



YOUR
AGENCY
IS WORTH
FIGHTING
FOR.

The BATTLE FOR YOUR AGENCY

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Keeping God's commandments brings freedom. To somebody who hasn't gained a testimony of that truth, such a statement might sound confusing. After all, if one of your neighbors walked up and handed you a list of things you had to do (or could not do), that might feel like *less* personal freedom.

However, keeping God's commandments really does make you free—free from the negative consequences of sin and free to enjoy the blessings that come from righteousness.

Breaking God's commandments, however, leads to captivity. One way to think of captivity is a loss of agency. It's hard to make many choices for your life if you're in captivity.

We know from the scriptures that Satan "sought to destroy the agency of man" (Moses 4:3) in the premortal life. We also know that he didn't win that war and that *you* were on the winning side!

The tricky part is that Satan is still trying to rob you of your agency. But have no fear. You can win this war too.

LIVING IN CAPTIVITY

In the Book of Mormon, Jesus taught, "Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him" (3 Nephi 18:15).

Becoming captive to the devil sounds terrifying! Yet when you do

imagine such a fate, do you tend to think mostly in terms of final judgment? There's actually a more immediate type of this captivity. And it's often quite subtle.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "People can become enslaved or put themselves in bondage not only to harmful, addictive substances but also to harmful, addictive philosophies that detract from righteous living" (Oct. 2013 general conference).

Have no fear. You can win this war too.

Becoming enslaved to addictive substances like harmful drugs or nicotine is easy to understand. But what about becoming enslaved in a habit of lying? With only a single lie, it's easy to become caught in a trap of your own making.

What about becoming enslaved to a quick temper or a habit of gossiping?

Or how about simply *not doing* the daily acts of righteousness (prayer, scripture study, etc.) that God asks of us? Does that also result in a loss of agency?

Yes, it does. Here's one way to think of it. What happens to athletes or musicians if they completely stop practicing? Answer: they soon lose the ability to play at their best. While that might not

seem like a loss of agency, it truly is. The athlete or musician who fails to work at their skill will no longer be able to make as many choices with how to use that skill. By decreasing their abilities, they can now do less than they did before. Their options become reduced.

In a similar way, you truly can't be your best self without the companionship of the Holy Ghost. You need His help every single day. It's one of the greatest gifts you can hope to receive

in this life, and daily righteous living is how you obtain that gift.

FINDING TRUE FREEDOM

The Apostle Paul taught, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). In the Book of Mormon, King Benjamin taught, "And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ" (Mosiah 5:8).

True freedom comes from following Christ. So choose to be free! **NE**