

## **Week Fifty-two: "Setting Captives Free"**

### **Day One: "Setting Captives Free"**

**Read: Matthew 12 (p. 1092)**

**Read: Commentary (p. 1093)**

**Reflect:** If your life is like a house, what is the garbage pickup and removal situation like in your "house"?

**Dig:** According to verses 18-21, how did Jesus exercise his authority?

What is "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit"?

Read Matthew 3:7-10 (p. 1078) and Matthew 9:32-34 (p. 1088) and notice the gradual hardening of the Pharisees' attitudes.

What did you learn about this particular unforgivable sin from these texts?

What further principles of spiritual warfare do you learn from Matthew 12: 43-45?

**Apply:** Go to page 1523 in your Freedom in Christ Bible. Read through the six commitments under "How to Maintain Your Freedom." What suggestion under this heading is God's Spirit calling you to commit to? Pray right now for God's help to begin or keep this commitment.

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### **Day Two: "The Truth Encounter"**

**Read: Acts 20:13-38 (p. 1264)**

**Read: Commentary (p. 1265)**

**Reflect:** How great a threat is truth-twisting in your life? Where are you most vulnerable to be gullible to falsehood?

**Dig:** What does Paul mean by "I am innocent of the blood of all men" in verse 26?

See Ezekiel 33:1-7 (p. 939) for a biblical answer to this question.

What is Paul's greatest fear? (see verses 29-31)

What does Matthew 7:15-20 (p. 1085) add to your understanding of this passage?

Notice the mention of tears in vss. 19, 31, 38. What does this tell you about the kind of heart our teachers should possess?

**Apply:** Read verse 38 and then pray for your leaders and teachers based on the content of that verse.

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### **Day Three: "Helping Others Establish Their Freedom in Christ"**

**Read: 2 Timothy 2:24-26 (p. 1406)**

**Read: Commentary (p. 1406)**

**Reflect:** In the difficult balance of grace and truth, which side of that continuum do you usually fall on? What about your church? What about the larger church in our culture?

**Dig:** Make a list of what Paul tells Timothy to "avoid" or "flee" and then make a list of the things that Paul tells Timothy he must practice or should have in his character:

Things to avoid or flee Positive attributes

According to this text, is repentance something that we can move toward or do we rely upon God to give us this as a gift? (see verse 25)

What does this tell you about how to pray for people who are spiritually hardened?

Look up Matthew 11:28-30 (p. 1091). Notice how Jesus describes himself. What is the effect on people's lives when you approach them as Jesus describes himself approaching people?

**Apply:** What must you "flee" in order to be a fit teacher and model for others to find their freedom? Ask God to help you flee today.

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**Day Four: "The Wonderful Counselor"**

**Read: Isaiah 61:1-3 (p. 818)**

**Read: Commentary (p. 819)**

**Reflect:** Do you bring people to Jesus when you listen to their concerns and problems? Why or why not?

**Dig:** Look up Luke 4: 16-19 (p. 1158) and notice where Jesus quits his quotation of the Isaiah passage. Why does he quit here?

"Favor" can mean "grace". Why would Jesus announce "grace" at this time and not judgment?

Also read Luke 4:23-30 (p. 1158). Why did the people get upset? What was Jesus saying about them?

Reading all the way to the end of verse 3 of Isaiah 61, list all the things that a person does who is "anointed" of God:

**Apply:** Since the commentary states that "...discipleship counseling is the process of building the life of Christ into one another," how are you doing in leading those who you influence in discipleship? Pray specifically for those who you are leading toward Christ by the life you lead (children, fellow workers, seekers, friends, neighbors). Pray that God would shine in you such that they see Jesus and then seek Jesus the wonderful counselor.

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**Day Five: "A Call to Live a Righteous Life"**

**Read: 2 Peter 3 (p. 1463)**

**Read: Commentary (p. 1462)**

**Reflect:** Do you think we live in the last times? Why or why not?

**Dig:** List the truths about the coming of Jesus for judgment (the end of history, the Second Coming) that you learn from the passage, especially these verses:

Verse 3:

Verse 8:

Verse 10:

How does Peter say we ought to prepare for Jesus' Second Coming? See verse 12.

How does verse 16 help you to understand how the apostles themselves understood the authority of Paul's writings?

Verse 18 is a favorite for many Christians. How are you growing in those two essentials: grace and knowledge?

**Apply:** Now that we have come to the end of our year-long study of the Freedom in Christ Bible, see if you can come up with one truth that has been given to you and one change of life that has come about as a result of this study.

***Thank God for this past year!***