

I Refuse to Stay Bound

Weekly Questions and Suggested Answer Key

Companion to the 12 Week Church and Small Group Study

How to use this key

These are suggested teaching answers, not a rigid grading rubric. Accept thoughtful answers grounded in the assigned Scripture, the book's teaching, and responsible personal application. Some questions are intentionally reflective and have no single correct response.

Instructor reminder

Keep the emphasis on the participant's own response and next steps. Do not require disclosure of painful experiences. Forgiveness does not mean denying harm, restoring trust immediately, or remaining in an unsafe situation. Apply Scripture in context and follow relevant safeguarding or reporting responsibilities.

Week 1: The Decision to Walk in Freedom

Scripture references: Psalm 139:23–24; John 8:31–32

Suggested responses

1. What does walking in spiritual freedom mean to you?

A strong response describes freedom as living increasingly in the truth and teaching of Jesus Christ, with a willingness to examine one's heart, make responsible choices, and grow. Freedom does not mean pretending pain never happened or claiming every struggle has disappeared.

2. How can you acknowledge that harm occurred while still inviting God to shape your response?

Acknowledge the event honestly, name its impact without exaggeration or denial, and distinguish another person's actions from one's own response. Prayer, Scripture, wise support, and appropriate boundaries can help a person respond without allowing the wound to govern every decision.

3. What is one area where you want truth to guide your next step?

Answers will vary. Look for a specific, realistic step such as pausing before reacting, seeking wise counsel, setting a boundary, telling the truth appropriately, or praying before making a decision.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Establish that the study is about honest personal application, not blaming participants for harm or pressuring anyone to tell a private story.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

Week 2: Recognizing Offense

Scripture references: Proverbs 18:19; Hebrews 12:14–15

Suggested responses

1. What is the difference between wise confidentiality and silence that protects wrongdoing?

Wise confidentiality respects privacy while allowing appropriate help, reporting, and accountability. Harmful silence prevents truth from being addressed, protects misconduct, or pressures people to remain quiet when help is needed. Confidentiality should not be used to conceal abuse or serious wrongdoing.

2. How can resentment affect a person's choices over time?

It may shape attention, interpretation, speech, relationships, and reactions to new situations. A thoughtful answer recognizes these risks without suggesting that every painful emotion is sinful or that healing is instant.

3. What response can help you address hurt without allowing it to govern your life?

Possible responses include honest prayer, reflecting before reacting, seeking trustworthy counsel, communicating clearly when safe, establishing boundaries, and using appropriate channels for accountability.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Distinguish responsible truth telling from gossip. Do not treat every disclosure as a lack of forgiveness.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

Week 3: Examining the Heart

Scripture references: Psalm 51:10; James 1:19–20

Suggested responses

1. Why can forgiveness feel difficult even when someone sincerely wants to obey God?

Hurt, grief, fear, repeated harm, and broken trust can make forgiveness a process rather than an immediate feeling. Willingness to obey God can coexist with pain and the need for support.

2. How is releasing personal vengeance different from saying that wrongdoing does not matter?

Releasing vengeance means refusing to make personal retaliation the goal. It does not deny the harm, cancel consequences, remove the need for truth, or prohibit safe and lawful accountability.

3. What attitude or response might you need to bring honestly before Jesus?

Answers are personal. Accept responses that name a specific reaction or habit, such as resentment, impulsive speech, fear, avoidance, or a desire to retaliate, while avoiding self-condemnation.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Make space for grief. Do not frame forgiveness as denying harm, instantly feeling peace, or removing consequences.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

Week 4: The Weight of Bitterness

Scripture references: Ephesians 4:31–32; Hebrews 12:15

Suggested responses

1. What does meaningful repentance look like beyond words?

It includes honest acknowledgment, taking responsibility without excuses, making amends where appropriate, accepting consequences, and demonstrating changed conduct over time. Repentance is more than using spiritual language or asking for quick restoration.

2. How can someone take responsibility for their own conduct without accepting blame for another person's wrongdoing?

A person can own their words, decisions, or reactions while recognizing that another person remains responsible for the harm they chose to do. Accountability must not shift blame onto the person who was harmed.

3. What can help interrupt a harmful pattern before it is passed to someone else?

Awareness of triggers, prayer, Scripture, learning healthier responses, honest apologies, boundaries, trusted support, and practicing a different behavior consistently can help interrupt a pattern.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Keep responsibility precise. Being hurt is not proof that someone caused or deserved the harm.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

Week 5: Choosing Forgiveness

Scripture references: Matthew 6:14–15; Colossians 3:12–13

Suggested responses

1. How would you explain the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?

Forgiveness concerns how a person responds to wrongdoing before God and releases personal vengeance. Reconciliation is the rebuilding of a relationship and requires mutual participation, truth, willingness, and often demonstrated change. One can pursue forgiveness without restoring a relationship.

2. Why might a boundary be necessary even when a person is pursuing forgiveness?

A boundary may protect safety, dignity, emotional well-being, or responsibilities. Forgiveness does not require unrestricted access, immediate trust, or continued exposure to harmful conduct.

3. What is one next step you can take without pretending trust has already been restored?

Answers may include praying honestly, declining an unsafe interaction, seeking counsel, communicating a clear limit, or allowing time and observable conduct to inform future decisions.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Never pressure participants to contact, reconcile with, or return to an unsafe person.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY

Week 6: Forgiveness, Repentance, and Accountability

Scripture references: Luke 17:3–4; 2 Corinthians 7:9–11

Suggested responses

1. What can make an apology credible over time?

Specific acknowledgment of the harm, no excuses, willingness to listen, appropriate repair, respect for boundaries, acceptance of consequences, and consistent changed behavior.

2. How can spiritual language be misused to control people or avoid accountability?

It can be used to demand unquestioning loyalty, silence questions, portray boundaries as rebellion, or claim that forgiveness means no consequences. Healthy spiritual leadership welcomes truth, humility, appropriate accountability, and responsible interpretation of Scripture.

3. Where might you need to take responsibility for your own actions?

Answers vary. Look for honest ownership of a person's own choices without accepting responsibility for another person's wrongdoing. A helpful response identifies a concrete action to change.

Facilitator note

Leader note: An apology is not proof that trust is restored. Where abuse or serious misconduct is involved, encourage appropriate safeguarding and outside support.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY

Week 7: Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Scripture references: Romans 12:18; Matthew 5:23–24

Suggested responses

1. Why does reconciliation require participation from more than one person?

A relationship cannot be repaired by one person's effort alone. Reconciliation requires willingness from both sides, honesty, accountability, and conduct that supports safety and trust.

2. What can help trust grow through consistent character and wise discernment?

Reliability over time, truthful communication, respect for boundaries, accountability, changed conduct, and a willingness to address concerns without retaliation.

3. Which part of a difficult relationship is within your responsibility, and which part is not yours to control?

A person can control their own words, decisions, boundaries, and requests for help. They cannot control another person's honesty, repentance, choices, or willingness to rebuild a relationship.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Do not promise that all relationships can or should be restored to their previous state.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY

Week 8: Trust, Wisdom, and Boundaries

Scripture references: Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 22:3

Suggested responses

1. What is the difference between a wise boundary and an attempt to punish someone?

A wise boundary explains what a person needs or will do to protect safety, responsibilities, and well-being. Punishment aims to make another person suffer or control them. The same outward limit can have different purposes, so discuss intent and practical effect carefully.

2. How can painful memories be acknowledged without allowing them to define every present decision?

A person can name the memory and its impact, notice when it is influencing the present, seek support, and evaluate current situations on their actual evidence while still respecting legitimate warning signs.

3. What support or boundary could help protect your peace and well-being?

Answers vary and may include limiting contact, seeking pastoral or professional support, setting communication expectations, asking for help, or creating a plan for difficult situations.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Do not equate trust with blind access. Encourage safe and appropriate support when needed.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY

Week 9: Responding Without Retaliation

Scripture references: Romans 12:17–21; 1 Peter 3:9

Suggested responses

1. What is within your control when another person refuses to change?

Your own conduct, boundaries, choices, communication, requests for support, and whether to use appropriate accountability channels. Another person's response is not under your control.

2. What painful conclusions can betrayal cause people to believe about themselves?

People may wrongly conclude they are unworthy, unlovable, foolish for trusting, abandoned by God, or destined to be hurt again. The instructor should guide the group to test such conclusions against Scripture and sound evidence rather than dismissing feelings.

3. How can you respond firmly and truthfully without seeking revenge?

State facts carefully, use appropriate channels, maintain boundaries, seek counsel, avoid threats or humiliation, and pursue safety and accountability rather than retaliation.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Releasing revenge does not mean abandoning protective action, lawful options, or justice.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY

Week 10: Walking in Truth and Spiritual Freedom

Scripture references: John 8:31–36; Galatians 5:1

Suggested responses

1. How can forgiveness and justice work alongside one another?

Forgiveness can release personal vengeance while justice seeks truth, protection, responsibility, and appropriate consequences. They need not be treated as opposites.

2. How might unresolved hurt influence communication and relationships?

It may lead to defensiveness, withdrawal, suspicion, overreaction, or difficulty trusting. These are possible responses, not inevitable outcomes, and can be addressed through honest reflection and support.

3. Which truth from Scripture can guide your response when emotions become strong?

Responses vary. Look for a relevant principle from the assigned passages and a practical explanation of how it could shape a choice, word, or boundary.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Read passages in context. Never use Scripture to silence grief or excuse wrongdoing.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY

Week 11: Living Out What You Have Learned

Scripture references: Ephesians 4:15; James 1:22–25

Suggested responses

1. How can you distinguish conviction that leads to growth from shame that attacks your worth?

Conviction identifies a behavior or attitude that can be addressed and invites repentance and growth. Shame often attacks a person's entire worth and leaves them feeling hopeless or condemned. Encourage truth, responsibility, grace, and appropriate support.

2. When might speaking truth be necessary, and how can it be done responsibly?

It may be necessary to protect someone, correct misinformation, address misconduct, seek help, or establish accountability. Responsible speech should be truthful, proportionate, appropriately directed, and attentive to safety and confidentiality.

3. How can you continue healing when others do not understand your choices?

Continue making wise decisions, seek trustworthy support, keep boundaries, remain open to appropriate correction, and avoid making everyone else's approval the measure of growth.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Encourage both courage and humility. Do not require public disclosure or testimony.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY

Week 12: Continuing in Freedom

Scripture references: Philippians 3:13–14; 2 Corinthians 3:17

Suggested responses

1. What truth has challenged or encouraged you most during the study?

Answers will differ. A strong response identifies a clear insight from the book or Scripture and explains why it matters personally.

2. What have you learned about forgiveness, responsibility, boundaries, and spiritual freedom?

Look for the understanding that forgiveness does not erase harm, responsibility remains important, boundaries can be wise, and spiritual growth is a continuing walk with Jesus Christ.

3. What practices will help you continue growing after the group ends?

Examples include regular Scripture reading and prayer, honest self examination, trusted accountability, wise boundaries, continued learning, and seeking appropriate help when needed.

Facilitator note

Leader note: Celebrate meaningful engagement and realistic next steps, not claims of instant perfection or pressure to share a testimony.

Optional follow-up: What would a wise, truthful, and safe next step look like in everyday life?

Using the Answer Key Well

The goal is not to make every participant repeat the instructor's wording. The goal is to help the group engage Scripture, think carefully, and identify responsible next steps. Where a question invites personal reflection, a participant's answer may be different from the examples in this guide and still be thoughtful and appropriate.

If a participant shares a serious safety concern, abuse, threats, or misconduct, respond calmly and follow applicable safeguarding and reporting requirements. Do not promise absolute confidentiality when a safety or legal duty may require action.

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