

DAY 1

Through efforts of International Justice Mission and other similar organizations, we've become aware of the truth that there are more people bound in slavery today than ever before in the history of mankind. **THINK** about the physical, emotional, and mental impact of being enslaved, powerless, and without hope.

What things come to mind?



READ John 8:31-36 and Galatians 5:2-6. Most of us find it difficult to comprehend slavery in relationship to our personal everyday lives.

LOOK again at John 8:36. If someone had been enslaved from birth (*which is how Jesus describes our spiritual condition*) how important was it to hear that when the Son of God sets you free, you'd be free *indeed - in reality; in truth; absolutely?* What would that kind of freedom mean? How important is it to protect that freedom? Like the Jews listening to Jesus' words in John, it sounds absurd that he would refer to us as now being free... "when were we slaves!" How does returning to/relying on the law instead of faith alone, rob us of freedom and enslave us?

LIST examples of how we set aside grace - which robs us from the freedom we have in Christ. *Can you relate to losing your freedom in this way?* The same kind of setting aside grace and freedom occurs whenever we abuse our freedom and claim license to live without restraint.

PRAY for protection from the things that lead us away from the true freedom we have in Christ. **ASK** the Holy Spirit to speak to you and bring to light anything which robs your freedom in Christ - things which have crept into your thoughts, attitude, and behaviors. **PRAY** for wisdom and understanding of what true freedom in Christ means and how it looks to live in that kind of freedom.

DAY 2

READ Romans 6:6-7 and Galatians 5:1.

A yoke of slavery shows up in different disguises. Sometimes it comes as an unquenchable desire which leads to addiction; or as a need to gain approval or be in control; or as having to keep rules, performing for acceptance; or as a drive to some self-made perfection. We can be enslaved to our own biting tongues, anger, or gossip.

LOOK back through **DAY 1**. **THINK** about the physical, mental, and emotional impact slavery has on us. **CONSIDER** how it impacts us spiritually. *How do our yokes of slavery affect us spiritually? In what way are you enslaved today? What renders you powerless and without hope of change? Which of your attitudes/behaviors do you wish were different?*

Prayerfully **CONSIDER** what has you "in its grips" by bringing a yoke of slavery to your life. Honestly **IDENTIFY** the thing that's become a master over you in some way. *What's the Holy Spirit saying to you?* **WRITE** your thoughts in your journal.

DAY 3

LOOK through the devo beginning on **DAY 2**. *Do you need to add something?* **WRITE** it down. **IMAGINE** what your life would be like without the things that enslave you. **RE-READ** John 8:36.

DESCRIBE the difference it would make in your life to receive freedom in Christ - to have true and absolute freedom from that which enslaves you.

PRAY: Father, Your word declares that in Christ we've been set free, absolutely and completely. **SHOW** me what that means for me today.

SHOW me how to walk in that freedom and to protect it.

DAY 4

How do you describe freedom? Similar to our common cultural understanding of freedom? Freedom to do as we see fit? Do you think of freedom as no limitations, no boundaries, no consequence, no restraint? Do you describe freedom as being free from any voice of authority? If so, why? Why would this actually not be freedom at all?

In proclaiming freedom from anyone and anything, we can actually become enslaved to ourselves. We lose the freedom to choose what's good, healthy, and right and are enslaved to our desires and gratifications. *If it was for freedom Christ set us free, what does that freedom mean?*

READ Romans 6:11-14. **LOOK** at the second half of verse 13. What do we now have the freedom to do? What does it mean to you to be freed to live a life of righteousness? How does this differ from seeing freedom as a life without restraint, doing as each of us sees fit?

WRITE Romans 6:11-14 as a personal prayer to God.

DAY 5

Our culture worships freedom. But we don't realize how difficult it is to keep hold of it. We can lose it to legalism or a lack of self-discipline/license. Both of these things bring us under the yoke of slavery. In the name of freedom we sometimes abuse the very freedom we've received.

READ Galatians 5:13-14 and 1 Corinthians 10:23-24. Which attitudes and behaviors place ourselves above others? How might we use our freedom to indulge in the sinful nature? How do we abuse or misuse our freedom? If this is your struggle, **DESCRIBE** what it's like. True freedom is found in the paradox of self-sacrifice and serving others. Through self-sacrifice and service we become free and part of God's eternal story. Through love, what can you do to serve someone? During the next few weeks, make a conscious effort to think about the things you do, the words you speak, the attitudes you are fed. Are they good? Healthy? Right? Do these things have the potential to enslave me? Do they serve my selfish desires or will they benefit and encourage others?