

Freedom and God's Will for you

In your current state in life, do you feel that you do not have the freedom to do what *you* really want to do? Or, do you feel you are not able to do what you think God wants you to do because you lack the freedom to do it due to being “trapped” by your current circumstances? Do you wonder when God will reveal His will for you?

Are you too sick to visit friends? You can't find a baby-sitter so you can go out for a nice meal? Are you in prison and being told what to do from hour to hour, minute to minute? Are you single, waiting to “start your life” but can't seem to find the person to share it with? Do you lack the freedom to do what you would like to enjoy?

What is freedom? The Catechism of the Catholic Church illuminates:

Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude (#1731).

Many of us may not think of freedom as defined above. In fact, many think of freedom as the ability to do whatever, whenever, with no regard to the potential consequences inflicted on ourselves and others due to our actions.

Fr. Walter Ciszek beautifully summarizes his thoughts on freedom in the book, *He Leadeth Me*.

The body can be confined, but **nothing can destroy the deepest freedom in man**, the freedom of the soul, and the freedom of mind and will. These are the highest and noblest faculties in man, they are what make him the sort of man he is, and they cannot be constrained. Even in prison a man retains his free will, his freedom of choice. Even in prison, a man can choose to do good or evil, to fight for survival or to despair... (pg 156).

Fr. Walter continues to explain:

Ultimately, **the only absolute freedom we have resides in a man's free will.** And that freedom was given us by our Creator, essentially, so that we might freely choose to love and serve him. **It is in choosing to serve God, to do his will, that man achieves his highest and fullest freedom.** It may seem paradoxical to say that our highest and fullest freedom comes when we follow to the least detail the will of another, but it is true nonetheless when that other is God (pg. 158).

While working at hard labor in the prison camps, Fr. Walter saw the various jobs in his current state in life as God's will for him in that time. He did the work demanded of him to the best of his ability (pg. 101). Even in those horrible conditions, Fr. Walter exercised his will with freedom to do his best, thus doing God's will for him at that time. To exercise one's will like this takes a lot of effort. And through his experiences in Russia, Fr. Walter learned, "Every new day, every new hour of every day, every new circumstance and situation, every new act is a new opportunity to exercise and grow in this freedom" (pg. 159).

God loves us so much that he gave us the freedom to exercise our own free will to choose to do or not do His will for us. He could have made us into robots, robbed us of our free will, tried to control our physical beings and minds as the communists tried particularly in the prison camps. But he did not.

But because we are "fallen creatures", using our freedom to do His will with perfection will be difficult. But the good news is that **"the more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1733).** And the beautiful reality is that by forming our will to do good, we end up loving God more and more.