



La libertad interior (Spanish Edition)

Jacques Philippe

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Incluso en las circunstancias externas más adversas, el cristiano dispone en su interior de un espacio de libertad que nadie puede arrebatarse, porque es en Dios donde encuentra su origen y su mayor garantía.

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From Reader Review *La libertad interior* (Spanish Edition) for online ebook

Jill says

It was so good, rich and insightful that I decided not to just highlight great thoughts, but to take notes. I took about 17 pages of notes, the best stuff. For a few examples:

True freedom is within us, not outside.

Our heart is imprisoned by selfishness or fears.

Faith, hope, and charity draw strength from whatever opposes them. Growth in them is the path to interior freedom.

Faced with unpleasant situations, three attitudes are possible:

Rebellion, Resignation, and Consent. The last is the attitude to aim for.

Complaining is a waste of time. If we don't accept what is, the Holy Spirit can't work.

Through God's eyes we have freedom: to BE sinners, and to BECOME saints.

Welcome difficulties. God can draw good from them.

"Peaceful suffering is no longer suffering."

Fear of suffering can be worse than suffering.

Those are a few of the ideas from 4 of the 17 pages I wrote. I plan to reread and ponder those notes often.

There was a lot of wisdom in this book. If all I remember is to welcome difficulties and suffering as God's means of helping me grow, it will have been worth the read. But there's much more.

Conor says

This is a remarkable and amazing book.

Kevin Wojciechowski says

In Matthew 13:55, the people in the synagogue said of Jesus, "Is this not the son of Joseph the carpenter?" The questioning of Jesus' credibility is a testament to just how fully human and completely poor God became in the Incarnation. Being fully human, Jesus did not stick out in any way in terms of a dazzling appearance or usage of lofty terminology. Being poor, he must have been especially ignored by many. Thus "flesh and bones has not revealed" his majestic divinity. And yet, though he was fully human, he remained fully divine. Jacques Phillippe's writings are comparable. His books are always around 100 pages and have nowhere near as many intimidating words as can be found in a VonBalthasar or Ratzinger text. His words are "fully human" and are poor in their simplicity, yet they are filled to the brim with divine truth and wisdom. You could very easily sit with a mere page, paragraph, or even sentence-worth of material at a time if you wanted to. Just as many glossed over the Second Person of the Trinity as he walked the earth, so too must one approach Phillippe's texts with a humble and receptive heart in order to "see" what's happening beneath the surface.

Philippe is, without a doubt, one of my favorite spiritual writers and this book in particular is my favorite of his.

KristinCams says

Profound; I will need to re-read this multiple times to really digest it (I read a few pages at a time over a few months to try and really think about the ideas in this book). Short, very readable, the insights in this book are simple and yet mind-blowing.

Aaron says

The author reinforced my desire to look only to God for my identity, to live in the moment and to strive to practice the virtues of faith, hope and charity. I'm looking forward to reading more of his books.

Andy says

Wonderful. Highly recommend this book. Reads like a spiritual classic simple and direct yet deep and profound. I could hardly put down my library's copy; am planning on buying my own copy to read again, mark up, and savor.

Margaret Kerry says

If you think you know yourself pick up this book and delve even deeper.

booklady says

How to describe this book? Modern spiritual classic? Essence of the Gospel? Everything you've always wanted to know—and maybe even read somewhere else—encapsulated and explained in 134 pages on how to live a happy, holy life in God. I could have (did!) highlight most of the book!

It's going to take me awhile to go back through the book and type in all my favorites, so I expect to just add in a few each day.

“You were within me, and I was outside myself, and sought you outside myself!” ~St. Augustine (p.15)

“Man's greatest illusion is to want to have mastery over his life But life is a gift that by its very nature escapes every attempt to master it.” ~Jean-Claude Sagne (p.29)

“The person God loves with the tenderness of a Father, the person he wants to touch and to transform with his love, is not the person we'd have liked to be or ought to be. It's the person we are. God doesn't love “ideal persons” or “virtual beings.” He loves actual, real people. He is not interested in saintly figures in stained glass windows, but in us sinners.”

“Above all, never despise yourself. It is difficult to despise ourselves without offending God in us.” ~George Bernanos from *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (p. 36)

“What really hurts is not so much suffering itself as the fear of suffering.” (p. 47)

“The only true security in this life lies in the certainty that God is faithful and can never abandon us, because his fatherly tenderness is irrevocable.” (pp. 52-53)

“If there is one area where nothing will ever be forbidden to us, it is holiness, provided it isn’t confused with external perfection, extraordinary feats, or a permanent inability to sin. If we understand holiness properly, as the possibility of growing indefinitely in love for God and our brothers and sisters, we can be certain that nothing will be beyond our reach.”

Quotable quotes aside, this is the second book by Father Philippe I’ve read and I plan to read everything else he’s written as well. I’d get him as my spiritual director if I could. I had been reading *Interior Freedom*, but then left it for awhile. Then I experienced a rather severe personal setback. This book literally picked me up and put me back on my feet. I want to always keep a copy of it close at hand for just such occasions.

Rick Dugan says

Interior freedom or inner peace is difficult to achieve, so we shouldn’t expect a book on it to be easy to read. The causes of our loneliness and anxiety are deeply entrenched in our nature, and the solutions offered to us in God’s word seem counter-intuitive, risky and supernatural. Yet there is an interior freedom that, if we discover it and cultivate it, can be maintained even in the most difficult circumstances. This is not “freedom from” problems, but “freedom for” faith, hope and love to grow in spite of them. This book rejects simplistic solutions while guiding us to lasting hope in God.

Father Jacques Philippe begins by identifying three things we must accept if we’re to experience interior freedom. First, we must accept ourselves. The person God loves is the person we are, not the person we pretend to be (32). This is “the freedom to be sinners, the freedom to become saints... We don’t all have the stuff of sages or heroes. But by God’s grace we do have the stuff of saints” (42). Learning to accept our limitations, our mistakes and even our sinfulness frees from the need to prove ourselves to God or others, and it opens us to receive grace.

Second, we must accept that our lives will contain suffering. What Jesus said Peter is true for all of us: “When you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone will lead you where you don’t want to go.” (John 21:18) We don’t get to choose all the chapters of our biographies. When we face suffering beyond our control, we can respond with rebellion, resignation or consent. Consent gives space for the grace of God and removes the sting.

Third, we must accept others as they are. By forgiving others and loving enemies we are modeling a new type of human relationship, which imitates God’s forgiveness and love for us. We must not identify others with the wrong they do or ourselves with the right we do. Such actions alienate us from others and create tension in our relationships. We accept that all people get their worth from God and are in process of becoming who God created them to be.

In his second section, Father Jacques describes the importance of learning to live in the present moment, addressing one problem at a time. Fear of future suffering or shame over past mistakes are often worse than the actual suffering. Though the past is unchangeable and the future is unknowable, the present is “rich with the possibility of communion with God” (82). (Matthew 28:20)

His third section describes the importance of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, which are our weapons for fighting the demons that haunt us (1 Thessalonians 5:8). Mysteriously, the theological virtues are simultaneously gifts of grace to be received and disciplines to be practiced. Believing rarely comes naturally. There come times when we must, like St. Therese of Lisieux, simply believe what we choose to believe (96). “When we hope, we are not passive: we are acting.” (96)

Though practicing faith, hope and love may be difficult, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26).

Father Jacques’ fourth section is “From Law to Grace: Love as a Free Gift.” Our natural instincts are toward a life of reward and punishment for works done (good or bad). This is law. There is no need for love in such a system. The unintended consequence of earning, defending and punishing is a world of loneliness, anxiety and violence. A life ordered by the law gives in to the flesh. In contrast to this, Jesus told us that by freely giving and receiving grace we become perfect like our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:48). This means that in the kingdom of God there is nothing to defend or earn. It’s all of grace and the only law is love. This reminds me of the words of Jim Elliot, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

The final section describes the importance of spiritual poverty in obtaining freedom. Spiritual poverty is “utter dependence on God and his mercy” (132) Our anxieties often arise because we’re afraid our weaknesses will be exposed or that we’ll lose our self-sufficiency. Our problem, Father Jacques suggests, is a problem of “being,” which we try to solve by “having” or “doing.” We look for worth and security in what we own or achieve. We are all born with a sense of inadequacy, which we spend our lives trying to cover up by creating a new image. It is this false self that we must die to if we’re to find interior freedom. It’s only by crucifying the false self that the real self – created by God and redeemed by Him – can emerge. The “poor in spirit” have nothing to lose and are truly free.

Inner freedom comes from a life of discipleship, learning to practice faith, hope and love. We must be honest about things that aren’t as we wish and trust in God’s love. It is through faith, hope and love we will find the strength to be free. The theological virtues find their source in God, are strengthened by God, and are exemplified and made possible in the life of Christ, to whom we’re united by faith. In Him we discover interior freedom when fears imprison us.

John says

This little book is a treasure. Philippe supports each point by many scripture quotes with chapter and verse. There was so much in here that was just perfect. Some of my favorites: 1. When painful stuff happens, we can respond in one of three ways - rebellion, resignation, or consent. Only by consent can we be at peace. 2. We need to stay in the moment because only in the here and now does grace work with us. Dwelling on the failings of the past and/or worrying about the future simply make us miserable. 3. God loves us. It's his gift to us. If we try to earn that by prayer or fasting or whatever, that leads to pride and misery. This is a book that I need to read again and again.

Catherine says

Interior Freedom is a gold mine, especially if you are faced with difficulties in life. It brought me peace and acceptance when things were out of my control and not what I would have liked them to be.

Sara says

Wow this author is a must-read for all Catholics! And maybe for any Protestants who are at all interested in Catholicism. A very traditional priest recommended this book to me. I kept reading the author's bio on the back because I kept finding myself in disbelief that he was catholic- he writes of the love and forgiveness of god in such a way that is entirely new for me to hear from the catholic perspective, and in ways that I have only heard Protestants speak before. Of course I know the church teaches these things, but he writes about in a way that is entirely new and fresh to me. On a whole new level. This book is one of healing and love. Can't recommend it enough! God's love for us is so very great!

Isabel Keats says

Me ha gustado mucho. Es un libro fácil de entender y te abre la mente.

Susan Peek says

"Interior Freedom" is one of several books I own and love by Father Jacques Philippe. His treatise on peace, "Searching for and Maintaining Peace" is, in my opinion, right up there with "Story of a Soul" and the works of Dom Marmion. This little volume is not far behind. Every chapter is consoling and breathes strength and courage. Each page made me long for deeper union with God. Father Philippe's style is very accessible and engaging, not at all dry or overbearing like some spiritual books can be. All of his books are ones I've read several times and marked up with yellow highlighter pen. They are so timely for our age of confusion, discouragement, and depression. I truly can't recommend his books highly enough.

Sarah says

Confession: I wouldn't have picked this book up if I wasn't part of the Catholic Spiritual Direction book club. And oh! What I would have missed!

Fr. Philippe hits a whole box of nails right on the head, puts the house together, and then roofs and sides it. (OK, I took the metaphor too far. But...that's what it felt like, reading it.) While he's dealing with some complicated matters of the spiritual life (ahem, the title says it all), he does so with language that my ten-year-old would understand. He's straightforward, tangible, and relevant.

Don't be fooled by the slim size of this book. It packs a punch that's well worth the time you'll take to read, re-read, and share it.
