



truly

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truly **FREE**

Discovering Your Freedom In Christ

Follow-Up Devotional Journal

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO: _____

DATE STARTED: _____

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“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

8:31-32

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getting STARTED

If you're holding this book, it means that you (probably) recently spent a few days going through Truly Free study with your youth group. Maybe you did this during a Disciple Now, or a retreat, or a camp. However, you came to start your journey with Truly Free, this book will help you continue it.

Life is full of ups and downs. We love the moments when things are going our way. But what about when things don't go our way? What about the times when we are exhausted and overwhelmed by stress? What about those moments when we just can't seem to overcome the stuff that drags us down?

For many of us, the stress, pressure, and brokenness of our lives is at times, too much to bear. But the good news is that there is tremendous hope in the Gospel.

When you feel trapped by your sin, the Gospel says, "You're a slave no longer." When you feel like you don't match up, the Gospel says, "You have immense value to God." When you feel overwhelmed by the stress of your life, the Gospel says, "There is rest in Jesus." And when you don't feel like your life matters, the Gospel says, "Your life is meant for more than this." In a word, the Gospel sets you free. Truly free.

This book will help you go deeper into this truth.

HOW THIS

book WORKS

START WITH THIS ADVICE

Whether you're super-committed and read your Bible each day or struggle to read a few verses a couple of times a week, the key to sticking with this through four weeks is a routine. Try and work through this book at the same time each day, whether that's in the morning, after lunch, or before you go to bed. Block out a time each day to spend in this book, and then commit to sticking to it. **You'll find it's a lot easier to stay consistent that way.**

HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN

Resist the urge to ignore the spots where this book will tell you to read a passage of Scripture. This book is only a guide for *the* Book. **The close relationship with God that you want only happens by reading and doing what's in the Bible.** Have it open as you go through this book.

EACH WEEK IS STRUCTURED THE SAME, BUT IS REALLY DIFFERENT

Each week's content follows a pattern. **But, each day is different. And, there are a lot of different kinds of activities.** Some will take 3-5 minutes, some 10-15. Some will ask you to look at two or three passages of Scripture; some will ask you to think about a concept. The variety will make it easier to stick with and help you learn in different ways that are suited to you.

WHAT IF I MISS A DAY OF READING? OR THREE?

Don't give up. Take this at your pace. The goal is for you to grow closer to God and to have a faith-life that's more "real". If you miss a day or two . . . or four . . . don't throw in the towel. Pick this book back up and start where you left off. **You can do this.** And by doing it, you'll show the world that God makes an incredible difference in the lives of His followers. So, hang in there! You've got this.

Well, that's what you need to know to get started! **Turn the page to read the introduction to Week 1.**

INT

Week 1

PRO

Before starting Week 1, read this short introduction

Maybe it's been a while since you went through Truly Free with your group. Or, maybe it wasn't that long ago, but you've still turned your mind toward other things. (Or just maybe you're picking this book up having not gone through Truly Free with a group at all! That's OK, too. This book will still be an excellent resource for you.) After all, you're a teenager, which means you're super busy.

The point of Week 1 is to re-introduce you to some of the concepts you studied with your group while beginning to introduce you to some of the deeper truths of what it means to truly be free in Christ. So, there will be some old stuff and some new stuff.

If we're going to continue down this journey of growing closer to God, we'll need to make sure that we start on the right track.

So, let's get started! Turn to page 10 for Week 1, Day 1.

Week 1

Today's content is a quick review of what you should have covered in Truly Free. Read the following verses and follow the questions to recall anything you learned, or to begin reflecting again on these concepts.

TRULY FREE CONCEPT 1

In Christ, you have been set free from the penalty of your sin. In Christ, you are forgiven.

Read This: "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." - Romans 6:20-23

Now, answer these questions in the space provided:

- How does Jesus set us free from sin and death and give us forgiveness and new life?
- How does freedom from the effects of sin change the way you see your life, your faith, and the world around you?

TRULY FREE CONCEPT 2

In Christ, you have been set free from the pressure to "measure up." In Christ, you have value.

Read This: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies." - Romans 8:31-33

Now, answer these questions in the space provided:

- In what ways have you experienced your value or worth questioned by the world around you?

- God is for you! He gave His only Son so that you could be free from having to “measure up” to the world’s standards. How does this make you feel?

TRULY FREE CONCEPT 3

In Christ, you have been set free from the stress and anxiety of your life. In Christ, you can know true rest.

Read This: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” - Matthew 11:28-30

Now, answer these questions in the space provided:

- What in your life causes you stress or anxiety?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus offers you rest and peace?

TRULY FREE CONCEPT 4

In Christ, you have been set free from the world’s definition of success. In Christ, you have a purpose.

Read This: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” - Ephesians 2:8-10

Now, answer these questions in the space provided:

- How does the world around you measure success?
- God has set you free to a new purpose in Him. How would you describe the new purpose your life has as a result of knowing God?

Alright! Now you’re back in the flow. You should remember these concepts. It’s a good foundation for starting this book. Tomorrow’s activity is a lot different, so don’t miss it!

Week 1


Ice cream is amazing. It's sweet. It's cold. It's refreshing. You can put it in milk, and it makes a milkshake. You can put it on top of a pie, and it becomes something altogether magical. It's easy to forget how awesome ice cream is. Why? Because we're so familiar with it. We just take it for granted that it's as great as it is. Sometimes we even eat it and don't stop to appreciate it.

Why the ice cream talk? Because it serves as a good parallel for how we think about the grace God offers us in the Gospel. We can become so familiar with it that we forget how truly life-changing it is.

What's so great about the Gospel? To re-capture this, we have to go back and make sure we reflect on what the Gospel is in the first place. The Gospel is the "good news" that through faith in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we can be saved from our sins and have a relationship with God. That's an incredibly powerful statement. Let's unpack it to appreciate it more.

The Bible tells us that God existed before anything else and that He spoke all of creation into existence (Gen 1:1-31). He created man and woman and gave them everything they could ask for. God created a perfect world for them, a world where He would walk and talk with them. He gave them only one rule. There was a tree they couldn't eat from. If they ate from it, they would die. He gave them EVERYTHING else they could possibly want or imagine. He had one rule. One rule only. And they broke it. Adam and Eve ate from the tree. God's response was worth taking a second and focusing on.

God could have killed them. He said He would. Why would God say such a thing? Simple: all sin is rebellion against God, the perfect creator and life-giver. Rebellion against God rightfully deserves the ultimate punishment. It's the only right response. Anything less wouldn't make sense. But, here's a shocker: God didn't kill Adam and Eve.



God allowed Adam and Eve to live. He was kind and gracious and loving in that way. But their sin created separation between God and humans (Gen. 3:16-24). And it has been that way ever since. You see, and this is kind of crazy, we INHERITED Adam and Eve's sinful nature. Read Romans 5:12. Summarize this verse in your own words:

That stinks, doesn't it? But it's not just that. Not only did we inherit their sinful nature, but we also inherited the punishment for sin. Read Romans 3:23. Summarize this verse in your own words:

So, like Adam and Eve, our sin earns for us death and separation from God. Sure, when we sin, we don't fall over and die. But WHEN we die, if we are left in our sin, we will be forever separated from God. We will be outside His love and goodness and grace for eternity. That's a pretty rough outcome.

There is hope, though. There is a powerful, meaningful, overwhelmingly fantastic hope in Christ. But let's spend the rest of this devotion reflecting on the problem of our sin. Let's hold on for the HOPE part of the Gospel until tomorrow. We mustn't simply pass over what our sin does to us and for us.

Reflect for a moment what your life would be like without a way out from under the payment your sin earns.

- How would you feel knowing that you were separated from God forever by your sin? How would it feel knowing there wasn't peace between God and you?
- How would it feel to know that no matter what good you did in your life, it wouldn't overcome the death caused by your sin?

Reflect on these thoughts today. It's OK if it doesn't feel great. That's the point! The more we understand our helplessness apart from God, the more we appreciate the grace He offers us.

Week 1

Remember yesterday, when we focused on why our sin is such a big deal? We took time to reflect on why our sin is such an issue, what it does to our relationship with God, and the impact it has on our lives. Today you're going to look at how Jesus radically changed the entire sin discussion.

Take a second and read the following verse:

**“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:21**

Take a second and unpack that verse. A lot is going on there. First, look at the phrase “he made him.” Who are we talking about? Paul is talking about God (“he”) and Jesus (“him”). OK, so what did Paul say that God did? God, the Father, sent Jesus, the Son, to earth as part of His plan to rescue people from the penalty of their sin. How? Paul answers that question too.

Paul says God planned all along for perfect, sinless Jesus to “be sin.” What in the world does that mean? Does it mean that Jesus actually sinned? Nope. Not at all. It means that Jesus was allowed to be put to death on the cross so that His death would count in our place. In that way, perfect, righteous Jesus was counted as sin in our place. That’s how Paul could say that Jesus could be punished for sins He never committed. The main question is, why? Paul answered that too. And it’s the most amazing part of the Gospel.

Look at the last part of that verse. God had a plan in place for Jesus to be sacrificed for our sins so that we might be seen as righteous. We are sinful, not Jesus. Our sin makes us unrighteous. But in His great mercy and grace, God had a plan where we would not have to suffer forever for our sins. Jesus would pay the price our sins earned for us, once and for all. That is an AMAZING thing for God to do. But how do we take advantage of this incredible gift?

Paul has more to say about this too. He tells us in Romans 10:9-10 how we can accept the salvation Jesus offers. This is what he says:

“. . . if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” - Romans 10:9–11

So, did you catch that? To have Jesus' death count on your behalf, to be seen as righteous in God's eyes, to have your relationship with God be restored, all you have to do is BELIEVE that Jesus is who He says He is and that He did what He said He did. That's it.

There is nothing more powerful than the truth of the Gospel.

So, the question for you today is, where are you with God? Have you accepted His gift of salvation through faith in Jesus? If not, what is keeping you from doing so?

If you have been saved from the punishment of sin through faith in Jesus, how has your life changed? How are you living out the new life in Christ that you have been given?

What do you need to say to God today as a result of the life He's given you through Jesus? How have you expressed your thanks and praise to Him? Make it a point today to spend some time showing God how thankful you are that He made a way back to Himself.

Week 1

So now you know why sin is such a big deal and why Jesus had to come to do something about it. But the question remains, "How does this impact my life"? This study is about the things God sets us free from. God sets us free from the penalty of sin through His Son Jesus. But what are we set free to?

There is a really, really simple verse in the book of John. So simple that we can miss its power.

Here's the verse:

"The thief comes only to steal and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

- JOHN 10:10

Abundant life. Full life. A life overflowing with, well, LIFE! This is what freedom in Christ looks like. Sin shackles us. It weighs us down. It robs us of a future. But it also keeps us from exploring the person God made us to become. In Christ, there is FREEDOM from the guilt and shame and pain of sin.

This is true. It's the truest thing there is. But what you have to ask yourself is how it CHANGES you? What does a life of fullness - an abundant life - look like for you?

We're going to help you think about it. To process it, we've given you some statements on page 17. Think about how you'd answer them and write your answer in the blanks. Then, spend some time in prayer thanking God for the abundant life He made possible for you, free from the effects of sin, through faith in Jesus.

**I am living a full life
when it comes to my
relationships by**

**I am living a full life
when it comes to my
family by**

**I am living a full life
when it comes to my
faith by**

**I am living a full life
when it comes to my
hobbies or interests by**

**I am living a full
life when it comes
to my future by**

**I am living a full life
when it comes to how I
think about myself by**

**I am living a full life
when it comes to how
I serve God by**

Week 1

This week has been kind of heavy in terms of what you've been studying. Today is a time of reflection. Reflection is important because it helps us respond to God in the right ways. Our world moves so fast that we don't often have time to stop and bring our thoughts and emotions to God.

So that's what you're going to do today.

See all that space over there on page 19? That's for you. That's for you to write a prayer, a song, draw a picture, a note, or whatever it is you need to respond to God because of what He has given you.

In Christ, God has set you free from the penalty of sin and death. Spend some time responding to Him accordingly.

