

# truly FREE

## Discovering Your Freedom in Christ SESSION 4: SET FREE FOR A PURPOSE

**What we want students to learn:** For students to learn that in Christ, they have been set free from the world's definition of success. In Christ, they have a purpose.

**Main Scripture:** Ephesians 2:1-10; Matthew 5:16

**Session Snapshot:** Up to this point, you have made a case for your students that the Gospel sets them free from the bondage of sin, from the weight of expectations, and from the stress that weighs them down. In this session, you'll help students see that more than just setting them free FROM these things, God has set them free FOR a purpose. When students come to saving faith in Christ, God frees them from pursuing unfulfilled or misguided purposes. Paul shows us that God called us so that we might fill the world around us with goodness. And Jesus says in Matthew that this goodness is designed to point people to God. We were freed for a purpose. Our students' lives are rich with meaning. This session will challenge them to embrace the purpose God has for each of them.

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### BIBLE BACKGROUND

*The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.*

### TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each Small Group Leader's Guide comes with a **Teacher Prep Video**. These are simply short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your Truly Free Lesson 4 Teacher Prep Video, simply click on the link below:

**Lesson 4 Teacher Prep Video** (<https://youtu.be/BrTwDaLHtjI>)

### THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

### THE MAIN POINT

This entire passage is one of the richest ones in Scripture. We're familiar with Paul's words here on salvation, grace, and faith. But for this session, you'll be focusing primarily on Paul's words in verses 8–10. Paul says here that God saved us from our sins through faith in Christ, not by our good deeds. Paul then makes a profound statement: we are God's "workmanship," literally the fruit of God's creative efforts. Why did God work to create us? For what purpose were we made? Paul says God created us and called us to Him so that we might walk in the "good works" He prepared for us BEFORE He even called us!

We want students to know that an important aspect of our purpose is to live out the good works that God has called

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us to do. This is what we were set free to do. The really awesome thing is that when you pair this truth with Matthew 5:16, we discover that our good works have a redemptive purpose: they are to point others to a saving relationship with God. That is the challenge this session will put on the lives of your students.

### THE TAKEAWAY

The takeaway for this session is simply to challenge students to be aware of the opportunities they have to inject God's goodness into the world they live in, to lead others to Jesus. That's it. It's a simple yet profound calling, one that impacts not only their lives but the lives of those they come in contact with.

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### LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: an introductory activity called **Getting Started**; the Bible study section called **Digging In**; and an application-focused segment called **Wrapping Up**.

### GETTING STARTED

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- **Student Book Pages**
  - This lesson will utilize pages 29-33 in the **Truly Free** Student Book.
  - This activity will use page 29-30.
- **Additional Instructions**
  - None

FIRST, have a student read the intro to this session on page 29. When they have finished, explain that this lesson is indeed all about purpose. Explain that you want to illustrate this point by doing a brief activity.

THEN, direct their attention to the list of objects on page 30. Explain that you are going to read a scenario where students will be asked to choose an object from the list to complete the task. Explain that the person who is the most creative for each scenario will be the winner (you can choose beforehand if you want to award a prize).

NEXT, read the following scenarios or make up your own. For each scenario, allow students to answer with an object of their choosing, and how they would use it. Repeat this process for each scenario. Encourage creativity and have fun.

- **Scenario 1:** You are at the grocery store when a sweet elderly lady asks you to get a box of prunes off the top shelf. You can't reach them either, but you're all-in. You're going to play matchmaker to this old lady and her prunes. What do you use to get the prunes, and how do you use it?
- **Scenario 2:** You've just had your hair done before the big dance. It's PERFECT. As you leave the salon, you realize it's pouring down rain. Your car is across the street. If you don't leave now, you're going to be late. What do you use to get to the car without ruining your "new do," and how do you use it?
- **Scenario 3:** You're playing a video game against an opponent you REALLY want to beat. They have been talking trash the whole game. It's coming down to the wire, but suddenly it looks like you may lose. You need a distraction. What do you use from the list to cause a victory-stealing distraction, and how do you use it?

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- **Scenario 4:** Your mom asked you to take your younger sibling to the release of their favorite superhero movie. They insist on dressing up. You don't want to be seen with them, but you don't have a choice. Wouldn't you know it? As soon as you walk in the theatre, you spot your crush. He/she is turning their head to look in your direction. Quick: what object do you use to make sure they don't see you, and how do you use it?
- **Scenario 5:** Walking across the lunchroom, you're engaged in a super in-depth debate with your friend about what is the better school lunch: taco day or chili day. You don't notice the puddle of spilled milk until it's too late. You slip and fall and dump your tray all over yourself. Everyone is looking and laughing. Think fast: how do you use one of the objects on the list to get yourself out of this situation?

FINALLY, once you are done, say something like the following:

- **The reason this was fun is that you were tasked with using objects outside of their intended purpose. [Highlight a specific funny/creative use of an object someone came up with that was WAY outside of how it was intended to be used.] We understand that this is humorous because the way you considered using these objects was just absurd. In a real-life situation, you'd never use them this way. Things have an intended purpose, and they function best when they operate within this purpose. In this final session of Truly Free, we're about to learn how this concept applies to our faith. Let's jump into our time of Bible study.**

If there are no more comments or questions, transition to the *Digging In* section of your lesson.

### DIGGING IN

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- **Student Book Pages**
  - This activity will utilize pages 31-32 in the *Truly Free* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
  - You'll want to make sure students have something to write with, and a Bible or Bible app.

FIRST, remind students of what you have covered up to this point. See if anyone can remember the previous three sessions and what specifically God has set them free from. You may consider saying something like the following to help guide students' responses:

- **Up to this point, we have learned that the Gospel sets us free from the bondage of sin, from the weight of expectations, and from the stress that weighs us down. Each of these is a powerful truth. What we're about to see, however, is that being truly free is more than just being set free FROM these things; God has set us free FOR a specific purpose.**

Instruct students to turn to page 31 in their Student Books. Explain to them that you'll be looking at a passage from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Have them turn to Ephesians 2 in their Bibles or Bible apps. While they are finding the passage, provide some context for the book using the Details section of your lesson plan.

NEXT, explain to students that you're going to be looking at this passage and about what God has freed us to. You're going to start by looking at where we were before Jesus set us free from sin. Read or have a student read Ephesians 2:1-3. Then, have them respond to the prompt below the passage:

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- **Circle any words or phrases that describe how we live before God, in Christ, frees us from the chains of sin and death.**
  - Students may circle words and phrases such as: “dead in the trespasses and sins,” “following the prince of the power of the air,” “once lived in the passions of our flesh,” “carrying out the desires of the body,” “children of wrath.”

Help students flesh out what this means for us. Consider asking questions like:

- **Describe how these descriptions make us feel.**
  - Answers will vary, but it's not a positive feeling!
- **The English Standard Version says that before we have a saving relationship with Jesus, we are “dead in [our] trespasses and sins.” Does anyone have another translation that describes it differently? We covered this in session 1. What does this mean exactly? How are we dead in our sins apart from a faith-relationship with Christ?**
  - Answers will vary, but help remind students that our sin forms a barrier between us and God that is impossible for us to overcome on our own. We have to have help to overcome the effects of sin. God provided Jesus as that help.

Say something like:

- **This is a description of where we were before we came to saving faith in Jesus. It's not a good feeling. It's not a good place to be. Of course, we know that the good news is that we don't have to stay there. Let's spend a second reviewing how we were set free in Christ. It's such a powerful truth that we can't ever talk about it enough.**

THEN, have them look at the next section under “How We Were Set Free.” Read or have a student read Ephesians 2:4-9. When you've finished, lead them to answer the prompts below the passage:

- **Draw a square around some of the words and phrases Paul uses to describe how we are set free in Christ.**
  - Answers may include: “God, being rich in mercy,” “made us alive together with Christ,” “by grace you have been saved,” “seated us with him in the heavenly places.”
- **Underline anywhere you see Paul talking about HOW we accept the freedom God offers us.**
  - Students may underline phrases such as “by grace you have been saved,” “saved through faith,” “it is the gift of God,” “not a result of works.”

Help students process how God set us free. Ask something like:

- **Looking at what Paul has written here, who initiates our freedom? In other words, who is the source, God or us?**
  - Answer: God.
- **Where do we see evidence of this?**
  - Answer: We see it right out of the gate: “But God.” God is the initiator. While we were dead in our sins, God had a plan for our salvation. We brought nothing to the table. Out of His love and mercy, God made us alive in Christ. God is the initiator of our freedom from sin.
- **Just so we're all on the same page, how do we gain our freedom from sin's impact? Do we work hard for it? Do we have to be good enough so that God grants us freedom based on our actions?**
  - Answer: Paul says we gain freedom from sin and death, by God's grace, through faith in Jesus. Paul says it CAN'T be because of anything we've done, because if that were so, we would be the source

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of our salvation ("not a result of works, so that no one may boast").

Say something like:

- **This is a review from our first session, but it's something that we as Christ-followers should never get tired of reviewing. The Gospel, the good news that in Christ, we can be saved from death and sin, is not something we ever move on from. It's not basic Christianity. It's the heart of who we are. But it's not ALL we are. We weren't just saved from sin; we were saved to a purpose. Let's check that out.**

NEXT, look at the last section on page 32, "What We Were Set Free To." Have a student read Ephesians 2:10. Then, answer the prompt under the verse.

- **Put an exclamation mark beside any words or phrases Paul uses to talk about the purpose we have been set free to pursue.**
  - Students should put an exclamation point next to "created in Christ Jesus for good works," and "that we should walk in them."

Help them process this with a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **There isn't just one reason why God saved us. There are multiple aspects of our purpose. But this is a major aspect of why God saved us. What do you think Paul means when he says we were saved by God so that we would do "good works"?**
  - Answer: "Good works" is another way of saying that we would live godly lives. Our actions would represent the change God has made in our lives. Our lives would reflect God and His ways.
- **Give me an example of what "good works" look like in your world today.**
  - Answers will vary.
- **God wants you to "walk" in these "good works." What does that mean to you?**
  - Answers will vary, but the idea is that this represents our daily lives. We might as well say we were saved to live out these good works.

FINALLY, point out Matthew 5:16 to students. Explain that these words are Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus spoke these words something like 30 years or so before Paul wrote Ephesians. Read this verse out loud and ask:

- **Jesus makes the concept Paul was writing about a little clearer. How does this add to what Paul just said about our purpose?**
  - Answer: Jesus says that our good works, our "shining light," are recognized by others and that they point people to God.

Say something like:

- **When we take Paul's words and Jesus' words together, we get the picture that our lives have great meaning. We have a purpose. We were set free for a reason. We were freed from sin and death so that we might live in such a way that we point others to the freedom that is in Christ. This is the measure of our lives. We don't live according to the world's definition of success but God's. God doesn't measure your success by your grades, your achievements, the school you'll attend, or the career you'll have. God's desire for you is that you would live a powerful life of godly influence, aimed at pointing others toward Him. THAT'S the purpose for which you were set free.**

Ask if anyone has any thoughts or questions, then transition to the Wrapping Up portion of your lesson.

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### WRAPPING UP

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- **Student Book Pages**
  - This activity will utilize page 33 in the **Truly Free** Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
  - Make sure students have something to write with.

FIRST, instruct students to turn to page 33 in their books. By now, they will be used to this part of the session and will know what to expect. But encourage them to continue to consider how the truths they've learned have changed them.

THEN, direct them to work through this activity as they have the previous three. Have students read the question and come up with their answers. (As a reminder, this specific format will be a repeating feature for these small group sessions.) Allow students to work through the question and consider how they are changed by what they learned in the same manner in which you've done in the previous sessions.

FINALLY, when you've allowed time for students to work through how they can apply these truths to their lives, close your time in prayer.

Don't forget to inform students of the devotions located on pages 35-42 in their Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work through them. (The first devotion is on page 35.)