

72. *Pinocchio's Donkeys*

As a youth I was a devotee of freedom. Political freedom for the oppressed saw me serving all manner of causes, even at considerable risk of violence. Personal freedom of choice meant I could join the bad boys on Dream Island, like the misguided colleagues of Pinocchio. I wanted to be free to roam about the earth at will like Satan (Job 1:7) seeking titillation and doing whatever whim and fancy lighted on. Spiritual freedom meant I could put Jesus up in prime place in the Parthenon, but the temple was still displaying an eclectic collection of other gods.

Over a period of time I started to note the wreckage of friends and acquaintances who were also devotees of unbridled freedom seeking. Their health, social and work lives came unstuck as a consequence of the choices which were ultimately self seeking. Freedom seemed to be making donkeys of its disciples.

Freedom, I realized later in life, is not a blank canvass. I can't stay up all night in revelry, and be cheerfully making wise decisions the following day. Unbridled freedom means my mind and spirit are unfocused and given to every passing fad and promise of a quick route to Valhalla. I am free to drive through the red traffic lights- but eventually a penalty is exacted. The delights pass, and the price that is exacted seems longer lasting than the fleeting pleasure of indulgence.

Timothy is told that the arena of freedom is exciting, and even intoxicating, and that it is a baited hook. The divine revelation of freedom is something quite different to what mortals naturally understand. Timothy is told to be firm and patient with the donkeys for he will "never know how or when God might sober them up with a change of heart, and a turning to the truth, enabling them to escape the devil's trap, where they are caught and held captive, forced to run his errands". (2 Timothy 2:20 TMB)



I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial.

“I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. 1 Corinthians 10

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Corinthians 3:17

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love Galatians 5:13

But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:35

They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for “people are slaves to whatever has mastered them. 2 Peter 2:19

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last

Martin Luther King

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>