

ON TRACK TO TOTAL FREEDOM BIBLE APPLICATION WEEK 3

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” (Hebrews 12:1-2a)

I. **The less baggage we carry the faster and further we will go in our race. Getting rid of baggage moves us from being stuck in survival mode into being fruitful and flourishing.**

- A. All of us have baggage. Baggage affects every area:
- Relationships
 - Energy
 - Joy and peace
 - Ability to fulfill our purpose
- B. Jesus said that for branches to bear fruit they must not only be watered but pruned.
- C. Jesus not only mentions how we need to be rid of the sins that binds us but weights that hold us back. There are many things that are pruned not because they are bad but because they distract, divert, and block us from bearing much fruit. **There are things we have in our lives that crowd out God and choices that we can make that make more room for God.** There are many things that can distract and keep me from saying my best “yes” to God. **Examples of things that might need to be pruned**
- Hurry and Worry
 - Screen time, too much entertainment, politics...
 - Brooding over slights, spats, and offenses
 - Letting memories and disappointments of the past have too much room in our minds
 - Expectations, thinking about what people are thinking of us...
- D. To bear fruit we need to let God replace time, thoughts, and actions that aren’t producing fruit, with time spent in thoughts and actions that make room for God to produce fruit through our lives. **Pruning is the relentless process of replacing what is less important with what is more or most important.**
“I have the right to do anything,” you say-but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything”-but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.” (I Corinthians 10:23-24)

II. **A second key to being on track to freedom is to see freedom not as the absence of pressures and issues but as the process where we allow the presence of God in us to be bigger than those issues.**

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Cor. 3:17)

- A. Freedom is not the absence of stressors and frustrating things but the presence of God’s peace in the middle of those things.

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.” (Isaiah 26:3)

“If we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16)

- Freedom is not the absence of difficult people but the presence of love that covers a multitude of sins.

- Freedom is not the absence of weakness, but the presence of God’s strength in our weakness.
 - Freedom is not coming to a place where you don’t need God and friends in your life; it is coming to a place where we learn to find the most possible strength in God and others to live the life God has called us to live.
- B. A key part of accessing this freedom is allowing God’s truth to replace lies that keep us from letting God’s Spirit be victoriously present in those areas of life where we find ourselves bound or oppressed.
“You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:32)
1. We can’t access the Spirit’s freedom when we believe lies like:
 - I can never get over my past.
 - What has happened ruins my chance of joy and freedom.
 - I am just a ... failure, no good at... I will never be able to forgive, overcome.
 2. When we believe God’s truth, those lies can be broken and we can receive the power of the Holy Spirit into that area of our life to change things.
 3. We should ask Holy Spirit to show us lies we have believed and to show us what truth He wants to speak to our heart to replace those things. We not only need the presence of words of truth but the Holy Spirit to be the source, helping us to receive and have those truths written on our hearts.
- C. Along with truth from God’s Word, transparency with faith friends is essential to knowing and growing in freedom. Freedom comes as we remove the masks we put on to appear well and openly allow the struggles of our journey to be made known. God uses our willingness to humble ourselves and the unconditional love and support of friends to break strangleholds of bondage and empower us to move forward in our journey to freedom. *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16)*
- D. It is not only important to receive and share the journey of freedom. It is also important to learn to stand firm and fight for our freedom. The enemy is always trying to steal freedom. Our victory comes from standing not on how we feel or how we have performed but completely on what Jesus did and achieved for us on the cross. Freedom is an accomplished fact we stand in not just a nice idea we hope for.
“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

Questions for Discussion

1. What are examples of weights in your life today that are hindering or slowing down your journey to growth and freedom? What lesser activities or practices might God want you to think about replacing with higher priorities?
2. Where have you had the experience of being filled and focused on God to the degree that old bondages fell by the wayside?
3. What are some examples of lies God might be asking you to allow Him to replace with truth?
4. When it comes to investing in transparent relationships that will help you be free, what is the hardest part of that for you?
5. Where could the group agree with you in faith to stand firm in the freedom that Christ has given?