



# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

*Helping you heal from  
sin done to you, by you,  
and around you.*

## WORKBOOK



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# WELCOME TO FREEDOM!



**AT FREEDOM, WE HELP PEOPLE HEAL FROM SIN DONE BY THEM, TO THEM, AND AROUND THEM.**

Freedom is both a program offered here at NLCC as well as a spiritual state which believers are called into as part of their salvation through Jesus and a relationship with the Holy Spirit. But freedom doesn't just happen; we have to partner with the work the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives, and sometimes this takes effort on our part! This partnership will change your life, though. So dig in and make a commitment to engage in this process as fully as you can.

## WHAT IS NEW LIFE FREEDOM?



New Life Freedom is a semester-long program that includes individual homework (watching/listening to sermons/teachings) during the week and discussion at a set table group over the course of the semester. The more authentic you can be with your table group, the more growth you are going to experience! Your table leader is there to support you on your freedom journey, and should you have questions about the content presented at Freedom, you can express those without fear of condemnation or ridicule. At Freedom, we are all growing together.

## BASIC GUIDELINES OF TUESDAY NIGHTS



Come prepared! The more you put into Freedom, the more freedom you will experience. To get the most out of your Freedom experience, you are encouraged to prioritize watching each Weekly Teaching video on the New Life Freedom page of the New Life Community Church website. You will see a Bonus Teaching and Freedom Track that you can watch/listen to as well. Engaging in as many of these teachings as possible will help you participate in table time discussion. Use this workbook to take notes and enhance your discussion time. After your table time, your table group will also pray together.

# TUESDAY NIGHT STRUCTURE TYPICALLY FOLLOWS THIS FORMAT:



 WELCOME/PRAYER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

 TESTIMONY

 LIVE TEACHING

 TABLE TIME DISCUSSION

 TABLE GROUP PRAYER TIME

## TABLE TIME IS GUIDED BY 5 BASIC TENETS:



1. **Verify teachings in Scripture**—The Bible is the litmus test of truth. We will use a number of messages, teachings, teachers, and tools. Our inclusion of these teachings and tools is not an endorsement of every message from that teacher or churches associated with them. Each teaching should stimulate the listener to go to the scriptures to verify them.
2. **Eat the fish, leave the bones**— Don't miss the 99% good for an offense of the 1%. While exploring these teachings you might hear something that challenges your current understanding, the speaker might say something that offends you, or you might just not prefer the teacher's tone and cadence. We encourage you to take notes and bring all your agreements and disagreements to the discussion at your table.
3. **Growing people change**—Transformation should be evident in action. If you are growing in your understanding and gaining more freedom, you should be able to see the fruits of that maturity. Spiritual growth should be evident in physical and behavioral changes.
4. **Faith is an Action**— Be brave and practice what you learn. Faith is not simply a belief in truth, but the practice of that truth knowing that God is faithful to see us through.
5. **The Vegas Rule**—What happens at the table stays at the table. Confidentiality is the key for each person at New Life Freedom to be able to share freely at their table.



# WEEKLY RESOURCES



We offer several ways for you to grow, learn, and deepen your walk with Jesus throughout the week. Each resource is designed to help you prepare for Tuesday nights, stay rooted in truth, and explore freedom at your own pace.

## LESSON IN YOUR WORKBOOK

Each week's lesson walks you through our focus topic in a simple, powerful way. You can read it directly in your workbook or scan the QR code to listen to the audio version.

At the end of each lesson, you may find a Reflection Section—a space for you to write down what God is showing you. You'll also find a list of Scriptures for Further Reading, chosen to help you go deeper. These verses connect directly to the week's theme and give you space to hear from God through His Word.

On the following page, you will see a QR code. This links you to the audio version of the lesson as well as all the weekly, bonus, and Freedom Track teachings.

You will also see a notes section where you can write down insights from the lesson, your reflections, and anything God highlights through the teachings.

Lastly, each week includes discussion questions to think through before coming to table time. These help prepare your heart and mind for meaningful and productive conversations.

## WEEKLY TEACHING

Before coming to Tuesday night, we ask everyone to listen to the weekly teaching—available as a video or podcast.

Take notes, sit with it, and let God speak to you as you prepare for what He wants to do.

## BONUS TEACHING

Want to go a little deeper? Our bonus teachings are optional but highly encouraged for anyone hungry for more.

These teachings help you explore additional layers of freedom, healing, and biblical understanding.

## FREEDOM TRACK

Still craving more? The Freedom Track is designed for those who want an even deeper dive into discipleship, inner healing, and spiritual growth.

These teachings open the door to richer conversations and a stronger foundation for lasting freedom.

# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 1



We're here to address something that most of us have been avoiding for a long time. It's really a problem that affects every person on the planet: How do I deal with the pain and damage that result from living in a fallen world? No matter the source of that pain and damage, we have to choose how to respond. Rather than deal with it, though, a common choice is to create the illusion that we're doing just fine and can live on the surface without getting into the mess. What will help us protect, comfort, or distract ourselves from an ugly reality?

This is where our coping strategies come in. Taking our cues from the world around us, we think if we just had this product, or ingested this substance, or had a new relationship, or controlled other people through anger, people-pleasing or isolation, or any other in a whole list of potential escapes, our problems would be solved. Proverbs 14:12 speaks bluntly about this: "There is a way which seems right to a man and appears straight before him, but its end is the way of death."

We've been going to the wrong source for help and deliverance. We may have tried in the past to give it all to God. Somewhere along the way, we've decided that He's really not dealing with things in the right way or the right timing. We may have tried to get out of this cycle before, relying on our own willpower. This just reinforces the belief that we're doomed to failure and it's not worth the fight, so we might as well enjoy ourselves. As long as we rely on our own strength and motivation, lasting change is impossible. And we still haven't dealt with the underlying issues.

It's important to acknowledge that we're not in this struggle alone. Just as God is fighting for us to succeed, there are other forces fighting for us to fail. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, "For we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." This isn't meant to paralyze us with fear but helps us recognize what we're up against. Satan intends to keep us feeling helpless and hopeless, but no matter how big he makes himself appear, he's not bigger than God!

**God wants to use all of His resources to give us lasting freedom.**



### REFLECTION:

Where have you gone for help and deliverance before coming to Freedom? How have these options worked for you?

### SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Jeremiah 6:14, Proverbs 14:12, Romans 3:23, Exodus 25, 32:1, 22-24, Romans 7:15, Ephesians 6:12



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 2



We've begun to see that our lives have been based on systems of damage control. They keep the pain at bay while we conduct our daily lives. Pride has helped us in our ability to keep things going, but this pride is misplaced. Proverbs 29:23 says, "A man's pride and sense of self-importance will bring him down. But he who has a humble spirit will obtain honor." It takes humility to admit we're only giving the appearance of having a healthy, successful life. We started believing things about ourselves because of actions we took or those taken by others. We allowed other people to define who we are and what worth we had in the world. We lost sight of how God sees us and accepted the world's view as the only truth.

This distorted view is fed by guilt, shame, rejection, and condemnation. Our enemy wants to keep this going by stealing our hope that things could ever be different. He constantly reminds us of our failures and how we can never live up to any of God's expectations. He wants to blot out anything good in our lives. Jesus describes him as a thief and tells us in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

How will we ever make sense out of all of this information? We begin by listening to Jesus in Luke 12:2: "But there is nothing so carefully concealed that it will not be revealed, nor so hidden that it will not be made known." This may not sound comforting at first, because our real fear is having our sin and damage exposed for the world to see. There are lots of forces at work to keep things hidden. When Jesus talks about exposure, he means these things will lose their power over us when they come out in the light. There's a saying that tells us we're only as sick as our secrets. These are covered by His blood given freely to set us free.

Satan wants to keep us stuck in regret, reliving our failures and those of the people we trusted. He tells us there's only one way to look at all of this wreckage - a hopeless mess. This is where God wants to come in and take us on a different path. He has the power to overcome and transform what has been done.

This is what God really wants - a relationship with us. Not like the kind of relationships we usually have. He wants us to be free to come honestly to Him no matter how we're feeling. We don't have to cover anything up or pretend everything is great when it's not. He wants us to confess our weaknesses, but He also wants to celebrate our victories. He wants us to be fearless in bringing all of our thoughts into the open, never doubting that He will always love us. When we're quiet and open to His presence, He'll help us see things from His perspective. He wants to take those ideas which have been twisted and restore them so we can be released from confusion and misinformation that keep us separated from Him. Then we can fully trust Him to lead us through this process to freedom.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Proverbs 29:23, Psalm 40:12, John 10:10, Luke 12:2, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 8:38, 3:34



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 3



It's time to check the foundation of our lives and see what needs to change. We may say we believe in God, but what exactly do we know about Him? Has our view come from our experiences in the world or from His own word? How does He see us and what is our place in His eyes? When we look at the way we've been running our daily lives, is He invited in regularly or only when there's a crisis?

If we search in His word we can begin to see that His nature is revealed in His creation as well as His interactions with people. Paul says in Romans 1:20: "For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature." He can be trusted to provide a strong, consistent base for us to build on and a reason to hope in His ability to make us new.

The Father is compassionate and eager to accept and restore us to our relationship with Him as His children, no matter what we've done. He doesn't want us to feel isolated from Him by guilt and shame, but celebrates our moves toward Him with full acceptance. 1 John 3:1 says, "See how very much our Father loves us, for He calls us His children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know Him."

God has a specific purpose for our lives which we can find if we are committed to learning about Him and following His way. Psalm 40:5 says, "Many, Lord my God, are the wonders You have done, the things You planned for us. None can compare with You; were I to speak and tell of Your deeds, they would be too many to declare." We can ask God to remind us of all the times He's been there for us. He can help us look at situations in our lives with fresh eyes so we can recognize His presence, even in our worst moments. Getting into God's word isn't just a chore we have to do to score points with God. It's how we learn who He really is. We need to know we can trust Him so we can give Him complete authority over our lives. Proverbs 16:3 tells us, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans." He helps us develop new plans for dealing with our hurts. Believing these words will help us exchange the image we have of ourselves as failures who could never be good enough to be accepted by a holy God or anyone else. In Ephesians 3:17 we are given a new way to see ourselves: "Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong." God wants to take out the deep roots of damage and replace them with His own work.

### **REFLECTION:**

What is your view of God? How has this view been shaped? God can handle your honesty about this question, so take some time to write down an answer that is truthful.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Romans 1:20 and 5:5, Luke 15, Psalm 40:5, Proverbs 16:3, Ephesians 3:17, Romans 11:36, Philippians 4:3, 2 Corinthians 12:9



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 4



It's become popular to focus on "my truth." That means each of us can operate in our own version of the truth, usually at odds with others. Using this as a basis for making decisions keeps us at the mercy of our own views, which are being increasingly shaped by the world and spiritual forces that aren't working for our good. These views are changeable and can shift dramatically, leaving us unstable. God's solution is to give us His truth as revealed in His Word. It hasn't changed because He doesn't change.

There are so many ways to endlessly repeat destructive patterns instead of believing that we could be different, and none of them come from God. How many of us have been using the same actions or beliefs to handle every situation that's difficult? Do we procrastinate or avoid dealing with it at all, choosing some method of escape? Do we jump in to rescue another person so we can feel useful or important? Are we stuck in a cycle of beating ourselves up for not handling everything perfectly?

Paul tells us what it's like to live inside this maze of frustration in Galatians 5:16-17: "So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions."

We may have built our lives on the mindset of "This is as good as it gets." We don't believe that anything can really change, so we settle for less. What we've been doing may not be working, but change might bring something worse. What if we try something new and mess up? More disappointment is the last thing we want. Satan is more than willing to keep us fearful and uncertain, even thinking that we don't deserve better outcomes because of who we are or what we've done. Keeping us focused on the condemnation of our performance, past and present, is his goal. He wants us to ignore the power of God that's available to make changes happen.

Many of our problems start with lies we've believed that have twisted how we see ourselves and our relationships. Proverbs 29:25 says, "Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety." If we've experienced abandonment, abuse, or condemnation from another person, this verse may be hard to trust. There will be a lot of lies that have kept us from understanding that we can have a secure place with God. We believe that He'll get tired of us and leave us to fend for ourselves. These lies are being used to hold us in patterns of weakness, trusting on our own resources for relief. Each of us sees a world shaped through input that we've accepted as true, either from our own ideas or those that have been put on us by someone else. God's truth about us and about Him is what will truly make a difference.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Matthew 7:24-27, Proverbs 29:25, 1 Samuel 16:7, Hebrews 13:5-6, 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, Psalm 31:7



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 5



Our life experiences have shaped our trust. When people have hurt or disappointed us, we may have decided that it's too risky to put much faith in others. Consequently, our views of God have an effect on how willing we are to turn to Him first. If we see Him as harsh, stern and impossible to please, He's the last one we turn to when we've messed up. If we see Him as remote and uninvolved, we won't think He's listening or even cares about our problems. If we see Him as some divine Santa Claus, we won't understand why His answer isn't what we wanted and think He's unreliable. Satan is happy to contribute his lies to distort how God wants to relate with us. Just like Eve in Genesis 3, he wants us to think God is holding out on us and His word shouldn't be trusted. Add in any negative opinions other people have contributed and we end up determined to cope on our own strength. But we can't deny that our security system isn't making our lives better. It's time to take our views about God to the best source of information there is – His own word, the bible.

It's time to examine where we got these beliefs about God. This process can stir up pain and confusion, but Proverbs 3:5-6 gives us a starting point: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." Trusting in our own understanding has kept us from moving forward. **Making the decision to trust God gives us the courage to change.** We stop trying to fix or protect ourselves. We trust God's word to be true and that Jesus has paid for our sins, as Paul says in Romans 10:9: "If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Now we have the power to face the things we've avoided.

It's time to change the way we think about a lot of things. There are lots of voices in our culture encouraging a self-focused way of thinking, telling us we deserve whatever we want. Don't think about the consequences to you or anyone else, just take care of yourself. Paul tells us in Romans 12:2 to stop listening to this advice: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will." Did we ever test our old ways before putting our trust in them? Probably not. God is willing to have His plans put to the test because they are perfectly designed for us. He's the one who really knows us best.

Repentance is part of this transformation. It isn't just telling God we're sorry for choosing other things instead of Him. It involves a deliberate turning from the old ways and moving in the new direction He gives. We stop making excuses for our actions and start acting on our trust in Him.

### SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Psalms 62:7-8, Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 13:11, Romans 12:2, Mark 1:15, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and 5:17



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 6



Jesus' conversation with a wealthy young man in Luke 18 shows how hard it is to let go of what we know and want. This young man had kept all of the rules, but just couldn't let go of his security and trust that God would provide what he really needed. After watching him walk away, the disciples wondered how anyone could be saved and transformed. Verse 27 says, "Jesus replied, 'What is impossible with man is possible with God.'" We have to exchange our power source for the one God has prepared for each one of us individually. He's involved with every detail of our stories and knows what it will take to bring us to freedom so we can live in the way He designed. Nothing is too small to bring to Him for healing.

This is going to be a process, not a one-and-done or a quick fix. There are a lot of things we need to unlearn and even more that we need to start doing. But God won't get impatient with us and try to hurry us along. Each one of us will have to go at our own pace and be patient with our progress. Some issues may take more time to overcome than others, but God knows that. In Philippians 1:6, Paul tells us "...He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This process of growth can continue through our whole lives so that when something new hits us and tries to drag us back into the old ways, we'll be prepared and ready to use the tools God gave us from the start.

We can expect our enemy to do his best to interfere with our new growth, but we don't need to be afraid of him. 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and a sound mind." The Amplified version describes this as "power, love, sound judgment and personal discipline (abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control.)" These are all abilities that grow the more we use them. We can ask God to help us identify what area of our lives we should work on first and approach them with confidence that we can change.

It's important to remember that we can only deal with this one day at a time. There may be years of damage to tackle, but when we focus on God's ways, the right thing becomes clear. This process of cleaning out the garbage from the past will be like that. The result will be something that blesses us and others as well, hopefully encouraging them to try it themselves. This will make us bear the kind of fruit that Jesus spoke about in John 15:4-5. It doesn't come from us doing things in our own strength and according to our own wisdom. Jesus tells us, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

### **REFLECTION:**

What have you been trying to do in your own strength that you need to surrender to the Holy Spirit? What does it look like to do that? Ask Him to show you!

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Romans 5:4, Revelation 3:20, Psalm 34:18, Psalm 143:10, Luke 18:27, Matthew 18:28-30, Philippians 1:6, 2 Timothy 1:7, Matthew 6:33-34, John 15:4-5



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 7



In Romans 8:1, we are assured, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Our acceptance of Jesus as Savior means we believe He has paid fully for all of our sins and doesn’t hold them against us anymore. When Satan comes back with the garbage of your past, you should remind him that it’s covered and his weapon is useless.

We’re going into new territory now that isn’t familiar and may even seem threatening. Preparation for this process will involve getting quiet before God so we can recognize His voice. It’s important to remember that God has the wisdom we need, and when we’re really listening, we’ll receive it and learn to use it. God welcomes honesty. He already knows about the bitterness, resentment, grudges, fear, dishonesty and self-pity we’ve tried to cover up. They’ve been blocking our ability to get past the pain. This is what He wants us to examine: what we feel and where those feelings came from, how they’ve shown up in our reactions to our hurts and in the consequences of our responses. These are the things we’d never want to admit having and that we’ve done our best to disguise. They’re also necessary to face if we want to get to the roots of our issues, then expose and fully remove them.

Psalm 40:1-2 expresses how God is involved in this process. “I waited patiently for the Lord. He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.” That’s a pretty accurate picture of what it’s like dealing with the messes we’re in: sliding back down into the hole when we try to get ourselves out, just getting dirtier and more frustrated. God takes us out and gives us His steady foundation to build on so we can start from a place of strength. The purpose of all of this effort is to move forward, learning from the things of the past without getting stuck there. We can recognize the path to the pit and take steps to avoid falling into it in the future.

Prayer cover is one important protection as we confront our past experiences. We need all of the prayer we can get in this fight for freedom, especially when we’re focused on how much needs to change. Our enemy wants to keep our eyes right there, but Isaiah 40:29 says this about God’s work in our lives: “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.” We need to keep reminding ourselves that He’s never expected us to do this by ourselves. Besides the constant help He’s giving us, we can also work together with others in this community to motivate each other to keep going.

We’re building a team of prayer support here with our Freedom tables, but remember to give yourself time alone with the Lord to search for what’s been hidden, to prepare your heart and mind to process what you’re learning, and to honestly confront anything that’s been holding you back.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Lamentations 3:40, Romans 8:1 and 26, Joshua 1:9, Job 33:33 and 7:11, Psalm 40:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 1:9, Ephesians 6:18, Isaiah 40:29





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How have the teachings this week contributed to your progress?

# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 8



### PART I

It's time to leave the comfort zone of the general picture and get into the details. We have to fight the temptation to stay in the safe zone and push on out where our feet may not feel so secure.

Being honest means admitting that staying quiet isn't really a safe place. David describes this in Psalm 32:3: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long." That may seem like a huge exaggeration, but pain that's been suppressed can eat away at our bodies, minds, and souls. It definitely keeps us from experiencing the full life God has promised. Speaking the hidden truth out loud is the big step that really moves us forward and breaks the power of the past that keeps us stuck.

Identifying the people who have contributed to our hurts is vital to this process. This will be a major part of understanding how our lives got so messy and why we picked our escape methods for dealing with the pressure. We can start to recognize where our patterns of thinking and behavior started. Another important thing to understand is that some of these people come with their own damaged pasts. They may carry a load of pain themselves that they then pass on to us.

**Action Step: This week, make a list of these people and the nature of the damage that was done by each one. Acknowledge what has taken place.**

This will help organize your thoughts and help you remember what happened. This is the beginning of the process – the whole thing will take some time. Ask God to make things clear. This can be tough when strong emotions are involved, so we need His help in finding the truth.

Psalm 139:23-24 tells us how to begin. "Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way." When we pray this way, we acknowledge that we have played a part in this story too. We can pray with confidence that God will not condemn us for the past but will help us see how we were wrong and learn to make different choices for a better result. He can reveal where our thinking got twisted and realign it with His ways.

John describes Jesus as light in his gospel. In chapter 8:12, he records how Jesus referred to this Himself: "... I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." If we're going to go probing into a lot of dark places to uncover the hurt, we need this pure light so we won't be afraid to go in, and so we can see what's really there. The Holy Spirit will also go in with us to make sense of what we find.

[illegible]

Two obstacles can make this process harder: fear and resentment. You have probably heard of the fight or flight response to a problem. Resentment can be a fight against healing by building a barrier of toughness against future hurt and a refusal to let go of the past. It doesn't make us stronger; it just makes us sicker. Paul warns us in Ephesians 4:31, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with any form of malice." No matter how much you may think the other person deserves these responses, they're not the answer to lasting peace.

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It may be hard to believe at this point, but positive things have happened along the way. They can just be buried under all of the bad memories. The Holy Spirit can help uncover these things and the people who have contributed to them. He can help you see how God was present when you didn't recognize Him. He can remind you of the good things you have done as well, the times you didn't give in to temptation to retaliate or make excuses for yourself. This needs to become a regular part of your path to freedom to keep you from being overwhelmed by the negatives. It can also be the start of a habit of gratitude toward God for the good things and people He's placed in your life.

Ask your table to pray for you as you start this process. They can pray for courage to face painful events, wisdom in sorting out what happened, discernment when Satan tries to confuse or discourage you, and confidence that God has your back and you'll come out on the other side without the load you've been lugging around. Pray for each of them as they go through their own histories. Find ways to motivate each other to attend meetings and develop a meaningful daily quiet time with God.

**RESPONSE:**

As you pray this week, continue to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of hurt that He wants to heal in you. Write down what you hear Him saying to you.

[illegible]

### SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Psalm 32:3, Psalm 139:23-24, John 8:12, Ephesians 4:31, Isaiah 41:10



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 9



It's all too easy to rationalize our reactions, assuring ourselves that they're perfectly "natural" under the circumstances and comparing ourselves to others by saying, "At least I'm not doing that....". We may even have moments where we feel in control and safe, but they aren't lasting. We still feel something is missing, leaving us empty and unsettled.

How do we deal with these emotions in a healthy way? David shows us throughout the Psalms—we bring them honestly before God and ask for His help. Keep these examples in mind when you're looking at your own life. You'll be facing your feelings but won't have to be overcome by them because you're looking at them with the Holy Spirit beside you. He can help you understand the reasons you felt them and how they contributed to the beliefs you developed. You may have chosen self-protection by isolating, keeping relationships superficial, hiding behind a mask or making yourself unavailable. Fear, anxiety, and depression can result from these choices. You may have chosen to fight back with anger, revenge, manipulation, ridicule, and control. As you sort through all of the feelings, know that they may be part of your story but they don't have to determine how it continues.

It's important for us to be completely honest about the harm we've done to others. It's much easier to focus on the part they may have played. But Hosea 4:4 warns, "Don't point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame to him." Colossians 3:9 says, "Do not lie to each other. You have left your old sinful life and the things you did before." **Ask yourself if you want real freedom more than the false freedom you thought you gained by using your escape methods.** What were you really getting out of the old ways, and why would you want to hold on to them? Jesus offers a better way in John 8:32: "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

In Hebrews 12, Paul is giving his listeners sound advice on how to live out their faith. In verse 15 he tells them, "See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." We are going after deep roots that have hurt us and other people in our lives. Instead of ignoring them, we need God's help in pulling them out so He can replace them with truth that will lead to healthy growth. This will happen when we get a realistic view of where we've been, how we've coped, and why that needs to change. We identify what to get rid of and what to hold on to. We see how our feelings have played a part in all of this mess.

### RESPONSE:

Think about how you've chosen self-protection in the past and how well those strategies have worked for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you (by giving you a picture in your mind) what your walls of self-protection look like, what emotions are connected to them, and what He wants to uproot in you.

### SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Psalms – 31, 55:12-14, 27:13-14, 54; Ephesians 4:26, Proverbs 15:18, James 1:9 and 3:1-12, Romans 12:19, Matthew 6:12, Hosea 4:4, Colossians 3:9, John 8:32, Hebrews 12:15, Philippians 4:8



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How have the teachings helped you grow this week?



# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 10



Putting new content into our minds and bodies will help us get out of tendencies to avoid the pain of our tough situations by making unhealthy choices. Proverbs 17:24 puts it this way: “Wisdom is with the one who has understanding, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.” What have you used in your escape from dealing with the truth? Where have you looked for peace or security?

Most of us have chosen to accept the world’s suggestions and found that the results haven’t produced anything that works. It may have seemed great at the time, but now that we’re going deeper into our problems, we can see why these things haven’t produced what we’d been searching for. None of them have gotten to the root causes and certainly couldn’t be called wise choices when we look at them honestly. This isn’t a new condition. The apostle Paul talked about it in his book to the Roman church. In chapter 12 verse 2 he warned them, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Our culture isn’t made according to the pattern of life God gives us in the Bible; it is often openly hostile to it. But Paul tells us that allowing God to give us a new way of thinking will help us understand what He wants us to do and why it’s better than our plans have been.

Discernment is defined as the ability to look at information with keen insight and good judgment. It doesn’t come from making snap decisions or doing something just because someone told you it was good. It goes beyond just knowing the facts and involves closer examination before acting.

Getting more familiar and comfortable with God’s word helps us with this process. Paul tells his young assistant Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.” James confirms this in his book in chapter 1 verse 26: “Don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you’re only fooling yourselves.” God’s Word is better than any self-help book there is!

We can use what we’re learning to evaluate how we’ve affected our minds and bodies. Now that we have a clearer picture of what God’s design is, we can start making changes that aren’t just based on our feelings or outside sources. Some of these changes may seem hard or almost impossible to make if we try doing them with our own willpower. Jesus recognized our human limitations when He took a few of His disciples to the garden to be with Him while He prayed. In Mark 14:38, He told them “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” He knew there would be an inner battle going on, just like we’ve all experienced when we’re tempted to choose one path over another.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Proverbs 17:24 and 15:14, Romans 12:1-2, James 1:22, 2 Timothy 3:16, Mark 14:38, Philippians 4:6-7, Psalm 139:13-14, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

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How are you growing in your relationship with the Lord? What new habits are you developing?

# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 11



This week, we're going to look more closely at confession. Hopefully you're already seeing how necessary and freeing it can be and have already started to do this. Our first confession is to God. It's not that He doesn't already know what we've done, but we need to admit those actions and choose to turn away from them. Proverbs 28:13 explains, "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy." We may have told ourselves in the past that the old ways weren't that bad, but God has been revealing how damaging they really were. Knowing that Jesus paid for all of that when He chose to cover our sins, we can stop avoiding the truth. There will be consequences to face, but we can be confident that God won't desert us.

This is the first part of "coming clean" about the past, and you may have already done it. It's also important to share your story with another person. This may seem harder than confessing to God, but James 5:16 tells us, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." It may sound strange, but when you open up to someone you trust, you feel greater acceptance. While you may have already shared some sensitive information with your table group or another person, it may seem too difficult to be totally open with anyone. The things we're most fearful of sharing are holding us back, often because of pride in our image. We fear their judgment and try to go back to the old mask-wearing protection of the past. But we can only see what's really going on if we're willing to take action and get rid of everything that's in the way.

We can try to keep all of this stuffed down out of sight, but the weight of keeping our secrets gets heavier the longer we hold on to them. Think back to where you were in the beginning, before you decided to change. Remember the pressure of trying to live a false life that looked perfect on the outside. When you don't keep secrets, you don't have to keep track of the lies you've told to cover them or remember what story you told to which person. Everything is done in the open. There's no need to use substitutes for God because you have a real relationship with Him now. You see that you're a flawed person in a community of flawed people – no more pretending to be perfect to measure up to perfect people. 1 John 1:7 mentions this. "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."

Our enemies in the spiritual world want to keep us trapped in a life that's crushed under guilt and shame. These feelings are often stirred up to tell us we're not worthy of God's love and that's who we still are. Remember Romans 8:1 says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Condemnation comes from focusing on who we used to be and letting that remain our identity. It doesn't come from God. The Holy Spirit can get our attention when we're doing something wrong that leads us back into the old ways, but that's not condemnation—it's conviction.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 32:1-2 and 3-5, James 5:16, Matthew 7:3-5, 1 John 1:7, Romans 8:1 and 16, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Hebrews 4:16



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How have you grown or changed your view about this since being in Freedom?

# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 12



There are often typical daily reactions or choices that we just accept as normal and okay. We're used to them and don't stop to think about why we choose them or what they produce. Some are so subtle we don't even realize we're doing them. How do you handle a stressful day at work, and how do you plan to unwind afterward? Where do those attitudes come from? There are hundreds of these situations that can reveal a lot about our ideas of who's in control and how we should take care of ourselves. They're also areas where we can start justifying ourselves, telling God we really couldn't be expected to act any other way under those circumstances.

God will help us identify the specific areas that we haven't released to Him if we ask. They show us that we can't expect to be transformed by our own willpower alone. It's going to take God's insight to figure out what else should be changed. David experienced this and wrote about it in Psalm 143:10. "Help me to do Your will, for You are my God. Lead me in the good path, for Your Spirit is good." We need His direction as well as His strength to even see that we need a different response.

We were given the Holy Spirit to walk alongside us. When we get used to talking with Him, we learn more details about what's really going on in our minds and driving our reactions. We become more sensitive to His voice and more willing to trust His leadership. God will reveal lots of areas that need changes, but that doesn't mean He wants you to jump in and tackle them all at once. We've learned that our freedom is a process and it's important to keep that in mind here. God doesn't want you to get overwhelmed by the size of this process. He's patient and knows how impossible it can seem.

1 Peter 1:13-14 tells us to stay on target. "So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know better then."

Keep in mind that when God removes an old strategy of handling your life, you need to be prepared to let Him put in the substitute. Satan is ready to make his own suggestions, and so are some of our old friends or family. They may feel threatened by our new lifestyles. 1 Corinthians 15:33 warns, "Do not be misled. Bad company corrupts good character." Changing the places you go and the company you keep can help you stay on track. When someone gives up an addiction, a new one is often taken up to replace it, usually with the same bad results. That's a possibility for all of us if we don't replace our old problem with a solution that directs us toward God. It's too easy to excuse a new choice as "not as bad as the old one" without thinking about where this one will lead. We need to have a plan for handling temptation so we won't go backward.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Psalm 143:10 and 37:5, 1 Peter 1:13-14, James 4:10, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Matthew 12:43-45, Galatians 5:16

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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 13



At this point in the freedom process, it can be tempting to think we've got it figured out and can handle the rest of the way ourselves. We've learned some important tools and are trying them out. We may have begun to see positive results and think we already know everything it takes to make all the changes we'll ever need. We may be impatient and want to get through as soon as possible. We ask ourselves if we really need this community. We want to take back the control we gave to God.

Proverbs 16:9 says, "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." There's a big difference between making plans to act and actually carrying them out. We can have the best intentions of sticking with the new ways, but find ourselves going back into the old default mode when the pressure of our lives builds up. Going off on our own makes it easy to isolate ourselves. Then we get cut off from encouragement and positive resources. **This isn't a self-help course. We can't fix ourselves. God must be our leader and we need to let Him do the work in us if we want freedom that lasts.**

It's common to believe that all we need to do is change our behavior, to just stop doing the things that were destructive. This is certainly necessary, but it's only part of the picture. We may have just exchanged good actions for the old bad ones, but if we don't go after the thoughts that drive those actions, we'll eventually be right back in the same rut. Our thoughts develop tough roots that need to be seriously addressed.

These thoughts can make us believe we're helpless failures, victims of bad circumstances, or incapable of lasting change. We may think no one will fight for us so we have to go on the attack to get what we need. We may want what others have and believe that God is holding out on us, becoming resentful and ungrateful. Thoughts like these and many others can overtake us and become permanent parts of our identities if we just accept them. Ephesians 4:23 has a better way: "Let your minds and hearts be made new." Our minds are changed so our hearts can follow into new actions.

Remind yourself of your victories and share them with each other. Think about the way your words and thoughts are becoming more positive and hopeful and how that's affecting the way you look at your life.

One verse that shows us the power that's available to us is James 4:7: "So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Notice that our defense is made of submitting control to God, accepting His strength and using that strength to stand up to the devil. We reject his lies that say we are helpless and use the authority we have in Jesus to send him away. If you haven't started using this weapon, pick it up now.

### SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Proverbs 16:9, Psalm 116:1 and 14, Ephesians 4:23, James 1:5-8, Matthew 6:34, Isaiah 43:18-19, 1 Peter 5:8-9, Matthew 4:1-11, James 4:7





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How are you letting the Holy Spirit lead you?

# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 14



Forgiving those who have wronged us is a huge step toward spiritual freedom. This may be hard to do, especially if there was sexual, verbal, or physical abuse. We'll get into what this forgiveness means, but first, we need to think about God's forgiveness to us.

Romans 3:22-24 says, "We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in His sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty of sin." It may be easier to think of how someone else has "fallen short", but Paul reminds us that we're all in the same condition. Rather than trying to keep score by comparing another person's sins to ours, we need to focus on God's amazing love for us that gives us a clean slate instead of what we deserve.

This doesn't mean that we deny the wrong that was done or the damage it caused. It doesn't excuse the actions. It doesn't tell us to just forget all about it. Forgiving is letting go of the offense and leaving it in God's hands. When we hold on to unforgiveness, we're often tied up in thoughts of bitterness, helplessness, or revenge. Even if the other person never takes responsibility or asks us to forgive them, we can still be freed from carrying this weight around. **The world expects us to get even, often even encouraging us to stay focused on the pain to build anger and resentment.** This just keeps us stuck in a cycle that never ends until one person says that's enough. Because of the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, we can be the one to stop it. Every time we choose to forgive, we win another battle.

One of the biggest benefits we have when we forgive others is an increase in peace. Colossians 3:15 says: "And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body, you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful." This isn't something we have to create by ourselves, we just make room for Jesus to come in and fill us with His peace. When we spend time thinking about all He's done and thanking Him for all of the changes He's making, we add gratitude to peace for even more freedom.

There are times when we may want to hold God accountable for the harm we've received. We may want to ask Him how He could have allowed this to happen. God gave all people free will, and that means we have the ability to choose how we use that will. Using it selfishly can result in the damage we've received as well as the damage we've caused. Pain and suffering can come from these choices. But God will restore the peace that was taken away, He will support us when we feel unable to go on, He will provide the strength to do the work necessary to become whole, and He'll replace the shaky foundation we've made from trying to be in control with a solid one He's made Himself. (1 Peter 5:10) These are His gifts to us because He loves us.

### SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Romans 3:22-24, Matthew 18:21-35, Romans 12:14, 17 and 21, Colossians 3:15, 1 Peter 5:10, Joshua 24:15, Psalm 119:30, Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 22:36-40



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 15



We continue to take strong steps toward choosing to live in freedom and obedience to God in our daily interactions. It's getting easier to spot the things that used to trip us up and cause us to act on impulse instead of careful thought. The old ways are starting to look less appealing and we're recognizing the Holy Spirit's voice when we need to make decisions. Forgiving doesn't seem as impossible as it once did. We need to remember, though, what got us to this place: God's grace, not our own efforts.

Grace has been described as God's undeserved favor. It doesn't mean that He excuses or ignores our sins, He pays for them through Jesus. Grace depends on God's character, not our conduct. See how Paul explains it in Ephesians 2:4-7: "But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Jesus from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For He raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of His incredible wealth of grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all He has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus."

We build barriers to God's love when we hold on to the idea that we're earning His grace. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:9, "He saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time." Remember, following the rules isn't what saves us. It comes from our faith in Jesus as the One who covers our failures. He changes our hearts so we want to do what He says. The changes we're making in how we live now come from faith. What used to seem impossible is now not only possible but becomes our focus and goal.

Obedience allows us to live in freedom from our damage. He gives us a new identity that doesn't come from what others say or what we may have said about ourselves. Romans 5:2 shows us a beautiful picture of who we are now. "Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory."

He also gives us a different perspective on the other people in our lives, especially those that are hard to love. We're battling our human tendencies when we choose to forgive, so we need the reminder Paul gives in Colossians 3:13. "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." Making allowance just means we understand that sin is the default mode in human life. That doesn't justify the offence, but we leave it to God to sort out each person's accountability. Other people will be affected by the difference they see in our lives. God gives us the power to move forward instead of living in the past. We can show them that kind of change is available to them too.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Ephesians 2:4-7, 2 Timothy 1:9, Philippians 3:9, Romans 5:2, Colossians 3:13, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, Colossians 1:6



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 16



Have you ever made great progress in an area of your life and watched it fade when you lost sight of what got you there in the first place?

At this point in our semester, we need to continue using the tools that will help us be consistent in following God and His plans for us. We need to remember that freedom isn't just a short trip, it's a lifetime adventure.

First, take some quiet time to honestly assess where you are in the journey. Are there any issues that still pop up and sidetrack you? What lies are still lurking in the back of your mind, and how do you respond when your enemy throws them at you? Are you using the truth you've learned and are you confident in how you stand in God's eyes? This is a time to pray again as David did in Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts. Examine me, and see if I have not represented my feelings as they really are. Keep on always searching me out." We're making ourselves open to God's input at every moment and listening to what He reveals.

Paul talks to the early church in Corinth about the necessity for this kind of checkup. In 1 Corinthians 10:12, he says, "If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall." In other words, pay attention! This happens when we think we're finally mature enough to figure everything out on our own and forget we really need to stay in teamwork with God. By now we should understand how much we need God's word. It can sharpen our discernment in telling the truth from the lies our enemy sends. Remember that Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) He's the real truth. Just as those who work with cash learn to spot counterfeits by studying the real things, we can recognize how Satan uses his imitations to deceive and pull us away from the right way. The Bible helps us to be prepared for his attacks by giving us examples of those who have succeeded and failed in the battle.

Battle Tactics against the Enemy:

- Keep a collection of Scriptures on hand—there is more power in God's Word than we recognize!
- Stay committed to prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Maintain exposure to content that encourages growth and healthier places for your mind to dwell
- Maintain accountability in your relationships—continue to release unforgiveness and offense any time they try to come into your spirit; continue to bring things out into the light with your Freedom table

### SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Psalm 139:23-24, 1 Corinthians 10:12, Hebrews 10:23, John 14:6, Psalm 119:9-11, 27 and 34, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Matthew 6:5-13, Galatians 5:7-8, Colossians 3:1-10



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 17



Facing temptation is a fact of life for every Christ follower. It's important to know that being tempted isn't sin and doesn't mean we're guaranteed to give in. It just means we need to be aware of the potential to choose the wrong way.

Take a look at Matthew 4:1-11. Satan chose to tempt Jesus in three areas: His physical needs, His obedience to the boundaries His Father had set up for His time on earth, and the choice between following His own desires or God's plan. Hebrews 2:18 says, "Because Jesus was tempted as we are and suffered as we do, He understands us and He is able to help us when we are tempted." He knows exactly what we're up against and how hard it can be to stay committed to what God has for us.

Remember how He countered Satan with scripture? God uses His word to equip us too. When we find ourselves in what seems like a losing battle against giving in and going backward, it's time to stop and ask ourselves what's made us so vulnerable now? What changed? What's the weak spot in our armor? Paul talks about the need for a reality check in Romans 12:3. "Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us." Pride in our successes can prevent us from noticing patterns of compromise or make us ignore warning signs. Paul goes on in Galatians 3:3, "How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?"

Instead of just waiting for temptation to strike and hoping that we'll resist, we need to develop a plan for dealing with it now, starting in the mind. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 advises, "Test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good." When a thought pops into your head, hold it there for examination and compare it to what God says. This honest communication with God will redirect your body and mind to follow Him. James 1:14-15 spells this out plainly. "Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow it gives birth to death." This shows that although the thought itself is just a thought initially, it could become a reality. Ask God to show you if this idea came from your own mind or from someone else.

So what happens if you take that step from thinking about a temptation to acting on it? Do you go back to square one with God? No, that's part of the all or nothing thinking that discourages people from coming back to Him when they fall. We confess and turn back to Him, confident that He'll walk us through what happened and show us how to avoid it next time. We should go to Him first, but if we don't, our failures don't have to be the end of our stories. He doesn't give up on us. He is faithful to keep walking with us and continues to renew our minds.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Matthew 4:1-11, Hebrews 2:18 and 10:25, Zechariah 4:6, Romans 12:3, Galatians 3:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Psalm 46:10 and 1:1, James 1:14-15, 1 John 2:1



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# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 18



Psalm 100 is only 5 verses long, but it's packed with praise. Verse 4 tells us to "Enter His gates with thanksgiving; go into His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him." Instead of setting aside one day for thanksgiving like we do in this country, we can choose to tell God how much we appreciate and love Him any time we go into His presence. Make it a habit to thank Him for small things as well as major breakthroughs. Our prayers can be an immediate response in reaction to what He's doing in the moment.

Read all of Psalm 107. It's quite a bit longer, but it gets into many circumstances where God's love and deliverance can be seen. It tells about homeless exiles, wanderers in the wilderness, those who've been rebellious or foolish and are facing the consequences of their choices, and those in dangerous situations. God came through for each one of them, as He has for us. Verse 1 starts off with the theme of the psalm. "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good! His faithful love endures forever."

See if you can relate to verses 14-15: "He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; He snapped their chains. Give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and wonderful deeds for mankind." Spend some time thinking about the chains God has broken for you and how your life has changed. Verses 42-43 show the result of that reflection. "The godly will see these things and be glad, while the wicked are struck silent. Those who are wise will take all this to heart; they will see in our history the faithful love of the Lord." You have a history with God. Start at the beginning and follow the evidence of His presence and action throughout your life. Ask Him to show you how He was with you when you didn't realize it at the time.

Go through the next 3 verses, thinking about the people and resources He's given you to help you stay on course. Take time to thank Him for the input they've had. As you're remembering what people have done for you, don't be afraid to tell them how much they've helped to make your progress easier.

In Hebrews 12:1, Paul reveals the value of reading the bible for stories about God's work over thousands of years in the lives of people who weren't all that different from us. Start your own collection of stories and verses that have been especially encouraging to you and share them with others.

Spending time with God and being truly grateful for what He's done and is doing now is the best defense against negative attitudes and pity parties. Whether you feel you've come a long way or are still near the starting point, you can find evidence of growth and healing. The next time Satan comes around with his bag of garbage to throw on you, you can use these verses as a weapon to destroy his attack.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Psalm 100:4, 107:1, 14-15 and 42-43, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 1 Peter 3:8, Hebrews 12:1, Psalm 19:1-4 and 8:3-4, Matthew 10:29-31



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Share with the table at least one thing you are grateful for.

# NEW LIFE FREEDOM

## Lesson 19



We've come to the last lesson in this cycle, and some of us are wondering, now what? Now comes the rest of your story. What will you do with what you've learned? How can you stay focused and successful in the maturing of your faith and the development of your relationship with God? You may be concerned about losing momentum, but it doesn't have to be that way. Continuing your daily communication with God will help you spot issues you haven't dealt with fully or sources of confusion and distraction along the way. Don't let things build up until they seem impossible to handle. The best time to deal with an issue is now.

We have the Holy Spirit as our constant guide and counselor. Galatians 5:25 tells us, "Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives." Don't hold anything back from Him. Be completely open to His prompting. You can sense when He puts a finger on an attitude or action and invites you to stop and take a look at what's behind it and the best way to approach that situation. The more you listen, the more sensitive you'll get to these times.

The urge to take over can pop up when we start to panic if things seem out of control in our current situation. This is a good time to slow down and honestly think about how different our lives are now compared to the past. Use Galatians 5:13 to help with this. "For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love." Breaking this verse down, we see we're in a new lifestyle now, not a temporary place. This doesn't include going back and forth between being ruled by our old choices and following the new. It's about staying in a commitment to God's leadership and allowing Him to use us to benefit others as well as ourselves. The old life of bondage was based on pleasing or fixing ourselves. We're now taking deliberate actions to keep moving forward in freedom.

We may have to address fears of failure and the unknown, but we don't have to do it alone. We still have a support team that can continue to encourage us if we stay connected to them. Proverbs 13:20 says, "Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get into trouble." This is pretty basic. We get to decide what advice we take, what resources we use, and what outcomes we want. As much as we'd like to arrive at the finish line now and coast all the way home, this is going to be the ongoing writing of our stories. If that seems too big, remember that any story is made up of small parts. It has to be done one day at a time.

If you decide to go through the six month cycle of teachings again, you can be sure God will show you new things. We're always growing, and His word is always fresh. If you decide to move on to other things, you have that same assurance of growth when you stay open to the Holy Spirit. He reminds us of what we've learned if we listen. Either way, God has promised to be with you. Keep writing and sharing your story.

### **SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Galatians 5:25, Luke 10:38-42, Ephesians 1:6-9, Galatians 5:13, Proverbs 13:20, Psalm 34:4-6



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

45



# PRAYER



Philippians 4:6-7 says “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

One of the most fundamental things Christians need to walk in freedom is prayer. Prayer (talking with and hearing from God) was a foundational piece of Jesus’s life here on earth (Luke 5:16). However, many Christians have a lackluster experience with prayer. Very often seasoned Christians will express frustration with hearing from God, feeling like their prayers go unanswered, or having a toxic prayer life... treating God like a genie to grant wishes or an absent father. We want to change your experience with prayer. We believe what the Bible says about prayer—that it is powerful and real, and that as believers we have access to the peace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **We teach you to:**

Pray more potently using scripture  
Intercede for others in need  
Discern whether an idea, vision, or word is from God  
Pray with authority and confidence given to you from Christ  
Listen to the Holy Spirit guiding you  
Set aside a quiet time  
Couple fasting, confession, and prayer

Don’t worry. Whether you are new to Christianity or a veteran believer, we will take you step by step to praying with confidence to a God who is listening and will respond. We believe what the Bible says about prayer—that it is powerful and real, and that as believers we have access to the peace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit (Mark 11:24).

We will end each Tuesday night with praying for each other using prayers based in scripture like these:

Proverbs 18:21 says that “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.” In the name of Jesus I pray death to (depression) and life to (joy).

Mark 11:22-24 Jesus says “Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.” In the name of Jesus I believe Jesus has healed me.

Matthew 18:18 Jesus says “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” In the name of Jesus I bind (lust) and loose (purity) in my life.



# WHAT IS A PRAYER SESSION?



You'll hear this phrase a lot during your time in Freedom! Our Christian walk was meant to be done both in private and in community. A prayer session is a dedicated time of intentional and focused prayer with fellow believers. You are the main... A prayer session is a dedicated time of intentional and focused prayer. You are the main participant. You will be guided through processes like inner healing and deliverance by a prayer leader and supported by other prayer ministers as well. There are usually 3-4 people in the room. Prayer sessions are private and confidential and are a major step in the freedom process!

In prayer sessions, the team of prayer ministers acknowledges that first, we must submit to the Lord: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We recognize that all authority we claim over demonic oppression and influence comes from Jesus himself: "And he [Jesus] called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction" (Matthew 10:1). We walk through the process of confession: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16). And we recognize the power of forgiveness in loosing us from bondage: "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

## BRINGING FREEDOM TO MY HOME



After or during your time in New Life Freedom it may become apparent to you that there is something that feels spiritually detrimental in your home. This could be from ungodly objects brought into your home or perhaps ungodly activities that have happened in your home. We want our homes to be peaceful, safe, and places that God is honored. (Deut 7:26)

You might find it beneficial to rid your house of paraphernalia from a previous sinful habit, or objects that are "spiritual" but not godly and pray over your home. This is also something your NLF table or your NLF leaders can help you with. Simply let your freedom table leader know you are interested in finding out more and they can help guide you or help find people to pray with you.

# WALKING IN FREEDOM



Freedom is not just a class you attend, it is a lifestyle. Whether you continue to attend New Life Freedom or are looking for other ways to connect and grow at New Life, here are some ways to continue to walk in the freedom you have in Christ.

## **JOINING A LIFE GROUP**

New Life Community Church offers groups of 8-15 people that are in various stages of life: single, married, young, and old. Some of these groups have special focus but most are open to anyone. This gives you an opportunity to have community, accountability, and to continue to grow in the word. Join today on the app under the “more” tab or contact the church for help.

## **WOMEN’S LARGE GROUPS**

There are groups similar in format to New Life Freedom for women. Our Rooted ministry is dedicated to women building community around God’s word. It follows a familiar “Large Room/Small Table” format that offers a chance to be known to a larger number of women but still have intimate accountability. Childcare and books are offered for a nominal fee when you register for semesters starting in January and August. See the NLCC app for details.

## **MEN’S LARGE GROUPS**

Men also have a familiar “Large Room/Small Table” format ministry. You can join at any time. The men take turns making dinner and studying the word together. This is a great opportunity to find spiritual fathers and brothers in Christ. Dates and times are on the NLCC app.

## **SERVING IN A MINISTRY**

A great way to connect to other Christ followers and your identity in Christ is by participating in serving at your local church. New Life Community Church has opportunities to serve in hospitality, creative arts, missions, youth, children, and much more. You can volunteer by visiting [newlifegardner.com/volunteer](http://newlifegardner.com/volunteer) or contacting the church office.

## **ATTEND WEEKEND SERVICES**

Weekend Services are a time that we all come together to serve each other and worship God. Walking in Freedom requires refreshing and is a responsibility that includes leading others to freedom. Weekend services are for the Lord, but by participating you can invite others into freedom, and help celebrate milestones like baptism. Service times are on our website and app.

## **KEEP YOUR FREEDOM RHYTHMS**

Don’t forget what brought you freedom. Prayer, quiet time, fasting, study, and community brought you here and will continue to help you walk in the new freedom you found.

# ADDITIONAL FREEDOM RESOURCES



## **BIBLE TRANSLATIONS:**

NKJV/KJV—offers a time honored translation and seeks to be a word for word translation.

ESV—also seeks to be a word for word translation, more modern language

Amplified—An ESV translation but with added explanation (in parenthesis)

NLT—Not a word for word translation but great for readability and understanding

Filament—Add the filament app to your NLT for extra study tools

## **BOOKS ON HOLY SPIRIT:**

Andrew Wommack—The New You and the Holy Spirit

Jack Deere—Surprised by the Power of the Spirit

Robert Morris—The God I Never Knew

## **BOOKS ON PRAYER:**

Erica Willis—Believe Boldly

Andrew Wommack—A Better Way to Pray

## **BOOKS ON CHRISTIAN LIVING:**

John Bevere—The Bait of Satan

Alan Hirsch—Permanent Revolution

Havilah Cunnington—Discovering & Activating My Spiritual Gifts

## **BOOKS ON CHURCH HISTORY:**

Eddy Hyatt—2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity

David Augustine—The Early Church Fathers Collection

## **BOOKS ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE:**

Dr. Jerry Robeson—Strongman's His Name, What's His Game

Derek Prince—They Shall Expel Demons

John Ramirez—Unmasking The Devil

## **HELPFUL APPS:**

Echo Prayer—helps remind you to pray and keep track of your answered prayer

The Bible App—set up a reading plan, receive daily devotions and have all translations

New Life Gardner—Our app has links to our freedom teachings and resources

# FREEDOM LEADERSHIP PATHWAY—WHERE CAN I GO FROM HERE?



After completing a semester of Freedom, there are several options regarding what's next. You may choose to go through another semester if that seems like what the Holy Spirit is calling you to do. Sometimes further freedom can be found by attending another round as an attendee. **Attendees** come regularly on Tuesday nights and participate in their table groups.

You may feel excited after completing your semester of Freedom and wonder how to take a next step. At this stage, we encourage you to prayerfully consider becoming a **Table Apprentice**. An apprentice begins a learning/training process with the goal of preparing to be a **Table Leader**. An apprentice will be actively coached and led by a current table leader, working through an apprentice leader manual together during the course of the semester. This may take one or more semesters before the apprentice is ready to move forward.

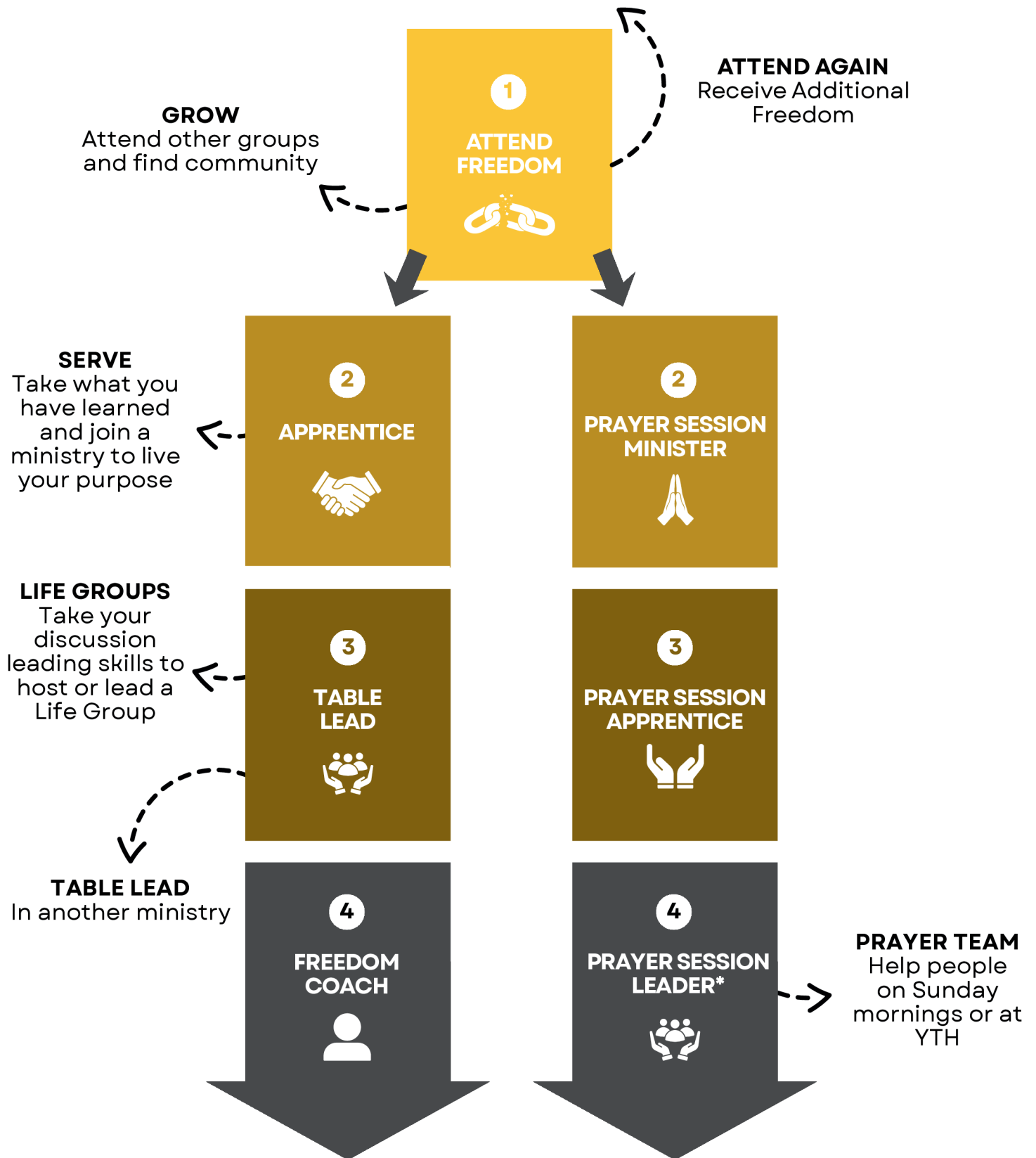
**Table Leaders** are the backbone of Freedom, and therefore this responsibility needs to be undertaken with utmost respect for the process of freedom and compassion for helping others into freedom as well. After successful completion of the apprenticeship process, an apprentice may become a table leader, at which point they would now have their own apprentice to train and develop along with leading their table. Table leading involves regular attendance on Tuesday nights, caring for table members and continuing to grow in your own personal freedom and relationship with the Lord.

**Table Support** is another option for leadership. If you are unable to fully commit to being a table leader, being table support is also a valuable addition to each individual table group. Table support leaders have also been apprenticed and would be capable of helping the table leader with discussion, answering questions, and leading prayer.

Additionally, we have many **Freedom Prayer Ministers**, who are vital to successful prayer sessions. Prayer ministers are able to listen to the Holy Spirit's leading and provide spiritual support during the prayer session.

Prayer sessions cannot take place without **Freedom Prayer Leaders**. These prayer session leaders invest in their personal relationships with the Holy Spirit. They know his voice and recognize when He gives direct words of knowledge, wisdom, or other insights. Prayer leaders also continue to grow and learn about spiritual warfare, particularly the tactics of demonic oppression. These leaders are called to do spiritual battle and be accountable to the Lord and the leaders of the Freedom ministry.

# LEADERSHIP PATH



**\*must get personal prayer session first**



# 20/20 CHALLENGE

## Quiet Time Focus



Get up 20 minutes early for 20 straight days, I promise you will feel different and be more prepared to face the day! Don't run into the battle without His presence!

The KEY to long-term freedom and victory in Christ is found in learning how to have a quiet time, this can also be described as going into the throne room of God, the Holy of Holies, the tent of meeting, entering the secret place, or simply basking in His presence. Usually there is a feeling of peace or emotional release when we encounter the Holy Spirit's manifest presence, but this is different for everyone and shouldn't only be tied to a feeling. "Because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are those that have not seen and yet have believed", so trust that each morning you are connecting with God even if you don't get a goosebump. Also note, it took me a few weeks of quiet time every morning before the feeling of His presence started to occur. Seek and you WILL find...

**Part 1: Worship, 10 minutes** – Most of prayer time is about worshiping our Creator and Heavenly Father, and thanking Him for what He has done. We are told to "enter His gates with Thanksgiving and His Courts with praise" Everyone does this differently but here are some examples:

- Youtube search "christian soaking music", play quietly in background
- Say out loud "Holy Spirit you are welcome here"
- Picture yourself entering boldly into presence of Jesus
- See yourself hugging Jesus and having conversation with him
- Speak scriptural declarations over yourself. Examples: "Father thank you that I am not rejected but am accepted into the beloved" (google search 'scriptural affirmations')
- Stir yourself up with memories of times God moved powerfully in your life
- Thank your "Abba" (daddy in Hebrew) for anything you can think of
- Thank Him for upcoming events and tell him you trust him with these endeavors
- Journal what you pray for and hear from the Lord, look back on day 21
- Ask Him to show you what it looks like when victory is achieved: Examples, 'Lord show me what it looks like when I am healed', 'Lord show me what peace looks like'
- Teaching: [www.AWMI.net](http://www.AWMI.net). search audio teachings: Power of Imagination

**Part 2: Petition / Supplication, 5 minutes** – Combination of asking for what you need and praying for others. Remember to take authority, if you (or your friend) is struggling with anxiety then bind anxiety and command it to leave! Pray blessings over your family and their day, upcoming events, etc.

- Teaching: [www.AWMI.net](http://www.AWMI.net). search audio teachings: Speak to the Mountain (Better way to pray series)

**Part 3: God's Word, 5 minutes** – God's primary way of speaking is through his written Word! We must know God's Word for ourselves and just like any relationship, it takes time (5 minutes is just a start, 30 minutes or more is ideal). Scripture is one of the main ways that God speaks to us, so if you don't know where to start try these books. Luke, Ephesians, and Proverbs.

# 20/20 CHALLENGE

## Fasting Focus



As a group, Freedom will execute three, 24 hour fasts during the course of the 20/20 challenge. Length of fast is not necessarily the goal here, but consistency. Simply eat dinner on the evening of November 19th, miss the next breakfast and lunch, and eat again the evening of November 20th (then again November 26-27 + December 3-4). When structured like this, fasting is very approachable and you can begin building endurance for longer fasts in the future!

The red letters in Mark 6:16-18 outline what it looks like to fast, but they start with the phrase “When you fast...”, not if you fast. This core discipline is a lost art and leads to a weaker spiritual body than Christ intended. The power’s evident in the deliverance of the boy from the deaf and dumb spirit: “This kind only comes out by prayer and fasting”. Fasting is the act of denying your flesh, making it submit to Christ, and in doing so, this allows the Holy Spirit’s presence to be more evident. Many people testify to better spiritual clarity during fasts which lines up with the Bible’s teachings that it was a critical component of repentance and / or seeking God’s voice. Clearly fasting was an important practice throughout Scripture and in the history of the church so the Lord is calling us to regain this very powerful tool. (also Matthew 6:16-18, Esther 4:16, Daniel 10:1-20, Joel 2:12, Isaiah 58:6, Psalm 69:10, Acts 13:3, Acts 14:23)

**Part 1: The approach** – Even though this is called a spiritual discipline, it's actually a privilege to practice fasting so that we can become closer to the Father. This doesn't earn us right-standing with God, Jesus' work on the cross has done that perfectly, but it does help us move closer to Him. And if it's “only by Faith that we please God” then trusting Him in this area will definitely please Him!

- Youtube search “Connecting with God through Fasting Jasmine Tate”, listen at least once
- Each morning ask Holy Spirit for the grace (un-earned heavenly empowerment) to fast
- As Jesus to reveal the name and purpose of this fast. For example, early in 2024 my weekly fasts have been seeking for the gift of ‘discerning of Spirits’
- The meal that starts the fast should be high in protein and greens, low in sugar and carbs. Don't do the “Fat Tuesday” approach!

**Part 2: The fast** – Remember this is a spiritual fast, not weight loss, so use hunger pangs to:

- pray and read scripture, utilize your 30 minute lunch break for this purpose as well
- Ask Holy Spirit to show you who needs prayer right now, then intercede for that person
- Alternate Option: Daniel Fast: eat “nothing pleasant”. (veggies and unleavened bread only)

**Part 3: The exit** – Ending a fast in a smart way is very important for both spiritual and physical reasons:

- Naturally - your blood sugar will be low so plan your meal ahead of time. Just like the approach, stay away from carbs and sugar and stick to greens and proteins.
- Spiritually - end by thanking him for the grace to successfully fast and believe that your Creator has heard your requests!



*Helping you heal from  
sin done to you, by you,  
and around you.*



**NEW LIFE  
FREEDOM**