

LIFE GROUPS	TEACHING PLAN	
	FW	<i>Study of John</i>
	JUNE 13	21

# SET FREE BY JESUS

JOHN 8:1-59

JUNE 13, 2021

TEACHING PLAN

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## PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying John 8:1-59. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**TAKEAWAY: THE GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST ALLOWS US TO FIND FORGIVENESS AND EMPOWERS US TO LIVE WITH HIM FREE OF SHAME.**

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**WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: WE EXPERIENCE SHAME FOR OUR SIN, BUT JESUS HAS TAKEN AWAY OUR SHAME.**

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**GOSPEL CONNECTION: JESUS REMOVED OUR SHAME BY PAYING FOR OUR SINS ON THE CROSS.**

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## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

### Notes:

- 1 What is your earliest memory of asking someone else for forgiveness or having someone ask you for forgiveness? How did it feel to be forgiven? How did it feel to forgive?
- 2 Has your perspective on forgiveness changed as you've gotten older? How so?

True forgiveness is a precious gift. When we humbly ask for forgiveness and receive it, it brings a greater intimacy and freedom into the relationship than ever before. Today's study introduces us to a woman who was caught breaking God's law and was shamed by the public. When the religious leaders brought her before Jesus, He offered her grace, forgiving her sins, liberating her from the law and shame, and setting her free to live for the glory of God.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:1-11.

The scribes and Pharisees were among the recognized religious authorities of that day. Scribes were experts in biblical law. That included the Scriptures and the rabbinical interpretations that comprised the oral traditions religious Jews sought to follow. The Pharisees were known for their dedication to observing all the biblical laws and oral traditions. These two groups represented the pillars of the religious community and the guardians of established morality.

- Do you think the scribes and Pharisees were sincere about the need to punish the woman? Why or why not? Who else should they have presented for punishment?
- What was the Pharisees' goal in bringing the adulterous woman to Jesus?

**Notes:**

The scribes and Pharisees' aim was to discredit Jesus and bring Him into conflict with the Roman authorities. In bringing the guilty woman before Jesus, the religious leaders were not acting from a love for God, for purity, or for justice. They certainly had no love for the woman. To them, she was simply a weapon to use against Jesus. So on the one hand, if Jesus advocated stoning the woman, the trap perhaps was to accuse Him of advocating a death sentence in violation of Roman law. In that scenario, the scribes and Pharisees hoped the authorities would arrest and even execute Jesus. This woman was being used as a pawn by the religious leaders, yet Jesus would turn the table on them by asking a simple question and offering this woman grace.

- How did Jesus answer the scribes and Pharisees?
- How did Jesus' answer to the crowd reveal the accusers' problems?
- Why do you think the older men left first?

Jesus finally said, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." When they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men. Jesus could have used the phrase "without sin" to mean any kind of sin, but in this context it seems more likely He meant the sin of adultery. This

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does not necessarily mean the accusers committed adultery in the flesh, for adultery is not only a sin of the flesh but also a sin of the heart. (See Matt. 5:28.) The main thing to recognize is that in stating “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her,” Jesus was effectively introducing grace to the woman, freeing her from shame and condemnation.

**Notes:**

- What do you think the woman was feeling when it was just her and Jesus?
- What did Jesus say to her? How did Jesus’ words empower the woman?

Jesus said two intensely significant things to her. These two things are closely connected and both are vitally important: 1) “Neither do I condemn you.” God has pronounced a spiritual death penalty on all sins and that penalty has not been revoked. Jesus was showing that God is more interested in converting sinners than in condemning them. 2) “Go now and leave your life of sin.” This command destroys any misunderstanding about Jesus’ attitude toward sin in general and the sin of adultery in particular. He neither excused the woman’s behavior nor gave her license to continue her sinful ways. Rather, He gave her an opportunity to make a new start. He invited her to repentance and faith. He empowered her to live with God and others free of shame.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:12-20.

When Jesus made this statement and had the following conversation with the Pharisees, He was likely standing in the Court of Women under the vast glow of the great lighting fixtures that lit up the great court and surrounding areas. It was a light that many could see a great distance from the temple.

- Since Jesus is the “light of the world,” what does that imply about the world? What does it imply about you?

- What is light's affect on darkness? How does darkness respond to light?

**Notes:**

- Read John 3:19-21. How do John's words in that passage speak into Jesus' teaching in John 8:12?

If Jesus is the "light of the world," then the world resides in darkness (us included). Anyone that is drawn to Jesus the light comes purely as a gracious gift of God, for evil flees the light.

- Did the Pharisees at least partially understand Jesus' statement (v. 13)? Why or why not?
- On what basis do the Pharisees assert that Jesus' statement is not true?

Under Jewish law, when testimony was given in the law court, a suspect could be convicted only on the basis of the testimony of at least two witnesses whose testimony naturally had to agree. In other words, any witness had to have corroboration. Therefore, the Pharisees were discounting Jesus' testimony about Himself on the grounds that there was no corroborating witness.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:31-36.

- According to this passage, what does a servant of God do? What about those who are servants of sin?
- What is God's goal for us (v. 36)?

- Why is freedom from the bondage of sin important?
  
- What might be a standard for measuring your growth in freedom?

**Notes:**

God's intention is for us to be free from this world's mindset. In doing that, we become bound to His mindset—the mind of Christ—and are free from the bonds of Satan and of sin. When we are in bondage, our attention is on our lusts, loyalties, ambitions, grudges, and other things that bind us to the world. Christ's freedom within us assists us in being attentive to God, His Word, prayer, and His voice. Christ's freedom also changes our habits (from being careless to Spirit-ruled), our loyalties (from being scattered to being prayerful), our relationships (from self-serving to God-serving), and our prejudices. If prejudices exist in our hearts, it's an indication that we do not trust the sovereignty of God to work in everyone's life. Because God is sovereign, no prejudice of any kind can exist in our hearts.

- Think back on the woman at the beginning of today's study. How did Jesus both set her free and also call her to live in that freedom?

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

### Notes:

- Why do you think people who know Jesus' forgiveness might still somehow feel condemnation?
- The discipline of confession is important, both personally and as a group. How can we do better to incorporate confession into our community of faith? How would it benefit us as individuals?
- Considering our call as believers entrusted with the gospel message, how should knowing that we are completely forgiven change the way we live each day?

## PRAY

Lead your group in prayer, thanking God for His forgiveness. Thank God for restoring us through the work of Jesus. Pray that when you feel shame, you will look to Scripture and to Jesus to receive power. Pray for those at our church who are dealing with shame and loneliness. Pray that they would find peace and restoration in Christ.

## FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

**Notes:**

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
  - Think about your current hurts and fears. In what ways do these hurts and fears oppose the freedom of Christ in your life?
  - What has God given you to steward? How are you using these opportunities to serve others and bring glory to God?
  
- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
  
- > The challenge to memorize John 8:36.
  
- > The text for next week's study, so group members can read it in anticipation of next weekend: John 9:1-41.

## JOHN 8:1-59

## Sinless Judge (7:53–8:11)

This story is certainly in line with Jesus' character and teaching, but it does not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts. This does not deny the story's authenticity, only that it may have been added at a later date. (See NIV note.)

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees had brought a woman who had been caught in adultery to the feet of Jesus in order that He might pronounce the proper judgment upon her. The purpose was to trap Jesus, for if He neglected to suggest stoning, as the law required, He could be charged with being a lawbreaker. (The actual law prescribed stoning only if she was a betrothed virgin; the man was to be stoned as well, see Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22–24.) If however, Jesus did advocate stoning, then He would bring the wrath of the Roman government to bear upon Himself. How did Jesus handle the dilemma? "If any of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Brilliantly, He did not break the law; yet He ensured the woman would not be stoned. When all had left, Jesus addressed the woman's two greatest needs, self-esteem and a new life. For her self-esteem, He assured her that He, who was without sin, did not condemn her. For her deepest need, that of a new life, Jesus said, "Go now and leave your life of sin."

## Light of the World (8:12–30)

The second of Jesus' seven "I am" statements occurs here: "I am the light of the world." The relationship between Jesus and His Father is of such a nature that Jesus could say that if "you knew me, you would know my father also."

Teaching about His identity and nature, Jesus revealed that He is from above and not of this world. Further, "if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins." Such a statement could only elicit a shocked, "Who are you?" Jesus answered that He was

**Notes:**

who He had always claimed to be, the One sent from the Father, the Son of man.

Many have wondered how a loving God can condemn persons to hell. Our response should be that He does nothing of the sort. Individual persons condemn themselves by choosing to reject Jesus Christ and the truth He came to share with the world.

**Notes:****Truth That Sets Free (8:31–41)**

Jesus made clear that holding to His teachings is essential in order to claim to be one of His disciples. Further, His teachings should be accepted as absolute truth. This truth, and no other, has the power to set a person free. Many philosophies and ideologies make the claim for truth, but all truth is God's truth, and therefore all claims for truth must be judged in light of God's revealed truth and knowledge. To adhere to a false view of reality is to be held captive to ignorance. To live a life apart from God's rule is to be held captive to sin. The truth of Jesus sets individuals free from all such bondage. The Jews refused to listen to the truth of Jesus, instead insisting on clinging to their own understandings. Perhaps the most telling verse is when Jesus stated that they had "no room" for His word.

**Who Is Your Father? (8:42–47)**

If God was truly their Father, then they would love Him. Jesus' made clear that His origin was divine, His mission God planned, and His purpose God willed.

People cannot hear what God has to say if they do not belong to God. If people choose to listen to the evil one in terms of what is considered truth, then they close out the voice of God. The basic disposition of Satan is that of a liar, a perverter of truth, one who deceives all who will allow him to direct their lives and thoughts.

## The Eternal I Am (8:48–59)

Desperate to discredit Jesus, the Jews accused Him of being a Samaritan as well as demon possessed. Jesus denied the charge and immediately resumed His charge that they were living apart from God. He added that if anyone kept His word, “he will never see death.” At this the Jews were outraged. Jesus was placing Himself above even Abraham. With one voice they asked in indignation, “Who do you think you are?” Jesus responded that God glorified Him, that He knew God, and that He kept God’s word. Further, Abraham “rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” This brought utter incredulity to the crowd. They challenged Him, for here Jesus—far from even the fifty-year-old mark—was claiming to have seen Abraham.

Jesus gave one of the most important answers to any question posed to Him in the entire Gospel of John. “ ‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!’ ” “What was Jesus saying? That He was God Himself! The only other time the phrase “I am” was used to describe someone was in Exodus 3:14, where God used that very phrase as His name. Here Jesus claimed that name for Himself. No identity statement could be clearer. Jesus claimed to be God Himself in human form. The Jews did not respond with words but picked up stones to kill Him for blasphemy (see Lev. 24:16). Jesus hid Himself and slipped away from the temple grounds.

**Notes:**