

BREAKING

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UPDATED EDITION

The Journey, The Stories

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 LifeWay
Biblical Solutions for Life

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session one viewer guide

Introductory Session

Isaiah 61:1-3 shapes the heart of our study and states the gracious intent of our God. Before we take this process forward, we'll trace it backward and capture a fascinating parallel for freedom drawn in Isaiah 9:4.

Turn to Judges 6:1-6. A few things we need to know about yokes and how they can be shattered based on the example of “Midian's defeat :”

1. The blessed people of God can live under great oppression.
The goal of the oppressor is to make us ...

- Unproductive (vv. 3-4)—Hebrew shahat: ruin ... corrupt ... lose ... spill ... waste.” In the KJV terminology, the oppressors destroyed the increase.”
(Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.)

- Impoverished (v. 6)—Hebrew dalal: “bring low, dry up, be emptied, not be equal, fail, be impoverished.”
(Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)

2. If we don't seek freedom, we will seek shelter (v. 2 and glance ahead to v. 11).

Consider a little history on the relationship between the Israelites and the Midianites ...

Read Judges 6:7-17.

3. God stands to get much glory from making mighty warriors out of the least likely.

Read Judges 6:17-23.

4. Whatever we may end up setting on the altar will be wholly received by God.

5. The purpose of this journey is not to kill us but to bring us to the full measure of abundant life He promised us (v. 23).

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Few books of the Bible are more fascinating or more prophetically baffling than the Book of Isaiah. Not coincidentally, the name of the prophet—and subsequently the book—means “The LORD saves” or “The LORD is Savior.” It is a hotbed of messianic prophecies, several of which are grouped in sizeable segments we’ll read today.

Segment One

Isaiah 9:1-7 prophecies Christ's birth.

Segment Two

Isaiah 61:1-3 prophecies Christ's ministry.

- See Luke 4:14-21. Christ takes complete ownership over the job description given in Isaiah 61:1-3.
- Compare Luke 8:40-48. In verse 44 the word translated “edge” (*Kraspedon*) is “used for the tassels the Israelites wore on the four corners of their garments.” (*Word Bible Commentary*) According to the New International Commentary of the New Testament, “This is the story of her resolution to cross the border of legitimate behavior to gain access to divine power.”

Segment Three

Isaiah 52:13–53:12 prophecies Christ's suffering.

We will read the entire portion, and then discuss several key elements, particularly those with the greatest bearing on our present journey:

- 52:13—The Hebrew words translated “raised and lifted up” are used as a pair four times in Isaiah and nowhere else (see 6:1; 57:15). They are highly significant here because they refer to God alone.

- Three kinds of suffering this prophetic poem predicts:
 1. Physical

 2. Mental

 3. Spiritual

- The highly intentional repetition of terms in Isaiah 53:3-4:

Verse 3: “A man of pain, one who knows sickness.”
(*New International Commentary on the New Testament*)

Verse 4: “But surely it was our sickness he carried, our pains he bore.” (*New International Commentary on the New Testament*)

- The great paradox: that healing can flow from a wounding.

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Isaiah 44:20-22. With two weeks of Bible study behind us, we're prepared, if we're willing, to take one of our first leaps on the path to freedom: freedom from self-delusion.

A succinct definition of idolatry: An idol is any trade-off for God.

A New Testament Contrast of Truth and Lies

TRUTH: John 8:31-36—Christ sets the captive free through truth.

LIES: John 8:44—Satan sets the free captive through lies.

Equations That Add Up to Liberty

My Environment + My Experiences = My "truth"

Read 2 Chronicles 18:28-34.

“The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth” (Ps. 145:18).

My “truth” + 0 = Incomplete

My “truth” + Satan's lies = Captivity

God's Truth > My “truth”

Compare Hebrews 4:12.

James 1:22-25. Contrast “looking at himself” (v. 24) with “looks intently” (v. 25).

Verse 24. The Greek word translated *looking at himself* “indicates perception. Tragically, this kind of person ignores what he has perceived, resulting in a detachment from what is observed, in this case the truth about himself.” (New American Commentary)

My “truth” + God's Truth = Freedom

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New Testament parallels from the confrontation between Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and Hezekiah, the king of Judah: We'll view Sennacherib symbolically as the enemy captor and Hezekiah symbolically as the covenant child of God.

Isaiah 36:13-16. Our captor tries to coax us into making peace with our bondage.

Isaiah 37:10-11. Our captor likes to remind us of all who have fallen and poses the question, "And you think you will be delivered?"

Isaiah 37:14-22,23,28,35-37. Over and over Scripture portrays prayer as the first act of war when under attack.

God has reserved momentous victories and great rewards for us. But we'll never make it to our milestones if we can't make it through our moments.

See 1 Corinthians 10:13. "Way of escape." The Greek word *ekbasis* (escape) comes from the same origin as the English word end. In the Greek language the term also implies an end.

Making It Through the Moment: The Role of Prayer

1. Prayer changes passions.

Two reasons we often don't take the exit:

- We don't want to (Ps. 40:8).
- We don't feel like we deserve to (Rom. 8:1).

2. Prayer activates partnership. Compare Jude 24-25.

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In the journey to freedom, nothing has greater potential to weigh us down than the family baggage.

If we dare to break free while some of our family members remain in bondage, we are going to have to exercise some courage!

“The spirit which they then received, the new nature and life that God gave them, was not ‘a slavery - spirit,’ the two words being a practical compound.” Instead, “we received ‘a spirit of adoption,’ the opposite of ‘a spirit of slavery.’”¹

1. Courage to believe we can be different

- We often feel the family chains will never fall off of us because they're in us.
- In the context of the Potter reshaping the clay, God said to His people, “turn ... each one of you, and reform your ways and actions.’ But they will reply, ‘It's no use’” (Jer. 18:11).

2. Courage to be misunderstood

We may be mistaken as ...

- traitors
- saviors (See Isa. 3:5-7.)
- fanatics

3. Courage to “extract the precious from the worthless”
(Jer. 15:19, NASB).

Let's camp on a common generational stronghold that is poisonous: prejudice.

- a. prejudice is grievous sin fueled by fear and ignorance.
- b. prejudice propagates from the false notion that, if people are different, someone has to be better.

4. Courage to deal a new way with old memories

“Memory ... is vigorously present tense, selecting out of the storehouse of the past, retrieving and arranging images and insights, and then hammering them together for use in the present moment.”²

In Isaiah 33:6, God offers a second storehouse. Every time you draw something painful from your storehouse, draw something priceless from God's:

- salvation, also translated deliverance—yesu ‘a’
- wisdom
- knowledge

1. R.C.H. Lenski, “St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans” in *Commentary on the New Testament* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 521-522.

2. Eugene H. Peterson, *Answering God* (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), 117.

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Today we will talk about the brokenness of heart that can result from the frantic search for something earthly to fill the void.

John 4:1-18.

1. All excess is rooted in emptiness.

2. Salvation does not equal satisfaction.

Compare John 4:10,14 to John 7:37-39.

“‘Welling up’ is inadequate. The verb ... does not appear to be used elsewhere of the action of water. The word indicates springing up or leaping.”

(New International Commentary on the New Testament)

“The life that Jesus gives is no tame and stagnant thing. It is much more than merely the entrance into a new state, that of being saved instead of lost. It is the abundant life, and the living Spirit within people is evidence of this.” *(New International Commentary on the New Testament)*

3. Misplaced worship is at the heart of all bondage.

In his book *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, author Edward T. Welch refers to all addiction as “a worship disorder.”

4. The continued search for something earthly to fill our empty places is costly.

Romans 6:19-21

John 4:25-30

5. Christ knows everything.

Jeremiah 2:13

6. A new response is one sincere confession away.

Conclude with a glance at John 4:31-33.

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Our entire lesson will build upon this important premise:

God never allows or appoints a fire unless He can bring beauty
from the ashes.

First Peter 1:3-9

1. We cannot avoid fiery trials.

a. God is much more interested in our callings than our
comfort.

b. Even faithful people have tremendous difficulties.

2. The purpose of the refinement is always to make us:

a. objects of beauty.

b. recipients of reward. Compare 1 Peter 1:4 to
Isaiah 61:7.

Allotting a double portion was sometimes a recognition of status (Deut. 21:17). Sometimes it was a compensation or damages (Ex. 22:4,7,9)." (*Word Biblical Commentary*)

3. One primary purpose of fiery trials is to surface the cross.

4. We cannot often refuse the fire, but we can refuse to be refined by it.

5. Sometimes our fiery trials are absolutely necessary to fulfill our callings.

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Freedom is not found in casting off a yoke, but in trading a yoke of
slavery for a yoke of liberty.

In Matthew 11:28, the lexical Greek word *anapauo* means “to
repose, be exempt; by implication to refresh, take ease ... rest.”
(Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance)

1. We are not forced. We are invited.

2. We share a yoke with Christ alone.

One commentary’s translation of the wording based is on the Greek: “I,
I myself, will give you pause or rest.” (Lenski)

“For my yoke fits perfectly” (Matt. 11:30, NLT).

3. We have the freedom to learn from Christ as we simply walk with Him.

Genesis 5:21-23. The name *Enoch* (Hebrew transliteration *Hanok*) comes from the Hebrew word *hanak*, which means “to narrow, discipline, dedicate, to train up.” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*)

4. We share a yoke with someone who is gentle and humble.

- Gentle: the Greek word *chrestotes* means kind.
- Humble: “His path of humble service is the pattern for us to follow. So much of our fatigue and burdensome toil stems from pride.”

“If we are successful, our egos are inflated and we try for more.”

“If we falter, the rejection of others and our self-condemnation weigh us down in guilt and self-doubt.”

“It is much more freeing to take Christ’s attitude of serving others.” (*Life Application Bible Commentary*)

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Why Does God Make Love the Priority Command?

1. Love motivates obedience.

2. Love motivates perseverance.

3. Love provides protection.

4. Love for God empowers love for others.

One of the biggest and least addressed obstacles to truly loving God:

Thinking I already do when, truth be told,
I really don't.

John 21:15-22. *Agapao* is “used of divine love and usually carries the connotation of will or purpose as well as that of affection.”
(Expositor’s)

Identifying True Love

1. Does God regularly circulate into my thoughts (Ps.63:6)?
Often Sometimes Rarely
2. Am I often drawn to + spend time with Him (Ps.27:4)?
Often Sometimes Rarely
3. Does my life demonstrate a love for God (Rom. 5:8)?
Often Sometimes Rarely
4. Do I often enjoy God (Ps. 16:11)?
Often Sometimes Rarely
5. Do I ultimately find relief or satisfaction in obedience (John 14:21)?
Often Sometimes Rarely

“To love God in the way defined by the great commandment is to seek God for his own sake, to have pleasure in him and to strive impulsively after him.”

(New International Commentary on the New Testament)

Understanding How to Freely Love God

1. Recognize the source (1 John 4:7-8,19).
2. Pursue it diligently through prayer (1 John 5:14,15).

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The Emphasis of 2 Timothy 3:1-5

- What will most remarkably define the times as “terrible” will be social phenomena rather than natural or environmental.

The Construction of 2 Timothy 3:1-5

- Seventeen characteristics fall between two profoundly purposeful bookends. “People will be lovers of themselves ... rather than lovers of God.”

Abusive—a word in Greek that especially emphasizes speech.
(New American Commentary)

Without love—(Greek *astorgoi*)—hard-hearted toward kindred.
(Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance)

Unforgiving—irreconcilable ... without treaty.
(Word Biblical Commentary)

Slanderous—*diabolo* means accusatory (Titus 2:3).

Brutal—untamed. (Word Biblical Commentary)

Treacherous—traitors ready to betray their friends.
(New American Commentary)

Conceited—swollen with self - importance. (New English Bible)

The Repetition of 2 Timothy 3:1-5

- Interestingly, 11 out of 18 vices begin with something in Greek called an “alpha privation” an “a” at the beginning of a word corresponding with our English “un.”

The Warning of 2 Timothy 3:5-7

- The primary target: weak - willed women —“The term is a Greek diminutive, literally suggesting ‘little women’ but more precisely showing them as easily deceived and prone to temptation. Their weakness was primarily moral, not intellectual.” (New American Commentary)

Exercise tremendous caution toward ...

- Incongruity: People with a form of godliness but denying its power (2 Tim. 3:5). *Form* is the recognizable Greek word morphosis.
- Instant intimacy: “the kind who worm their way into homes.”
- Increasing control: “the kind who gain control over time.”

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Identifying ourselves *daily* by God's own descriptions will profoundly impact our sustained success.

1. We are witnesses (Isa. 43:10-12).

2. We are warriors (Isa. 54:12-17).

Never forget ...

- The tie between fear and bondage.
“Be far from oppression, because you need not fear, and from terror, because it will not come near you.” (*New International Commentary on the New Testament*)
- The tendency to expend energy on the lesser battle.
“Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me” (Ps. 119:133).

3. We are brides (Isa. 61:10).

Hephzibah: “My- Delight -Is-in- Her” (*New International Commentary on the New Testament*)

Beulah: “Married. The basic sense of the word is ‘to possess.’”
(*New International Commentary on the New Testament*)

“When circumstances and failure and blighted hopes combine to convince us that our name is ‘Forsaken,’ that is the hour to hear the whisper of the Bridegroom to his Bride, with the name that it is his alone to give and hers alone to hear.”
(*New International Commentary on the New Testament*)

How do we conclude our journey?

Nehemiah 9:36-38

- “making”—*karat*—to cut ... to make a covenant.”
(*Old Testament Lexical Aids*)
- “binding agreement”—*amanah*—from *aman*—“to believe, trust.” *Amanah* means “covenant, firm commitment, settled provision.”