

Here is a mind-blower: Jesus, God's Son, created the world. Before my non-religious spiritual journey began I had no idea.

What is your response to your King? In what ways do you know and enjoy your Creator and His Son? Is it plausible that Jesus the Son created the world? Do you enjoy the presence of God in your life?

BEING FREE



Have you ever had a dream so vivid it shakes you just a bit? I could feel all the parts of my body shutting down, one compartment at a time. It was as though each area of my living tissue was closing up shop in some predetermined order. Like being in the living room in a house and sensing every room of the house closing for the last time. Systematic finality. When I awoke I realized this event had a different quality than the regular musings in my sleeping psyche. Even now I get shivers - it was that real. Many years later I think God was telling me - this is what it is like, Dave. This world must shut down in order for the new world to emerge. This is what it will be like when you shut down.

The internal benefits of fusing with God's heart are really quite amazing. Personal peace, forgiveness, the ability for expanding love, and experiencing true hope are a few. When I met Jesus I really was quite lost. As Eugene Peterson puts it in the Message translation of the Bible, I was "crashing around in the darkness." I was slave to my desires, to my self-centeredness, and to my blindness and insensitivity about the needs of others. I never would have called it bondage, but deep in my heart I certainly knew I was not free.

This has been an interesting part of my curious journey. I had found God, but I didn't have a clue as to how to become truly free. As I look back I can see how God has been trying to set me free from my cares and concerns, from myself, and even from evil itself. All of my life.

Quite a few years ago I was wrestling with the incompleteness of different aspects of my life. Relationships were a constant struggle, and I questioned whether I would find the kind of companionship that would meet some of the deeper needs I was recognizing in myself and others. While I had come to faith I was far from free. The Voice had more to teach me. He wanted me to learn freedom.

The concept of a satisfied mind was something I found quite elusive. But as my faith continued to expand, and as my heart began to fuse with God's heart, I learned to step back from the self-defensive life in which I had grown up and enter the secure and honest realm where God exists. Most of my fears were then overtaken by an understanding of God's ultimate authority and power. One by one I submit my personal dreams to a loving Savior. He gives me exactly what I need to find a life of substance - and a satisfied mind. My insecurities about my shortcomings have been kindly healed as my security has grown - in my identity as a son of God Most High.

I truly wish I could have grasped these things as quickly in my heart as I was learning them intellectually. But one thing I know about God is that *process* is every bit as important as *outcome*. God can and will take years to etch something into our soul, even though we may grasp the intellectual concepts at the beginning. God doesn't want me to learn ABOUT peace, He wants me to KNOW peace,

After my eyes were opened by Jesus I began to do an inventory of my character. For the first time, I looked in the

mirror and saw my soul, and it disturbed me. My life was built upon shadows. There was so much internal change necessary. It was overwhelming. But God began to explain the journey to me. It was in His heart to walk with me through a transformation which continues today. He is in the process of overtaking me. It wasn't merely a matter of assimilating new information - it was time for my heart to change. This is difficult because it is much easier to hold on to what we know rather than take a chance in uncharted waters.

During my first few years as a Christ-follower I encountered a woman named Doreen. I had landed on my own standards for honesty, but it soon became apparent God was going to change all of that. Doreen tormented me day after day. If I promised to have a project completed and failed to follow through, she was there. She didn't take kindly to my excuses, and for the first time in my life I was faced with the concept that I needed to be trustworthy. While this was personally painful (it went on for what seemed like forever), step by step I began to get it. It was so freeing to follow through on my promises that a shift began in this part of my life. I was learning what it meant to live with a clear conscience. I had no idea what a relief this would be.

The process of following Jesus has severed my cords of bondage one by one as the years have unfolded, and the cumulative affect has been a sincere change in my heart. As I live each day with a clear, forgiven, and liberated conscience, I am amazed at what a gift it is to be able to talk to God and to hear Him answer. To close my eyes each night with a clean slate has greatly increased my capacity for gratefulness, and I have come to believe only grateful people are truly free.

Occasionally you will meet a deeply grateful person. You will notice the level of peace that surrounds them. He or she is so appreciative of what IS they spend little time speculating about what COULD be or what SHOULD have been. Grateful people reflect upon their past and discover the richness of their human journey. The present becomes an

opportunity to live in the moment and to look to the future with hope and assurance. Finding what lies around the corner becomes an adventure and not merely a source for fretting over the things which we have no control.

We know we are truly free as our faith increases and anxiety, fear, and striving diminish. A growing faith allows us to avoid our natural tendency to suck the life out of what is good, and to choose to contribute gratefully to it instead. I used to flip out trying to control the behavior of others. I called this "big brother syndrome." I am much more likely these days to look for the grateful reality versus trying to control a situation. I am blessed as I become a kinder, more spiritual contributor into the lives of those around me. Instead of taking life and energy from others, I am free to gratefully offer whatever I can to help others on their journey of Fusion.

My mind used to be cluttered with so many loose ends. Unresolved relationships, imperfect outcomes, the weightiness of the sheer imperfection of so many things about life. The freedom that comes from reconciling each day to people and to God is truly priceless. It allows me to sleep in peace as well.

Of course, I will not be completely free until I have taken my final breath. Then (according to the scriptures) my real life begins.

"If the Son has set you free, you are truly free."

- Jesus in John 8:36

What is a clear conscience? Have you learned to live with a clear conscience? How can you help another to experience this kind of freedom? What is the value of a clear conscience?