

#### Big Idea

As people who have been set free by Jesus, we exercise our freedom in a way that respects the differences of others. We resist coercion but share the gospel freely. We choose to work together, prioritising relationships of love and accountability, to make Jesus known so that others might freely respond to him.

#### Scripture Passages

- Genesis 2:15-17 – we were created with freedom and limits given by God
- Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-21 – Jesus has come to proclaim freedom
- Romans 6:15-23 – we were slaves to sin and have been set free, becoming slaves to righteousness instead
- John 8:36; Galatians 5:1 – our freedom in Jesus is true freedom
- 1 Cor 9:19-23 – we exercise our freedom in ways that seek to make Jesus known to all

#### Key points

- Freedom is a gift from God that can be enjoyed and abused
- True freedom is found in Jesus, who sets us free to be all we are created to be
- We choose to submit ourselves to King Jesus' reign
- We resist attempts to impose beliefs upon people, instead inviting them to freely respond to Jesus
- We believe the state exists for the good of humanity and should foster freedom for all people to practice their faith, and we resist attempts by the state to exalt itself into an idol
- As God has given us freedom to live out his mission in our contexts, we give one another freedom to disagree in practice, always seeking to maintain relationships of love
- We freely choose to work together, submitting ourselves to one another and being accountable to one another
- We seek to live and speak the gospel in ways that invite others to freely respond to what God is doing

#### Questions for application

- How does the paradox of freedom (that we have been set free and freely choose to submit) work out in practice in our community?
- Where might we be in danger of abusing our freedom or restricting the freedom of others?
- How do we maintain a posture of love towards those who disagree with us? Who needs to know that we love them even though we disagree?
- Where can we choose to work with others in our broader movement and community for the good of others?
- Where do we see others' freedom being restricted and how can we advocate for and with them?

- How will your daily life this week surprise, raise questions, and invite others to respond freely to Jesus?

## Stories

- Thomas Helwys and his advocacy for religious freedom for all
- Baptists in the public sphere who are not coercive in their beliefs, but advocate for others (e.g. Tim Costello, Converge)
- Baptist World Aid: Catalyst groups advocating against modern slavery; the Ethical Fashion Guide
- Stories in your own community of people who disagree on particular topics but work together in love for the greater purposes of the kingdom

## Further resources

- <http://bwa-baptist-heritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Peck-Helwys-BWA-2012.pdf>
- [https://www.baptcare.org.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/20063/FREEDOMFROM-RELIGION-SocialPolicy.pdf](https://www.baptcare.org.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/20063/FREEDOMFROM-RELIGION-SocialPolicy.pdf)
- <https://www.baptist.org.au/religious-freedom-after-ruddock/>

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