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# Recipe for Freedom

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Freedom from the norm of sin and death is not the only freedom. As disciples of Yeshua, and as people with God-given freedoms like everyone else, we want to live in a free society which

- respects individual and collective freedoms,
- preserves life, liberty, personal choice,
- holds truth and freedom of speech as critical values,
- allows freedom of association,
- promotes personal privacy and freedom from pervasive surveillance,
- permits freedom of belief, and the free expression of it; and
- curbs the relentless pursuit of power by central governments.

This is because

- slavery,
- total surveillance,
- thought control and control of free expression,
- curtailment of basic liberties,
- extermination of life,
- imprisonment and persecution of dissenters, and
- other totalitarian repressions of human activities

are antithetical to the dignity of every God-given human life, each of whom is made in the image of Yahweh.

## What Can We Do?

The most important thing we can do is to exercise wise choices while we still have the reasonable ability to do so, and while we still retain reasonable levels of personal freedom.

A major part of the wise choices we should be making involve the technologies, products and services we use, because by using the wrong technologies, products and services, we are in danger of *feeding the beast*.

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Leave the tech giants who are censoring free expression of ideas and beliefs, and whose purpose is to increase control over society in order to further their own interests and agenda. You know who these are. Refuse to use them unless there is really no alternative. If you must use one of these services, do so as *little* as possible, and keep searching for viable alternatives. But remember that just *being* on an anti-social network encourages others to likewise be on it.

Create de-centralised networks using Free Software networking technologies which cannot be easily attacked or controlled by corporate behemoths, nor adversaries controlled and financed by nation states. Remember that Free Software is critical to your freedom, because you **do not know** and **cannot know** what secret, proprietary software does, nor whether it is working *for* you or *against* you.

What software is running on your computer right now? Is it being controlled by the Windows operating system, for example? Or the Mac OS operating system? In these cases, *you* do not control your computer: Microsoft or Apple does. They are magnanimous enough to give you the *illusion* that you control your own hardware.

For *most* (not all) people, the GNU/Linux Free operating system (i.e., Debian, Ubuntu, Fedora, to name some of the main “flavours”) is a viable alternative, and for these people, if they value freedom as we do, there is *no excuse* to plan to continue using Windows. These people should start planning now to switch over to GNU/Linux. There is plenty of help available on the Internet to plan this transition. But remember, as with all change, it may not be totally painless, and that is the test of how much freedom is really valued.

If you do not control your computer, you have built your technological life, and your freedoms, on sand.

You should be using and supporting Free Software as much as possible, because this type of software is the only type that can reasonably secure your freedom in the online and digital world. Full stop. Proprietary software is *secret* and its workings are essentially *unknowable*. Do not trust what the tech giants tell you about what it does and does not do, because they have regularly been caught lying, and there should be no expectation that they will tell the truth unless they can be forced to do so (which usually they cannot be).

Make it difficult for the tech giants and the State to surveil you. The most important step (but not necessarily the first) is to change out your operating system as soon as practical, as discussed above. Other steps include:

- Use a Free Software email application like **Thunderbird**.
- Eliminate entirely, or reduce your use of, the free online web email providers like GMail, Yahoo, Outlook, and so on. You should pay for an email account, if necessary, rather than become the *product* of a free service.
- **Start signing and encrypting** your email using the OpenPGP standard. Encrypting emails end-to-end is the only strong guarantee of privacy, and it should be used on a daily basis. (And do not believe enterprises which lie to you about being able to send you information — for example, pay slips — *securely* by email. Do not receive sensitive information via email that is not end-to-end encrypted.) Note that the FSF step-by-step instructions (in particular, Step 1.B) are slightly out of date now with regard to the Enigmail Thunderbird plugin. The current version of Thunderbird (78) has OpenPGP encryption built into its core, so no plugin is required to do encrypted email! If you are still using Thunderbird 68, you still need to use the Enigmail plugin, or just upgrade to version 78.
- Realise that learning how to use encryption may take an hour or two of your time. You need to deal with that, because the benefits are well worth the time and energy you will put into it.

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- Use **Delta Chat** for effortless encrypted de-centralised instant messaging over email. (The Delta Chat free software application is the only game in town for this, as far as I'm aware. It works in Linux, Windows, Mac, Android and iOS.) You can use it with your existing email address, or you could use a separate email address just for Delta Chat instant messages.
  - Encrypt your SMS/MMS messages using **Silence** (only on Android at present). This uses the same high-grade encryption that Signal uses.
  - Do not use anti-social networking services. You know who they are. *You* are their product, and they are placing *you* under total surveillance. Don't let them. Use Free Software like Delta Chat to keep in touch with the faithful, and with friends and family.

If you value freedom, as I believe followers of Yeshua should, then these are some of the practical steps that *all* of us are able to take in the digital realm that will result in real benefits to freedom in our society.