

HOW TO FIND TRUE FREEDOM:

The longer I live, the more I realize that humans are, simply, messes. Beautiful messes, but messes in need of help, nonetheless.

*I grew up in a loving home with siblings who cared about me and parents who loved me. I knew God and chose to be baptized at 16. I knew right from wrong, but **by the time I reached 20**, my life was steeped in alcohol, parties, promiscuity, selfishness, and more.*

I hardly knew what I wanted.

One day, I was getting drunk at a bar, **and the next day**, I was going to church with my parents.

There was something inside me that knew the truth and wanted to be near the light, but when night came, temptation rose and I willingly entered the darkness once again.

With each year that passed, I lost more and more of who I was.

This is not surprising:

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”

— Ephesians 5:18 (NKJV)

The more I indulged in sin, *the less I resembled the person God made me to be.* Eventually, I couldn't find *me* anymore. *I was emotionally and spiritually wasting away.*

Even so, **God continually wooed me.** I mostly resisted his advances, but he was persistent, unwilling to let me go without a fight.

Progress was slow. God was patient.

I got married, became pregnant with my first child, and **finally made a definite decision:** I wanted God. I wanted to be His. And I wanted my children to know him. *This began a beautiful growth process* as I read God's word, prayed, studied, and grew to love Jesus in a way I never had before. I flourished as a mother and adored my children.

The previous years of rebellion, however, were not without consequence.

Certainly, **I felt loved and forgiven, but I didn't really know who I was anymore.** Add the busyness of two more children to the mix and by the time my youngest child was two years old, my life seemed to consist only of: *little noses filled with rivers of snot, mountains of sticky laundry and stinky loads in diapers, supper dishes, etc.*

Sara? Who was that? I was Mom.

Please don't misunderstand me. I loved my life and it was a good life. But I knew there were parts of me that were missing.

So, I decided to rediscover who I was using: who, what, where, when and eventually why?

Who did I like to spend time with?

I tried to find my meaning and value through friendships, but within two years I lost two best friends and was booted from a group of women who claimed to love me.

Painful.

What did I like to do?

I tried my mediocre hands at crafty projects, painting furniture and decorating on a budget.

Meh. Not really my thing.

Where could I find a career (once my youngest was in school full time)?

I didn't spend much time on this one before I felt panic-stricken at the thought of returning to the workforce and juggling work and home and managing to get enough rest and still find time to tend the needy needs of my family members and did I even have any usable skills left over from my office days...

abandon ship!

When could I find time for myself?

On the odd day that I did have an hour or two by myself, I felt restless and lonely for the family I had desperately arranged to be away from.

Alone-ness wasn't what I'd hoped.

Why couldn't I find myself?

Why? Why didn't any of these things bring me satisfaction or tell me who I was?

Were they bad? No, but **they were only fragments of me and I was looking to be whole.**

And if it was the whole me that I wanted to be, then *I wasn't looking in the right place.* The answer lay in seeking more and more of God and “*all these things*”* would be added.

Today, I am convinced that **the only way to truly find out who you are is through the One who made you.** Only he knows how to *set you free* — free from the past, free from bondage, free from hurts, and *free to be who he made you to be.*

That person, the ONE who can set you free, is GOD.

The only true God is ONE God, in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. Together they are One, just as your body, mind and spirit make up one YOU.*

Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, **took human form** and lived on earth.*

Jesus died on the cross to pay for the sins of mankind, “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*”* and “*the wages of sin is death*”*.

But **God raised Jesus from the dead** because “*it was impossible for him to be held by it*”*.

Jesus Christ appeared, fully alive, to many who knew him and then to “*more than 500 of his followers at one time*”^{*} before he ascended into heaven and returned to the Father.

Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father, with all authority and power and glory.

But he did not leave us alone on earth.

Jesus Christ asked the Father and **the Father sent us a Helper — the Holy Spirit**, *to live inside of, to teach, to guide, to empower and to comfort all those who will give their hearts to the Son of God.*^{*}

Why do we need a Helper? Because we have an enemy.

Satan, a “*thief who comes only to kill and steal and destroy*”^{*}. He wants nothing more that to drag our lives down with him into the pit of death and hopelessness and destruction.

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, **came that we “may have life and have it abundantly**”^{*}. This is why he has sent us his Spirit to help us while we live on the earth.

How do we receive this freedom and life to the full?

I am convinced that **the only way to find this abundant life is through Jesus Christ**, who is Lord and Savior to all who will trust him, day by day.

- *Would you like to receive Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, as your own Lord and Savior?*
- *Would you like to invite his Holy Spirit to give you a new heart, new life, new guidance, new joy, and new purpose?*
- *Would you like to become a child of the living God, God the Father?*

If yes, then pray!

The words you pray are not as important as what you **believe in your heart**.

Pray the prayer of salvation on the following page; and then afterward, tell God what is on your heart in your own words:

My Dear Heavenly Father,

I know that I have sinned against you.

I believe that your Son, Jesus Christ, paid for my sins on the cross and was raised to life so that I could have eternal life.

Please forgive me for all of my sins and help me to live for you.

Father God, I was made to be with you and I want to give myself to you.

Jesus Christ, I trust you as my Savior and the Lord and Master of my life from now on.

Jesus, I invite your Holy Spirit to come fill me and live in my heart.

I ask all this in the power of the mighty name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer from your heart, you are now a child of God! And I am very proud to call you my sister (or brother) in Christ.

I would love to hear your story! Please introduce yourself by e-mailing me at saralivingfree@gmail.com .

(*BIBLE REFERENCES: MATTHEW 6:33; MATTHEW 28:19; JOHN 1:14; ROMANS 3:23; ROMANS 6:23; ACTS 2:24; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:6; JOHN 14:26; JOHN 10:10)