



Bound to Free

Moving from Passive Recovery to Actively Pursuing Freedom

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Often in sessions with clients I am asked, 'can my spouse actually overcome their addiction?', or the addict asking, 'can I overcome this addiction?'. The sense of hopelessness, defeat and despair is present. Freedom is a biblical concept at the core of our Faith. The word of God clearly tells us that Freedom is attainable. Jesus paid the price for our freedom by the finished work of the cross. Why then does freedom seem so hard to attain?

Bound in Sin, Free in Christ

1. **Imprisoned in Sin** – A person sitting in a jail cell committed a crime and is now serving time for their actions. Their privileges and rights are revoked. This person is restricted to a confined space and has no voice in what they get to do. Jesus walks up to the jail cell and has the keys to unlock the cell door. Jesus goes in and puts his hand on that person and says, 'your sins are forgiven, go and sin no more and come and follow me'. Jesus leaves the jail cell and that person continues sitting in the jail cell when they are free to go.

In recovery, the addict often feels defeated by their addiction, left with the shame of what they have done. This person is dead in their sin and bound by their addiction. Early in recovery, this person feels they are restricted and not able to live their life the way they want to. The problem is this person is still stuck in the addiction.

Are you sitting back in that jail cell waiting for God to move on your behalf or for your circumstances to change? Jesus already paid the price for your freedom. The question is, is God waiting for you? Freedom requires an intentional choice to get up and start actively pursuing freedom.

Passive Recovery– My husband is a police officer and was sharing about how sometimes individuals are called to go to court but they resist going. Crown intends to release these people with conditions but because they resist going to court, they are remanded and have to stay in jail longer. To be released from jail requires active participation as the person reintegrates into society.

Recovery requires that you take active steps to get your freedom. At some point, we must choose to do what it takes to overcome the addiction. Are there conditions set out by your spouse, accountability partner or counsellor that you are resistant to doing to get your freedom? What areas in your life have you been putting off dealing with? Why are we willing to live one more day with the bondage and addiction, when God is willing to set us free? So often, we can busy

ourselves with lower priorities to avoid doing the work of recovery. What are you avoiding? Start today to do the work that will get you to the place you want to be tomorrow.

Hurdles to Choosing Freedom

- Stuck in defeat and despair.
- Stuck in isolation.
- Stuck in a victim mentality.
- Stuck in emotional adolescence.

Why choose freedom tomorrow when you can choose it today? The children of Israel took 40 years to complete a one-month task. Freedom can take one month or forty years, you get to decide. The Lord gives you the choice to decide when you will be free. How long do you want to take to go from the wilderness into the promise land?

My husband was working in the jail and released one of the people. Shortly after this person was released, he noticed this person outside the detachment using drugs. This person has not yet learned the responsibility required to keep his freedom. "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love" (Galatians 5:13 NIV). When the person is released from jail, if they continue making poor choices, they will find themselves back in jail serving longer time. Freedom is not the absence of responsibility. Freedom does not mean you can do whatever you want whenever you want.

"Freedom is not a free ride while someone else pays to keep us irresponsible. Freedom is a return to stewardship and a return to responsibility" (Myles Munroe).

2. **Active Recovery**– Requires that the person sitting in the jail cell chooses to get out of jail and start taking the active steps needed to walk in freedom. Self-discipline and maturity are required to obtain and maintain freedom. Once you make an intentional choice to start walking in freedom, then the question becomes how?

Employ Agency through Accountability: "People act as agents who intentionally regulate their behavior and life circumstances. They are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. "They are producers of their life circumstances and not just the products of them". Agency allows you to choose the direction your life will take. Self-discipline for individuals in recovery is not always a strength. You can use agency by setting goals in your recovery, to make the changes that will lead you in the direction of your freedom.

Change Formula: Dissatisfaction + Vision + First Steps > Resistance = Change

Start with your recovery goals and then move to character development. Taking responsibility for your addiction means you take the initiative to make changes, instead of waiting for others to ask you to change.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the change agent we need in sanctification. “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17, NIV). The power that raised Christ from the dead lives in us and empowers us in our transformation journey.

3. **Stand Firm as a Prisoner of Hope** – “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, NIV). When you notice that you are starting to walk in freedom, stand firm and continue to do the things that brought you to that place. Do not let your guard down. When you start to feel weary set your mind and stand firm on your freedom. Be determined. Tell yourself, I am not going to give up or quit. I am going all the way through this to get to my victory.

“Return to the stronghold, You Prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you” (Zechariah 9:12, NKJV). The Lord will bring healing and restoration to your life if you do not give up. Hope is “the confident expectation of what God has promised, and its strength is in His faithfulness”. Our hope is in the finished work of the cross and that Jesus paid the price for our freedom. “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:19, NIV). Let your hope in the Lord anchor you as you actively pursue freedom.