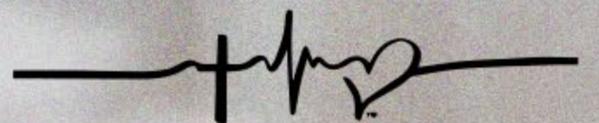


IN
PURSUIT
OF

Freedom

5 DAY DEVOTIONAL



Intro

Freedom. It's a buzzword in today's society. A word that ignites both strong feelings and strong conversations. Ask any two individuals on the street their personal definitions of freedom, and you will most likely hear two different interpretations. It is a concept which is universal, yet still deeply personal.

For the follower of Christ, however, true freedom is something different altogether. It is paradoxical in nature – a gift gained only in surrender, in submission, and in laying down your life and picking up your cross to follow the One who surrendered His own life first. It's a radical trust, one not built upon the lesser things this world offers, but instead rooted in the only One who truly satisfies every heart's deep desire to be free.

For the next week, we will study how true freedom in Christ impacts our daily lives...how it empowers each of us to be who He has created us to be, and to live as He calls us to live. So before you dive in, take a moment to ask yourself a few questions. Do you walk in true freedom each day or are the troubles of this world weighing you down? Are you desperately clinging to something that is preventing you from grasping the freedom offered to us? Do you truly believe that life-changing freedom is not only possible, but also what your Creator wants for you?

As you study with us these next few days, may you remember and reflect upon the words of Galatians 5:1a, ***“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.”***

DAY 1 // FREE TO HOPE



Free TO HOPE

LET US HOLD UNSWERVINGLY
TO THE **HOPE** WE PROFESS,
FOR HE WHO PROMISED IS

faithful

HEBREWS 10:23

For many individuals around the world, 2020 has been a year in which hope has, at times, been hard to find. Uncertainty, confusion, anxiety, depression, and fear have taken root in a way not seen in recent history, and have often pushed out any glimmer of hope. Yet if Christ has truly set us free, hope is already ours for both the giving and the receiving.

When we truly grasp that every moment of our lives is under the loving, watchful eyes of the Father—the Sovereign One for whom nothing is a surprise—how can we not have hope? Every one of us will walk through trials - seasons of pain, loss, and grief. But hope that is born out of the freedom Christ offers is never lost. He who promised is faithful. We don't have to wonder if He will come through. We may not know when, or where, or how, but we can know, deep in our souls, He will. Somehow, someday, He will.



When we surrender to His perfect plan, and trust in Him completely, we find a freedom that empowers us to hope. So often we shackle ourselves with the things of this world and we exhaust ourselves chasing after our own dreams. But when we uncurl our fingers from the things to which we hold so tightly, and instead allow Him to fill our hands and our lives with what He has for us, it is then that we are truly free. And in that freedom, we find true hope.

Do you need hope in this moment? Spend a few minutes reading over the verses below, asking the Lord to remind you of the hopeful future you are promised in Him. Do you know someone else caught in a seemingly hopeless situation? Find a way to share hope with them today.

Verses for Reflection

Mark 9:23 • Romans 15:13 • Ephesians 1:18



Free TO SERVE

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.
But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather,

**SERVE ONE ANOTHER
HUMBLY IN LOVE**

Galatians 5:13



To the nonbeliever, the idea of being free to serve makes little sense. Today's culture is certainly proof of that. From the classroom to the board room, from the big screens to our phone screens, we live in a society that tells us—in subtle and not-so-subtle ways—to look out for number one.

But the life and death of Jesus Christ modeled for us a different way of thinking. If anyone had both reason and ability to promote Himself above all others, it was Him. Instead, He did the very opposite. He lived a life of sacrifice on behalf of others. And in what was the single greatest act of service the world has ever known, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death (Phil. 2:8) - a gruesome, humiliating, and excruciatingly painful death that should have been ours to pay.

More than likely, we will not be tasked to die in another's place. However, those who



know Him will be called countless times a day to think of ourselves less, to surrender our own desires, to elevate the wants and needs of others above our own, and to submit to an Authority who is greater. In doing so, we will find both a purpose and a joy greater than we have ever known. ***We will find there is freedom in putting others first.***

Is there an area of your life where you sense the Lord leading you to submit fully, even though it means putting your own desires last? Is there someone today who you can serve, who you can prioritize even if it costs you something? Spend a few minutes with the Lord now and ask Him to bring something or someone to mind.

Verses for Reflection

Matthew 23:11 • John 12:26 • 1 Peter 4:10



Free TO GIVE

As for the rich, charge them to not set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God. **They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,** thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they make take hold of that which is **truly life**

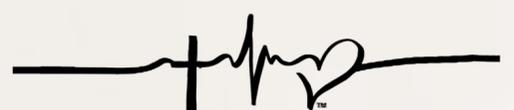
1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19
(summarized)



The idea that giving is better than receiving is a widely held belief, even by many who do not follow Christ. Giving brings joy to the giver, a sense of loving, honoring, or serving another well. But for the Christian, it is even more than this. When we consider Him who gave His very life so that we could have life eternal...we begin to view generosity in a wholly different light.

The gift offered to us in Jesus' death and resurrection guaranteed our freedom. Freedom from lasting punishment, freedom from an eternal death, freedom from hell itself. Our souls are free because of His sacrifice, from His willingness to face that which only He could defeat.

Yet it is not only a future of freedom we are promised because of His work on the cross. We are free even in the here and now, even amidst this broken world.



It is from this place of assuredness that we are able to freely give. ***We are free to give our lives, our time, our treasures, and our hearts to others because He first gave us His.*** As we do, we will find both a purpose and a joy we could not have otherwise known.

How can you give of yourself today? Who in your life needs a helping hand, a listening ear, or maybe just a cup of coffee? Ask the Holy Spirit to put someone in your path who needs something you can give – whether it's a few minutes, a few dollars, or a few words of encouragement and hope. Who knows how the Lord will speak to someone through your generosity today.

Verses for Reflection

Deuteronomy 15:10 • Proverbs 11:24-25
2 Corinthians 9:11



Free
TO LOVE

WE LOVE BECAUSE

He first loved us

1 JOHN 4:19



Depending on which translation you source, the word “love” is mentioned anywhere from 310-551 times in the Bible. A direct command to “love one another” is mentioned nearly a dozen times, and multiple times by Jesus Himself. Yet any love we give or receive is rooted in one simple thing...
He loved us first.

Christ’s death on the cross was many things. It was an act of submission to the Father’s perfect plan. It was an acceptance of the mission to which He had been called. But underneath it all, it was an act of love. Because of His great love for every man, woman, and child who has ever walked this earth, He willingly sacrificed His own body and took our punishment as His own. It’s a love that both sets us free and empowers us to freely love others.

When we love out of freedom, we hold all things loosely, trusting that what the Father

gives or takes away is truly for our best. When we love out of freedom, we forgive as we have been forgiven. When we love out of freedom, we show Jesus to those around us, inviting them to know Him more. **When we love out of freedom, we love with patience, kindness, humility, forgiveness, honor, truth, trust, hope, and perseverance** (1 Corinthians 13).

Take a moment now to simply rest in the Father's great love for you. As He pours His love into you, ask for an opportunity to do the same for someone else today. And when that moment comes, don't hold back. You have been set free for this very thing.

Verses for Reflection

John 15:12 • 1 John 4:7 • Colossians 2:2



Free

TO LIVE

I have come that they may have **LIFE**

**AND HAVE IT
TO THE FULL**

John 10:10b



Hope. Service. Generosity. Love.
These are just some of the things we
have to offer others because of the
freedom we have received. But they
are also some of the very things that
give us abundant life in return.

When we fully trust in the only One
whose death and resurrection redefined
the word “freedom” forever, then we are
free to hope for a good future. Free to
serve a world desperately in need. Free
to give our lives away for what actually
matters. Free to love all people, regardless
of differences, without fear or restraint.
As we do these things, we find ourselves
beginning to live in true joy, a kind not
synonymous with momentary happiness,
but a kind that is life-changing on this
earth, and eternal in the one to come.

To those who do not know this joy for
themselves, may God reveal Himself



to you in ways you never imagined. To those who are hesitant even now to fully surrender to Him, may He fill you with the courage needed to let go of that which holds you back. To those whose daily lives feel anything but free, may He continuously remind you that He is for you and His plans for you are good. And may we all truly live, remembering in every moment, of every day, these words, ***So if the Son has set you free, then you are free indeed*** (John 8:36).

Verses for Reflection

Psalm 23:6 • Proverbs 21:21

Romans 6:22

