

## **JOURNEY TO FREEDOM**

### **UNIT III Key 6 SURRENDER**

**SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLE:** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

Two words for “fear” are found in the Bible. One is slavish fear, the kind of fear a slave feels for the slave-owner. Such fear is not what the Bible tells us to have for God.

The other use of the word “fear” means respect, awe, and reverence. We have been saved by Grace alone; we accept that we are totally dependent for our salvation on the mercy of God. When we have faith in the enormity of the ransom paid for us on the cross, what else could we feel toward God except respect, awe, and reverence?

Having come to that point in our walk with the Lord, what holds us back from building a life based upon the wisdom God gives? We see the lies that come to us from our environment. We see the lies that were injected into our minds at a vulnerable age. We hear the deceitful whispers of the enemy of our souls, who uses the lies of the environment and our own self-will as leverage to tempt us.

As fallen human beings, we are not totally helpless victims. As little children, we were helpless against the big people who hurt us; but at some point we became bigger and stronger, and we could question the messages we had received from those with whom we had grown up. And how did we use our ability to reason?

Humans are separate from the animals because we can reason. Like any of our other abilities, we can use reason for good or for evil. Fallen humanity often uses its ability to reason to defend and justify sin.

When we repent of our sins and receive God's forgiveness, our ability to reason is redeemed as well. We can use our ability to reason to work with the Holy Spirit to expose the lies in our minds. We can use our ability to reason to face the truth about God, ourselves, and others. We can use our ability to reason to confess our weaknesses rather than defend them. We can use our ability to reason to confront the lies with which the culture tries to indoctrinate us. We can use our ability to reason to confront the games that others play in order to manipulate us and bend us to their will. When we confess our sins and receive forgiveness, our minds begin to be restored to the uses for which God originally intended them.

One very pleasurable way in which our minds remain in bondage to the self-will and deceptions of the enemy is through the use of fantasy. Fantasies appear to be unique to the human race. The male pronghorn antelope does not waste any time fantasizing about an attractive female antelope; he simply locks horns with any other male pronghorn that stands between him and her. Nor do the females of any species seem to fantasize; they simply signal their availability and wait for a male to arrive.

The male pronghorn does not waste any time fantasizing about what a hero he is to his herd; he simply turns on the coyotes pestering the herd and drives them away. He feels no sense of humiliation if the other male pronghorns join in; if anything, he is glad to have the help. Getting the job done is the most important thing, and once it is done and the coyotes safely out of the way, he turns his attention to the next thing, which is usually food.

We often develop a fantasy life to cope with painful reality. In a hostile and rejecting environment, the mind of a child will naturally seek escape, and a rich fantasy life probably has cushioned many children from being overwhelmed by reality. The helpless child needs to create a world where he/she is powerful and special, and where he/she is loved. But at some point this fantasy world becomes a hindrance rather than a help. It makes us weak instead of strong. It weakens us by maintaining and reinforcing the lies. It prevents us from developing genuine strength.

To become strong, we must face our lives and ourselves as they are, not how we wish they were. We are not omnipotent superbeings. We are ordinary, and we must learn to love ourselves as ordinary. At the same time, those whom we love are also ordinary. They are not meant to be props on the stages of our fantasies, they are not put on this earth to be extensions of our will, and we have no right to be angry when they fail to behave like the people in our fantasies. We all have a common need for redemption in Christ, and we all have the gift of a Savior Who died for us. We must surrender our fantasies and learn to love ourselves through the love Jesus has for us, so that we can love the others through the love Jesus has for them.

The blessing of learning to love our ordinary selves, and learning to love other ordinary selves, is that we become truly strong. The only Superbeing, before Whom we are very small, loved us enough to pay for our sins on the cross. When we come before Him, confess our weaknesses, receive the free gift of forgiveness, and give Him rightful awe and reverence, we can learn to love who we really are and love others as they really are. Rather than loving ourselves and others based on how closely we resemble the characters in our fantasies, we can give love based on the love that God gives us in Christ.

## **SCRIPTURE**

Proverbs 16:16

Mark 14:27-31

Mark 14:66-72

John 21:15-22

Acts 21:10-14

### **STUDY GUIDE**

1. What does surrender mean, in light of how Jesus was surrendered for you (Philippians 2:5-11)?
2. In what ways has your attitude about surrender changed since you started the program?
3. In what ways has surrender brought you closer to God?
4. If you do not know what to say or do in a given situation, what should you do (James 1:5-7)?
5. In what ways have you used your ability to reason to defend and justify your sins?

6. In what ways have you used your ability to reason to expose your sins and confront your own defenses?

7. What have you found the easiest to surrender to the Lord?

8. What have you found the hardest to surrender to the Lord?

9. On a scale of 1-10, how much have you surrendered to the Lord? Please explain your answer.

10. On a scale of 1-10, how much have you surrendered your fantasy life to the Lord? Please explain your answer.

11. On a scale of 1-10, how victorious have you been lately? Please explain your answer.

12. Did you use any memorized Scripture to battle temptation lately? What was the result?

13. How is your spiritual life in general, how are your private devotions, and how are things at your church/fellowship group?

Plan of Action: