

## **JOURNEY TO FREEDOM**

### **UNIT II KEY 3 SCRIPTURE**

**SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLE:** Sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth. John 17:17

If a book had been written that accurately described all of your faults, in detail, would you read it? If the book not only accurately described all of your faults but also how you developed and maintained them, and the consequences of them, would you read it? Would you buy copies for your relatives and friends, and urge them to read it?

The Bible shows us our sin and shows us our Savior. The Bible gives the human race no flattery, nor does it assign us any virtue with which to defend ourselves. We sin with our deeds, our words, and our thoughts. The Word of God exposes our selfish motivations and self-serving agendas.

In our conceit and arrogance, we think of ourselves as virtuous; and fallen humanity finds numerous ways to cover sin with phony defenses. We deny that we have sinned, we minimize the seriousness of our sins, we make excuses for our sins, we blame others for our sins, we accuse others of committing the very sins that we are most guilty of, we loudly denounce in others the faults we ignore in ourselves, we gossip and judge others rather than honestly examining ourselves, we do good deeds to compensate for our sins, we commit more sins to cover up our previous sins, we persuade others to condone our sins, we surround ourselves with friends who commit the same sins, we find people who will approve of our sins, we avoid anyone who disapproves of our sins, we fight anyone who does not approve of our sins, and this list is by no means exhaustive.

We continue to commit our sins because stopping would be admitting that we had been wrong all along. When our sins catch up with us, and we are forced to experience the consequences of our sins, we view ourselves as victims and persuade people to feel sorry for us. We act like turkeys but pretend that we are eagles.

While we cover our own sins by reasoning them away, we accuse and judge others without mercy. We are quick to criticize others. We confront others on their excuses but demand that others accept our excuses. We expect others to follow the rules of society, but believe the rules should not apply to us because our situation is unique. We unjustly judge people based on their intentions without our knowing their intentions; at the same time, we expect people to excuse our sins because our intentions are good. We make negative assumptions about others and then look for evidence against them. We interrogate others in an effort to catch them in lies or contradictions, while taking great offense when others do so to us. We play head-games with others in order to provoke emotional reactions from them, and then judge them for the very reactions that we sought from them.

The Bible can expose all of these sins. No one can stand before the holiness of God the Father; the sinless life of Jesus, Who is both fully God and fully human; and the power of the Holy Spirit, Who uses the Word of God to comb through our consciences and expose our sins. In the light of the Word, our defenses are blown to pieces; and we are shown to be nothing but sinners in need of continuous mercy.

We come to the foot of the cross with nothing in our hands by which we might impress God. We come in total need. We are so easily impressed with our own virtues, but how much of even our virtues have no hidden motivations or self-serving agendas? No matter how good we are, we remain sinners in need of forgiveness.

Jesus' Atonement on the cross is foolishness and a stumbling block to those who will not acknowledge their sin and repent; but for those who have faith, His atonement is powerful (I Corinthians 1:18-25). His Atonement tells us that our own virtue cannot save us, that no purpose is served by pretending to be more virtuous than we really are, and that our excuses are worthless. It tells us that we gain nothing by pointing to others who are worse than we are, as if comparing ourselves to others could save us. The Atonement of Jesus on the cross strikes at the core of what we humans most want to believe about ourselves.

The Word is sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). It will not return empty, but will accomplish God's purpose (Isaiah 55:10-11). The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe (Romans 1:16-17). It performs God's work in those who believe (I Thessalonians 2:13). When we get into the Word, the Word gets into us.

No human mind would write anything as unflattering to the human condition as the Word of God. Nothing in human nature is able to believe it. Faith has to be brought to us from outside of ourselves, through the work of the Spirit in our hearts through the Word. When faith comes, and we acknowledge that we are nothing but sinners in need of forgiveness, peace comes. We no longer need to waste mental and emotional energy trying to rationalize our sins. We can rest on the forgiveness that covers us.

The more the archeologists dig in Israel, and the more artifacts and ancient documents become available, the more the Bible is illuminated and proven to be true. Facts that have been verified give credibility to facts that have not yet been verified. A true story tells of an Israeli businessman who read in the Bible the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The words "...the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace..." (Genesis 19:28). His reading led him to speculate that underground gas and oil might be in the area, and he was proven to be right. In 1953, Israel's first oil well went into operation near the ancient site of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Many more discoveries have verified Biblical statements regarding history and science. We have no reason to doubt that God can make profound changes in our hearts and minds based on what His Word says about our need for repentance and the forgiveness offered in Christ.

**SCRIPTURE:** Write out what each of these verses or passages mean to you and your situation.

John 17:17

John 16:4

John 8:44-45

Proverbs 24:1-12

### **STUDY GUIDE**

1. What kinds of defenses have you tended to use to justify your sins? Please re-read the third and fourth paragraphs of the devotion.
2. We often use defenses when we doubt God's forgiveness is great enough to cover all of our sins. Is there any sin in your life or past that you wonder if God can really forgive you for?
3. What kinds of faults do you find yourself quick to judge in others?
4. What do you need to do about that? Matthew 7:1-5

5. You began the Keys program because you desired to overcome ssa/ma/tx temptations. What are some other issues in your life that God is calling you to change?
  
6. What are some things you have learned about yourself since you started the program?
  
7. On a scale of 1-10, how victorious have you been lately? Please explain your answer.
  
8. On a scale of 1-10, how much memory work have you done?
  
9. Did you use any memorized Scripture to battle temptation lately? What was the result?
  
10. How is your spiritual life in general, how are your private devotions, and how are things at your church/fellowship group?

Plan of Action: