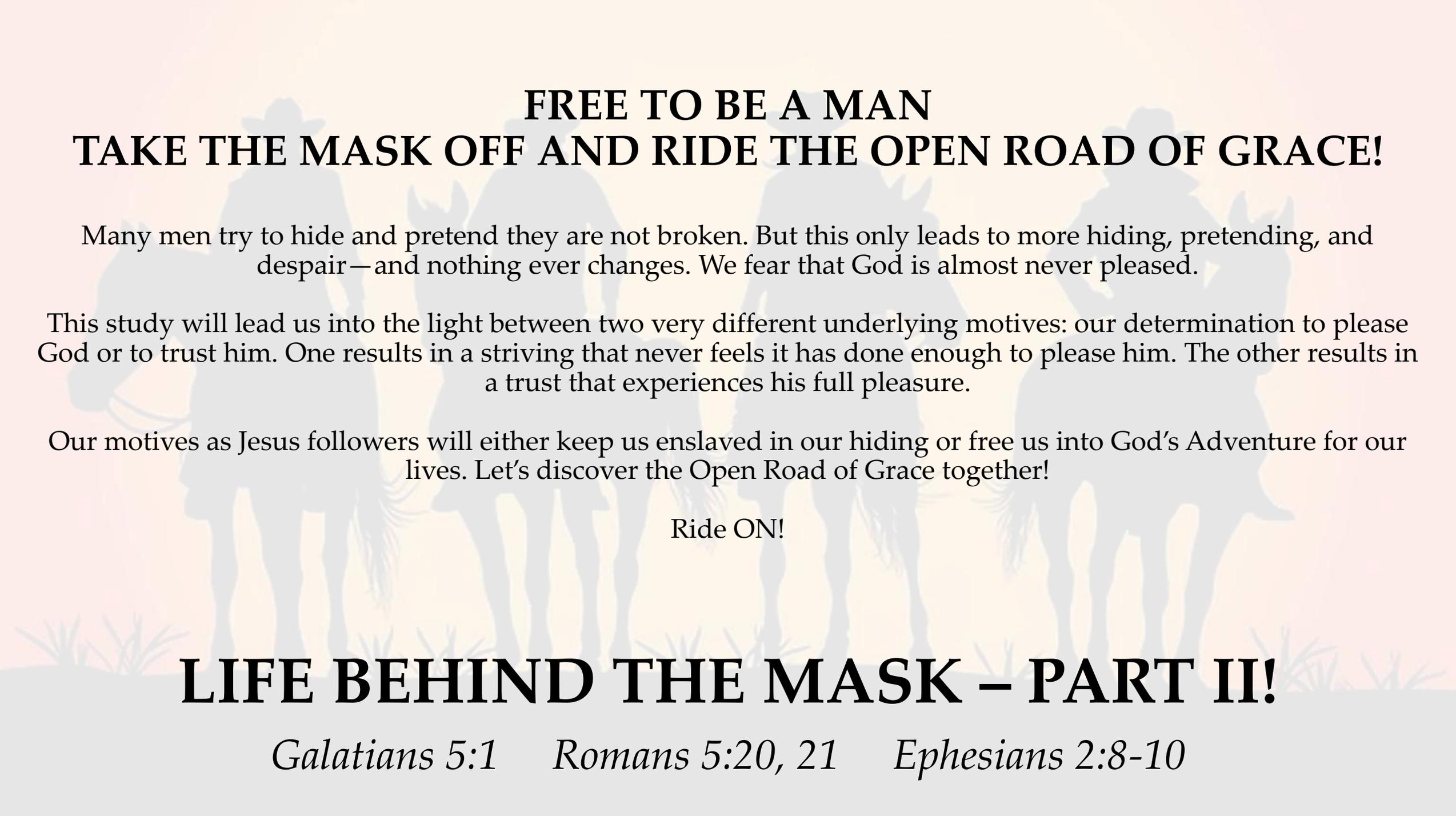




FREE TO BE A MAN



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 II!

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. REMEMBER: Three-Phase Process =

Act of Sin → Involuntary Response → Inevitable Effect.

Our involuntary responses to inevitable effects unreleases pain, inner turmoil, and mask-wearing (Luke 12:1-5).

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 – TOXIC EFFECTS OF NOT DEALING WITH SIN!

4. **UNABLE TO BE LOVED OR LOVE** → Unresolved sin always causes preoccupation with our own lives. We want so badly to be mature and selfless, but our unresolved sin just keeps triggering self-centeredness (I Kings 22:16-18). When we are preoccupied with ourselves, we don't see that our masquerade incites fear in those around us—that we are porcupines to be around. We gesture for people to come close with one hand, and with the other we signal, "Stay away." No wonder others consciously or unconsciously fear being intimate with us or entrusting themselves to us (I Peter 2:21-24; 4:19). *"Unless we allow others to meet our needs, we cannot receive their love."*
5. **BECOME VULNERABLE TO WRONG CHOICES** → Caught in the trap of unresolved sin issues, we often begin to make a string of poor life choices, causing us even more harm (Luke 15:11-32). In our unresolved and unidentified sin, we're now blindly reacting to life, without perspective, guidance, or wisdom. We close down to truth that could stope the raging *inevitable effects*, while we open up to seductive, self-vindicating reasoning.
6. **ATTEMPT TO CONTROL OTHERS** → When we have been hurt or have hurt another, a deep need to be validated grows within us. We must, at all costs, hold onto our "righteousness," and so we strive to control every area in our life. Control validates our "rightness" and soothes our anger. If we give up any form of control to another, we have somehow proven we must not be right and our anger will emerge. Not only must we remain in control of ourselves, but we must also control others in order to ensure that we don't get hurt again. Controllers must be "right!" (Luke 11:37-44).

ACTION: Journal This!

1. Think of a time when you acted in sin or when an act of sin was committed against you.
2. Describe what the sin was (the act of sin) and its initial impact on you (the involuntary responses)—either guilt or hurt.
3. If you haven't resolved the guilt or hurt, describe why. What caused God's healing to get skipped, moving you from the involuntary responses right into the involuntary effects of shame, blame, fear, denial, or anger?
4. What specific life patterns ensnared you as a result?