people in the church were in danger.

Again, Paul was trying to live out in his Christian experience the example of Jesus: Philippians 2:8.

II. OBJECTIVE: the way things really are

There will always be the possibility of evil people making life miserable for anybody who disagrees with them, so that is not really different for Christians.

But the significant thing is that . . .

A. Christianity helps us live in conformity with reality.

1. When we become Christians, reality does not change; we are brought more into conformity with it.

PROPER RELATIONSHIP TO GOD . . .

- a. puts us in our natural place.
- b. puts us in our natural relationship with others.
- c. causes us to live in conformity with our created nature (which is, to a great extent, what morality amounts to).
2. Freedom is not being detached from everything. That is what it means to be lost!

B. Freedom is moving freely with everything.

We cannot live self-centered lives and be happy. Happiness comes from proper relationships and therefore from proper behavior that makes such relationships possible.

CONCLUSION

We must live in conformity to the fact that we are persons designed for relationships with persons. Otherwise, we sense emptiness, unfulfillment, void, which lead to boredom and cynicism.

I. REALITY

A. As to objective reality, we are/can be partially free. Living freely means conforming to the nature of the situation or moving freely in relation to the nature of the situation.

B. As to reality subjectively, we are partially free. We can choose; we are not determined. Living freely means not creating an expectancy that is incompatible with the situation.

II. STANDARD

A. In regard to the objective standard, we are partially free. The standard allows elbow room. Living freely means conforming behavior to expectancy.

B. In regard to subjective stand, we are free. Living freely subjectively means we internalize the will of God, which is the standard for our purpose and behavior.

III. GUILT

A. As to objective guilt—we are not free. Living freely means not doing what we did before and the other person no longer acting toward us as if we were still that way (forgiveness).

B. As to subjective guilt, living freely means my repenting and another's forgiving.