Who, What, Where, When, How and Why questions

What are we **freed from** that is so dangerous?

Freedom from wrath (loss of protection and insulation from harm and degradation)
Antidote: Reconciliation and peace

Freedom from fear (expectation of severe punishment in the name of judgment)
Antidote: Perfect, unconditional and unshakeable love that never lets go

Freedom from shame (loss of connection to life and intimacy and all that is inherent in that)
Antidote: Restored joy and boldness and confidence and awareness of personal worth

Freedom of offense (believing that someone owes us for something they did to cause us hurt or loss)
Antidote: Release from belief in the system of debt collecting and hierarchy altogether

Freedom from condemnation (false **assumption** that God **threatens** punishments for offending Him)
Antidote: Truth that God is not a destroyer or manipulator but **relentlessly invites intimacy**

Freedom from lies (cause of despair, depression, hopelessness, meaninglessness, loneliness, confusion)
Antidote: Truth as it is in Jesus – truth about God's disposition, reality, and our real identity

Freedom from sin (the inevitable fruit of distrust, unbelief, shame, fear and false views of reality)
Antidote: Death to the power of sin to define my identity by trust in my true identity in Christ

*There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus, who **don't walk according to the flesh**, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.* (Romans 8:1-2)

What is condemnation? **Where** does it come from?
Condemnation is the **counterfeit** of holy conviction – **conviction** of the truth of **God's love**.

*Therefore, my brothers, you also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you would be joined to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, **the sinful passions which were through the law**, worked in our members to bring forth **fruit to death**. But now we have been **discharged from the law**, having **died to that in which we were held**; so that we **serve in newness of the spirit**, and **not in oldness of the letter**.*
*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? May it never be! However, I wouldn't have known sin, except through the law. For I wouldn't have known coveting, unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." But **sin, finding occasion through the commandment**, produced in me all kinds of coveting. For apart from the law, sin is dead.* (Romans 7:4-8)

Here we are introduced to **two main sources** of motivation – the **flesh** and the **spirit**.
Paul uses these to explain it is so vital to **pay attention to our motives** and why.
He also identifies the problems caused by reliance on the **motivation of fear**.

*Therefore **the law** indeed **is holy**, and the commandment **holy, and righteous, and good**. Did then that which is good become death to me? May it never be!*
*But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by **working death to me through that which is good**; that through the commandment **sin might become exceeding sinful**. For we know that **the law is spiritual**, but **I am fleshly, sold under sin**.* (Romans 7:12-14)

While **many presume** Paul is **undermining** the legitimacy of **the law**, he is actually saying the very **opposite**. The law of God is not our problem, but rather **our thinking** and **feelings** and **beliefs** we rely on to **motivate** us.

*For **I delight in God's law** after the **inward** man, but **I see a different law** in my members, **warring against the law of my mind**, and bringing me into **captivity under the law of sin** which is in my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will deliver me out of the body of this death?*
*I **thank God through Jesus** Christ, our Lord! So then with the mind, I myself serve God's law, but with the flesh, the sin's law. There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are **in Christ Jesus**, who **don't walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit**. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me **free from the law of sin** and of death.*
*For what **the law couldn't** do, in that it was **weak through the flesh**, **God did**, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he **condemned sin** in the flesh; that the ordinance of the **law might be fulfilled in us**, who walk not after the flesh, but **after the Spirit**. For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds on the things** of the flesh, but those who **live according to the Spirit**, the things of the Spirit.* (Romans 7:22 – 8:5)

*The scribes and the Pharisees brought **a woman taken in adultery**. Having set her in the midst, they told him, "Teacher, we found this woman in adultery, in the very act. Now **in our law, Moses** commanded us to stone such. **What then do you say** about her?" They said this testing him, that they might **have something to accuse him** of.*
*But Jesus stooped down, and wrote on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he looked up and said to them, "He who is **without sin** among you, let him throw the first stone at her." Again he stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground.*
*They, when they heard it, **being convicted by their conscience**, **went out** one by one, beginning from the oldest, even to the last. Jesus was **left alone with the woman where she was**, in the middle. Jesus, standing up, **saw her** and said, "Woman, where are **your accusers**? Did no one condemn you?"*
*She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "**Neither do I condemn** you. Go your way.*
*From now on, sin no more." Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "**I am the light** of the world. He who follows me will **not walk in the darkness**, but will **have the light of life**."* (John 8:3-12)

***He is near who justifies me**; who will bring charges against me? Let us stand up together: who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord **Yahweh will help me; who is he who shall condemn me?** Behold, all they shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up.* (Isaiah 50:8-9)

*And by this we know that we are of the truth, and **persuade our hearts before him**, because **if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart**, and knows all things. Beloved, if our **hearts don't condemn** us, we **have boldness toward God**; and whatever we ask, we receive from him, because **we keep his commandments** and do the **things that are pleasing** in his sight.* (1 John 3:19-22)

*Indeed, **God did not send the Son into the world to condemn** the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. **Those who believe in him are not condemned**; but **those who do not believe are condemned already**, because they have **not believed in the name** of the only Son of God. And **this is the judgment**, that **the light has come** into the world, and **people loved darkness** rather than light because their deeds were evil.* (John 3:17-19 NRSV)

Condemnation, shame and **blame** is our **worst enemy – not the law** of God. The law merely **describes what God is like** and therefore **what life looks like reflecting Him**.

When we **imagine that God relies on condemnation** to **motivate us**, we **align with the accuser** both **against ourselves** and others because we **resist the Holy Spirit's method** for our own heartp.

*For it isn't the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but **the doers of the law will be justified** (for when **Gentiles who don't have the law** do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law to themselves, in that they **show the work of the law written in their hearts**, their **conscience testifying** with them, and their thoughts among themselves **accusing or else excusing** them) in the day when **God will judge the secrets** of men, according to my Good News, by Jesus Christ.* (Romans 2:13-16)

Where is my **focus**?
How do I **perceive** what is **pleasing** to God?
If obedience is **more important** than **love** in my **priorities**, I **misjudge God's heart** which **induces feelings of fear and condemnation** in my own heart.

To **live free of condemnation** does not mean ignoring the law, but **looking past it** into the heart of **love**.

*Beloved, let us love one another, for **love is of God**; and **everyone who loves is born of God**, and **knows God**.*
*He who doesn't love doesn't know God, for **God is love**.*
*By this **God's love was revealed in us**, that God has sent his one and only Son into the world that we might **live through him**. In **this is love**, not that we loved God, but that **he loved us**, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if **God loved us in this way**, we also ought to **love one another**.* (1 John 4:7-11)

*We **know** and have **believed the love** which God has for us. **God is love**, and he who **remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him**. In this love has been made perfect among us, that we may **have boldness in the day of judgment**, because **as he is, even so are we** in this world.*
*There is **no fear in love**; but perfect love casts out fear, because **fear has punishment**. He who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, **because he first loved us**.*
*If a man says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who doesn't love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? **This commandment** we have from him, that **he who loves God should also love his brother**.* (1 John 4:16-21)