**Dependency and Freedom in Christ**

Based on [Luke 18:9-14](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk18.9-14)

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Someone recently made the argument to me that, in order to be free you needed to have money...and that the more money you have the freer you are. Money is your access to things available in the world, and the more money you have, the more options you have. Who is more free, the person who wants to vacation in Hawaii, but can’t afford it. Or the person in otherwise the same circumstances wants to vacation in Hawaii, and has the wealth to do so.

Given these options, it is pretty clear what the answer is supposed to be. The person who can do what he wants is freer than the person who cannot. And, of course, that the more money you have the more generously you can give to the church, and to the poor. I remember wishing to be rich when I was younger and, in order to show that I wasn’t simply greedy, saying the first thing I would do is give to charity. (not all of it of course). I recently heard my children muse the same thing.

Despite all the warnings about love of money as a root of all kinds of evil, and other warnings about wealth, I was told that it was selfish to be content with only your daily bread. This is a seductive idea, and captivates all types of people, even christians. There are televangelical preachers who say that god wants you to be wealthy, and the first thing you need to do is believe it and send them some. It is for good reason that Jesus warns us of the deceitfulness of riches.

Does money make you free? Yes. But realize this, you become a servant to whatever makes you free. If you look to money for freedom, you are, in that very pursuit, enslaving yourself to it. Freedom through money is actually dependence upon money. It is in effect saying, put money first, and then you will have the ability to do whatever else you want. It’s like what Satan said to Jesus, “I’ll give you all the kingdoms of the world if only you will bow down and worship me.” First, worship money and then you can have whatever else you want.

No human being can escape is dependency. You do not exist by your own power, neither do you stay alive. You are wholly dependent upon air, food, water, etc. And all of these are dependent upon God.

The only truly independent person is God. Only he is absolutely free, sovereign, and unreliant. He is the uncreated creator, and we as creatures depend upon his providence for our survival every instant. So whatever freedom we might find in this world is never absolute; it is always sourced in a dependency upon some other power. But it is a pharisaical idea to think that righteousness before God is shown in your independence.

Jesus tells the famous story of the pharisee and the tax collector. They both went up into the temple to pray. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thanking God that he is not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector, and that he fasts and tithes. The tax collector, standing far off, beat his breast saying “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

The pharisee comes before God asking for nothing. In this way, he approaches God independently. He thanks God for who he is, but he doesn’t ask God for anything, he doesn’t seem to think he needs anything. He wants to be seen as righteous, but seems to think that righteousness comes from self-sufficiency, from living your life and arranging your resources in a way that you don’t need to ask anything of God.

We look down on people who ask for our forgiveness or need our help. Could you imagine running over a child and having to ask the parents for forgiveness. The shame would be unbearable. Children die every day even unjustly, and we don’t tend to lose sleep over it. But I can think of nothing more humiliating than having to ask for and depend upon someone else to forgive such a horrible offence against their life that I caused. // And I wonder if part of it is because I would not want to have to forgive someone who so negligently killed my own child.

If one despises the beggar, the drunk, the poor, those who make bad choices that may or may not affect you; would they not think of God in the same way? And if God feels the same way towards sinners; wouldn’t you to avoid asking God for mercy at all costs? Wouldn’t you think that--just as the good son or daughter is the one who moves out at 18, lives an outwardly decent life, and supports themselves--so too the good child of God grows into a maturity and adulthood by supporting themselves and not needing Him? Wouldn’t a pharisee believe that coming to ask God for mercy is like a wasteful son who comes back again and again asking for money? Get a job!

It is true that God is our Father, but it is false to think that spiritual maturity means not being a burden to Him anymore. On the contrary, our text said that it was the man who came to God in need was the one who left Justified, while the one who came asking for nothing received nothing.

Freedom is not independence from God, it is the opposite. Only when you see your dependence upon him can you truly be free. Only those who recognize their dependence upon God will ask for his mercy; and those who ask will receive.

11What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”