

Are You Living As a Free Man?
Hebrews 13: 5 – 6
March 7, 2010

A prisoner confined to a jail cell may have the desire to live free, but the reality is he cannot.

A person living in a country with a dictator-style of government may desire to live free, but the reality is he cannot.

A person who enlists in the military to serve his/her country may at times wish he could reclaim his old freedom to live any way he chooses, but the reality is he cannot get up when he wants, or wear whatever he wants, or live anywhere he wants – he is now governed by the will of his commander.

So we see some people lose their freedom; some people never have freedom; and some people voluntarily lay down their freedom for the greater good.

The writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews Chapter 13, Verses 5 and 6, that when it comes to our relationship with the world as Christians we must always take the position that we are not going to give up our freedom. We are willing to fight to stay free. Let's read these brief verses and see the call to stay free as Christians (read).

1. If you love money it will feel like worry to your heart, and that will steal your freedom (Hebrews 13: 5a *Keep your lives free from the love of money...*).

A. God is not telling us we all need to take a vow of poverty, or enter a monastery so we will not be influenced by money.

1. God knows we live in a physical world, and each of us needs money to pay for food, clothing, shelter.

2. And the demands of making a living, raising a family, and providing a nest egg for old age never go away – in fact they call out to us from the checkbook daily!

B. But God *is* saying is “Don’t let money have more of a dominant place than it ought to have.”

***Matthew 6: 24** *“No one serves two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*

1. When money becomes more dominant than it needs to be, it looks like worry to your heart. And you become worried about “stuff.”

2. Your mind becomes divided, and you cannot enjoy what you have because you are preoccupied with concern for how you are going to pay for the stuff you purchased with someone else’s money (credit card companies and the like), and fretting about how you are going to build back your cash reserves.

C. One disclaimer: this is not a license to do nothing; remember the scripture that warns if you don’t work, you don’t eat?

D. The focus of Scripture is all about keeping money in its proper perspective. Use money as the tool it is supposed to be, but don't let it control you.

1. If money occupies too heavy an influence in your life, it causes you to worry.

2. If you love things it will feel like discontent in your heart, and that will steal your freedom (v. 5b "...and be content with what you have...").

A. God is not telling us we must live a simple lifestyle – think Amish in PA – or not have nice things in our life.

1. Instead, I believe He is saying, "Don't let things have a more dominant place in our life than is appropriate. Use things for their function or utility; don't make them more than what they are.

2. Listen to this caution from the Lord in 1 Corinthians 7: 30 – 31 in a passage warning against becoming overly entangled in this world, "*...and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it, for the form of this world is passing away.*"

B. You and I, as Believers, need build a dispassionate buffer around our heart.

1. That is the problem for many in this world today: we become passionate about the latest "new thing," be it a cell phone or the latest gadget in the latest car, or the larger house in the newest subdivision.

2. But of course, the latest "new thing" will be supplanted by the next "new thing," and we are not as passionate about the old "new thing."

C. I wish we were as passionate about Jesus' presence in our life as we are about the things of this world!

3. We have worry and discontent in our heart while we have Jesus as Lord because we lack faith (v. 5c "...for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you...").

A. Remember the wonderfully ironic observation of Matthew 6: 30, "*But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not do the same for you, O men of little faith?*"

1. He answers by telling us He will never leave us.

2. "That's nice, Pastor, but that just tells me He is watching; I don't necessarily need someone who is just watching me; I need somebody who is going to help me when I stumble and fall."

3. I remind you of the second half of that verse; God will never forsake you; God will always stand by you.

B. **Psalm 37: 23 – 24:** "*If the LORD delights in a man's way, He makes his steps firm; ...though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with His hand... I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or begging for bread.*" – **How will God delight in my ways? Philippians 4: 6** "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*"

1. Do you take the times you are worried, and turn them into opportunities to pray?

2. You learn to convert worry into prayer, and God will uphold you, because He will delight in your steps.

So, here is the bottom line principle to take away from this lesson:

4. We are able to live as free men when/ if we are confident about our future despite having circumstances that say otherwise (v. 13: 6 "...so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?').

A. I recall when our brother Frank Cox, during those weeks when his insurance provider was dithering back and forth about where his surgery for the aneurism should be performed, and who the surgeon should be, would come into the office – it seemed he was always around – and the subject of the procedure would come up. The striking thing about it was that Frank was very matter-of-fact about the whole thing. His philosophy was, "However it turns out, it's in God's hands. He knows best, I don't."

B. How do you feel about your future? If you are a Christian, today is bright; your tomorrow is bright; your future is bright.

Difficult events and circumstances will come into every life; how we react to those events and circumstances will determine our outcomes. Will I allow that event to cause me to spiral downward, or will I rise above it on the wings of faith? Will I descend into the valley of worry, anxiety and despair, or will I lift my eyes of faith to the hills from whence comes my help? Brothers and sisters, let's live as free men – men who have been set free by God's grace and forgiveness

Let's pray!