

Frequently Asked Questions

freedom
in
Christ

Newsletter

www.ficm.org.uk

2004 Issue 1

Why should I forgive someone who hasn't repented? Won't that lead to more abuse?

Forgiveness does not mean staying in an abusive situation and giving the perpetrator more opportunities to inflict damage. The loving thing to do is to confront abuse and help the perpetrators acknowledge and accept their responsibility.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are separate issues. Forgiveness is necessary even when reconciliation may not be possible. In many situations, emotional healing from bitterness, hatred and anger is necessary, but reconciliation is impossible or inadvisable. A person who was abused by a now deceased parent, for instance, will never find healing by waiting for the offender to repent. That person can't, and many other people won't. The deceased abuser has already met his or her Maker and Judge, and hanging on to bitterness and hatred won't help you or impact that person. Also, a person who was ritually abused needs to find emotional healing but should never be reconciled with the perpetrators. Simply put, forgiving is releasing a debt. It is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin

and relinquishing the right to seek revenge which God assures us is His domain (see Romans 12:17-21).

Some believers, however, have used Luke 17:3,4 to teach that we should not forgive unless repentance occurs: "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him." This passage focuses on forgiveness in the context of reconciling a relationship in which we are called to rebuke sin and help bring others to repentance. It doesn't specifically say that we shouldn't forgive if they don't repent (even though this may be implied). Furthermore, we are not called to play the role of the Holy Spirit, rebuking every sin in every person we meet. Honesty about sin is necessary for genuine reconciliation, and there is a time to refuse a cheap reconciliation without repentance. But note that Christ's main point here is not about withholding forgiveness but extending it, even repeatedly, to someone who is struggling in the relationship. We are to be grace-givers, not repentance-demanders.

As we take people through the Steps to Freedom, we find that people who wait for another's repentance are locked in bitterness toward literally dozens of people. Many are

still bitter about an old boyfriend who jilted them or a boss who passed them over for a promotion. We see little gained by hanging on to bitterness and somehow trying to exact repentance and force reconciliation. Our freedom cannot be dependent upon whether another person will repent.

In the Steps, we deal primarily with the volitional and emotional side of forgiveness as it relates directly to our relationship with God. Jesus says, "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions" (Mark 11:25). Here, forgiveness is not portrayed as some long, drawn-out reconciliation process. It can be done while you stand in prayer. Nor is forgiveness shown to be conditional, extended only to some people for some transgressions. Instead, forgiveness is pictured as part of our normal prayer life, it is extended to anyone for anything, and it may not be a prelude to reconciliation. Furthermore, forgiveness on a human level is necessary if we are to experience forgiveness from God (see Matthew 6:12,14,15). Forgiveness is also a crucial element in resolving anger and bitterness (see Ephesians 4:27,32). Only when we are free from bitterness can we pursue reconciliation from a biblical perspective.



As I travel around the country I have the privilege of seeing many different churches and meeting their leaders. I see the most amazing demonstrations of the love of Jesus in local communities. I encounter wonderful times of worship and sacrificial intercession. I see leaders from different streams coming together all over the country in an unforced way to seek God's face. I hear amazing testimonies of God's love and see wonderfully changed lives.

Yet, there is one area where leaders express great frustration. It's the whole area of making disciples. The big question is how can a convert become a disciple?

It's nothing new. Just listen to the frustration of these two eminent church leaders talking to their own congregations:

"I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready." (1 Corinthians 3:2)
"Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!" (Hebrews 5:12)

Their people had become Christians and begun to grow and mature. Now, however, they had stopped growing and were going round and round in circles falling far short of their potential. We too are seeing people come in to our churches through excellent initiatives such as Alpha but we are not seeing enough of those people move on to maturity.

Leaders have done all they know to do - excellent preaching, solid teaching, wise counsel - yet still they see the same people coming back with the same issues week after week. The irony is that the people themselves know full well that they are not operating at full potential and really want to move on. But they simply do not know how to resolve the things that hold them back: spiritual conflicts; wrong ways of thinking; past trauma; getting caught in sin-confess-sin-confess cycles.

Sometimes our churches seem more like hospitals, with people coming back week after week for ministry for the same old issues. Yet the New Testament portrays us as military outposts set up to storm the gates of hell. It's difficult to envisage that the Lord will send revival until we start acting like soldiers.

As I write, The Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course is at the printers. I'm excited, not only because this is the culmination of more than 3 years of work, but because I know that it can make a contribution towards solving this crucial problem. Why? Because it puts into the hands of church leaders an effective way to help people resolve personal and spiritual conflicts and dump the "rubbish" that prevents them connecting with truth. So that every Christian, no matter what their past, can move on to maturity.

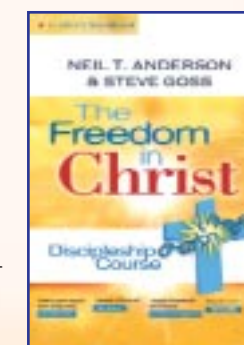
My prayer is that the Lord will use it to prepare His Bride so that when revival comes, the Church will know what to do with those converts who are eager to become fruitful disciples.

Steve

Steve Goss, Executive Director

New Discipleship Course

Well, the Lord did it! The new Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course has been over three years in the making but it's finally ready. Steve Goss says, "This course is going to make the FIC approach more accessible than ever before to UK churches - I can't tell you how excited we are about it!" The course consists of a leader's guide, participant's workbooks and an optional DVD with video presentations of the 13 talks presented by Steve. These were filmed at Bournemouth Family Church in May in front of an audience of around a hundred people. A number of testimonies have come in following the filming, including one from someone who wasn't even there! He relates how his wife found her freedom during the teaching and says, "Thanks to you and the Lord I have got my wife back!" The course will be available from August 2004 but may be ordered in advance from FIC.



Neil Anderson To Visit UK Twice

We are delighted that Neil Anderson will be making two visits to the UK in the next year. On July 23 & 24 2004 he will be in London to introduce us to a new course, Discipleship Counselling, which is for those who want a deeper grasp of the FIC approach. In 2005 he will be running the same event in Shrewsbury (7 & 8 March) and a Living Free conference in Belfast (3-5 March).

Freedom Fellowship Changes

The Freedom Fellowship is our way of keeping in touch with those who are using the FIC approach. Recently we changed the way we support members. All of the information - hints and tips, standard documents and so on - are now available in a special section of our website. Members have been sent a user ID and password to give them access to the site. There is also an on-line forum where members can post messages and have discussions on FIC related matters. Those who do not have access to the internet continue to be sent hard copy information.

More Information Online

Further info is available online at www.ficm.org.uk where you see this icon.



Setting Your Marriage Free

8-10 October 2004
Derbyshire

Experience a new freedom, intimacy and oneness with your spouse

An opportunity to fine-tune your marriage and find the freedom to enjoy your oneness in Christ more than ever before. Compassionate instruction and direction will help you learn how to put Christ right at the centre of your relationship. You will be given the opportunity to renew your marriage vows and go through the *Steps To Setting Your Marriage Free*, a process that will help you deal with footholds of the enemy that have been holding your marriage back. There will be time and space for each couple to work privately on their marriage, prompted by the leading of the Holy Spirit. It's a life-changing experience - not to be missed!

Topics covered include:

- Establishing God's priority for marriage
- Balancing rights and responsibilities
- Releasing old hurts
- Breaking cycles of abuse
- Breaking sexual bondage
- Unmasking Satan's deception

This conference is especially for:

- Couples who are committed to making a good marriage even better
- Couples who repeatedly struggle with the same troublesome issues
- Engaged and newly married couples
- Couples who want to learn how to encourage other married couples

Please note: This is a follow up for couples who have already experienced the Steps to Freedom individually and wish to go on to establish freedom in their marriage.



Costs and other information

Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick
8-10 October 2004

Cost per couple (including meals) for two nights
Twin Standard Room : £250
Twin Ensuite Room : £275
Engaged Couples (2 singles): £310

Timings

The conference begins on Friday evening with a meal at 6pm and the first session at 7:30pm. It ends after lunch on Sunday (around 2pm).

Booking

Limited availability - book early! To book, see www.ficm.org.uk (the Catalogue section), call 08700 11 41 77 or send a cheque to the office.

Comments from people who have attended previous retreats:

...A breakthrough for our marriage. We have been married as singles for 23 years. Today we have Christ in our marriage and great hope for the future...

...The conference is excellent. It addresses issues that destroy our marriages and then challenges us to deal honestly with each one...

...We had tried all kinds of counselling but this process dealt directly with the source of our conflict and brought a life-changing transformation...

...Yes, it was difficult. Through honest and vulnerable discussion, the Lord led us through problems, anguish, hurts, fears, all the way to forgiveness, resolution, love and commitment...

...This broke the strongholds in our marriage and allowed us to continue...

...This was my last resort. But this real, honest, heartfelt, truthful, godly way softened my heart, gave me back my hope, and a desire to truly love my husband...

Supporting Church Leaders

We're often contacted by church leaders asking how we can help them get started - which we love because that's what we're here for! Here's a quick guide to some of the ways we can help...

This Is For Every Christian

The message of freedom is for every Christian. There's no better way to emphasise this in a church than by leaders having their own personal steps to freedom appointments ahead of everyone else - it's also a great way to learn. We are pleased to arrange those appointments for leaders who want to get started by referring them to members of our team and our partner churches. Having said that, we don't envisage that leaders are the ones to take everyone else through the Steps - rather, they are likely to be the ones who will build a team of non-experts to carry the process through.

We Just Want To Give It Away

Our role is simply to give away the life-changing message of freedom that the Lord has entrusted to us. We hold various events around the country to equip leaders: Church Leaders Briefings introduce the Freedom In Christ approach, usually with leaders on-hand to share their own experiences. Living Free In Christ conferences cover the basic teaching that leaders can take back to their own settings. Helping Others Find Freedom In Christ workshops explain the principles behind the Steps To Freedom In Christ and give practical guidance on getting started in your own setting.



Members Of The Teaching Team And Their Families

Helping Christians Who Are Struggling

We have discovered that no Christian, no matter how badly "messed up" they seem, is beyond finding real and lasting freedom in Christ. But simply praying for them or with them isn't the whole answer - they need to be taught how to resolve personal and spiritual conflicts and take hold for themselves of what Jesus has done for them. Many leaders have found the advice of our "Deeply Wounded" team invaluable and have been amazed to discover that those whom



The "Deeply Wounded" Ministry Team

they may have thought beyond help have not only been able to resolve their issues but have also become fruitful disciples. The team is happy to support leaders by phone or e-mail and run workshops for ministry teams.

Everything You Need To Get Started

There are now hundreds of churches in the UK using the Freedom In Christ approach, from the largest to the smallest across all denominations and streams. This is set to increase significantly with the launch of The Freedom In Christ Discipleship Course, a straightforward way of introducing the approach into a church. We are always willing to advise leaders on any aspect of implementing the approach. Our website is a good place to start: there is a comprehensive section for leaders which we continually update with the latest information and hints and tips.



A Recent Event At Winchester Family Church

Join The Freedom Fellowship

We run the Freedom Fellowship for everyone who is using the FIC approach. Members receive a binder full of essential information and documents, access to a comprehensive website and regular updates. Membership is £20 a year.

Young People Need Freedom Too

Young people are hugely receptive to our message of freedom. With many being exposed to spiritually dangerous activities at younger and younger ages, some need a lot of "unravelling". All of our materials are available in youth versions and our Youth team can run events for young people in your area - better still, they can equip your youth leaders to do that.

Finding Corporate Freedom

Many churches labour under the bondage of past sin (division, sexual immorality and so on) unaware of the schemes the enemy uses against them. Church leaders do not have to put up with this but can change the spiritual climate in their churches. Setting Your Church Free is a weekend retreat that we can facilitate during which leaders ask the Holy Spirit to show them what the issues are and then take steps to deal with them. Many have reported that their churches seem like totally different places. Read more in Neil Anderson's book, Setting Your Church Free.

Freedom In Marriage

Setting Your Marriage Free is a process in which couples can deal with the enemy's footholds and take steps to change unhelpful patterns of behaviour in their marriage. We run regular courses but can also help you run an event in your own church.

FIC Around The World

The recent FIC International Staff conference in North Carolina was an opportunity for the various offices around the world to compare notes.

Countries represented included: USA, Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, West Africa, Switzerland and, of course, the UK. There are significant moves to open other offices.

Steve Goss is pictured with Christine Norman, FIC's representative in West Africa. Her father, William R. Tolbert, was President of Liberia until his assassination in 1980. Christine was present when he and 16 members of his cabinet were machine-gunned by a group of drunken soldiers. She and her family were put under house arrest but eventually fled the country to Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Having forgiven her father's murderers and found her own freedom in Christ, she arranged for Joe Wasmond, now President of Freedom In Christ Ministries, to lead over 100 Liberian politicians and other dignitaries through a process of repentance and reconciliation. She is now working to establish Freedom In Christ in four West African countries.



Partner Church Focus

A number of churches around the country are helping us equip others by being centres of excellence. City Church is a very active, community minded, charismatic church in an area of Belfast known appropriately as the Holylands. It is committed to equipping other churches in Northern Ireland. According to Pastor Mark Houston (pictured with Heather McFarlane who runs the freedom ministry), "We have found the FIC approach revolutionary - it's thoroughly biblical and highly effective. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to share it with my colleagues in Northern Ireland." Recently the City Church team travelled to the Coleraine area to talk to leaders about establishing freedom ministries. They are currently working with Newtownbreda Baptist Church in South Belfast to prepare for a visit by Neil Anderson in March 2005.

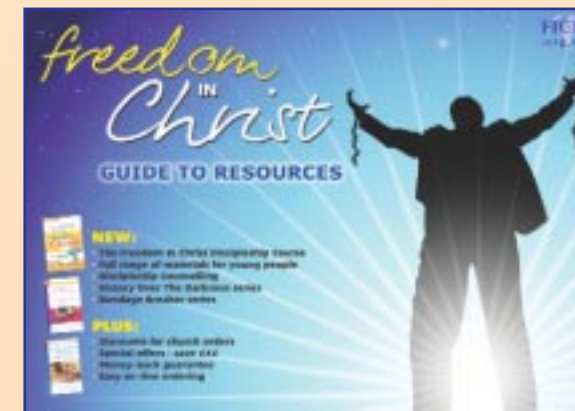


In their own church life, they run regular discipleship courses based on FIC principles. Being practically next door to the university, some of these courses are especially for students. Comments from participants include, "I've found the course challenging. It's opened my eyes to reality" and "We are children of God - this knowledge impacts our view of self and others. God is so good!"



Steve Goss is pictured running an event at City Church. He says, "City Church is a key partner. We prayed for some time for a really good opening in Northern Ireland and it's fantastic to have found a church so committed to helping others get started."

New Resources Catalogue



As well as the new FIC Discipleship Course, our new catalogue features other significant new titles. Here's a quick guide:

There are two important new series of books that are short and easy to read. In the *Victory Over Darkness* series there are three new books on the theme of "overcoming". Highly readable, they address the topics of negative self-image, addictive behaviour and doubt. A similar set of books in the *Bondage Breaker* series offers help on praying by the power of the Spirit, finding God's will in spiritually deceptive times and finding freedom in a sex-obsessed world.

Breaking the Bonds of Legalism is superb for anyone who comes from a strict or "doing" background. *The Biblical Guide to Alternative Medicine* offers a biblically based, medically authoritative lens through which to consider alternative therapies.

For those using the FIC approach, *Discipleship Counselling* is a must-read. It replaces *Helping Others Find Freedom In Christ* and gives a clear understanding of how to help others and use the approach. A brilliant handbook.

For many teenagers fear of rejection or failure is a big issue. *Stomping Out Fear* offers clear biblical truth to overcome those fears.

Keep an eye on our on-line resource catalogue for future additions.

Forthcoming Event Dates

Church Leaders Briefing, 10am to 12.30pm

SOUTH EAST Thurrock 8 Sep 04
E. MIDLANDS Barrow-on-Soar 9 Sep 04
S. WEST Redruth 10 Sep 04
SOUTH EAST Reading 14 Sep 04
S. WALES Cardiff 16 Sep 04
MIDLANDS Shrewsbury 25 Jan 05
N. IRELAND Belfast 14 Jan 05 (tbc)

Living Free In Christ & Helping Others Find Freedom In Christ

SOUTH EAST Thurrock 30 Sep - 2 Oct 04
S. WALES Cardiff 7-9 Oct 04
SOUTH WEST Redruth 14-16 Oct 04
E. MIDLANDS Barrow-on-Soar 4-6 Nov 04
SCOTLAND Ayr 27-29 Jan 05
N. IRELAND Belfast 3-5 Mar 05

Setting Your Marriage Free (residential)

MIDLANDS Swanwick 8-10 Oct 04

For further details of any event or to book, see www.ficm.org.uk or call 08700 11 41 77.

Helping Others Find Freedom In Christ (only)

SOUTH EAST Reading 20 Nov 04

