

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides
April 7th

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

1. When was a time that you tried to control a situation and completely failed?
2. What comes to your mind when you hear the word “freedom”?

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. Among Christians, what does a fight or flight response reveal about our beliefs in God?
4. 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?
5. Can you resonate with a need to control? If so, what does that look like?
6. What does it say about your beliefs about both God and ourselves when we seek to control?

7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?

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Freedom: From the Need to Control

The freedom that we enjoy in America is one of our greatest gifts. It is a gift that unless we defend, we can easily lose. The Bible often describes the Christian life as one of freedom. Galatians 5:1 celebrates our freedom, but also reminds us that we can easily be burdened by the yoke of slavery. Over the next month, we are going to look at five different things that can easily enslave Christians, and how the gospel can set us free.

- **False Gospel: The need to control:** In Exodus 18, Moses is visited by his father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro observes that Moses spends every moment of the day judging cases for the Israelite people. Every case, big and small goes before him. Jethro judges that this is not good. Apparently, Moses has decided that he is the only one who has the education and wisdom to bring justice. The result is that Moses is getting burnt out and the people are not able to get the swift justice that they need. We can very easily fall into the same mindset.
 - **Salvation is found through our controlling the world around us:** Many of us oversee family, ministries, or organizations. We can struggle with wanting to control everything, believing that we alone can ensure quality. If we keep everything tightly controlled, then we can save the world by forcing it to be right.
 - **Our self worth is based on the success of what we oversee:** This compulsive behavior is often rooted in the idea that if something under our influence

doesn't turn out perfectly, then the failure reflects on our personal value.

- **We take on the role of God in holding the world together:** The underlining belief is that if we fail to keep the world together, it will fall part. We have to act as God to make things happen.
- **True Gospel: God is in control:** The Bible constantly talks about the infinite power of God. John 1:14 reminds us that God has made his dwelling among us.
 - **God is actively in the world caring for his people:** In Exodus 3, Moses asks God about who he is. God identifies himself as "I Am". You could deduce that Moses is the "I Am Not". We are not expected to be God sized. We are expected to be human sized.
 - **Freedom happens when we trust God to be supremely in control:** When we allow God to do that, then we don't have to control every situation. We can step back knowing that he holds the world in his hands. One suggestion is to honor the Sabbath. Resting for one day of the week reminds us that the world will continue to move on while we take a break.
 - **Our success or failure does not impact our identity as God's beloved children.** Our identity is not based on everything having what we think is the perfect outcomes. Our value is as God's beloved children. Knowing that gives us the ability to release control.