

FREEDOM

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

SO IF THE SON SETS YOU FREE
YOU ARE FREE INDEED.

JOHN 8:36

INTRODUCTION

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free! That's what Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1, and Jesus Himself said that He came to the earth so that we may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10). Just imagine that: life abundant. Not barely surviving, but truly living. It means days filled with hope, joy, and purpose. This is the kind of life God always intended for you to have.

God wants a relationship with you and He sent His Son, Jesus, to bridge the gap between earth and heaven so you could know Him. The journey may not be easy, but it will be rewarding. During this semester you will be the one who decides how far you are willing to go to find freedom. Here is a promise from Jeremiah 29:13, "If you seek Him with your whole heart, you will find Him."

THE PURSUIT OF FREEDOM BEGINS TODAY!

Getting Your Group Started

Give an overview of the semester and let your group know what to expect. Each section of the curriculum is designed to be read the week before it is discussed, and there are opportunities for response and reflection each week. Encourage your participants to go all in with the curriculum. They will get out of it what they put into it!

Explain to your group what each meeting will look like. Let them know you want to respect their time and will start and end on time every week. Participants appreciate structure and knowing exactly what to expect.

Share the dates of the Freedom Retreat and encourage everyone to mark their calendars and make plans to be there.

Group Structure

- Play one worship song to help people settle their hearts and their minds.
- Facilitate discussion to help group members continue to process and get the most out of that week's teaching. Discussion questions are provided for you each week.
- Set aside time for individual prayer for each person. Be sensitive of the needs of your group in this area, and remember individual prayer is an important part of preparing your participants for the retreat.

Tip: You may also offer for the participants to share prayer requests on index cards. Not only does it provide a private way for participants to share requests, it also is a great way for you to remember how to pray for your group during the week.

WEEK



You will watch the Section One Video as a group this week. Videos are available for streaming and download at freedom.churchofthehighlands.com/media.

OVERVIEW

The second story in the Bible describes two trees from the Garden of Eden: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life.

It is the second story because everything in our Christian lives is filtered through the idea of the two trees. God gave Adam and Eve the choice between the two trees. We have the choice to filter our lives through one tree or the other. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil says, "You must do more to get to God." It keeps us stuck trying to get God's approval. The Tree of Life says, "Receive the fact that Jesus already loves you." Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thinking causes us to obey out of duty rather than obeying out of delight as we do in Tree of Life thinking.

There are four responses that will help us filter our lives through the Tree of Life:

1. *Fall in love with Jesus.*
2. *Serve God through relationship not rules.*
3. *Respond to all sin with life.*
4. *Guard your heart from going back.*

Discussion Guide

- Which tree do you think you live in and filter your life through the most?
- Do you find yourself "doing more" to get to God and earn His approval? If so, how?
- Discuss religion versus relationship. Do you feel like you obey God out of duty or delight?
- What are some practical ways you can choose life in your relationship with God and with other people?

Application

- Encourage your participants to look for ways they might act and react based on Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thinking.
- Ask them to be prepared to share some examples next week if they are comfortable.

Prayer Focus

- During your individual prayer time with group members, remember that some of your participants might not have received Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This could be their first introduction to the message of Jesus, or they may have only experienced religion rather than a relationship with God. Cover the topic of salvation with each of your participants during individual prayer, and if they are ready to give their heart to Jesus, pray the prayer of salvation with them.

Prayer of Salvation:

Dear Jesus, Thank You for dying on the cross and making a way for me to come to God. I receive this extravagant gift and ask You to come into my heart and be the Lord of my life. I give You all of me and ask You to turn my life around for Your glory. Fill me with Your Spirit and help me live the life You died to give me. In Jesus name, Amen.

During your daily prayer over your group during the week, pray for good, healthy relationships to be formed within the group and that the participants feel the group is a safe place and are transparent in discussion. Pray for your participants to go all in and experience all God has for them.

Notes & Prayer Requests

Week 1

WEEK



THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL & THE TREE OF LIFE

OVERVIEW

- Tree of Life: Freedom, Grace, Eternal life, God is good, God is forgiving.
- Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: Bondage, The Law, Leads to death, God is only a judge, We are condemned.

After consuming the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam and Eve hid, but God came looking for them. God is in love with sinful man and sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue people.

Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil:

- The fruit is knowledge.
It is not wrong to have knowledge, but we must evaluate our motives to obtain it. Are we wanting to exalt ourselves or gain God's wisdom and understanding? Using godly wisdom allows us to become more like God as we emulate Him. Worldly wisdom leads us to sin, which alienates us from God.
- The fruit is deadly.
The desire to know is in direct opposition to the desire to trust. Adam and Eve didn't die physically but died spiritually upon consuming the fruit.
- The fruit is consumed.
Ideas are ingested in our minds and then sin is conceived. The first sin came about when Eve talked to Adam about it. Through a conversation, they consumed the idea and began to process it. This progression tells us that sin does not begin with the act, it begins in our minds.
- The fruit causes separation.
God didn't separate Himself from Adam and Eve; instead, they hid from Him after consuming the fruit. God searched for them because He loved them. When we see His heart for us, we will run to Him instead of hiding from Him when we sin. We must get to the point where no matter what has happened in our lives, we take responsibility for our own lives. We can no longer blame anyone else for the quality of our relationship with God.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil produces shame and victimization. Shame causes us to separate ourselves from God. Victimization causes us to blame others, displacing our responsibility for the condition of our lives and souls.

The Fruit of Living in the Tree of Life:

- The Tree of Life results in fellowship with God. The only way to experience abundant life is truly knowing the living God. He asked us to love Him, but only after His lavish display of love for us through the sacrifice of Jesus. Fellowship with God results in innocence

not the other way around. As we spend more time walking with God, listening to His voice, talking to Him, obeying Him, worshiping Him, and enjoying Him, we will notice a transformation taking place, not only on the outside, but on the inside as well. We will become transparent and unashamed before Him.

- Innocence is a conduit of God's power. As we seek God and submit our lives to Him, He equips us for every good work.
- Innocence results in freedom. We will sin and fall, but if we sin with the Tree of Life as our perspective, we can easily receive forgiveness and get back up.

Discussion Guide

- Ask participants to share examples of ways they acted and reacted out of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil throughout the previous week.
- Are there things in your past that have caused you to want to hide from God?
- Have you used knowledge of God as a basis of your relationship with Him?
- What are some ways that you might have gotten caught up in religion and the Law versus the freedom and grace that result from a relationship with God?
- Have you ever been overcome by shame? The way to overcome shame is to start seeing ourselves the way God sees us. Throughout the semester, we will cover ways to align our perspectives with God's and to let Him move in our hearts.
- Ask participants to share examples of ways they acted and reacted out of Tree of Life thinking throughout the previous week.
- Do you feel completely innocent before God? What would it be like to have true fellowship with God?
- Do you live your life as a son or a servant?
- Do your daily responses and decisions bring life to others? In what tree do you find yourself living in the most?

Application

Encourage your participants to pay attention over the next week to how they might be acting and reacting based on Tree of Life or Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thinking, and ask them to come prepared to share some examples next week. Emphasize the importance of daily time in worship, God's Word, and prayer.

Prayer Focus

- Pray that any incorrect views of God will be revealed to your participants and that they will be able to see Him as a loving Father who is searching for them.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas in which participants have operated out of shame and victimization.
- Pray that your participants understand that it is a daily choice to live in the Tree of Life.

WEEK



SPIRITUAL ORDER & LIFE OF SURRENDER

OVERVIEW

Spiritual Order

God created us with three distinct parts: a spirit that must be redeemed, a soul that must be restored, and a body that must surrender. At the moment of salvation, our spirit is made alive in Christ and immediately put in right standing with God (Romans 3:24, 5:1). The Bible calls this event justification: “just-as-if I had never sinned.” However, the soul

and body will require time and effort to be conformed to the image of Christ.

This gradual process is called sanctification. God’s plan is that our spirits become the strongest part of our three-part design and be the “command center” of who we are and what we do:

- Our souls are also made up of three parts: the mind, the will, and the emotions. The soul enables us to experience relationships, appreciate the beauty of our surroundings, and think, reason, and express emotions. God formed our bodies from the earth.
- The body acts as a temporary house or shell that contains our soul and spirit. Our bodies have appetites, both good and bad. The Bible says to be careful of any sin that leads to our flesh getting anything it wants. Keeping our flesh in submission to our soul and our soul in submission to our spirit allows us to live in spiritual order, in tune with the voice of God.
- Spiritual order provides a framework for living in the Tree of Life. It allows you to live with your spirit united with God, and your soul and body submitted to your spirit. Living in spiritual order brings with it incredible benefits, such as protection, spiritual growth, and power to overcome obstacles in our lives.

Remember, if we fall short or give in to temptation, God convicts; He does not condemn. Godly sorrow for sin will lead us to repentance, which means “to turn and go the other way.” To walk in spiritual order, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. He is our counselor, our friend, our guide, and the One who reveals truth.

A Life of Surrender

When it comes to life with Christ, the act of giving up control to Him is actually the beginning of our freedom. A life of surrender requires trust, and that trust is developed in the context of relationship. Jesus left heaven and came to earth; He felt hunger, hurt, and rejection; He was beaten and crucified and three days later rose from the grave—all so He could prove His love, earn our trust, and be in relationship with us.

If you want to get to know God better, you will need to do what you would do when getting to know a friend: spend time with Him. This doesn’t have to look a certain

way. The key is to invite Him into your life. The Lord will reveal Himself to you as you do things that feed your spirit, like studying the Word, seeking Him in prayer, and building relationships with like-minded friends. God's way of thinking is much different-and much greater-than ours. As a believer, the only way you can live the abundant life God has for you is to fully surrender your life to Him and adopt His way of doing things.

God wants to make our lives smoother by being Lord over every-thing. It is only when He is in control that we can walk in spiritual order.

Anything we decide to hold on to becomes our responsibility to maintain.

However, if we surrender every area of our lives to Him, He will partner with us on this journey and bring us safely to our final destination. When we surrender everything to Him, we will find that His path to the fulfillment of our desires is better than we could have imagined on our own.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

- How does knowing your spirit is redeemed and in right standing with the Father change the way you see yourself?
- Are your thoughts driven by emotions? (Soul)
- Are your actions driven by your cravings? (Body)
- What are you doing to feed your spirit? (Spirit)
- What are some ways that you can intentionally feed your spirit to stay in spiritual order?
- What areas of your life have you not fully surrendered to God?
- Are you having a hard time trusting Him with those areas?
- What are some of the things or relationships you might value more than your relationship with God? How do you think your life would change if you pursued God with all your heart rather than those things?
- Have you surrendered your past, present, and future to God? Do you trust that His way is better than your own? Why or why not?

APPLICATION

Encourage your participants to be aware throughout this week of times when their soul and body are the strongest and times when their spirit is the strongest of the three. Also encourage them to think about the areas they need to surrender to the Lord.

PRAYER FOCUS

- Pray that the Lord will reveal and reconcile any areas not in spiritual order.
- Pray that their hearts will be softened and that they will understand that surrendering these things to the Lord and letting Him be in control will bring freedom and peace.

WEEK



You will watch the Section Two Video as a group this week. Videos are available for streaming and download at freedom.churchofthehighlands.com/media.

OVERVIEW

This video touches on surrender, forgiveness, and the power of the spoken word.

The condition of your heart is revealed by outward symptoms (giving in to temptation, depression, anger, lust, etc.). When these symptoms are present, there is a deeper

issue, and it is associated with the heart.

There are four blockages of the heart: selfishness, bitterness, rejection, and evil thoughts. In order to remove the blockage of selfishness, we must actively surrender our lives to God. Bitterness occurs and blocks our hearts when we hold on to a hurt caused by another person, and we must live a life of forgiveness to remove the blockage. A seed of rejection planted in our lives may also cause a blockage, and we can reverse this curse of rejection by discovering and receiving God's acceptance of us through the power of His Word. Evil thoughts result when we allow ourselves to be exposed to unholy things or speak lies over ourselves. These evil thoughts need to be replaced with truth from God's Word.

We need to take steps to remove these blockages from our hearts in order to live in freedom. Invite the Holy Spirit to show you any ways in which your heart is blocked. Invite Him to change you. Invite Him to fill you so that your heart will be full of only what is good.

Discussion Guide

- Which one of the four blockages of the heart (selfishness, bitterness, rejection, evil thoughts) did you relate to the most? How might it be holding you back? What practical steps can you take to remove the blockage?
- Have you ever thought about your words having power? Do you think you primarily speak words of life or words of death?

Prayer Focus

- Pray that each participant recognizes any selfishness, bitterness, rejection, or evil thoughts that are blocking their heart from all God has for them.
- Pray that they are open to the Holy Spirit showing them these areas, changing them, and blessing and filling them with truth!

Notes & Prayer Requests

Weeks 2-4

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WEEK



FORGIVENESS

OVERVIEW

Because we live in a fallen world, we face the realities of hurt and offense. Harboring unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting another person to die; it does much greater harm to us than the person we refuse to forgive. Offense is the bait that the enemy uses to lure us into bondage, and it causes us to create walls. Walls may keep out the bad stuff, but they also keep out the good. With walls around our

hearts, we not only protect ourselves from pain and rejection but from experiencing love and life-giving relationships. We think that it is up to us to protect our hearts, but the truth is, God never meant for this to be our responsibility; it is His.

Reasons we may struggle to forgive:

- We have the wrong idea of forgiveness. Remember, forgiveness is not minimizing the offense or forgetting what happened. Forgiveness doesn't necessarily bring reconciliation. Forgiveness is something that happens in our hearts, giving us freedom. Reconciliation is a two-way street and requires repentance, the desire for restitution, and rebuilding of trust from both parties.
- We don't think it's fair to let them off the hook. We reason in our hearts that they don't deserve forgiveness. But God doesn't hand out forgiveness based on merit—and thank goodness, because none of us deserve forgiveness! Since we have been forgiven so very much, we should extend what we have received to others. The forgiven forgive!
- We don't think we can do it. In our own human power, we may not be strong enough to forgive the great wrongs done against us, but we are empowered by the supernatural strength of God. It is important to remember that forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. It is a choice that we have to make daily.

It is impossible to forgive others for their offenses until we receive forgiveness ourselves. If we struggle to forgive others, chances are we have not fully grasped what God has done for us. We have been given total forgiveness for past, present, and future sin. It is not that God forgets our sins, but rather, He chooses to remember our sin no more because He wants to be in relationship with us.

It's often difficult for us to receive God's forgiveness. The enemy loves to remind us of the mistakes we made in the past because guilt keeps us stuck, unable to move forward into the future that God has planned for us. We feel that we have to repent for our past over and over, but these thoughts come solely from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We don't have to earn forgiveness. It is a free gift we can receive by faith.

When our past comes to mind, we can defeat the enemy by knowing and speaking truth from the Word of God. Forgiveness takes courage and strength, but it leads us to pathways of righteousness where we can live free from guilt and shame!

How do we keep our hearts pure and unoffended? We must recognize our own imperfections, focus on the real enemy (the devil, not people), and receive the forgiveness and love of God. Because it is a daily choice to forgive, remember the steps for walking out forgiveness with those who have offended you: pray for them, bless them, and do good to them.

Discussion Guide

- Did you have the wrong idea of forgiveness before reading through the curriculum this week? Are you harboring unforgiveness in any way?
- Have you received God's forgiveness for your past sins? If not, what do you think is holding you back?
- Think about this, in light of all the sin for which you have been forgiven, can you release those who have wronged you? Would you trade your forgiveness from God for the right to hold someone accountable for their offense?
- Are there people in your life who you have not released to the Lord? Do you think you might be trying to get revenge for their offense?

Application

Encourage the group to write down names of any individuals they need to forgive. Challenge them to pray for each person by name every day this week. You may choose to have your group read the "Let Freedom Ring" section out loud during your group meeting.

Prayer Focus

- Pray that your participants truly receive the Lord's forgiveness for themselves so they can freely forgive those who have offended them.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show your participants who they need to forgive and give them the strength to do so.
- Pray that the Lord will heal every wound in their lives and allow them to live a truly unoffended life.
- If they express that they are constantly reminding themselves of past failures and are bothered by the sin of their past even though they have asked for forgiveness, pray specifically over these areas.

WEEK



THE POWER OF WORDS & THE LIVING WORD

OVERVIEW

The Power of Words

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV) says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” The words we speak are a spiritual gauge, showing how much of our soul we have surrendered to God. A life surrendered to God and filled with the Holy Spirit will produce speech full of grace, mercy, love, and power.

With words, God spoke the entire universe into being. Words and language were His idea, and His words are literally life to us. Because God created man in His image, our words have power every time we open our mouths to talk. We either advance the kingdom of life or we advance the kingdom of death. When we were saved, we weren’t taken directly to heaven because we are Jesus’ body—His hands, feet, heart, and mouth designed to reach the lost and make a difference in this world.

Our words can either tear others down or build them up. God desires for us to speak words of life that build up, bring healing, and offer encouragement.

To be able to speak words of life, we need to guard our hearts. Speaking words of life also requires garnishing our speech. At times, we need to say things that are difficult or may appear negative, but we can still speak in a way that will bless and encourage the other person.

If you have been on the receiving end of destructive words, you can truly be healed and set free from the effects of those words.

Pray through these steps:

1. Confess: Healing starts with admitting we were wrong. We must first acknowledge that we have believed something that is not true and have agreed with the lies of the enemy.
2. Repent: To repent means to change direction. When we repent, we choose to turn around and go the opposite way of our previous path. Stop your agreement with the enemy in its tracks, and set your mind on a new course of thinking. If anyone has hurt you by reinforcing these lies in your life, forgive them and release them to the Lord.
3. Cast off: We must refuse to allow the enemy to continue to use destructive words or events against us. With the authority of the Name of Jesus, command the enemy to leave.
4. Bless: Once the enemy has been removed, fill the place that he held with truth and promises found in Scripture. Speak life over yourself by declaring an accurate view of how God sees you.

APPLICATION: Provide pieces of paper for your participants and have them write down any words of death that have been spoken to them by others or that they have spoken to themselves. Then, let each person tear up the pieces of papers (a tangible illustration that the participants no longer have to carry these words).

The Living Word

The same power that is in Jesus is in the Word. We have to receive that truth for the Word to work in our lives. If at some point we feel the Word has lost its power, it's not because the Word has changed, it's because we've stopped mixing the Word with faith. If you want to fall in love with Jesus, find Him in the Word, and make the Word a priority in your life. If you want more power, consume more of His Word.

We need the Spirit of God in order for the Word to come alive, and when it does, it will genuinely change our lives. "Rhema" is the Greek word for "word," and it means "revealed word." When the Word becomes revelation to you, no word God speaks will be void of the power for its fulfillment.

Activate the Word of God in your life by making God's Word a priority, believing what you read, and meditating on Scripture. One of the great ways to meditate on the Word of God is to speak God's Word out loud. Find declarations in Scripture that you can speak out loud to strengthen your spirit. Another way to meditate on the Word is to think about it day and night. Bring your world and God's world together and make them one. You can also make meditation practical. Choose a verse and study it throughout the day. The promises of God are fulfilled when we walk in obedience to His Word. Meditation will turn into revelation, revelation will activate your faith, and when your faith is activated, things change!

APPLICATION: Remind participants to use God's Word to replace the words of death with truth. Write Scripture on index cards and have participants select one that speaks to them or have them read a verse from the Appendix that applies to them or their situation.

Discussion Guide

- How has your relationship with the Lord and your perspective changed as you prayed for the people you needed to forgive this past week?
- Are you intentional to use your words to promote the Kingdom of God and minister to others?
- Do you say things about yourself, or others, that you quickly regret? What steps are you taking to be more careful with your words?
- If group members feel comfortable sharing, ask: what are some of the words of death and cursing that have been spoken to you by others? What are some of the words of death and cursing that you have spoken to yourself? Have you spoken words of death and cursing to others?
- Do you think you read the Bible out of duty or out of desire to know God?

Prayer Focus

Pray that participants understand the power of their words. Pray and break off any words of death that have been spoken over each of them. Ask the Lord to create a hunger in their hearts for God's Word and pray that God's Word would bring revelation to each of them.

WEEK



You will watch the Section Three Video as a group this week. Videos are available for streaming and download at freedom.churchofthehighlands.com/media.

OVERVIEW

We have discussed two reasons why you were in the condition you were in when we began the Small Group. We are all greatly affected by both our own sin (the choices we have made) and what other people have done to us. While we have already covered these two factors,

there is a third we must address: There is an enemy of your soul who has a plan for your life. We must acknowledge the fact that demons are real, and they want to destroy us; however, demons respond to higher authority: the Name of Jesus, the Word of God, and the blood of the cross. In order to engage in spiritual warfare and ensure we are fighting the enemy proactively, we must submit ourselves to God, close any open doors, and confront our enemy daily.

Discussion Guide

- Have you seen a pattern in how the enemy attacks you?
- What doors are open in your life right now that you might need to close so that you can stand strong against the enemy?
- What are some practical ways you can engage in spiritual warfare to fight the enemy?

Application

Reference “The Armor of God” in the Appendix. Encourage your participants to put on the Armor of God every day by praying through each piece of armor.

Prayer Focus

Pray that your participants are aware of the enemy's plan to steal, kill, and destroy their lives. Pray for them to realize that they have the power to fight the enemy and that they are fighting from victory, not for victory!

Weeks 5-7

WEEK



VESSELS OF HONOR & WORSHIP

OVERVIEW

Vessels of Honor

Every person is at a different place in his or her walk with Christ. No two stories are the same, and no one starts out as silver or gold; it is a process.

Remember, justification is an event that takes place when we are saved. When Jesus becomes our Savior, at that very

moment, every sin of our past is wiped clean. Sanctification, however, is not an event—it's a process. It's a journey through which God molds and transforms our character.

It may surprise you to discover that the highest level of our journey as Christians is servanthood. One of our greatest purposes as Christians is to become servants of the Lord. There are three steps we can take to become vessels of honor: offer our bodies, renew our minds, and surrender our wills. When we are intentional to give God our bodies each day, we are able to make conscious decisions to avoid sin. Sin functions in the body, but the mind controls the body. Sin begins in the mind, which is why it is so important to renew our minds to the Word of God. Warfare is exchanging the report of the world for the report of the Lord. Peace can reign and rule in our hearts when we align our thoughts with the truth of God's Word. We know that the body carries out sin, and the mind controls the body, but the will controls the mind. As we surrender our will to God, His perfect will becomes the motivation of our lives.

Being useful to the Kingdom is the greatest honor of our lives, but it comes at a price. When we begin to walk in our purpose, we will get the attention of the enemy. We should anticipate his attacks and take them as a sign of encouragement. We are a threat to his plan to keep the world in darkness. When attacks come, remember, you belong to God and the enemy cannot change that. When we repent, our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus, but there are times we might feel like we are not forgiven. When this happens, we need to tell the enemy to leave by casting him off in the name of Jesus. This destroys the demonic hold in that area and releases us to experience the complete peace of God's forgiveness.

WORSHIP

When we truly embrace the love God has for us, we begin to trust Him, and, as our relationship with Him grows, we develop a great love for Him as well. What we once saw as duty has now become devotion. It is our delight to know Him and follow His commands. Worship is a natural response when we fall in love with Jesus. It is also an act of warfare against Satan and demonic forces! Psalm 149:6 says, "Let the praises of

God be in their mouths, and a sharp sword in their hands.”

In Ezekiel 47:1-12, we find a vision of a river, which symbolizes the presence of God. As we venture forward in our relationship with God, we have a tendency to want to keep our toes on the ground, ensuring our head stays above water and we are in control of our lives. But God is inviting us to trust Him, to go deeper, to experience the fullness of His presence. As we surrender control to God, we will be swept away by His love and freely enjoy our journey with Him. When we see that God is worthy of our trust, we will more easily give up control and live in spiritual order.

Ways to be a true worshiper:

1. Give God your affection.
Worship Him out of the overflow of your heart because He is worthy of the best you can offer Him.
2. Commit to unconditional worship.
True worship means praising God even when we don't feel like it. It's common for us to take a conditional approach to worshiping God.
3. Include God in your daily life.
Including God in all areas of our lives reveals our level of surrender to Him. As we invite Him to be a part of everything we do, we will have moments of worship every day.
4. Be obedient.
The greatest sacrifice we can give to God is a heart of humility willing to serve Him with unconditional obedience. This kind of worship moves the heart of God toward us.
5. Show reverence.
True worship requires that we fear the Lord. When we both fear God, and love Him, we feel safe in the shelter of His immense greatness.

Discussion Guide

- Are you living the life of a worshiper? If so, how? If not, what are some things you can change to ensure you are living the life of a worshiper?
- Do you feel like your worship is coming from a genuine place in your heart?
What are you doing to create an atmosphere of worship in your daily life?
What are some practical things you can do to worship the Lord throughout the day?

Application

- Consider starting this week's group off with an extended worship time (2-3 songs).
- What are some of the areas in your life in which Satan tends to have a foothold?
(*areas might include rejection, abuse, self-hatred, unworthiness, depression, pride, unforgiveness, greed, guilt, shame, lust, sexual impurity, control, anger, fear*)
Pray, repent, and cast off the enemy's hold in these areas to walk in freedom.

Prayer Focus

- Pray that your participants' eyes are opened to any footholds of the enemy and that they will be bold in standing up to the enemy regarding these areas.
- Pray for each participant to live a life of genuine worship. Bind the enemy from stealing spiritual progress that has been made this semester.
- Pray that the Lord will work out all of the details for them to attend the Freedom Retreat and experience all God has for them.

Notes & Prayer Requests

Week 8 & Preparation for the Freedom Retreat

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PREPARING FOR THE FREEDOM RETREAT

Give your group a reminder of the retreat and that it is half of the freedom experience. They will not want to miss it!

1. Be expectant.

Remind your group to have prayer time before the retreat. Confess to the Lord and believe He can do anything. Allow Him to fill you with anticipation and hope. Romans 15:13 says, "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

2. Cultivate an attitude of worship and praise.

Intentionally set aside time every day to worship the Lord. Psalm 95:6 says, "Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

3. Shut out the world.

Encourage your group to limit exposure to secular influences such as social media, tv, etc. Spend your time in prayer, worship, and reading the Bible. James 4:8 says, "Come close to God, and God will come close to you."

Encourage them to make the retreat a priority in their schedule. They may experience resistance from the enemy, but have them focus on what they have learned so they can set their minds to finish strong.