

## Life Group Notes 3/3/2024

### Pastor Mark Warren The Journey to Freedom Week 7

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[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 3/3. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On the heart and "...the issues of life."](#)
2. [On doing word studies, and finding verses.](#)

\*\*\***Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. \*\*\*

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Pastor opened by saying, "It's OK to not be OK." Explain. Is it? Why is church the perfect place when everything is not OK? Look up Matthew 18: [19](#) Again, I tell you truly that if two of you on the earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. [20](#) **For where two or three gather together in My name, there am I with them.**

1. Explain?
2. What does this even mean?
3. To what extent is Jesus with us when we are gathered in His name?
4. What does Jesus bring with Him when He joins the meeting? What can you expect?
5. Do you have a testimony?

This is week seven in the "Journey to Freedom." Take a moment to review what you remember. Pastor opens this week speaking of the fence between him and the alligators he met while on vacation. He said, "I'm grateful for the boundaries."

1. How do boundaries relate to freedom?
2. What purpose do boundaries serve?
3. Why does freedom NOT mean an absence of boundaries?
4. Who needs boundaries most?
5. Why do the mature need them less?
6. Look up Proverbs 4:23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (NLT) How does the heart make boundaries?

7. Look up Luke 6: [44](#)For each tree is known by its own fruit. Indeed, figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor grapes from brambles. [45](#)[The good man brings good things out of the good treasure of his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil treasure of his heart. For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.](#) Why is a heart without boundaries a danger to you and your neighbors?

8. Is it always a good idea to "...follow your heart?"

Review once again 2 Timothy 3: [1](#)*But understand this: In the last days terrible times will come. [2](#)For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3](#)unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, [4](#)traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5](#)having a form of godliness but denying its power. Turn away from such as these!*

1. What does a life without boundaries look like?

2. What is the boundary fence Paul exhorts us to establish in these verses?

3. Explain why. What makes lawlessness a threat to all?

4. Look how the book of Judges end: Chapter 21: [25](#)[In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.](#) Why is this not a good thing?

Mark says, "The greatest freedom you can have is in understanding appropriate boundaries."

1. Explain.

2. Why is it good to have a safety screen on a second-floor window in an apartment with children?

3. Why is that unnecessary if there are no children?

4. Explain in terms of boundaries how "...the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

5. Why is it only the beginning, and not wisdom herself?

Pastor begins looking at the Ten Commandments by pointing out that, although these are foundational, the first five books of the Bible have many other laws that stem to some degree from these, and that the Pharisees in Jesus' day had actually added to these laws, seeking to prevent law-breaking with artificial boundaries, so much so that Jesus told them, "You nullify the Law in favor of your traditions."

1. Why is a boundary a good thing?

2. Why is an artificial boundary not a good thing?

3. How many boundaries did Adam have in the garden?

4. How well did he handle his one, single and only boundary?

5. Why do you think that is? Adam had the law. What was Adam lacking?

6. What broke when Adam took his first bite?

7. How do "Limits preserve relationship?"

8. How soon after the Israelites left Egypt did God establish the new limits in the covenant found in the 10 Commandments?

9. What is God seeking to establish by laying down these commandments?

(Look up Matthew 22: [36](#)"Teacher, which commandment is the greatest in the Law?" [37](#)Jesus declared, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'[38](#)This is the first and greatest

commandment. **39**And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' **40**All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.") Explain.

Look up Exodus 20: **1**And God spoke all these words:

**2**"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

1. Why did God begin by establishing His credentials?
2. How long had it been since they had crossed the Red Sea? Days? Weeks? Months? Years? How long does a memory maintain its impact?
3. How important will this memory of the crossing of the Red Sea prove to be throughout the centuries between then and today?

**3**You shall have no other gods before Me.

1. Explain.
2. Who alone will provide for Israel? How many Fathers will Israel have?
3. If they turn to another god what are they actually doing?

**4**You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in the heavens above, on the earth below, or in the waters beneath. **5**You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on their children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, **6**but showing loving devotion to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

1. Comment.
2. How can anything you fashion by hand become an idol?
3. Can your car become an idol?
4. Can your house become an idol?
5. What does having an idol do to your relationships?
6. Contrast the consequences...visiting the iniquity vs. showing loving devotion. Which would you prefer?
7. Do you know what a generational curse is? Have you ever witnessed a generational blessing? Have you heard of it?

**7**You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who takes His name in vain.

1. How does one take His name in vain? (What does "in vain" mean?)
2. What is in God's name? What is associated with His name?
3. How much power is in His name?
4. What happens when you invoke His name? Are there any dangers?

**8**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **9**Six days you shall labor and do all your work,**10**but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God, on which you must not do any work—neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant or livestock, nor the foreigner within your gates. **11**For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, but on the seventh day He rested. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

1. Whom, in keeping the Sabbath, are we being asked to imitate?
2. If God created man in His image and in His likeness, what is the logic of Him requiring us to act as He did after six days?

3. Who is included in this commandment? Who else? Is there any exception to the law of rest? Why do we NEED a law to make us rest?
  4. What else did God do on the seventh day, besides rest?
  5. Why is it good to reflect on your week?
  6. Of all the ten commandments, which is most often broken? Why?
  7. If we say, "That's Old Testament Law," of this one, but not of the commandment not to murder, are we being wise?
  8. What does it mean to "keep" the Sabbath?
  9. Share how you keep it.
  10. Look up Isaiah 58: [13](#) "If you turn your foot from breaking the Sabbath, from doing as you please on My holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight, and the LORD's holy day honorable, if you honor it by not going your own way or seeking your own pleasure or speaking idle words, [14](#) then you will delight yourself in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the land and feed you with the heritage of your father Jacob." In your own words, what is the promise associated with keeping this commandment? How does one "keep it?"
  11. In what way does Isaiah say your own attitude changes toward God?
  12. What is God's response?
  13. What does Jesus mean when He says, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath?" (How do we know that God did not create man because there was a sabbath no one was keeping?)
  14. How important to health and well-being is a day of rest?
- [12](#) Honor your father and mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
1. Paul speaks of this as the first commandment that comes with a blessing. What is the blessing?
  2. How do you honor your father and your mother?
  3. How does dishonoring your parents shorten your days?
  4. What happens in a society where parents are not honored?
- [13](#) You shall not murder.
- [14](#) You shall not commit adultery.
- [15](#) You shall not steal.
- [16](#) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
1. Are these "Old Testament laws?" Or are these laws as valid today as when Moses received them?
  2. Explain.
- [17](#) You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, or his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."
1. Why the laundry list for this commandment?
  2. What item that you do not own is OK to covet?
  3. What emotion does covetousness breed?
  4. How do you cope with jealousy?
- Now look back at the list of commandments.
1. Which hang on loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?
  2. Which hang on loving your neighbor as yourself?

3. Explain the vital importance of which Mark spoke of our relationships.
4. What happens to our relationships if we break any one of these commandments?

Pastor points to the promise of the New Covenant God made through Jeremiah in chapter 31: [31](#)Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. [32](#)It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant they broke, though I was a husband to them," *declares the LORD.* [33](#)"But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD. I will put My law in their minds and inscribe it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be My people. [34](#)No longer will each man teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities and will remember their sins no more."

1. What do you see?
2. These verses are quoted in Hebrews 8 and referred to again in Hebrews 10. Can you explain why?
3. How is having the Law inscribed on our heart, and not taught by others beneficial?
4. What role does the heart play in our behavior? (Review Proverbs 4 again.)
5. Do you have a testimony?
6. What does this have to do with our freedom?

According to Pastor Mark, God is saying, "I want you to be in a right relationship with Me, and I want you to have a right relationship with others."

1. What has God done to ensure that we are in a right relationship with Him?
2. What more do we need to be in a right relationship with God and with others?

Look at what God promised through Ezekiel in chapter 36: [26](#)I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. [27](#)[And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and to carefully observe My ordinances.](#)

1. How does this compare to what God promised through Jeremiah?
2. What is different?
3. How free are we, when He causes us to walk in His way...and to not offend Him by our walk?
4. In John 8, Jesus says, "The one the Son sets free is truly free." What does this freedom mean?
5. How much freedom is there in finally doing things God's way?
6. Describe our relationship with God when we finally walk in His way according to His commandments.
7. How do you feel when you step away from that relationship?
8. Look up Romans 13: [9](#)The commandments "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and any other commandments, are summed up in this one decree: "Love your neighbor as yourself." [10](#)[Love does no wrong to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.](#) Explain.

Pastor Mark concludes with this: "If you just keep a right relationship with God and a right relationship with each other, life is going to be OK. You will be at peace. You will find freedom living that way. Freedom is not living without constraints, but living with the right constraints. The world will tell you, 'You do not have to follow any rules. Be who you want to be. Be whatever you want to be.' But living within the right constraints involves acknowledging that God wants to be our Father. He and none other,"

1. What do you see?
2. How does having One Father prevent idolatry?

Take a moment to pray for one another that God would fulfill His promise to us and inscribe His Word on our hearts, and cause us to walk in His way according to His commandments.

**Take the time to pray.**

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### **The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Write down the ten commandments from Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. Ask yourself, "How am I doing?"
3. Assess what interferes with your relationship with God. (Have you given anything greater importance than your relationship to Him?)
4. Do a study this week on "keeping the sabbath" and make a plan to keep it. (See footnote 2 below.)

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### **Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On the heart and the "...issues of life"**—Proverbs 4:23 admonishes us to "guard your heart with all vigilance, because out of it flow the issues of life." The Hebrew word translated "issues/well spring," תוצאה, (*totsaah*) means "an outgoing, extremity, perhaps source, escape." It is the border you will not cross, the extremity beyond which you will not go. Sin is always found there, knocking and enticing you to move the border. Reflect how, in your own life, sin tempted you to do things you would otherwise never have dreamed of doing (first cigarette, etc.). How did that affect you? How did it change your own life?
2. **On doing word studies and finding verses**—Before the internet, students of the Bible who wanted to search for topics and verses used a resource called a Concordance. Strong's concordance was and still is one of the very best, most exhaustive concordances available. With the advent of the internet, we have this and so many other resources at our fingertips. If we want to look up the importance of the Sabbath or study what Sabbath keeping meant, my favorite web site is <https://biblehub.com>. You will find that I use this site almost exclusively for my footnotes. Searches can include verses, but they can also be topics based, and almost every translation can be examined in many languages. Even the original languages can be examined and explored.

**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Exodus 20:1-17
Tuesday: Matthew 18:19-20
Wednesday: Proverbs 4:23
Thursday: Luke 6:43-45
Friday: Matthew 22:36-40
Saturday: Isaiah 58:13-14
Sunday: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.