



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

THE TRUTH THAT SETS US FREE

KEY PASSAGE: John 8:28-32 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Luke 4:14-19 | John 3:3, 16, 36; 14:6, 27
Ephesians 2:8-9; 4:32 | Romans 5:8 | Hebrews 4:16 | 2 Peter 1:3-4 | 1 John 1:9

► SUMMARY

Do you feel free?

Most likely, you'd answer yes to that question. However, I'm not talking about external bondage, but internal. Regardless of where you are physically, you might be trapped in negative thought patterns or unhealthy behaviors. You confess your sin and resolve to do better next time. But when the pressure mounts, you fall into the same destructive pattern. Others might consider you a faithful believer, but you experience anxiety, fear, and turmoil on a regular basis. The peace, joy, and righteousness promised in the Word of God seem unattainable.

The good news is there is hope. Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). Christ has the power to break the chains that hold you captive.

► SERMON POINTS

Many people are in bondage to error.

These incorrect ideas include:

- **"There is more than one way to get to heaven."** In fact, Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6).
- **"You can get to heaven through good works."** But the Bible teaches we are saved through faith, not our deeds (Eph. 2:8-9).
- **"God accepts or rejects me based on how well I perform."** No, our heavenly Father loves us unconditionally (Rom. 5:8).

- **"God is loving, so everyone will go to heaven."** The truth is, those who reject Christ will not be accepted into heaven (John 3:36).
- **"Your salvation can be lost and regained."** Some believe that eternal life is a free gift that must be maintained by good deeds. But eternal life, by definition, lasts forever (John 3:16).

Others are enslaved to evil deeds.

No one ever intended to become enslaved to alcohol. No drug addict planned to be in bondage to a substance. The same is true for those ensnared in patterns of dishonesty, stealing, cheating, slothfulness, profanity, gossip, or any other type of sin. But little by little the control of sin grows in their lives. One day they realize they are in bondage. While no one is without sin, God wants us to deal with our wrongdoings honestly and quickly.

People can find themselves in emotional bondage.

Here are a few emotions that can enslave us:

- **Fear.** Although we should act with wisdom and caution in certain situations, those who are filled with fear are not trusting God.
- **False guilt.** We often place expectations on ourselves that are not God-given. Sometimes they are unattainable. Then when we fail, we feel guilty.
- **Jealousy.** You cannot be envious and happy at the same time.
- **Anxiety.** We might be surprised if we knew how much money was spent every year on medicines to treat anxiety and sleeplessness. Jesus said, "My peace I give

to you; not as the world gives. ... Do not let your heart be troubled" (John 14:27).

- **Guilt.** Do you live with regret and sorrow over past mistakes? If you are a child of God, and you have asked Him to forgive something, He has (1 John 1:9). Receive His mercy rather than asking Him over and over for forgiveness.
- **Bitterness.** If you are resentful, hostile, or angry toward someone, it will spill over into your relationships with other people, too.
- **Unforgiveness.** The Bible says we are to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32). When you are tempted to withhold forgiveness, remember how gracious God has been to forgive you—every time you ask.
- **Inadequacy.** You should have a healthy sense of dependence on God. But a deep sense of insecurity interferes with your ability to perform necessary tasks. It's often more important to get something done—even imperfectly—than to not do it at all.

What is the destructive power of spiritual bondage?

- **It hurts your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.** You can't be who He wants you to be if you are tied up in unbelief and bondage.
- **It hurts your personal testimony.** If you are in bondage to sin, your rebellion in that area will weaken your influence in the lives of unbelievers. Living a godly life increases your effectiveness for the gospel.
- **It grieves the heart of God.** Good parents mourn the self-destructive choices of their children; the Father is saddened when we are caught in sin.
- **It limits the Lord's use of you.** If you never deal with the issues that hold you in bondage, you will be unable to reach your full potential in Christ.
- **It has detrimental, long-term effects on your body.** Anxiety, bitterness, unforgiveness, anger, and other negative emotions wreak havoc on our bodies.

What is the cure? Remember your ...

- **Personal relationship.** If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, all your sins are forgiven. You can never lose your salvation.
- **Position.** You are not an enemy of God. As His child, you have the privilege of accessing His throne at any moment to find grace to handle any situation (Heb. 4:16).
- **Possession.** You are indwelt with the Holy Spirit who will empower you in any and every circumstance of life. God has given you His nature and all you need to live a godly life (2 Pet. 1:3-4).
- **Personhood.** As God's child, you are of great worth and value to Him.

► RESPONSE

Do you struggle with any of the areas of bondage mentioned above? If so, you can be free through the power of Jesus Christ. If you have accepted God's gift of salvation, you are His child. You have access to God's throne, where you can find grace and mercy to overcome any struggle. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you can reject unhealthy patterns and begin walking in righteousness again.

As children of God, we already have our freedom. We just need to declare it by faith. You could pray something like this: "Lord, I confess this area of bondage has held me captive for too long. Thank You for Your forgiveness. I claim Your victory over this sin in my life. I trust You to set me free." God wants to deal with your bondage. Are you ready to be set free?

- What stands in the way of you becoming completely free to experience Christ's love in your life? Is this a self-imposed bondage?
- If you saw a loved one living with these constraints, what advice would you pass along to him or her? Why do we find it so much easier to give advice than to take it?

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