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## Facebook

### PATHWAY TO FREEDOM

During the past winter I recorded 42 videos covering the subjects in my Pathway to Freedom seminar. These are short videos of between 15 and 20 minutes. I also prepared a Video Index briefly describing each video. (I could not have done any of this without the guidance of my friend, Donald Hunger. Thank you, Donald.)

We will send a follow up email with the video series index. Each teaching will have a link that takes you directly to the Face Book video. The index is in sequential order.

If you want to watch any of the videos, just click on the blue name of the video in the Index and it will take you to the recording.

The main subjects covered in the videos are:

- How we get our identity
- My personal story of God's rescue
- Addictions, the cause and cure
- The power of words to bless and curse
- Anger- you must get free, and you can
- Five steps to forgiveness
- Overcoming self-condemnation
- Trauma, PTSD
- Generational curses
- Danger of the occult
- Demonization

### AMBITION

I just noticed a footnote in one of my study Bibles that surprised me. I learned that there is no such word in the Bible as "ambition." There is only the Greek word, *eritreia*, which means "selfish ambition."

What? Why, this undermines everything 330 million Americans have ever learned about being a true American! A person has to have ambition, for goodness' sake, if he is going to go anywhere in life. Right?

"What is your ambition, young man ?" "Well,

my ambition is: to become a multi-millionaire by the time I'm 50 and retire; to become a .doctor; to play in the NFL; to be a teacher or a pastor; to be a policeman; to climb Mt. Everest; etc"

In America, another word for ambition is **dream**. "What is your dream, my friend? What do you want to do or to achieve more than anything else? Dream the impossible dream. You can achieve anything if you hold onto your dream and work hard for it (that is not a preposterous exaggeration)."

Examples:

(1) I read a lot and also watch a lot of documentaries on TV, especially about those people who live in the bush in Alaska. I'm fascinated by those people. They can do anything it seems: hunt, fish, trap, build a cabin in the woods, repair a boat or a motor, fly a plane. And they are courageous, facing injury or death in a dozen different ways every day. I truly admire them. Many of them tell about their lifetime dream to live the way they do: "I love this life. Above everything, I want to be independent and not have to rely on anyone for help. I don't want anyone telling me what to do."

I'm certainly not the judge of their souls, but I can't help judging their way of life and their own words. Do their words and their way of life sound like a life that pleases God to you? Doesn't it sound totally self-centered? But Jesus said, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me." I've never heard any of those folks say that their dream is to love and serve God, the one who created the majestic mountains and streams and animals where they live.

(2) I watched a documentary series named "The River Runner." It focused on Scott Lundgren who was a world class kayaker. He kayaked down rivers that were so wild and turbulent that he almost died several times. His dream, his burning ambition concerned a massive mountain in Tibet named Mt. Kaliash. Four rivers flowed from the glacier on that mountain into Tibet, India, China and Pakistan. No one had ever kayaked two of those rivers, much less all four of them. It was simply impossible.

Eventually, Scott was able to kayak three of

them, and almost died doing it, but Pakistan was closed politically. After 20 years it finally opened up. But he was living with a beautiful and kind woman and she had had enough. She said, "If you go to Pakistan, we're through!" What do you think he did? Of course he went to Pakistan and was the first guy in history to achieve the dream of conquering all four of the rivers. La de da! He killed his relationship with that loving woman, but he achieved his dream and that's what is important. Right?

How many times have you heard someone say, "Well, at least he died doing what he loved to do." - traveling, skiing, hunting, golfing, etc.? Have you ever heard, "He died doing what he believed God wanted him to do."?

The Bible speaks a lot about dreams. Joseph had a dream, Jacob had a dream. Peter and Paul had dreams and visions. The Prophet Joel spoke from God: "*Your young men will have visions and your old men will dream dreams.*" But of course these were God-dreams.

Do you have a dream about your life, a burning ambition? Is it your selfish, self-centered dream that will bring you self-fulfillment, recognition by others, and possibly even riches? Or is it a dream that God has put in your heart?

A couple of caveats:

(1) Sometimes it is a mixture. At least it was in my case. I wanted to serve God and please him, but there was a generous amount of self-glory mixed with it. Isaiah 64:6 says that even our highest and best righteous acts are like filthy rags to God. Whoa! Apparently there is some mixture in everything we do for God

(2) The Muslim terrorists who flew airliners into the Twin Towers were doing something they believed their God wanted them to do. So we surely need to be as sure as we can be that the God of Jesus, the God of the New Testament, is the God we are obeying.

Some examples of modern God-dreams are Mother Teresa and her Sisters of the Poor in Calcutta; Chuck Colson and his Prison ministry around the world; and Hal Donaldson and the Convoy of Hope. Do you know Hal's story?

In 1969 Hal's father was killed in a car accident and his mother was debilitated. Hal and his three siblings were left homeless. The only family willing to take them in was the Davis family. The Davis' lived in a small trailer with two children of their own.

Bill and his wife, LouVada, welcomed them and said, "You are with family and this is your home." Bill had to take an extra laboring job to feed his new family, but the kids were safe, secure and loved.

When Hal was a teen-ager, he had a dream of being a businessman and getting rich so he and his family would never have to worry about going without food and shelter. In the meantime, he and his brother started delivering food to hungry folks in an old pickup. The thought came to him one day: "What would happen if I quit worrying about taking care of myself and totally gave myself to God and trusted him to take care of me?" That is what he decided to do. And what eventually came forth was Convoy of Hope. (Just Google "Convoy of Hope" and marvel at what they do all around the world to feed people in refugee camps, after disasters, etc.)

Do you see the difference between our dream, our selfish ambition, and God's dream for us? God is our friend. He is not out to rob us of our manhood or womanhood. He wants us to fulfill his dream and bless us beyond our wildest personal dreams.

What has God whispered to you that he dreams for you to do? Do you trust him?

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## **WHAT IT MEANS TO SURRENDER**

In The Purpose Driven Life, Chapter 10, Rick Warren addresses the very subject I have been writing about. Following are some of his insights:

"The heart of worship is surrender. Romans 6:13 says, *Give yourselves to God....surrender your whole being to him to be used for his righteous purposes.*

But surrender is an unpopular idea to people. It implies losing, and no one wants to be a loser. Surrender evokes the unpleasant images of admitting defeat in battle, forfeiting a game, or yielding to a stronger opponent. The word is almost always used in a negative context. Captured criminals surrender to authorities.

In today's competitive culture we are taught to never give up and never give in. If winning is everything, surrendering is unthinkable. We would rather talk about winning, succeeding, overcoming and conquering than yielding, submitting, obeying, and surrendering. But surrendering to God is the heart of worship. It is the natural response to God's

amazing love and mercy. We give ourselves to him, not out of fear or duty, but in love, *“because he first loved us.”*

This act of personal surrender is called many things: consecration, making Jesus your Lord, taking up your cross, dying to self, yielding to the Spirit. What matters is that you do it, not what you call it. God wants your life - all of it. 95 percent is not enough.

There are three barriers that block our total surrender to God: fear, pride, and confusion.

**Fear.** Our question is, Can I really trust God? You won't surrender to God unless you trust him. How do you know God is trustworthy? Because he loves you so much. God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. God isn't a bully or a slave driver. God is a lover and a liberator, and surrendering to him brings freedom not bondage. God is not a tyrant but a Savior, a brother, a friend.

**Pride.** We don't want to admit that we are creatures and not in charge of everything. The desire to be like God and to have complete control over everything that affects our lives is what causes so much stress for us.

**Confusion.** We accept our humanity intellectually but not emotionally, and when faced with our limitations we react with irritation, anger and resentment. We want to be taller or shorter, stronger, more athletic, smarter, more beautiful, etc. When we notice that God gave those characteristics to other people, we respond with envy, jealousy and self-pity. (Some even want to be the other gender, blaming God for making a mistake, and our society encourages such confusion and rebellion - GB)

Surrendering to God is not fatalism or an excuse for laziness. It is not accepting the status quo. It could even mean sacrificing your life for God's purposes. Surrendering is not for cowards or doormats. Likewise, it does not mean giving up rational thinking. God would not waste the mind he gave you! God does not want robots to serve him. Surrendering is not repressing your personality. God wants to use your unique personality.

Surrendering is best demonstrated in obedience. You say, “Yes, Lord” to whatever he asks of you. You can't call Jesus your Lord if you refuse to obey him. Surrendered people obey God's word, even if it doesn't make sense.

You know you're surrendered to God when you rely on God to work things out instead of trying

to manipulate others and control the situation. Instead of trying harder, you trust more. You also know you're surrendered when you don't react to criticism and try to defend yourself.

The most difficult area to surrender for many people is their money. Some folks think, “I want to live for God but I also want to earn enough money to live comfortably and retire some day.” Retirement is not the goal of a surrendered life. Jesus said, *“You cannot serve both God and money.”* and *“Wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Genuine surrender says, “Father, if this problem, pain, sickness or circumstance is needed to fulfill your purpose in my life, please don't take it away.” This level of maturity doesn't come easy. In Jesus' case, he agonized so much over God's plan that he sweated drops of blood. Surrender is hard work. It is intense warfare against our self-centered nature.

Everybody eventually surrenders to something or someone. If not to God, you will surrender to the expectations of others, to money, to resentment, to fear, to your lust or ego. If you decide not to worship God, you will find other things (idols) to give your life to. There are consequences to our choices that cannot be avoided.

Paul's moment of surrender occurred on the Damascus road when he was knocked down by a blinding light. But surrender is more than a one-time event. Paul said, “I die daily.” There is a moment of surrender, and there is the practice of surrender, which is moment by moment and lifelong. Jesus said, *“If people want to follow me, they must give up the things they want. They must be willing to give up their daily lives to follow me.”*

In view of this inspired teaching, the question for each of us is: Are you surrendered to the Lord? Or perhaps the question is: Are you sensing some area of your life that is not surrendered to him? Do you really trust him? Are you willing to pay the price to fully surrender that part of yourself to him? He loves you, and he's inviting you to go deeper with him.

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## **BALANCE**

Paul teaches us in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12 through 14, that the church is like a body and each part is important. Only when all the parts are working in harmony can the body function as God designed it. Each of our body parts is limited but

important. A foot, an arm, an eye and an ear are each super important but limited.

I've been reflecting on the way God placed others in my life to bring balance. Without them I would have wobbled off into the ditch even more than I did. The most important person God gave me was my wife, Doris. She had so much wisdom and insight into others, and especially into me. I was too prideful and immature to listen to her for many years, but I finally woke up and realized what a precious gift she was. Thank you, Lord, for Doris.

As I started the part of my life devoted to teaching, missions and counseling, God brought a team together in a covenant relationship. The team was Lynne Cumming, Fred and Annette Feller, and Doris and I. What a gift Lynne and Fred and Annette were and how desperately I needed them. Do you think maybe Jesus knew what he was doing when he sent the disciples out in teams of two or more? I had been traveling by myself, which was not a safe thing to do physically or spiritually, and Lynne and Fred brought tremendous wisdom and balance. Thank you, Lord.

In the last three years I haven't been able to travel anymore, and God has brought another friend and ministry partner into my life, a man named Donald Hunger. Donald is a brilliant guy, and he has given endless hours in guiding me with my computer and setting up the videos and video index for my Pathway series. Thank you, Donald.

There have been many others that have brought wisdom and balance into my life, and I'm encouraging you to think of the people God has brought into your life as helpers, guides, encouragers, examples, partners.

Isn't God good to us?

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## **TENSION**

The Bible says, "*In the world you will have trouble, tribulation.*" Therefore, life is challenging and stressful for everyone. One of the ways that we can relieve that tension is by regular exercise. I loved to exercise and ran, climbed, biked, played basketball and played golf for many years. As I aged, I jogged, biked and played golf. As I aged more I walked and went to the gym. Recently, I roll around in my wheelchair, read, watch TV, and chew gum. I miss exercising terribly, and my body misses it, too.

My friend Donald is not only a computer guru, he has all sorts of other talents, including massage therapy. The other day I asked him to massage my neck which has been locking up in a cramp for a long time and has been getting worse.

To digress for a moment, my body seems to be wearing out for some strange reason, but in view of 95-½ years I'm doing great and am so grateful. But I have counted 14 serious issues concerning my body (anything uncomfortable about my body is serious to me) from congestive heart failure, peripheral neuropathy and gout to wrinkles. And cramps in my neck. (I know you have your own list, so we are all learning to trust God and not fall into the deadly poison of self-pity.)

Anyhow, Donald massaged my neck and then taught me how to relax my body, as follows: (1) Sit or stand up straight. (2) Roll your shoulders up and back and hold that position. You will note that your chest is thrust up and forward. (3) Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. (4) While holding that position, drop your shoulders and relax everything.

Donald then said to me, "Do you realize that you hold your shoulders in a hunched, tensed position all the time?" I hadn't realized it until he observed it and told me.

Now for the amazing punch line: In a few minutes I realized that the toes of my left foot, which had been burning because of the neuropathy, had stopped burning, and that the cramp in my neck had relaxed and stopped cramping. And after many days the burning and cramping have not returned!

I've been doing it to myself because of tension, for crying out loud. How thankful I am to God and to my friend, Donald. PTL!

Got tension? You might try Donald's home remedy.

