

3. Walking in Freedom and Liberty

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Sub-title: Freedom from Cultural Bondages

- Today is the third Sunday in our 40 Day Campaign
 - 6 consecutive Sunday messages & 6 weekly Small Group meetings
 - 40 days of daily Scripture Declaration & Memorisation (liberty truths)
- All resulting in new levels of freedom & liberty in our lives
 - Freedom from bondages, fears & curses
 - Free to fully serve the Lord & one another (1 Peter 2:16, Gal. 5:13)

Luke 4:17–19 (NKJV) *He (Jesus) was handed the book of ... Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

Last week’s main points:

- a. Renew your Mind, transform your Life
- b. We are three-part Beings
- c. The Mind, Battlefield of the Ages
- d. The Word of God is the Power to renew the Minds of Believers
- e. How to renew the Mind & initiate a new way of thinking

1. Do not be conformed to your Culture

Romans 12:1–2 (NASB95) *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- Do not be conformed to this world ...

Romans 12:2 (J.B. Phillips NT) *Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within ...*

- Evidently, the world around us has a “mould” for us
- This “mould” typically comes in the form of the “prevailing culture” around us

- But God has a different plan and a different “mould” for us
- As believers, we are called to forsake worldly cultures & embrace “Kingdom Culture”
- Much of this world’s culture clashes with the culture of God’s Kingdom

Romans 12:2 (MSG) *Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike **the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity**, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*

- Many Christians are “dragged down” by the culture around them
- There are cultural bondages that are not easily recognised or understood
- (i.e. Does the fish know it is surrounded by water?)

2. What is a Culture?

Definitions of the term “Culture”:

- A culture is a set of rules, regulations (mostly unwritten) & practices that help to regulate a society
 - (Some of these rules are good & necessary, while others are very restrictive and binding)
- Culture includes the arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and other products of human work & thought considered as a unit, especially with regard to a particular time or social group
- A set of predominating attitudes & behaviour that characterize a group or organization

Acts 2:40 (MSG) *He went on in this vein for a long time, urging them over and over, “Get out while you can; **get out of this sick and stupid culture!**”*

- When Apostle Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, he urged people to get out of their culture
 - Our ethnicity is ok, but much of our culture probably isn’t
- There are certain cultural expressions that are absolutely fine & harmless
 - Cultural foods, cultural clothing, etc.
- **However, many cultures have a built-in spiritual component**
- If a culture has a spiritual component to it (most cultures do), then, if that spiritual component isn’t thoroughly Christian, then it is demonic
- Each culture has its own sacred cows, its own idols, etc.
- Every culture has its own demons
- Some cultures are under a constant curse because of:

- their idol worship
- their ancestral worship (veneration of the dead, [Mary worship])
- superstition, involvement in the occult, , praying to the dead, etc.
- Jesus Christ hasn't come into our lives to strengthen us in our culture
- He has come to deliver us from our culture & strengthen us in our walk with Him
- Christians who are strongly into their own culture are usually weak in their faith with Christ (competing forces)

3. God forbids us having other god's or be involved in idol worship

The 1st of the Ten Commandments: Have no other God's before Me

Exodus 20:3 (NKJV) *You shall **have no other gods before Me.***

The 2nd of the Ten Commandments: You shall make no idols for yourselves

Exodus 20:4–6 (NKJV) *You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; **5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.***

Leviticus 26:1 (NKJV) *'You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, **to bow down to it;** for I am the Lord your God.*

4. God tells us to separate ourselves from our culture

2 Corinthians 6:14–18 (NLT) *Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? **15** What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? **16** And **what union can there be between God's temple and idols?** For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. **17** Therefore, **come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. 18** And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

- Corinth was known as a city full of idols, temples of false god's, temple prostitution, ritual idolatrous feasts, etc.
- Its culture was highly sexually promiscuous

Revelation 5:9–10 (NKJV) *And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have **made us kings and priests to our God**; And we shall reign on the earth.”*

5. God delivers us from our culture and then sends us back as missionaries to our family and friends

Acts 26:12–18 (NKJV) *“While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 15 So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’*

- Paul was Jewish, but he also had Roman (Gentile) citizenship
- **Darby:** ... taking thee out from among the people, and the nations, to whom I send thee
- God said: I will first deliver you from the Jewish & Gentile people, and then I will send you to them
 - You will be instrumental in opening their eyes
 - Turning them:
 - from darkness to light
 - from the power of satan to God
- Most people who are inside their culture cannot see its bondages
- God takes us out, so we can see
- Then He send us back in, to share Christ with spiritually lost people