

A person in a white robe stands in a field with arms outstretched, silhouetted against a sunset sky. The scene is framed by a decorative border.

LIFE LESSONS UNFEIGNED CHRISTIANITY

A GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL
CHRISTIAN LIVING

WRITTEN BY:

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FOR THE WORD OF THE LORD IS RIGHT;
AND ALL HIS WORKS ARE DONE IN TRUTH.
HE LOVETH RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT:
THE EARTH IS FULL OF THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD
PSALMS 33:4-5

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all who hunger for God's True Word in a very compromised world. I wrote it for those who want a stronger, deeper relationship with Jesus. I dedicate this book to all who the called servants in the service of his kingdom to God's glory.

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Introduction

In all the years that I have persisted as Christian I have had a calling on my life from the Holy Spirit to tell of God's love and grace. I am compelled to reach out to those perplexed people living in this very confusing world in order to bring to light God's mercy, compassion and forgiveness for them. Though they may feel abandoned in this sometimes inhospitable world, Jesus is always there knocking on the door or their hearts. He is always offering a way out of their situations. I am authoring this book for the ones who are truly seeking for answers to help fill in the voids in their lives. In the same manner as I was before I accepted a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. People desire to understand why they are in this world and life. They want to differentiate what their purpose is. To know there is justification for their existence in this world while possessing a genuine meaning to those around them. Everyone wants to experience love, acceptance, contentment and fulfillment. Without it, all humanity feels out of step and as if they don't belong to a greater purpose as I did before I had known my calling and purpose in life.

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Some may think the world revolves around them. Hardened to much of what is penned here. This book is not for them at this point in their lives. They are unready. This book is for those that know they have a calling. To the people who have been seasoned by humiliation through trial and fire. To those who have experienced pain that has forced them to their knees in hopeless despair. It is for those that have suffered loss that felt these trials were beyond what they could tolerate. This book is for the downtrodden. For those that maintain hope and hunger to take in all that our God has to offer for their lives.

Please remember, there was unwillingness on my part to author a book of any kind whatsoever. I experienced tremendous fear for lack of proper English skills and by the fact that there has been repeated failure in my life.

Who would want to receive any instruction from anyone who has failed at so much as I have? Do you think that I was in a hurry to look foolish because of all my limitations?

Though I possess a significant amount of knowledge in scripture and spiritual things, I have felt no one would be interested in anything that I have to offer. It has prevented me from stepping out more in so many ways. When the Lord said I was going to compose a book, there instantly came the resistance and a laugh. Sure, it's un-bewildering for me to write a sermon or a teaching without expressing the slightest apprehension about doing so. Since I know more about doing it than the average sinner without any biblical knowledge at all. But to write a book bears more significant challenges. I didn't think it was a brilliant idea to tackle that head on without the proper education to do so. Knowing there would be a reasonable share of critics who would be more than willing to find those limitations and expose them as much as possible.

I am a strong man in many ways, but so insecure in others. I don't mind critics that will aid in my development while undergoing this new creative

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process of learning. Being always open for improvement if it can be gained in a constructive manner that will make a difference for me in the long run. I hunger for knowledge. Everyone that has associated with me recognizes that to be true. I try to impart everything I know while keeping all scripture in its proper context and intent in a simplistic way that everyone can relate to. As a visual person, I try to encourage people to visualize the specific things that I am trying to get across in my teachings. Periodically people are irritated because they feel as though I am pointing out their faults purposely. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have my own to worry about.

As each chapter is written, I likewise am going through my own personal self-examination and convictions. Wherever I see myself falling short of God's will, that causes me have to stand up and take notice too. These Life Lessons I have written represent nothing more than an extension of the ones experienced by me in the last 48 years. Without these failures and shortcomings, I would not experience the intimate and personal relationship presently enjoyed with my Savior. One comment I tell people who are struggling is that failure is filled with opportunities in which we use the impossible to bring about miraculous victories. Without loss you can't appreciate your gains. In the absence of trials, there is no success to be had. Success can solely come through the trying fires that surround our lives. Trials that mold us into the marvelous work that God intends us to be. Other's like to call it the masterpiece God designed each person to be. Either way I like it and everyone gets the point.

Moving on to the teaching in this second book, I am praying that the Holy Spirit uses it to transform a life. One that is experiencing doubt and weakness and needs edification to bring about victory. I know each scripture, famous quote and Life Lesson taught here will give strength to that soul that thirsts for truth while helping them navigate through the corruption of this life that desires only for their destruction eternally. My want for you is that through the pages of this book there will a discovery for the answers needed. To comprehend what the Lord wants from all

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who recognize Him as their Savior. To open your heart and understanding to possibilities. To miracles that have the power to transform lives. If you thirst and hunger just as Jesus said, then this is a simple guideline for your journey to freedom and fulfillment. This is a help for that road map we call the Bible to clarify your vision and understanding for God's will for your life. Every so often the Bible can seem veiled from our thinking. Sometimes looking like it is written for people of superior understanding. That is not the case. There are times when we all need a little coaching to persuade us to jump over the hurdle in the way. The scripture below taught me I didn't have to be a scholar to have a relationship with Jesus. It was a comfort to comprehend this although effort was involved to bring about this understanding:

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence... 1Corinthians 126-29

Jesus paid a huge cost to make us all worthy and forgiven to be able to approach God our Father without shame or fear of contradiction if we follow what is written in our Bibles. This book is nothing more than just an aid that will help us to do that. I hope it will inspire you to go past your limitations and discover the real person of God intended you to be to his glory.



Chapter 1

What is True Freedom

I was thinking about the word freedom and what some people might interpret the meaning of it to be. Often symbolizing many conflicting perceptions to various people. Freedom is only relevant to whatever the situation represents in which they are living in at that particular moment. It sounds like a casual word to interpret and acknowledge to the diverse people within hearing. When considering how people implement it to their lives, turns out to being more complex than what we might have thought. All of us experience incompatible things. Things that might cause us think out of the box more than we needed to before to rationalize what freedom represents in our own life. No two people are identical in every aspect of their lives. One minor difference in thought or perspective can alter the whole definition completely. What some people consider to be unrestricted or experiencing freedom might be different than we define it to represent

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for ourselves. Although still the identical word in a definition, it might not be in experience.

What do you think true freedom is?

For some, it is being able to do what they want when they want. Without having to be accountable to anyone for whatever it is that they are doing. It sounds like that could be freedom. Yet when you look at how people, abuse freedoms in their lives you can see that they are not free at all. An example would be drug addicts, alcoholics, people with sexual addictions or gambling problems. All these examples started as simple freedoms. As time went on, they grew to be more dependent on those so called freedoms. Ones that became addictions that overcame them and ruined their lives. Causing much suffering for themselves as well as other's around them. Some, sooner than later, realized that they had lost control of their lives. Spiraling out of control and finding themselves in need of some emotional and spiritual help to break these traps that they thought made them free.

Isn't that the way some so called freedoms always start out?

Some think freedom represents the ability to effect what we desire without being given permission to do it. By never having to think about the price, it will cost for ill-fated decisions. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are not free to allow whatever our will desires to produce. When using your impunity to cause havoc and destruction in your life and others, then it isn't freedom at all, more like enslavement. In fact you maintain no freedom anymore having trapped yourself in a room without doors. Surrendering your will to your unfortunate choices while becoming a slave to whatever it is you allowed to take control of your life. That dependency will turn out to represent a exceptionally cruel and demanding taskmaster. I know, having experienced it.

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How many people have destroyed their financial stability, lost houses, families, jobs, friendships and eventually their freedom?

Wholly because they couldn't get a handle on the things that they became enslaved to. We all identify people that have fallen to these treacherous gods of freedom and expression. Our prisons are bursting at the seams with them.

And we think it is our God given right to allow ourselves to succumb to these so called freedoms?

It's not under any circumstances nor will be. If undertaking wrongful things, you will reap the punishment for those actions. That is not freedom by definition; merely rebellion and anarchy. Because something that is desirable can be satisfied, that doesn't grant you the freedom to act on it. If there is an unsustainable practice or violates any established laws, you are not free to engage in them. That is why we maintain laws in the first place. That is why we allow lawmakers to govern us. They exist to establish by law where our social boundaries are. They are there to prevent us from stepping over those boundaries. Not all laws instituted are for our benefit, but we as a self-governing people can revise them. But we have to reconstruct them legally. Look up the definition of freedom in the dictionary. You will see that the definitions sound as if there are no laws at all. Webster Dictionary defines freedom as this:

1. The condition of being free; the power to act or speak or think without externally imposed restraints. 2. Immunity from an obligation or duty. 3. Right, or the capacity, of self-determination, as an expression of the individual will.

Do you think most people fit into Webster's definition of what freedom is?

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Some people would answer yes, while others no. Because it completely depends on what your definition of freedom is as I stated. Another determination of freedom would be your financial standing. That is why there are so many self-help guru's out there to enlighten you how to make them rich with your limited income. Affirmative, I did suggest that. I have never seen poverty-stricken people to be that free. Working harder and earning much less money than most people. Scraping together a living to make ends meet and nothing more. Never enjoying the freedoms to go explore things that most with money can. At least they are working and feeling productive and that is what is important to them. Hopefully, feeling like they are making a contribution to society as the valuable citizens they are. Next, some are lazy and stand on corners holding up signs taking advantage of hardworking people's guilt and generosity. Others are on welfare and grant programs that could work, but don't want to. These people submit to rules and regulations so lax that it doesn't seem like there are any. Because they are lax, there is almost no boundaries at all. Most of those who take from this system of generosity are happy living like that because they maintain no self-respect. Others on aid programs aren't asking for a hand out, but an opportunity. They want to work to gain a respectable living. Desiring to forge out a decent life for themselves while building for their family's future. That is why they will labor overtime to elevate themselves to improve their standard of living. Then, of course, some those are disabled and need relief just to live who wish they could do more. As you can see, freedom includes many meanings that apply to the circumstances that surround your life.

The middle class has transformed this country into the greatness that America is. America being recognized in the world as representing a land of tremendous opportunity. Knowing they have to work hard to provide for their families. There are obligations to take care of like paying the rent or their mortgage. To put food on the table and keep the lights on so they don't

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have to sit in dark houses. Emotional needs and moral responsibilities have to be met. Things have to be handled daily so that everyone around them is safe and secure. Later on, if fortunate enough, they can take vacations when money is budgeted to get away. Going on outings while enjoying time with their families and friends. They appreciate the importance of unwinding. The need for decompressing from the stresses of their demanding lives. Knowing the importance of relaxation and family time. Their neighbors want to identify them as a beneficial asset to the neighborhood. They desire to be an asset to their community and not a liability. To enrich their community. Consistently trying to maintain stability for the sake of their families and neighbors. To them that is freedom.

The rich have all that they want, but in a constant battle to maintain it. That typically means they have to be self-absorbed in whatever it is that has made them rich in the first place. Having to labor extended hours and acquiring less sleep as they keep their focus on opportunities and investments. Trying to keep a handle on anything that could be a costly setback to their wellbeing and future. People identify them as being set apart by that wealth. Their worth and identity being associated with the amount of money they have accumulated. Many think their wealth provides specialized treatment to them. They are capable with their riches and influence to sway business and politics. They are proficient to gain specialized treatment by controlling ideas and circumstances. Yet, even with all their wealth, many of them are miserable and empty inside. True freedom escapes their ideology in mist of deception and self denial. Those who are centered on other's needs benefit from all that freedom has to offer them.

Is that true for all rich people? Are there any happy rich people anywhere?

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I will not lump these people into one category only. Each of their lives is going to be different. Each of them will maintain areas of personal, emotional and spiritual successes. Successes that many will never witness. By all means, many satisfied people possess a lot of money. I would suspect those who are disappointed are the same types that have issues that average people experience. Whether you are wealthy or bankrupt, if your life is out of line with God's will, then there will continue to be issues.

So, which one of these three classes experience the most freedom?

The fact is there is no freedom in lustful pursuits. If under stress to live, exist or maintain a certain standard, then you are a slave to that pressure whether rich or poor. You exercise no more freedom than someone locked away in a prison cell. The sole difference being, they are behind bars. A German Jesuit and theologian wrote:

How often I have found that we grow to maturity not by doing what we like, but by doing what we should. How true is that not every 'should' is a compulsion, and not every 'like' is a high morality and true freedom.

Karl Rahner

www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/k/karlahner204839.html

If we are slaves to our environment or our circumstances. Slaves to our obligations, desires, lusts and pursuits that sway us away without a thought. Slaves to philosophy and ideals by which we build, then we have to admit we are slaves emotionally and require some intervention that only God can provide. It would be more logical to build on foundations of hope, trust and faith. Until we deal with that, we will constantly feel we are on unstable ground. As Jesus said in this parable he instructed his disciples with:

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will

be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."...Matthew 7:24-27

True freedom comes from a foundation of moral ethics and integrity. True freedom brings about the byproducts of peace, contentment, safety and security. It is virtually never gained in the pursuit of worldly desire. It is unfound in the lusts that people in history have destroyed one another for. Never found in vain pursuits. James in his epistle bore light on this specific issue when he composed this verse:

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? ² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? ⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: " God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."...James 4:1-6

In this scripture verse James dealt with a particular issue. He gets to the root of what people do out of greed. How they exploit what they believe freedom is to them. He exposes the destructive behavior that follows. It always boils down to pride, lust and jealousy. A classic example of that in America is what we refer to "keeping up with the Joneses." One neighbor buys something that is extremely impressive. When the other neighbor sights it, he has to purchase something better. Every time they attempt outdoing each other over and over placing the bar higher and higher. Ultimately, it turns into an outright feud. There is a total dislike for each of the families.

Does anyone benefit from this type of behavior? Doesn't it end up enslaving

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both of the families in a downward spiral of one-oneupmanship?

These behaviors benefits no one, ever. They will find their pursuit for vain recognition grows into a monster. One that will enslave them, subjecting them in bondage to a race that each can never win. One that grows beyond the financial ability that each one needs to gratify the monster they have created. It could even last for generations. Something down the road has to break. That is when the severe problems begin. This may sound like a fictitious example, but it happens every day here in America. It is happening in some town somewhere right now. One of the most infamous feuds is the Hatfield's and McCoy's. What started off as a misunderstanding turns out to represent the thing that undoes both families.

Therefore, if that example is genuine, then where can true freedom be found?

One of the founding fathers who signed the Declaration of Independence stated:

The priest is Christ's slave, and Christ himself took the form of a slave and became obedient to death. So the priest serving human needs lives a Godward life, possessed by God and witnessing that only when lives are utterly possessed by God do they find true freedom..

Arthur Middleton
signatory of the Declaration of Independence
www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/arthurmidd204173.html

This statement is factually accurate. It hits the nail right on the head. Look wherever you want for the freedom you are trying to achieve apart from God. There must be an understanding at some point that it inevitably leaves you empty and unfulfilled. When God's Holy Spirit indwells in us, we discover the answers we wish for the life and the fulfillment desired. Mankind needs to acknowledge why all are alive and what happens after

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death. To feel connected to something greater than ourselves. God fashioned us to be that way. He established each person to reach out and explore beyond the limits of our abilities. Jesus conceived in our being to expand our horizons. We are fashioned in His image. Wired with creativity, curiously and a need for discovery. God revealed this to us in the scriptures in Genesis:

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them...Genesis 11:5-6

God said that whatever mankind proposes to do will not be held back. Whatever we purpose ourselves to achieve, good or bad, will happen. We will always be capable of reaching out beyond our limitations if the possibility exists. Mankind will expand our vision to see beyond those mental boundaries that say it can't be attained. We will do it to make our dreams a reality. This is what an angel declared in the book of Daniel:

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."...Daniel 12:4

God has granted everyone the freedom to decide between good and evil. He has granted us the ability to increase our knowledge to outperform ourselves. He has endowed us with the ability to make the impossible a reality. With this freedom comes a immense responsibility that we must all acknowledge. The responsibility to execute what is right for mankind. There are limitations to our freedom just as James said in the previous scripture. When we cross beyond the acceptable boundaries, undesirable things happen. Freedom contains in it limitations. There are moral boundaries that no one should ever negotiate. If we want to maintain peace, security and contentment in our lives, then there must exist an acceptance of what those

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limitations are. As said before, God has granted the freedom to decide between good and evil. We can see that by what is happening in the world around us. The specific thing that James advised us about is happening currently. It is leaving behind a trail of barbaric carnage. The scripture says:

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --- unless indeed you are disqualified. ⁶ But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified. 2 Corinthians 12:5-6

Have you ever looked deep inside yourself to see what there is?

Most people like what is seen inside themselves. They appreciate the qualities that yield respect and honor from their peers. Others do not like what they find at all. They bear shame and remorse for the decisions they have made throughout their lives. Their decisions have provided profoundly negative implications for their standard of living. So much that they become accustomed to making excuses for their practices. Deflecting away any personal responsibility from themselves. They lay the blame on the people around who are unaware of their problems. Frequently holding other's accountable for causing them to suffer. It is a must to accuse others to deflect blame away from themselves. They continue to remain the ones who are withdrawing opportunities that they consider to be entitled to. The fact is, the mirror that you look into at yourself with, never fabricates lies and deception. That mirror recognizes everything about that person who is gazing in better than anyone else. It is impossible to lie to the one staring back face to face. There might be success at fooling everyone around for a time, but it is impossible to deceive the person in that mirror. Try convincing yourself that responsibility for your life lies elsewhere. In spite of your deception, you recognize the truth. Freedom can be liberating or it may put a yoke of bondage around your neck. You inevitably exercise the freedom to decide which one it will be.

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Did you appreciate what was observed in the mirror? Have you concluded it to be easier to lie to yourself and accept things the way they are?

Human nature causes many people to follow the path of least resistance. It is more painless to give up than to try. Trying calls for continual effort. It demands sacrifice. It expects you to be truthful with yourself.

Can you be straightforward with yourself? Positively seen as someone who could be valuable to your family and beneficial to your friends? Or buying into your own lies and giving up without a fight? Or expecting someone else to affect those changes for you? To the exclusion of everything else because you don't want to assume the responsibility just in case, there is a setback or a failure?

These remain profoundly significant questions acknowledged by everyone's honesty. There has to exist a desire for truth to manifest any victories in your life. Look in the mirror and ask yourself whether or not there has been sincerity with the person staring back. If the answer is yes, that means you are happy with your life and you wouldn't want to improve a thing.

If the answer is no, then what are you going to do about it?

Change takes effort. It expects everyone to step out in faith believing they can make it. If you do not try at all then there will exist an assurance of one thing, there will be failure. Being in the exact place you are presently in at this moment. Nothing will improve, ever.

Can you live with that for the next 30-40 years? Is there that much time left? What is the definition of insanity?