



# Only in Truth Do We Find Freedom

**“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness” (John 8:12).**

**“Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.... If you remain in my word...you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32, 34).**

Do you want to be free? Of course you do, but what does that mean?

As we celebrate Religious Freedom Week this June 22-29, the question is worth pondering.

If we take our cues from the Gospel passages above, authentic freedom is aligned with truth and the light of Christ. The enemy of true freedom is whatever hides in darkness and falsehood, egged on by the evil one, whom Jesus calls “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

## **Back to the Beginning**

Let’s flash back to where it all started, to the Garden of Eden. God creates man and woman and tells them they can eat of the fruit of all the many trees in the garden, except one – the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” The point of this divinely inspired account is that God places a limit on man, a reminder that he is a creature, and only God is God.

Along comes the devil, tempting man to think that God is holding out on him, depriving him. God had warned that eating of this tree, breaking this limit, would lead to death. The devil scoffs, tells them that not only will

they not die, but they will become like gods. So they eat of it, unleashing on the human race the deadly consequences of their pride and disobedience.

## **Redeemed, but the Drama Continues**

Jesus, the Son of God, comes into human flesh to undo the damages of sin. By humbling himself, concealing his divine glory, He makes up for our proud grasping. By dying, He restores us to life. He shows us what it looks like to walk in the light, free from the grip of sin. He proclaims the Beatitudes as the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments. He speaks the truth.

But in this drama that will continue until Jesus comes again in glory to judge the living and the dead, Satan keeps repeating his deadly formula, trying to seduce us with his lies, trying to make us slaves of sin.

## **A Courageous Witness to Truth**

Tanner Cross, a Christian physical education instructor at a public school in Virginia, is a bold witness to truth. At a May 25 school board meeting, he spoke out against the county public schools’ proposed transgender-affirming policies, which would require teachers and staff to call students by their preferred pronouns and allow them to engage in school activities according to their gender identity, as opposed to their biological sex, including team sports.

Tanner cited a recent **60 Minutes** report which featured more than 30 young people who had ‘transitioned’

and now regretted how easy it was to go to a doctor and have life-altering, irreversible changes made to their bodies, with little push-back and few questions asked.

Cross said in his speech, “I love all of my students but I will never lie to them regardless of the consequences. I’m a teacher but I serve God first and I will not affirm that a biological boy can be a girl and vice versa.”

The school reacted to Cross’s words by placing him on leave, but then on June 8, a judge ordered that he be reinstated, ruling the discipline was a violation of his freedom of speech.

## **Courage and Compassion Needed**

We are facing increasing challenges to our religious freedom to affirm God-given truths, as we confront our culture’s seductive falsehoods. Transgenderism is a heartbreaking example of this trend, requiring from us a compassionate yet truthful and courageous response. For excellent resources on issues of faith, gender and personal identity visit [personandidentity.com](http://personandidentity.com).

For more information on topics related to religious freedom, and on how you can make your voice heard when it comes to legislation such as the so-called “Equality Act,” visit [diolc.org/religious-freedom](http://diolc.org/religious-freedom).

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Ministries & Social Concerns



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