

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Long to Be Set Free! – Irresistibly Free

June 13, 2022

Isn't it wonderful to live in America? America, *the land of the free*, at least that's what we call it. But what is freedom, and are you truly free?

Yes, compared to other countries, we do enjoy many freedoms. But let me ask you this, "Do you feel free when you are at work, school, or when you're stuck in big-city, rush-hour traffic?" These are places we're more likely to feel trapped—places we can't wait to break "free" from.

So how do we define freedom?

It's the ability to do what you want, when you want it, and how you want to do it. I admit, I can easily relate to this definition of freedom, and I imagine there are quite a few people in this country that get to experience this "freedom," on some level, daily; but are they truly free?

This past weekend, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder opened a new series called *Irresistibly Free*. He defined *freedom* a little differently. He explained that our definition of freedom is no one telling us "no," because we see freedom as having no restrictions. The more restrictions that are placed on us, the more we feel trapped.

This is why some people are resistant to Christianity. They think it comes with restricting rules and regulations, and that, as human beings, is a natural *turnoff* for us. Consequently, all we want to do is break free and get out.

Feeling trapped is one side of the spectrum, but the other side is when we have too much freedom. Everyone doing what they want, when they want, and how they want would lead to chaos. Chaos is a different kind of trap. Because when everyone is trying to do what they want, when they want, and how they want, it results in nobody being able to do so.

Pastor Ben went on to explain how true freedom is found in the middle, within a certain amount of structure. Not trapped in too many restrictions, but not having unlimited leeway either. We have limits—we were not designed to live outside of God's plan for us. Jesus proclaimed this several times in the Bible.

Luke 4:18-19

¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free,¹⁹ and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”*

John 10:10

“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”

The bottom line is: ***Freedom is trusting what God intended, when God intended it, and how God intended it.***

The rest of this week, LIO will break down details on how we can accomplish this, but I want to leave you with this thought. Freedom is not, as Janis Joplin sang, “just another word for nothing left to lose,” it is what God intended and wants for us.

So with this in mind, shouldn’t we long to be set free?

Questions:

How do you define freedom?

Do you feel like you live in a state of being trapped or in chaos?

Next Steps:

Evaluate where you are in experiencing true spiritual freedom.

Tune in to the rest of the “Irresistibly Free” series.

Prayer:

Father, I long to be truly set free. Teach me how to live in the freedom you want for me. Help me to avoid the traps and chaos of seeking freedom outside of my limits and what you intended for me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

This post was written by Ned Miller, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

True Freedom is God's Gift – Irresistibly Free

June 14, 2022

We live in a time when many young people continue to live at home after high school. I'm not knocking the choice because it makes a lot of sense. Quite often, a person isn't necessarily ready to leave the safety structure of a family environment. My generation (Generation X!) might've been the last for Jedis (parents) to push out the padawans (kids) before they were ready.

My sage grandparents offered me the chance to avoid facing the challenges of leaving the nest. They attempted to talk me into moving to the Cleveland area to stay with them—without paying rent or getting a job as long as college was my priority. They even offered to give me spending money. However, with all the infinite wisdom of a 19-year-old, I declined the opportunity. I was done sacrificing my freedom.

It took me all of one night to realize what my idea of freedom would cost. My house needed a vacuum, dishes, and a chair (things I didn't need when I lived at home). I went to Meijer and spent \$130 more than the \$50 I had planned to use. I needed food the next day, so my wallet let me borrow another \$60. Before long, my freedom ventured into chaos. Perhaps I was doing it wrong.

I was clueless about what it would take to live freely. My grandparents called every week and asked how things were going. "I'm good" or "Alright" usually came out of my mouth. However, I spent the next 22 months denying that I was trapped in a world I had created. As Lead Pastor Ben Snyder said, "Truth is a captive of no one. It will always set itself free."

John 8:31-32

³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

My beliefs about what freedom looked like blinded me to my grandparents' generous offer (and wisdom). While I may have had to give up some minor freedom in structure, it would have offered incredible freedom in other areas—rather than the chaos I created.

In the same way, Jesus wants us to trust him and his process. It's the only way to avoid the chaos we create when we do life on our own. And it's the only path that will lead us to live irresistibly free.

Questions:

What does freedom look like to you?

How do you obtain freedom?

Next Steps:

Continue reading [John 8](#) to gain further understanding.

Find your freedom by participating in [summer Groups](#) and encouraging others to do the same.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for teaching me to find freedom in my purpose. Lord, may my time and efforts learning your word create a deeper walk with you. I pray that your spiritual guidance and truth continue to ease the chaos I often create by choosing what isn't for me. Amen.

This post was written by Jaron Camp, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Who am I? – Irresistibly Free

June 15, 2022

Who am I?

This is the question that plagues the human race. We spend countless hours reading books to help us discover our “true selves.” We look inward to create our own identity. And once we create this identity, we look to others to validate it and provide us with the dignity we crave.

Unfortunately, when others don’t appreciate our carefully crafted identity, we feel attacked and angry. What many don’t understand is that dignity and identity can only be found in Christ. We cannot answer the question of who we are without first submitting ourselves to the authority of the Creator of life.

Freedom can only be found in Christ.

John 8:34-36

³⁴ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. ³⁵ A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

Jesus was speaking to a group of Jewish people who had formed their identity in their position as God’s chosen people. They put their faith in the fact that they were descendants of Abraham, yet Jesus called them slaves to sin and proclaimed that they were “children of the devil.”

We are constantly being told that freedom is found in living a life without limits. “You do you,” is the motto of most Americans today. Yet as Lead Pastor Ben demonstrated last weekend with Fishsticks, when we step outside of the boundaries God has created for us, we will eventually struggle, perhaps to the point of death.

As we continue our pursuit of the “do you” lifestyle, we become slaves to the sins we thought would provide us freedom or help us find our identities. Sin will always lead us into bondage and destroy us.

However, God in his mercy, sent Jesus to help us discover our true identities and true freedom.

Romans 8:1-2

¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

Submitting to the Lordship of Jesus in our lives frees us from the power of sin and gives us a new identity. We become children of God and, together with Christ, heirs of God's glory ([Romans 8:17](#)). We are no longer trapped by the chains of sin or lost in the chaos of self—we're able to live a life of true freedom.

Questions:

How does the idea that boundaries give freedom sit with you? Do you embrace boundaries as beneficial or push against them?

Next Steps:

Read [Romans 8](#) to see what a life of freedom in Christ should look like.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us a new identity in Christ. Thank you for promising freedom to those who submit to you. When I struggle with sinful desires, give me the strength to resist them and claim the name of Christ as my strength. Help me to leave all of my struggles at the cross and embrace the freedom only found in you. Amen.

Are You Trusting or Trying?—Irresistibly Free

June 16, 2022

As I reflect upon my life, I find that the root of my worries is a fear of failure. I am the textbook definition of a perfectionist—I attempt to control every aspect of my life, including situations far beyond my control. This has led to excessive anxiety and wasted time, trying to grasp onto my own desires and outcomes when it would have been better to *let go and let God* take the reins.

During these times, I ask myself an important question: “Am I placing my trust in Jesus or myself?”

Even though I am a dedicated Christ-follower, I often find myself failing to place my daily troubles in the hands of Jesus. If I can trust him with my salvation, I can trust him with the trials and tribulations of everyday life. By focusing on my worries and struggles, I leave less room for Jesus in my life. And when Jesus takes up less room in our lives, the enemy sneaks in and deceives us with lies.

In the Bible, Jesus reminds us that when we fall short, trying to do it on our own instead of giving it to him, we fall captive to sin and fear. When we trust in ourselves instead of him, we inevitably fall into sin and must face the consequences. Jesus warned the Pharisees of this when they tried to find freedom on their own and refused to trust in him.

John 8:44

For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

I often fall into these false thought patterns: If I try my best and work my hardest, then I'll find freedom. If I can finally control my career, my relationships, and my decisions, then I'll be set free from my worries and live life my way. However, Jesus teaches that no human being can find freedom apart from him, because we are all enslaved to sin. We live in a fallen world, and we all sin.

Ultimately, we'll find that a lack of trust leads to a lack of freedom, resulting in unnecessary worry and strife.

John 8:34-36

³⁴ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. ³⁵ A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free."

Next Steps:

Pray about the areas in which God is leading you to surrender to him. Make the conscious decision to trust him with these areas, and let go of trying to do it yourself.

For the next week, keep a journal of the things you worry about most. Identify the most common areas of worry and give them to God in prayer.

Questions:

When was a time in your life that you recognized the consequences of not giving enough room to Jesus? What steps did you take to give the situation to Christ and let go of the outcome?

What are some ways that you could make more room for Christ in your everyday life? In what ways would giving him the room to work in your circumstances impact your life?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for teaching me that I do not have to face life on my own. You graciously sent your son into the world to free me from the slavery of sin and death, allowing me to place all of my burdens and troubles at his feet. Please remind me each and every day that I am called to trust fully in you and help me to surrender my decisions and circumstances to you. Let me experience the freedom and peace that only comes from a life with Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Isabelle Billnitzer, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

You Can Handle the Truth – Irresistibly Free

June 17, 2022

Freedom is a bit of a paradox for me. First, I generally like to be in control of a situation. When I'm not in control, I can feel resistance building within me. But when I do have control—when I can do what I want, when I want, and the way I want to do it—I feel free.

Until I don't.

When I'm "free," I'm the one making the decisions. I'm the one responsible for the outcome. I need to be aware of the big picture and the smaller details. I have to answer for something. And this can be incredibly stressful, causing worry and anxiety to grow inside me.

This human perspective of freedom—*what I want, when I want, how I want*—as Lead Pastor Ben Snyder defined it, is ironically quite constrictive. Jesus, however, invites us into *true* freedom, which is reflected in this week's bottom line: *Freedom is trusting what God intended, when God intended it, and how God intended it.*

So, what does this look like? How do we find freedom in Jesus? Jesus' words in John 8:31-32 are a good place to start.

John 8:31-32

³¹Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³²And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

The truth will set you free. It's such a common phrase that it's become trite and cliché, and often an invitation to roll our eyes. But when we start to unpack what Jesus is saying here, it takes on a much deeper meaning.

Jesus says the truth will set you free. What is the truth? Well, that one's easy.

John 14:6 (emphasis added)

*Jesus told him, "I am the way, the **truth**, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."*

Jesus teaches that *he* is the truth. So to remain faithful to his teachings is to remember this, to believe it, and to live it out. The Gospel, aka the “Good News,” is not a holy handbook to keep us bound and enslaved to rules. Instead, it is a way of life in freedom and truth. And the truth is Jesus and who we are in him.

Alive.

Chosen.

Loved.

A new creation.

Forgiven.

Free.

Questions:

How do you define freedom? Does it line up with the definition in this week’s bottom line?

Do you find following Christ to be freeing? Why or why not?

Next Steps:

Focus on who you are in Jesus by studying the following verses: [Romans 6:11](#); [1 Peter 2:9](#); [1 John 4:8-10](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#); [Romans 8:2](#).

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for relieving me of the need to control anything and everything in my life. I pray that I can remember to put what you intend, when you intend it, and how you intend it over my own plans and desires. Remind me daily who I am in you, and help me to live in a way that shows others who they are in you as well. In your name, amen.

This post was written by Ryan Leone, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.