

# Finding Freedom - Devotional

## Week 2 - #1

**Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.** Proverbs 28:13

Did you grow up in a household where mercy was consistently shown to you when you messed up? I can't say I know anyone who really experienced this...so you are not alone if you answered "no". We are all on a journey to understand more deeply the compassion and love of our Heavenly Father and to experience just how radically different He is from the earthly fathers, mothers, and other authority figures we grew up with.

Take a moment and read the above scripture out loud. Now read it again silently to yourself. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you right now regarding this scripture. Sometimes I read a scripture 4 or 5 times before the Holy Spirit begins to draw my attention to a word or a few words in a verse. Don't be in a hurry. Say, "**Holy Spirit, speak to me about this verse. What do you want to show me today?**". Write down what you feel God saying to you:

---

---

---

Most of us grew up in families where our failures and bad behaviors were punished. Whether we took "lickens" for our bad behavior or were put in timeout, there was usually some sort of punishment that we reaped when we didn't measure up to our parents expectations. How were you punished when you misbehaved as a kid? \_\_\_\_\_

---

It didn't take you and I long to figure out if our parents, or teachers, didn't find out about what we did wrong, we avoided any form of punishment! We got off "Scott free"!! So we learned to hide the bad things we did! Taking that into consideration, is it any surprise that confessing our sins to our Heavenly Father is not a behavior that many of us are naturally inclined to easily do? This may go against some very long standing and possibly deeply entrenched beliefs you have!

Let the following scripture from Romans 2:4 (NLT) speak to your heart. "**Don't you realize how patient He is being with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see that He has been waiting all this time without punishing you, to give you time to turn from your sin? His kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.**"

Do you really believe you will find mercy, as it says in Proverbs 28:13, if you acknowledge you've done wrong to your Heavenly Father? If you are not a person who is quick to confess your sins, there may be some beliefs from your early years regarding punishment and authority figures (parents, teachers, etc) which have now carried over to your Heavenly Father. Ask the Holy Spirit right now to reveal any lies you have believed that have led you to conceal your sins from your Heavenly Father. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Take some time to pray through what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you. Confess & renounce all the lies that have carried over to your relationship with your Heavenly Father from other authority figures. You may also have some hard feelings towards the authority figures from your past in regards to the way they punished you. Be sure to **confess** those sins, **renounce** the lies, **forgive** them, **rebuke** any evil spirits, and **declare** blessings & truth over their lives!

# Finding Freedom - Devotional

## Week 2 - #2

**Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. James 2:13**

Today, let's take one of the questions from the bookmark and do a little work. The second question on the back of the bookmark reads, "What standards are ruining my relationships?" Too often, we have some very rigid beliefs concerning the ways people should behave or the way things should be done. While these expectations may seem good, we can often become "not so nice" when people fail to meet up to our standards. Right now, I want you to think about your family, friends and co-workers: Is there a repetitive issue or frustration you have with a specific person? Write the issue or problem down here: \_\_\_\_\_

Now ask the Holy Spirit to help you get in touch with the expectations or standards that you are holding this person to \_\_\_\_\_

Typically, the negative labels we put on people are an outcome of our judgments. When a person doesn't measure up to our expectations or standards, they essentially have "missed the mark" in our eyes and we come to negative conclusions about them. What are the labels you have put on this person who failed to meet up to your expectations or standards?

Some expectations we should just ask God to completely remove from our life. For example, expecting the toothpaste to be squeezed from the bottom, or the laundry to be folded perfectly, are expectations you may want to totally renounce and do away with. Life is not going to come to an end if these things aren't done exactly the way you want them to be. On the other hand, there are other expectations that on the surface seem fine, but the meaning you have assigned to a specific behavior is creating the issue. For example, I hear people grumble about feeling disrespected when someone is late. In this case, you need to focus on renouncing the lie that "if you respected me you'd be on time". It's the fact that you have strongly linked respect to the behavior of being on time, which is driving your bad reaction when a person is late.

When this person behaves in the way that offends you, how do you believe God would like you to respond? \_\_\_\_\_

What new beliefs do you need to adopt to avoid falling back into the same patterns of judgmental thinking and behaving? (hint...they will be merciful) \_\_\_\_\_

Now grab your bookmark, if you need help, and pray through this situation!

Your judgmental reactions to this person's behavior have probably taken a toll on this relationship. Ask the Holy Spirit right now, "**What can I do to, or for, this person to start rebuilding our relationship?**" \_\_\_\_\_

Now put a plan in place to do whatever God has shown you!

# Finding Freedom - Devotional

## Week 2 - #3

**Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. James 2:13**

Often times when we blow it, fail, or make a mistake, we want, and maybe at times expect, others to be merciful. So how do you respond when someone around you blows it, fails, or makes a mistake? Do they receive mercy from you? Or do you have a tendency to punish?

Do you recall the definition of mercy that I shared last week? Write it down:

---

Now read the scripture at the top of the page. Think for a moment about how your Heavenly Father has treated you. There wasn't anything you and I did before coming to Christ which could have earned us the amazing privilege of being forgiven of all our sins. We rightly deserved punishment, but our compassionate Heavenly Father loved us too much!

The definition of punish is to inflict a penalty for an offense or fault. Whether the penalty you inflict is to vocally express your disapproval, or more subtly withhold love and affection from the person, both are forms of punishment. Take a moment and think about a recent time when you judged someone you really care about and then inflicted some sort of "penalty" upon them. How did you punish them? \_\_\_\_\_

---

While there are times and places where there needs to be consequences for a person's actions, I believe it's far too often that we somehow justify our harsh unloving thoughts and behaviors with this type of reasoning. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you justified your judgment of this person. What is the lie, or lies, you believe that somehow gives you permission to judge and punish this person? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Do you realize what today's scripture says about how God will treat us when we choose to judge others? Don't be fooled by your own reasoning; we will reap what we sow. And if you sow judgment, that is what you will reap. I don't know about you, but that really makes me want to get my heart clean before God. That is what the Bible calls the Fear of the Lord!

When we get in touch with the reality that our thoughts and beliefs are not aligned with the way God desires us to think, the next question you need to get in the habit of asking God is **"Why do I think this way? Holy Spirit, show me where I learned this way of thinking and behaving?"** Write down what the Holy Spirit reveals to you: \_\_\_\_\_

---

He may reveal to you a specific situation that contributed to this pattern of thinking. Or you may see that this type of judgmental behavior has been role modeled and reinforced throughout your life. Either way, remember what I say.. "Go with what you got".

If you haven't already done so, pray through the recent situation where you judged the person and inflicted some sort of "penalty" upon them. Then take the time to confess how you have justified your "punishment paradigm" and renounce the lies that have empowered this way of thinking. Ask your Heavenly Father to release more compassion and mercy into your heart!!

# Finding Freedom - Devotional

## Week 2 - #4

Go back to the class notes from the Finding Freedom Prayer Model in Week 1, or open your Bible and write out 2 Corinthians 10:5 \_\_\_\_\_

---

Re-read the scripture you just wrote down. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart about this verse. Take notice of any specific words that seem to jump out at you. Write down what God is saying to you: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Taking our thoughts captive is a very challenging task for most of us, including myself. I have found over the years that setting aside time to reflect on my circumstances, especially when things have gone wrong or gotten chaotic, has been a great help in this endeavor to reign in my mind. However, this will only be a fruitful time if you are partnering with the Holy Spirit to ask questions which help release the revelation of how you think and what you believe. Getting the revelation of specific thoughts and/or beliefs which don't align to the word or character of God is the first, and often times the biggest, step in taking these thoughts captive.

Think about a recent time when your got angry or upset. I'll bet you got angry when the person failed to meet up with your expectations. Okay, maybe you just got a little frustrated, but that is the same thing as getting angry, just at a lower emotional level. The emotion of anger is always associated with perceived injustice. Remember the picture of the stickman sitting on the chair like a judge looking down at the other person from last week's teaching? This is the posture we assume when we get tripped up by our rigid expectations and begin to seek justice in our relationships. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you why you need or desire justice.

---

It's not uncommon to find that your need for justice is associated with areas of your life where you are not trusting in God or are not believing deeply in His love for you. If that didn't come up as you prayed, take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if either of these apply to you. What are the lies you are believing that feed this need for justice?

---

Looking back at all the times you've gotten angry, if you get real honest with yourself, did you believe your anger would protect you? If you believe this is true, you will need to renounce this lie and begin to put your trust back in God!

You probably have enough revelation for now to begin praying. However, if anger has been something you have really struggled with, I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal an event or situation from your past that really anchor this pattern of anger deeply into your life. If that's you, I'd suggest you get a blank Ministry Time Handout and let God reveal to you all the "wedges" you need to pray through to help clear out a level and layer of anger in your life. If anger hasn't been a big struggle for you, simply take another good look at all you have written down today and pray through those lies you need to disown. Be sure to get in touch with the powerful truths you need to declare to renew your mind and help complete the work of making your thoughts obedient to Christ!