

KINGDOM EVERYWHERE

Discover Your Freedom — High School Discussion Guide

John 8:31-36

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

This guide is for high school students (9th–12th grade). Today's message from Jonathan Evans confronted a hard truth: you can look like the real thing and still be in bondage. Use these questions to push students past the surface — toward honest reflection about what discipleship actually costs and what freedom actually feels like.

John 8:31-36 (CSB)

"If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free... So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free."

OPEN UP | Getting the Conversation Started

Start here to break the ice before going deeper.

1. The sermon opened with Viceroy butterflies — they look exactly like Monarch butterflies but they're not. Where do you see that kind of imitation showing up in real life? On social media? In your school? In church?
2. Be honest: is there a version of yourself you present to the world that's different from who you actually are behind closed doors? What drives that gap?

GO DEEPER | Into the Word

Explore the scripture together.

1. John 8:31 says Jesus spoke to those who 'had believed in him.' So these were already believers. What does it mean that Jesus still had to tell them to 'continue in His Word'? What's the difference between believing and continuing?
2. Verse 34 says 'everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.' The word 'practices' matters. What's the difference between struggling with sin and being enslaved to it?
3. Jesus says the truth will 'set you free.' But freedom from what, exactly? List as many things as you can from the text and the sermon — what does Christ free us from?

4. Luke 14:27 says 'Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.' What does that cost look like for a high schooler in 2026?

GET REAL | Personal Application

This is where it gets honest. Encourage students to be specific.

1. The sermon said spiritual heritage, church attendance, and singing the right songs cannot make you free. Which of those have you personally leaned on as a substitute for actually walking with God?
2. Identify one area of your life where you intellectually believe God's truth but your actions don't reflect it. What would it look like to actually trust God in that area this week?
3. The sermon said Christ removes shame. Is there shame you're carrying that you've never brought to God or to another trusted believer? What's stopping you?

TAKE IT HOME | This Week's Challenge

1. Pick one practice and do it every day this week: read one chapter of John, journal one prayer, or text one friend something God taught you. Which one will you commit to?
2. Who in your life models what it looks like to actually live free in Christ — not just talk about it? What's one thing you can learn from watching them?

Memory Verse — Luke 14:27

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

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Discover Your Freedom — Jr. High Discussion Guide

John 8:31-36

LEADER NOTE

This guide is for 6th–8th graders. Jr. highers are navigating identity at full speed — who am I, who do I belong to, what do people think of me? The Viceroy butterfly illustration and the concept of 'counterfeit freedom' land powerfully at this age. Keep it conversational, normalize honest answers, and celebrate vulnerability.

John 8:31-36 (Nirv)

"If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free... So if the Son sets you free, you will be free for sure."

WARM UP | Let's Talk

1. Have you ever tried to act like someone you're not — maybe at school, on a team, or even at church? What made you do it?
2. If you could be totally free from one thing in your life — a fear, a habit, a pressure — what would it be?

DIG IN | What Did the Bible Say?

Read John 8:31-36 together, then tackle these questions.

1. Jesus says 'if you continue in my word.' What does continuing mean? Is it a one-time thing or an ongoing thing? What's something in your life you have to keep doing to stay good at it?
2. The sermon said some people look like Christians but aren't really following Jesus — like the Viceroy butterfly that looks like a Monarch. What's the difference between looking like a Christian and actually being one?
3. Jesus says everyone who keeps sinning is a 'slave to sin.' Have you ever felt stuck in a habit or behavior and couldn't stop even when you wanted to? What did that feel like?
4. How does Jesus free us? What does He actually do — what does the sermon say He removes and replaces?

MAKE IT PERSONAL | Your Turn

1. Where in your life do you try to look like you have it together — but on the inside you feel stuck or fake?
2. The sermon said you can believe God loves you and still not live like it. Is there something you say you believe but don't actually trust God with yet?
3. What's one thing — a habit, an app, a friendship — that pulls you away from Jesus instead of closer? What would it take to change that?

THIS WEEK | One Thing

Choose one action to take before next week:

- A. Read John 8:12-36 on your own and write down one thing that surprises you.
- B. Tell one trusted person one thing you actually struggle with — and let them pray for you.
- C. Replace 20 minutes of scrolling with 20 minutes of talking to God. Just try it once.

Memory Verse — Luke 14:27

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

KINGDOM EVERYWHERE

I AM FREE!

Children's Activity Page — Ages 5 to 11

John 8:36

TODAY'S BIG IDEA

Jesus doesn't just say we're free — He **MAKES** us free! The more we learn about Jesus and talk to Him every day, the more we experience that freedom. You don't have to be stuck. You don't have to be afraid. Jesus unlocks the door!

John 8:36

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

THE BUTTERFLY STORY | Circle the Right Answer

We heard about two butterflies — the Monarch and the Viceroy. The Viceroy **LOOKS** like the Monarch, but it's not the same. Circle the right answer!

The butterfly that **LOOKS** safe but isn't:

☐ Monarch ☐ Viceroy

Only _____ can make us truly free:

☐ My Good Behavior ☐ Jesus (the Son)

UNLOCK THE VERSE | Fill in the Blanks

Use the Word Bank to complete John 8:36:

"So if the _____ sets you _____, you will be _____ **indeed**." — John
8:36

Word Bank: Son • free • free

DRAW IT | What Does Freedom Look Like?

Draw a picture of what it looks like to be FREE because of Jesus — chains breaking, a butterfly flying, a bright light — whatever freedom means to you!

Draw here!

PRAYER TIME | Talk to Jesus Right Now

"Jesus, thank You for making me free. Help me to follow You every day and not just look like I love You — but really love You. Show me how to walk with You. Amen."

Write your own prayer here:
