

## UN-PARALYZED

The unknown often holds us captive. Whether it is a job that we don't know if we will get, a house that we don't know if we will get a contract on, a potential move that could be upcoming, a medical diagnosis that we don't have answers for... you get the point. When we don't know how things are going to turn out, we feel weight that almost places us in paralysis.

DISCUSS: *When is a time that you have felt held captive by the situation you were in?*

When it comes to our spirituality, we often feel that same trapped feeling. Certain things that seem to tie us down can make us feel like our spirituality is in limbo. Those things may be sins, baggage from our past, or other things that keep us from experiencing the beauty of the Father.

This is a pretty personal question, but *what are some ways that you feel spiritually held captive?*

Thankfully, Jesus had an answer for this. In John 8, Jesus is teaching, and there are many who believe in Him based on what He teaches them.

Look at what He says in John 8:31-32.

[31] So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Jesus looks at the people who believe in Him, and He says "if you want to be free, you will abide in Me."

This statement immediately confused the Jews. They didn't feel like they had been enslaved to anyone (reference John 8:33). Jesus doesn't let them get away easily. He makes a statement that all of us can relate to at some point in our lives.

Check out John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."

This statement from Jesus is looking at those of us who let sin be a common thing in our lives and saying, "If you think you are free, BAD NEWS! You are actually a SLAVE."

This language is pretty intense to us, and it would have been pretty intense to them as well. Nobody wants to be in a place where they are working as a slave or a bondservant. That individual is forced to work for something they do not have any ownership of.

Jesus makes this point in verse 35: "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever."

Maybe today, you feel this in your life. Maybe you feel like your life doesn't have meaning, you aren't working towards anything beneficial, and you feel like you are swimming through difficulty. You feel spiritually paralyzed.

What will we be willing to do to get out of this spiritual paralysis?

Remember earlier in the passage? Jesus says that the one who abides in Him is His true disciple.

As we think about what it looks like to abide in Jesus on a disciple level, it is worth reading where Jesus discusses the cost of discipleship.

Check out Luke 14:25–33

[25] Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, [26] "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. [28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? [29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, [30] saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' [31] Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? [32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. [33] So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

This idea of abiding in Jesus isn't easy. Here's the thing, though: getting out of a place where we are stuck isn't easy. It takes effort, patience, and, oftentimes, pain.

The freedom of Jesus is absolutely worth it.

To wrap up, here are a few questions you can challenge yourself with!

1. *What are ways that you can actively abide in Jesus on a daily basis?*
2. *Why do you think that the truth Jesus gives leads us to freedom?*
3. *What is something in your life you may need to sacrifice in order to abide as a disciple of Jesus?*