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A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Without looking at a dictionary, write down your own personal definition of "free".  
Now, jot down the first definition of "free" from [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) and [webstersdictionary1828.com](https://www.webstersdictionary1828.com).  
  
According to each of those definitions, what percentage of Americans currently are "free"?  
  
To which of those two dictionary entries does your personal definition bear more similarity?
- Read John 8:31–36.  
According to v. 31a, **to whom** is Jesus speaking? Aside from ethnicity, does that describe you?  
  
What does Jesus say is the distinguishing criterion for truly being his disciple?  
  
According to v. 32, what benefits will a true disciple experience? Are you experiencing that? Explain.  
  
What sort of "enslavement" did these believers have in mind (v. 33)?  
What sort of freedom did Jesus have in mind (v. 34)? What insights does Romans 6 add?  
  
**To what degree** are you experiencing "freedom indeed" in your daily life (v. 36)? Explain.
- Pastor Doug noted that mankind was made to love God and others. Love is our nature and design.  
Tell about a time when "living for self" ended up enslaving you.  
  
Tell about a time when loving God and others—costly though it was—ended up liberating you.

# Sermon Summary

I've been a Christian for 45 years, and I have discovered that we have a tendency to become unbalanced—lopsided—in our Christian lives. I hope to bring some balance to the kind of life Jesus call us to live. Everyone wants to be free. When you think about it, there are many different kinds of freedom—civil freedom, national freedom, financial freedom, and personal freedom. Americans are perhaps the most free people in the world, and yet many of us admit to feeling personally frustrated and unfulfilled! Jesus announced that he had come “to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners” (Luke 4:18; John 8:36). The Apostle Paul appealed to the Galatians to “stand firm” in the freedom Christ purchased (Galatians 5:13). In fact, “freedom” is a good modern word for “salvation.” After all, to be “saved” by Jesus is to be “set free” by Him. But **from** what and **for** what are we set free?

**I. From what personal bondages did Christ come to set us free?** “Salvation” (aka “freedom”) is a very broad term which has at least three aspects: (a) justification is freedom from guilt and condemnation (the penalty of sin); (b) sanctification is freedom from selfishness (the power of sin); (c) glorification is freedom from the fear of death (the presence of sin). Let's talk about the implications of each.

**(a) Justification** There is a growing movement in our culture to try to rid ourselves of feelings of guilt and shame. Most people do that by trying to abolish the notion of absolute truth, and you do that by denying that there is a God to whom we are accountable. But if there is no God, there is no absolute truth. And if nothing can be deemed objectively right or wrong, then what is there to feel guilty about? Right? But despite all of this cultural brainwashing, we know better. As moral beings we have a sense of oughtness and oughtnotness. That we ought to do certain things and we ought not do other things. And when we do what we know in our hearts to be wrong, it results in a sense of guilt. “Man is the only animal that blushes—or needs to!” God does see everything, and when we act unjustly or unrighteously, it provokes His just displeasure. Our conscience tells us so! We feel guilty because we are guilty! No one is free who is unforgiven. Prior to coming to faith in Christ we have a nagging sense of our guilt—and our destructive choices do not lessen our shame, they compounded it. But Jesus bore in his own innocent person the condemnation that we deserve, and he did it in order that we might be forgiven. It sounds amazing, but if you are “in Christ,” you will never be held accountable for those sins. They were all forgiven at the cross (Romans 8:1-2)! When one places his trust in Jesus Christ, he is adopted into God's family and sin will alter that privileged family status! However God wants us to walk in the light and to turn to him when we sin. In fact, we should be so sensitive to the Lord and his Word that the moment we become aware of sin in our life, we immediately confess and forsake it (Proverbs 28:13 & 1 John 1:9) so that we will remain in intimate communion with Him. If you haven't already looked to Christ as God's remedy for your guilt, then your greatest personal need is to be forgiven, and it is freely available in Christ. I plead with you to do so today.

**(b) Sanctification** “Self-centeredness” is a good synonym for sin because at the root of sin is a preoccupation with self—what I want, what I need, what I demand (John 8:31-32)!

*“I am the center of the world I see. And where the horizon is depends on where I stand. Education may make my self-centeredness less disastrous by broadening my horizon of vision. It's like a man climbing a tower who sees farther in terms of physical vision while remaining himself the center and the standard of reference. I am the center of the world I see.”* —William Temple, *Christianity in the Social Order*

It is **not** God's design for “self” to be at the center. Our first obligation is to love God with all of our being. Our second obligation is to love our neighbor, and put ourselves last (Matthew 22:36-40). Sin is the exact reversal of that order! We love self first, then, when it is convenient, our neighbor, and then in the distant background, perhaps God. Jesus is the only remedy for this radical self-centeredness! He not only died on the cross, He also rose again from the dead! That means that He is alive today and, by the power of his Spirit, He wants to enter our personality and begin to change us from the inside out. Only Jesus is able to subdue our sinful, selfish desires and empower us to put God and others ahead of ourselves and to liberate us from the cramping bondage of our own self-centeredness. The route to real joy never comes by pursuing our own self-interest. Rather it comes in giving ourselves away in love to others.



## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any topic. We can use it to learn more about our purpose in life: loving God and others.**

**Monday**—Read Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 6:27-28 and John 13:34-35

**Tuesday**—Read Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Timothy 1:7 and 1 John 4:7

**Wednesday**—Read Romans 13:8-10 and 14:15

**Thursday**—Read Proverbs 10:12 and 17:9, 17

**Friday**—Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

**Saturday**—Galatians 5:13-15

Need blank copies for doing more

"Five Question Bible Study"?

e-mail: [Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com](mailto:Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com)

### Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]