

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLE: Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4

Every journey begins by taking the first step. You are beginning a journey that will lead you to the freedom that you seek. One's first step is having a DESIRE to be free. The truth is that many people have faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior but do not know how to use their faith to become free from besetting sin.

There are several reasons why many ssa/ma/tx people do not experience freedom in Christ. One is that they have been given wrong information. Society tells them they were “born that way”. Believing they cannot change prevents many from actively persisting in the change effort. When a strong temptation strikes, they accept it as “proof” that they will never change; and they therefore give in to the temptation. But the truth is that the genetic theories have never been proven and the developmental theories have never been disproven. Political correctness has caused a great deal of confusion in society’s understanding of the issues.

Others do not experience freedom in Christ because they are uncertain if that is what they really DESIRE. Giving up the thrills is hard. Their relationships may have provided the only source of closeness they have ever had. Even when their relationships have been unworkable, ssa/ma/tx people continue to hope that somehow these relationships can be made to work if they try a little harder or find the right person.

Another reason that some do not experience freedom in Christ is FEAR. SSA/MA/TX people often identify so strongly with their attractions that they cannot imagine life without them. One frequently asked question is, "What kind of man/woman will I become if I pursue this course? What kind of life and identity are waiting for me at the end of the trail?"

Considering an identity change raises one's anxiety. Only God's mercy motivates anyone to pursue holiness. Only God's mercy makes anyone willing to let Him turn him/her into the man or woman He wants him/her to be, without knowing beforehand what that person will be like.

Not everyone who pursues change from ssa/ma/tx becomes heterosexual. No one can guarantee that anyone who struggles to overcome ssa/ma/tx will become heterosexual, although about a third of overcomers do. Another third experience significant reduction in ssa/ma/tx attractions, find joy in being single and celibate, and feel that I Corinthians 7 was written for people like them. Although they do not get married to people of the opposite sex, they feel that they have resolved many emotional issues, have become stronger, have grown in their faith, and have overcome depression. They feel that their relationships with God, self, and others have greatly improved. (The final third drop out in the first few months).

Some do not experience freedom in Christ because they hope to earn merit from God by living clean lives and doing good works. They are tempted to believe that God will overlook their ssa/ma/tx sins if they do enough good deeds to outweigh the bad deeds. But that is a human-made philosophy. The Bible teaches that we are all sinners in need of forgiveness. None of us are good enough to approach a holy, sovereign, and just God on our own. The good news is that God's favor was won on our behalf by Jesus.

How do you perceive God? How do you perceive Jesus? Do you acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God? We often project onto God the problems we had with our parents when we were children. If a parent was critical, we might perceive God as critical; if our parent was abusive, we might perceive God as abusive; if our parent was uninvolved and aloof, we might perceive God the same way. If we perceive God negatively, we will be motivated to rid ourselves of ssa/ma/tx in order to "clean ourselves up" before we approach Him.

The truth is that we are not able to “clean ourselves up”. We can only come to God as we are and let Him clean us up. Jesus made full satisfaction for all of our sins when He went to the cross, and we can only approach God as penitent sinners seeking forgiveness.

Living clean lives and doing good works count for nothing; only faith in the mercy of God in Christ can save us. No merits of ours can make us righteous before God; only the merits of Jesus can make us righteous before our merciful God. Jesus did for us what we can never do for ourselves.

The only compelling reason to overcome any sin is the mercy of God offered through Jesus Christ. The word for that is GRACE: forgiveness of sin offered as a free gift because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross on our behalf. Grace alone motivates us to change our lives so we can become more like Jesus. Are you ready to take your sexuality into the fire of God’s Grace and let Him begin His work in you? Are you ready to go before God, become completely honest with Him, and give up your own self-will? Are you ready to allow the Spirit to shine His light on your sins and bring you to total transparency before God? Romans 8:1 promises us that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

SCRIPTURE Write what each of these verses or passages means to you and your situation.

Psalm 37:4

I Corinthians 10:13

Luke 4:1-13

Ephesians 6:10-18

STUDY GUIDE (Feel free to write on the backside or use additional paper if necessary.)

1. On a scale of 1-10, how great is your desire to overcome ssa/ma/tx (1 is the lowest, 10 is the highest)?
2. What are your reasons for wanting out?
3. When will God grant you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4)?
4. What do you think will be the hardest parts of overcoming?
5. What warnings and encouragements are found in James 4:4-6?
6. What do we need to do to get help from God (James 1:5)?
7. What can short-circuit our prayers (James 1:1-8)?

8. What should be our reasons for not doing ANY sin (Genesis 39:9 & II Corinthians 5:13-15)?

9. What is our condition because of our faith in Christ (John 8:32-36)?

10. What are some things you have learned from this Key study?

11. On a scale of 1-10, how much victory have you had lately? Please explain your answer. (Victory is measured by how much you have overcome temptation.)

12. Is there anything special you would like to talk about?

Plan of Action: (Read the handout Plan of Action and make plans as specific as possible.)