

John 8:31-36

The Challenge of Discipleship Study 9: *Freedom*

Focus Question: *When have you experienced “freedom”?*

Word of Life

“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.” John 8:31

Read [John 8:31-36](#)

It is easy to imagine Jesus shaking his head in response to the comments of the Jews. Like a loving parent left speechless when a child totally misses the point, Jesus might have even given a deep sigh as he tried again to help them make sense of “freedom.” Already, Jesus has attempted to connect the dots for his listeners. It’s a simple equation: Continue in my word = know the truth = be set free

But the Jews, challenge the need to be freed and claim to have never been slaves to anyone. Apparently, they have forgotten their own ancestors enslaved in Egypt and forced to make bricks. These ancestors cried out to God for freedom, and God sent Moses to lead them to freedom.

1. *Why did the Jews who responded to Jesus have so much trouble understanding freedom?*

During the life of Jesus, it is Rome who occupied the land. The Jews have limited freedom in their own country, a land promised and given to them by God. Many had hoped the Messiah would overthrow the Roman government and return freedom to Israel. But Jesus offers a new perspective.

2. *What made it so difficult for the listeners to comprehend Jesus?*

Jesus is not dealing with enslavement to a government or political structure. Instead, Jesus focuses on sin and being a slave to sin. Sin is more than an error or failure. Sin is separation from God and includes all that becomes a barrier between people and God. This is what happened in John 8.

The challenge of being a disciple is to align life with Jesus while the rages of sin rush through our spiritual system. It’s like keeping the tyres of our car aligned while daily driving on roads filled with potholes. After a while, we scarcely remember there is another way. Remaining in the Word reminds us of the proper alignment with Jesus Christ.

3. *Describe your life as if it was more firmly and rooted in God’s Word.*

4. *What if anything would change?*

5. *When do you feel firmly anchored in Christ and God’s Word?*

Freedom is a gift from God for those willing to claim it. But here is the irony. We cannot claim the gift of freedom until we know we cannot save ourselves. That knowledge is the very place that we are found, forgiven and freed as a free gift of God in Jesus Christ (See [Ephesians 2:4-9](#)).

6. *What is God freeing us to do or be?*

7. *How do you feel about being free?*

Prayer

Christ, free us from the shackles which bind and loosen our hearts to love. Amen

Dig Deeper

[Romans 7:14-20](#)

Last word

This week,

stay in God’s Word and read John 8:31-36 each day.

Seek to name all which shackles you from claiming freedom in Christ.

Offer your list to God in prayer.