

## Free agency, a divine principle.

Written by Administrator

Monday, 26 April 2010 22:27 - Last Updated Monday, 17 May 2010 09:58

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Free agency existed even before faith because without free agency there can be no faith. When this principle of free agency is more fully understood we gain a clearer understanding of how to properly use the priesthood of God to preside over our family in the same way that God, our Father in heaven, rules over His children. The reason why this is so important for us to understand is because it was through the violation of this sacred principle that Lucifer became Satan.

In the Doctrine and Covenants we learn, "all truth is INDEPENDENT (free agency) in that sphere in which God has placed it, TO ACT FOR ITSELF, as all intelligence also; otherwise THERE IS NO EXISTENCE."

When man was created in the garden of Eden, God gave him his free agency when he said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Moses 3:17). In the Bible the words "thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee" are not mentioned, although it is clearly implied. Thus we see that God teaches us but He doesn't compel us, for to do otherwise would rob us of our reward

The Lord has also informed us through the prophet Lehi, that existence itself is based on the principle of opposition in all things in order to bring about His eternal purposes for man, and that man merits the reward of his own choice. (see 2 Nephi 2:11-13). If there can be no existence without there being opposition in all things then what about in heaven? Is there opposition there? We have been taught that heaven is a place of perfection, so how can there be opposition there? If there was no opposition then it would not have been possible for Lucifer and his followers to take a different course than what God desired.

In the preexistence, we lived in the celestial kingdom as spirits. As such we had not yet reached a state of perfection. In order to advance to perfection we had to be obedient to the laws of that perfect kingdom where God lives. Therefore, we needed to prove our worthiness before being allowed to live in mortality, which is a necessary step to obtaining eternal life, meaning, the RIGHT TO live the kind of life God lives. By the choices we made as spirits we could lose the right to gain a physical body, without which we could not obtain eternal life. That is why God created a place where each person could live according to the law which they were willing to abide by. Since those spirits who rebelled against God in the preexistence didn't want to live by the law of the celestial kingdom, it was necessary for them to be cast out and given another

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place that suited their desires. While it is true that the celestial kingdom is a place where righteousness reigns supreme, that doesn't mean that opposition doesn't exist there, because such a condition would prevent the free exercise of our agency.

All kingdoms are upheld by the law assigned to it. If there is no law, we would have anarchy, which produces chaos. The scriptures tell us "And again, verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law is also PRESERVED by law and PERFECTED AND SANCTIFIED BY THE SAME" (D&C 88:25). The Lord further explained, "That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still. All kingdoms have a law given; And there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions. All beings who abide not in those conditions are not justified" (D&C 88:35-39).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained, "The gift of conscience which is an outward manifestation of the Spirit of Christ given to every man, which quickens their minds, and gives them intelligence, and leads those who harken to it to the divine truth, was not given to the animal world. The Lord does not require of them repentance from sin, for they do not sin. It requires intelligence and a knowledge of right and wrong, in order for man to sin. While animals prey on each other there is no violation of conscience, for they have not the gift of conscience. There is no moral obligation for a lion or a bear, or any other animal to kill and prey on other animals, for the Lord did not give them the light of truth and therefore when they trespass upon the rights of other and weaker animals and kill and lay waste, there is no obligation that they should repent and restore that which they have taken." (From the book "Man, his origin and destiny")

Brigham Young said, "The eternal laws by which He (meaning God) and all others exist in the eternities of the Gods, decree that the consent of the creature must be obtained before the Creator can rule perfectly. This infers that God must have explained to us in detail the plan pertaining to us and we comprehended the conditions to the extent that we were capable of making an intelligence choice."

The scriptures declare that when God the Father announced the creation of the earth there was joy among all of His children, the morning stars (see Job 38:4-7). No doubt this included Lucifer. God explained to us why it was necessary to leave our celestial home and live on earth for a short time and He probably showed us the process by which He Himself became God. This is

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why Jesus could say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19).

Probably when Lucifer and many others realized that not all of God's children would obtain exaltation, their joy changed to sadness. That's when Lucifer offered his plan to "correct" what he thought was a problem in our Father's plan. Let me quote Brigham Young again: "The eternal laws by which He (meaning God) and all others exist in the eternities of the Gods, decree that the consent of the creature must be obtained before the Creator can rule perfectly. May we say then that as intelligence, we agreed to the plan of God and we consented to our being born, understanding the laws and the consequences of obedience and disobedience to those laws that obtained in that kingdom."

In D&C 29:36 we read, "And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil--for, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency."

This clearly shows that the principle of agency was there. In the kingdom of God we were fully aware that we were sons and daughters of our Father. And even though we were living under His laws, we were nevertheless free to choose for ourselves whether to follow those laws or disobey them. This same situation would also apply to the plan our Father presented to us in the Grand Council in heaven. Just as before we came to earth, the consequences of our choice would be decisive and we no doubt clearly understood this. The consequences which Satan and his followers found themselves in were a direct result of the choices they freely made on their own.

Lucifer had the right to present his own plan, but when God made the final decision and two thirds of the God's family accepted it, Lucifer was angry at the results and rebelled against God. He wanted to IMPOSE his idea on everyone even though the majority supported our Father's plan. In doing this, they violated the law of the celestial kingdom. Since they would not abide by the law of the celestial kingdom they could not reside in the celestial kingdom. Thus, Lucifer became the Devil along with his followers, as it says in D&C 29:37,38: "And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels; And, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell." When they didn't yield obedience to the conditions prescribed for their first estate, being in open rebellion against their father, they were cast down. (see Abram 3:25-26)

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The prophet Joseph Smith revealed a important piece of information concerning this event. He said, "At the first organization in heaven we were all present, and saw the Savior chosen and appointed and the plan of salvation made, AND WE SANCTIONED IT." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, page 181)

As spirits we had the opportunity either to support or not support the plan of our Father in heaven. Every single person who has come to this earth sanctioned that plan in the pre-existence. Lucifer's sin was not that he had presented just another idea, but that he became angry after God made His decision and rebelled against our Father. The reason why we hold counsels is for the purpose of discussions and the putting forth of proposals. But when the final decision is made, we are to be obedient to that decision, otherwise chaos will be the result.

One of the reasons why God gives us commandments is to prevent chaos. From "The Discourses of Orson Pratt," we read: "He (God) constructed this fair creation, as we have told you, subject to immortality, and capable of living forever, yet he had an object in view in regard to that man, and the creation he inhabited. What was the object, and how shall this object be accomplished? Why, the Lord wanted this intelligent being called man, to prove himself; inasmuch as he was an agent. He desired that he should show himself approved before his creator. How could this be done without a commandment? Or to act for himself or to use his free agency."

The Gospel, with all of its commandments, is designated to help us become like our Father in heaven. The gospel is like a manual that, if followed, will help us gain divinity, honor, and power. As the Lord explained in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Mine Honor is my power." How did the Father gained His honor? By living a perfect life and observing the laws and commandments which we too are required to obey.

Orson Pratt continued, saying: "How could this be done without a commandment? Can you devise any possible means? Is there any person in this congregation having wisdom sufficient to devise any means by which an intelligent being can show himself approved before a superior intelligence, unless it be by administering to that man certain laws to be kept? No!

"Without law, without commandment or rule, there would be no possible way of showing his integrity. It could not be said that he would keep all the laws that govern superior orders of

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beings, unless he had being placed in a position to be tried, thus proving whether he would keep them or not. Then it was wisdom to try the man and the woman, so the Lord gave them commandments; if He had not intended that man should be tried by this commandments, He never would have planted that tree, he never would have placed it in the midst of the garden. But the very fact that He planted it where man could have easy access to it, shows that He intended man should be tried by it, and thus prove whether he would keep His commandments or not. The penalty of disobedience to this law was death.

"Could he not give a commandment, without affixing a penalty? He could not; it would be folly, even worse than folly, for God to give a law to an intelligent being, without affixing a penalty to it if it were broken. Why? Because all intelligent beings would discard the very idea of a law being given, which might be broken at pleasure, without the individuals breaking it being punished for their transgression. They would say: Where is the principle of justice in the giver of the Law? It is not there; we do not reverence him nor his law; justice does not have an existence in his bosom; he does not regard his own laws; for he suffers them to be broken with impunity, and trampled under foot by those whom he has made; therefore we care not for him or his laws, nor his pretended justice; we will rebel against it" What would have been the use of it if there had been no penalty affixed? But what was the nature of the penalty? It was wisely ordained to be of such a nature as to instruct man. Penalties inflicted upon human beings here, by governors, kings, or rulers, are generally of such a nature as to benefit them."

Paul speaks of this same principle in Romans 8:28 where he explains that it is the agency of man which is the basis upon which man stands condemned before God. We see this same principle taught in D&C 93:31,32 which reads, "Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light. And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation."

Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "Man brings his free agency and responsibility from a pre-existent state. There he had the light, because, that which was from the beginning is plainly manifested unto them, because of the light they had in the pre-existence. Every man whose spirit receiveth not the light, is under condemnation. Why? Because the spirit has had light before it came here, and ought to recognize and love it here, as soon as the years of accountability are reached."  
(page 595)

According to Parley P. Pratt in "Discourses of latter day saints leader," he wrote: "Truth is light. Light is spirit. Light cleaveth unto light. Truth embraces truth. Intelligence comprehendeth intelligence. Spirit recognizes spirit. Like embraces like in all spiritual things. These are some of

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the laws of nature in the spiritual world, and are as true, and as capable of demonstration as any physical laws of the universe. Two balls of quicksilver, placed in contact, immediately recognize and embrace each other. Two blazes of fire placed in near proximity, will immediately spring toward each other and blend in one. Two drops of water placed upon a table, will remain in a round or globular form, until they are enlarged so as to expand their circles, when, as they mutually touch each other, they instantly mingle and become one globular form. So it is in spiritual things. There is in every man a portion of the spirit of truth; a germ of light; a spiritual test or touchstone, which if strictly observed, studied, and followed by its possessor, will witness to him, and will, as it were, leap forward with a warm glow of joy and sympathy, to every truthful spirit with which it comes in contact. While by a shudder of disgust, it will recognize a false spirit, a lie. Call this spiritual magnetism, or whatever you please; it is so, and is a law of nature. Herein CONSIST THE MYSTERY of the agency of man. This is the reason why a man is under condemnation for rejecting any spiritual truth, or for embracing any spiritual error."

In the book "Latter day Prophets Speak," John Taylor wrote: "Man sleeps the sleep of death, but the spirit lives where the record of his deeds is kept that does not die. Man cannot kill it; there is no decay associated with it, and it still retains in all its vividness the remembrance of that which transpired before the separation by death of the body and the ever living spirit. Man sleeps for a time in the grave, and by and by he rises again from the dead and goes to judgment; and then the secret thoughts of all men are revealed before Him with whom we have to do; we cannot hide them; it would be in vain for a man to say then, I didn't do so and so; the command would be, Unravel and read the record which he has made for himself, and let it testify in relation to these things, and all could gaze upon it. If a man has acted fraudulently against his neighbor, has committed murder, or adultery, or anything else, and wants to cover it up, that record will stare him in the face. He tells the story himself, and bears witness against himself. If I had time to enter into this subject alone I could show you upon scientific principles that man himself is a self registering machine, his eyes, his ears, his nose, the touch, the taste, and all the various senses of the body are so many media whereby man lays up for himself a record which perhaps nobody else is acquainted without but himself; and when the time comes for that record to be unfolded all men that have eyes to see, and ears to hear will be able to read all things, as God Himself reads them and understand them, and all things, we are told, are naked and open before him with whom we have to do." (page 57).

Alma explained also that everything's will be restored to his perfect form and shape, so our brain will have the entire knowledge about our life through the senses that we participated in during our life.

John Taylor continued, "These penetrating truths impress upon us the urgent need for continual repentance and a cleansing forgiveness that where there appears marks against us on the negative side of the ledger we may have a corresponding cancellation mark achieved through

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the application of the atoning blood of our Savior, who bled and gave his life for our redemption.

"Carnal experience, as such, regardless of how aesthetically, emotionally, or physically compelling or tremendous it may be, has been and always will be and end in itself, an ending carried to its extreme is called death and, after the climactic moments of fulfillment are accomplished leaves the soul unsatisfied, debased, and with an inevitable haunting sense of self betrayal. Righteous experience has been and always will be, not an end in itself but a personal expression of eternal life! Soul satisfying, exalting, productive. Carnal passion produces an ecstasy to destruction and damnation; righteous passion produces an ecstasy to life and exaltation.

"Some have falsely supposed that a religious life is a life without the experiences of ecstasy in personal living an existence in self denial of the soul stirring, passion filled exhilarating experiences of life. Exactly the opposite is true. In a deeply religious life, founded in the eternal principles of revealed truth the dynamic forces of life, divinely comprehended, expressed in the spirit of sacredness, and channeled within the bounds of righteous law are experienced with an intensity and power intimately integral to God's own power and far surpassing in exquisite rapture anything basically carnal that flesh and blood can produce.

"We are the harvest. We will stand one day as sheaves to be gathered into a threshing floor. The Lord will reach out and draw all men to Him to be judged according to their WORKS and the DESIRES of their hearts. We then we are our OWN harvest. We will stand forth living evidence of what we have willed ourselves to become. When we have BY CHOICE sown to the flesh with KNOWLEDGE, unless we have removed the conditions of corruption in the flesh by repentance and forgiveness, we will stand revealed before the Lord as a harvest of carnality to be cast into the fire and burned.

"We may gather eternal principles to our minds and have an intellectual understanding of many godly truths, but UNTIL they sprout, take root, and out of the substance of our very being come ALIVE with ACTUAL GROWTH, they are seeds lying lifeless in a bed of dust. The tears of our longing must water the soil, the burning of our heart's desire must warm them with vital light, the dedicated labor of our bodies cultivate the fields.

"It is the intent or the desire of the heart that the Lord is so fundamentally concerned with. He has revealed that principle as one of the basic standards upon which a man will be judged not only according to his works, but according to the desires of his heart. Now the desire of his

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heart is the true barometer of his inner life. We may deceive a man by exterior conduct but not God."

God is not free of laws; He is free because of laws. That's why when we know the truth the truth will make us free. This not only means free of sin but free to inherit the celestial kingdom because we are freely willing to obey its laws. It is clear that while in mortality no one will be able to obey the whole law, but God knew this from the very beginning. Therefore, He has us enter into covenants with Him, whereby we agree to obey the laws that we do understand. When we will fall short He gave us the law of repentance, which is made possible because of the atonement of Jesus, because of the shedding of His blood.

What is truth? Truth is the knowledge of things as they were, as they are and as they will be. But what kind of "things" does this mean? This includes (but is not limited to) the eternal laws by which the universe is ruled. To illustrate what I mean, if you want to go in England, you need to know at least the basic rules of that country otherwise you could be in trouble. For example, you need to know that in England they drive their cars on the left side of the street instead of on the right as we do in America. If you know and obey all the laws you will be free to go where you want without getting into any trouble.

It might be asked, "What is the difference between freedom and free agency? The answer is that freedom is the goal we are trying to achieve, while free agency is the means to helping us achieve our goal. Freedom is the fruit of free agency.

From the book "Free to be Free" by Richard M. Eyre, we read: "There are of course, many kinds of freedom. When we hear the word, we usually think first of political freedom, freedom of choice. Freedom, by definition and by the type of word it is, implies freedom from something. Political freedom includes freedom from compulsion or dictated choices and behavior. Intellectual freedom includes freedom from imposed ideas, beliefs or perspectives. Economic freedom might be freedom from forced obligations or perhaps financial worries. All forms of freedom require some form of work or commitment if they are to be retained. They all have a price. In other words, freedom is never free. The word freedom is used widely and in vastly different contexts. The scriptures tell us that the truth can make us free (John 8:32). Some political leaders tell us that military superiority will make us free. Large brokerage firms tell us that good investments will make us free. Psychologists tell us that letting off steam and screaming once in a while will make us free and so on and on. The question is, from what things should we want to be free?"

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"Lucifer advocated a plan of freedom. He claimed that the people would have been free from responsibility, from challenge, from pain, even from the possibility of failure. He just wanted to free mankind from the agony of uncertainty, of difficult choices, he said that he would have even free us from law.

"Christ's position, opposite in every way, is perhaps nonetheless presented in freedom terminology. Implicit in the position taken by the Father and the Son is freedom of choice, a freedom to individually succeed or fail, a great and irrevocable type of freedom called agency. And Christ offers Himself as a ransom for our sins and as a redemption through which we can all be free from the effects of physical death. His position also implies the freedom to choose, by how we live, between spiritual life and spiritual death. It affirms to us that freedom from compulsion and from the sting of death can allow us to gain additional freedoms, even the highest form of freedom such as He enjoys.

"God is free because He is omnipotent (free from limitation because he can do all things within the scope of eternal laws He has accepted). He is free because He is omniscient (free from all ignorance because He knows all things).

"But is freedom the effect or the cause? Perhaps God is omnipotent, omniscient and so on because He is free. Whichever is the case, the point is that we can take our definition of freedom from the example and the words of God. Thus our model of freedom must be Him, and our goal, eternally speaking, is to become free as He is free. (In practical terms: to be able live in the celestial kingdom because we are willing to obey the laws of that kingdom.)

"In that context, any confusion about true freedom melts away, because we know what God is free from, and we know what He, by choice, is not free from ( and quickly we learn the lesson that ultimate freedom involves the ability and the will to choose not to be free from some things)

"God is free from guilt, from fear, from doubt, from ignorance, from envy, from hate, from the influence of Satan, from death, from hell. He chooses not to be free from responsibility, from challenge, from emotional attachment, from concern. He makes these choices because He knows that these things and other like them, are PART of the freedom He enjoys, and that to be free from them would be to be free from freedom. Perhaps most importantly, God is not free of laws. He is free BECAUSE of laws. It is his total knowledge of laws and total observance of laws and total command and use of laws that gives Him total freedom.

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"A major part of the plan is agency. And through its proper use, we may obtain freedom. Comparing agency to freedom is a little like comparing immortality to exaltation. One is given to us that (through our own choice and effort) we might obtain the other. One is part of the other, One can grow into the other. One is the root and the beginning of the other. Agency is one kind of freedom (freedom of moral choice) that is given to all men as, so to speak, a seedling which can grow into a tree bearing all other true forms of freedom.

"To clarify further the differences between true and false freedom, imagine a hypothetical decision in your present which bears some resemblance to a real and highly significant decision in your past.

"Here is your present decision: you want to learn to fly, to obtain your pilot's license, but you need to decide between two flight schools. Both schools state the same objective, to teach you to fly, and both involve extensive on the ground training, but other than that they use methods that are drastically different from each other.

"Following your ground training and flight simulation, the first school puts you in a plane and lets you solo. You are free. Where you fly and how high is up to you. You are able to have frequent, even constant, radio contact with the control tower during your flight, and to speak directly to your instructor. You can ask him whatever questions and get whatever answers you need. But, as even the head of the flight school admits, there is some risk involved in this training method. He wants you to understand that learning to fly simply cannot be guaranteed to be safe. About the only guarantee that is offered (and it certainly doesn't sound much like a guarantee) is that if you wreck a plane and live to tell about it, the school will rebuild or replace the airplane at their expense and give you a second chance.

"The other school takes a very different approach, you don't actually fly at all, at least, not by yourself. The instructor goes with you, and though you have a set of instruments and controls in your cockpit, they are just dummies. The actual controls that direct the aircraft are in the instructor's hands. He guarantees your safety, of course, and sometimes calls it "freedom from risk". Everyone he teaches follow exactly the same course and "learns" precisely the same things. If you ask about when you might fly on your own, the answer is: "Don't worry about that just yet....to risky...leave it up to me and

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I'll get you where I want you to go -ER - I mean where you want to go. You may not remember making this decision, but, because of the school you now attend, we know that you said: "I will choose the first."

"Before we go on to other stories and personal situations, let's be sure that the difference between agency and freedom is clear. Use your imagination and go back into a simpler time wherein you are a gardener.

"A master gardener gives you a wondrous fruit containing living seeds of great worth. He explains to you that if you plant the fruit rather than devouring it, and if you cultivate it properly, it will grow and develop into a tree bearing the most valuable fruit in the universe, fruit that will allow you to know what he knows and be what he is, fruit that will contain additional seeds that you can give to others.

"He also allows you the use of a great field, containing in some places rich, deep soil. And he points out to you water cascading down a nearby hill and informs you that the living seed requires much water and the finest soil. You understand that it is up to you to choose the best soil and to bring irrigation water to your tree. He warns you of the scorching power of the sun but reminds you that without the sun your seed could not grow at all, and that when much sun is accompanied by deep soil and much water, growth will be strong and steady.

"He indicates to you that he will leave you largely on your own to cultivate your tree but will help when you ask and will actively intervene if the water supply is ever cut off or if winds and erosion ever strip away the good soil.

"Now let's apply this simple, imagined metaphor, more or less line by line, to the actual story of our agency and our freedom.

"Acting as the executive of the Father, Jesus Christ, through the father's plan and the Savior's atonement, gives you immortal life that contains agency. He explains to you that agency is the ability of freedom to choose good or evil, and that if you exercise and use it properly rather than squandering it, it can grow and develop into freedom of many kinds; and that this freedom will make you like Him and eventually allow you to give the seeds of agency to spirit children of your own.

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"Jesus also freely allows you to use of the earth he has made, an earth containing alternatives of beauty and joy as well as ugliness and sin. And He points out to you knowledge from the source of scripture and revelation. He informs you that agency can continue only where there are alternatives and knowledge and only through the process wherein good rather than evil alternatives are chosen and knowledge is gained and used. You understand that while he will insure that knowledge and alternatives always exist, it is you who must choose them and use them.

"He warns you of Satan's scorching power but reminds you that without opposition, agency could not exist, let alone be used to develop freedom. He assures you that when opposition is controlled by knowledge and correct choices, it assists in agency's reach for freedom.

"He indicates to you that he will leave you largely on your own with your agency but will help when you ask and will actively intervene to restore lost knowledge and truth to the world (as in each of the gospel dispensation) and to begin things over again if the world or peoples on it ever become so wicked that righteous alternatives are no longer available (as with the flood).

"Think about the metaphor for a moment longer. In the pre-mortal existence Lucifer tried to offer us a ready made tree. He promised us ready made fruit that he would provide. Christ's position was that the tree of true freedom could not be ready made, nor could it be given to us by another. It could only be grown, and he stood by, ready to help us use the seed of agency which the Father had given us.

"In the metaphor he insures the availability of alternatives and knowledge, for the absence of either would kill the seed of agency before it could become a tree of freedom. We can kill our own seedling, however, through the commission of sin, through wrong choices and wrong priorities or through the omission of failing to gain knowledge and faith. Latter day saints are tremendously fortunate, through the Gospel and its restoration, to know that a major part of the goal is freedom and a major part of the plan is agency.

Richard M. Eyre continues, saying: "Every principle of knowledge will be with you in the resurrection stated Joseph Smith. "You will know the truth (knowledge) and the truth will set you free stated the Savior. When Adam and Eve partake of the fruit the Lord declared that by that (knowledge of good and evil) man is like one of us. Wisdom in the proverbs is declared to be

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the virtue of exaltation, Wisdom is practically the knowledge used after the learning process. For this reason another Satan's favorite ropes with which he constantly tries to tie us is "IGNORANCE.

"He knows that the truth can make men free. Thus he knows that in fighting truth he is fighting freedom. Often the most accessible source of truth we have is the scriptures. Can I ask for how many centuries the Bible was taken away from the hands of the people?"

The scripture makes it clear that the promises of God are not easily obtained. As with all freedoms, they aren't truly free. They all come at a price. Freedom requires effort and energy, faith and firmness, goals and guidance. "We first need to know the truth. To know it we must seek after it, find it and learn it. "Search the scriptures," Jesus said to the scribes "for they are they which testify of me." But the scribes didn't search the scriptures, therefore they never came to a knowledge of the truth.

There are two basic ways for us to use our agency to develop freedom. One is to use our agency in positive and productive ways. The other is to show the ultimate trust in the Giver of that agency by submitting our will to His. For a more in-depth look at this, please read my article entitled "Faith and Free Agency."

In order for there to be power in the priesthood, a holder of the priesthood not only needs to know and understand the law but to obey it. This brings wisdom, which is the correct use of knowledge concerning the truth (law). And it is by the use of our free agency that it becomes possible not only to know the law and understand it, but to obey it.

True law understands those the principle if mercy and justice go together. They are not in contrast to one another but are connected. Miracles of changes of the laws are never demonstrations of power but only pure mercy. Mercy intervenes only when justice can understand it but it is always the justice which minister the mercy and allow it to work as Alma explain clearly "And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. but here is a good question ... What, do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God."

## Free agency, a divine principle.

Written by Administrator

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Many people feel that Jesus and God can do anything They please, but this is not true. A careful study of the gospels shows that Jesus had many restrictions on what He could do. For example, He couldn't perform miracles unless He had the faith of others. In modern-day scriptures, it clearly states that the priesthood works only on principle of righteousness, which includes respecting the free agency of others.

Jesus was able to perform miracles when the conditions of the moment allowed His priesthood to work. I really doubt that Jesus could perform miracles when was challenged by the devil on the pinnacle of the temple or when He was challenged by the scribes and Pharisees. When he performed miracles it was because there were the conditions mentioned above.

Of necessity, free agency has to know good and evil otherwise there would be no choices. Choice however does not mean freedom from consequences. Consequence, the immutable companion of choice, is the essence of eternal law. God, the Father, understanding perfectly the eternal law, knew that given their moral agency, some of his children would choose differently. If the Gods arbitrarily used their power they wouldn't be ruled by laws. Since every kingdom has laws which govern them, people who live in those kingdoms have to observe them otherwise they cannot live there.

Difference between theology and religion is much like the difference between knowing and doing. Theology is essentially theory, while religion, by its very nature, is practice. Theology represents what we know, believe and say regarding God. Religion is what we do in our everyday lives as the result of the theology that we have, which is usually the result of training we have received at home and in the church. We could even say that sometimes many persons schooled and well versed in theology have lives that could hardly be called religious. Not until we thoroughly and persistently apply the theological principles learned, can it be said that we are living our religion. And it is living the Gospel, not just knowing it, that will save us.

Having a better understanding of what "free agency" really is and using it the best we can really shows our Father in heaven the real desires of our heart because sometimes using our free agency correctly take a lot of courage to face troubles and problems we encounter when we use our free agency incorrectly. Free agency is the balance between the desires of our heart and the wisdom we acquire in this life. Free agency is connected with knowledge. For that reason the knowledge of good and evil was essential in the plan of God.