



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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and
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Freedom or Fear

*Note: As an alternative to making typical New Year's resolutions, we continue our look at new ways of approaching life that can make a big difference in how we live. This month, we focus on embracing life with **freedom**, rather than fear.*

It has been reported that Americans are buying firearms at levels seldom seen before. While some people attribute this to an increase in sport shooting, others point to fears of economic collapse and civil unrest. People fear losing their jobs, their homes, their investments, their way of life, their future. When faced with such fears, people tend to "circle the wagons" and focus on self preservation and protection of those closest to them.

Fear is indeed a powerful emotion designed to protect us from that which would harm us. Sadly, it often invades so much of our life that it becomes a way of life. We fear loss, rejection, failure, and shame. We fear weakness, vulnerability, disease, and the possibility of loved ones being harmed.

We know the fear, but why is it so pervasive? Simply put, we fear what we don't understand or control. We believe that life will wound us or cause us to suffer if we don't control what happens around and to us. Such fear grows from a deep recognition of the

brokenness of our world and the realistic danger it presents. This awareness interacts with our dependence on the world, so that the more we depend on the world to meet our needs and fulfill our desires, the more vulnerable we are to its hurtful brokenness. Our efforts to protect ourselves by controlling the world are equally as flawed, based as they are on assumptions of human wisdom and power that simply do not exist.

Are we condemned, then, to live in life-long fear? Not at all! But first we must adjust our thinking and expectations. For example:

- what if we stop looking to others (the world) to fulfill all our needs and wishes?
- what if we realize we can experience disappointment, pain and struggle, and emerge from it stronger, healthier, and more at peace than when it began?
- what if we stop trying to control what we can't control, and instead embrace life with a confident trust in our all-powerful God, along with the value, significance, and eternal purpose He endows us with?

"What if..." is the doorway of insight that leads to the path of freedom. Once we accept the limitations of our

control, and trust the wisdom, care and plans of our God, we are better able to approach life with freedom, rather than fear. This is a marvelous upgrade!

- Consider, for example, being free to:
- decide and act without constantly defending or justifying oneself.
 - be our best, without the need to compete or "win" to prove our worth.
 - resist the crowd and avoid petty arguments, gossip, and slander.
 - do what is right and just, even when it's unpopular, or no one is watching.
 - question and discover, even when others might disapprove.
 - forgive and grant mercy, even when things aren't fair.
 - serve, encourage, and assist others without the fear of "losing".
 - love, without expectations or conditions.

Clearly, true freedom is neither a license for irresponsibility, nor a guarantee of bliss. Rather, it is a life changing approach to living based on courage, humility, and a solid awareness of God's presence and role in our life.

Amidst the threats and dangers of this world, it offers, like nothing else can, a sense of secure peace along with joyful adventure. That's how life is meant to be lived!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Freedom

It is a common misconception that freedom assumes a lack of boundaries or limits. Quite the opposite is true. Consider the kite. The kite is free to fly and achieve its full potential only as long as it is teathered to a base by a string. The kite uses the restraint of the string to play with the wind, as a kite is intended to do. Cut the string, and the kite loses its form and function. Likewise, blood is free to flow through our body. But unless it is guided by a system of vessels, it exists simply as a messy mass of potential.

Freedom without stucture is chaos. Like the kite and blood, we humans experience fulfillment from our freedom only when it is directed in such a way that it honors our purpose for being. But what is this purpose, and how do we find it?

To discover our purpose, we can look to our self or to our Creator. We are free to live for our self, or to fulfill God's purpose for us. We should remember, however, the fear generated by a world that lives only for itself.

What , then, is God's purpose for us? Simply this:

- to pursue and promote what is right in God's eyes; and is doing so,
- to please and glorify our God; by
- reflecting His glory within us.

When we use our freedom to fulfill this divine purpose, we experience the true joy of living free.



"There is much in the world to make us afraid. There is much more in our faith to make us unafraid."

- Frederick C. Cropp

"Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. And lo, no one was there."

- Anon.