

During this time of year so many of us are looking for ways to get away from the regular and get refreshed, renewed, and reconnected. Many families have embarked on their annual "road trip" to visit people and places that they rarely get to see, while experiencing the untold hours of drive time, backseat card games, rest stops, and memory making opportunities. Some people dread this type of travel; I enjoy it. Others are hitting the rails or skies departing toward myriads of destinations around the world with friends, family, and fun-filled adventure on their minds. Summer is a romantic time of life experience for many of us with precious memories that we hope to never forget. And for most, while the travel is enriching and exciting, there is a wonderful feeling that awaits us at the end of each vacation; returning back home again to the place where you live, to be back in your own house, to sleep in your own bed.

After spending night after night in hotels, motels, campsites, friend's couches or family member's guest rooms, there is something very refreshing about returning to the place where you abide. Wouldn't you agree?

Now what I am about to share with you here is one of the most powerful statements ever spoken that could potentially transform your life. It is a key to living successfully, purposefully, and abundantly and was communicated by Jesus Himself. It is one of those truths that dig so deep into our core that just about any family or societal crisis could be resolved through the affect of grabbing hold of this message. It is a "key" to latch onto your "spiritual key ring" of truths. Remember, keys unlock locks by which doors can be opened through which you can enter places that you did not have access without that "key". Chances are that in your pocket or purse you have a set of keys right now that give access to your house, car, and a dozen other places. Now here is a key, which if you add it onto your spiritual life experience, will help transform your marriage, your relationship with your children, and your personal future.

Jesus said "If you abide in my Word, you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free". Please know two things in order to understand: that he did not speak this to the multitudes but to the "believers" in Jesus and "believers" in Jesus is not defined by those who uphold the realities of the historical accounts of Jesus but instead by those who want to be disciples. There are many people today who simply acknowledge that what the Bible says is true about Jesus but have not really chosen to be a follower. For those wanting to be His disciple, Jesus gives a "key" to enter: ABIDE IN HIS WORD.

Now please allow me to connect the dots. In our travels, we visit places that are not where we live. We abide in our homes (that is why we call it "home"). When we stay at various hotels, motels, campsites, couches, and guest

rooms, the place might be comfortable, even luxurious, but still somewhat foreign because it is not where we live. The same is true for many struggling Christians today. They visit God's Word on Sundays, and a few other times per week, possibly daily in the mornings and evenings, but they don't "live there". They don't dwell in the Word of God; it isn't part of their regular mindset and thinking, decision-making process, and life application, friendships, career planning, schooling, work and travel. For many, like a hotel, the Word of God is a place to visit not a home to live in. That is why they struggle with things that they know Jesus wanted them free from. He went on to say "If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed". Why are so many people not free, because they don't "abide" in Jesus' Word.

One last thing: As you read this you might want to initially challenge me with the question "What do I need to be set free from?" After all, this is the response of those that heard Jesus say this. Look it up for yourself in John 8. Then they go on to comment to reveal that they had bought into some societal ideas that were completely erroneous about their situation. Their conclusion based on false facts: I am already free; so I do not need what Jesus is offering in the deeper life of "freedom" because I am already free.

They had completely lost their imagination for a power filled life and were not expecting much more that they already had. How about you? Have you settled? Have you given up on your dreams due to disappointments, fear, or past failures? I see a clarion call to everyone to let their best dreams come alive again and the prayer that has become dull be renewed again. For Jesus gives a key here to be "free" to live.

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2007. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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**Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:30 am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

**Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View