



## Open Your Eyes

### Kelly Shackelford

**Focus** When you lose your religious freedom, then you lose all your freedoms. God is doing something good in the midst of all the chaos in the country. Now is the time for every believer to pray and educate others regarding their freedom.

**Fun** If you could pick, would you go forward in the future or back in time? Where would you go and why?

**Review** Key Scriptures: 2 Kings 2:17–20

#### 1. Religious freedom is important to everyone.

When you lose your religious freedom, then you lose all your freedoms. History shows that once a government takes away religious freedom, all other freedoms, such as free speech, immediately follow. The United States is seeing the same warning signs during this pandemic. There have been many cases where pastors are being threatened by local government for hosting drive-in services. Local authorities are trying to stop people from meeting for prayer or Bible study. The battle against our religious freedom is real.

#### 2. God is on the move.

Religious freedom is a constitutional right and something our founding fathers fought to preserve; however, it is under attack today in the United States. As Christians, we must be bold and stand up for our faith. The story of Elisha encourages us to pray that God would open our eyes to how He is on the move in our nation. Now is the time for every believer to pray and educate others regarding their freedom. God is changing history as it relates to religious freedom.

**\*Group Dynamics Idea\*** Kelly Shackelford said that by texting the word LIBERTY to 474747, you will receive news on how to pray. Consider setting up a monthly small-group prayer meeting in Zoom.

## **Discuss**

1. What does religious freedom and independence mean to you?
2. What would our nation look like if there was no freedom of religion or no freedom of speech? How would this affect our daily lives?
3. What would happen if people like Kelly Shackelford and the Religious Liberties teams didn't fight for our freedoms? What can we do as believers to fight for our freedoms?
4. Have you ever experienced persecution for being a Christian? How did that situation make you feel? And how did you respond?
5. What can we do as believers when our religious freedoms are under attack? How can we support others like Pastor Hamilton who are being persecuted?

**Take Home** As we conclude, remember the following:

- Religious freedom is foundational for a free society.
- God is on the move to give our nation increased religious freedom.
- Christians should boldly stand up for religious freedom.

**Prayer** Heavenly Father, we praise You and thank You for allowing us to live in a country where our Constitution protects our religious freedom. We pray for our leaders and all authoritative figures that they would defend our religious freedom. We pray for righteous judges who are believers to be placed in the right positions. We ask that You give us boldness to stand for You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**\*New Leader Tip\*** There are many types of people who attend small groups, and not everyone will share the same political views, so be sensitive to that. It is okay to discuss what the Bible says and what the Constitution says. If there are people in your group who were raised with different opinions, you can still have healthy conversations without being divisive. Focus on the truth, and do not get sidetracked into other potentially divisive political conversations.