

"To Will and to Do of His Good Pleasure"
 The Two Levels of Freedom in Each of These Miraculous Actions of Salvation
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A study of God's work in us to free us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), tracing the details of that work as described in Romans chapters 5-8, detecting there two clear levels within both the "will" and the "do," and observing how two key passages from *Desire of Ages* powerfully and succinctly summarize the Romans passages while expanding the central picture given us in Phil. 2.

Freedom

"To Will and...

(continued on page 4)

<i>Level One</i> Free to Will	
Illustration: Every human: Rom. 12:3	
Key thoughts	<p><u>Rom. 5:6</u> when we were yet without strength, ... Christ died for the ungodly.</p> <p><u>8</u> while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.</p> <p><u>10</u> when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son</p> <p><u>15</u> the free gift ... the grace of God, and the gift by grace ... unto the many</p> <p><u>16</u> free gift ... unto justification</p> <p><u>17</u> abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness</p> <p><u>18</u> by the righteousness of one upon all men unto justification of life.</p> <p><u>19</u> by the obedience of one</p> <p><u>20</u> grace did much more abound:</p>

<i>Desire of Ages</i>	Reflections on the connections of <i>DA</i> thoughts to Rom. 5-8
<p>In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. ...</p> <p><i>(continued in next section)</i></p>	<p>It appears these three sentences from <i>Desire of Ages</i> summarize Rom. 5 and 6 beautifully, as it is because of the Second Adam that we have miraculously been "left free to choose." This marvel of redeeming grace is poorly appreciated, because we have to visualize something that we don't easily see--what it would have been like without that grace, and how much more powerful the grace of "no compulsion" and "no external force" is than the opposite principle it confronts of slavery and coercion, the bondage of the law of sin and death into which the first Adam so easily led us. Without the work of the Last Adam in justifying lost sinners' continued existence and legal right to choose, after Adam's failure sold them to Satan, we would not be free or even alive. As a result of Messiah's position and accomplishments, "the influence of the Spirit of God" has extended to the entirety of lost humanity (Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:7; Eph 4:7, 8; compare with Ps. 68:18). So grace abounded to the entire race (5:20; Tit. 2:11); so we are not under the law but under grace (6:14); so we are free to reckon what God reckons (6:11); so we can "yield" ourselves to one or the other of the principles contending for supremacy (6:16, 19). This we could call level one of freedom--there is an open door before us, and it is universal for all who have not irretrievably thrown it away through their own persistent choices.</p>

Level Two
Will to be Free

Illustration: Peter (faith fail not; I will die) Luke 22:31-33

Key thoughts	<p><u>Rom. 5:11</u> we have now received the atonement. <u>17</u> they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness <u>Rom. 6:13</u> yield yourselves unto God <u>19</u> now yield <u>Rom. 7:9</u> I died <u>14</u> I am carnal, sold under sin <u>18</u> to will is present with me <u>19</u> the good that I would <u>22</u> I delight in the law of God after the inward man <u>23</u> the law of my mind <u>25</u> with the mind I myself serve the law of God</p>
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All of the occurrences in Romans of the verb "**make free**" (Strong's #1659) clearly and significantly connect the focus of levels Two through Four in Rom. 6-8.

<p><u>Ro 6:17</u> from the heart <u>18</u> Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. <u>19</u> now yield <u>22</u> But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.</p>
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<p>In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, ...</p> <p><i>(continued and referenced in next section)</i></p>	<p>These two sentences, and part of a third, accurately picture the events of Rom. 7. When Paul learned the truth of the cross (vs. 4), seeing himself a sinner along with everyone else, and Christ death for all, he died (vs. 9-11); specifically, he saw his flesh had been taken to the cross (vs. 5, 6; compare 8:3). His acceptance of this reality, this good news, was "when [his] soul surrender[ed] to Christ." And how did he describe "the change that [took] place"? This is vitally important. It for sure was NOT a change in his flesh, which though taken to the cross in the humanity of Christ in His representative position, was still very present with Paul (7:18, 20, 21, 23). However, in spite of having "no power to free ourselves from Satan's control" over what had not been changed, yet after surrender there is the "highest sense of freedom." This is NOT freedom from conflict. In fact there is a change into <i>more</i> conflict. But this state being described is still freedom in "the highest sense" because we now "desire to be set free from sin"--we "will ... to perform that which is good" (vs. 18). This was clearly the change that occurred at the point of surrender, of dying,--a change of mind, of now loving righteousness and hating evil (vs. 15). This is a re-creative act of God! We do not value as we ought the significance of this "birth." The intensity of the conflict Paul paints tends to obscure the freedom that he is describing in this very personal story of entering into the gospel reality. Because of his great lament, "O wretched man...!", one can misconstrue this as the cry of a slave unfreed. But the first step through the door of freedom is to be free to see your enslavement (verse 14) and long for freedom (verse 24). Recall that this tension between a freed mind and an unchanged, enslaved flesh does not occur pre-birth (Eph.</p>
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2:3). The conflict that comes from such a hybrid state ("surrenders to Christ" and "desire[s] to be set free from sin" combined with "no power to free ourselves") is the very training ground for heaven, the very school in which we learn more and more deeply to hate sin, to repent, to long for righteousness in "the inner man" (Eph. 3:16), and to look for a solution "out of and above ourselves." The twice-used "ourselves" is a clear echo of "I myself" of verse 25. So finding "no power" in self ("I myself ... with the flesh" vs. 25), yet genuinely and internally desiring "to be set free" ("what I would" vs. 15, "the good that I would" vs. 19, "with the mind I myself" vs. 25), we are inescapably led "in our great need [to] cry out for [something that is NOT in us,] a power out of and above ourselves" ("who shall deliver me...?" vs. 24). Only through the eye of faith can we affirm that this is the "highest sense of freedom" here, at what we could call the second level of freedom, that into which we enter at surrender (compare 6:18, 22). But it is because of where it leads....

Freedom

"To Do
of His good pleasure."

Level Three
Do Free in Spirit

Illustration: Paul (temperate; keep my body under subjection) 1Cor. 9:25-27

Key thoughts	<p><u>Rom. 6:18</u> became the servants of righteousness <u>22</u> become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness <u>7:6</u> serve in newness of spirit <u>8:2</u> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. <u>4</u> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. <u>9</u> But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. <u>13</u> ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body <u>14</u> led by the Spirit of God <u>15</u> received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.</p>
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"Made free"	<p><u>Ro 8:2</u> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. <u>4</u> that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.</p>
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<p>... the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}</p>	<p>This end of the sentence powerfully describes the way in which "Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs. 25) delivers us, which chapter 8 covers. For He works in us "both to will and <i>to do</i> of His good pleasure." (Phil 2:13) The will has been changed by His re-creative act, and now He comes by His Spirit to dwell in us. And with His presence we experience the reality that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (vs. 2). The power of God dwelling "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (vs. 3) shows how we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (vs. 4). How powerless is the unchanged nature? It has no power to be "subject to the law of God" (8:7) or to "please God" (8:8). But how powerful is "the divine energy of the Holy Spirit"? "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (vs. 11). This "life-from-the-dead" power is easily able to handle our unchanged bodies. Here we see how "the act of the soul itself" functions--not <i>by</i> itself in expelling sin, but ever dependent on an indwelling Spirit. We enter more fully into the experience of the cross (see 6:6; also Gal. 2:20; 5:24). There is a death to the remaining unchanged nature (vs. 13), and a new life manifested in the same body (vs. 11). The "dictates of the will" ("to will" 7:18) to do "the law of God" (7:22) is now joined with the power of the Spirit, "the powers of the soul ... imbued with divine energy," "fulfilling the will of God" ("doing the will of God from the heart," literally, "from the soul" Eph. 6:6). This ability <i>to do</i> is freedom now to a greater yet degree, for as we now experience what it means to</p>
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	<p>be no longer "debtors ... to the flesh" (vs. 12) while still in the flesh (as Christ, 8:3). And as we grow into an experience of being "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (8:9), we lose "the spirit of bondage" which is "to fear," and now we have a new, freer cry, one that surpasses the cry of 7:24, "Who...?" For now we have experienced "Who"--"Abba, Father." (vs. 15) The Spirit of adoption that conceived and birthed us, has now led us into the arms of the Father. This we could call the third level of freedom. But more is still to come....</p>
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<p><i>Level Four</i> Do Free of Flesh (with the freedom of a new body)</p>	
<p>Illustration: Enoch (translated, changed)</p>	
<p>Key thoughts</p>	<p><u>Rom. 8:19</u> For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. <u>21</u> the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God <u>23</u> waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.</p>

<p>"Made free"</p>	<p><u>Ro 8:21</u> Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.</p>
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<p>Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,--not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal. {DA 388.1}</p>	<p>Here on another page in <i>Desire of Ages</i> we see the corollary passage to the "the soul itself" experiencing victory over sin by a union with the Spirit. There is yet another freedom awaiting us. As long as we have our unchanged bodies, we continually must reckon ourselves to be dead (6:6, 11); we must confess our wretchedness (7:24); we must put to death the deeds of the body (8:13). Even in the freedom we have entered into, our experience is described as suffering, though hallowed by the footprints of Christ Himself (vs. 17, 18). As He did, so we wait (vs. 19), and join the "whole creation" in groaning and travailing in pain for yet another birth--a deliverance "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (vs. 21), "waiting for the [final] adoption"--"the redemption of our body" (vs. 23). If we are sleeping when it happens, then we "come forth from the grave" because "His life has become ours" "through the Spirit [by which] Christ dwells in us." This victory over death "by virtue of this union" with the Spirit is manifested not only by the resurrected saints, but also by the living saints, for whether we are sleeping or alive, "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). What is changed is our "mortal" bodies (vs. 53, 54), the last personal frontier of freedom (Rom. 8:11). Then "death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:54). The "bondage of corruption" (Rom. 8:21) is fully gone. So here we find the final level of freedom powerfully affirmed.</p> <p><i>O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory [of freedom at every level] through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:55-57)</i></p>
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All other uses of "make free" (#1659) in New Testament are highly significant:

Joh 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth **shall make** you **free**.

Joh 8:36 If the Son therefore **shall make** you **free**, ye shall be free indeed.

Ga 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ **hath made** us **free**, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Summary:

		Freedom						
		"To Will and		"To Do of His good pleasure."				
		<i>Level One</i> Free to Will (before I even will to be free)	<i>He gives abundant evidences of His love and my need to be free.</i>	<i>Level Two</i> Will to be Free (without even the ability to be free)	<i>He gives insights into my hybrid state and assures my He can still deliver.</i>	<i>Level Three</i> Do Free in Spirit (after I learn to depend on Him)	<i>He gives me hope as I groan and suffer with all creation, longing for full deliverance.</i>	<i>Level Four</i> Do Free of Flesh (with the freedom of a new body)
		Christ wins the right, and by His Spirit opens the door before all slaves.	I see the door, and as my mind is changed, I see my enslavement, step through the door, but fall down, and cry out for help.	I surrender to the Spirit, freeing Him to give my unchanged flesh supernatural energy, and I walk the path with Him.	He changes my mortal flesh, and I enter the realm of full freedom with Him.			
Changed	Vantage	Will	Do	Body				
Discovery	He finds me.	I find Him, and my enslavement.	I find the Spirit.	I find a new body.				
The Door		The Path		The Destiny				
This fundamental foundation is poorly seen or appreciated. The gift of His faith imparted to all makes the exercise of our will even possible. (See next page.)		Using what He has given at such cost, we must make the choice to be made willing, and the change occurs. But many do not grasp the remaining inability.	Many do not see the possibility of walking in the Spirit free from falling, and many others insist on this freedom without depending on the Spirit completely.	Many somehow think that they merely must await the change at the Lord's coming, without understanding the necessity of the previous levels of experience.				

Sample of "vantage ground" statements that apply to Level 1.

It is at an immense cost that we have been placed upon vantage ground, where we can find liberty from the bondage of sin wrought by the fall in Eden. Adam's sin plunged the race into hopeless misery; but by the sacrifice of the Son of God, a second probation was granted to man. In the plan of redemption a way of escape is provided for all who will avail themselves of it. God knew that it was impossible for man to overcome in his own strength, and he has provided help for him. How thankful we should be that a way is open for us, by which we can have access to the Father; that the gates are left ajar, so that beams of light from the glory within may shine upon those who will receive them! {CTBH 15.3}

Christ passed over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell, and by a sinless life placed the human race on vantage ground, that every one might stand before the Father, accepted in the Beloved. {HP 13.6}

Only by the expensive offering made upon the cross of Calvary can we understand the value of the human soul. We are placed on vantage ground by the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, to obtain freedom from the bondage of sin which was wrought by the fall of Adam. {HP 192.2}

Bear in mind that we are placed on vantage ground because Christ has overcome in our behalf. He has made every provision for us to overcome. Divine power stands behind every will resolutely set to do the right. God has provided the armor and the weapons with which each one is to fight. Let the soldiers of Christ put on the whole armor of God and flinch not at Satan's attacks. . . . Success in the Christian warfare means watchfulness and a daily crucifixion of self. {HP 260.5}

Christ was victorious. Satan was defeated, and the race was placed on vantage ground with God. {TDG 318.2}

He bridged the gulf between heaven and earth, and thus made finite man of value in God's sight. Through Christ, our Mediator and Intercessor, the human race has been placed on vantage ground. {AUCR, July 28, 1899 par. 2}

In the great battle fought between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness, Jesus gained the victory in behalf of humanity. Had Satan gained a degree of advantage, as he did with the first Adam, the human family would have been left under his control, and without one ray of hope they would have perished from the earth. But in behalf of the human race, Jesus conquered the fallen foe: Satan was vanquished. Through the victory of Christ, the human race was elevated in moral value, not because of anything they had done, but because of the great work that had been wrought out for them through the only begotten Son of God. As man's substitute and surety, in human nature, through divine power, Christ placed man on vantage ground. In believing on Him as our personal Saviour, we place ourselves under his blood-stained banner, and the wicked one cannot take us from under his standard, as long as we desire to prove loyal to Him who has died for us. {BEcho, December 1, 1893 par. 8}

Adam disobeyed, and entailed sin upon his posterity; but God gave His Son for the redemption of the race. Christ took on him the nature of man, and passed over the ground where Adam fell, to be tested and tried as all human beings are tested and tried. Satan came to him as an angel of light, to induce him if possible to commit sin, and thus place the human race entirely under the dominion of evil. But Christ was victorious. Christ was victorious, and man was placed on vantage ground with God. {6MR 3.1}