**Questions for homegroups**

**Freedom Week 1 Come out of hiding. Come to the Father.**

1. Is there any area of your life you sense God is speaking to you about, that He wants to shine his light on, bringing you into greater freedom, transformation and truth?
2. Lockdown has given all of us time to face ourselves!! Sometimes the intensity of having other family members around all the time has been a challenge… may have noticed things in ourselves that we have avoided…ignored… what’s been really hard for you? IS there an area you sense God is speaking to you about where he wants to bring you into greater freedom, transformation and truth?
3. Freedom can come gradually, as we renew our minds with the truth of God’s word, and receive God’s love for us from him, and through his people. Or it can some suddenly, when the Holy Spirit brings a breakthrough. Layers of freedom – or sudden freedom – have you experienced either of these…. How did they come about?
4. Adam and Eve hid…. We all wear masks to protect ourselves, just as Adam and Eve made coverings from fig-leaves. Sometimes these may be helpful, but there may come a time when they become unhelpful and prevent our freedom.

Here’s an example of some different masks identified by Arianna Walker in her book ‘Mirror Image’.

**The mask of perfectionism and performance**

*I can’t show any weakness, I must earn love and respect*

Can you think of any biblical characters who were far from perfect?!

**The victim mask**

*Nothing works out for me, it’s everyone else’s fault that I’m not free…*

They believe there is no hope because of what has happened in the past, and who they would be without their problems.

**The mask of a lively personality**

Some people are genuinely lively, but others pretend to be, to hide their pain.

**The mask of passivity**

*I feel safer if I do nothing, and then there is no risk of failure.*

**The mask of ‘I’m too busy’**

*This distracts me from looking at myself, and from guilt I am getting so much done!*

**The make of Independence**

*I only count on myself, then I am in control, and I won’t be let down by anyone else or God.*

**The mask of inadequacy**

*I am too small and inadequate for God to use…*

Can you think of any biblical characters who struggled with this?

**The mask of sarcasm, bitterness, criticism and blame**

*By putting others down I feel better about myself, and can defend my own fragile self-esteem.*

As you read through this list is there any masks that you identify with?

What response can you find in the scripture to some of these lies?

God has a unique plan for our lives, to reach other people with His love. To do this effectively we need to be the people God has called us to be. God wants to heal and transform us so that we don’t need to wear our masks anymore and can be the full expression of who He created us to be!

**Come out of hiding, come to the Father.**

Ask God to show you when you are wearing a mask, so that you notice through the week. Ask him why you are wearing it. You may find it helpful to be honest with another person about where you are at.

Then take small steps out of your comfort zone to not wear the mask, asking your heavenly Father to help you with this process.

1. How can we make our community a safe place to take off our masks?
2. Religion can become an unhelpful mask, and it can lead to bondage, not freedom – Paul wrote a whole book about it – Galatians!! How can this happen – and how can we help each other avoid this trap? Has the lockdown challenged this at all for you?
3. In the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the tomb (John 11:1-44), when he came out of the tomb Jesus asked other people to come and remove his graveclothes. Sometimes we need other people to help us get free, or God uses us to help free others. In what way have people in your life done this for you. How might God use you to come alongside others and help them?

**Lyrics and link to Run to the Father, by Cody Carnes**

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=run+to+the+father&docid=608041466593083853&mid=EABA438807D3879C01EFEABA438807D3879C01EF&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

[Verse 1]
I've carried a burden for too long on my own
I wasn't created to bear it alone
I hear Your invitation to let it all go
I see it now, I'm laying it down
And I know that I need You

[Chorus]
I run to the Father, I fall into grace
I'm done with the hiding, no reason to wait
My heart needs a surgeon, my soul needs a friend
So I'll run to the Father again and again and again and again
Oh-oh, oh-oh, oh-oh

[Verse 2]
You saw my condition, had a plan from the start
Your Son for redemption, the price for my heart
And I don't have a context for that kind of love
I don't understand, I can't comprehend
All I know is I need You

[Chorus]
I run to the Father, I fall into grace
I'm done with the hiding, no reason to wait
My heart needs a surgeon, my soul needs a friend
So I'll run to the Father again and again and again and again
Oh-oh, oh-oh…
Again and again and again and again (Oh-oh, oh-oh)
Oh-oh, oh-oh… (Oh-ohh)

[Bridge]
My heart has been in Your sights
Long before my first breath
Running into Your arms
Is running to life from death
And I feel this rush deep in my chest
Your mercy is calling out
Just as I am You pull me in
And I know I need You now