The background features a complex, abstract geometric design. It consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of yellow, blue, and grey. The shapes are angular and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The central area is a white diamond shape where the text is located.

**Obtaining Real
Independence**
John 8:31-36

Observations

- **Unless you have been in another country, you know that tomorrow is “Independence Day,” for these United States**
- **The U.S. Congress, on July 4, 1776, declared that the 13 original colonies were, as of that day, “independent” from British rule**
- **Many parents/grandparents on tomorrow feel that it’s their expression of patriotism to, “empty their wallets” for fireworks for their kids**
- **But I would like you, for a few minutes, to think about your “Spiritual Independence”**
- **My argument for today is that if you are not truly free “spiritually,” then even in the U.S.A. you are not really “free”**



Observations

- There are some people in the world (like Ukraine) who are not free socially or politically, but are in prison; unable to practice their faith openly like we are doing right now, but have an “inner freedom in Christ.” (God heard Paul in Acts 16)
- There are others of us who, because of what Christ has done for us, are free today from “the prisons of our past” and now live for God in the present (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 N.I.V.).

“Or do you not know that the wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be not deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God.”

Real Spiritual Independence Begins With Coming To Jesus Christ, John 8:31-36

To the Jews who had believed in Him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but the son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

**There are Three Steps
to Spiritual Independence**

Step 1: Realize That You Are a Slave

- Notice the Jews' answer to Jesus: *"We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves to anyone."* They had short memories as they celebrated "The Passover" every year, in which God delivered them from 400 years of slavery
- If You don't realize that you are a slave then freedom means nothing for you to obtain. Listen to Jesus in John 8:34

".....everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

- Listen to Paul in Romans 6:16

"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slave to the one you obey—whether you are slave to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness."

- Paul says when we sin, we voluntarily offer our services to Satan!

So Without Christ We Are Slaves to Sin!

Question: So What Is Sin?

Answer: Anything that goes against God

Question: How do we know what Goes against God?

Answer: The Bible tells us. By studying the Bible, we learn what God likes and what He dislikes

By Bible study we learn that what we might not consider sin—like self gratification (Matthew 16:24)—is sin, and that we will need to answer to God for it, 2 Corinthians 5:10

By Bible study we also learn that what we might consider sinful may not be sin at all (interracial marriage was widely thought of as a sinful, especially in churches throughout the south)

Acts 17:26 (God predetermined your what, when, and where)



Step 2: You Must Find The Way To Freedom

- African Americans remember the anti-slavery movement to independence and the advent of the “Underground Railroad” which was a network of people, homes, and even some churches that runaway slaves would use to get to Canada to find their freedom
- Just wanting freedom wasn’t enough. Wanting to leave the plantation wasn’t enough. In order to get to Canada you had to follow instructions, run the risk of capture, getting lost, or dying along the way

Finding Freedom Requires Listening and Obedience

- Not only is listening to Jesus' teachings and what He did for us on Calvary important, but also *Patterning Our Lives Based On What We Have Heard (Acting on Our Belief)*

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” James 1:22-24

- This man has to be willing to correct what he sees is wrong! James 1:25



Step 3: Hold to Freedom and Don't Go Back

- Don't go back into slavery once you've been freed
- Your life in Christ may suggest that to avoid returning to sinful slavery you'll need to change habits/associates that clearly don't help your Christian walk, Hebrews 12:1
- Knowing your weaknesses, don't willfully put yourself in a position to fail God (1 Thessalonians 5:22)
- Question: What could cause a slave to lose his/her freedom/independence?

Answer: The pleasures of sin (pride, not following instructions, arrogance, demanding respect)

- Know how to diffuse a toxic situation, Proverbs 16:18, *"Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before the fall"*

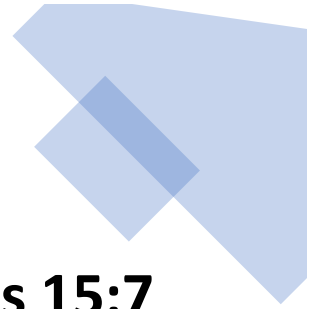
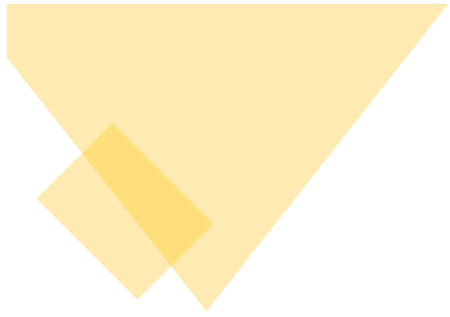
Let's Go Back to the Underground Railroad

Question: Just because the Underground Railroad existed, did that fact free the slaves?

Answer: No. They had to take advantage of the Railroad and risk that dangerous journey, trusting others with their lives

Question: Just because Jesus Christ is a Savior, does that fact mean that everyone is saved?

Answer: No. You have to take advantage of Jesus' instructions and trust Jesus with your life of obedience to His will



Jesus' Instructions for Our Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

John 8:24

Repent of Sins

Acts 2:38

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38

