



FREEDOM OR ENTITLEMENT?

How much of your life have you spent not doing what you want to do with your life?

Maybe you have been surrounded by naysayers. Maybe you have lacked good resources or opportunities to grow and develop into your God-given potential. Or maybe your fears and comfort zones have kept you right where you are, even though you're unhappy. Maybe you need a doctor to prescribe for you some self-confidence.

If you are visually-oriented, imagine you are a runner stripping off useless weights and layers that have caused wind resistance and held you back from taking the lead in the race. Now, all of a sudden, you are breezing by the other runners as you are sprinting for the finish line.

Or imagine you just overcame your greatest fear, and now your heart is about to dive into your lifelong dream. You have a renewed sense of freedom, and you start sharing your dream with people around you. Your eyes are fixed on your goal, and you are no longer paralyzed by fear. You fully expect God to do something in and through you that will really make a difference in your world. Your confidence is growing stronger each day along with your courage to face and overcome obstacles.

- What came to your mind when you were asked to imagine being free to pursue a lifelong dream?
- Can you think of a time when you felt free?
- When do you feel confident?

“And the land of the free, and the home of the brave!” In the United States, these words are often sung amidst an ocean of cheers as sports fans are preparing to freely celebrate their team competing in an upcoming game. But oftentimes, this is the only time you discover people being free. Most people don't seem to be free. And if they seem to be free, people wonder what's wrong with them. Or if they are free, they're way too free.

People who grow up in homes where there are not very good boundaries may develop an inflated sense of entitlement. They think **“What's mine is mine, and what's yours is mine.”** Rules apply to you, but not to me. I make my own rules. I get what I want when I want it. And I don't care what you want or feel. In fact, people with entitlement issues are not able to put themselves in the shoes of those around them because their lives are organized around themselves. **Although it may be easy to judge or label people with entitlement issues because they hurt you, it's harder to see beyond their arrogance to see that they are hurting people who usually get what they want, but they probably never got what they needed.** If you slow down and get close enough, you may likely discover that the people who seem to get what they want have very few “real friends,” and they've been abandoned by people who were supposed to love them.

- Is it harder to see other people's entitlement issues or your own entitlement issues?
- How easy is it to go from feeling free to pursue something to thinking someone owes you something?

Entitlement issues can quickly disrupt relationships and our sense of community. One of God's strategies to help humble us is to ask probing questions like **“What do you have that wasn't given to you?”** (pause for reflection) The answer to this question is all that we are and have is a gift from God. If we live in the **freedom** of a thankful heart, God will help us to develop a freedom to share with others what He has blessed us with. When we ignore God's strategies that keep us grateful to Him, He has a way of removing the things in life we think we are entitled to. **Has God ever removed something in your life when your growing “freedom” led to a feeling of entitlement?**

“*Health Talks*” are designed to help us learn to talk and deal with one another in ways that build understanding and a healthy, growing, supportive, Christian community.