

*Use this format as a family, a couple, or with a small group.

Message Summary

People long for deliverance and freedom. Throughout history, men and women have literally been slaves to other human beings, and being delivered meant freedom from that enslavement. But there are many forms of slavery. Sometimes we are enslaved by prejudices and opinions people have of us. At other times we are the ones with a prejudice—and that too is a form of bondage. As Christians, we would all profess that Christ has “freed” us from the penalty of our sin—that fact is the foundation of our relationship with Christ. But if we are honest, being “free” in every sense of the word eludes us. For many, ongoing sins or addictions have dominion. In our discouragement, we may actually come to believe God is in the forgiveness business, but not the freedom business because we still feel so powerless. God’s deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt is an amazing testimony of His wonder-working abilities. It is also a rich and multilevel analogy of how He delivers us from corrupt human tendencies. The 10 plagues show God’s power over the false gods of Egypt, and paradoxically illustrate His patience and repeated offers of grace. God’s faith-based Passover deliverance is the perfect starting point for understanding how atonement through innocent sacrifice works. The warnings against Israel’s longing to go back to Egypt also serve as a reminder that once delivered, we ought to protect our new freedom and not fool ourselves about what life was like before. God didn’t just deliver His people from Egypt—He delivered them to a new way of life. That new pattern and the freedom it makes available is His desire for all of us. We may not be able to live in the land God promised to Abraham, but we are meant live in the power of God’s promises to us.

Opening Question

Describe an employment situation that felt like slavery. What made it so difficult to keep going back to work each day?

Discussion Questions

Note: All page numbers below are from *The Story*, 2008 edition. Additional group discussion questions for this chapter can be found on page 391.

1. Imagine you are among the children of Israel and have lived in slavery, as did your parents before you, for generations. Also imagine you were told God promised your people they would live free in a new land under God’s rule someday. How would you cope with still living in slavery? What doubts would you have? How is that scenario like—or different from—your life as a Christian today?
2. The injustice Moses saw needed correction (page 36 or Exodus 2:11-15) but Moses’ solution—murder—was criminal. What injustice around you angers you so much you might be tempted to do something wrong to make it right? What is an alternative action you could take that would still make a difference but not compromise your integrity?
3. God told Moses his name was, “I AM WHO I AM” (page 38 or Exodus 3:14). What do you suppose this name might imply about God’s character or nature? What light does it shed on having a relationship with Him?
4. The Egyptian magicians counterfeited some of the extraordinary acts of God (page 40 or Exodus 7:8-24). What do you believe are some spiritual counterfeit experiences happening today? How do you think Christians can be taken in even by other Christians? How can we be discerning without becoming judgmental or cynical?
5. The text says Pharaoh hardened his heart and it also says God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (pages 40 and 41 or Exodus 7:8-13, Exodus 8:15). How do you explain this contradiction? In what ways has God worked even in the midst of wrong choices made by you or others? Is God ever responsible for our sinful choices? Explain your answer.
6. Name as many parallels as you can between the events of the Passover and the Exodus and how those events prefigure God’s redemption through Christ. Why do you suppose God reveals spiritual truth through these historical parallels and analogies and not just through plain, direct teaching?
7. Newfound freedom brought hardships (pages 45-46 or Exodus 15:22-27, Exodus 16:1-36, Exodus 17:1-7) and the Israelites were very selective in what they chose to remember about their life in Egypt—even to the point of distorting their previous experience (page 45). What are some of the admittedly hard challenges “freedom” (being a Christ-follower) brings to you? What are some of the ways the “old life in Egypt” (your pre-Christian life or the life non-Christians live) seems better than what you have now? What lie(s) trip you up and make that seem plausible?
8. If deliverance from sin includes freedom from addictions and bad habits, why do you suppose Christians still struggle with those things? What is your view of how much freedom from sin is available to Christians this side of heaven?

As a final question, you can ask group members who did the personal reflection assignment if there is anything from that material they would like to share or ask the group about. Close in prayer.