

# WELCOME TO OUR FOURTH SERIES OF FAMILY LESSONS

Throughout the Series you will find:

1. Various ways to pray
2. Relationship building with others
3. Connections with Christian community
4. Mission and outreach

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## WEEK #2 (7- 4-21) Freedom is NOT Free

**KEY WORD:** Freedom

### **MEMORY VERSE**

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again ...". Galatians 5:1

### **SCRIPTURE: John 21:15-19 NIV**

*15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"*

*"Yes, LORD," he said, "you know that I love you."*

*Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered,*

*"Yes, LORD, you know that I love you."*

*Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."*

*17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"*

*Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "LORD, you know all things; you know that I love you."*

*Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"*

### **APPLICATION/MESSAGE**

**Forgiveness sets us free.** In the scripture above, Jesus meets Peter where he is. Just like he meets each of us where we are. Peter and the disciples have gone back to what they know -

fishing for fish, not fishing for new followers of Christ now that Jesus was no longer with them (or so they thought). Peter has learned humility and is not as quick to be “over confident” and “self-assured.” **His freedom has not been free.** His Jesus has died. For him. After denying Jesus, three times, and hearing the rooster crow at his betrayal, he understands that emotion AND **God’s will** are not easily understood and acted upon.

Jesus asks him, also three times, if “Simon Son of John” loves him. No longer is he calling him Peter, the Rock on which God is to build His church. This is a new beginning. A “reinstatement” of Peter’s journey in following Jesus. Like “de ja vu” - Peter is remembering his past joy and hurt, what he had seen and experienced. Feeding the 5000 with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, sharing the Last Supper with Jesus, and specifically, Peter may have been remembering the night where he had warmed his hands over a similar fire while denying that he knew and was a follower of his friend, his shepherd, his Lord, and his Saviour.

#### **Notice Jesus’ responses (and what they can mean to US):**

1. **“Feed my lambs.”** (*young believers*)
2. **“Take care of my sheep.”** (*pay attention, listen for “divine opportunities” to help others and to care for those searching to know Jesus*)
3. **“Feed my sheep.”** (*Don’t just offer Christ; bring others into Christ’s kingdom. Guide and shepherd believers as Jesus did.*)

Jesus also uses different kinds of meaning in the word **“love”**. Did you know that there is **eros** (*romantic love*), **phileo** (*brotherly love*), and **agape** (*unconditional love*). Jesus again meets Peter where he is. Jesus asks for **agape** love. Peter, realizing that Jesus already knows where he is in his heart, recognizes that Jesus responds with brotherly love.

Peter has been set free and forgiven by Jesus. Jesus, just like in some of our previous lessons, is once again offering compassion, confrontation, no condemnation, and forgiveness to continue the journey. **Peter has to live INTO his calling.**

## **FOURTH OF JULY - Why celebrate it? What does it have to do with freedom?**

**On July 4th, we celebrate the BIRTHDAY OF OUR NATION** (*Think of fireworks as the “candles” on America’s cake*). **We stepped into our nation’s calling to be a “light on a hill” to the world.** “We” (*the future United States of America*) began to form when we sent a letter to King George, the king of England to tell him we no longer wanted to be a part of the British Empire, but that we wanted our INDEPENDENCE. That letter we call our **DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**. We would go on to create a flag that symbolized the USA’s effort to be **“the land of the free, and the home of the brave.”** (*At times we may have failed to be the best we can be, but we have always pressed on to improve ourselves.*)

The **US flag** reminds us that this week we will celebrate that very important holiday.. Do you know what **independence** means? It means **freedom**, doesn't it? In our country we enjoy a lot of **freedoms**. We are free to come to church and worship. We are free to choose what we want to be when we grow up if we are willing to work hard. We are free to choose where we want to

live. We are free to choose most of the things that affect our daily lives because Americans are hard-working, caring people.

Now, this might come as a surprise to some of you, but **did you know that freedom isn't free?** That's right, someone had to pay the price for us to have the **freedom** that we enjoy. There are men and women who have helped to pay that price. Some have served in the military -the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force, etc. Many of them have fought in wars and some may have been wounded. There are some people who had loved ones who paid the ultimate price for freedom. They gave their lives fighting for our **freedom**.

Yes, we have a lot of **freedom**, but the greatest **freedom** that we have is the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus. **The Bible teaches that the penalty for sin is death, but you and I have been set free from this penalty when we chose to believe that he died for us and rose again to give us new life. We have been set free because Jesus paid the penalty. The Bible tells us that Jesus died to set us free from the penalty of sin. Instead of death, we have been given eternal life. This freedom wasn't free, Jesus paid the price.**

This week as we celebrate Independence Day, let us remember to stop and thank God for those who have paid the price for our freedom. But even more importantly, **let us remember to thank God for Jesus, who has set us free from the penalty for sin, because he was willing to pay the price, His life.**

*(from sermons4kids.com/freedom-isnt-free.html)*

### **PRAYER:**

Dear God, **thank you** for the freedom that we enjoy in our country. We are thankful for those who paid the price for that freedom, but even more important, we thank you for the freedom we have because Jesus was willing to pay the penalty for our sin. Amen.

### **SONGS**

All ages: "Onward Christian soldiers" words and music @ <https://youtu.be/dkdUplxlflc>  
"Set Free" (Chris Tomlin) @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4by2NH0AsVE>

### **CHILDREN AND/OR GROUP HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES:**

- We celebrate Independence Day by honoring our American Flag and that it stands for. **Did you know that there is also a Christian Flag that we can honor as well?**
  - "The Christian flag represents all of Christianity, and has been most popular among Christian churches in North America, Africa, and Latin America. The shade of **red (cross)** on the cross symbolizes the blood Jesus shed on Calvary. The **blue** (area behind the cross) represents the waters of baptism as well as the faithfulness of Jesus. The **white (big flag area)** represents Jesus' purity, a white flag is linked to surrender, a reference to the Biblical description of Jesus' non-violence and surrender to God."

## **CHILDREN AND/OR GROUP OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- Reflect on this quote from former **President Ronald Reagan**. How does his quote below honor Independence Day and freedom in America? How does this honor our Christian heritage?

**“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.”**

- Write a card to, or personally call or talk to, **someone who has served our country**, thanking them for our freedom.
- Write a card to, or personally call or talk to, **someone who has served to bring you closer to Christ**. Thank them and explain how Christ has given you freedom.
- Color the **Christian flag** and the **American flag** and hang the pictures in your window so everyone can see them.

# Christian Flag Coloring Page



