



FINDING FAITH: Individual Bible Study inspired by the movie "Freedom"

INTRODUCTION

Freedom tells two stories separated by a century, united by one family's search for deliverance. In 1856, Samuel Woodward escapes the Monroe Plantation in Virginia with his wife, mother, and son, guided by the Underground Railroad and pursued relentlessly by the slave hunter Plimpton. Embittered by suffering, Samuel struggles to sing songs of hope with his fellow travelers, until his mother reminds him that one day he will sing "Amazing Grace." A hundred years earlier, in 1748, slave ship captain John Newton carries Samuel's great-grandfather across the Atlantic. The voyage becomes the crucible of Newton's own conversion, and the hymn he later writes becomes a legacy of grace that reaches down through generations to Samuel himself. Two men, two centuries, one search for freedom found ultimately in Christ. Take a few quiet moments before you begin. Ask God to search your heart as you reflect.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. BONDAGE TO SIN, BONDAGE OF BODY

- Samuel's physical enslavement is real and brutal, but the film also traces a deeper captivity: bitterness, vengeance, and unbelief that hold Newton and Samuel's ancestors captive in different ways.

Read Romans 6:16-18 and John 8:34-36.

- Take some time to think about the following questions: What holds me captive right now that isn't visible to anyone else? Where have I confused freedom of circumstance with freedom of heart? Write down anything that comes to mind, and bring it honestly before God.



2. TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND THE REALITY OF SIN

- John Newton participates willingly in the slave trade before his conversion, and the film does not shy from depicting the horror of that sin.

Read Ephesians 2:1-5 and Jeremiah 17:9.

- Consider your own life apart from grace. Is there a sin you've told yourself is unforgivable, or a season of your life you're ashamed to bring before God? Newton's transformation shows that no darkness is beyond the reach of grace. Spend a moment naming that before the Lord, not to dwell in shame, but to release it into His hands.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

3. SOVEREIGN GRACE AND UNMERITED MERCY



- Newton later writes "Amazing Grace," confessing that grace saved a wretch like him. This reflects the truth that salvation is by grace alone, received through faith, not earned.

Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-5.

- Ask yourself honestly: do I still, in some quiet corner of my heart, believe I need to earn God's favor? Rejoice in the truth that God's grace is completely undeserved, and can never be earned.

4. FORGIVENESS AND THE IMAGE OF GOD

- Samuel wrestles with whether to pursue revenge against those who wronged him and his family. His path toward forgiveness reflects the truth that all people, including those who hurt us, bear the image of God.

Read Genesis 1:27, Matthew 6:14-15, and Romans 12:19.

- Is there someone you are withholding forgiveness from right now? Ask Him to help you see that person as He does, and ask Him for the grace to forgive as you have been forgiven.



REFLECTION & APPLICATION

Where in your own life do you experience bondage, whether to bitterness, fear, sin, or circumstance, that only Christ can free you from? Newton's testimony reminds you that no one is too far gone for grace. Consider writing down one relationship where God may be calling you toward forgiveness, and one way you might quietly testify, as Newton did through his hymn, to the grace that has redeemed you.



PRAYER

Close in a time of private prayer. Thank God that your salvation rests on grace alone and not on your own works. Bring before Him anyone who remains in bondage, whether to spiritual bondage to sin, fear, or physical slavery and trafficking in the world today. Ask for courage to forgive as you have been forgiven, and for strength to persevere in your own trials, fixing your eyes on Jesus.



CONCLUSION

Freedom reminds us that true and lasting freedom is not found in circumstance but in the amazing grace of God, who redeems the greatest of sinners and sustains His people through the darkest trials until they reach their true home. Carry this reflection with you into the week ahead.

