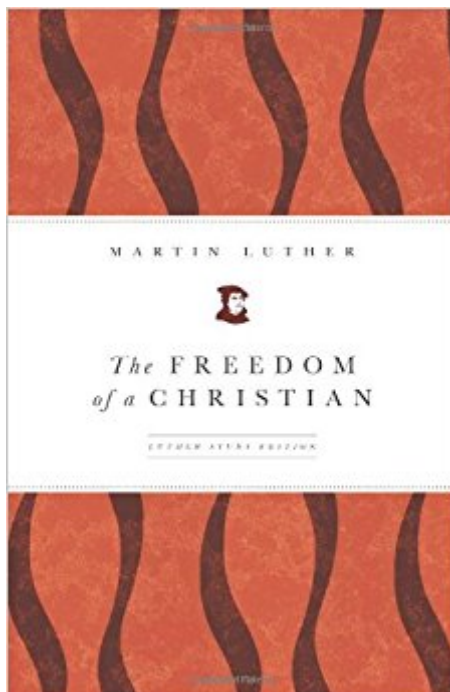


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# The Freedom Of A Christian



## Synopsis

Perhaps no work of Martin Luther's so captures the revolutionary zeal and theological boldness of his vision as *The Freedom of a Christian*. Yet, it is not easily accessible today. Mark Tranvik's new translation of Luther's treatise brings alive the social, historical, and ecclesial context of Luther's treatise. This is the first of a set of student guides to key Reformation treatises by Martin Luther, concentrating on those most widely used in college settings.

## Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Fortress Press; 7.2.2008 edition (July 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 080066311X

ISBN-13: 978-0800663117

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #28,047 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Anthropology](#) #6 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Lutheran](#) #18 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > History > Historical Theology](#)

## Customer Reviews

Mark D. Tranvik is Associate Professor Religion at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, and director of the Lily Endowment program on vocation there.

This book is billed as the most important of Luther's writings, next to his Small Catechism. It was written before he was excommunicated from the Catholic church and also contains his letter to Pope Leo. This book was enlightening, even to a life long Lutheran, and stimulated much discussion about our beliefs and their basis in our book club. The translation is quite readable (some of our group were worried about reading something written in the 16th century). I would highly recommend it to anyone who wants to know the basis of the Lutheran Church, written in the words of Luther himself.

Martin Luther is one of my personal heroes and this small work on the doctrine of Faith Alone is

amazing and still as relevant today as when he first penned it. I found it a joy to read through and recommend it to anyone wanting to study their faith or learn more about what Protestants believe about salvation. If you're looking for a concise and clear presentation, this is it.

Excellent product, well worth great book.

Our book club is reading the classic works that are the foundation for modern thought and philosophy. This book, less often read than his 95 theses, is a bit more "enlightening" about how he and others of his time thought.

would have loved it, if it wasn't so choppy. BUT, Made me want more of GOD (JESUS CHRIST)!

I found it to be quite good.

The first part includes an amazing letter Luther sent to the Pope. It quickly reveals the extensive familiarity of Luther with scripture - he knew it inside-out and could weave and connect Old Testament passages with those in the New and apply them with clarity and frankness. His insight makes it appear as if God himself explained the Word to Luther. Don't miss the context - imagine yourself writing to the most powerful spiritual leader of today and questioning and exhorting him (at a time when the pope was bowed down to and treated as a god). There are some statements in the letter that must have made the pope squirm. I kept imagining the pope's facial expressions as he read the letter - oh to be a fly on the wall at that time. Luther is refreshingly direct and candid. His explanations make even deep material understandable. Luther is a master at explaining and discussing faith in real terms. "Faith" was not a catch word or cliché with Luther. All too often today, this huge and mysterious concept of faith is treated too casually. This is a work that not only edifies and teaches, it inspires. Luther did not blindly accept what he was told by authorities. He went to the source - God and the Word. He trusted God always over man but not in an arrogant or rebellious way. The Bible exhorts us to "test" the spirits and messages we hear. 1 John 4. Finally, it is not often that in reading spiritual treatises I find myself smiling or laughing but, Luther is so enjoyable and frank, it's a natural response. Read, enjoy and learn. It is wonderful to have scholars who accurately and faithfully bring us translations of master works.

An unfortunate circumstance in our age of media and information overload is that students are more

informed on modern trends and popular culture than they are of history. This lack of exposure to history can be a real handicap to students as they labor through the writings of theological giants like Calvin, Luther, and others. In order to bridge this gap, publishers are producing many reader's and study editions of important works in order to make these writings accessible to a whole new generation. Hats off to Fortress Press for doing just that, with this updated edition of Martin Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian: Luther Study Edition*. Mark D. Tranvik puts twenty plus years of teaching Martin Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian* to work in bringing us this most excellent Luther study edition. This volume offers an updated translation as well as very thorough footnotes and commentary. With these helps as their guide, readers with minimal exposure to Luther's writings and their historical context will be able to follow along with relative ease. I particularly enjoyed the introductory chapter titled *Martin Luther's Road to Freedom*. It gives the reader a good idea of the extent to which the fear of death and the devil dominated the culture of the sixteenth century. This chapter also offers a brief biographical sketch of the life of Martin Luther and as the title of the chapter suggests, his road to freedom. The remainder of the book is comprised of two parts. First is Luther's letter to Pope Leo X in which he notes that he has dedicated his short essay on the entire Christian life (i.e. *The Freedom of a Christian*) to Pope Leo. Second is Luther's essay titled *The Freedom of a Christian*. Here Luther explains his course of history altering understanding of the justification of sinners by faith and the good works that follow. Readers will also want to make use of the short glossary at the end of the book, which defines some of the important people, places, and concepts relevant to the essay. All things considered, I must give this new edition of *The Freedom of a Christian* a rating of five stars. This updated edition will be useful for both a classroom setting and personal study. Those long acquainted with Luther and those discovering Luther for the first time will both benefit greatly from this new volume. Readers who enjoy this work will also want to consider *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings, 2nd Edition* (Fortress Press, 2005). Mark D. Tranvik is Associate Professor of Religion at Augsburg Fortress College, Minneapolis, and director of the Lilly Endowment Program on vocation there.

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