

Let God Decide What You Can't Do

Discussion Questions:

The paralytic in this passage was stuck on his mat, watching life pass him by, for 38 years. He wanted to get well, but his circumstances prevented it and by this point he had pretty much abandoned his efforts to overcome them.

- *Are there circumstances in your life that hold you back from living life fully (ex: physical limitations, emotional limitations, financial restrictions, responsibilities to work and people, etc.)? If yes, describe them.*
- *Do you continue to resist them? If yes, how so?*
- *Sometimes God calls us to live fully in the midst of adverse circumstances. How have embraced and lived life in the midst of yours?*

Once the paralytic had overcome his restriction and was carrying the mat that he'd spent his life restricted to, the religious authorities told him that he couldn't do that because it was against the rules. In the same way today, our culture can create "rules" that restrict us when God wants to liberate us.

- *In your opinion, is the church a voice that liberates or restricts these days? Is the message of the church, "You can because God is with you" or, "You can't because it's against the rules?" How is our church (NAC) doing with this?*
- *Can you think of any "rules" that well-intentioned followers of Jesus might champion that actually restrict the liberty God is trying to bring in peoples' lives?*

According to the text, Jesus later found the paralytic in the temple and warned, "do not sin anymore so nothing worse happens to you." (John 5:14). This indicates that the former paralytic's sickness was a function of a spiritual problem.

- *Are sickness and sin ever related? Are our sicknesses ever a function of a spiritual problem going on inside our hearts? Yes or no? explain.*