



BUILD CHARACTER

FREEDOM

Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Experiences freedom in ever-increasing ways from addictions and sin patterns by surrendering to God and engaging authentic community.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

There are at least two errors commonly made when it comes to overcoming sin. The first is to pretend sin is not there. This is the professing follower of Christ who pretends to be perfect. They of course wouldn't say as much, but they carry an air of superiority and arrogance that results in a plastic religiosity. The Pharisees of Scripture were notorious for this. The second error is equally destructive but a bit more subtle. This is the error of fully recognizing one's sin, but not believing the sin can truly be overcome. This is not the person who is stuck in their arrogance of perfection, but the person who is stuck in the despair of their imperfection. For some, they are stuck in their sin because they're convinced the situation is hopeless. For others, they are stuck in their sin, because they're convinced that to be sinful is to be authentic and to claim to have overcome a past sin is to be inauthentic, and they would never want to be that. These errors, denying sin and being stuck in sin, are two ditches on opposite sides of the same road. In the middle is Scripture's teaching on freedom.

"Sin is like compulsive or addictive habits that seem to control our actions even when we don't want them to and after we swear we will 'never do it again.' Paradoxically, even though we are powerless to defeat Sin on our own, we are responsible for our Sin and for seeking help to stop sinning, a seeking that leads us to God."
-- Keith Miller

To be free, according to Scripture, is not to just do whatever one wants to do, but it is freedom from destructive patterns of living. Jesus said, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). We know this slavery when we consider how challenging—impossible—it seems to break destructive patterns of living in our own lives. We struggle with substance abuse, eating disorders, lust, greed, and more. It is easy to remain convinced that these are realities we must simply accommodate. But Jesus was clear that "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Paul addresses the same theme from a different angle when he talks about the new life available to us through Christ. He points to the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead as the Spirit that will raise us out of our destructive patterns so "we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4). Freedom is possible. Available to us is a power that raises the dead and breaks us out of bondage. To diminish this power, or to attempt to live in our own strength, is to minimize the gospel and neglect the authentic kind of living that is truly available to us.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- The ability to explain Scripture's teaching on freedom.
- Can name past destructive patterns that are no longer active in one's life.
- Is not clinging to any current destructive patterns by being unwilling to submit them to God's grace and power.
- The desire, ability and practice of helping others gain true freedom.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent do you believe that, by grace, you can overcome destructive patterns of living?

Galatians 5:1

Observations:

Discernment question: What form does slavery take in your life? (anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, fear, coveting, negativity, etc.) How does it wreak havoc in your life?



Proverbs 20:1, 23:20-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you control your physical appetites for food, drink, or any physical substances?

Isaiah 5:11-12

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you give alcohol or other substances to great a focus in your life?



John 8:31-36

Observations:

Discernment Question: From what has Christ set you free? From what do you need Christ to set you free?

Romans 6:1-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent is your current life characterized by the new and resurrected life in Christ?



Romans 13:13-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you engage any form of sex outside of marriage (premarital, extramarital, pornography, etc.)? If so, why?

1 Corinthians 10:13

Observations:

Discernment Question: What currently most tempts you? What way out does God provide?



Ephesians 5:18

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might the Spirit of God replace drunkenness or other destructive patterns in your life?

Philippians 3:12-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently looking forward to what is ahead in your walk with Christ? How stuck are you in past patterns? How might insights from this passage motivate you?



Titus 2:11-14, 3:3-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: How is grace teaching you to renounce and move beyond past destructive patterns? How is your salvation saving you not just for heaven but from destructive patterns today?

James 1:12-15

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you see desire and temptation giving birth to sin in your own life? What are some of the patterns you could recognize and disarm? What are practical things you could do to avoid these patterns in the future?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on freedom? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scripture Memory:

Romans 6:11-14 NIV

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Titus 2:11-14 NIV

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

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