

**Free Verse  
on  
Freedom**

FROM THE RAMBLIN' PEN  
of  
MARK JOHN FREEMAN

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# Free Verse on Freedom

by Mark John Freeman

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# The Purpose of Liberty

*You, my brothers, were called to be free.  
But do not use your freedom to indulge  
the sinful nature;  
rather, serve one another in love.*  
Galatians 5:13 NIV

"If you come to a fork in the road,  
take it."

Yogi Berra

**D**EAR FRIEND,

God gave us liberty. And with that liberty,  
He gave us a choice.

—we can use our liberty to serve  
ourselves.

—or, we can use our liberty to serve  
God and one another.

Recently the mayor of San Francisco author-  
ized city officials to grant marriage licenses  
to same sex couples.

—this sanction violates the Califor-  
nia state constitution.

—more importantly, it violates God's  
moral law.

Upon first hearing this news, I thought to  
myself ... this is freedom's end.

By freedom's end, I simply mean the end  
product of freedom run amok.

—some have thumbed their nose at  
God.

—some have taken the law into their  
own hands.

—some have exchanged their God-  
given liberty for license.

God-given freedom is being used to serve  
the base and degraded purposes of human  
depravity.

—it is a foolhardy path.

—it is an invitation to disaster.

Freedom has been given to us for a high and  
noble purpose.

—we are to use our freedom to lift up  
Christ.

—we are to use our freedom to lift up  
our fellow man.

We saw the same end product of freedom  
run amok on Super-Bowl Sunday.

—debauchery came uninvited and  
un-welcomed into our living rooms.

—we watched a clownish parade of  
classless, depraved humans.

—they writhed and wriggled on  
stage.

—they mouthed lyrics unfit for hu-  
man ears.

They capped their wretched performance

—with a crude,

—attention-grabbing display,

—of perverse, sensual titillation.

These are not the end purposes of freedom.  
Scripture tells us that liberty is given so that  
we might serve one another.

—genuine service is a form of wor-  
ship.

—it is a way of demonstrating our  
love for God.

—it is a way of showing our appre-  
ciation of His gifts of life and freedom.

# The Purpose of Liberty

Nowhere in human history has freedom been so abundant as in this nation.

—six millennia of souls have lived out their lives before we came along.  
—scant few knew the privileges of freedom that we take for granted.

But American freedom has come to us with a price.

—before our Declaration of Independence and Constitution came into play,  
—self-serving kings and egomaniacal tyrants had to be confronted.  
—powerful, misguided religious leaders had to be challenged.  
—blood had to be spilled.

And for American freedom to remain in play, a price, too, must be extracted.

—the actions of those in San Francisco,  
—the actions of those behind the Super-Bowl debacle,  
—and the actions of all those in our country ...  
—who misunderstand the purpose of their freedom,  
—who pervert it for self-serving ends,  
—must be checked.

If not,

—our nation  
—and its commensurate freedoms,  
—will in time be stripped from us by a just and holy God,  
—who though slow to anger,  
—nevertheless does not allow wickedness to continue forever.

Sir Alexander Fraser Tytler,

—Scottish jurist,  
—historian,  
—and professor of Universal History at Edinburgh University in the late 18th century,  
—remarked in an 1801 lecture that,  
—"the average age of the world's greatest civilizations ...  
—has been 200 years."

He went on to describe the course of nations:

—From bondage to spiritual faith;  
—From spiritual faith to great courage;  
—From great courage to liberty;  
—From liberty to abundance;  
—From abundance to selfishness;  
—From selfishness to complacency;  
—From complacency to apathy;  
—From apathy to dependency;  
—From dependency back into bondage.

Sir Alexander Fraser Tytler

1748-1813

You can decide for yourself where we are in this progression.

We have come to a fork in the road. We cannot, as Yogi Berra suggests, choose both paths.

# Replacing God with the Systems and Devices of Men

**D**EAR FRIEND,

"They need to do something about that!"

How many times have you either ...  
—heard someone make that declaration?  
—or made it yourself?

The well-worn cliché begs the obvious follow-up question: Who is "they?"

Incorrect grammar aside ...  
—most understand the inference behind the three-word query.  
—"They..."  
—are a faceless, nameless bureaucrat.  
—or a committee of faceless, nameless bureaucrats.  
—somewhere.  
—somehow.  
—responsible for doing something.  
—to make some part of our lives better.

In ancient Israel, God wanted to be King.  
—But the people wanted a man to be king.  
—"Give us a king like the other nations," they demanded. (I Samuel 8:5)

God had used ...  
—Moses to deliver them from Egypt.  
—Joshua to take them into the promised land.  
—and a myriad of judges ...  
—to rule them.  
—to guide them.  
— over the course of many, many generations.

He had given them His law, a set of rules for self-governance.

Each individual soul was to ...  
—walk under the law of the Lord.  
—rule or manage himself in an upright way from the inside out.  
—obey God's commands with respect to others.

If all did as God commanded ...  
—trusting Him to meet their needs.  
—trusting Him to protect them.  
—all would go well.

But Israel's neighbors were intimidating.  
—the Israelites feared them.  
—they refused to trust in God alone to be their defender.  
They wanted a king like the other nations.

God eventually ...  
—relented.  
—gave them King Saul.

But in so doing, He warned them of **four** consequences. (I Samuel 8:11-18)

1) **Your families will be broken up.** (I Samuel 8:11-13)  
a) *Your sons*: If God is rejected as the defender of Israel ...  
—the nation's young men will be called up to military service.  
—lives will be lost due to war.  
—the nation's future will be put at risk.  
—many will be required to work to supply the needs of the warriors.  
b) *Your daughters*: If God is rejected as the defender of Israel ...  
—your civil government will become a monster.  
—it will gobble up everything in its path.  
—your daughters, too, will be forced into the king's service.

2) **Your private property will be sacrificed.** (I Samuel 8:14)  
—The government has a need for ...  
—your fields.  
—your vineyards.  
—your property.  
—they must be confiscated for the government's purposes.  
—from one generation to the next generation ...  
—land forever has the potential of generating income.  
—land forever has the potential of supplying needs.  
—but if the government ...  
—needs it.  
—takes it.

# Replacing God with the Systems and Devices of Men

—families will have little left to pass on to succeeding generations.

—families will become dependent upon the government for their welfare.

3) **Your high taxes will eventually make you a slave.** (I Samuel 8:15-17)

—God requires our tithe.

—but now, big government too requires require our tithe.

—so, in addition to our willing supply towards God's priestly ministries.

—we become burdened with more taxes.

—we are double taxed.

—we become the government's slaves.

4) **Your direct line to heaven will be blocked.** (I Samuel 8:18)

—if we turn our hearts away from God ...

—from looking to Him as ...

—our source.

—our defender.

—if we turn instead to a king ...

—or a civil government to be ...

—our need-meeter,

—our provider,

—our protector ...

—then He will have less of a mind ...

—to immediately respond to our

prayers.

—to turn quickly toward us when we call upon Him in emergencies.

If any of this scenario sounds familiar ...

—then you have successfully activated your cogitator.

You understand that we Americans have slowly become ...

—institutional junkies.

—co-dependent addicts.

—children sucking at the breast of our own civil government.

Like Israel of old ...

—we have ceased to trust God ...

—for our daily bread.

—for defense against our enemies.

—and have instead looked to men to do the job.

Civil government is inescapable.

—it is an institution created by God.

However, God meant its role to be very limited.

The larger the civil government's ...

—sphere of control.

—and budget.

—the smaller our own spheres ....

—of individual self-government.

—of control over our own lives.

—of personal freedom.

—of money in our pocketbooks.

Slowly,

—methodically...

—our freedoms.

—our personal autonomies.

—our wealth.

—our very lives.

—are being stripped away by the "they" who see themselves as ...

—our saviors.

—our deliverers.

—our source of supply and defense.

# Replacing God with the Systems and Devices of Men

Why do we look to them instead of Him?

It was not always so. Consider the words of our own *Declaration of Independence*.

—"And for the support of this Declaration,

—**with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence,**

—we mutually pledge to each other our

—Lives,

—our Fortunes,

—and our sacred Honor."

Perhaps this passage could be called a *Declaration of Dependence*.

How did we get ourselves into this mess?

Let us turn back ...

—repent of our institutional co-dependence.

—repent of our idol worship.

—and call upon God.

—asking Him to become our King once more.

# To Preserve Freedom, We Must Understand It

**D**EAR FRIEND,

Many of you on my email newsletter list know me personally. For those who do ...  
—you understand that I have quirks that surface now and then.  
—like this new writing style I am trying out.

Recently, one of my quirks emerged in the pen-name persona of Mark John Freeman.  
—I created this pen-name.  
—I dreamed up and activated this nom-de-plume as they say.  
—to convey a personal passion of mine.  
—to spread my enthusiasm for the idea of freedom.

To help bring the idea of freedom into focus ...  
—I share the following, brief story.  
—it was conveyed to the nation by President Ronald Reagan.  
—from the Oval Office.  
—in January of 1989.

"In the early 1980's, a sailor aboard the carrier *Midway* wrote of his ship's efforts to aid a small band of boat people adrift in the South China Sea. When the *Midway* pulled up alongside the rag-tag vessel, one of the refugees shouted to the sailor who later wrote of his experience. The refugee waved and proclaimed, '**Hello freedom man.**'"

**Freedom man.**  
—that is how many throughout the world view us Americans.  
—we are seen as men ...  
—(or people)  
—of freedom.

—*but what is freedom?*  
—*how have we come to enjoy it?*  
—*and what must we do to preserve it?*

These questions cannot be fully addressed here.  
—but I will attempt explore them just a little.  
—together, we will scratch the surface.  
—and I will supply you with some food for thought.  
—so activate your cogitator once again.

## 1) WHAT IS FREEDOM?

Simply explained ...  
—freedom is the ability to consciously choose our own course.  
—but to make the right choice ...  
—we must also possess understanding.  
—what consequences will occur ...  
—with each particular choice?  
—what can I expect to happen if I choose ...  
—course "A" ...  
—instead of course "B"?

Our Creator-God is the Giver of the freedom-gift.  
—to begin to understand freedom ...  
—we must believe that God is the freedom-Giver.  
—we must also believe that God Himself is free.  
—and that we ...  
—made in His image.  
—were created by Him to be free.

Freedom is ...  
—our natural state.  
—our original, God-given state.

# To Preserve Freedom, We Must Understand It

God wants us to ...

- love Him freely.
- not under compulsion.

And so He gave us ...

- the ability to choose.
- which includes ...
- the freedom to honor and love

Him.

- the freedom to reject Him.

Without a belief in a freedom-giving God ...

- our attempt to understand freedom will be greatly hindered.

Without a belief in a freedom-giving God ...

- we will not comprehend how freedom was surrendered.

And without a foundation in the Genesis story of sin's entry into the human race ...

- we will not be able to grasp the concept of freedom lost.
- nor the entry of tyranny into the human story.

To better understand freedom ...

- we need to understand freedom's opposite.

Tyranny is the anti-thesis of freedom.

- it is widespread.
- in fact it is everywhere.
- it first manifests itself individually.

Tyranny is found in every human being ...

- weighed down by the bondage of personal sin.
- held captive in the prison of selfishness.

Did I say every human being?

But in its full blown form ...

- tyranny is experienced collectively.

—through the machinations of wicked tyrants.

- men like Hitler.
- Stalin.
- Pol Pot.
- Saddam Hussein.

But tyranny can also be quiet.

- subtle.
- sophisticated.
- unnoticed.
- voted in.
- welcomed.

Since the Garden of Eden debacle ...

- the human race has struggled to be free.
- but to no avail.

Held in the powerful grip of sin's deadly grasp, humankind is ...

- enslaved to the god of selfishness.
- in bondage to its by-product, wickedness.

## 2) HOW HAVE WE COME TO ENJOY FREEDOM?

God, in His wonderful mercy ...

- did not abandon us.
- instead provided His Son.
- and through His cross-death sacrifice.

- the tyranny of sin's power.
- has been broken.

# To Preserve Freedom, We Must Understand It

By embracing God's gift of redemption ...  
—by allowing God's Spirit into our lives.  
—we can begin the process of deliverance.  
—from the tyrannical grasp of self-serving sin.  
—in other words ...  
—God starts us afresh.  
—and we begin to walk again on the path toward freedom.

Freedom, first ...  
—is personal.  
—not collective.  
—comes to us as an epiphany.  
—is an internal quickening.  
—drawing us into a restored relationship with God.  
—freedom continues its work within us ...  
—in smaller epiphanies.  
—or little ...  
—periodic awakenings.

Ah, epiphanies!  
—flashes of insight.  
—light breaking across ...  
—our soul.  
—our spirit.  
—life changing truth.  
—mini ahas.

Two thousand years ago ...  
—Peter, Jesus' disciple, first realized who Jesus truly was.  
—*"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God,"* he proclaimed.  
—in that instant ...  
—whether the instant was that very moment.  
—whether it had occurred earlier.  
—Peter stepped into freedom.  
—big aha moment.  
—life transforming aha moment.

Fifteen-hundred years later ...  
—Martin Luther re-discovered a long-hidden truth.  
—salvation comes by grace ...  
—and not by works.  
—whoa!  
—big aha!  
—history changing aha!  
—as with Peter ...  
—freedom burst into Luther's soul.  
—awakened his darkened heart.  
—delivered him from the tyranny of falsehood.  
—Luther took his freedom-stand.  
—and the Protestant Reformation began.

Two-hundred-and-fifty years later ...  
—Virginian Patrick Henry.  
—in a Luther-like moment.  
—took his stand too.  
—proclaiming that death would be preferred to the loss of political freedom.

Today ...  
—we enjoy freedom ...  
—because others before us embraced the truth.  
—because our Founding Fathers embraced Jesus.  
—THE TRUTH.  
—and embraced the truths He brings to us.

Yes, we Christian Americans enjoy freedom ...  
—because the Truth has set us free.  
—because we have been born anew.  
—and because ...  
—our predecessors established a political system.  
—built on Truth.

The Truth is Christ.

# To Preserve Freedom, We Must Understand It

Freedom comes in two forms.

- internal.
- external.
- internal is ...
- eternal.
- sure.
- external is ...
- tenuous.
- fragile.

Some enjoy ...

- both.

Some enjoy ...

- neither.

Some enjoy ...

- one.
- but not the other.

## 3) WHAT MUST WE DO TO PRESERVE FREEDOM?

Freedom is a tricky proposition.

- it is a delicate balance.
- it requires our constant attention.

In order to fully enjoy it ...

- we must first understand it's source.
- we must realize its incredible worth.
- we must know its Giver.

Internal Freedom comes only from our Creator, who out of His great love ...

- first made us.
- then gave us the option to choose

Him ...

- or our own way.

If we have received His gift ...

- of internal freedom.
- of salvation.
- of the buy back ...
- we must guard ourselves ...
- our hearts ...
- against the temptations of religion.
- they abound.

Religion is a subtle trap

- perhaps the subtlest trap of all the devil's wily machinations.
- touch not.
- taste not.
- do this.
- don't do that.
- worship this way.
- no, worship that way.
- see those people over there?
- they don't have it right.

Internal freedom is always at risk of falling prey to external rules and regulations.

- the trappings of religion.
- legalism.

In Paul's day...

- the Judaizers sought to make circumcision a requirement for church membership.
- "The Gentiles cannot fully be grafted in to the Vine," they said,
- "until they have undergone this necessary process."

# To Preserve Freedom, We Must Understand It

But God said, "No.

- I have made a new covenant.
- a new way.
- the new way is the way of relation-

ship.

- of sonship.
- I have ...
- opened the door.
- torn down the wall.
- removed the barriers.
- rent the veil of separation.
- come and enter into My house.
- sit at My table.
- dine with Me.
- drink of My living water."

Internal freedom is a gift, pure and simple.

- it cannot be added to.
  - it cannot be enhanced.
  - by anything we do.
  - by anything we say.
  - it comes to us freely
  - it sets in our hearts as a seed.
  - everything we need is in that seed.
  - we can cultivate it.
  - we can make it grow.
  - or we can ignore it.
  - build our own religious structures
- around it.
- hem it in.
  - shelter it from light.
  - stunt its growth.

"I will write My law on your hearts."

Love God and the things God loves.

—that is the law written in our hearts.

To preserve internal freedom...

- we must learn to live by the law written within our hearts.
- the law written by the Spirit upon our hearts.

External Freedom on the other hand ...

- is a different animal.
- it too is a gift from God.
- and it comes to all who are living within the borders of its geographic scope.

True external freedom, political freedom ...

- springs from the laws of God.

The laws of God protect us from tyranny.

All souls are subject to the same laws.

- no one is exempt.
- not even the king.
- yes, the law is the king over the king.

The law is the great equalizer.

- no one is excused from justice.
- no one is above the law.
- the law, like God, is no respecter of persons.

The law divides power.

- this keeps us free.
- 1) some power goes to those who exercise judgment according to the law.
- 2) some power goes to those who make law.
- 3) some power goes to those who enforce and carry out the law.
- we are safe if these three powers are held in balance.

Only God can manage all three powers.

- "For the LORD is our judge,*
- the LORD is our lawgiver,*
- the LORD is our king;*
- it is he who will save us."*
- (Isaiah 33:22 NIV)

# To Preserve Freedom, We Must Understand It

But when it comes to us mortals ...

- in God's plan.
- the powers of each must be ...
- diminished.
- parceled out.
- limited.

Give your power back to God.

- if we all did this.
- we would all be free.

When the external laws of freedom are no longer supported by the internal law of love ...

- freedom collapses.
- tyranny arises.

To preserve freedom, external, political freedom ...

- we must obey the law.
- and even more importantly ...
- we must obey the internal law

written in our hearts.

- the law of love.