

# Enslaved by Freedom

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Special to ChristianWeek*

Are you free?

*Truly free?*

We all have a need to have choices available to us, and be able to make choices that are suitable for us. When choices are limited or unavailable, we can feel like we've "lost ourselves" and need to break free to "find ourselves." Without realizing it, many of us become enslaved to sinful behaviours as a means of seeking that freedom to choose.

Satan deceived us with false freedom from the beginning. "Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of *any* tree in the garden'?" (Genesis 2:1b) He implied that Adam and Eve had *no* choices, rather than the abundant choices of every tree but one, which Eve correctly countered. Satan continued, "...God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 2:5) His appeal again was to choice, hinting: Eat, and you'll have the freedom to choose your own way!"

Since then, mankind continues to rebel against God to be "free" from His direction.

One of the first ways we seek freedom to choose is against our parents – people called by God to raise us in a way that is pleasing to Him. Does this limit our choices? Of course! Their direction is meant to protect us from harm, guiding us into a fruitful (and free!) life of godliness. But as children, we sometimes want to choose a different way...

Most of us will have at least one job or career. By taking a position as employee, we agree to submit to the business needs of another person or company and the customers they serve. Does this limit our choices? Of course! Employment is meant to protect us from poverty, guiding us into a productive (and free!) life of service. But as employees, we sometimes want to choose a different way...

Many of us get married. Of all the relationships you can have in life, marriage can be the most contrary to our sense of freedom. With the "I do" comes a commitment to bind ourselves for life to another person in obedience to a covenant of marriage. Does this limit our choices? Of course! Marriage is meant to protect us from the evils of ungodly sexuality, guiding us into a fruitful (and

free!) life of love. But as spouses, we sometimes want to choose a different way...

As God's people, we're commanded to be members of a local church. In so doing we submit to the representatives of God in that church to give us spiritual oversight and discipline. Does this limit our choices? Of course! Living a life of service and worship is meant to protect us from evil, guiding us into an obedient (and free!) life of thankfulness. But as sinful people, we sometimes want to choose a different way...

In every aspect of our lives, we're ceaselessly tempted by the devil and his workers, the world, and our own flesh – temptations that have the illusion of freedom. When we succumb to these temptations, we don't gain freedom; we lose it as we become slaves to rebellion and revenge, bitterness and unforgiveness; and the many and varied behaviours that come as a result.

Choose instead to be enslaved to righteousness. (Romans 6:15-23). Only there will you find true freedom.

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