

Free: Free to Love
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Messages Throughout the Free Series:

- “We live within the limitations of what we can believe.”
- “Your success is not determined by what you have but by what you do with what you have.”
- “God gives you special gifts to excel in your work.”
- “You become free from sin when you give yourself completely to God!”
- “Everything you need has been put in you by God to accomplish His will.”

Shifts in the American View of Christianity:

- Only 15% of young adults claim any strong affiliation with Christianity and/or the Church.
- The U.S. now has more secular, unchurched people than most nations of the world!
- The 3rd largest mission field is now the English-speaking world.
- Only 6% of adults over age 18 find faith in Christ.
- Only 25% of the adult population claims any strong affiliation with a local church.
- Practically every denomination is losing attendance at a record pace, and approximately 200 churches close their doors every week in America!

- The fastest growing religion in America is social justice.

Churches Grow 2 Ways:

1. Transfer Growth
2. Conversion Growth

Transfer Growth Causes Many Challenges:

- Pressure to create services that accommodate past church experiences
- Church doctrines begin to conflict with one another
- Majority of resources given to minister to people within
- Religious attitudes form that come across as condescending to outsiders
- Cultural walls begin to build and keep unchurched people out
- Church becomes known for experience inside instead of work outside!

3 Main Challenges with Unchurched World:

1. Trust Issues
2. Tolerance Issues
3. Truth Issues

How the Church Overcomes These Challenges:

1. A culture of love instead of religion

JOHN 13:35 MSG

“Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will

recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.”

MATTHEW 9:10-13 MSG

Later when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew’s house with his close followers, a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them. When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus’ followers. “What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riffraff?” Jesus, overhearing, shot back, “Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: ‘I’M AFTER MERCY, NOT RELIGION.’ I’M HERE TO INVITE OUTSIDERS, NOT CODDLE INSIDERS.”

2. A culture of grace instead of judgment

1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23 MSG

Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I DIDN’T TAKE ON THEIR WAY OF LIFE. I KEPT MY BEARINGS IN CHRIST—BUT I ENTERED THEIR WORLD AND TRIED TO EXPERIENCE THINGS FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!

3. A culture of others instead of self

4 Levels of Christianity:

1. **Informational:** knowing about Christ
2. **Revelational:** understanding Christ
3. **Incarnational:** Christ in you
4. **Transformational:** CHRIST THROUGH YOU!

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4 NIV

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility VALUE OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELVES, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

MATTHEW 9:36-38 NKJV

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary, and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."