



# Obedience Leads to Freedom

## ***FINDING THE SPIRITUAL FREEDOM NEEDED TO CREATE***

*by Dusty Mitchell*

**B**eing in our artistic flow is wellness for a creative person. The desire that God placed in us to create artistic works for Him is certainly one that we should pursue, but only with His guidance. For true creativity to flow, spiritual freedom through obedience is required. We must develop a healthy rhythm of being still in His presence, focusing on Him, listening intently and following Him closely.

### **Being Still in His Presence**

From the beginning, God set forth a healthy rhythm for us to live by. He modelled a pattern for us by doing creative work for six days, and on the seventh, He rested from all His work. It is healthy for us to work, and whatever we do, do it as unto the Lord. It is just as beneficial for us to take a break from that work and be still in His presence. A Sabbath day of rest should be kept so that we allow our mind and body to recuperate and recalibrate with the plan God has for our lives and work. We must be intentional about stepping back and looking to God for direction.

Often, we can focus so much on what we're working to create that we begin to make the project our own, and we get ahead of God, whom we are to refer to for instruction. It is easy to get so deep in our work that we do not realise we are heading off course in our lives. A day of rest is essential to realign our souls. It is a necessary change of perspective—an opportunity to set aside our work, which potentially can become an idol.

When Peter was on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, Moses and Elijah, he declared that it was good to be there and suggested that he build a shelter for the three of them. *"While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!'"* (Matthew 17:5). Often in our lives, we may find that the house that needs to be worked on is us. If we cannot let go of our striving and be still and sit at Jesus' feet so that we might be developed, we may very well find ourselves burnt out and unproductive.

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in His presence, focusing on Him, listening to Him intently  
and following Him closely.**

### **Focusing on God, Not Success**

We can also value the gift of creativity over the Giver. We must not replace the joy of creating with the stress of success. When we emphasise our work over the work that God desires to do in us, we can easily lose sight of being who we are created to be for those around us.

I know that for most of my life, I have strived for a certain ideal of success for the work that I was doing. It is easy to do. Usually, as creatives, we want our work to go somewhere, be seen and impact people's lives. This can be particularly delicate to balance, if your creation is meant to draw people to His Kingdom.

But if we allow the joy and gift of creating to be crushed by the desire for it to be more than God's original intent, we can become very frustrated, stressed and potentially angry. From those emotions, we may respond by making poor choices that may develop into poor habits. We can get stuck in a cycle from this—all from not prioritising God's will for us over all else.

His will is for us to have abundant life; this comes from abiding in Him. When we focus on Him, we can produce healthy fruit, not just good art. When healthy fruit is from the Spirit, our fruit informs and develops our character, impacting those around us.

### **Listen to Him, Not to Fear**

As artists, spiritual freedom is required for creativity to flow. When our minds are constrained by fear, doubt, stress and anxiety, we are not free to do our best work. Our enemy desires to keep us from operating to our fullest potential. Satan knows that if he cannot snatch us away, he can inhibit us from creating from the fullness of the riches of God's Kingdom.

Fear is not only a tactic of the enemy; it is the enemy. There are spirits of fear, but Paul says, *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and self-control"* (2 Timothy 1:7).

These aspects of our spirit are fundamental for us to recognise so we do not fall into the enemy's deception. When we operate out of the spirit of love that God has given us, we will not only create out of love for others, but we will be led by our love for our Father. This love will inspire us to not only do the work He has called us to do but also to listen and obey. Jesus says if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15).

### **Following God's Instructions**

If we are going to be truly effective in creating for His Kingdom, it begins with following God's instructions for life. This process allows the Holy Spirit to develop character in us. Then we become someone who can be trusted to be responsible with more and, in effect, reach more who might have ears to hear.

The work that God gives us to do requires attention to detail in His instruction. The Holy Spirit has often reminded me recently that unless the Lord builds the house, those who labour, labour in vain. We are the labourers contracted out to do His work, to build as He desires. We are to be His hands and feet to create following the chief builder or the architect's design.

There should be an ease that comes with allowing God to guide our lives and our work. We can put a lot of pressure on ourselves to create something with good intentions for God's use, but it may not be what He asked of us. It is wonderful to be passionate about creating, for God's sake, but we can make ourselves busy and miss what God desires for us to see.

## The true freedom of healthy creative flow comes from *trust and obedience to the will of our Father.*



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Unless we are in tune with Him, we won't be operating from our utmost for His highest. This tuning should be understood as aligning our souls with the new hearts and spirits that God has given us. When we are born again, we are born of His Spirit and given a new heart—a heart for God. Our soul is still part of our natural man; our soul is comprised of our mind, will and emotions. By this, we can understand that our soul needs transformation or restoration to align with the will of the Spirit God has given us.

### The Heart-Brain Connection

I have recently written a book, *Dividing Soul & Spirit*. In it, I point to the research that has been done regarding our heart-brain connection. One of the early findings is that the heart has a complex neural network called “the cardiac nervous system.” Characterised as the brain of the heart or “heart-brain,” it's an intricate network of complex ganglia, neurotransmitters, proteins and support cells, the same as the cranial brain. The heart-brain's neural circuitry enables it to act independently of the cranial brain to learn,

remember, make decisions, and even feel and sense.

If our heart and mind are not in sync, we can misinterpret impulses, hence “mixed signals.” I believe this is how we are to understand what is meant when the Apostle James wrote, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). When our hearts and minds are not in alignment, it typically elicits a response of unhealthy or improper emotions, which can then affect our actions.

As the heart-brain sends neural messages to the cranial brain, it can come in regular patterns when we're at peace and operating in freedom. When we experience fear and anxiety, it sends jagged irregular signals, causing the chemistry in the brain to become imbalanced, leading to emotional stress. It can be challenging to be creative under these conditions.

The true freedom of healthy creative flow comes from trust and obedience to the will of our Father. We're invited to be still in His presence, focus on Him, listen intently, and follow closely. ■