



## Session 1: Freedom from worry and fear

1-7 JAN

### Icebreakers

Have you made any resolutions for the New Year?

A recent survey reported on the 13 most common phobias in the UK. Can your group guess what they are? (Results: dogs, blood, darkness, clowns, crowds, flying, needles, mice, claustrophobia, spiders, public speaking, snakes, heights)\*

### Key thought

We can be influenced or sometimes even controlled by many negative factors, but Jesus has called us to live in freedom so we can experience His life to the full.

### Key verse

“I have the right to do anything”–  
but I will not be mastered by anything.’  
1 Corinthians 6:12 (NIV, 2011)

### Discussion starters

1. What would you like to master this year so that you may live in Christ’s freedom?
2. Why may the force of willpower be anti-Christian?
3. How could your fears be both healthy and unhealthy?
4. Do you agree with the quote on 4 Jan: ‘Worry is a form of atheism’?
5. Why might some Christians find step one particularly difficult (the admission of a problem)?

6. What is the difference between planning for the future and worrying about it?
7. Which of the nine steps do you find most helpful?

### The example of Jesus

‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?’  
Matthew 6:25

### Prayer pointers

- Pray that, as we study this issue, the Holy Spirit will help us to understand and walk in the freedom God has given us.
- Pray for those who have a tendency to worry or are facing difficult situations.

## Session 2: Freedom from guilt

8-14 JAN

### Icebreaker

Why do we often refuse to admit guilt? Watch the video found at: [www.today.com/parents/toddler-hilariously-denies-eating-cupcake-despite-being-covered-icing-t51001](http://www.today.com/parents/toddler-hilariously-denies-eating-cupcake-despite-being-covered-icing-t51001)

### Key thought

We can be free from the emotional turmoil of guilt resulting from our failures and sins.

### Key verse

‘who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases’ Psalm 103:3

### Discussion starters

1. Discuss Selwyn’s phrase, ‘realised forgiveness’, and contrast it with ‘unrealised forgiveness’.
2. Is personal realised forgiveness based on a feeling or on a decision?
3. Why may people feel unable to forgive themselves?
4. What is the difference between regret and shame?
5. Why might people excuse their behaviour rather than repent of it?
6. How may self-loathing negate Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross?
7. How might asking ourselves questions eliminate the torment of the past?

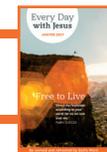
### The example of Jesus

‘For we have not an high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.’ Hebrews 4:15

### Prayer pointers

- Confess any troubling ‘failure’ or sin to God.
- Thank God for His forgiveness and freedom from guilt and shame.

\*For full survey results, see [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/are-you-braver-than-the-average-briton-uks-top-13-fears-revealed-9212346.html#gallery](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/are-you-braver-than-the-average-briton-uks-top-13-fears-revealed-9212346.html#gallery)



## Session 3: Freedom from resentment

15–20 JAN

### Icebreaker

Search and watch 'Forrest Gump (1994) My Destiny Movie Clip' on YouTube. Is resentment something others do to us, or something we do to ourselves?

### Key thought

We may not realise the presence or effect of lingering resentment in our hearts, but it can make us bitter and prevent us from being transformed into the image of Jesus.

### Key verse

'Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple.' Job 5:2

### Discussion starters

1. Do you agree with the quotes of C.S. Lewis on 15 Jan?
2. Why is resentment not just wrong, but actually bad for you?
3. How might resentment affect us physically, emotionally, spiritually, and within our personality?
4. What is the difference between righteous indignation and ungodly resentment?
5. How can we defeat resentment before resentment defeats us?
6. Why is it important to pardon those who act towards us as enemies?

### The example of Jesus

'Jesus said, "Father, forgive them"'  
Luke 23:34

### Prayer pointers

- Confess any lingering resentment to God and receive His forgiveness and cleansing.
- Pray for anyone who has hurt you recently (sensitively and kindly).

## Session 4: Freedom from materialism

21–26 JAN

### Icebreaker

Watch the clip at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6p8CM7zbnw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6p8CM7zbnw)  
How are these new parents moving from accumulation to stewardship of wealth?

What would you do with the money if you won a lottery jackpot of millions?

### Key thought

Both the ancient and modern world were built on the accumulation of money and possessions, but the kingdom of God is based not on stewardship – not ownership.

### Key verse

'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.' Luke 12:15 (NIV, 2011)

### Discussion starters

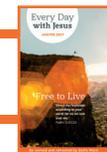
1. What might be good about having a lot of money?
2. What are some of the drawbacks to having a lot of money?
3. Discuss the personal mind-set and inspirational effect of the quote of David Livingstone on 23 Jan.
4. Could you adopt Selwyn's guiding principles on 24 Jan?
5. Do you give money to God, or are you a steward of God's money?
6. How can focussing on the benefit to others give us joy in giving?

### The example of Jesus

'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.'  
2 Corinthians 8:9 (NIV, 2011)

### Prayer pointers

- Ask God to give you wisdom in handling your money, and especially your giving.
- Pray that the Church will have the resources it needs to do its job effectively.



## Session 5: Freedom from inferiority

27 JAN – 1 FEB

### Icebreakers

How do you feel if others appear to have a bigger car, larger house, better job, nicer clothes, more expensive holidays etc?

Why do you think today's youth culture is so interested in fashion labels at such a young age?

### Key thought

A sense of inferiority can crush our spirit and limit our potential, but when our hearts are gripped by being chosen in Christ's body, we can be free from inferiority and fulfil our destiny in Him.

### Key verse

'Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ' Romans 8:17

### Discussion starters

1. How might your roots (background/upbringing) contribute to a sense of inferiority?
2. Do we sometimes buy things to compensate for our sense of inferiority?
3. Which group of church-goers do you most relate to?
4. How can our position as chosen children of God more deeply grip our hearts?
5. Are you too defensive?
6. Do have a sense that your life is insignificant, or is being directed by the will of God?

### The example of Jesus

Although Jesus was the child of a poor worker family, He identified Himself through His heavenly father: 'I am God's Son' (John 10:36).

### Prayer pointers

- Thank God that you are His chosen child and called according to His great purposes.
- Pray for those who feel inferior or superior – that they may truly recognise their own unique value in Christ.

## Session 6: Freedom from grief

2–6 FEB

### Icebreaker

How has God helped you in your own times of grief?

### Key thought

Grief is a natural, God-given way to express and release negative emotions – but if it is circumvented or becomes excessive, it can depress the soul and prevent one from helping others through their own grief.

### Key verse

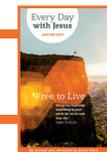
'God... comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble' 2 Corinthians 1:3–4

### Discussion starters

1. Discuss Selwyn's conclusion on 2 Feb: 'Grief is to be faced, but it need not be nursed'.
2. Have you experienced similar feelings to C.S. Lewis in his journey from grief to recovery?
3. Why should we seek to feel grief rather than avoid it?
4. How has your daily reading of the Bible helped you?
5. How have you used your own difficult experiences to help others?

### The example of Jesus

'Jesus wept' John 11:35



## Session 7: Freedom from the past

7-16 FEB

### Icebreaker

How did the past affect the Archbishop of Canterbury when he discovered he was an illegitimate child?

Go to [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36015162](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36015162) and watch the clip.

### Key thought

In Jesus we have a new heritage that is greater than any influence of the past, so we can experience God's fullness of life at any and every age.

### Key verse

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!'

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV, 2011)

### Discussion starters

1. Why is that, for a Christian, the past is the past?
2. How can vertical forces be greater than horizontal forces?
3. What changes has Jesus made in your life since you surrendered to Him?
4. What are the personal implications of Selwyn's point that 'we have full access to God, but does He have full access to us'?
5. How has God answered some of your prayers?
6. How have others helped you along the Christian journey?
7. What advice would you give your younger self?

### The example of Jesus

"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.' John 1:46

### Prayer pointers

- Pray for people to be free from negative childhood influences and experiences.
- Ask God to show you any areas in your own life that might be hindering you from moving forward.

## Session 8: Freedom from self-centredness

17-23 FEB

### Icebreaker

Listen to the song 'I would do anything for love' by Meatloaf (available on YouTube).

How do the lyrics contradict themselves, and reveal the issue of self-centredness in relationships?

### Key thought

As human beings we are naturally self-centred, but when we surrender ourselves to the fullness of God's love, we can experience real freedom.

### Key verse

'I die daily [I face death and die to self].'  
1 Corinthians 15:31 (Amplified)

### Discussion starters

1. How can surrender lead to victory?
2. What could be the symptoms of the disease identified by Karl Menninger?
3. Do you agree with the quote of John Dewey on 19 Feb?
4. What is the difference between surrendering the things we love and abandoning them?
5. What is the difference between surrender at conversion and surrender on a daily basis?
6. Compare and contrast human love with God's love.

### The example of Jesus

'yet not my will, but yours be done.'  
Luke 22:42

'I lay down my life for the sheep.'  
John 10:15

### Prayer pointers

- Surrender yourself and all your plans, desires and dreams to God.
- Thank God that in Jesus, He held nothing back, but fully surrendered Himself for you.



## Session 9: Freedom from wrong thoughts

24-28 FEB

### Icebreaker

How might modern society and technology influence our thought life?

### Key thought

Although people can be plagued with wrong thoughts of envy, anger, sex, greed etc, in Christ we can be free and in our right mind.

### Key verse

'You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.' Isaiah 26:3 (NIV, 2011)

### Discussion starters

1. Are wrong thoughts wrong? (see Matt.4:1-11)
2. How can we make our imagination stop before it takes over?
3. Why may the law of reversed effect cause us to lose our fight against wrong thoughts?
4. How might the techniques explained by Selwyn help you be free from wrong thoughts?
5. What has most impacted you from our studies, and how will you change as a result?

### The example of Jesus

'Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'"'  
Matthew 4:4

### Prayer pointers

- Thank God that He has called us and given us the ability to experience true freedom in Christ.
- Pray for those who have yet to experience freedom in their lives.