

## **God wants all people to be free!**

By Nancy Walker

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Children's sermon

"Proclaim freedom all over the land to everyone who lives in it ..."

Leviticus 25:10 (The Message)

When I was a little girl, from time to time my parents would invite their friends over to our house. Often these grown-up friends had children around my age - sometimes a little older and sometimes a little younger. Before the company arrived, my mother would give instructions of various kinds, but she always said, "When Tommy or Sally (or whatever the kids' names were) get here I want you to be friends with them." "Be friends?" I would think to myself, "I don't even know these kids!" Maybe I would be friends with a girl, but never would I be friends with a yucky old boy! Sure enough, the kids would arrive and I would pretend to be a friend. They would leave and I would look forward to playing with real friends of my choice.

Now, it's certainly a good thing for us always to be nice to other people, but no one but us can choose our real friends. That's how it is with God. He wants to be friends with us; he wants us to love Him. But no one can force us to love God - not our parents, not our Sunday School teachers, not even our pastor! It has to be our own choice. Each one of us has to be free to choose to love God, worship God, and serve God, or we are just pretending. As hard as it is sometimes, we have to be willing to let other people make that choice for themselves, too.

We need to be thankful that in the United States we can make this choice. We must also do whatever it takes to make sure everyone in our nation gets to make that choice as well. So, when you are having a great time hanging out with your friends remember that you were free to choose each other. Maybe that will remind you how wonderful it is that God loves you and you have freely chosen God to be your friend.

Let's thank God for our freedom.

*Nancy Walker is pastor for congregational care at Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va.*