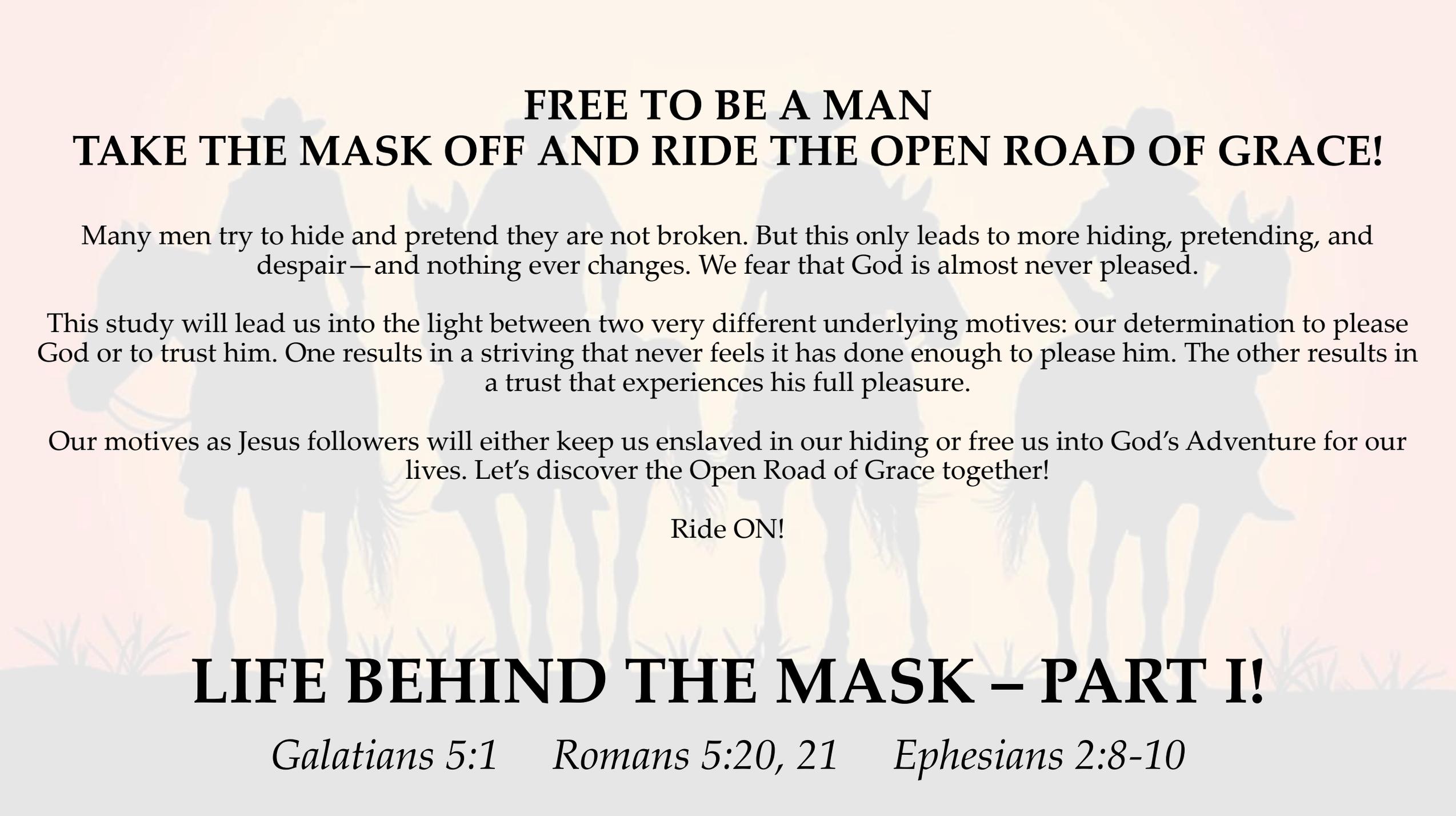




FREE TO BE A MAN



FREE TO BE A MAN TAKE THE MASK OFF AND RIDE THE OPEN ROAD OF GRACE!

Many men try to hide and pretend they are not broken. But this only leads to more hiding, pretending, and despair—and nothing ever changes. We fear that God is almost never pleased.

This study will lead us into the light between two very different underlying motives: our determination to please God or to trust him. One results in a striving that never feels it has done enough to please him. The other results in a trust that experiences his full pleasure.

Our motives as Jesus followers will either keep us enslaved in our hiding or free us into God's Adventure for our lives. Let's discover the Open Road of Grace together!

Ride ON!

LIFE BEHIND THE MASK – PART I!

Galatians 5:1 Romans 5:20, 21 Ephesians 2:8-10

TAKE THE MASK OFF – SEEING OURSELVES BEHIND THE MASK

When we don't access God's remedy to deal with sin, those *ugly destructive effects* join forces inside us and enslave us. Let's look at 6 damaging behaviors we engage in when the inevitable effects join forces inside us.

1. **Shame** = Guilt produces shame when I fail to acknowledge what I have done wrong. Hurt produces shame in the form of feeling demeaned and humiliated.
2. **Blame** = We can blame others because we feel shame or we can feel shame because of blame.
3. **Fear** = Guilt creates a barrier in relationships. Hurt convinces us that others cannot be trusted.
4. **Denial** = Prevents us from facing the truth about ourselves. If we are the offender, it allows us to deny that we've done anything wrong. If we are the offended, it allows us to deny that the sin done to us has affected us.
5. **Anger** = Brings a heroic sense of purpose to our guilt or our hurt. It gives us energy, explosive and unpredictable energy. "Somebody's gonna pay!" It allows us to play the victim or demand justice. It prevents the truth from being known or embraced.

TAKE THE MASK OFF – SEEING OURSELVES BEHIND THE MASK

SIX INEVITABLE EFFECTS:

1. JUDGEMENT → We become highly sensitive to our own sin and judge the sin of others.
2. BLAME & CRITICISM → We lose our objectivity in a crisis and we become the issue.
3. HIDE → We hide our sinful behavior and become vulnerable to more sin.
4. CUT OFF FROM LOVE → We are unable to be loved or to love.
5. LOSS OF DIRECTION → We become susceptible to wrong life choices.
6. CONTROL → We attempt to control others.

TAKE THE MASK OFF – INEVITABLE EFFECTS OF NOT DEALING WITH SIN

1. **JUDGEMENT** → We become highly sensitive to our own sin and judge the sin of others. (Luke 18:9-14). When this inevitable effect plays itself out in our lives, our sensitivity to our own sin the the sins of others causes us to create legalistic and controlling environments. When this is true in families, this damaging pattern can be passed on from generation to generation. (Deut. 5:8-10).
2. **BLAME & CRITICISM** → We lose our objectivity in a crisis and we become the issue. When we put on a mask due to unresolved sin, we lose our objectivity in a crisis. Everything revolves around this subjective, distorted, and idealized picture we now have of ourselves. We react our of that warped self-portrait. We move from an ability to see the problem clearly to becoming the problem. Without the power of grace to deal with sin, we will ruin the spirit and violate the soul of those we claim to love and are responsible to love.
3. **HIDE** → We hide our sinful behavior and become vulnerable to more sin. No matter how deep we try to bury it, unresolved sin doesn't die. It is always alive and well, inflaming more sin. Hiding creates a double whammy: It prevents us from maturing, and it makes us vulnerable to even more sin. The degree to which we wear a mask in our key relationships is the degree to which our character development will be thwarted. Environments without grace retain and multiply unresolved sin issues. (Psalm 51:3). The more influence we have, the more we are tempted to hide our true self for fear we will lose that influence. Hiding drains us. When we hide, we can never rest.

ACTION: Journal This!

1. Would others who know you say you are judgmental? Do you tend to be hard on yourself or others?
2. Do you tend to lose your objectivity in a crisis? Are you more likely to become angry or reactive under stress?
3. In your family, relationships, church, or work, is the penalty for disclosing what is true about you the same as getting caught? If so, how is that thwarting your character development?