

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

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Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide  
SB 10.09.2022

True Freedom – John 8:12-36

## Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

The statements we’re going to hear Jesus make today and the conversations that flow from them all stem from the incident we considered last week involving the woman caught in the act of adultery. That whole scene played out in front of a large crowd. Can you imagine something like that happening in one of our services? Once the religious leaders cleared out, I imagine Jesus had everyone’s undivided attention. He used that opportunity to make a bold claim. This is now the second I Am statement that Jesus makes in John’s gospel. We saw the first one in chapter 6 where Jesus said, ‘I Am the bread of life.’ In each I Am statement, Jesus combines the covenant name for God with some declaration about Himself. Let’s get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you from this week’s sermon?
2. Have you or someone close to you ever served as a witness in a trial or hearing? What was that experience like for you or your loved one?
3. What pressures might someone experience as a witness to a crime or some contested truth? What impact might such pressures have on our ability to be truthful witnesses?

Serving as a witness in a court of law can be an intimidating, stressful experience. Even the most confident, truthful witnesses can have their words turned and twisted, made to say something different than what was actually intended. Only absolute confidence that one is speaking truth can give a witness the strength to persevere and overcome challenges to the truth. In John 8, Jesus revealed a crucial truth regarding Himself, and was instantly challenged by the religious leaders of His day. The recorded conversation brings with it many challenges for those who would call themselves “witnesses” for Jesus Christ.

## Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:12-13

When Jesus made this statement and had the conversations with the Pharisees, He was likely standing in the Court of Women under the vast glow of the great lighting fixtures that lit up not only the great court, but other surrounding areas. It was a light that many could see a great distance from the temple.

1. If Jesus is the Light of the world, what does that imply about the world? What does it imply about you?
2. What is light’s impact on darkness? How does darkness respond to light?
3. 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.

4. According to verse 13, do the Pharisees at least partially understand Jesus’ statement? Why or why not?
5. On what basis do the Pharisees assert that Jesus’ statement is not true?

## ***“Breakthrough!” in 2022***

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 ground that there was no corroborating witness.

6. Do you think the Pharisees felt any fear in calling Jesus a liar? Why or why not?

In this and many other places in the gospels, Jesus effectively serves as the first witness to Himself. The word witness in this passage is where the word martyr is also derived. Ironically, the first martyr of the Christian church was Christ Himself, both in terms of His verbal witness and in His death on the cross. Apparently, the Pharisees had no fear in calling Jesus a liar. On this side of history, who among us would stand before Jesus and call Him and His teaching false? The answer to that question is all of us who don’t follow Him. Every unbeliever in this world says to Jesus, “You are a liar.”

### **ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 8:14-20**

1. How does Jesus’ response in verse 14 answer the Pharisees’ objections in v. 13?
2. What is wrong with the Pharisees’ form of judgment that Jesus, therefore, rejects (verse 14)?
3. How does Jesus’ explanation in verses 16-18 further answer the Pharisees’ objections regarding His testimony about Himself?

Jesus’ first point is that His testimony is true because it is based on firsthand knowledge of heaven, for He had come from there and was going back there. The Pharisees did not know the simplest fact about Him: His origin. The Pharisees were prideful and presumptive in their knowledge about Him. Jesus’ second point is that the Pharisees used a faulty system of judgment to arrive at their conclusions about Jesus. Jesus, however, judges no one in that manner. Jesus judges from the perspective of that place from which He had come—heaven. Finally, Jesus’ final point is that He did have a corroborating witness: the Father Himself. Not only did Jesus have a witness, but His witness is the highest authority.

4. What can we learn from Jesus in this passage about standing up to questions about our faith and properly responding to them?

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:21-36**

1. Where will Jesus be “going” (John 8:21)?
2. Why is it that they “cannot” (John 8:21) go there as well?
3. When will the Jews understand what Jesus said in John 8:21-26?
4. At what point did Jesus say that the people would know who He was? (8:27-28)
5. Based on verse 36, what is God’s goal for us?
6. Why is freedom from the bondage of sin important?

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 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.

## ***“Breakthrough!” in 2022***

### Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

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

1. In what ways would you consider yourself an effective witness for Jesus? In what areas can you improve?
2. Think about your current hurts and fears. In what ways do these hurts and fears oppose the freedom of Christ in your life?
3. What might be a standard for measuring your growth in freedom?
4. Who will you share these truths with this week?

**PRAYER** -Lead your group in prayer, giving thanks to God that Jesus was both the first witness and the first martyr for the one truth faith. Thank Him for calling you to Himself, and pray for the grace and faith to live boldly for the exclusive Good News of Jesus Christ. Pray for the people and ministries of our church to be courageous, truthful, and loving in their evangelism in our community and beyond

*“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.” {2nd Corinthians 4:6}*