

A NEW FREEDOM

HOW GOD'S WORD EQUIPS YOU FOR LIFE

10 STUDIES FOR GROUPS

Only Jesus can offer you true freedom. We discover this as we read his word, the Bible. These studies are like a training program for how to use the Bible to take on life, introducing the material presented in the book *A New Freedom* by Mike Snowdon. You will learn the theory—a framework for approaching any topic in a comprehensive and faithful way—and then put it into practice as you think through various topics like your studies, money, suffering, violence, sex and identity. By doing these exercises, you will see for yourself why Jesus and his word help us to live freely better than anything else. You will see that Jesus is always good, always genuine, consistent and integrated, and always tells a better story than the world does—if you dare to listen to him. And as you grow and practise, you will show those around you a new freedom.

These studies have been created for use in church youth groups and in small groups, like one that meets in a school or university. They have been developed with teenagers in mind, though they could also be used by a group of young-at-heart adults or youth leaders. They are inductive in method, designed so that a group of teenagers could run them without an adult leader. They are also adaptable to different sizes of groups. Download these studies from:

anewfreedom.net/resources/groups



Check out the book *A New Freedom* they introduce:

youthworksmedia.net/products/a-new-freedom



TEN STUDIES FOR GROUPS

MIKE SNOWDON

A NEW FREEDOM

HOW
GOD'S WORD
EQUIPS YOU
FOR LIFE

AN INTRODUCTION



An imprint of Anglican Youthworks

Published February 2023

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3) DISCOVER MORE FROM GOD'S WORD

The best way to continue learning more about the freedom Jesus offers for any topic is not to do a word search of the Bible, but to faithfully read the Bible as it presents itself. Reading progressively through a whole book helps us consider the text more faithfully within its context. It also allows God's word to interpret us by exposing things we might never have found if we were searching for a particular word or topic. This process of discovery will allow us to keep expanding our kite (a tool for organising the informa-

tion we find) according to God's agenda rather than our own.

A great way to do this is to **meet regularly with a small group** (e.g. weekly), pick a Bible book and work through it a bit at a time using the [Five Senses of Faithful Bible Reading](#) method to read faithfully.

See A New Freedom, pp. 229-240.



Week	Mark (A)	Mark (B)	Philippians	Hosea
1	1:1-8	4:35-5:20	1:1-11	1:1-2:1
2	1:9-15	5:21-43	1:12-18	2:2-23
3	1:16-28	6:1-13	1:18b-30	3:1-4:19
4	1:29-45	6:14-29	2:1-11	5:1-15
5	2:1-12	6:30-44	2:12-18	6:1-7:16
6	2:13-22	6:45-56	2:19-30	8:1-14
7	2:23-3:6	7:1-23	3:1-11	9:1-10:15
8	3:7-19	7:24-37	3:12-4:1	11:1-11
9	3:20-34	8:1-21	4:2-9	11:12-12:14
10	4:1-34	8:22-9:1	4:10-23	13:1-14:9

2) READ A NEW FREEDOM

This series of studies was developed as an introduction to the material presented in the book *A New Freedom* by Mike Snowdon (Youthworks Media, Sydney, 2022). Reading (or re-reading) the book is a great way to review what you have discovered through the studies as well as deepen your understanding of both the theory and the topics. If you have gone through these studies with your youth group, ask your leader how to get a copy of the book. Or go to...

youthworksmedia.net/products/a-new-freedom



To find out more about the book, check out the trailer...



anewfreedom.net/videos/trailer

Or watch Mike respond to your questions about the book...



anewfreedom.net/videos/presentation

You can also continue to use all the resources from these studies available at: anewfreedom.net

INTRODUCTION

Only Jesus can offer you true freedom. We discover this as we read his word (the Bible). These studies are like a training program for how to use the Bible to take on life, introducing the material presented in the book *A New Freedom* (Mike Snowdon, Youthworks Media, Sydney, 2022). You will learn the theory (studies 1–3) and then put it into practice (studies 4–10) as you think through various topics like your studies, money, suffering, violence, sex and identity. By doing these exercises, you will see for yourself why Jesus and his word help us to live with greater freedom than anything else can. You will see that Jesus is always good, genuine and consistent, and always tells a better story than the world does—if you dare to listen to him. As you grow and practise, you will show those around you a new freedom.

WHO THESE STUDIES ARE FOR

These studies have been created for use in church youth groups and in teen small groups, like a school group. They have been developed with teenagers in mind, though they could also be used by a group of young-at-heart adults or youth leaders. They are inductive in method—designed so that a group of teenagers could run it themselves without an adult leader. They are also adaptable to different-sized groups; a large youth group could use them as a term program.

Each member of the group should have access to a Bible and a copy of this handbook from:

anewfreedom.net/resources/groups



LEADING A GROUP

Anyone can lead a group through this material. Being inductive in method, there are no prepared answers. The leader's role is to organise the group, facilitate discussion, consider timing, prepare additional resources and decide on extra activities where appropriate.

The Facilitator notes provide some ideas: anewfreedom.net/resources/groups

It will be helpful to be well prepared to facilitate discussion and move the group through the material. It is recommended that the facilitator read through the corresponding chapter in *A New Freedom* in preparation for each study. Alternatively, the whole group could read through the chapter before or after doing each study.

TIMING

Each study is designed so that it can be done in **45 minutes**. However, at times it will feel like you are only scratching the surface during the study. If your group has more time and is engaging well with the material, you could easily extend the recommended timings or add in some of the suggested extra activities.

A NEW FREEDOM

Although the book, *A New Freedom*, is not required for going through these studies, it is highly recommended that group members read it. You can purchase it at:

youthworksmedia.net/products/a-new-freedom



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

*You've finished the training program! What do **you** want to do next? Here are a few suggestions.*

1) TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT

Spend 15–30 minutes, either on your own or with a friend, going through the following:

How would you describe what true freedom is like?

What did you learn about yourself?

What stood out to you about Jesus from the Bible?

What have these studies got you thinking about?

What do you believe about who God is and what he is like?

Which things would you like to investigate further?

To what extent do you think the Bible is good for you and others? Why?

What might be your next steps in:

- ▶ living in freedom?
- ▶ discovering God's goodness in his word?
- ▶ following Jesus?



MAKE A PLAN

How will you be yourself, as God intended you to be?

What can you say to your Heavenly Father about who you are?

Say these things to God now (either individually or in a group).



WANT MORE?

Have a go at starting to fill out more of the kite by investigating other Bible texts like:

- ▶ Luke 20:34–36
- ▶ Ephesians 2:1–10; 4:11–16
- ▶ Romans 12:13–14
- ▶ Revelation 22:17



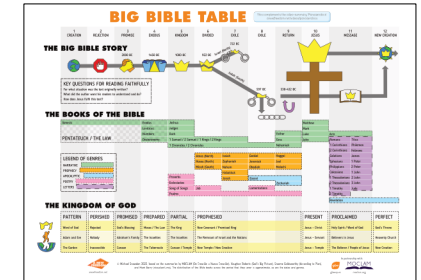
You could also read chapter 9 of [A New Freedom](#).

RESOURCES

Three tools from *A New Freedom* are referenced and used throughout these studies. They can be accessed through the following links and pages in the book:

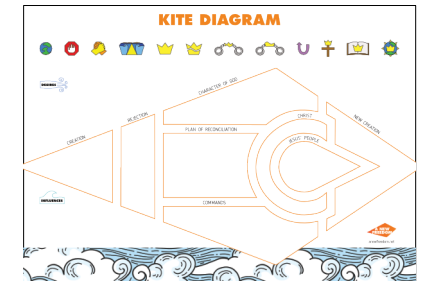
The Big Bible Table (p. 241, *A New Freedom*):

anewfreedom.net/resources/bigbibletable



The Kite Diagram (p. 242, *A New Freedom*):

anewfreedom.net/resources/kite



The Five Senses of Faithful Bible Reading (p. 240, *A New Freedom*):

anewfreedom.net/resources/5senses



There are also extra videos, visual aids, worksheets and activities referenced throughout the facilitator notes.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE A ...



A guide for how long the section is intended to take.



The aim or goal of the section.



Blocks of text intended to be read out by the facilitator or another member of the group.



Questions or instructions to engage the whole group in discussion. The facilitator could ask for volunteers to share, everyone could say something (depending on time and the number of group members), or the group could talk in pairs for a minute before coming back to share with the big group.

Italics

Generally instructions.



Bible texts to be read out.



Questions or instructions for discussion and interaction in groups of about 3-7 people.



Optional questions to help group discussion, particularly for groups that struggle to talk. They are mostly open questions that encourage investigation of the Bible text. There are no predetermined answers.



A video resource made for *A New Freedom*, which the group can watch to aid the study.



Information, usually based on the corresponding chapter of *A New Freedom*, that might help the study to move along.



10 mins



Discuss practical application for living out a new freedom in response to what we've read in the Bible.

F9.11

X9.4



Pick and discuss a couple of the following questions:

- ▶ How can your sexuality and your sexual desires help you long for our marriage with Jesus and to reflect God's love to others?
- ▶ How will you decide which desires to follow?
- ▶ With whom could you share your experiences/attractions/doubts about your identity? How could you support each other?
- ▶ How are you freed to:
 1. see your attractions as part of your bigger identity?
 2. see yourself as part of God's bigger story?
 3. say no to some things?
 4. delight in waiting patiently for Jesus?
 5. wait with others?
 6. be an incredible friend?

F9.12

START OF STUDY 10

We'll continue with observing and considering how the Bible talks about sexuality. This will build upon what we read in Study 8 (sex and love) and Study 9 (human identity in general).

If you're picking up again after a break, do the following review before continuing. Otherwise you can jump straight to the Bible.

F9.10

REVIEW STUDIES 8 AND 9

What did you discover about the purpose of sex and marriage (Study 8)?

What did you discover about human identity (Study 9)?

In what way are you still looking for freedom regarding your identity and sexuality?



READ

1 Corinthians 6:9–13; Romans 1:18–32; Leviticus 18:19–24

You could also review texts from other studies (like Genesis 2:24–25; Ephesians 5:25–27; Revelation 21:1–4).



Continue filling in the kite with what you observe.



Reminder: Every Bible text meant something for its first readers before it meant something for us. Being a faithful Bible reader will mean considering each text within its historical and literary contexts and within the bigger Bible story (see the appendix and the *Five Senses of Faithful Bible Reading* in *A New Freedom*, pp. 229–240).



1 Corinthians 6:9–13; Leviticus 18:19–24; Romans 1:18–32

- ▶ How do we live with the consequences of our rejection of God?
- ▶ How can this impact our desires and attractions?
- ▶ Which conducts/practices get mentioned? How might a conduct/practice change into an identity?
- ▶ To what extent do our desires, attractions and actions define us?
- ▶ How might the law in Leviticus have limited rejection of God within Israel and reminded them of God's character?
- ▶ How does Jesus offer to reshape our identity?
- ▶ What do you observe about what our bodies and sexuality are for?
- ▶ How does this relate to what you observed about God's 'marriage story' (Study 8)?



A moment for personal reflection.



Questions and instructions to help the group consider how they will apply what has been studied.



Extra material that will help the group members to continue thinking about what has been studied. They are not intended to be used as part of the group time.



A reference to a note at this point in the facilitator copy of the studies. These include instructions for helping the group, suggestions and extra information to help someone facilitating a group.



Extra activities for groups that have more time and want to incorporate different types of activities. These include games, ideas for further discussion, videos and more. These are found in the facilitator copy of the studies at the end of each study.

A NEW FREEDOM

A New Freedom: How God's Word Equips You for Life was written by Mike Snowdon from 2017–2021 during his time as a CMS missionary in Spain working with high school students (GBE). The English version was published by Youthworks Media in 2022. It was written for teenagers with two aims in mind:

- 1) to show that the Bible is God's good word for his world
- 2) to offer practice in discovering and living out God's goodness.

These studies work as an introduction to the material and method that is developed throughout the book.

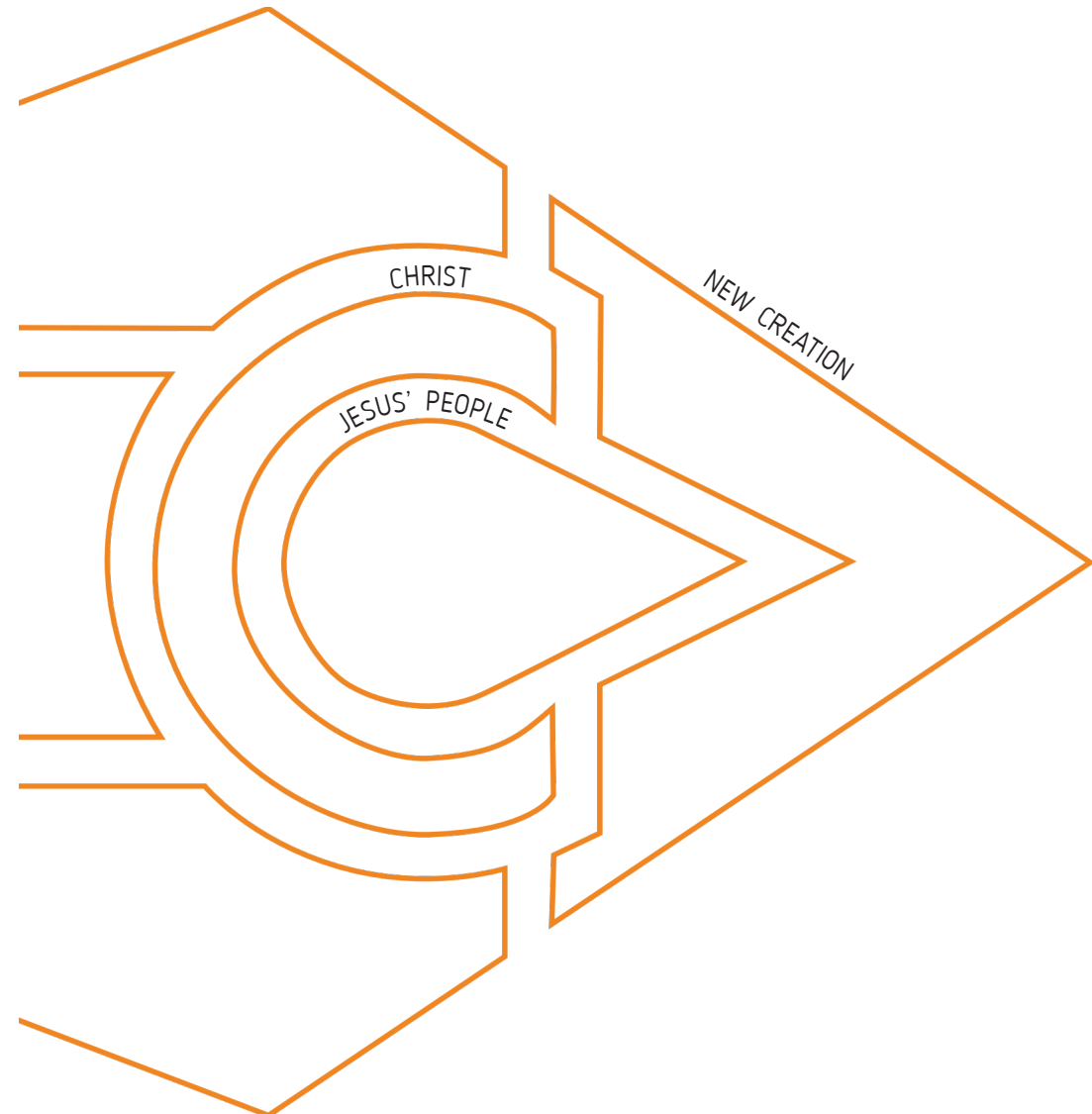
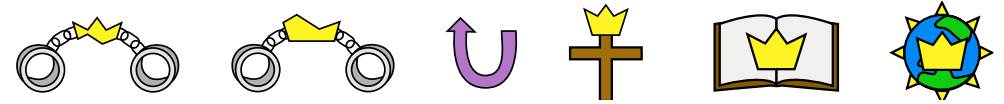
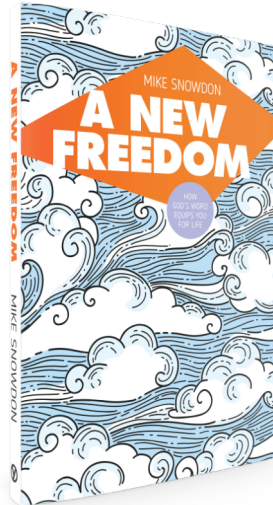
Although the book is not required for going through these studies, it is highly recommended that group members read it. You can purchase it at:

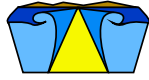
youthworksmedia.net/products/a-new-freedom

If you need help sourcing books for your group, contact Youthworks Media at: sales@youthworks.net or phone +61282683309.

If you would like to introduce others to the book, you could show them the trailer at:

anewfreedom.net/videos/trailer





DESIRES

CREATION

REJECTION

CHARACTER OF GOD

PLAN OF RECONCILIATION

COMMANDS



INFLUENCES




STUDY 1

I WANT TO BE FREE


DON'T YOU WANT TO BE FREE?

 10 mins  Consider our desire to be free to live life well. Introduce what the series is about.

 Through these ten studies, we want to discover a new freedom to live life to the full. We'll learn the theory (studies 1–3) and then put it into practice (studies 4–10). We're thinking about what we go through to arrive at the point where we decide something is good or bad, and what is going on inside us that brings us to that point. We'll be discovering a new freedom to be who we really are. But let's be honest. Life often feels like ...

 **WATCH**
[Kitesurf tricks](#)



 When do you feel like you're handling life with skill?

What would you need to feel free?


X1.1


 **WATCH**
[The Theory part 1](#)



 **WATCH**
[Kitesurf crashes](#)



 What aspects of your life feel like this?

 If we're going to make a call about right and wrong, good and bad, we need to search for some sort of reason outside ourselves. This series aims to help us discover that this final authority is Jesus. We'll explore this in the Bible—God's good word for his world—and we'll practise discovering and living out God's goodness.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

If you're doing this topic over two sessions, finish the first here by reflecting on the following questions:

What do you think about what God says about your identity?

How do you feel when you compare what you've seen from the Bible with your analysis of your desires and influences?

How does your own rejection of God impact your identity?

What questions or doubts would you like to think through?

Talk to God together and ask him for help in this journey.

END OF STUDY 9

Study 10 continues p. 82



50 mins Read the Bible and use our kite to organise the information that is found, forming a foundation for our understanding of how we think about identity and sexuality. Notice how we're building upon what we've already read from the Bible.

We'll now continue to practise reading the Bible, using all parts of the kite to organise what we discover about identity and sexuality. We'll think about how this builds upon what we've already gathered from other Bible texts, especially in Study 8. We won't cover everything, but you'll have a great foundation to build upon as you keep discovering how Jesus frees you to be yourself. Below are groups of Bible texts to work through, and on the following pages is the Kite Diagram for taking notes. We'll begin with observing and considering how the Bible talks about human identity in general. We already have a lot to draw on from what we've read over the last eight studies, but as we've seen, there will always be more we can add.

F9.9

If you're doing this topic over two sessions, spend 15 minutes (or more) on the first block of texts and 5 minutes on the reflection (p. 79), then start your next session with the review (p. 81) followed by the rest of the study. If you're doing this in one session, you can skip the review.

READ
Proverbs 1:1-7; Hebrews 2:17-18
You could also review texts from other studies (like Genesis 1:26-31 and Colossians 1:15-23).

Fill in the kite (pp. 80-81) with what you observe.

Proverbs 1:1-7; Hebrews 2:17-18 (Genesis 1:26-31; Colossians 1:15-23)

- ▶ What aspects of identity do you observe that God attributes to humans?
- ▶ To what extent do we grow in community?
- ▶ What is involved in our growing process?
- ▶ In what way does our rejection of God impact our identity?
- ▶ In what sense can Jesus identify with our experience?
- ▶ How can he represent us before God?
How does Jesus offer to reshape our identity?

PART 2
WHAT KITE ARE YOU FLYING?

15 mins Identify the variety of frameworks we use to arrive at saying something is 'good' and what authority they depend on.

GOOD/BAD/BECAUSE

How would you finish these sentences?

Compare your reasons with those of others in the group.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Now, think about one thing that you did this week.

If a parent asked you to justify why you did it, why it was 'good', what would you say?

F1.2


- ▶ Eating lollies is good/bad because ...
- ▶ Going to the movies is good/bad because ...
- ▶ Taking drugs is good/bad because ...
- ▶ Loving your enemy is good/bad because ...
- ▶ Working is good/bad because ...
- ▶ Bullying someone is good/bad because ...
- ▶ Talking about Jesus with someone is good/bad because ...

This week I ...

And this was good because ...

F1.3


What you put after 'because' is your reason or justification of goodness. You built this justification using a framework or way of thinking that led you to say the first part was good. Your framework is like a kite that pulls you across the water, helping you get the justification you need to keep moving forward ...

 We all use various 'kites' (frameworks) for justifying goodness. The following are the most common. After reading the description of each framework, identify which 'because' statements from the previous activity use it.

 **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Look back at the 'because' you wrote down earlier.

Is it based on a result, a value, a right, a rule or some sort of combination?

 Share your 'good ... because ...' statements and the kites you think they are based on. Pick a group member's 'good ... because ...' statement.

RESULTS: justify goodness by the result that something achieves
(e.g. 'Eating breakfast is good because it gives me energy')



F1.4

VALUES: justify goodness by certain ideals, characteristics, or ways of doing things (e.g. 'Breakfast time is good family time')



F1.5

▶ If someone were to argue that the action was bad, what 'because' statement might they give?

▶ Which of the four kites/frameworks are they using?

RIGHTS: justify goodness by a claim or need that a person or group has
(e.g. 'Everyone is entitled to food')



▶ Who do you think has the better reason? **Why** is it better?

RULES: justify goodness by following a principle or regulation
(e.g. 'I always have to eat breakfast')



You could use the following table to respond to the influences questions.

X9.2

School	Church	Media

 **DESIRES**  F9.8

How do you feel about yourself and your sexuality?

Where do these desires get affirmed or rejected (compare with influences)?

What things make you long for them or run from them when you think about them?

How does this topic make you feel about God?

X9.3

2 EXAMINE THE CONDITIONS

🕒 10 mins 🔄 Identify the **desires** and **influences** that might impact our handling of the topic.

📢 In studies 7 and 8 we practised how to analyse our influences and desires using certain questions to get us started. Now we'll practise doing both. For the influences section, you can either use the example poster shown or analyse something from your own context. Remember, this is the time for analysis and understanding rather than making judgements.



F9.7

🗣️ **What** groups or things you consume might influence you regarding identity and sexuality? What do they say?

Which of these influences pull stronger (and when)?

Where do they pull you?

Why do they want you there?

Spanish local government poster:



Translation: 'No one can guarantee you happiness, but now no-one can prevent it.'

📖 The 'why' helps to reveal the authority that your framework leans on. The **authority** is the foundation from which all our reasoning flows. It becomes the final word on what goodness is.

🗣️ How might we work out what or who has the final authority?

F1.7

X1.2

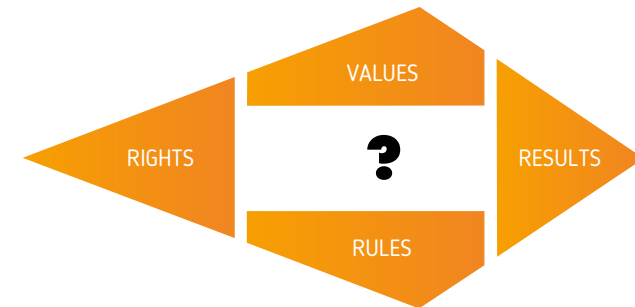
🗣️ What are some examples of authorities that you or your friends lean on?

F1.6

📺 **WATCH** [The Theory part 2](#) (00:00-01:18 then pause)



F1.8



PART 3 WHY JESUS?

🕒 20 mins 🔄 Consider the Bible's claims about Jesus' authority. Practise reading the Bible together.

📢 In *A New Freedom*, Mike suggests that we often make ourselves the final authority (more on this in Study 2) and so we end up colliding with the opinions of others. We need an authority that can resolve the competing frameworks for everyone. Now we'll consider who the Bible claims this authority is and why.

F1.9

+ **READ**
Colossians 1:15–20.

X1.3

👥 What stands out to you about Christ Jesus from these verses?

(Each group member says at least one thing and which verse they saw it in.)

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶

What words or phrases suggest why Christ Jesus might be the final authority?

i 'Firstborn', one word, is the old way of saying 'heir', as in the one who gets the inheritance, the owner (p. 34, *A New Freedom*).

+ **EXTRA QUESTIONS.**

What does it mean for Jesus to be the 'heir' (firstborn) over all creation (v 15)?

What does it mean for Jesus to be the 'heir' (firstborn) of the resurrection (v 18)?

What does it mean that God is reconciling all things in Jesus (v 20)?

i 'Christ' is a Greek word that means the one anointed to be King. The Hebrew word is 'Messiah'.

X1.4



🕒 10 mins **🎯** Define the topic, why we define it that way and why it is an issue.

💬 What makes up someone's identity?

💬 What is sexuality?

How do you work out who you are?

What is sexual identity?

To what extent do time and community impact one's identity?

How are they different from each other?

▶ **WATCH**
Is this me?



Which questions/thoughts from the video resonate with you?

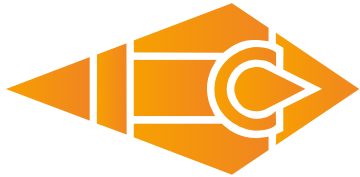
How would you describe what your sexuality is for?

F9.6

INTRO
COMPLETE YOUR TRAINING

🕒 10 mins 🔄 Review the series. Prepare for the final studies.

📢 In these studies we've learned and practised how to use the Bible to build a foundation for approaching any topic. We've also experienced analysing and critiquing our desires and influences. For this last topic, we'll be attempting to put it all into practice. You can do this in two 45 minute sessions (studies 9 and 10) or as one double session. Let's take a moment to review what we've learned across the series and consider what we still need to work on.



💬 Look back over studies 1-3. **F9.1**

- ▶ Can you name each part of the kite? **F9.1**
- ▶ Can you remember the 12 turning points and gestures of the story of reconciliation (Study 3)? **F9.2**
- ▶ What were the four common frameworks that the world uses to justify goodness? How does the complete kite remind us that Jesus has final authority (studies 1-3)? **F9.3**
- ▶ What are our desires and influences? Why do we struggle to control them (Study 2)?
- ▶ Can you describe the four steps we go through to approach any topic?

Or let Mike take you through the theory:

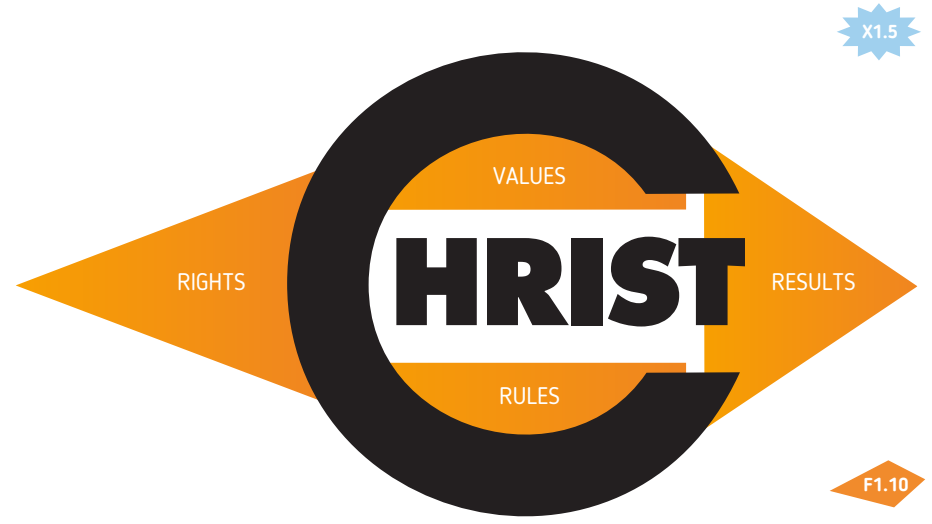
📺 **WATCH**
The Theory (A New Freedom)

F9.4 **X9.1**

Take a moment to consider how to make the most of taking on the final topic by planning what you want to work on.

- 💬 How will you go through the steps?
- All together Small group Pairs
- How much will you try to do and when?
E.g. two 45 minute studies, breaking at...
- Which parts of the theory do you want to work on?
- How do you expect to feel at the end? **F9.5**

- 👤 From what you've read, to what extent is Christ Jesus the final authority over:
- ▶ Results
 - ▶ Rights
 - ▶ Values
 - ▶ Rules



📺 **WATCH**
The Theory part 2
 (01:19-2:13 or the whole video if not watched earlier)

📌 What kind of authority do you want to base your life upon?

How might Jesus' authority reshape your perspective?

F1.11

Talk to God together and ask him for help in considering Jesus' authority.

WANT MORE?

We've still got a bit more theory to do before we get into the topics—that's when you'll see how to 'fly your kite' in everyday life. To help you keep thinking, before the next session try to write down for each topic below a question you hope the theory will help you address. At the end of the series, come back and consider how confident you feel about them.

- ▶ Being a student:

- ▶ Money:

- ▶ Suffering:

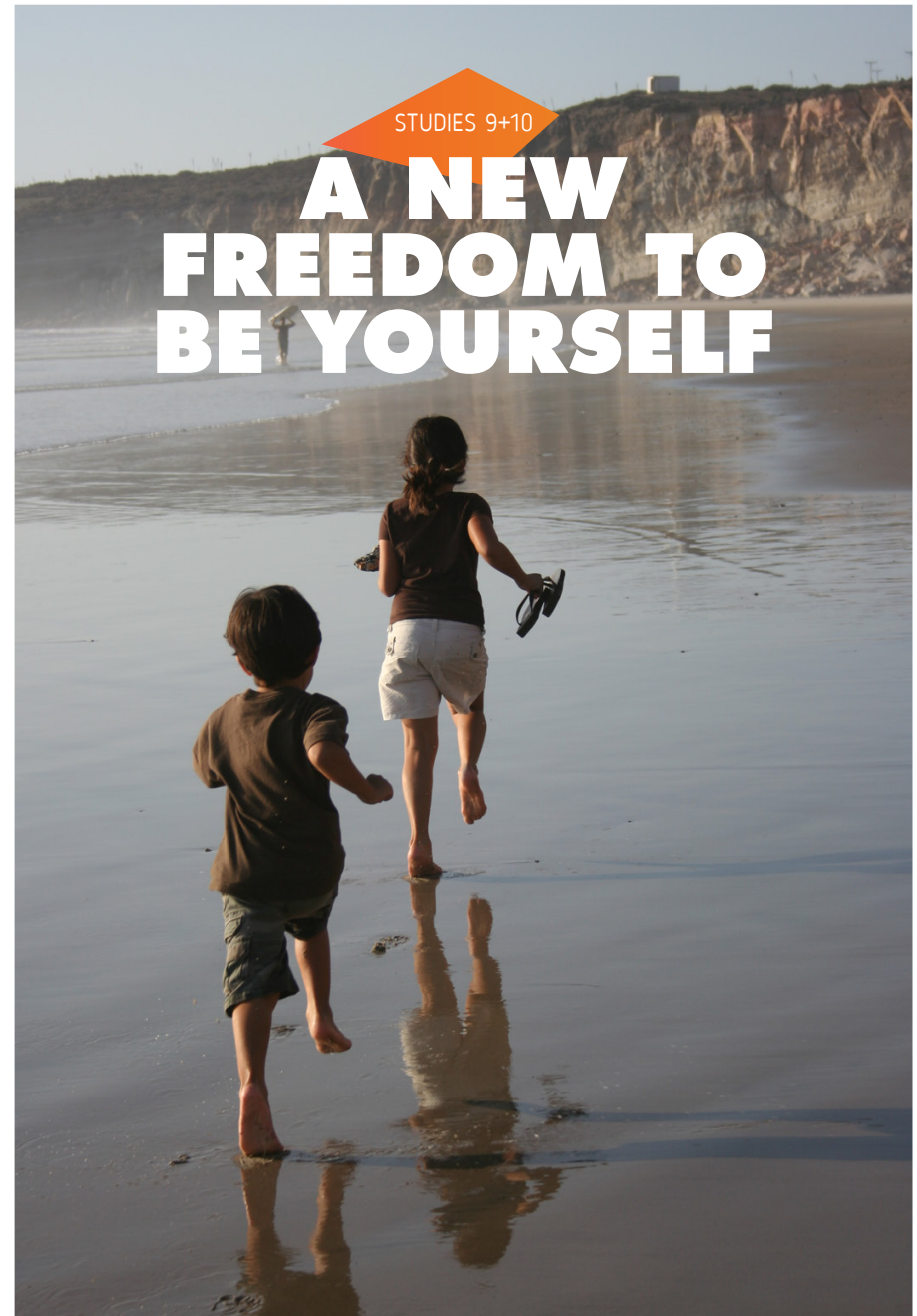
- ▶ Violence:

- ▶ Sex:

- ▶ Identity/sexuality:



You could also read chapters 1 and 2 of [A New Freedom](#).





🕒 10 mins 🗣️ Discuss practical application for living out a new freedom in response to what we've read in the Bible.

F8.7

🗣️ Pick and discuss a couple of the following questions:

- ▶ In what ways might sex within marriage remind us of Jesus' marriage story?
- ▶ If you say no to sex outside of marriage, what are you saying yes to?
- ▶ To what extent can someone who isn't married or having sex still love the fact that married couples are having sex?
- ▶ In what sense are God's purposes for sex 'good news' for our communities and world?
- ▶ How could you respond positively to someone who said, 'Christians don't let people have sex'?
- ▶ How could you remind married couples of what their marriage and sex points towards?

📌 MAKE A PLAN

What do you want to do to honour God's story of love and sex?

How might you share this good news with a friend?

Here's Mike's example. Could you write something similar?

📺 WATCH [A Marriage Story](#)



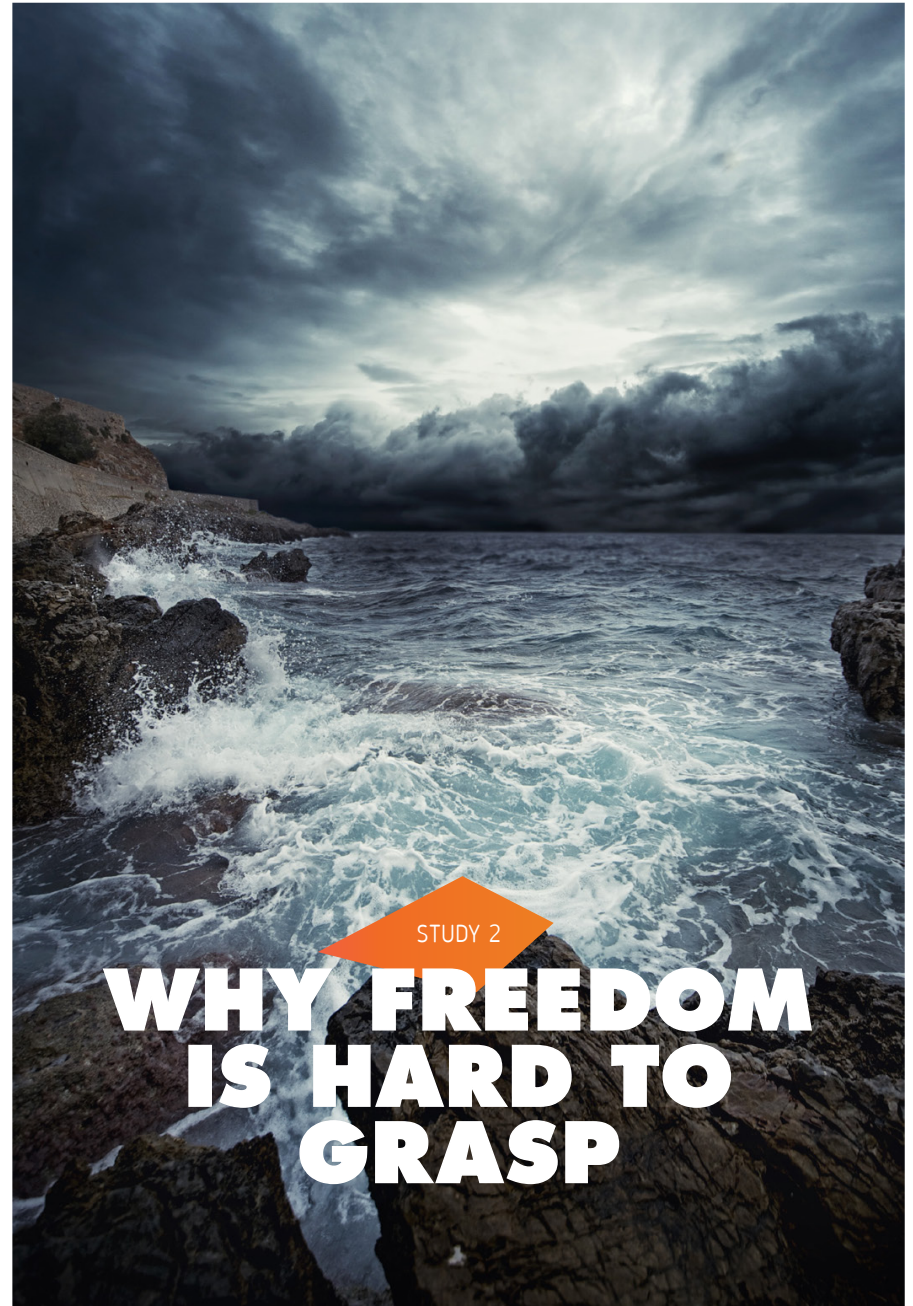
📌 WANT MORE?

Have a go at starting to fill out more of the kite by investigating other Bible texts like:

- ▶ Song of Songs 4:1–5:1 ▶ 1 Corinthians 7:1–6
- ▶ John 17:20–26 ▶ 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8

You could also read chapter 8 of [A New Freedom](#).

📢 **A REMINDER:** This study is really part one of two. The next study expands upon this topic to help us to think more concretely about our own desires and identity.



PART 1
RECAP


5 mins Review and summarise what was covered in Study 1.

WATCH
The Theory part 1



Is there anything that is not clear or that you don't understand?

WATCH
The Theory part 2



What situations or things can you think of that this framework (the kite at the end of Study 1) does not account for?

F2.1

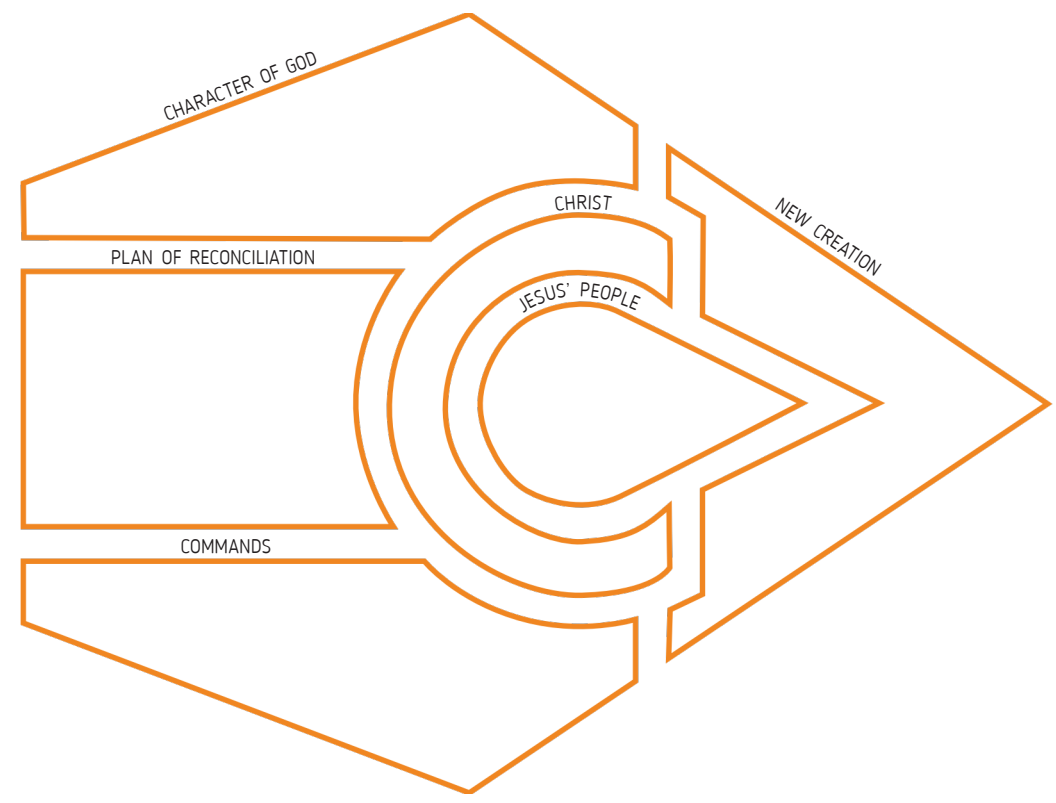
X2.1

PART 2
LIFE IS MESSY
(THE CONDITIONS WE FACE)

10 mins Recognise the complexity of life introduced by our desires and influences.


Have you ever done something that you hadn't planned on doing or that you didn't want to do?

What led to you deciding that it was the 'good' thing to do in that moment?



- Ezekiel 16**
- ▶ Which parts of the big Bible story are being portrayed?
 - ▶ What words would you use to describe how God thinks about and treats his people?
 - ▶ What words would you use to describe how Israel thinks about and treats God?
 - ▶ What does the sexual metaphors and imagery describe?


- Ephesians 5:25-27**
(Revelation: 21:1-4; Genesis 2:24-25)
- ▶ Which parts of the big Bible story are being portrayed?
 - ▶ To what extent does Jesus conclude the story from Ezekiel 16?
 - ▶ What words would you use to describe how Jesus thinks about and treats his people?
 - ▶ To what extent did Jesus fulfil God's design for sex and marriage?
 - ▶ Why might Jesus' 'marriage' set the pattern and purposes for human marriages?

 With a topic like sex, we can often jump straight to any commands about sex in the Bible. But these commands are all set within the big Bible story and are best understood in the context of God's character and plan. God recounts his love story through the prophet Ezekiel. *The Big Bible Table* on the resources page of anew-freedom.net reminds us that Ezekiel wrote to the Judeans during their exile to Babylon and that the genre is apocalyptic. Let's see how Ezekiel's use of imagery and metaphor helps set the context for understanding love, sex and marriage.

 **READ**
Ezekiel 16


If time is limited, only read 16:1-16, 32-33, 58-63.

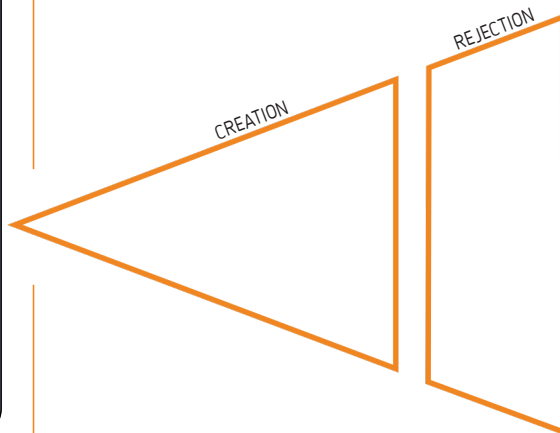
F8.6


 Start filling in the kite with what you observe.

 **READ**
Ephesians 5:25-27

You could also review Revelation 21:1-4, Genesis 2:24-25 and other texts.

 Continue filling in the kite with what you observe.



 How is God's story similar or different to the love stories (yours and/or the world's) from step 2?

What does the sex metaphor describe within God's story?

How would you summarise God's purpose for human sex?

X8.3

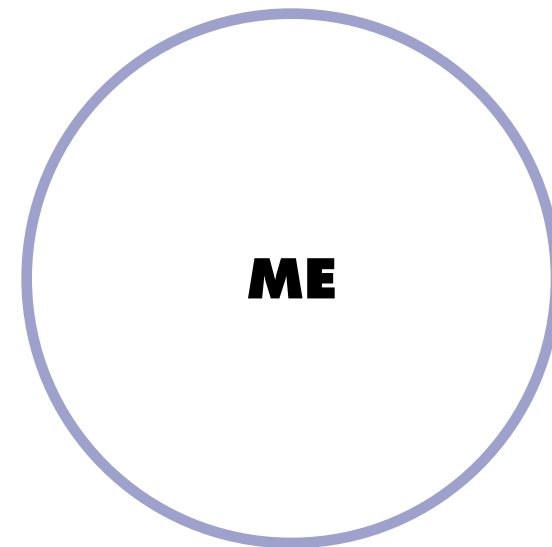
X8.4


 **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Thinking about that experience, use the following diagram to identify some of the factors that were in play.

1. Outside the circle, write or draw some of the different groups that you are part of (e.g. family/parents, friends, school, society).
2. Outside the circle, write down or draw some of the ways you spend your time (e.g. TV, books, video games, social apps).
3. Within the circle, write down or draw some of the things you desire in life (e.g. being successful at school, sport, relationships).
4. Draw arrows from each group/thing/desire towards 'Me' to represent how much they shape your decisions (bigger arrows = more significant).

F2.2



 We've just identified some of the influences and desires that not only impact our decision-making but shape who we are. They remind us that life is messy—we're trying to fly through a storm with some difficult conditions. Let's learn some more about them.


INFLUENCES

The groups that we are part of (e.g. family, friends, school, church, sport team, neighbourhood, country, etc.) and the things we consume (e.g. media, movies, games, apps, songs, etc.). Like the waves and currents, they're sometimes big, small or even hidden, but always moving. These are outside your 'Me' circle.

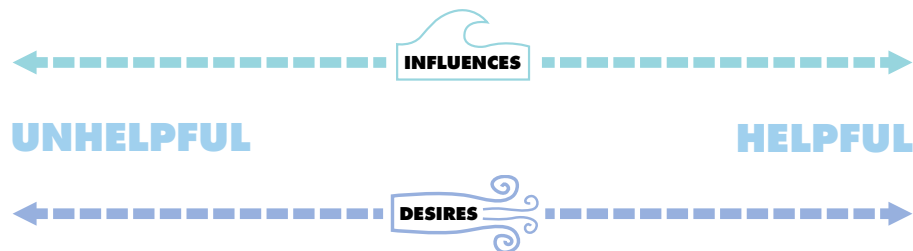
DESIRES



The things we want and long for, sometimes without knowing it (e.g. wanting to feel included, recognised, loved, have fun, succeed, buy something, feel authentic, avoid pain). Like the wind, they can rise and fall in sudden gusts or feel more constant over time. These are inside your 'Me' circle.


F2.3

 What amount of control do you have over these desires and influences?


On the following scale, rate how helpful you find your desires and influences, then discuss why.




 20 mins  Read the Bible and use our kite to organise the information that is found, forming a foundation for our understanding of how we think about sex and love. Practise reading Bible texts within the big Bible story.

 We'll now continue to practise reading the Bible, using all parts of the kite to organise what we discover about sex and love. We'll think about how this builds upon what we've already gathered from other Bible texts. We won't cover everything, but you'll have a great foundation to build upon as you keep discovering how Jesus frees you to love sex. We'll also continue adding to this kite in the next study on identity and sexuality. So don't worry if you don't finish it all now or if you leave with loads of questions.

F8.5

 Look over your kite so far to remind yourself of Bible texts you've already looked at. What elements of a love story do you see between God and his people in the big Bible story (study 3)?

What have you observed that might be related to sex?

 A literary genre is a category given to writings that follow a similar style, form or convention. You'd expect a narrative story to be quite different to a song or a science journal, and once you identified the genre you'd read it in a different way. The apocalyptic genre in the Bible often uses lots of imagery to convey ideas.

A metaphor is when you talk about something in a way that isn't literally true in order to convey an idea about it. There are loads of metaphors in the Bible like: 'your eyes are doves' (Song of Songs 4:1). As you look at the following Bible texts, try to notice their genre and use of metaphor.



To identify some of the desires at play and how they might relate to our influences, do one or both of the following activities:

F8.4

Write your ideal love story

Write down the main things you long for concerning love and sex. Then write how you imagine these being fulfilled in a story (it could be a movie synopsis, poem, song, comic or in point form).

Compare your story above with what you hear from the influences around you.

What is similar or different?

How do you feel about your story?

To what extent do you feel free regarding love and sex?

Analyse a modern love story

OR

Look up the top five songs on a popular music chart. As a group or in small groups, pick one that refers to love or sex. Look at the lyrics and discuss the following:

- ▶ In what way does it refer to love or sex?
- ▶ What story does it tell about love or sex?
- ▶ What about this do you find attractive and why?
- ▶ How does it compare to what you've heard from Christians?
- ▶ How does it make you feel about your own story?

What do you feel might stop you or others from loving sex?

Want to think about what you truly long for?

X8.2

WATCH
Love, tell me your story



PART 3
UNDERSTANDING WHAT GAVE RISE TO THESE CONDITIONS

10 mins Identify what caused the distortion of our influences and desires.

READ
Genesis 1:26 and 31

F2.4

What was the relationship like between God, people and the world in the beginning?

How does it relate to what you saw about Jesus in Colossians 1:15-20 (Study 1)?

READ
Genesis 2:16-17 and 3:6-13

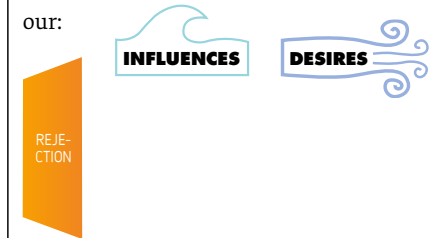
X2.2

In what way did humanity respond to God's authority?

What authority did Adam and Eve turn to?

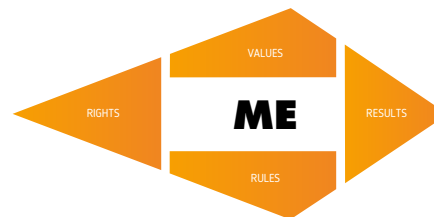
With the two kites below in mind, what happens when there are conflicting authorities?

How might our rejection of God distort our:



To what extent does this help us understand the messiness of life?

What would it look like to be free amidst these conditions?



F2.5

X2.3

PART 4
JESUS THE PRO HUMAN

🕒 20 mins 🔄 Meet Jesus the 'professional' human in his word. Practise reading the Bible together.

📢 We saw in Colossians 1 that the Bible claims that Jesus is the king who rules everything, the final authority. But it still needs to show us that he can take on the winds (desires) and waves (influences) of life.

What desires and influences are at play?

How does Jesus handle them (v 6)?

📖 **READ**
 Philippians 2:5-11

F2.6

X2.4

👤 What stands out to you about Christ Jesus from these verses?

Look back at your 'Me' circle (p. 19).

If you were in the same position as Jesus, what would you be considering?



1
CONFIRM OUR LOCATION

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Define the topic, why we define it that way and why it is an issue.

🗣️ What is sex?

To what extent is it connected to love?

F8.3



2
EXAMINE THE CONDITIONS

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Identify the **desires** and **influences** that might impact our handling of the topic.

📢 Remember the 'Me' circle from Study 2? Our **desires** were inside the circle: the things we want and long for, sometimes without knowing (e.g. wanting to feel included, recognised, loved, have fun, succeed, buy something, feel authentic, avoid pain). Like the wind, they can rise and fall in sudden gusts or feel more constant over time. They also reflect how we feel and respond to our influences. In

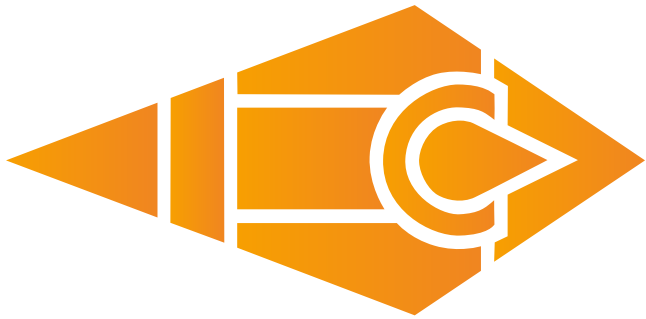
studies 4, 5, 6 and 7 we've done a number of things to help us answer:

- ▶ **How** do you feel about this topic?
- ▶ **What** does thinking about this topic make you long for or run from?
- ▶ **Where** do these longings get affirmed or rejected?
- ▶ **How** does this topic make you feel about God? Why?

REMINDER OF THE METHOD

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Remind ourselves of the theory and method.

📢 In studies 4–7 we practised using every part of the kite and began to see how they work together. In this study, we'll practise using the whole kite to build a foundation for approaching the topic of love and sex. We'll also further develop how we can analyse our desires as they are impacted by our influences.



🗣️ Can you name each part of the kite?

F8.1

Can you remember the 12 turning points and gestures of the story of reconciliation (Study 3)?

F8.2

Take turns explaining what we try to do in each of the four steps and why they are important.

X8.1

Need a refresher on the four steps?



WATCH
The Theory part 4



SLAVERY ←-----→ FREEDOM

👥 CONTINUED

Observing Jesus' actions from verses 7–8, where would you place him on the scale above?

Share why you think this with the group (using the Bible) and see if anyone convinces you to change your opinion.

How does he compare to Adam and Eve and us?

What responses do you observe to Jesus' action (vv 9–11)?

From all you've observed, how does the human Jesus handle life?

✍️ *Pick one of your desires or influences.*

Can you notice both goodness and evidence of distortion from our rejection of God?

How might what you've observed about Jesus reshape your perspective?

*Think about one **decision** you will need to consider this week.*

How might you take into account your desires and influences as you navigate it?

F2.7

X2.5

Talk to God together and ask him for help as you navigate these conditions.

F2.8

WANT MORE?

We've still got to finish the internal structure of our kite, which will show us how Jesus frees us to navigate the conditions that we've identified in this study. We'll then use our completed kite to take on the following topics. To prepare for that and reflect on your influences and desires around your 'Me' circle on page 19, you could write down what you think are some of the influences and desires that might be present as you approach the following topics:

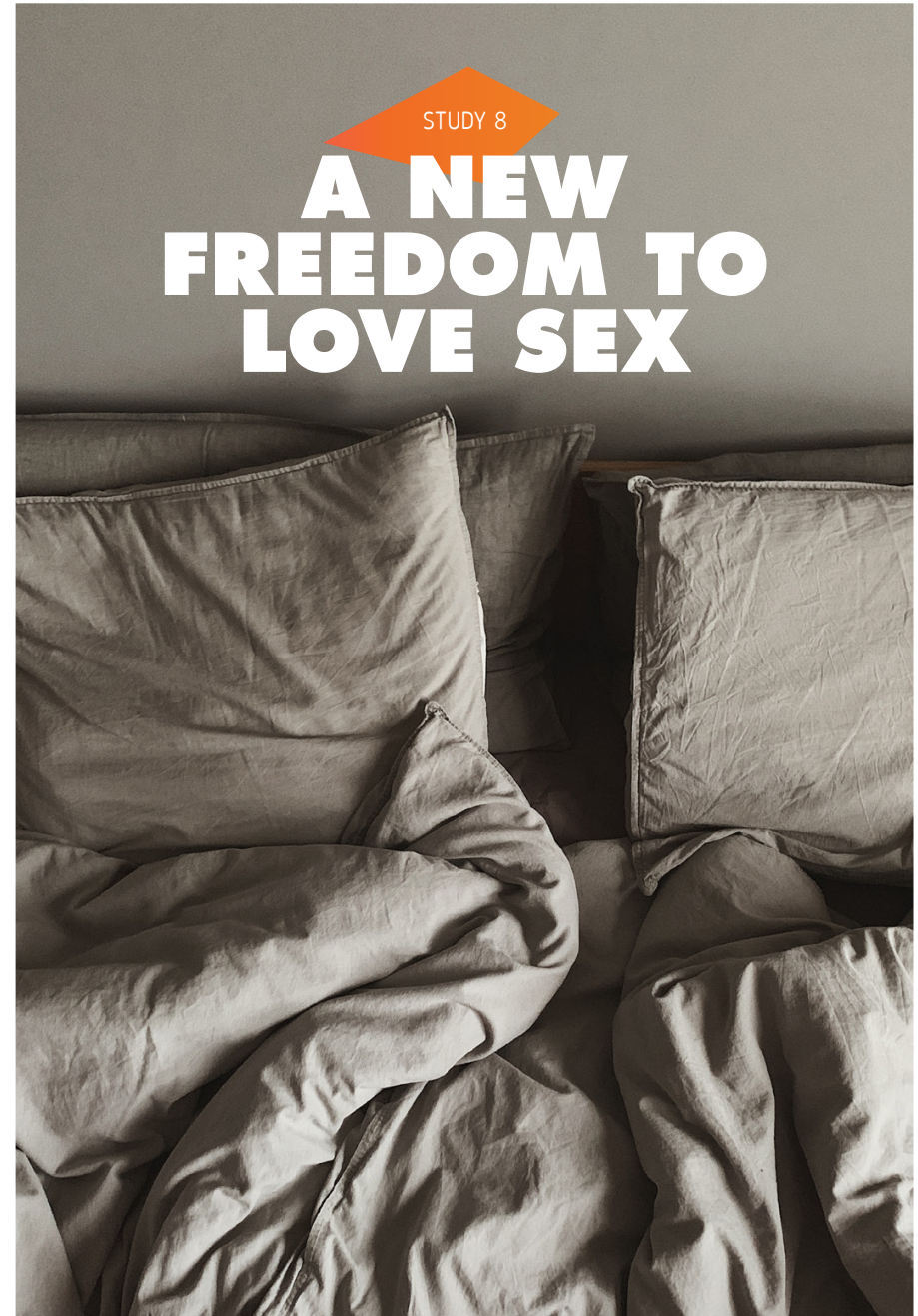
INFLUENCES

DESIRES

- ▶ Being a student:
- ▶ Money:
- ▶ Suffering:
- ▶ Violence:
- ▶ Sex:
- ▶ Identity/sexuality:



You could also read chapter 3 of [A New Freedom](#).





10 mins Discuss practical application for living out a new freedom in response to what we've read in the Bible.

Look back at the influences that you observed in Step 2 and the ways that you found yourself responding to them. How do they compare to what you observed in the Bible?

In chapter 7 of *A New Freedom*, Mike offers six options for how Jesus' people could respond to violence (pp. 154–157):

Weep: crying out to God for justice; repenting of your own desires and violent actions

Calm down: check your heart and motives, and ask God for help

Protect: yourself and others, in a legal way

Endure: with freedom, recognising personal risk, in certain circumstances

Forgive: recognising the horror of violence, extend mercy and love to your enemy as Jesus did to you

Show: what this world could be like without violence, speaking about God's plan to end it.

What do you think of these options? Are there any others you would add?

MAKE A PLAN: How will you use your new freedom to combat violence?

WANT MORE?

Have a go at starting to fill out more of the kite by investigating other Bible texts like:

- ▶ Genesis 15:13–16 ▶ Matthew 5:38–39
- ▶ Exodus 20:13 ▶ 1 Peter 2:23–25
- ▶ Isaiah 2:3–4; 66:15–16

You could also read chapter 7 of *A New Freedom*.



PART 1
RECAP

5 mins Review and summarise what was covered in Studies 1 and 2.

F3.1

F3.2

X3.1

How much do you remember from studies 1 and 2? Take the quiz! (Don't worry if you missed them; this will help you catch up.)

1. The kite (or framework) represents:

A B C D

2. Four common frameworks/kites are:

A B C D

3. Results/new creation justifies goodness based on:

A B C D

4. Values/God's character justifies goodness based on:

A B C D

5. Rights/creation justifies goodness based on:

A B C D

6. Rules/commands justifies goodness based on:

A B C D

7. Our final authority is what we use to:

A B C D

8. The final authority we naturally tend to use is:

A B C D

9. The only one with authority over all frameworks is:

A B C D

10. 'Influences' refers to:

A B C D

11. 'Desires' refers to:

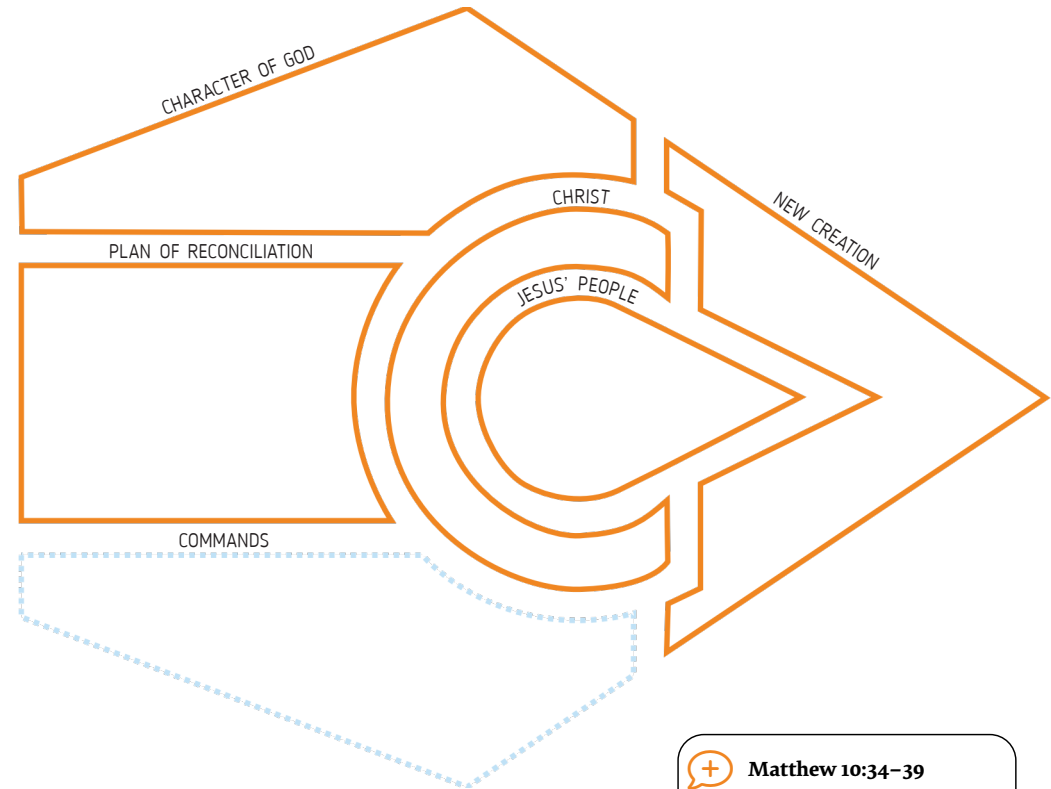
A B C D

12. We distorted our desires and influences by:

A B C D

13. Jesus shows what freedom looks like by:

A B C D



Exodus 34:5-7

- ▶ What stands out to you about God?
- ▶ What stands out to you about people?
- ▶ How does this reflect what God and people have already done?
- ▶ How does this anticipate what God and people will do?

Isaiah 53:1-9

- ▶ What stands out to you about the servant?
- ▶ In what way does the servant represent God's people?
- ▶ What might this have meant for the Israelites first reading this text?
- ▶ What kind of expectation is created for what God and people will do concerning violence?

Matthew 10:34-39

- ▶ What stands out to you about Jesus?
- ▶ What causes the trouble in relationships that Jesus speaks of?
- ▶ Is it similar or different to what caused violence in the Old Testament?
- ▶ What way of living is Jesus inviting people to follow?
- ▶ In what way would it combat the problem of violence?
- ▶ How does Jesus fulfil the role of the servant from Isaiah 53?

+ **READ**
 Genesis 4:1–16 or Exodus 34:5–7
 Read Genesis 15:13–16 if there is time.

F7.7

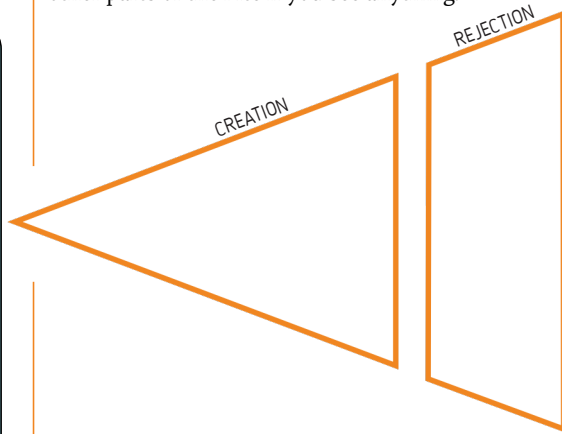
👥 Start filling in the **creation, rejection** and **character of God** parts of the kite with what you observe. You can also add to other parts of the kite if you see anything.

i Though God had given Israel their own land as promised, they continued rejecting God and violence was everywhere. Because of this, centuries later, God allowed the northern kingdom Israel to be exiled. The prophet Isaiah speaks to the southern kingdom Judah in that context. He talks about a 'servant' as representative of God's people.

+ **READ**
 Matthew 10:34–39
 You could also review Bible texts from previous studies.

X7.3

👥 Start filling in the **Christ, Jesus' people** and **new creation** parts of the kite with what you observe. You can also add to other parts of the kite if you see anything.



📌 How might this offer freedom to Jesus' people to combat violence?

- +** **Genesis 3**
- ▶ What causes the first death?
 - ▶ What do you see about desires in verse 6–7?
 - ▶ Who has authority and how do they use it?
 - ▶ What is God like in this text?
 - ▶ To what extent does this text create expectation for what other humans will be like?

+ **READ**
 Isaiah 53:1–9

👥 Continue filling in the **plan of reconciliation** and **character of God** parts of the kite with what you observe.

Based on what you've read from the Old Testament, to what extent would you describe God as:

- ▶ just?
- ▶ merciful?
- ▶ patient?

PART 2
THE STORY OF RECONCILIATION

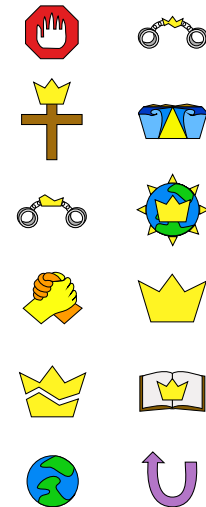
🕒 13 mins **👥** Introduce what the big Bible story is and why it is helpful to learn it for reading the Bible.

📢 In this study we'll look at how the Bible as a whole is one big story of reconciliation. This story is also the structure by which Jesus holds all the parts of the kite together. Understanding this story will help us see how every bit of the Bible is relevant and works as part of the whole under Jesus' authority. It will also help us to see how Jesus freely navigates the influences and desires that we can't control and how he freed us to do that too.

or
2. WORK IT OUT TOGETHER

👥 Have a go at putting the 12 icons of the turning points of the big Bible story in chronological order in the table below. Try to summarise what happens at each one. Then continue on the next page.

Don't worry if you don't know some of them. You can help each other, look at the Bible and have a go. We'll learn more in the next section.



F3.3

Choose one of the following activities to do together.

1. WORK OUT TOGETHER

🗣️ Do **Panoaerobics** together: a 10 minute summary of the Bible that will help you memorise the 12 turning points below with gestures, summarise the story and move about.




--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2. Work it out together continued ...


 **WATCH**
The Theory part 3



 In what way was your timeline similar or different from Mike's?



Which bits were familiar or unfamiliar?

What sort of reconciliation is involved?


 Invent a way to remember the order.
Present it to the rest of the group.







PART 3

THE PLAN OF RECONCILIATION

 18 mins  Read the Bible together to start building a more detailed understanding of the story of reconciliation.



 We've already explored some Bible texts in studies 1 and 2 that have started to build this story and we're going to read more across the series that will keep filling it in. The following three texts are from across the Old Testament. We'll ask the same questions of each text (right) and see what we discover together.


-  **JAN 1** When in the story of reconciliation is this happening?
-  What is there (people, places, things)?
-  What happens between them (verbs, scenes)?
-  What expectation does it create for God to act in the future?
-  What kind of reconciliation does it anticipate? (How does it respond to the problem of our rejection of God?) 

 **PERSONAL REFLECTION**



Think of the last time that you were tempted to respond to or act in violence, regardless of whether you actually did or not.


What did you feel at the time?





In what ways did your desires follow or flee your influences? 



 20 mins  Read the Bible and use the parts of our kite to organise the information that is found, forming a foundation for our understanding of how we think about violence. Practise reading Bible texts within the big Bible story.

 We'll now continue to practise using the kite by looking at some of what the Bible says about violence. In this session, we'll focus on observing **God's character** across the story of reconciliation, and how that frees **Jesus' people** to live now in a violent world despite our **rejection of God**. We'll think about how this builds upon what we've already gathered from other Bible texts. We won't cover everything, but you'll have a great foundation to build upon as you keep discovering how Jesus frees you to combat violence.

 Look back to your kite(s) from previous studies and Genesis 1-3. 

What violence have you observed?

Why does it happen?

What does God do about it?

2 EXAMINE THE CONDITIONS

5 mins Identify the **desires** and **influences** that might impact our handling of the topic.

Remember the 'Me' circle from Study 2? Our **influences** were outside the circle: the groups we are part of (e.g. family, friends, school, church, sport team, neighbourhood, country, etc.) and the things we consume (e.g. media, movies, games, apps, songs, etc.). In studies 4, 5 and 6 we've done a number of things to help us answer:

- ▶ **What** might influence us regarding this topic?
- ▶ **Which** of these influences pull stronger (and **when**)?
- ▶ **Where** do they pull us?
- ▶ **Why** do they want us there?

Let's consider our influences concerning violence ...

WHAT: *Think back over everything you've seen and done in the last 24 hours. Take note of any moment you saw or experienced something violent or something related to violence.*

INFLUENCES

WHERE: How do you feel after experiencing them?

What behaviour or thinking do they encourage?

WHICH/WHEN: *Plot them in terms of time of exposure and how important they are to you.*



WHY: What principle or purpose is behind the violence?

F7.4

READ
Genesis 12:1-3

READ
2 Samuel 7:11b-16

JAN 1

JAN 1

JAN 1	

PART 4
JESUS THE RECONCILER

4 mins Notice how Jesus becomes the climax of the big Bible story and completes the kite.

So how does Jesus fulfil God's plan of reconciliation?

How does Jesus crucified deal with the problem of our rejection of God?

WATCH
[1 Peter 3:18](#)
Do it together and get into it!



X3.2

F3.5

X3.3



5 mins Define the topic, why we define it that way and why it is an issue.

WATCH
[What can bring this world to peace?](#)



What are examples of violence?
Where do you see violence?

Write local things (your neighbourhood or school) inside the circle and global things (other places and peoples) outside the circle.

F7.3

What acts of violence do you know that are in the Bible?

How do you and others you know feel about this?

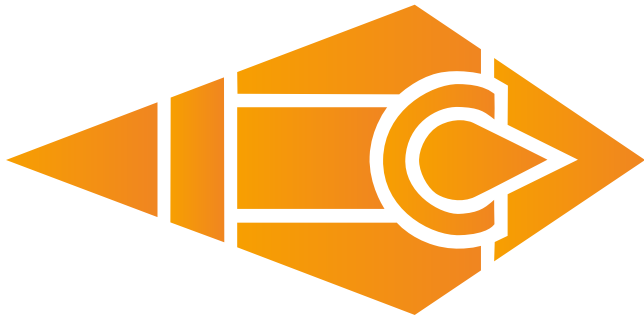
X7.2



REMINDER OF THE METHOD

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Remind ourselves of the theory and method.

📢 In Study 6 we practised using the parts of the kite that make up the big Bible story. In this study, we will learn how to observe God's character within that story and what it means for Jesus' people today. We'll also further develop how we can analyse our influences and the impact of our rejection of God. In doing this, we'll build a foundation for approaching the topic of violence.



💬 Can you name each part of the kite?

Need a refresher on the four steps?

F7.1

Can you remember the 12 turning points and gestures of the story of reconciliation (Study 3)?

F7.2

▶ **WATCH**
[The Theory part 4](#)



Take turns explaining what one part of the kite means, until you've covered each part.

X7.1

JESUS' PEOPLE, THE RECONCILED

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Introduce how this story of reconciliation involves God reshaping his people.



Choose **one** of the following texts and discuss the questions.

F3.6

X3.4

✚ **READ**
Colossians 1:21-23

How is Jesus bringing about reconciliation now in people?

What does that mean for you?

✚ **READ**
Philippians 2:1-4

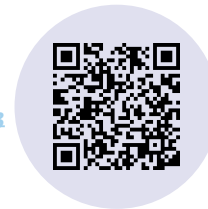
In what way does Paul encourage his readers to follow Jesus' example?

Who is 'the Spirit' and how is he involved?

To what extent does this offer the possibility of a better community of restructured influences?

If you did the activity 'Work out together' on page 27 ...

▶ **WATCH**
[The Theory part 3](#)

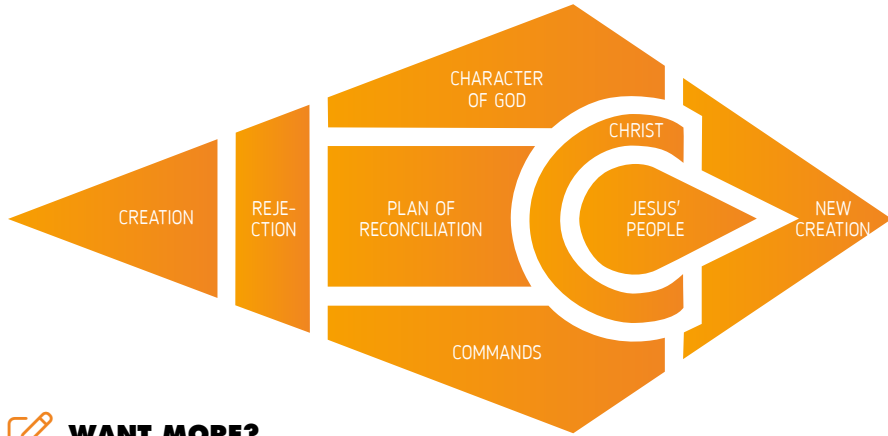


📄 Are you reconciled to God through Jesus?

In what ways is Jesus reshaping you?

F3.7

Talk to God together and ask him for help in this journey.



 **WANT MORE?**

We've now gone through most of the theory but we will keep reviewing it as we go through the practice sessions on the following topics. We'll be going through them in the order below and each one will help us to keep growing our ability to use the theory in practice. To prepare yourself, look back at the questions you wrote for these topics at the end of Study 1 and the desires and influences that you wrote at the end of Study 2. Now write down one thing that you're hoping to consider as we go through each one. What would it look like for you to feel free?

▶ Being a student:

▶ Money:

▶ Suffering:

▶ Violence:

▶ Sex:

▶ Identity/sexuality:

To keep building on your understanding of the story of reconciliation, check out:

▶ Exodus 19:3-6

▶ 1 Kings 11:9-13

▶ 2 Kings 17:5-6; 24:2-4



You could also read chapter 3 of [A New Freedom](#).



STUDY 7

A NEW FREEDOM TO COMBAT VIOLENCE



10 mins Discuss practical application for living out a new freedom in response to what we've read in the Bible.

To what extent has our reading of the Bible freed you to confront your own story of suffering? (Confront does not have to mean 'feel fine' or 'deal with it')

MAKE A PLAN: How will you use your new freedom to confront suffering?

Weeping (*Recognising the true horror of both your own and others' suffering*)

Waiting (*Living now in this hurting world*)

Trusting (*Putting your hope in God*)

Sharing (*Speaking to others of Jesus' suffering and victory*)

WANT MORE?

Have a go at starting to fill out more of the kite by investigating other Bible texts like:

- ▶ Exodus 20:13-17 ▶ Psalm 92:15
- ▶ Mark 4:35-41; 8:29-32; 10:45



You could also read chapter 6 of [A New Freedom](#).



INTRO
THE FOUR STEPS

🕒 2 mins 🔄 Remind ourselves of the theory (studies 1-3).
Introduce the method (4 steps) for approaching each topic. **F4.1**

📢 We've been training ourselves in how to approach life. We've done the theory, learning about the equipment we need to bring together all the Bible says (Studies 1 and 3) to help us navigate the conditions of life: our desires and influences (Study 2). Through the next seven studies, we'll be putting the theory into practice as we approach different topics. We'll use the same four steps outlined in this video ...

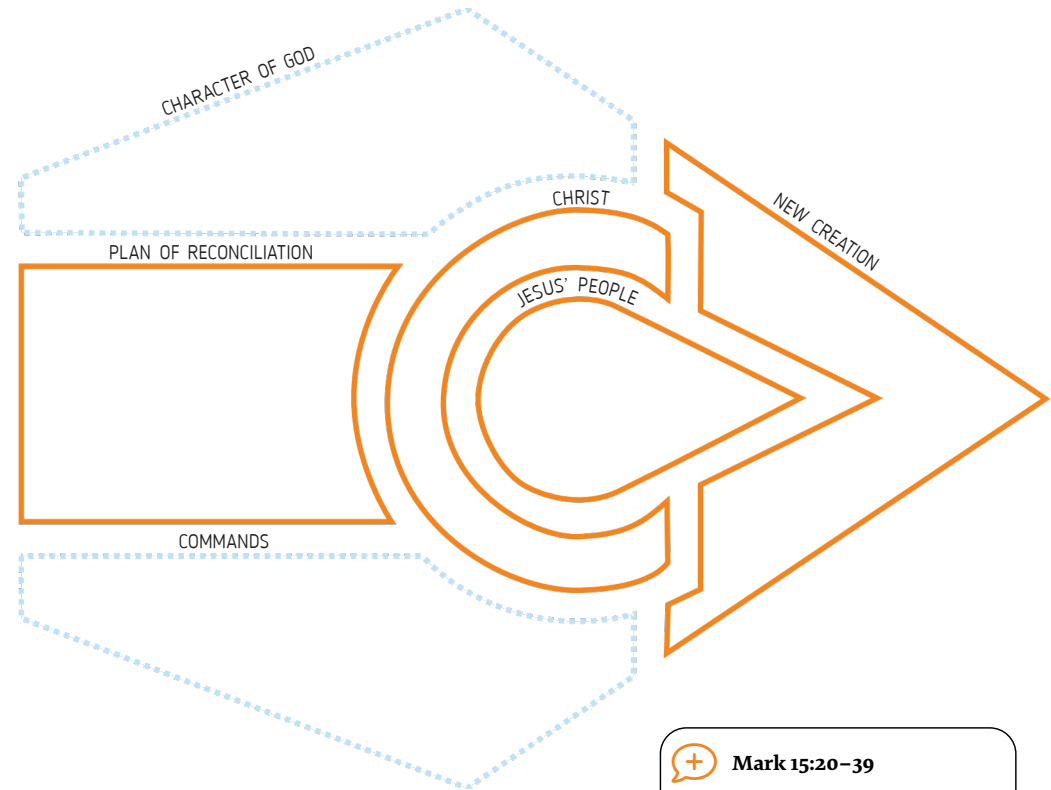
📺 **WATCH**
The Theory part 4

X4.1



Now it's time to practise going through these four steps and apply the theory with our first topic: **being a student**.

F4.2



+ **Genesis 3**

- ▶ What evidence is there of suffering?
- ▶ How does it happen?
- ▶ In what ways does rejection of God impact people and the world?

What kind of solutions are offered to limit, avoid or end suffering?

+ **Psalms 22:1-5, 14-22**

- ▶ In what ways is the Psalmist suffering?
- ▶ How does he speak to God about it?
- ▶ To what extent does he express confidence or hope?

What would this have meant to the Israelites reading this king's psalm?

+ **Mark 15:20-39**

- ▶ What stands out to you about Jesus from the text?
- ▶ What reasons are given by the people in the story as to why Jesus is suffering?
- ▶ To what extent does Jesus fulfil Psalm 22 in this text?
- ▶ What happens after Jesus dies and what do you think it means?

+ **Revelation 21:1-4**

- ▶ What stands out to you about the new future described in this text?
- ▶ How does it talk about suffering?

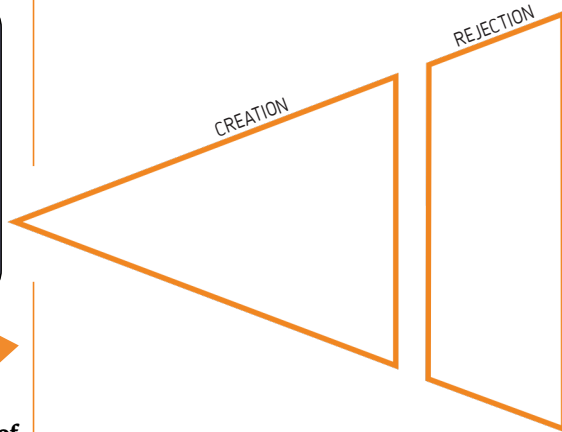
+ **READ**
Genesis 3

F6.8

👤 Start filling in the **creation** and **rejection** parts of the kite with what you observe. You can also add to other parts of the kite if you see anything.

📢 God's work through the Christ, Jesus, confirms the future that we long for: the end of the story of suffering.

📢 Remember the plan of reconciliation from Study 3? If we follow the story through to when God establishes the nation of Israel in the land, we see King David, in the midst of suffering, calling on God to fulfil his promises.



+ **READ**
Psalm 22:1-5, 14-22

F6.9

👤 Continue filling in the **plan of reconciliation** part of the kite with what you observe. You can also add to other parts of the kite if you see anything. You could also review 2 Samuel 7 from Study 3 for context on King David.

+ **READ**
Revelation 21:1-4

F6.11

👤 Continue filling in the **new creation** part of the kite with what you observe.

🗣️ Retell the story of suffering within the story of reconciliation to each other.

How might this offer Jesus' people freedom to confront suffering now?

+ **READ**
Mark 15:20-39

F6.10

👤 Continue filling in the **Christ** part of the kite with what you observe.



1 CONFIRM OUR LOCATION

🕒 5 mins **🗣️** Define the topic. What are we talking about? Why do we define it that way? Why is it even an issue? This step should get us all on the same page.

Draw an emoji to describe how you feel about:

School

Studying

Work/career

🗣️ Share why you drew each emoji or what you feel it says about each area.

What are some of the similarities between being a student and working in a paid job after school?

📢 The Bible doesn't seem to have much to say directly to students, but it does have a lot to say to workers in general. And since getting a job ends up being a common goal of study, we can build a good foundation for being a student by looking more broadly at the topic of work in the Bible. We'll then think about how this sets us free to be students.

2 EXAMINE THE CONDITIONS

🕒 5 mins 🧠 Identify the **desires** and **influences** that might impact our handling of the topic. Consider how we personally feel about the topic and what those around us might think about it.

💬 When you finish studying, what job would you most like to do and why?

💬 To what extent do these three give a fair summary of what most people look for? Are there any you would add or disagree with?



X4.2

F4.3

i There are a lot of reasons why we might want to study or work. Many of these tend to be based on one of the following three results gained by the work:

SATISFACTION: we enjoy it or can achieve something

REPUTATION: it portrays us in a certain way to others

PROVISION: the amount we're paid or what we receive.

Look back to Study 2, p. 19. We wrote down 'desires' inside a circle that said 'Me' and we also wrote down 'influences' outside the circle (things external to ourselves that impact the way we consider something as good or bad).

What (groups of relationships or things you consume) tell you something about how and why you should work?



X4.3

F4.4

Can you identify any of these three in the reasons your group gave for wanting a certain job?

What do they say (in one sentence)?

3 SET UP OUR KITE

🕒 20 mins 🧠 Read the Bible and use the creation–new creation parts of our kite to organise the information that is found, forming a foundation for our understanding of how we think about suffering. Practise reading Bible texts within the big Bible story.

📢 We'll now practise using the kite by looking at some of what the Bible says about suffering. In this session, we'll focus on the six parts of the kite that tell the story of reconciliation, from **creation to new creation**. We'll think about how this builds upon what we've already gathered from other Bible texts. We won't cover everything, but you'll have a great foundation to build upon as you keep discovering how Jesus frees you to confront suffering.

💬 *Look back to your kite(s) from previous studies.*

F6.7

What have you already seen from creation to new creation that might help us understand more about suffering?

F6.6

i Every Bible text was written by someone in a certain way for a particular group of people. It meant something for them before it meant something for us. But every Bible text is part of God's word and so they all fit within his bigger story, progressively revealing who God is and what he is doing. Faithfully reading a Bible text will involve considering what it meant for its original audience and where it fits in the big Bible story (Study 3).

2 EXAMINE THE CONDITIONS

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Identify the **desires** and **influences** that might impact our handling of the topic. X6.1

💬 What do your friends say about God and suffering?



Why do they say that?

How do you feel about what they say?

When you suffer or see others suffering, what do you want/desire?



Think about people you know who have suffered, in big or small ways.

Where do they look for solutions to the problem of suffering?

🧠 PERSONAL REFLECTION

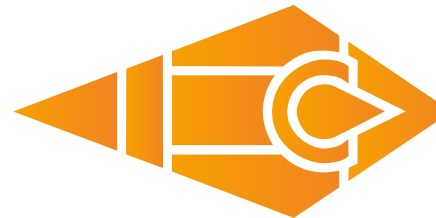
What do you personally want to ask or say to God about suffering?

F6.5

3 SET UP OUR KITE

🕒 23 mins 🔄 Read the Bible and use the parts of our kite to organise the information that is found, forming a foundation for our understanding of being a student. Practise thinking through the implications of what we discover about creation and the character of God fulfilled in Jesus.

💬 Without looking at the theory sessions, can you name each part of the kite?




Take turns explaining what each part of the kite refers to.


Remind each other which parts relate to rights/rules/values/results and how and why Jesus has authority over all these parts.

📢 We'll now practise using the kite by looking at some of what the Bible says about our life as a student. In this session, we'll focus on how to learn from the Bible about **creation** and the **character of God**. And we'll always look at **Christ** Jesus who brings it all together. You'll then have a great foundation to build on as you keep discovering how Jesus frees you to be a student. In future studies, we'll explore other parts of the kite, until the final sessions when we'll practise going through a whole topic using every part of the kite in the process.


📖 **READ**
Genesis 1:1–2:3

👥 Start filling in the **creation**, **character of God** and **Christ** parts of the kite (pp. 38–39) with what you observe.

 Optional: We've just observed from the Bible aspects of God's character and the purpose he has given people in work. This helps us consider both values and rights (Study 1). However, we haven't yet considered how our **rejection** of God might have impacted these, which we'll do in other practice sessions. But for now...


 Look back at what you discovered about our rejection of God in Study 2.

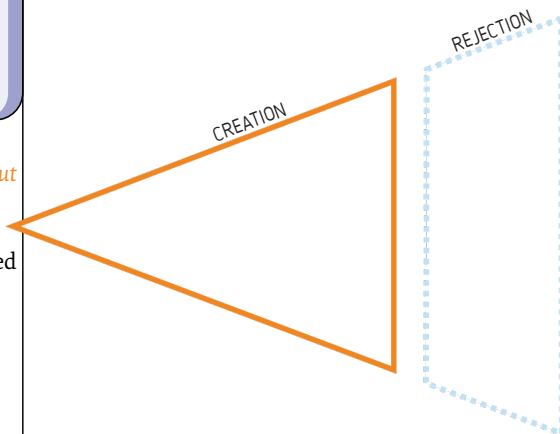
In what ways has this rejection frustrated your work as a student?


 Remembering Study 3, we know that God began his work of following a **plan of reconciliation** that leads through the Old Testament to Jesus the Christ. We'll keep practicing how to discover more from the Old Testament in the other practice sessions. But for now, let's jump ahead to Jesus, the **Christ**, to see the result of God's work of reconciliation and how it might free us to be students.

X4.4

 **READ**
John 6:29 and Matthew 11:28-30
You could also review: Philippians 2; Colossians 1.

 Continue filling in the **creation, character of God** and **Christ** parts of the kite with what you observe.




 How might this offer freedom in work to Jesus' people?

On the following page are optional questions for group discussion. They are mostly open questions that encourage investigation of the Bible text. There are no predetermined answers.




CONFIRM OUR LOCATION

 5 mins  Define the topic, why we define it that way and why it is an issue.

 **WATCH**
We weren't made for this



 When and where do you see suffering in our world?

What different types do you observe?

How might God be involved?

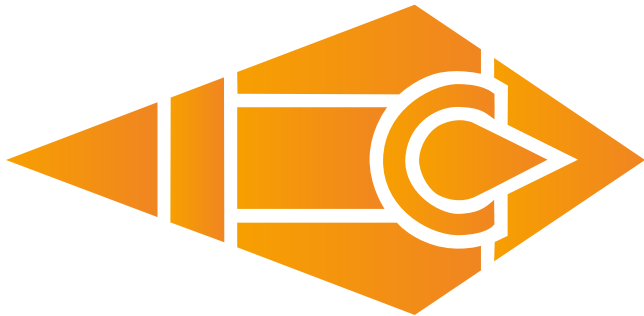
F6.4



REMINDER OF THE METHOD

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Remind ourselves of the theory and method.

📢 In studies 4 and 5 we practised using parts of the kite to organise the information we found reading the Bible. In this study, we will add in the parts of the kite that complete the story of reconciliation (Study 3) and practise reading Bible texts within that story. In doing this, we'll build a foundation for approaching the topic of suffering.



🗣️ Can you name each part of the kite?

F6.1

Can you remember the 12 turning points and gestures of the story of reconciliation (Study 3)?

F6.2

Using the six kite parts from left to right, can you tell each other the story of reconciliation in one minute?

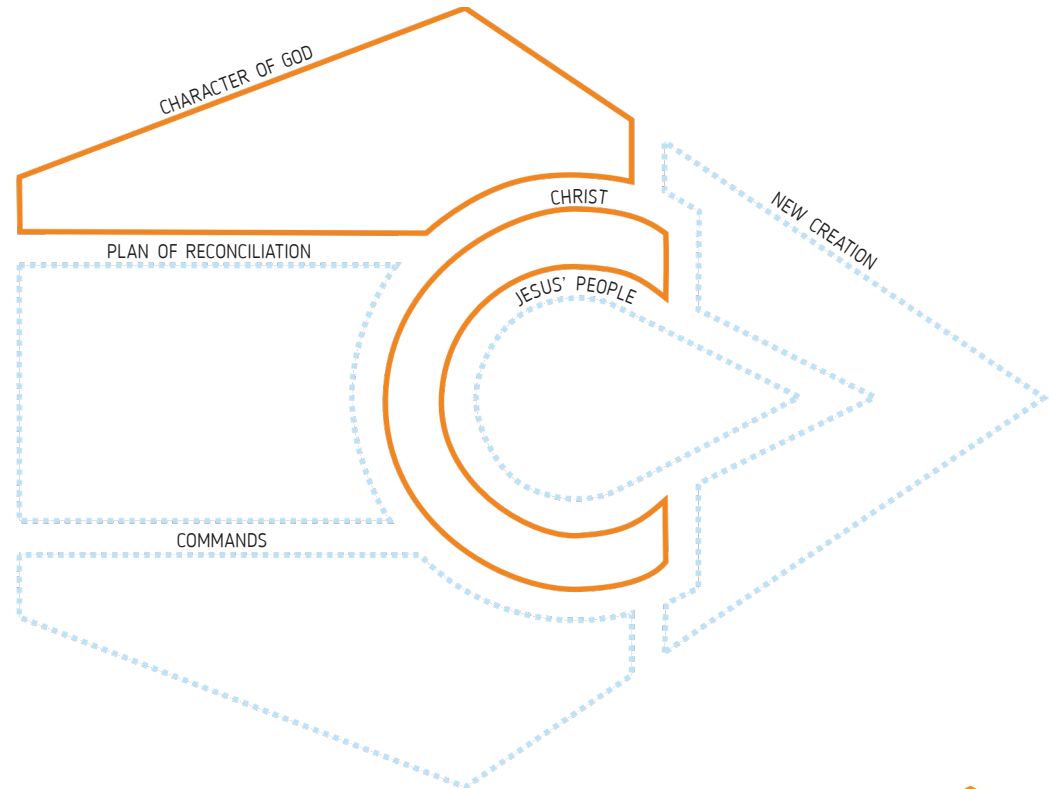
i The Big Bible Table from *A New Freedom* (p. 241) will help you to remember this story as well as locate where Bible texts fit within it.

F6.3

X6.1



WATCH
The Theory part 3



F4.5



Genesis 1:1–2:3

- ▶ In what ways do you observe God as a worker?
- ▶ What does he achieve through his work?
- ▶ What do you observe about God's character from the way he works in these verses?
- ▶ What purposes does God give to human work?
- ▶ In what ways do they relate to the way God works and his character?



John 6:29 and Matthew 11:28–30 (Philippians 2; Colossians 1)

- ▶ In what ways do you observe Jesus finishing God's work of reconciliation (Study 3)?
- ▶ How does Jesus describe the work of God?
- ▶ What might that look like in someone's life?
- ▶ To what extent does this fulfil the purposes you observed in Genesis?
- ▶ In what sense does Jesus offer a solution to the human experience of frustrated work?



10 mins Discuss practical application for living out a new freedom in response to what we've read in the Bible.

In this practice session, we've worked through three parts of our kite to see some of the freedom Jesus offers, so you can fly as a student. To finish, look back over what you discovered setting up your kite.

What does it mean for you and your work and study?

EXTRA QUESTIONS

- ▶ How would you like Jesus to reshape your desires for work and study?
- ▶ Consider one aspect of your life as a student (e.g. homework, being in class) and plan how you will relate to God/his world/others in that area.
- ▶ How will you navigate the influences of others?
- ▶ How will you do 'the work of God' as a student?

MAKE A PLAN: How will you use your new freedom to be a student?

WANT MORE?

Have a go at starting to fill out more of the kite by investigating other Bible texts like:

- ▶ Genesis 12:1-3
- ▶ 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10
- ▶ Exodus 20:8-11
- ▶ Ecclesiastes 2



You could also read chapter 4 of [A New Freedom](#).





10 mins Discuss practical application for living out a new freedom in response to what we've read in the Bible.

Look back at the different categories from the beginning (step 1, p. 43).

Has setting up your kite revealed any other categories you might consider for using money?

Before you consider some options for how you use the money God has given you, ask God to give you wisdom in prioritising how to use what you have.

MAKE A PLAN: How will you use your new freedom to be a student?

Discipline (A habit to help you remember and replicate Jesus' generosity and care)

Giving (Invest in heavenly treasures: church? mission? the needy?)

Spending (What will give thanks to God and replicate Jesus' generosity and care?)

Saving (Plan what you will save for that will store up treasures in heaven)

'Jesus opens up new ways for us to think about how to use our money. We are no longer enslaved to only use it for ourselves or worry about it. We're free to give and care. We're free to spend as Jesus spent for us.'
A New Freedom, p. 109.

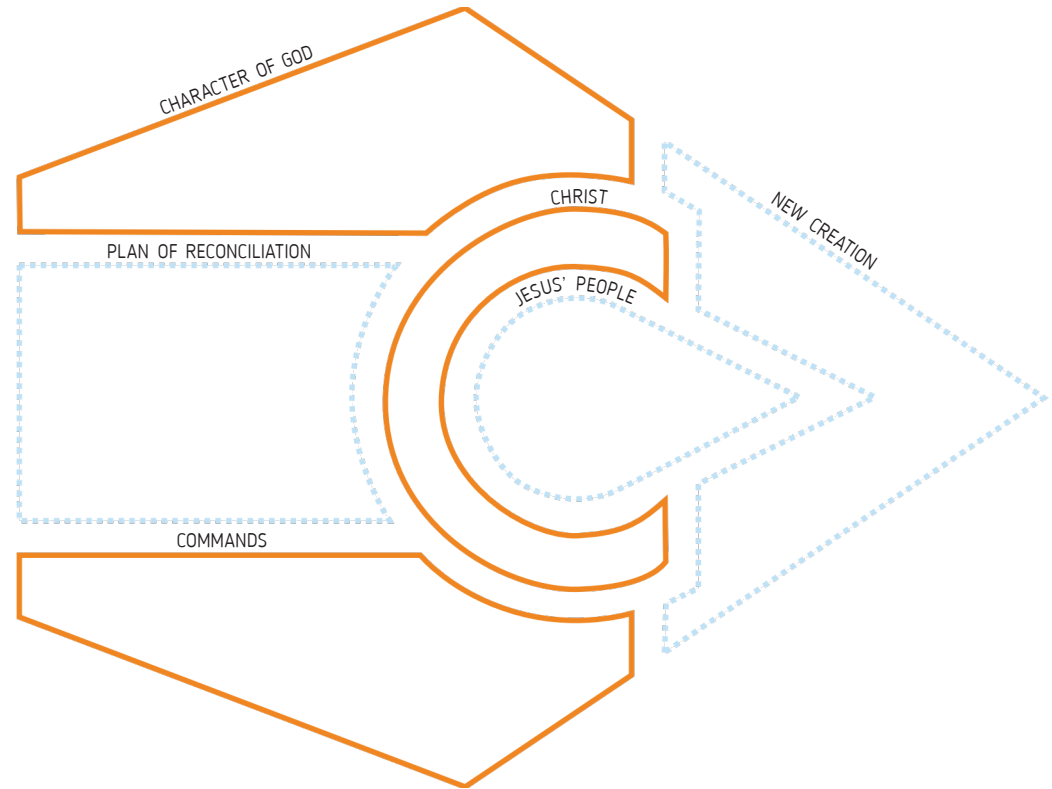
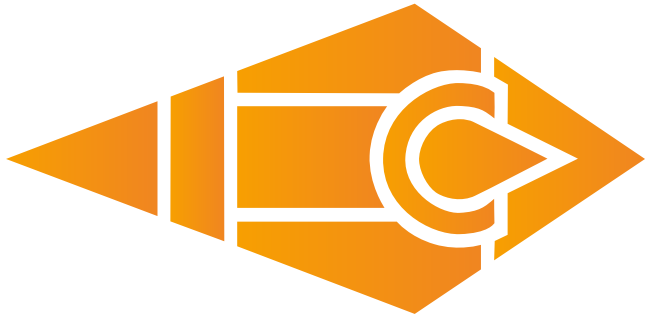
WANT MORE?
Have a go at starting to fill out more of the kite by investigating other Bible texts like:
▶ Isaiah 55:1-7 ▶ Acts 2:44-45
▶ Matthew 6:19-21 ▶ 2 Corinthians 9:6-8
You could also read chapter 5 of [A New Freedom](#).



REMINDER OF THE METHOD

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Remind ourselves of the theory and method.

📢 In Study 4 we began using a few parts of the kite (Study 3) to help us think through what we saw from the Bible about being a student. But before we think about money ...



🗣️ Can you name each part of the kite?

F5.1

How does using the kite as a whole help us take on a topic well?

Let's now explore how Jesus frees us to use money by going through the four steps (Study 4). If you need a refresher on these ...

▶ **WATCH**
[The Theory part 4](#)



How did the parts we looked at in Study 4 work together to free you to be a student?

F5.2

⊕ **Deuteronomy 26:1-13**

- ▶ What do you observe about God and what he has done for the Israelites?
- ▶ What commands does God give them regarding money?
- ▶ Why does he give these commands?
- ▶ In what way do they reflect something about God's character?
- ▶ In what sense do they limit Israel's rejection of God?

⊕ **2 Corinthians 8:9**

- ▶ In what sense was Jesus rich? In what way did he become poor? (You can also refer to Colossians 1:15-20 and Philippians 2:5-8.)
- ▶ In what way does he imitate or rebel against the character of God in his treatment of others?
- ▶ Looking over the context of the verse, what do you think it means by 'you might become rich'?
- ▶ What treasure does Jesus store up?
- ▶ How does Jesus exceed the tithe command in love?

+ **READ**
Deuteronomy 26:1-13

👥 Start filling in the **creation, character of God** and **Commands** parts of the kite with what you observe.

X5.2

📢 God gave many commands to Israel about money, which were intended to protect them from taking and hoarding and to teach them to be generous and care for others. But following the big Bible story, we see that Israel's kings and people continued to reject God's commands.

👥 Look back at what you discovered about our rejection of God in Study 2.

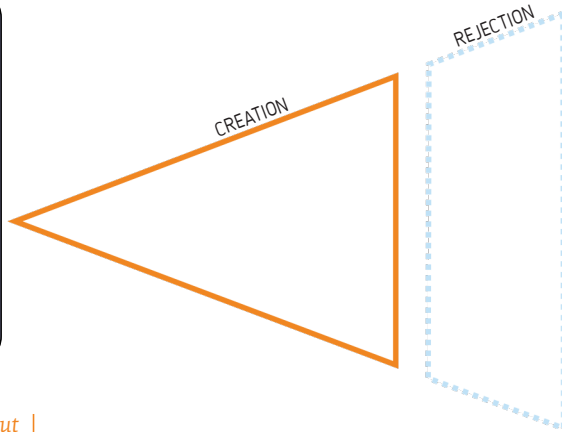
In what ways do you observe this in your desires and influences about money?

To what extent could the commands to Israel about money help with our rejection of God?

Let's investigate how Jesus shows us a new freedom that exceeds the law and gives our use of money lasting purpose ...

+ **READ**
2 Corinthians 8:9
You could also review Bible texts from previous studies.

👥 Fill in the **Christ** part of the kite with what you observe. You can also add to other parts of the kite if you see anything.



📌 How might this offer freedom to use money to Jesus' people?

On the following page are optional questions for group discussion. They are mostly open questions that encourage investigation of the Bible text. There are no predetermined answers.



🕒 5 mins **👥** Define the topic, why we define it that way and why it is an issue.

🗣️ What different things have you spent money on this week?

As a group, organise these things into some categories (e.g. entertainment, education, food, saving, giving, care, etc.).

F5.3

🗣️ How would you describe what money is?

'Money is freedom.'

Place yourself on the scale below.

What does it allow?



Why does money exist?

Why do you say that?

F5.4

2 EXAMINE THE CONDITIONS

🕒 5 mins 🔄 Identify the **desires** and **influences** that might impact our handling of the topic.

💬 Consider the different things and categories that you have spent money on.

How did you decide that these things were worth spending money on?

Who or what influences your decision?



Are there any rules that you follow?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

What might your use of money show about what you want deep down? F5.5



💬 When does money enslave you?

What would it mean for you to be free to use money?

Need something to get you thinking?

📺 **WATCH**
Is money on your mind?



3 SET UP OUR KITE

🕒 20 mins 🔄 Read the Bible and use the parts of our kite to organise the information that is found, forming a foundation for our understanding of how we think about and use money. Practise thinking through the implications of what we discover about commands and the Christ.

📢 We'll now practise using the kite by looking at some of what the Bible says about money. In this study, we'll focus on how to learn from the **commands** we find in the Bible and how **Christ** Jesus completes them. We'll think about how this builds upon what we've already gathered in other parts of the kite from other Bible texts. We won't cover everything, but you'll have a great foundation to build upon as you keep discovering how Jesus frees you to use money.

💬 Look back to your student kite (Study 4).

What have you already seen from **creation**, the **character of God** and the **Christ** that might inform how you use money? F5.6

📖 Remember the big Bible story (Study 3)? During the time in the desert after the Exodus, God established laws for his people, the nation of Israel, to live by. In *A New Freedom*, Mike suggests that two main purposes of these commands were to teach Israel about God and to limit the damage of their rejection of him until the commands found their fulfilment in Jesus. For us to read the commands faithfully, we seek to understand:

1. What they meant for Israel.
2. How Christ Jesus completes them.
3. What it might look like to exceed them in love as Jesus' people.