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**EDINBURGH**

# How can I be free from my past?

## John 8:36:

*"If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed."*

The gospel is an offer of freedom. Quoting Isaiah 61, Jesus stated his own mission in Luke 4:

*'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'*

We don't naturally walk in the freedom God gives. We tend to think of freedom as freedom of choice. But not all choices are equal. The first man and woman made a choice that committed them and their descendants into spiritual slavery. Jesus said "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin".

The year of the Lord's favour is a reference to an Old Covenant concept of the Jubilee Year in Leviticus 25, where upon hearing the trumpet sound of atonement day, slaves would be freed, and sold property would be returned to its original owners. It was God's way of resetting people's lives, restoring them.

Jesus' death atoned for our sin but also announced our liberty and the beginning of the restoration of all things.

Romans 8:22 describes the "*freedom and glory of the sons of God*", that's our inheritance in Christ.

**Step 1 of dealing with your past is to hear God's announcement of Freedom.**

## **He says you are free from Sin.**

Jesus dealt with the Penalty of Sin. Romans 4:7, speaking of those saved by grace:

*"Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*

*Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them".*

He who knows the numbers of hairs on your head; who knows a child's personality in it's mother's womb; who knows a word before you speak it; He chooses to forget your sin!

Guilt is dealt with.

He's dealt with the Pollution of Sin. He's the Lamb of God who takes away your sin.

He's dealt with the power of sin.

He says the power of sin is broken. The hold it has on us is broken at the cross. This theme is explained more in Romans 6 where Paul uses the image of baptism to describe Christian experience.

True freedom isn't the absence of constraint in your life. It's to live for Jesus and do as he says, free from sin.

## **He says you are free from meaningless existence.**

1 Peter 1:18 *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors"*

## **He says you are free from fear.**

Romans 8:15 *"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship."*

## **He says you are free from the enemy's lies.**

Satan is described by Jesus as the "father of lies". He lied to Eve in the garden. He's been doing it ever since. He's the accuser of the brothers in Rev 12:10, accusing Christians day and night.

"You never change"

"Nobody loves you"

"God doesn't love you"

“I need to act this way to gain acceptance”

### **He says you can be free from bitterness.**

Ephesians 4:31 *“forgiving each other as in Christ God forgave you”*

### **He says you can be free from Individualistic thinking.**

1 Peter 2:9 *“once you were not a people - now you are the people of God”*

Through being in community. Example of the runner alongside me at the gym. When he ran I wanted to run!

### **He says you one day will be free from sickness of the mind or body.**

Sometimes God does that now, because his Kingdom is here now.

Luke 13:16 *“Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”*

For every believer he will do that in the future: Rev 21:4: *“No more death or crying or mourning or pain, for the old order of things has passed away”*

## **STEP 2 is to act differently.**

The Bible uses the word repent, meaning to turn away from sin.

It's a fight of faith.

1. **Pursue Transformation.** Don't be a passive conformer to worldly values. Do be actively transformed into Christlikeness by renewing your mind (Rom 12). He is transforming you from one degree of glory to another.
2. **Pursue Transparency.** Don't walk in the darkness of secret struggles. Do walk in the light of a community of courage. Confessing your sins to one another.
3. **Pursue a resistance mentality.** Don't be discouraged by temptation, it's normal! Do pray, *'lead me not into temptation.'* Lean on God for his help.

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## **Questions:**

- **Freedom Already Declared.** Read Colossians 2:13-15. How does it help us to know that Jesus victory over sin in our lives has already happened?

- **True Freedom.** In our culture people tend to view freedom as being freedom of choice. Do you agree with that definition? How does Romans 6:22 help us define freedom?
- **Gospel Freedoms.** What freedoms have you seen most evidenced in your life since becoming a Christian? Share what God has done around your group.
- **Renewal of your mind.** Sinful behaviour is often the result of wrong thinking, do you agree? How can we develop godly thinking in our minds?
- **Transparency.** How does transparency help us walk in holiness? What makes us fearful of transparency?
- **Resist.** Why is it important we don't see temptation as the same as sin?



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