

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides
April 14th

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. If you could do any task or skill and know that you wouldn't fail, what would it be?

Bible Study Questions

1. Galatians 5:1 tells us that we have been set free, but warns us about falling back under the yoke of slavery.
 - What are some of the things that Jesus has set us free from?
 - What are common ways that Christians find themselves returning to some form of slavery?
2. Read Exodus 18:15-18
 - Why does Jethro declare Moses' attempt to be the lone judge of Israel "not good"?
 - Why do you think that Moses is trying to do it all?
3. There is a false gospel that many of us believe that if we are able to control the world around us, then something good will happen. What are some of those things that we assume will happen if we can control our families, work, or relationships?
 - How are those promises empty?
4. Can you resonate with a need to control? If so, what does that look like?
5. What does it say about your beliefs about both God and ourselves when we seek to control?
6. God is a God of infinite power. John 1:14 tells us that he has made his dwelling among us. How is God's power and presence

a powerful antidote to our need to control the world around us?

7. Pastor Michael described the Sabbath as a helpful practice. It is one day to remind us that we aren't God. Do you have a practice of Sabbath? What does that look like?
8. How is our identity tied up with our need to control? How does our position as God's beloved children free us from the need to control?

April 7th

Freedom: From the Need to Be Perfect

Last week we talked about the need to control the world around us. Today we are getting into the need to control ourselves. Psychologists define it as a personality disposition characterized by extremely high standards and overly critical self evaluations. Perfectionists often do excellent work, but have a low output due to the time that it takes to perfect a project. They tend to care about the respect of others and feel shame when they can't reach the standard that they have set for themselves.

I. The Promise of Perfectionism

- **Makes you worthy of God:** Perfectionism teaches that if you can correct all of your flaws, then you can be worthy of God. Many Christians have already embraced Jesus as their savior, but they continue to seek to earn God's love through their actions.
- **Earns the respect of others:** The promise is that by doing perfect work, work that is far better than others, one may not receive the love of others but will earn their respect.

II. The Cost of Perfectionism

- **A continuing voice of condemnation:** The reality is that we aren't perfect. We have a sin nature that will continually cause us to mess up. The result is that the enemy constantly reminds us that we aren't worthy and have failed in our pursuit of perfection. A cycle begins in which we try harder and then fail falling deeper into condemnation.
- **A spirit of judgmentalism:** One of the best examples of this comes from the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. Upon the younger brother's return, the father throws a celebration. The older brother is the one who has pursued perfection and we find him sulking outside. He is angry of

the unfairness that his unworthy brother receives a reward while he doesn't. Perfectionism causes us to judge those who don't reach our standard as well as judging God because of his kindness to undeserving people.

III. The Freedom of the Gospel

- **Jesus is perfect, so we don't have to be:** Hebrews 7:6 tells us that Jesus was without sin. He was the one person who got it right and through faith he gives us his righteousness.
- **There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus:** Romans 8:1-4 declares the good news that because of the work of Jesus, there is no condemnation. It was all poured out on Jesus so that we could be free.
- **We are invited to join in God's heart for all people:** Going back to the story of the prodigal son, the father tells the son that he didn't need a party. He has always had the greatest reward of all, access to the Father and all that he possesses. When we draw close to the Father, we begin to share in his heart, a heart that rejoices when lost people return to him. When we share in his heart, we replace a heart of judgmentalism. Jesus told his followers in Matthew 5:48 that they should be perfect. One of the purposes in this statement is to reveal how unable we are to do this on our own. But one of God's goals is to transform us through the power of the Holy Spirit. He does a work of making us perfect, not so that we can make ourselves worthy, but as a response to his incredible love. This is a process that takes time. We find freedom then as we deepen our relationship with Jesus and rest in our relationship with the Father.