

# Freedom: From whence it comes and its true nature

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Freedom. We love it. We're jealous and protective of it. We demand it. We'll fight to defend it. Still, few people know from whence it comes or its true nature.

**Contrary to popular opinion, freedom is not the liberty to do whatever we want. In the natural order, specific parameters prevail. We are free to**

**function and flourish within those boundaries, but if we violate them, freedom suffers loss.**

In *For Women Only*, Gigi Graham Tchividjian explains the nature of freedom, saying:

- **When God gave us the gift of freedom. He placed it within a framework. He also gave us a well-defined guideline for the effective use of the gift.**

- A fish is free as long as it stays in the water. If it suddenly declares that it wants the freedom to fly in the air like a bird, disaster occurs. A train is free as long as it stays on the track. However, if it demands freedom to take off down a major highway, the result is devastation and destruction. We, too, can only experience true freedom to its fullest if we remain within the framework of freedom. Often this requires accepting responsibility and practicing discipline.

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At the beginning of time, humanity lost the freedom it had initially. Life was paradise within God's limit, not to partake of the forbidden fruit.

But after humanity's rebellion in Adam and Eve, the freedom to converse with God was lost; the freedom to work and eat without sweat and drudgery was lost; the freedom to live forever gave way to death; the woman was reduced to subservience to the man and pain in childbearing; the beautiful serpent lost its attractiveness and was cursed to hideously slither upon the ground.

Whether we take the account in Genesis as historical (which I see no reason to take it otherwise) or allegorical, the principle is rock solid: Cooperation with God's established order is the only means to sustain freedom. This principle is also seen throughout the Old Testament in the rise and eventual captivity of God's chosen people, the Hebrews.

**In the New Testament, true freedom intrinsically relates to a person's relationship with Jesus Christ.** The apostle Paul said, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).

Paul's teaching had its roots in the teachings of Jesus, who said, "If you abide in my word, then you are truly my disciples; and you shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31). In other words, in its essence, freedom is spiritual, and only those who are disciples of Jesus and follow his ways can know the truth and be free. This spiritual freedom can be experienced despite outward circumstances of social bondage. Nevertheless, when society generally applies the doctrine of the great deliverer, Christ, social freedom also results.

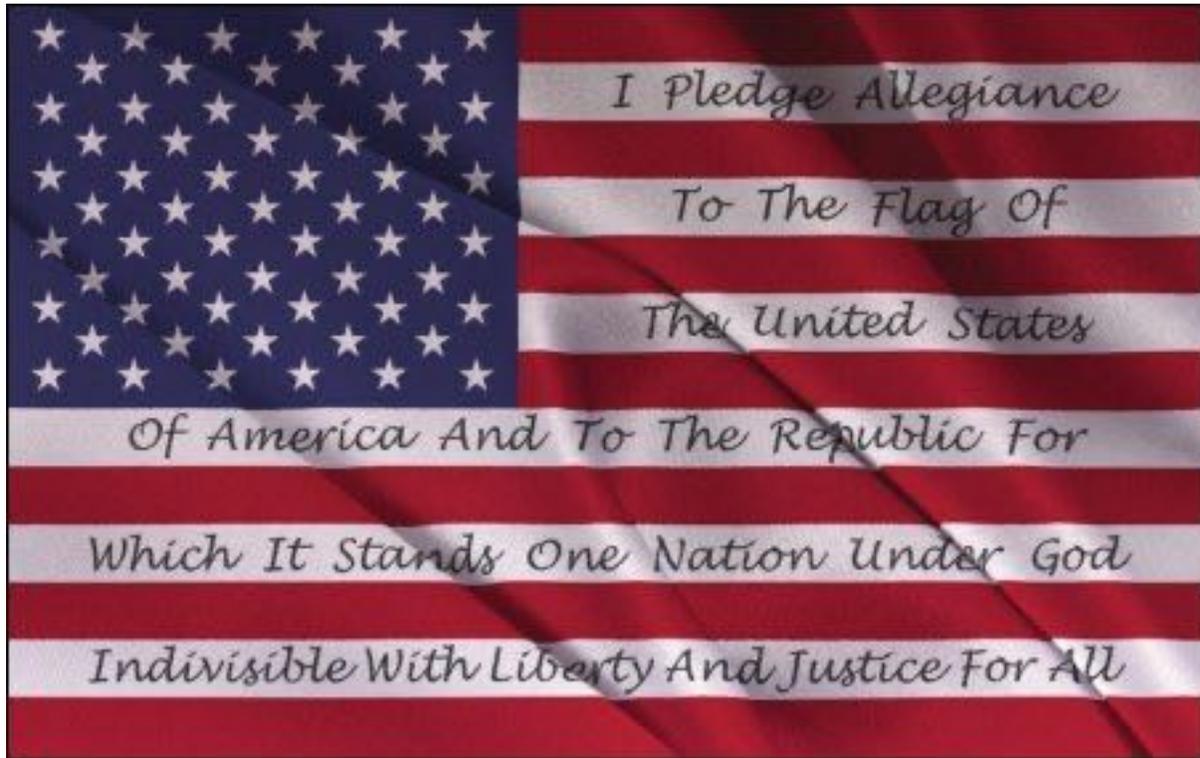


Embodied in the churches, this Gospel of freedom in Christ started spreading throughout the world. Over time, it headed westward through various means. It spread by the likes of Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Knox, Calvin, Wesley, Cartwright, and others. [The author neglects the Catholic Church's role in the freedom for 1500 years before these others that he celebrates, some with sketchy theologies, but this bias does not detract from the thesis of his article. — rp]

It came to the shores of America by the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Quakers, the Huguenots, the Catholics, the Dutch Reformed, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Anglicans of Virginia.

Its reach was broadened by the pens of Locke, Montesquieu, Sidney, Blackstone, Mason, Paine, Adams, Franklin, and the impassioned words of a young

clergyman, Patrick Henry. The Black Robe Regiment consisted of preachers like Henry who proclaimed God's gift of liberation in Christ from their fiery pulpits.



In his book, *One Nation Under God*, Russ Walton eloquently states from whence our country's freedom derived. He writes:

- *Free! Christ died and rose to make men free.  
Whosoever will! Praise God!  
Through Christ, we are freed from the wages of sin.  
Eternal freedom. Free if we choose to be.  
Free from the bondage and ravages of appetite and  
self. Internal freedom. Free if we choose to be.  
**Free from the savagery of demagogues and***

***the tyranny of kings. External freedom. Free if we choose to be.***

*Just as Christ Jesus brought us **internal freedom** (and a rebirth into a new life in him), so He also brought us a new direction for our external freedom (and a new purpose for our civil government).*

***Internal and external freedom. Self-government with union in Christ.***

*For if Christ would die to make men free, how dare Caesar to force men to live or die for him?*

*There! There was the spark, the flame, the beacon light of the American idea. The power of the great American Republic. The sense and the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of these United States of America.*

On that blessed day, when the Declaration of Independence was signed in Independence Hall, Samuel Adams, the firebrand of the American Revolution, stood and declared:

- We have this day restored the Sovereign to whom all men ought to be obedient. And, from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come.

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Freedom comes from God. A right relationship with God sustains freedom.

Happy July 4!

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