

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 450

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about freedom. The psalmist said: **“Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free.” (Ps. 118:5)** Jesus said: **“If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32)** And **“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)**

In 1977 John Lennon wrote and recorded the song “Free as a Bird”. Sadly, John was murdered on Dec. 8, 1980 by Mark David Chapman after returning from the Record Plant recording studio. Yoko Ono was with Lennon at the time. Death has a way of limiting our freedom!

In 1961 Warren Phelps and I purchased a Taylor Craft L-2 airplane for \$450. It was manufactured in 1940 and was used by the military as a glider. When they decided to put a 65 h.p. Continental engine on this little glider it was known as a “DC 65 Military Conversion”. This was our preferred way to describe our airplane. The motor was in such bad shape, however, that we paid \$150 to have it overhauled. Now, for the price of a mere \$600 we were going to be free as a bird. We would no longer be required to stay on the right side of the road or stop at stop signs. We could fly over rivers and railroad tracks without getting wet or even feeling a bump.

There was a mechanic at our little airport who completely rebuilt a Fairchild 24, both airframe and engine. In his infinite wisdom he bragged that this rebuilt airplane was so tough you couldn't tear it apart in the air, you had to hit something in order to do that. So on it's maiden flight he and his helper decided to prove his point right over the airport. They did a loop and coming out of the bottom of the loop immediately initiated a snap roll. The wings came off and both men died. It happened at the Reid's Hillview Airport in San Jose, California at 17:00 hours, April 18, 1964. The registration number of the plane was N29012. So much for freedom to do anything you want!

Frank and Ruby Lynn attended our church that met at 1548 Curtner Ave. Frank was a successful businessman with a new house and new cars for both he and his wife. One day he stopped by the office to inform me that Ruby had been an alcoholic for years and he was suing for divorce. When I confessed that I had no idea of her problem, he challenged me to drive to their home and see for myself. I did! Ruby was so drunk she could scarcely walk or carry on a conversation. Frank was granted a divorce and also custody of their daughter. Some time later the headlines in the San Jose Mercury News screamed “Mystery Death in Santa Clara.” An unidentified murder victim had been found in near by Santa Clara. It turned out to be Ruby. She had moved in with another alcoholic. One day they agreed to cut their drinking in half and start saving some money. Some time later he discovered that Ruby had “drank up” their nest egg and murdered her in a fit of anger. It was my responsibility to tell their 14 year old daughter. So much for freedom to do anything you want!

After moving to Missouri a wonderful Christian woman in our church asked me to visit her 19 year old grandson in Freeman Hospital. She said he had pneumonia. I was permitted to pray for him in the ICU unit and was optimistic that a strong young man like him would soon recover. I was shocked to hear a few days later that he had died. It was then that I found out that he had died of AIDS. So much for freedom to do anything you want!

One of the most unusual weddings I have performed took place at the Fairview Church in Carthage. The groom was in a wheel chair and had to be lifted to the platform by his groomsmen. His

paralysis happened on graduation night when he got drunk and wrecked his car. He had been an outstanding athlete and especially excelled in basketball. Sadly, he abused his freedom and lost it! So much for freedom to do anything you want!

When we moved to Missouri I was shocked to discover that Floyd Edward Cumby was in the Jasper Co. Jail. We had been class mates in Tulsa and both were on the track and cross country teams. Floyd was a year behind me but was state champion in cross country the year he graduated. Leon Wallace was a policeman in Carthage and also a member of our church. He asked me to visit Floyd as something didn't add up. Floyd was in our jail fighting a burglary charge, but had willingly implicated himself in a double murder in Louisiana. Two of Floyd's friends had broken into a home, executed an elderly man and woman and stolen their money. Floyd admitted to driving the get away car.

Floyd had evidently cut a deal in Louisiana for after he was extradited he was soon back on the streets. Later, when he was again arrested in Oklahoma City, he was overcome with the sinfulness of his life and confessed to murdering two women at 18<sup>th</sup> and Boston in Tulsa. Their bodies were in an apartment right across the street from Fire Station # 5 where my father worked. When the police doubted Floyd's confession he asked for a piece of paper and drew a picture of the room where their bodies were found and correctly identified their location in the room. His lawyer in Tulsa was Larry Oliver, also a track star at Tulsa Central. Floyd was sentenced to life in prison and later died in the state prison at McAlistier, Okla. So much for the freedom to do anything you want to!

Yes! **“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”** But you are only free from your sins and from eternal punishment. You are not free to do anything you want to!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce