

LIVING, NOT FOR SELF, BUT TO DO GOD'S WILL

Note to the speaker:

Exercising faith in the ransom means becoming a *slave* of God. Christians must, therefore, put Jehovah's will first in every aspect of life

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE (5 min.)

Increased emphasis in world is on independence; "doing your own thing" is urged

Because of injustices, many look at independence as highly desirable

All realize that a reasonable degree of independence is desirable

Would you want to go through life entirely, totally, dependent on others?

We see around us a rebellious spirit and an unbalanced view of independence

Often people, without considering all possibilities and implications, extol independence

Current emphasis on independence is dangerous (Eph 2:2)

This devilish spirit inclines imperfect humans toward *self-willed* rebellion

Bible urges people seeking God's favor to develop just the opposite of *self-centered* view

Encourages us to disown self and not to live for ourselves (Mt 16:24; 2Co 5:15)

In one sense, all of us have already been sold into slavery

EVERY ONE OF US HAS BEEN SOLD INTO SLAVERY (7 min.)

Your being sold into this slavery does not involve your economic station in life, nor is it related to your race or nationality; it is slavery to sin (Read Romans 7:14)

First man sold into slavery to sin was our forefather Adam (*it-2* 979 ¶6; *w65* 712-21)

Adam yielded to selfish desire (pleasing self, not God), becoming enslaved to sin

Was not a temporary slavery but lasted till death (Ro 5:12a)

That sale into slavery affected every one of us, for we were thus sold into bondage too. Why?

Since all of us were in Adam's loins, he sold us with himself into slavery to sin (Ro 5:12, 18a)

Our own lives prove that we personally are affected (Read Romans 6:16)

Which one of us has not committed what God classifies as sin—lying, stealing, or worse?

Even if we strive to keep God's laws, we fall short (Ro 7:21-23; *w73* 511; *it-2* 964-5)

Recognition of this slavery should spur us to seek what relief and help are available

We have no basis for high-mindedness; spirit of *self-willed* independence is not fitting

Will we ever gain freedom? If so, how?

TRUE FREEDOM INVOLVES DEPENDENCE ON GOD AND JESUS (15 min.)

In gaining right evaluation of our position, it is vital to recognize our dependence on God

All of us should acknowledge that we owe our lives to Jehovah (Ac 17:26-28)

Ask self: 'Does my life reflect recognition of fact that I owe it to God?'

We depend on God for means to sustain our lives (Ps 104:14, 15; Ac 14:17)

Some people admit dependence on God for life and means to sustain it, yet ignore his will

Ask self: 'What is that will? What does it require of me?'

By his life offered in sacrifice to God, Jesus ransomed all mankind; he purchased them; all of them belong to him (Read Matthew 20:28) (*w72* 687-8; *it-2* 733-6)

"Ransom" means a price paid to buy back or to bring release

Christ ransomed all mankind; they belong to him whether they exercise faith or not

That is why resurrection even of unrighteous ones is possible (Ac 24:15)

But no one can gain God's favor, release from bondage to sin, eternal life, without faith in value of Christ's sacrifice and openly acknowledging him as Lord (Joh 3:36; Ro 10:9)

If you have faith in sin-atonement value of Jesus' sacrifice, you can be free of bondage to sin but not independent of God and his requirements (Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15)

Because of Adam, "all had died," but "one man" (Christ) died for us; he bought us

Bible emphasizes this (1Co 6:19, 20; 7:23; 1Pe 1:18, 19)

Christ is the one whom God has said that we must recognize as Lord, or Master

Since we have been bought with a price, is proper that we live, not for self, but to do God's will

Person who claims to accept sin-atonement value of Jesus' sacrifice but puts personal interests, pleasures, goals (which all mean SELF), first belies his claim

Are any of us that way? What does our life show? (Read Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16)

Being a slave of God and Christ is course of freedom; brings benefits now and in future

To be a slave of God and Christ does not result in any real loss; get benefits (Ro 6:22, 23)

Already have 'fruit in way of holiness': have clean conscience; are protected from effects of alcoholism, drugs, and immorality; gain rich family life; have true friends

Final wage much better too: Slave of God receives eternal life in health and happiness

The way God dealt with literal slaves in the past should strengthen our confidence in the blessing of our being his slaves now and forever (*it-2* 978 ¶7, 8; Ex 21:20, 26, 27)

Men who served God in past delighted in being his servants; we too can have that joy

Abraham manifested by his ready response that he was servant of God; was blessed (Ge 18:6-8)

Moses and Joshua were not ashamed of being servants, or slaves, of God (Jos 1:1; 5:14)

Outlook of happy slaves of God is reflected in Psalm 84:10-12 (*w79* 9/15 15)

Question remains: 'What does this mean to me?' Important, for your life is involved

LIVE DAILY, NOT FOR SELF, BUT TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL (15 min.)

Truly being a slave of God means putting God's will first in life (Mt 16:24; *tp* 179-80)

We are not in position to bargain with God; we are approaching him as supplicants

For some here, applying this counsel involves taking steps to become dedicated and baptized

Some enjoy taking in Bible knowledge and being with Christians but go no further

Mere knowledge and contact with God's organization do not make one a slave of God (Read Acts 2:38) (*w78* 11/1 15-16; *w89* 1/15 14-15, 20)

Your becoming a dedicated, baptized Christian will show your recognition of and your dependence on God, your love for him, your desire to be a slave of God

Repentance requires turning from any wrong acts and changing your whole way of thinking to bring it in line with God's thinking revealed in the Bible (Ro 12:2; *w92* 3/15 16 ¶16)

You now know that it is possible to cease being slave to sin; do you really want to?

When you make a dedication to God, it is properly symbolized publicly by water immersion

Becoming a slave of God puts you in line for "seasons of refreshing" (Ac 3:19; *tp* 178)

If you are slave of God, recognize your position by humble response to God's Word and will

Real servant of God accepts all of his counsel and tries diligently to apply it

It is easy to live for *self* and so reject counsel on morals; means rejecting God as Master

Young person might find excitement in necking with and touching person of opposite sex; begins dismissing counsel of God's Word (2Ti 2:22; Jude 4; *yp* 254)

Person who drinks on social occasions may think it sophisticated to get dizzy, giddy; is rejecting warning against drunkenness (1Co 5:11; 1Pe 4:3)

Well to ask self: 'Whom am I living for, self or God? Do I want to be his slave?'

True slave of God is not going to ignore command to 'marry only in the Lord' (1Co 7:39)

As respectful servant, he realizes that the counsel is for his good (*w89* 11/1 21-2)

Respond to God's will, instead of living for self, by aiding others through the preaching work

May not be your natural inclination, but to do so shows you want good to come to others

You thus demonstrate love for God and neighbor, not letting *self* hold you back

Keeping in mind that you are not living for self adds to your joy in the field service

Living to do God's will also involves humbly serving interests of others in congregation

Jesus, Head of congregation, set the example by washing feet of disciples (Joh 13:2-5, 12-17)

Example to be followed, not of specific deed, but of spirit he showed (Verse 17)

Overseers need to serve their brothers humbly, not lording it over the flock (1Pe 5:1-3)

Youths have example in Timothy, who did not live for self (Php 2:19-23)

Are you of similar disposition, willing to assist even in menial tasks?

All of us can increase our living for God's will, not for self

STRIVE TO DEEPEN YOUR DESIRE TO LIVE FOR GOD'S WILL (3 min.)

We need to remind ourselves constantly of our dependence on God and Jesus

Acknowledge in prayers that our life is from God and our hope for the future depends on ransom

Build our lives around relationship with Jehovah, letting it be dominant influence

As we face problems and decisions, think in terms of what we should do, not as independent agents, but as slaves of God who delight to do his will

Instead of letting imperfect SELF react, respond as one who has been bought with a price

This is the course of wisdom, for those who will be survivors of destruction of Babylon the Great and live on into new world are described in Revelation 19:5 as "slaves" of God

Successfully serving Jehovah, living to do his will, is the course of blessing (Ro 6:22)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need to be read)