EST'D 2001

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM

STUDENT WORKBOOK

IT ONLY TAKES ONE STEP...

One Step To Freedom is a Christian-based program. The Holy Bible is the true syllabus for these lessons.

The OSTF curriculum examines the Scriptures and illuminates biblical principles designed to help a person gain victory over addiction leading to their restoration and wholeness.

As a person begins to study God's Word, he or she begins to understand their need for a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Once that takes place, restoration soon follows.

These lessons are intended for use in an addiction recovery ministry and can be used one-on-one with individuals or in a group setting.

This curriculum can be acceptable to a court of law for those on probation for a drug or alcohol-related offense.

The One Step To Freedom curriculum is a tool that God uses to bring victory. It only takes one step to Jesus to set you free.

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THE STUDENT

Foreword: Understanding Addiction by Devin Chase
Introduction: Why One Step To Freedom?
What Does The Bible Say About Addictions?

CHAPTER 1 PLANNING FOR VICTORY
Lesson 1: A Plan for Victory
Lesson 2: Is Alcoholism a Disease?
Lesson 3: What Are the Works of the Flesh?
Lesson 4: Is Addiction a Sin?
Lesson 5: How To Overcome Addiction
Lesson 6: One Step To Freedom Scriptures
Lesson 7: The Cycle of Temptation
Lesson 8: The Cycle of Sin
Lesson 9: Accountability for Restoration
Lesson 10: What Is A Daily Devotion?
Lesson 11: A Sample Daily Devotion

CHAPTER 2 INITIAL RESTORATION
Lesson 1: Man's Condition
Lesson 2: God's Remedy
Lesson 3: What God Has to Say About Addiction
Lesson 4: Put Off and Put On
Lesson 5: A New Way of Thinking

CHAPTER 3 FORGIVENESS
Lesson 1: Seeking God's Help
Lesson 2: Our Confession
Lesson 3: Turning Away From Sin
Lesson 4: Forgiving Others

CHAPTER 4 OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD
Lesson 1: Trials and Temptations
Lesson 2: Be A Doer of God's Word
Lesson 3: Don't Judge Others
Lesson 4: Your Faith Is Revealed in Works
Lesson 5: Taming Your Tongue
Lesson 6: Get Godly Wisdom
Lesson 7: Pride Versus Humility
Lesson 8: Perseverance and Prayer

CHAPTER 5 SPIRITUAL WARFARE
Lesson 1: What Is Spiritual Warfare?
Lesson 2: Tactics of the Enemy
Lesson 3: The Armor of God
Lesson 4: The Power of Prayer
Lesson 5: Our Vulnerability
Lesson 6: Victory In and Through Jesus

CHAPTER 6 THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
Lesson 1: What is the Fruit of the Spirit?
Lesson 2: Love
Lesson 3: Joy
Lesson 4: Peace
Lesson 5: Patience
Lesson 6: Kindness
Lesson 7: Goodness
Lesson 8: Faithfulness
Lesson 9: Gentleness
Lesson 10: Self Control

CHAPTER 7 GOD'S FAITHFULNESS
Lesson 1: When We Are Tempted
Lesson 2: No Room For Excuses
Lesson 3: Treasure God's Word
Lesson 4: To Equip and Edify
Lesson 5: God Is Faithful to Deliver
Lesson 6: I Can Do All Things Through Christ
Lesson 7: Trusting God

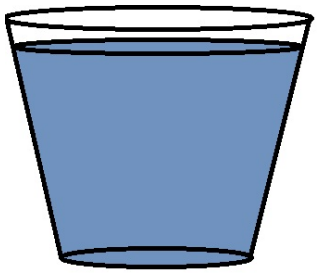
Understanding Addiction

In order to help us understand how drugs affect the body, in the simplest terms, I have found the following analogy brings understanding to those outside the medical and scientific professions.

Before we start, a couple of things need to be understood.

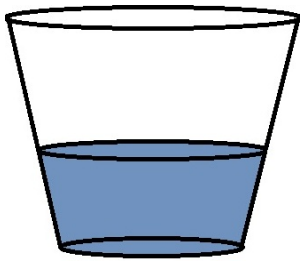
The neurochemicals that naturally occur within our body are used to control our body's many functions. For example serotonin is our natural mood stability neurochemical, dopamine allows us to feel pleasure, and endorphins are our natural painkillers. For most humans our various neurochemicals are replenished by:

1. Eating
2. Resting
3. and exercise.



This bucket indicates a healthy, normal person.

If we think of our body as a bucket of neurochemicals the basic principle is that our body's bucket wants to remain full (The medical word for this is homeostasis). In order to fill our bucket each day we eat healthy and get our required rest and exercise. This allows our body's neurochemical "bucket" to remain filled. Whenever the body experiences illness, injury, or we're not eating, resting or exercising, the body's neurochemical system is strained and depleted. When the neurochemicals are depleted, the human body does not function at 100% and the individual will show signs or symptoms such as moodiness, depression, agitation, etc.



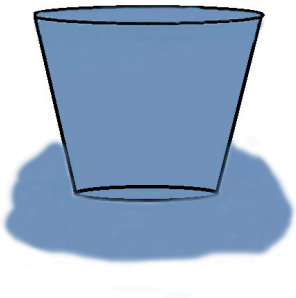
This bucket indicates a person who is experiencing illness, injury or is unhealthy.

Drugs and Alcohol

Now enter drugs and alcohol. All the drugs of abuse mimic or block natural neurochemicals. For example, heroin mimics the body's natural endorphins and causes large releases of dopamine.

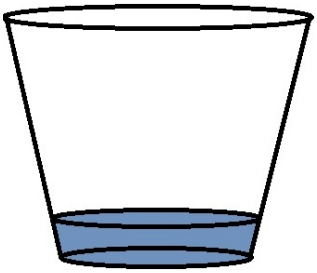
So when a person injects heroin, the body perceives that its neurochemical "bucket" has overflowed. An overflowed neurochemical bucket is called "getting high." The body wants a full

bucket—not an overflowing bucket. When this happens the body controls the only thing it has control over; the natural neurochemical. In our example of a heroin user, that person's body begins shutting down production of the natural endorphins and neurochemicals since the body can't tell the difference between heroin and natural endorphins.



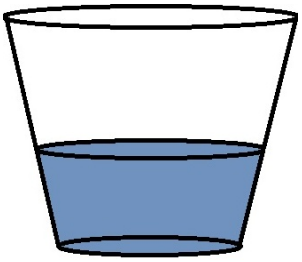
This bucket shows a person after using drugs.

Heroin's blood life (how long it keeps you high) is between four to six hours. After this four to six hour high, the user not only has lost the heroin in their system, but they also are experiencing a depletion of their natural production of endorphins. This means that without the heroin, the user's "bucket" is actually significantly depleted since their body has stopped producing endorphins and neurochemicals naturally.



This bucket exemplifies a person, after the drug has left their system. Their neurochemicals are extremely depleted.

At this point the user's body is craving normalcy, like the bucket of a healthy person. Unfortunately for most drug users, that craving leads to more drug use in order to restore their "bucket" and so the cycle repeats itself… until after multiple uses (how many depends on the drug and the individual) the user has established a "new normal" for their own natural neurochemical production; which at a certain point is so diminished that the user relies on the drug in order to feel "semi-normal."



This bucket illustrates an addict's "normalcy." Even after using their drug of choice again to replenish the bucket, it cannot reach a normal level because their natural production of neurochemicals has shut down.

It is at this point the user is addicted to the drug and without the drug the user can't function normally. Once an addict stops using drugs and alcohol, in best case scenarios it takes the human body on average one to two years for the neurochemical system to return to normal production. However, if an addict uses again just once, the process starts all over.

This simple analogy rings true for other addictive substances, such as alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamines, painkillers, tobacco—the list goes on and on.

Without God's healing, the evidence has shown that an addict will never again have a completely full neurochemical bucket.

Devin Chase
Teamchasetraining.com
http://21stcenturypolicingsolutions.org

Devin retired in 2014 as a Lieutenant with the Torrance Police Department in Southern California after working as a police officer for over thirty-two years. In addition to his years of administrative experience Devin specialized in patrol, narcotics and field training programs; becoming an industry and court recognized expert in these fields in both state and federal courts. Devin was a veteran narcotics investigator, with over nine years of full-time narcotics experience working as an investigator, a supervisor and as a commander of a Special Investigations Division.

Devin began teaching narcotic related topics in 1991 and since that time he has taught thousands of students extensively throughout the United States on various narcotics related topics for Local, State and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies as well as to private industry, school students, teachers and parent groups. Devin was an IACP Certified Drug Recognition Expert and Drug Recognition Expert Instructor from 1995 until 2006.

Today Devin is a lifetime member of the California Narcotic Officers' Association and he was the California Narcotic Officers Association 2005 recipient of the Al Stewart State of California Narcotic Officer of the Year award. He continues to provide training and consulting services for schools, public agencies, law enforcement, probation, and private businesses.

WHY ONE STEP TO FREEDOM?

Victoria is an interventionist and sober coach for the rich and famous. She is paid on average $1,500.00 per day to reside with a patient 24/7 to do everything possible within her strength and ability as a medical professional to aid in her client's sobriety. She counsels, educates and encourages each patient with his or her sobriety every day for six to twelve months.

The success rate? One percent. Ninety-nine out of 100 clients will relapse within a year's time.

When asked about that one who makes it, she nonchalantly replies, "The one-percent are those who choose Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord."

As we think about that, we realize that our world is filled with differing opinions concerning those who struggle with addiction. The most popular theory is that most addicts have a "disease." Conversely, according to the Word of God (the Bible), drug abuse, alcoholism, and other types of addictive and compulsive behaviors are not diseases but sins of choice.

Colossians 2:8 reads, "Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ" (NLT). God also said, "Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:5).

This is the concept behind the *One Step To Freedom* curriculum. *OSTF* is a survey of God's Word to study biblical principles that lead to restoration and wholeness from life-dominating sins. You don't have to manage sin. Jesus will set you free.

Believing the philosophy that addictions are diseases, psychologists tell addicts that they are not responsible for their actions and they're hopeless. This philosophy states that addicts can never be cured of their disease, and therefore, must label themselves as addicts forever.

If this is your belief, please consider the following: What other diseases are self-inflicted and by choice? Is it not true that a substance abuser always has a choice? There is no question that the body learns to crave addictive substances, but this can be overcome. Even with withdrawal symptoms, the person always has two choices: to take that temporary fix or to endure through the discomfort of withdrawal.

Yes, there is a truth to science in regards to psychology that the brain operates in certain ways, but most of our problems deal with coping. That's the bad news. The good news is that the Word of God has an answer for these life-dominating sins. Even with the physiological issues with respect to neurological function, God's Word offers a solution.

Even if you do not believe that addiction is a disease, you may be tempted to suppose that drug and alcohol abuse is some kind of physical addiction that God cannot help people overcome—along with pornography, homosexuality, gambling, eating disorders, anger issues, or some other compulsive behavior. If you have come to the conclusion that those who have addictive or compulsive behaviors desperately want to stop but cannot, there's hope.

Jesus said, "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29 NLT).

When a person chooses to endure through the withdrawal, they are limited, relying on their own strength. Yet if they rely on Jesus Christ as their Savior—to save them from their addiction—allowing God's Word to rule their thoughts and actions—they will have success. If Jesus is Lord of your life, you no longer have to manage your sin. Jesus sets you free.

Jesus made this amazing statement. He said, "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Jesus wants to free a person from addiction, not manage it. When a person receives Jesus as the Lord of their life, essentially they're inviting Him to rule their life. They now have a relationship where God comes and lives inside of them and changes them from the inside out. They recognize that those addictive habits are wrong and sinful. As they read God's Word and apply it to their lives in complete obedience, victory happens.

Jesus heals people differently. For some, there is an instant transformation, for others, it's a process. There are countless numbers of stories of how Jesus came into people's lives and brought transformation, brought change, and freed people from destructive patterns. For a believer, we have the hope of knowing that God is at work in us, that God is in the process of bringing that change, and God has the tools necessary to make that change.

The One Step To Freedom curriculum is a tool that God uses to bring victory. It only takes one step to Jesus to set you free.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ADDICTIONS
Excerpted from Biblical Counseling by Chuck Smith

Any addiction, whether to alcohol, drugs, prescription medicines, pornography, gambling, cigarettes, or even food, is a form of idolatry. The first commandment is, "You shall not have any other gods before Me." The second commandment is, "You shall not bow down to them or serve them" (see Exodus 20). When a person is addicted, they are really bowing down and serving that addiction as their god. It is the sin of idolatry. They become a slave to it and they are held in bondage. Jesus said, "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34).

Adam had perfect liberty in the garden. He had the freedom to eat of any tree in the garden that he pleased, but God warned him, "Don't eat of that tree! That will bring you into bondage. That will bring you into death." God didn't tie him up in the corner of the garden, nor did God build a high wall around that tree. He had the freedom to eat of it. But Adam exercised that freedom in such a way as to bring death and bondage to sin and to the flesh. As he obeyed the desires of the flesh rather than the Word of God and the commandment of God, he then found himself a victim to his flesh.

So many people are dying a slow death because their addiction has a hold on them, almost as if it were demonic; and the only thing that can free a person from this hold is the power of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to open the eyes of those that are blind, and "to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Isaiah 61:1). "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:30).

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	GOD'S PROMISES	MAKE A CHANGE
Proverbs 5:22-23	John 8:34-36	Proverbs 23:20-21
1 Corinthians 6:12-13	Romans 8:12-15	Rom. 6:1-2, 11-13, 16
1 Corinthians 9:24-27		Romans 12:1
1 Timothy 6:6-10		1 Corinthians 6:19-20
James 1:14-15	BIBLICAL EXAMPLES	2 Corinthians 7:1
1 Peter 4:1-3	Proverbs 23:29-35	1 John 1:8-9
2 Peter 2:19		

ALCOHOL
Drinking alcohol has been debated within the church for years. There are many Christians who feel at liberty to drink wine, and to be frank, I cannot make an airtight scriptural case against it. However, Paul said, "All things are lawful for me," but he declared, "I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12). I personally feel that it is unwise to take anything into your system that can bring you under its power, or "under the influence." It alters a person's thinking, and thus their judgment. In addition, alcohol has been proven to damage a person both physically and mentally.

There is a thirst within the spirit that can't be satisfied with material or emotional things. Only a meaningful relationship with God can satisfy that yearning within. Sometimes people seek to drown this thirst with alcohol. Ironically, all they're doing is creating a fuzzy mind so they won't have to think about it. But when they sober up, the thirst is still there. By turning to the bottle, an alcoholic only creates new problems greater than the first.

If you will turn your life over to Jesus, He will set you free from that which is destroying you. More than that, He'll bring you satisfaction; He'll fill your thirsty soul. Be filled with the Spirit of God and you will find that which your soul and spirit are longing after.

Though it may be lawful, I believe you're better off not to drink or ingest anything that can bring you under its influence. Live a life that's completely consecrated and committed to God. The Bible says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1 KJV).

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	GOD'S PROMISES	MAKE A CHANGE
Proverbs 20:1	John 7:37-38	Proverbs 23:20-21
Proverbs 21:17	John 8:36	Luke 21:34
Proverbs 23:29-32	1 Corinthians 10:13	Romans 13:12-14
Isaiah 5:11, 22	2 Corinthians 5:17	1 Corinthians 5:11
Habakkuk 2:15		1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Galatians 5:19-21		2 Corinthians 7:1
		Ephesians 5:18-21

For those who serve in ministry:

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	MAKE A CHANGE
1 Timothy 3:8-9	2 Timothy 2:4
Titus 1:7-9	

ANGER

Are you quick-tempered or quick to "fly off the handle" when something doesn't go right? The only thing some people are ever going to know about Jesus Christ is what they see in you. How do you represent Jesus? Do you represent Him as being upset, mad or angry over small annoyances?

The only way we can really be His representative is through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can spend our lives thinking about all of the things that make us upset, or we can spend our lives thinking of God's lovingkindness, goodness, mercy, and grace—and extending that to others. Proverbs 19:11 reads, "The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression." It's the discretion of a man to put off his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. Love covers a multitude of sins. Don't respond or react in anger to a situation. Defer that action until your anger has subsided. Then, many times, once it's subsided, you'll say, "Well, what difference does it make? Nobody was hurt." This is a good rule for driving the freeways. Overlook someone's transgression, rather than get frustrated and stew over the matter.

The next time something upsets you, don't react. Instead, I would exhort you to just count your blessings and be thankful for what God has done. And then let your heart rejoice in His goodness.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Proverbs 10:12
Proverbs 12:16
Proverbs 14:17, 29
Proverbs 15:1
Proverbs 19:11
Proverbs 25:28
Proverbs 29:22
Ecclesiastes 7:8-9
Galatians 5:19-21

GOD'S PROMISES
Romans 12:19

MAKE A CHANGE
Psalm 37:8
Proverbs 22:24-25
Luke 6:28-29
Eph. 4:26-27, 30-32
Colossians 3:8
James 1:19-20

DEPRESSION

Depression doesn't just hurt you; it also hurts everyone around you. There is nothing more depressing than talking to a person who is depressed, sometimes lasting weeks, months, and even years. Everything you suggest that might help, they return with a negative statement and attitude. You do your best to lift them up out of it but it seems they have brought you down instead. But there is a cure.

When we're miserable and think despairing and hopeless thoughts, we can literally dig our own grave. But by setting our minds upon the Lord, we come into a whole new state of consciousness. No longer one of total despair and hopelessness, but one of victory and hope. And that's what Jeremiah did. He changed his thought patterns from, "Oh, woe is me and there's no one to help me" to thinking, "Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23). You can get into this self-pity mode very easily by concentrating upon yourself, but as you begin to think about the Lord it will lift you up right out of the deepest depression.

GOD'S PROMISES
Psalm 147:3
Romans 5:3-5
2 Corinthians 1:3-4
2 Corinthians 4:16-18
2 Corinthians 12:10
Ephesians 3:16-19
Titus 3:5-6
James 1:2-8

MAKE A CHANGE
Psalm 27:13-14
Psalm 37:3-7
Psalm 42:5
Proverbs 3:5-6
Romans 12:2
1 Corinthians 15:58
Philippians 3:1
Philippians 4:4

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES
Job 1:20-22
Job 2:6-10
2 Corinthians 12:9-10

PRAYER
Psalm 16:7-8
Psalm 55:16-18
Psalm 73:26
Lam. 3:17-18, 21-26

DRUGS

The word "sorcery" stems from the root word *pharmakeia*, which is also translated as witchcraft. When we find sorcery or witchcraft in the Bible, it refers to the use of drugs for hallucinogenic or mind-altering purposes, like narcotics. God's law strictly prohibits drug abuse because when you allow the abuse of narcotics to reside in your life, it will ultimately destroy you. Narcotics are very insidious. The very first thing a narcotic will do is attack a person's willpower to resist. People can become hooked so quickly. Narcotic abuse then destroys good judgment and sensitivity to right and wrong, and people soon find themselves doing things they would have been appalled and shocked at before.

One of the most devastating effects of drug abuse is becoming enslaved to the drugs. Satan loves to take a person captive, holding them as a hostage against their will. Paul wrote to Timothy, "that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:26). Satan does not fight fairly or by the rules. But thank God, Jesus Christ came to set at liberty those who were captive, and to open the prison doors to those who are bound.

The power of Jesus Christ can break the hold that Satan has upon someone bound by drug addiction, "to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus" (Acts 26:18). That's what the gospel is all about, freeing people from the power of darkness.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
1 Samuel 15:23
Psalm 52:7
Isaiah 47:9
Ezekiel 18:30-32
Malachi 3:5
Galatians 5:19-21
Revelation 21:6-8

GOD'S PROMISES
Revelation 22:14-15

MAKE A CHANGE
Ephesians 5:18
1 Corinthians 6:12

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Revelation 9:20-21

FOOD

Jesus warns us concerning the last days before His return, that we should be careful not to be caught unaware or by surprise as the result of surfeiting, which is eating and drinking too much (Luke 12:45-46). Eating and drinking too much can cloud our judgment. Solomon warned, "It'll bring you to poverty, son."

In the book of Leviticus God gave extensive instructions to the children of Israel concerning what they could and could not eat. Today you can find an interesting book written by Dr. S. I. McMillen called *None of These Diseases*, which explains the medical reasons for these dietary laws and cleansing rituals.

I don't think that we can load ourselves up with junk food and ask God to give us a healthy body. That's inconsistent. When my friends and I used to drive home from Bible school, we would stop by the market and buy a gallon of ice cream, a pint of whipped cream, chocolate syrup, and bananas. Then we would get home and I would whip up a quick banana cream pie. As we sat down to devour it, the guys would look at one another and say, "Who's going to ask the blessing?" I'd say, "You've got to be kidding. You can't in all good conscience ask God to bless this. Just eat it and suffer the consequences." Don't ask God to bless what you know isn't good for you. Once in a while dessert is fine, but it's foolish to eat like that all the time and expect God to bless you with strength and health.

Paul wrote, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). What a great bottom line principle this is! If we do not grasp anything else, God help us to grasp this truth. The purpose of our existence is to live for His glory. Let this one question be uppermost in our minds whether or not we should or shouldn't do something: Can I do it for the glory of God?

Today maybe you are in the bondage of surfeiting and it has a hold on your life. You can see it is destroying you, and you're somehow unable to get free. "All things are lawful for me," Paul said, "but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Many times people foolishly exercise their liberty in doing things that bring them into bondage. Don't use your liberty as an occasion for the flesh, because if you do, it'll destroy you. Surrender your life over to Jesus and He will set you free from that which is destroying you. More than that, He'll satisfy your hungry and thirsty soul.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Psalm 81:10
Proverbs 23:19-21
Proverbs 25:16
Matthew 6:25
Matthew 26:41
Luke 12:40-46
John 4:34
John 8:36
1 Corinthians 3:16-17
1 Corinthians 6:12-13

GOD'S PROMISES
1 Corinthians 10:13

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Daniel 1:8-14

PRAYER
Philippians 4:13

MAKE A CHANGE
Proverbs 23:2
Romans 12:1
1 Corinthians 6:19-20
1 Corinthians 9:27
1 Corinthians 10:31
Galatians 5:16
1 Peter 4:1-2

FORNICATION

Fornication is having sexual relations outside of marriage. The world terms it "making love." However, it's not an act of love at all; it's an act of lust. A person who entices someone else into the act of fornication is selfish since they are not considering the other person, but only thinking about satisfying their own desire. Fornication is a very unloving act and it is only by Satan's deception that a person would think of it as an act of love.

To the Christian who commits the sin of fornication, Paul writes, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!" (1 Corinthians 6:15). Jesus took it a step further, "You've heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28). Jesus looks at the heart—you're guilty even if you haven't actually committed fornication.

You see, if a person goes around lusting in his mind but never actually gives in, that man would be self-righteous. "I've never committed adultery. I've never committed fornication." But in his heart, he has. Now if he were to say, "Oh God, I have impure thoughts. God, I'm an unclean man. Help me, God," he then casts himself on the mercy of God. And in so doing that man will attain the righteousness imputed to Jesus Christ by his faith to overcome those lustful thoughts and live a Christlike life.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Proverbs 5:20-23
Proverbs 6:23-25
Proverbs 7:4-5
Matthew 15:19-20
Mark 7:21-23
1 Corinthians 6:9-11
Galatians 5:19-21
Hebrews 13:4

GOD'S PROMISES
Isaiah 55:7
1 John 1:9
Revelation 22:14-15

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Revelation 2:14

PRAYER
Psalm 51:7, 10

MAKE A CHANGE
Acts 15:20, 29
1 Corinthians 6:18
Ephesians 5:3-5
Colossians 3:5
1 Timothy 4:12
2 Timothy 2:22

GAMBLING
Gambling has an addictive capacity. A man can find himself under the dominion of this addiction and under its power so quickly. You see, a person who is involved in sinful iniquitous practices, such as gambling, is actually yielding himself as a servant unto sin.

The Bible says, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). A person who has a gambling addiction is a servant of Satan. The moment he gives himself over to this sin, he comes under the power of Satan. And once he is under Satan's power, he will not let go. The power of Satan is greater than a man's power to resist. Only Jesus Christ can free a man from sin.

The psalmist very wisely prayed, "Lord, do not let any iniquity have dominion over me" (Psalm 19:13). And thus if there is anything that has the capacity of bringing you under its influence or under its power, it is wise to exercise your liberty to avoid it.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	GOD'S PROMISES	MAKE A CHANGE
Exodus 20:17	Matthew 6:33	Luke 12:15
Proverbs 23:4-5	1 Corinthians 10:13	1 Corinthians 10:31
Proverbs 28:22	Hebrews 13:5	Galatians 5:1
Ecclesiastes 5:10	1 Peter 5:2-4	Colossians 3:2, 5-7
Ezekiel 33:31		1 Timothy 6:17
Matthew 6:24		
1 Corinthians 6:12		
1 Timothy 6:6-10	PRAYER	
	Psalm 19:13	
	Proverbs 30:8-9	

HOMOSEXUALITY
The prophet Ezekiel tells us the sin of Sodom started with pride, abundance, idleness, and they neglected the poor and needy. (Ezekiel 16:49-50). The term "sodomy," is the obvious sin of Sodom. But as God looked into these men's hearts and analyzed Sodom's sin, He saw its more subtle form, the roots before it bore fruit.

God emphasized that the sin of Sodom was actually pride. Pride is thinking of yourself more highly than you should; it is an exalted opinion of yourself. So many times we look at the blessings that God has granted to us, and we act as though our genius, abilities, or wit have brought God's favor and blessings upon our lives, not realizing that if we have anything worthwhile and good within us, it has come from God.

There are certain roots of sin that when tolerated will germinate into vile fruit. Homosexuality and sodomy were actually the final manifestations of the people's sins. Their sins of pride had been germinating under the soil for a long time before being manifested in its final form.

God created the sex drive within us basically to become the highest form of expression of love between a husband and a wife who have pledged themselves exclusively to each other, and through its fruit the procreation and the perpetuation of mankind. It is not designed for one's own delight or pleasure, but rather a beautiful gift to be shared between a husband and wife. The Bible is very clear that homosexuality is something that is opposed to God. Those who are practicing homosexuality have chosen to live after the flesh rather than to walk in the Spirit. The Bible says it is sin; it is not to be accepted nor tolerated. It is something to be dealt with.

None of us are immune from problems with our flesh. There is a battle whether or not I am going to be controlled by my flesh or allow my spirit to be in subjection and harmony with God's Spirit. If you regularly attend church and you are engaged in sinful practices, don't be deceived into thinking that your church attendance is going to cover your sin. If it supersedes your commitment to Jesus Christ, it is all a form of pride and idolatry, and you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul wrote, ''The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness," for "although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God." You see, men became proud. They didn't give God the glory and the credit for what He had done, but "their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools…and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" For this reason God gave them over to a mind that was void of God, and ultimately God gave them up to all kinds of vile practices such as the sin of homosexuality (see Romans 1:18, 21, 22, 25).

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Gen. 1:27; 2:24; 5:2
Leviticus 18:1, 22
Leviticus 20:13
Ezekiel 16:49-50
Proverbs 16:5
Proverbs 18:12
Proverbs 21:4
Isaiah 3:9
Obadiah 1:3
Matthew 19:4-5
Romans 1:24-32
Romans 2:8
1 Corinthians 6:9-11
Ephesians 5:31
Jude 4, 6-7

GOD'S PROMISES
Psalm 138:6
Proverbs 11:21
1 Corinthians 10:13
2 Corinthians 5:17
2 Timothy 1:7
2 Peter 2:4-10

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Genesis 19:4-5; 24-25

MAKE A CHANGE
1 Corinthians 6:9-11
Ephesians 4:20-24
1 Peter 5:5

PRAYER
Psalm 19:13
Psalm 119:133

LOVE OF MONEY

There's nothing wrong with money. It's a means by which we exchange commodities and goods with one another. The Bible doesn't say that money is evil—it says "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). If getting rich is the most important thing to you, and you are obsessed with wanting to get more and more money or possessions—that's when it becomes evil. When your love for money exceeds your love for the true and the living God, you are actually worshiping the god mammon, and you will then find yourself "straying from the faith in greediness, and pierced through with many sorrows."

There were many people in the Bible whom God blessed with great riches, but when their riches became more important than God, it became sinful. Such was the case for the young man written about in Matthew 19:20-22. His riches stood in the way of his following Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Riches are not wrong in and of themselves. But if your riches master your life, and if you are ruled by them and they have precedence over your relationship with God, then they are wrong. That's the essence; that's the heart of it. Do you want eternal life? Follow Jesus.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Deut. 8:17–20
Proverbs 3:9-10
Proverbs 13:7
Proverbs 15:16
Ecclesiastes 5:10
Matthew 6:21, 24
Luke 12:15
Luke 16:13
1 Timothy 3:8
1 Timothy 6:10
Titus 1:7

GOD'S PROMISES
2 Corinthians 9:8
Philippians 4:19

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Matthew 19:21-24
Luke 19:8
Philippians 4:11-12

PRAYER
1 Chronicles 29:12-13
Proverbs 30:8-9

MAKE A CHANGE
Psalm 62:10
Proverbs 3:9-10
Proverbs 23:5
1 Timothy 6:17-19
Hebrews 13:5

LUST

Lust can never be satisfied. It will always demand more. The only cure for lust is to starve it to death. If you feed it, it will go into a feeding frenzy and draw you deeper and deeper into it.

The sin of lust began in the garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve. So wouldn't it have been better had God not placed the tree there, averting the temptation to lust? But then how would God know you truly loved Him and wanted to obey Him unless you had a choice? Choices are necessary. Man was made in the image of God, self-governing, but there had to be something to choose from—something attractive and desirable. If it was ugly, bitter, or sour, all the temptation in the world couldn't get you to choose it. John summed it up, "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 John 2:16).

If you are a child of God, you are called to live a life separated from the defilement of the things in the world. So therefore, we are to separate ourselves from living after the lust of our flesh. We are not to be controlled, governed or following after our fleshly desires. If you fulfill the lust of your flesh, it is a one-way road. You can't retreat. Your flesh will always demand more and more and more. The Bible says, "Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). God said, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). So it's important for us to live a life of holiness and a life of separation from the world.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Proverbs 5:22-23
Proverbs 11:6
Ecclesiastes 10:8
Matthew 5:27-28
Romans 8:5-8, 12
James 1:14-15
2 Peter 1:2–4
1 John 2:16
Revelation 21:8

GOD'S PROMISES

1 Corinthians 10:13

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Genesis 3:1-4, 6
2 Samuel 11:2-4
2 Samuel 12:7, 9-10, 13-14
Job 31:1

PRAYER

Psalm 19:13
Psalm 119:37, 133

MAKE A CHANGE

Proverbs 6:25-26
Romans 6:12
Romans 13:13-14
Galatians 5:16
Colossians 3:5
1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
2 Timothy 2:22
Titus 2:11-12
Hebrews 13:5
1 Peter 1:13-16
1 Peter 2:11-12

MASTURBATION

Uncleanness is immorality, one of the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19, and it can be a powerful sin that controls your life. So it's understandable that you could lose hope.

If we examine why we do the things that we do, we need to realize that man is a trinity made up of body, mind, and spirit. Either my mind is going to be controlled by fleshly desires, or it is going to be controlled by spiritual desires. If I am living after the flesh, giving in to the passions and desires of my flesh, then the result will be a carnal mind. Paul said we are to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). When we find our minds absorbed in the things of the flesh, it's important to take a moment and stop and ask the Holy Spirit to take control. Start to sing a worship chorus. Turn your mind toward the Lord. Pray. Get into the Scriptures.

The Bible says, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word" (Psalm 119:9). The best defense that we have against the attacks and temptations of Satan is the Word of God hidden in our hearts. Saturate your life with the Word of God. As you are saturated with God's Word, there is that power against sin. The Word of God hidden in your heart gives you the best defense against the temptations of Satan. Reading God's Word will help you to live and to walk in the Spirit. When you do, you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Romans 6:6
Galatians 5:19, 21-25
2 Timothy 2:25-26
James 1:13-15
1 Peter 2:11
2 Peter 2:19

GOD'S PROMISES
Romans 8:12-13

PRAYER
Psalm 19:13
Psalm 119:9-12
Philippians 4:13

MAKE A CHANGE
Romans 6:12
Romans 12:2
Romans 13:13-14
1 Corinthians 6:19-20
2 Corinthians 7:1
2 Corinthians 10:5
Galatians 5:16-17
Ephesians 4:22-24
Colossians 3:2
1 Peter 4:1-2

MATERIALISM

Materialism is a lust for the things of the flesh, to possess worldly things. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21). That's the bottom line: Where is your heart? Do you desire heavenly things or earthly things? Do you want a new car, home or clothes, or do you desire spiritual things such as a greater faith in God and a love and kindness towards other people? Whatever things you treasure most reveal the condition of your heart.

Materialism will blind a person to things that are perfectly obvious. God has given us all things to enjoy, our homes, our families, but the sin of materialism turns the blessings of God into a curse. These things that were intended to be a blessing can become a master, and a person can become enslaved to worldly things. The truth of the matter is, you are serving God or mammon, one or the other—but you can't serve them both; you can't mix light and darkness. Mammon is a worldly treasure. And since God has given to us the ability and the capacity to reason and to choose, we must decide whether we will serve God or mammon. You're the one who makes the choice whether you will put your heart and your life into the things that are eternal or into the things that will pass away.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	BIBLICAL EXAMPLE	MAKE A CHANGE
Psalm 49:6-20	Luke 12:16-20	Matthew 6:19-21
Proverbs 22:4		Mark 4:18–20
Proverbs 23:4-5	PRAYER	Luke 12:15
Ecclesiastes 5:10	Proverbs 30:8-9	Galatians 5:16
Matthew 6:24		Colossians 3:2-4
Luke 16:13		1 Timothy 6:17
1 Timothy 6:6-10		Hebrews 13:5
Hebrews 11:24-26		1 John 2:15

PORNOGRAPHY

When a person gives himself over to lust, he loses all sense of balance and propriety, and as such is a person who has given himself over to pornography. He has to keep going deeper and deeper into that realm to find a sense of satisfaction. But he's never really satisfied. It's an appetite that doesn't quit—until it just has taken over and controls his life. He becomes enslaved and addicted.

But there is hope for the one who wants to be free from the addiction and slavery of pornography. Psalm 119:9-12 promises, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Also, a healthy respect for God and the awareness that He is always with us helps us to purify ourselves, and to live in such a way that we do not offend Him.

It's a tragic thing to see a person who is really given over to lust, because their life becomes so unbalanced. There's no moderation at all. They go hog wild. But the tragic thing is that they never find a place of satisfaction.

With this ugly scene in mind the psalmist wrote, "And God gave them their request [or the lust of their heart], but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106:15). And that's always the tragic consequence of giving yourself over to pornography. You suffer spiritually. You see, there is the world of the flesh and there is the world of the spirit, and they are mutually exclusive in that no person can serve two masters. You're either going to be mastered by your flesh or by the Spirit. And these two are warring against each other. Paul said, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Galatians 5:17). There is a battle going on for the control of your life. If you give yourself over to the flesh to be controlled by the flesh, then it brings you into the bondage of corruption. It brings you into this desire that cannot be satisfied but only grows.

Paul the apostle said, "Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh." And you will find that there's such a full satisfaction in walking in the Spirit. The problem is that people will not make a true and full commitment to God. They will either make provision or compromise. But the only cure is to commit your life completely to the things of the Spirit. And when you do, you'll find that you can't do two things. You cannot be walking after the Spirit and still living after the flesh. But that walk after the Spirit actually puts the flesh in its proper place and under control.

Now, we still live in a fleshly body—and there are still those body appetites. But thank God they don't rule me anymore. I'm not a slave to them and they take their proper place. God never intended that any of us should be a servant to our flesh, a slave to the desires of our flesh. God intended that we should have victory over the flesh. And that victory comes when the spirit is supreme and we're walking after the Spirit and living after the things of the Spirit. Then you do not fulfill the desires of your flesh. You don't need to.

You can have a life that is rich and full, and you're free from those things that were destroying you.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	GOD'S PROMISES	MAKE A CHANGE
Psalm 101:2-4	Psalm 119:1-2	Job 31:1
Psalm 106:15	John 8:32	Proverbs 4:23
Psalm 119:9	Galatians 5:16	Proverbs 6:25
Proverbs 5:20		1 Corinthians 5:9, 11
Matthew 5:28	BIBLICAL EXAMPLE	Galatians 5:24
Romans 13:14	1 Kings 11:4-6, 11	Ephesians 2:1-6
Galatians 5:16-17, 19	2 Peter 2:14	Ephesians 4:22
James 1:14-15		2 Timothy 2:22
1 John 2:16	PRAYER	Titus 2:11-12
Revelation 21:8	Psalm 19:13	James 1:14-15
	Psalm 119:18, 33, 37	1 Peter 1:13-16
		1 Peter 2:11

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

One of the great weaknesses of the church today is the toleration of sexual immorality such as fornication, or people living together outside of marriage, or homosexuality.

Don't give it an inch. Make no provision for it but put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It's important that we cast off the works of darkness and we put on the armor of light. That means to put a block on the Internet so sexual images don't pop up. These are the last days and we must walk in holiness and purity because we want to be found in the righteousness of Christ.

There are always those who fool themselves into thinking that they could live immorally and still be Christians. But the apostle Paul made it clear that "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners will not inherit the kingdom of God" (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). That was a part of your past life. If you want to be God's child, He will clean up your life. Don't go back to that.

There are still others who say, "It's my body, I can do as I please." Isn't that what we're hearing today, especially when it comes to pro-choice? Well, that may be true of the person in the world, but it is not true of the child of God. It's not your body anymore. It's been redeemed. You've been bought with a price. Jesus redeemed you from that lost, enslaved state, that you might be free now to serve, worship, and to glorify God in your body. The Bible teaches that the end result of being sexually promiscuous will be disastrous. It will destroy you and your life, and it will bring you into poverty. It will rob you of everything that is worthwhile and good, including your health.

Paul said to the church of Corinth, "Don't you realize that you cannot be joined together with a prostitute? Since you are Christ's, then you are seeking to make Christ a

participator in that immorality" (see 1 Corinthians 6:16-18). It can't be! The Lord won't join Himself to sin. He cannot be one with sin.

It is important that we purpose in our hearts to live a life of moral purity. That is what enabled Joseph to flee Potiphar's wife when she sought to entice him (see Genesis 39). He had already determined in his heart that his body belonged to God, so when evil presented itself he knew he must flee. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22).

In our world today we have many people who worship sex; it's their god or goddess. They're too sophisticated to carve out little idols anymore, but nonetheless it is still their god. They may have pictures that would be an equivalent in a sense to these idols. If you observe that person's life, you see that their whole life revolves around sex and sexual encounters. That's what they live for and that's what they talk about. It is really the god that controls their life. However, the Bible teaches that the end result of being sexually promiscuous will be disastrous. It will destroy you and your life, and it will bring you into poverty. It will rob you of everything that is worthwhile and good, including your health.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Genesis 2:24
Exodus 20:14
Leviticus 20:10
Deuteronomy 5:18
Proverbs 2:16-19
Matthew 5:27-28
Matthew 15:19-20
Romans 1:18, 22, 24, 26-29, 32
1 Cor. 6:13b, 16
Galatians 5:19-21
1 Thesslonians 4:3-8
Hebrews 13:4
James 1:13-14

GOD'S PROMISES
Psalm 119:1-2
John 8:32
Galatians 5:16

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Genesis 39:12
1 Corinthians 6:15-17

MAKE A CHANGE
Prov. 5:1-5, 8-9, 15-23
Proverbs 6:23-29
Proverbs 7:1-5, 24-27
Romans 6:12-13
Romans 12:1-2
Romans 13:14
1 Corinthians 6:18-20
Colossians 3:5-7
2 Timothy 2:22
1 Peter 2:11
1 John 2:15-16

SMOKING

"As a Christian, can I smoke cigarettes? I find that it just sort of calms me down." Let me ask you this: Can it get a hold on your life so that you've just got to have another one? Is that really calming you down? God never intended that man should be ruled by his flesh; God intended that you should be ruled by the Spirit. There are things that will hinder your progress in your walk with the Lord. They're not wrong, whereby it's a sin, but they are hindrances in the way of following Jesus.

You're a born-again Christian—so why does it seem impossible to stop smoking? Second Timothy 3:5 says, "Having a form of godliness but denying its power." That is an

accurate description of much of the church today. They observe rituals by going to church every Sunday, and have a form of godliness, but they lack power.

Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). When you come to Christ and understand the cross, you realize not only was Jesus crucified for your sins, but you are crucified with Christ. I no longer am held by the power of sin but I am dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ. Sin no longer rules over me. So this is the principle: As a believer, I am now crucified with Christ. I have reckoned my old life and nature to be dead.

Now, that doesn't mean I completely lose the desires of the flesh, but they no longer rule over me. I no longer have to obey them. I'm no longer a slave to my fleshly desires, but I'm a slave of Jesus Christ. My desire is to obey Him and to please Him. And because of this, I can overcome sin through Him.

God has given us pure air with oxygen to breathe. But when you breathe in chemical substances, such as nicotine, it will affect your brain to give an altered state of consciousness. It will give you a feeling of euphoria or excitement. But the truth is, that isn't why God created your breathing. By smoking cigarettes, or anything else for that matter, you are twisting the use that God had originally intended. And what happens? You soon become addicted and then you become enslaved. Now your body is ruling over you. You're no longer in control. God never intended that man should be ruled by his flesh; God intended that you should be ruled by the Spirit.

There are things that will hinder my progress in my walk with the Lord. They're not wrong, whereby I can label them as sin, but they are hindrances. Paul said, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6:12). In the book of Hebrews it says, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us,* and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). And so we need to deny those things that would hinder us that stand in the way of following Jesus. We need to use wisdom in the exercise of our liberty in Christ. Don't use your liberty as an occasion for the flesh, because if you do, it'll bring you into bondage.

First Corinthians 3:16-17 declares, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." If you are a child of God, then you are a temple of God and the Holy Spirit lives inside you. And as Paul reminds us, God's temple is holy and shouldn't be mistreated or defiled. Now there are some people who use this passage to teach against smoking cigarettes. That could certainly be a good application; but to be consistent, we must then include candy bars and everything else that is bad for us. Our bodies are His holy temples, and we need to keep them pure.

Let's say you agree that smoking cigarettes is wrong, and you want the Lord to help you quit. You're a Christian. You're born-again. So why does it seem impossible for you to

stop smoking? Second Timothy 3:5 says, “Having a form of godliness but denying its power.” That is an accurate description of much of the church today. They observe rituals by going to church every Sunday, and have a form of godliness, but they lack power. Churches have often just become social centers, where one can get some entertaining message dealing with psychological issues, and hear some inspiring music; but the power of God is left out.

Every one of us is either a servant of God or a servant of Satan. And it is God’s desire to bring us out of the bondage of the kingdom of darkness, Satan’s kingdom, and to bring us into His glorious kingdom. But there is a war going on, a spiritual warfare, and Satan is doing his best to keep you in bondage. And Satan uses the world and the flesh in order to bring you into bondage unto himself.

First John 2:14 declares, “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.” In other words, John gives us the secret to how these young men overcame sin: they were strong in God’s Word. They lived in it. King David asked, “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:9-11).

Oh, how we need the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God working in our lives. To ignore the power of the Holy Spirit and God’s Word is to teach people how to get along in life without God, and without Him we can’t do anything.

We’re no longer slaves to our flesh, sin or Satan when we’re born again (Romans 6; 2 Timothy 2:26). We’re also free from the Law. But we must exercise our freedom in a way that will not bring us back into bondage.

GOD’S PERSPECTIVE
Genesis 2:7
Exodus 20:3, 5
Deut. 5:6-7, 9-10
Job 33:4
Romans 6:6
1 Corinthians 2:5
1 Corinthians 3:16-17
Galatians 2:20
2 Timothy 2:26
2 Peter 2:19
1 John 2:14

GOD’S PROMISES
1 Corinthians 10:13
2 Corinthians 7:1
Galatians 6:7-8

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
1 Corinthians 9:24-27

PRAYER
Psalm 119:37

MAKE A CHANGE
Psalm 119:9-11
John 8:34, 36
Romans 12:1-2
Romans 13:14
1 Cor. 6:12, 19-20
Galatians 5:13, 24-25
2 Timothy 3:5
Hebrews 12:1
1 Peter 2:16

TELEVISION

Many people have stunted spiritual development because pleasure is their thing. Their minds are distracted and drawn away by the pleasures of this world. Movies and television contribute greatly to this. So many people spend their evenings in front of the television set, seeking pleasure, seeking to be entertained. Yet Paul the apostle speaks about the decadent society, the horrible things that were going on as far as violence and immorality, and he said, "Not only do they do such things but they take pleasure in those that do them" (Romans 1:32).

Now you may be true and faithful to your marriage, you may be of the character and sort that you would never cheat on your wife, but if you are watching adultery on TV, in being entertained by it, you are vicariously entering into it.

When pleasure supersedes your relationship with Jesus, it can sap spiritual life from you, and it can keep you in an arrested spiritual state. Those who spend maybe eight, ten hours a week in front of the television will tell you, "Oh, I just didn't have time to read my Bible." And so many people allow these other things to become first and supersede their relationship with Jesus. And thus, though they have received Jesus and claim to be Christians, their lives never bring forth fruit. They never develop; they never grow. The fruitfulness is choked out by these other things.

I would like to suggest that this week, during that time when you normally sit down and pollute your mind with television—instead of clicking on the remote, turn your face towards God. Dedicate yourself to prayer and reading the Bible. Turn off your television and turn your face to God.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Luke 8:14
Romans 1:28-32
Romans 6:21
Romans 8:7
2 Corinthians 10:4-6
Ephesians 4:17-19
1 Timothy 5:22
Revelation 18:4

GOD'S PROMISES
Isaiah 33:15-16
Romans 8:13
Galatians 6:7-8

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Psalm 50:18

PRAYER
Psalm 119:37

MAKE A CHANGE
Psalm 101:2–4, 7
Romans 13:14
Romans 16:19b
Ephesians 5:11-16
Philippians 4:8
Colossians 3:16
Colossians 4:5
1 Peter 4:3

TEMPER
A hot temper is like the wave of the sea that has no rest, driven by the winds of passion. It is like a volcano waiting to erupt.

So often a person will try to strategize a bad temper by saying, "Well, I've learned to count to ten before I react." They try to figure out how to keep from losing their temper, but then they lose control and say all kinds of horrible, ugly things. And then they hate themselves for doing it. And yet when faced with a provocation again, they explode.

God has a better way. The person who has yielded his life to follow Jesus Christ is at peace with the circumstances of his life. He has greater patience; he is more gentle. There is a temperance knowing that God rules one's life. As a person sees God working through their anger, it's like they can't believe it. It's very exciting to see God doing this work within a person what they could not do for themselves. It's God's work; it's His battle. Give your hot temper over to God and let the Holy Spirit help you overcome your anger.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE	BIBLICAL EXAMPLES	MAKE A CHANGE
Proverbs 14:29	1 Samuel 20:27-33	Psalm 37:8
Proverbs 15:1, 18	Psalm 106:32-33	Proverbs 22:24-25
Proverbs 25:28		Ephesians 4:31
Proverbs 29:22		Colossians 3:8
Ecclesiastes 7:9		James 1:19-20
Galatians 5:19-21		
Titus 1:7		

TRANSGENDER
In the King James Version of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 reads, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

If you are engaged in these practices, don't be deceived into thinking that your church attendance is going to cover your sin. If you are effeminate seeking to be female when you are male, or female seeking to be male, you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The book of Jonah shares a valuable lesson. In the KJV, Jonah 2:8 reads, "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." "Lying vanities" is translated "worthless idols." Even though Jonah knew the Scriptures, he believed worthless lies. He thought he could escape the presence of God. Psalm 139:7-8 declares, "Where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there." Another lie Jonah believed was that his plan for his life was better than God's plan. Not so. God's thoughts concerning you are "of peace and not evil" (see Jeremiah 29:11). Jonah also believed the lie that he could resist the call of God and still win. How many of these lying, worthless vanities do you believe?

It is a lie to think that you know better for your own life than does God. It is a lie for you to think that you can find happiness apart from God. And for you to attempt to do so you are only bringing misery and disaster upon yourself. You're forsaking your own mercy, because God is merciful. God is loving. And however God has created you is the very best thing that could ever happen to you, though you may not think it.

Jonah 2:9 continues, "But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."

"Salvation is of the Lord"—Jonah discovered he couldn't save himself. Salvation is not of my own works. It is not of my own efforts. I tried for a long time to please God with my works and my efforts, and I tried to be righteous by my own doing. But what a glorious day when I learned Jonah's lesson: salvation is of the Lord. After a lot of bitter experiences of failure, I learned that salvation is of the Lord. One of the happiest days in my whole life was when God taught me this truth—salvation is of the Lord—and I found my answer in Him.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE
Genesis 1:27, 31
Deuteronomy 22:5
Deuteronomy 32:6
Isaiah 43:21
Acts 4:12
Romans 1:18-32
1 Corinthians 3:9
Ephesians 2:10

GOD'S PROMISES
Psalm 37:39
Psalm 138:8
Isaiah 29:23-24
Philippians 1:6
Hebrews 13:20-21

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE
Jude 7-8

PRAYER
Psalm 31:5-9
Psalm 139:14-18

MAKE A CHANGE
1 Samuel 12:21
Psalm 100:3-5
Jonah 2:8-9
John 3:1-7, 12
1 Corinthians 6:9-11
Philippians 2:13-15

Lesson 1
A PLAN FOR VICTORY

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

The One Step To Freedom Bible study will help a believer in Jesus Christ to overcome sin by learning principles from God's Word that leads to restoration and wholeness. Read the information below and write out the Scriptures.

1. First, repent of your sin. Begin today by making a daily commitment in seeking God's will for your life and trusting Him.

Matthew 6:33: But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Write Psalm 18:30.

2. Examine your lifestyle. Pray and ask God to pinpoint your problems and issues. See God will empower you to do so.

Psalm 26:2: Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my mind and my heart

Write Psalm 139:23-24.

3. Work closely with one of the counselors at this Bible study. They are here to help and encourage you on difficult days, especially when you feel tempted to sin. Call, text or e-mail frequently for prayer

Proverbs 11:14: Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Write Proverbs 15:22.

4. Stop associating with companions who may tempt you into sin. The Word of God (the Bible) clearly warns, "Do not be deceived, bad company corrupts good habits."

1 Corinthians 15:33: Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

Write Ephesians 5:6-7.

5. Develop friendships that will encourage you to grow in your faith. Your whole life may need to be restructured, but God's desire is that you be built up in the knowledge of Him; and this includes good fellowship with other believers.

2 Timothy 2:22: Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Write 3 John 1:11.

6. Grow in the Lord. This includes a meaningful commitment to daily Bible study, prayer, and consistent church attendance. This is how you become strong in the Lord. If you lack desire in these areas, ask the Lord to change your heart

Psalm 1:2-3: But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper

Write Psalm 51:10.

Write Hebrews 10:24-25.

6. Submit to God's will for your life. As you do, He will pour out His Holy Spirit into your heart and empower you to overcome the temptation to sin. It is in this kind of commitment that God is glorified in our lives, and we begin to truly understand His incredible, perfect love for us and His purpose for creating us.

John 15:5: (Jesus said) "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

Write Romans 12:1.

Write Galatians 5:16.

Begin to apply these guidelines today. By the grace of God, you can be honest before the Lord and learn principles from His Word, which will transform your thinking and help you see life from His perspective. It will not be easy, but as you truly trust in Jesus, you will have victory.

Lesson 2
IS ALCOHOLISM A DISEASE?

If alcoholism is a disease:

1. It is the only disease that is contracted by an act of the will.
2. It is the only disease that requires a license to distribute or sell.
3. It is the only disease that is bottled and sold.
4. It is the only disease that produces revenue for the government.
5. It is the only disease that provokes crime.
6. It is the only disease that is habit-forming.
7. It is the only disease that is spread by advertising.
8. It is the only disease for which we can get arrested and incarcerated.
9. It is the only disease that brings death on the highways.
10. It is the only disease that requires an age limit to contract.
11. It is the only disease without germ or virus, and for which there is no corrective medicine.
12. It is the only disease that bars a patient from the kingdom of God (unless he repents).

Read and define 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

GOD CALLS IT SIN

The world labels drunkenness as a disease. God calls it sin. This is just one example of many other fallacies of the world. The abuse and long-term use of narcotics as a prescription, God calls sorcery, from the Greek word *pharmakeia* meaning witchcraft.

Some say that temper tantrums are just a part of your gene pool, but God calls it outbursts of anger. Couples who live together say it's love, God calls it sexual immorality. Video-gaming all day is fun. God calls it idolatry. The same could be said about other sins too.

"When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins ***like these***. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21 NLT).

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM: **STUDENT EDITION**
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

Lesson 3

WHAT ARE THE WORKS OF THE FLESH?

It's important to know what God labels as sin so you can understand exactly what these words mean when you read them in your Bible. A Christian Bible commentary will help you, and you can find one for free online when you visit blueletterbible.org.

Using a Christian Bible commentary, define the works of the flesh that are listed in Galatians 5:19-21.

Adultery:

Fornication:

Uncleanness:

Lewdness:

Idolatry:

Sorcery:

Hatred:

Contentions:

Jealousies:

Outbursts of Wrath:

Selfish Ambitions:

Dissensions:

Heresies:

Envy:

Murder:

Drunkenness:

Revelries:

"I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who ***practice*** such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM: **STUDENT EDITION**
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

Lesson 4
IS ADDICTION A SIN?

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Our world is filled with many different opinions concerning the abuse of drugs and alcohol. The most popular thinking is that those who are drug addicts or alcoholics have a "disease." However, according to the Word of God (the Bible), drug abuse and alcoholism are not diseases but sins.

GOD'S WAY OR MAN'S WAY
God has warned us about the wisdom and philosophy of man. He said, "Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ" (Colossians 2:8 NLT). God also said, "Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:5).

With the philosophy that addictions are diseases, man tells addicts that they are not responsible for their actions and they're hopeless. This philosophy says that addicts can never be cured of their disease, and therefore must label themselves as addicts forever.

If this is your belief, please consider the following: What other diseases or destructive processes of the body are self-inflicted and by choice? Is it not true that a substance abuser always has a choice not to partake? There is no question that the body learns to crave abusive substances, but this can be overcome. Even when withdrawal symptoms result, the person always has two choices: to take that temporary fix or to endure the withdrawal symptoms.

Even if you do not believe in the *disease* philosophy, you may be tempted to believe that drug and alcohol abuse is some kind of physical addiction that God cannot help people overcome—along with pornography, homosexuality, gambling, eating disorders, anger issues, or some other compulsive behavior. Have you come to the conclusion that those who have addictive or compulsive behaviors desperately want to stop but cannot?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR
The following lessons are written to present a biblical perspective of addictive habits and refutes that such behavior is a disease.

First, we must realize that we are all sinners by nature. That is to say, we all fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23) or we miss the mark of God's perfection (Psalm 19:7, 18:30). Although few of us like to admit we are sinners, most of us would agree that we miss the mark of God's perfection. We deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin (1 John 1:8).

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM: **STUDENT EDITION**
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." This Scripture says we inherited our sinful nature from Adam. As Adam's descendants, we are prone to sin.

God's Word tells us that we serve this sinful nature by seeking to satisfy our physical desires (Romans 7:15-24). In Galatians 5:19-21, there is a list of physical desires that are sinful. Three of the listed items are idol worship, sorcery, and drunkenness.

Let us look at these things, beginning with idol worship or idolatry, and how they relate to the person who has addictive and compulsive behaviors.

WHAT IS IDOLATRY?
An idol is anything that takes the place of God in a person's life, taking top priority and attention. Drugs, alcohol, pornography, gambling, eating disorders, and other types of addictions are false gods that rule a person's life. Instead of living for the Creator and Savior, a person bows down and worships to these idols as god. The Scriptures clearly indicate this is a type of idolatry.

WHAT IS SORCERY?
Now let us look at sorcery (witchcraft). The original Greek word for sorcery is the word *pharmakeia,* from where we get the word "pharmacy." Back in the time of Christ, sorcerers and witches used these mind-altering drugs to tap into the powers of the demonic realm.

WHAT IS DRUNKENNESS?
An excessive use of alcohol causes drunkenness. Throughout the Bible, drunkenness and intoxication are condemned, and numerous examples are given where alcohol led to immorality. Drunkenness is associated with loss of control of one's senses or actions. Ephesians 5:18 tell us to be filled with the Spirit and not to be drunk.

WHO IS AN IDOLATER?
Galatians 5:21 defines an idolater as one who **practices** such things. To practice means "to frequent or make a habit of." The first two of the Ten Commandments say that we are not to have any other gods before the Lord our God, and we are not to bow down or worship them (see Exodus 20:1-17). This is very important to God and Galatians 5:21 states that idolaters will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Are you practicing idolatry, sorcery, or drunkenness? If you are, God has a better plan for your life. He does not want you to be excluded from receiving your inheritance. He wants you to enter in victoriously, through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

Lesson 5
HOW TO OVERCOME ADDICTION

We need to establish specifically what God's Word says about the mind-altering effects of addiction. Take time to reflect about each verse and write down God's revelation to you.

Ephesians 5:18:

1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

1 Corinthians 6:18:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

ADDICTION DESTROYS
Read Galatians 5:19-20. Self-destruction, violence, sorrows, contentions, unexplainable wounds, and perversions in the heart are the results of all forms of addictions, which will hinder a person from inheriting God's kingdom (heaven).

God says to be filled with His Holy Spirit rather than to be drunk (Ephesians 5:18). With alcohol and drugs, these sins are evident, but with other sins you cannot immediately see their effects. But God sees everything and He knows the effects that sin has on our lives. The bottom line is that God knows how destructive these sins are to our bodies, minds, and our families and friends. Most importantly, sin destroys our ability to fellowship with God and to enter into all that He has for each one of us—now and eternally.

God knows that our sinful nature separates us from Him and condemns us to eternal death (Romans 6:23). This is exactly why Jesus Christ died on the cross for all of our sins, once and for all. The Bible tells us that God made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21). God demonstrated His love for us when He gave His perfect, sinless Son to die in our place (John 3:16).

When Jesus died for our sins, He provided atonement on our behalf (1 John 2:2). That is why Jesus is the ONLY way a person can come to know God (John 14:6). By putting our trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we can inherit God's kingdom. It is by faith in Jesus and Him only that you can be saved (Acts 16:30-31 and Acts 4:10-12).

HOW TO OVERCOME ADDICTION
In putting our trust in Jesus, we become what Jesus described as "born again" (John 3:3-6). We are born out of the flesh and its sinful ways (such as addictions), and born into the family of God (John 1:12-13). The Spirit of God begins to help us to overcome addiction the very moment we unconditionally accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior (John 7:38-39).

The Holy Spirit empowers the believer to overcome the works of the flesh (sin) and to walk in the Spirit. When this happens, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control will be evident in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

This is part of that perfect will God has for each of our lives. However, unless we turn away (repent) from our sin, we will never know the overwhelming joy that comes from a personal relationship with God.

CAN A PERSON BE HEALED FROM ADDICTION?
One more thing separates the opinions of man and God concerning addiction. Most of today's so-called experts say that if you were once an addict, you will always be one. There is no hope for you. God's Word settles the truth on this matter and gives us hope. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 it says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

1. In light of Colossians 2:8 and 1 Corinthians 2:5, explain why biblical counseling is more effective than psychological counseling for addicts or those who struggle with sin.

2. Would you say that you are perfect? What does this mean in God's terms? Can you therefore conclude that in God's eyes you are a sinner? How about in your own eyes? See 1 John 1:8-9. Write your conclusions below.

3. What did God do to enable sinners to inherit His kingdom? Refer to John 3:16-17.

4. Read John 1:12-13, John 3:6, John 7:38-39 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. In your own words, how can a man be born again, and what is the result of that new birth?

Lesson 6
ONE STEP TO FREEDOM SCRIPTURES

1. **Romans 3:23**: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

2. **1 John 4:9-10**: In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten 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 to be the propitiation for our sins

3. **John 3:16-17**: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

4. **Romans 6:23**: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

5. **John 8:36**: Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

6. **Acts 16:30**: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" **Romans 10:9-12**: If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

7. **Ephesians 2:8-9**: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

8. **John 7:37-39**: Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive.

9. **Matthew 11:28-30**: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart: and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. "

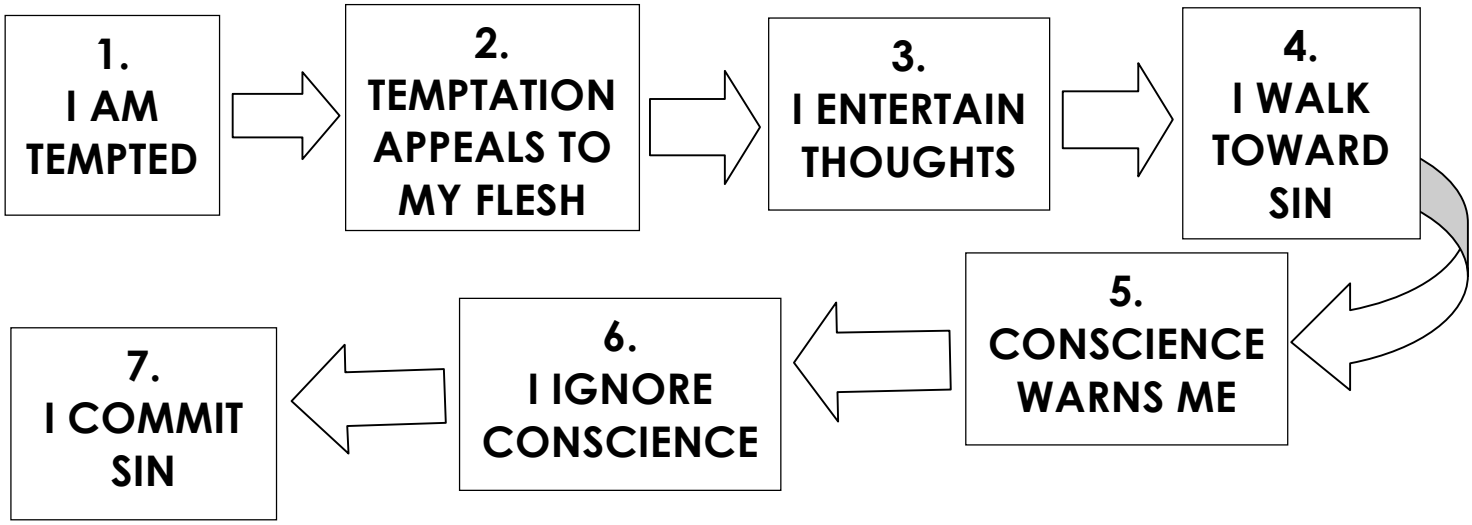
10. **Luke 18:13-~~14~~**: God, be merciful to me a sinner! **Psalm 25:18**: Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. **Matthew 14:30**: "Lord, save me!"

11. **Psalm 40:1-2**: I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.

12. **2 Corinthians 5:17**: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM: **STUDENT EDITION**
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

Lesson 7
THE CYCLE OF TEMPTATION



WHO TEMPTS YOU?
"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:13-15).

1. I am tempted. Satan and his host of wicked spirits can initiate a temptation to test us. Read Genesis 3:1-6, Matthew 4:1, 16:13-23, John 13:2 and Ephesians 6:11-12.

Using the Scripture passages listed, what speaks to you the most and why?

2. Temptation appeals to my fleshly desires. We are enticed by our own desire or urge to please our flesh.

Write out James 1:13b-14 and Galatians 5:16-17 in your own words.

3. I begin to entertain thoughts, thus making a choice for sin. If you entertain thoughts, they increase your desire and fan sinful action into flame (like adding gasoline to the fire). Jesus said that if you look at a woman to lust for her (entertain lustful thoughts in your mind), you have committed adultery in your heart (Matthew 5:28). Confession and repentance can take place here, which would stop the person from "falling into the act itself."

What must the Christian learn in order to stop the sin process? See 2 Corinthians 10:5.

4. I am now walking in the direction of sin. When I continue to entertain sinful thoughts, the first level of involvement with sin begins. I have started walking in the counsel of sin.

Write Psalm 1:1 here and commit it to memory.

5. Conscience warns me that this is wrong. The law of God is written on the conscience of men, even unsaved men (Romans 2:15). Though sin has marred the image of God in man, that sense of right and wrong still remains in all men. For the Christian, we have the Holy Spirit to convict us when we begin to stray (Galatians 5:17-18). The wise thing to do is listen and respond God's way. See 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Peter 2:11.

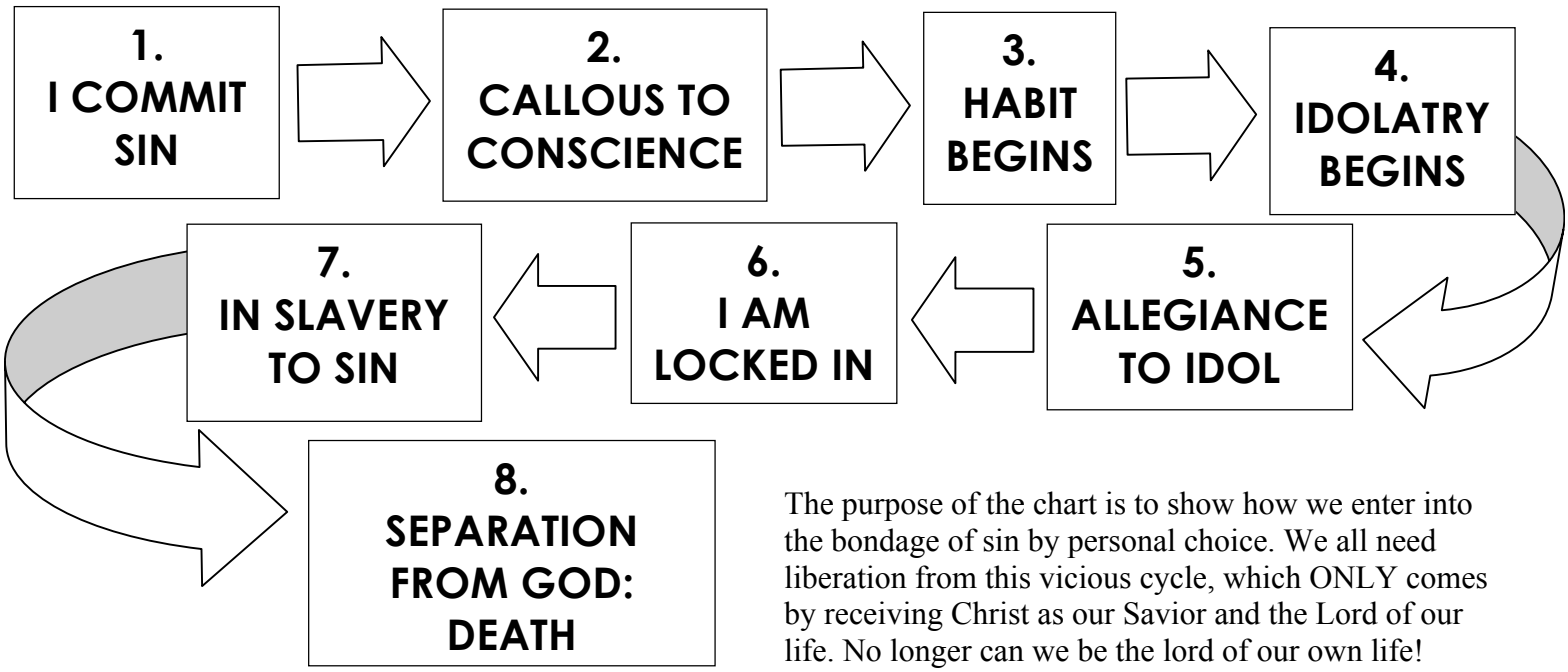
What does God promise the Christian concerning temptation? See 1 Corinthians 10:13.

6. I suppress (ignore) what I know to be right. I suppress the truth to pursue my desires. I begin to follow the lie ("Go ahead, you deserve it"). Whenever I ignore what is right and pursue what is wrong, I start to become "self-deceived." In other words, in my mind I have thought of a way to justify what I am doing. The more I push aside my convictions of right and wrong, the duller I become to responding to those convictions by God's Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 1:18-20 and share why God says we are without excuse when it comes to sin.

7. I commit the act of sin. See James 1:14-15. What does this Scripture plainly say to you?

Lesson 8
THE CYCLE OF SIN



The purpose of the chart is to show how we enter into the bondage of sin by personal choice. We all need liberation from this vicious cycle, which ONLY comes by receiving Christ as our Savior and the Lord of our life. No longer can we be the lord of our own life!

1. I commit the act of sin. See Genesis 3:6 and James 1:15a.

2. I become "desensitized" to right and wrong. It becomes easier to sin the next time I am tempted. I become past feeling or desensitized. See Ephesians 4:19.

3. Habit begins. It becomes a part of me or becomes "second nature." We all have a "habit capacity." This can be used for good or bad. See Romans 6:16, 19.

4. Desires are given ultimate priority, and they become an idol. Whenever I give anything in my life ultimate priority, it becomes an idol of my heart. Any desire can become more important in my life than pleasing God. See Ezekiel 14:3-6.

5. My life becomes enslaved to serving these desires. A pattern of allegiance (or ritual) to the idol sets in. Jesus said, "Whoever commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). This is a compulsive and addictive behavior. For some, it is turning to the bottle or smoking cigarettes.

6. I am locked into a way of life. I've become dominated by sin making me a slave to it, leading me into bondage and destruction. See Proverbs 5:22-23.

7. I am a slave. You are either a slave to sin or a slave to Christ. See Romans 6:16, 22.

8. Separation from God "DEATH" This refers to both physical and spiritual death, leading to God's judgment and spiritually remaining separated from Him for eternity. For the Christian, it brings spiritual deadness and corruption. "The wages of sin brings death" (Romans 6:23). "Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren" James 1:15-16.

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM: **STUDENT EDITION**
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

Have you heard the story of the emperor's new clothes? This is the condition of a person who is self-deceived as God sees them—they are naked and think that they are clothed. That is why the apostle Paul said, "Do not be deceived" in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

Only when we are truly honest about our sin can the Holy Spirit show us the real problem, as well as the real solution (confession, repentance and obedience to the Word of God).

1. Read James 1:22-25. In order to have victory over sin, what does this passage say?

2. Read John 8:34-36. What does Jesus call a person who commits sin and how can this person become free? What happens to the person that comes to Jesus?

3. For a Christian who feels they are living in defeat over their sin, what does Philippians 4:13 promise?

4. According to Psalm 1:1, what are the three actions that lead to sin?

5. According to Psalm 1:2-3, what is the remedy and blessing for resisting sin?

6. Is sin an accident, an involuntary action, or a choice? Explain your answer.

7. What are the wages of sin? What does this mean to you?

Lesson 9
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESTORATION

Accountability to God and to one another is the foundation for freedom and liberty. But what is true freedom? It's both the responsibility and the ability, by the grace of God, to do what is right according to God's Holy Word. Accountability is one of the means God uses to bring about solid growth and maturity in our Christian walk, to bring about restoration from a sinful lifestyle.

Accountability to God
We need to have a deep reverence for God first. Our priorities must be God-centered and our values must be based on biblical morality. When this becomes our attitude, our life and family will be blessed and our knowledge of spiritual things will increase.

1. Write out Proverbs 9:10 and Psalm 115:11.

2. According to Proverbs 8:13, what should be our biblical value?

3. What should be our attitude for restoration, and how will God bless us? See Proverbs 22:4.

Obedience to God
A person who has truly been redeemed by Jesus Christ will not live a life characterized by continuous, willful sin. For restoration to take place, we must be accountable to God and obey Him. We must have a loving relationship with God Himself.

4. In order to obey God, what does He ask of us? See Deuteronomy 10:12-13.

5. How can God's Word help you to obey? Write what you find in Psalm 119:9-11.

Serving God
Restoration comes with accountability in serving God. We can do this by teaching our children about Him or declaring Him to others. Serving God also helps us to remember what God has done for us.

6. Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9 and explain in your own words what this commands.

Accountability to One Another

Just as we are accountable to our employer on the job or accountable to our spouse in a marriage, we also need accountability for our spiritual development. However, we may be prone to resist reasoning, "It's between me and God. It's nobody else's business." Yet the Bible teaches that we as brothers and sisters in Christ are to be accountable to one another, to the degree that men are accountable to men, and women are accountable to women.

Receiving Accountability

7. Write Proverbs 12:15.

8. When receiving counsel, what does Hebrews 13:17 instruct?

9. Without the power of the Holy Spirit and reading God's Word, it's impossible to stay accountable to God. Write Galatians 2:20 as a reminder of who you are today.

10. Read James 4:17 and share your biblical responsibility for restoration.

11. What encouragement do you see in Galatians 6:9?

Helping others with accountability

12. What must we consider when keeping our friends accountable? See Hebrews 10:24-25.

13. As a Christian, why is it vital to have the courage to help in someone's accountability? See James 5:19-20.

14. Read Galatians 6:1-5 and share what the Bible teaches about being accountable to one another.

"So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God." Romans 14:1

Lesson 10
WHAT IS A DAILY DEVOTION?

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He [Jesus] went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed" (Mark 1:35).

This is a guideline for daily devotions to help you improve your prayer life.

It is important that every Christian establish a habit of meeting with the Lord on a daily basis. Many Christians refer to this time as a "daily devotion." A daily devotion is a specific time during each day that is set apart solely to communicate with God. While it is true that we can communicate with the Lord at any time, it is helpful (and advisable) to set apart a certain amount of time every day for this purpose. Therefore, we would like to give you this step-by-step plan to help you develop consistent and fruitful daily devotions in your own life.

HOW TO HAVE A DAILY DEVOTION

Meet with God. Before you begin, take a few moments silencing your heart and mind before God.

TALK TO GOD.
This is accomplished through prayer. Four basic elements of prayer are listed as follows. You can remember it by the acronym ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

1. Adoration This is the purest kind of prayer because it is all for God; there is nothing in it for you. Take a few minutes to praise and worship God for all that He has done for you.

2. Confession "Confession" comes from the root word meaning "to agree together with." Apply this to prayer and agree with God. Something happened yesterday that you called a slight exaggeration; God calls it a lie. You call it telling the truth about somebody; God calls it gossip. Confess, apologize, and repent. (1 John 1:9)

3. Thanksgiving Express your gratitude to God. Think of several specific things to thank Him for: your family, your business, your church, your responsibilities—even thank Him for hardships knowing that He allows them for your spiritual maturity (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

4. Supplication This means to ask earnestly and humbly and make your petitions known to God. Ask for your needs and the needs of others. Ask that God's will for your life, your problems and your goals would take place on a daily basis (1 John 5:14-15).

LISTEN TO GOD.
This is accomplished by reading His Word (the Bible) and listening to His voice within your heart. God's voice will never go against His Word and He will always bring a sense of peace, never confusion (John 14:27, 1 Corinthians 14:33).

Understand and apply these principles. Ask God to help you understand His Word and the truths that you learn; then ask God to help you apply these truths in your life each day (James 1:5).

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM: **STUDENT EDITION**
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

A daily devotion requires reading God's Word and praying for the Holy Spirit to give you understanding. Read the following verses to help you apply these principles daily.

1. Read Luke 9:23. What does this verse tell us?

2. What does it mean to deny yourself?

3. Read Luke 9:23. What does it mean to "Take up his cross and follow Me"?

4. Read Matthew 10:38. Write in your own words what this means to you.

5. Read Matthew 6:19-34. Explain what verses 6:19-20 are to you personally.

6. According to verse 21, where should your treasure be?

7. What do verses 22-23 reveal about what you see with your eyes?

8. Verse 24 states, "No one can serve two masters." Why is this necessary to remember in your plan for victory?

9. What is your response to Matthew 6:25-34?

10. Summarize what you have learned from this Bible devotion.

Lesson 11
A SAMPLE DAILY DEVOTION

Use the following verses to practice applying a personal Bible devotion. Read Matthew 7 and record what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you.

Verses 1-6:

Verses 7-11:

Verse 12:

Verses 13-14:

Verses 15-20:

Verses 21-23:

Verses 24-26:

Now that you have learned what a daily devotion is, it is important to continue this daily habit. Every day, pick a passage of Scripture and meditate upon it. Start with a chapter a day. Journal your thoughts on what the Holy Spirit is showing you about each portion.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"
(Philippians 4:6-7).

ONE STEP TO FREEDOM: **STUDENT EDITION**
CHAPTER 1: Planning For Victory

Lesson 1
MAN'S CONDITION

MAN'S CONDITION
"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:24-25a)

What is the underlying problem of man and the remedy? If we fail to understand the nature of the problem, we will misdiagnose it. Jeremiah, the prophet, rebuked the false prophets of his time for overlooking the seriousness of the people's problems. He wrote, "They have also healed the hurt of my people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace!' when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). We want to avoid giving superficial help that does not get down to the matters of the heart.

1. What proceeds from the heart according to Matthew 15:19?

2. What is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? See Jeremiah 17:9.

Self-help groups have an appearance of help, but they can only put a band-aid on a cancerous condition. We need God's perspective on the origin and nature of our problems, so we can deal with the root cause. To understand man's problem more fully, read Romans 5:12-21. In this passage, God tells us that there are only two types of people: those who are "in Adam" and those who are "in Christ." Herein lies man's condition and God's remedy.

OUR CONDITION "IN ADAM" (Romans 5:12-14)
Death is unnatural; it has not always existed. This really hits home when we experience the loss of a loved one through death. Death is an intruder, and all of us one day are appointed to die. The Bible teaches that it is God's judgment for sin. So when we read Romans 5:12-14, it refers us back to Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3:1-6.

Adam was a perfect man, living in a personal relationship to his Creator. Since real love is not forced, Adam had the choice to remain obedient to God or to pursue "self-enlightenment" through the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Upon being tempted by the serpent (*2 Corinthians 11:14 tells us it was the Devil in physical form at that moment*), both Adam and his wife, Eve, ate of the forbidden tree and sinned.

According to Romans 5, the entire human race is represented in Adam. One person's action affected all who were related to him. When Adam sinned, it affected every single one of his descendants. All of us were in the loins of Adam; therefore, his action of disobedience was imputed to our account before we were even born. All men and women are guilty of Adam's sin because Adam is the head (or representative) of the human race.

Adam's sin corrupted him. Originally, he loved to please God; however, his inward person (that is, his nature) was marred by sin. From then on, his natural inclination was to please his flesh independent of God. All of us as Adam's descendants have inherited a corrupt, sinful nature.

EVERY PERSON IS NATURALLY SELF-CENTERED

In the garden, God-centeredness was replaced with self-centeredness, self-interest, and self-desire. Then death through sin was introduced (Romans 5:12).

Now, every single person is fully motivated in the direction of what pleases his or her flesh, instead of being motivated to please God. You have probably heard it said, "If it feels good, do it." We are motivated to do what suits self first in spite of pleasing God and others.

This is our inherited inclination as descendants of Adam. Sin actively works against us from within us. The law proves this. How many of us have been told not to do something and wanted to do it even more? Have you seen the sign that reads "Maximum Speed 65?" When a police car is not present, most of us suit ourselves instead of obeying the law. In addition, we usually have a justification (or excuse) for why the law should not apply to us. According to the Bible, sin controls us and we cannot escape this control on our own. Jesus tells us we are all slaves to sin. (John 8:34)

Romans 5:17 says that death reigns (or rules) over our lives because of our relationship to Adam. First, it refers to physical death, and secondly, it refers to spiritual deadness where we are unable to relate to God. This is why people are so bound and broken. Our lives are dead in trespasses and sins. Without God's Holy Spirit, we are spiritually dead and powerless.

Man was created to reflect the image (or likeness) of God through a loving personal relationship with Him. Instead, we are more concerned about our own self image.

We seek an identity apart from God on our own, but man is incomplete apart from a personal relationship with God. This is why we experience loneliness, dissatisfaction, emptiness and a fear of death. All unbelievers are bound for eternal destruction. But physical death is not the end; the soul (consciousness) of man will exist throughout all of eternity.

So death literally rules over those "in Adam" as king. Its rule is inescapable apart from some outside supernatural, miraculous provision—Jesus Christ.

GOD'S REMEDY

"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:18-19).

Lesson 2
GOD'S REMEDY

MAN'S PROBLEM

Our problem is spiritual in nature. It is incorrect to think that you sin because of your genes, or a mental illness, or a disease of any kind. Christians flatly reject such unscientific, speculative notions. Just as Adam ran from God in the garden, we, as his descendants, by nature also ran from God. Instinctively, we all pass the buck. However, we cannot blame our problems on our circumstances.

Some of our common excuses are: "I had a father who didn't love me." Or "I was abused as a child." "All of my relatives are alcoholics so I am too." "I come from a dysfunctional family." It is part of our "Adam" nature to shift blame. (Genesis 3:12-13) Blameshifting cannot heal our sinful condition.

WHY DO WE NEED A REMEDY?

Because of our sinful inclinations, we need freedom from the power that sin has over our lives. All of us received our earthly life source from Adam, and it was in depravity and deadness. Our need then is to get a new life source, not merely a modified behavior, but a new nature no longer enslaved to sin.

One man illustrated it this way: "You can teach a parrot to say, 'Hello, how are you?' That is, you can modify its behavior, but no matter how much you modify its behavior (to talk) it is still a parrot." It cannot have a rational conversation like a human being. It would need a supernatural change to receive a human nature in order to relate to human beings. In the same way, mere behavior modification, making changes to my life on my own, is unable to remedy my real need.

Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His time for this very thing. He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:27-28).

We need a new work to take place inside of us. We need a new nature that desires to love and please the Lord—rather than loving and pleasing ourselves first.

THE REMEDY GOD HAS PROVIDED

God sent His only Son to become the Head of a new race outside of Adam's race. Adam was the head of all who are born after the flesh. As long as Adam is my head, I am still under the power of sin and death. I may be able to "kick the habit," but I have only dealt with the symptoms. I have not dealt with the root of the problem, which is sin and idolatry. It is only a matter of time before other symptoms arise. I am still bound for eternal destruction. I need to be taken out of the parentage (race) of Adam and born into a new race, and under a new Head, which is Jesus Christ.

BORN AGAIN OF THE SPIRIT

Just as Adam's actions affected all who were related to him, Jesus' actions affect all who become related to Him. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" (John 3:6-7). I must be born again by the Spirit. Only Jesus can remake a person to please God and give him eternal life. When I am born into this new race under Jesus Christ, His righteousness is imputed to my account in the place of Adam's sin. I also receive a new nature that causes me to want righteousness—and to live righteously.

When you are born again, you enter a new dimension. Those "in Adam" can't understand this. It's like if you were born blind. You have never seen colors, people, the sunset, or anything else. People try to describe it, but you are unable to comprehend. In the same way, it's hard to describe being born again until you have had your spiritual eyes opened.

Who is your head? Are you "in Adam" or "in Christ"? In Adam, you are under the power of sin. In Jesus Christ, you are liberated from sin. The choice is yours. David the psalmist wrote, "O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him." (Psalm 34:8) No matter how deep your pit, God's grace is deeper to save and keep you.

1. Who are "in Adam" and who are "in Christ"?"

2. Is your addiction physical, mental, or spiritual in nature? Explain.

3. When Adam sinned, what happened to his relationship with God?

4. What is the remedy for man's condition? See John 3:7.

5. Why must a person be born again? Refer to 1 Corinthians 2:14.

6. How can a person be free from an addiction—or any sin—and live righteously forever? Write out 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Lesson 3

WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY ABOUT ADDICTION

"You shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3

In a previous study, we learned that an idol is literally a false god that a person serves instead of God. Drugs, alcohol, pornography, video games, eating disorders, and other types of addictions are false gods that rule a person's life. In a sense, they are bowing down and living for their addiction as a god and worshiping it. Jesus is their Savior but Jesus is not the Lord of their life. Their addiction is lord of their life, and has become a false god. The Scriptures clearly indicate this is a type of idolatry.

The Scriptures clearly indicate this is a type of idolatry.

Addictions are a very real issue, but they are not impossible to overcome with the help of God. It is important to understand what God has to say in the Bible about addictions.

You may have tried to quit your addiction, possibly even several times, but have always ended up failing. It is because you tried to change in your own strength. Jesus said, "The Spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). This is why He sent the Helper, the Holy Spirit to help those who believe in Jesus to overcome sin and to live for Him.

Read the following verses about addiction. Write down in your own words what you think these verses are saying about God's views concerning addiction. Spend some time pondering these verses and ask God to reveal these truths to you.

1. Deuteronomy 6:5:

2. Matthew 7:21-23:

3. John 8:32, 36:

4. John 14:26:

5. Acts 1:8:

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 2: Initial Restoration

SELF-EXAMINATION

Most of us would agree that addictions are life-dominating sins, which affect virtually every area of a person's life. Check off the areas of your life that you feel have been affected by your addiction(s):

_____Eating habits

_____Close relationships

_____Sleep

_____Job (attendance, production)

_____Friends (social life)

_____Emotions (self-pity, anger)

_____Economics (finances)

_____Health

_____Marriage and family life

_____Character and practices (deceitfulness, lying)

Now, spend some time in your group discussing these areas. Be honest with one another. James 5:16 says, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

The moment we receive Jesus as our Savior, we need to ask Him to be the Lord of our lives too. We need to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to give us the power to overcome our sinful behavior.

The following Scriptures teach us how to apply God's Word. Write what you learn.

1. Luke 11:13

2. James 1:21-22

3. 1 Peter 2:1-3, 11

4. Galatians 6:9

When God's Spirit dwells in our hearts, He guides us. We are no longer born of the flesh and its sinful ways. God desires that our lives give evidence of this change that has taken place in our hearts—not just by our words but also by our actions.

Lesson 4
PUT OFF AND PUT ON

"Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."
(Ephesians 4:22-24)

God wants us to understand that when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He comes and dwells in our hearts. He bought us with a price (His death on the cross). Therefore, it is only reasonable for God to ask and expect us to glorify Him in our bodies.

Habits must not only be broken; they need to be replaced with new ones. Just as it took you a while to develop bad habits, it is going to take some time to establish good habits to replace the bad ones. The Word of God calls this putting off and putting on. God wants us to replace the old destructive habits with new productive ones.

PRESENT YOURSELF TO PUT OFF
1. Read Romans 12:1-2. Explain what God wants us to do.

2. What five things does Colossians 3:8-9 tell us to put off, and one thing not to do?

PUT ON NEW CHARACTER AND HABITS
3. According to Colossians 3:12, what five things must we put on?

4. What is your new character in Christ as explained in Colossians 3:13-14?

5. List the nine new habits for the Christian (repeating one twice) in Colossians 3:15-17.

6. What spoke to you the most after reading Colossians 3:5-17?

PUT ON THE NEW MAN
God wants to put our old nature (the sinful flesh) out of business. As a Christian, God wants us to go forward in the power of His Spirit, with an obedient heart in the new nature (as His child walking according to His Spirit).

7. Write Ephesians 4:24.

8. Looking at verse 24, what two attributes create this new man?

We can be a new person by disciplining ourselves to study the Bible more often, pray throughout the day, and to be actively involved in the church where we fellowship.

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

9. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Write in your own words what verse 17 means to you.

It is important that we desire to walk in our new nature. If we put God first in our lives on a daily basis, all the sins of the past will begin to fade away.

10. With biblical insight from these Scriptures, as a Christian, how do you view any sin you may be struggling with? Pray and ask the Lord to reveal what would please Him in these matters.

God has spoken and it is clear. He wants us to put off our old man and its sinful way and put on the new man who is raised victoriously in Christ. He is faithful and He will empower us by His Spirit to do so!

Lesson 5
A NEW WAY OF THINKING

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1-2)

God wants us to seek things for our eternal benefit, rather than a temporary fix. That is why He encourages us to seek the things above (spiritual), rather than the things here on earth (physical). In order for God's Spirit to work and to help us do this, we need to be disciplined and obedient to God's will in our lives. Our old man does not die easily.

WHAT SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT?
Psalm 119:36-37 reads, "Incline my heart to Your laws, and not to selfishness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way."

If we abide in God's Word, He will take away our struggle with sin. We will lose the desire for those addictions and sins that had a hold on us. It will be challenging, but the Lord will begin that initial restoration of our lives if we obey and trust Him.

1. After we put off our former sinful nature, what should we renew? Read Ephesians 4:23.

2. Read Joshua 1:8. Why should we meditate on God's Word day and night?

3. What does God promise if we meditate on His Word … day and night?

4. What has God commanded for us to do in Joshua 1:8?

5. Why will this commandment give us strength and confidence in the face of possible future temptations with sin and addiction(s)?

6. Read Matthew 12:35. How does Jesus tie in this biblical principle?

A NEW MIND, A NEW HEART

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

John 3:16 says that God **so** loves us! We can trust Him. He is never going to ask us to do something that is not in our best interest—spiritually or physically. It is important for us to realize that God is perfect. God is love and God created us so He could show us His perfect love!

When we're obedient to God's will in our lives, He will give us a new heart. If we remember this, especially when we are tempted to sin, God will empower us to resist the impulse to sin. He will deliver us from addiction when we surrender our will for His will. If we look to Him and obey Him, restoration will begin.

7. Write God's declaration about a new heart found in Ezekiel 11:19-20.

8. When we seek God's law and cherish it within our hearts, what does God promise? See Psalm 37:31.

9. Read Psalm 51:10 and share what it means to you.

10. Write out 2 Corinthians 5:17 and commit it to memory.

Lesson 1
SEEKING GOD'S HELP

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3)

When we compare ourselves to others around us, we don't look so bad. But when we look at the Lord in His purity and holiness, we agree with the apostle Paul when he said, "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).

WHAT IS POOR IN SPIRIT?
Poverty of spirit is a true evaluation of yourself, not in the light of man but in the light of God. When you see yourself in the light of the Lord, the effect on you is poverty of spirit. You realize you are a sinner in need of God's forgiveness. It's a very humbling experience to get a true vision of yourself in the light of God's holiness and purity.

To be "poor in spirit" means to understand that you have no spiritual wealth on your own—that in your own efforts, you could never please God. You could never come close to God. It means saying, "I am a sinner in need of a Savior."

This humility is the entrance into the kingdom of heaven. This same humility looks only to God for help. It does not consider the world's ways or its philosophies. Only God's Word is acknowledged as truth. This is the beginning consciousness of a person who has a true relationship with God.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Why? Because this person has had a true encounter with God, and as the result, the kingdom of heaven belongs to him. He's no longer living in this temporal material realm, but he is now a child of God, and a citizen of the eternal kingdom.

1. When the prophet Isaiah had a vision of the Lord, write down his response. See Isaiah 6:5.

2. What was Peter's initial response after he encountered the Lord for the first time? See Luke 5:8.

THE PROUD CANNOT SEE GOD
When you really see the Lord, you have the consciousness of being spiritually poor. Blessed are the poor in spirit! They are the ones who discover the truth about themselves and seek God's help.

On the other hand, if you see a man who is proud, pompous, or declares he doesn't need God, this man has not yet really seen the Lord. No one can really see God without a feeling of grief and despair, appealing to God for His mercy, grace and forgiveness.

3. Read Proverbs 16:5 and share how the Lord views the proud and what is their end result.

4. Using a Bible commentary or dictionary, define the meaning of "abomination."

5. Write James 4:6.

God forgives the humble (the poor in spirit), for the humble seeks His forgiveness; but He resists the proud, for they fail to seek Him.

Read Matthew 11:28-29.
If you come to Jesus Christ, He will reveal the Father to you. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). Today many people boast in their knowledge of God. But Jesus in essence said, "It's only as I reveal Him that you can know God. Now come unto Me, for in knowing Me, in understanding Me, you'll know and understand God, the Father. "

6. Whom did Jesus invite to Himself? (verse 28)

7. What does Jesus desire to teach us and what will we find? (verse 29)

Jesus extends the offer of forgiveness and rest from the labors of our sinful nature. He also reveals to us that after He forgives us, He wants to teach us how to have a forgiving spirit like His, a spirit of gentleness (meekness) and lowliness in heart.

The key to receiving this forgiveness is your willingness to humble yourself in the sight of the Lord.

"*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up*" *(James 4:10).*

Lesson 2
OUR CONFESSION

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MOURN?
When we see ourselves in the light of the Lord, it creates brokenness in our hearts and weeping over our sinfulness. When we see this truth, it causes us to be repentant. And when we mourn over our sin, Jesus promises to comfort us.

"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but worldly sorrow lacks repentance and results in spiritual death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)

As you mourn over the fact that you have no strength, no ability or power, you feel helpless, and that causes you to cry out to God. In your state of mourning, you'll begin to experience the glorious power of God, doing in your life what you could not possibly do for yourself. Mourning over your sin causes you to confess your sin. And confession of sin is critical for victory!

FAILURE TO CONFESS OUR SIN
When we fail to confess our sins to the Lord, one of two things happens: (1) We begin to think we are without a sinful nature and become self-righteous, or (2) We harden our hearts to the conviction of God's Holy Spirit, refusing His offer to help us. This will bring our relationship with God to a standstill.

1. Read Proverbs 28:13-14 and write it here.

Read 1 John 1:8-10.
2. If we say that we have no sin, whom do we deceive? See verse 8.

3. What happens when we confess our sins? See verse 9.

4. Write out 1 John 1:10.

In 1 John 1:8-10, notice that each verse begins with the word "if." God puts a stipulation on our forgiveness and restoration. That work is based on our confession of sins. If we confess our sins, God will show us our sin (through the conviction of the Holy Spirit) and forgive us and cleanse us from unrighteousness.

Unconfessed sin can limit our relationship with God. If we do not confess our sins, we cannot serve God. The following Scripture passages teach us about unrepented sin and why it is mandatory to confess our sins.

5. Read Psalm 66:18. What happens with unrepented sin?

6. Read Psalm 38:3-4. What is the result of unconfessed sin?

7. How does God view the unrepentant person? See Proverbs 28:9.

8. If we are uncertain that we have sinned, what does Jesus promise?

9. Not only will the Holy Spirit teach us our sins and show us how to turn away from them, what will the Word of God do? See 2 Timothy 3:16.

The more we study God's Word, the more we become aware of what He desires in our daily lives. His Word also reveals our sin nature and makes it clear how to confess and repent.

10. Read Psalm 139:23-24. Why does the psalmist (David) invite God to search his heart?

If we seek the Lord through prayer, meditation and His Word, God will be well pleased to show us our sins. All we need to do is ask, and have a willing heart ready to respond to what God shows us.

When we confess our sins, two wonderful things take place. First, God forgives us our sins; and secondly, He cleanses us from the unrighteousness of our sins (1 John 1:9). The result of confession is a release from guilt and we are set free to rejoice in the goodness of the Lord.

"Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

Lesson 3
TURNING AWAY FROM SIN

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6)

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?
Every day as believers in Christ, we wrestle with controlling our sinful nature. This is why the need for ongoing confession is so important. We need to ask God to show us our sin nature and ask for His help to turn away from our sins.

When we have sinned, not only do we need to confess our sins, but more importantly, we need to stop doing sinful things. This is called repentance. True repentance results in a change in our attitude and behavior. It works itself out practically as we turn away from sin and desire to turn to God seeking His righteousness instead of our former life of sin.

Read 1 John 2:1-6.
1. As believers in Christ, what happens when we sin (verse 1)?

2. What is Jesus to those who believe in Him (verse 2)?

3. How can we be sure that we know God (verse 3)?

4. What do you become if you claim to know God but don't obey His Word (verse 4)?

5. What is that person lacking, according to verse 4?

6. How can you know that you are in God's love (verse 5)?

7. If we claim to know and abide in Jesus, what should we do (verse 6)?

Jesus died for our sins so that we would follow His example and live for Him. He does not forgive our sins so we can go on sinning repeatedly over and over. Rather He desires for us to love Him (instead of sin), and serve Him (instead of our sinful nature). This is how you turn away from sin.

Read Hebrews 10:26-30.
8. If we receive the knowledge of the truth (Jesus) and continue to sin willfully, what happens (verse 26)?

9. What three things happen when we sin willfully (verse 29)?

1.

2.

3.

Everyone is accountable to God. However, for believers there is an increased accountability. God has saved us and forgiven us of our unrighteousness, having revealed Himself and His will to us. He justifiably expects us to be obedient to His will in our life and turn away from sin.

Read Psalm 119:9-11 to help avoid repeating the same sins.
10. How can a young man cleanse his way (verse 9)?

11. How should we seek the Lord (verse 10)?

12. What can we hide in our hearts to keep from sinning (verse 11)?

The more we study God's Word and apply it to our lives, the less likely we are to sin against God. Remember, faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). As we study God's Word, He builds us up in our faith, and this helps us to turn away from sin.

Read 2 Timothy 2:22.
13. From what should we flee?

14. What should we pursue? And with whom?

As believers, we need to avoid people and places that would cause us to stumble into sinning. This involves turning away from a sinful lifestyle and developing a godly, Christ-centered lifestyle where we desire and thirst after the things of God.

Lesson 4
FORGIVING OTHERS

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

WHY DO I NEED TO FORGIVE?
God forgives us of our sins through our faith in Jesus Christ. As God has forgiven us, He wants us to forgive others.

When a person receives God's forgiveness (through believing Jesus died on the cross for their sins), God then expects and commands that person to extend this forgiveness to other people who have wronged them. Regardless of the circumstances, if we choose to live a life that pleases God, then we must learn to forgive others.

For people whose lives have involved addiction, this principle is magnified in its need for practical application. Marriages are destroyed, jobs are lost, families are split apart, friends become enemies, and enemies become friends. The effects of addiction destroy personal lives; yet, through Jesus every addict can find forgiveness of their sins. The problem for so many is extending this same forgiveness to other people.

It is hard to forgive (and forget) those who encouraged us in addiction. It is hard to forgive those who took advantage of us when we were down and out. For some families, healing and restoration never take place because the other spouse refuses to forgive the person who destroyed the marriage and/or family through their addiction. This is the greatest challenge to every Christian: to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us.

Read Matthew 6:9-15.
1. What is the stipulation for our sins being forgiven (verse 12)?

2. What happens if we do not forgive others (verse 15)?

It is important to note here that as Jesus taught the disciples how they should pray, He emphasized forgiveness as the key to prayer. If we do not forgive others, we sin and our fellowship with God is broken. God's Word commands us to forgive others and His Holy Spirit gives us the power to do so. Those who desire to find mercy with God must show mercy to others. Christ came into the world as the great peacemaker, not only to reconcile us to God, but one to another.

3. Write out Ephesians 4:32.

4. Share what Colossians 3:13-14 says to you.

Read Luke 6:27-37.

5. How are we to treat our enemies and those who hate us (verse 27)?

6. How are we to treat those who curse us and treat us in a hurtful way (verse 28)?

7. How does God want us to treat others (verse 31)?

8. How does God want us to show our love to our enemies (verse 35)?

9. Why do we need to be merciful (verse 36)?

10. Why is it important for us not to condemn or judge others and to forgive them (verse 37)?

According to this passage, Jesus shows us four practical applications in forgiving others:

(1) Love them

(2) Do good things for them

(3) Ask God to bless them

(4) Pray for them.

If we do these four things, God will change our hearts toward those who have wronged us. We will begin to experience a true sense of forgiveness and love for them.

Loving your enemies is difficult. You can try to forgive them and be nice, but then they'll do something that reminds you why they are your enemy. But Jesus said God is "kind to the unthankful and evil." You may say, "But I can't do that. That's impossible!" Yes, it is. But God wants to do the supernatural within us, that we can show forth His love—to all people.

"But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" (Matthew 19:26)

"Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

Lesson 1

TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." (James 1:12)

In the next several lessons we are going to study the book of James to help us learn how to study the Bible on our own. Psalm 119:11 says, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." The best defense that we have for trials and temptations is the Word of God hidden in our hearts. As we saturate ourselves with God's Word, we can have power against sin.

The theme of the book of James is mainly practical advice on how to live the Christian life. This book addresses living out our faith when it comes to trials and temptations. James communicates that the Christian life should not just be a belief system and philosophy; rather it is a way of life. It is something to be believed and acted upon.

If we look at the original Greek word for "trials" in James 1:2 and "temptation" in James 1:12, the meaning is the same: a beneficial test that will strengthen our Christian character. Therefore, when we study the Word of God, it is good to ask questions about the text to get a better understanding.

Read James 1:2-4: The Profit of Trials

1. What is tested when we go through various trials and what should be our attitude?

2. What do trials produce in our lives? (verse 3)

3. What does patience produce? (verse 4)

God puts our faith to the test and tests us to the breaking point of our abilities and resources so we will learn to trust in Him instead of ourselves. Our resources are limited; but when we look to God, we have unlimited resources. My strength is limited; but when I rely on God, I have unlimited strength.

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 4: Obedience to God's Word

Read James 1:12-18: Loving God in Trials

4. Describe the man who endures temptation and what he will receive (verse 12).

5. How can we apply this wonderful promise when we are tempted to sin?

6. Does God tempt us? How are we tempted? (verses 12-13)

7. Once you give in to temptation, it gives birth to sin. What is the result of sin? (verse 15)

8. Why is a trial a gift from God? (verse 17)

Read James 1:19-20: Qualities Needed in Trials

9. Considering the nature of trials and temptations, what qualities are needed? (verse 19)

10. What happens when we lose our temper during trials and temptations? (verse 20)

Enduring through trials and temptations is part of the everyday experiences of true believers, but reading and applying God's Word will help us to have victory. We need to listen more, speak less, and let God be the Judge of our lives. Focus on growing in your relationship with God, rather than fixating on the problem. Remain steadfast and faithful in trials, and be obedient and submissive to God in the face of temptations.

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
(2 Corinthians 12:10)

Lesson 2

BE A DOER OF GOD'S WORD

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22)

In the previous lesson we learned biblical principles on how to view and respond to trials and temptations in James 1:1-20. In this lesson, the theme is to be a doer of God's Word. We must also obey what the Bible says in order to overcome trials and temptations.

Read James 1:21-25: Doers—Not Hearers Only

1. What are we to lay aside and receive with meekness? (verse 21)

2. What is the implanted word and what will it do to our souls? (verse 21)

3. When you hear the Word of God, but you don't obey it, what kind of person are you? (vv. 22, 24)

Galatians 6:7-8 reads, "Don't be deceived. Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. If you sow to your flesh (selfish desires), you are going to reap corruption." Whatever you sow into your mind is going to come out of your life. If you plant the filthiness of the world, the language, the jokes, etc., that's what's going to come out. But if you plant the Word of God, you will reap the Spirit of God.

God wants us to empty ourselves of worldly influences and attitudes by receiving His Word with a humble attitude, and then doing it.

Read James 1:26-27: God's Religion

Note: The word "religious" or "religion" here refers to outward actions—not just what you say you believe. Your actions speak louder than your words!

4. Compare James 1:26 with Matthew 7:21. Explain what God is teaching us.

Jesus is both Savior and Lord. He saved us from our sins, and once we confess that, He must be Lord of our lives. When you call Jesus Lord of your life, this means He rules you. You are no longer the boss of your own life. You must obey His Word and live to please Him. You no longer do what you want or live to please yourself. Being a believer in Christ takes more than just saying you are. You must obey God's Word and do His will.

5. Why is it important to "bridle your tongue" or control what you say? (verse 26).

Having self-control over what you say is a great temptation! We are all tempted to gossip, put others down, brag, manipulate, exaggerate, complain, flatter, and lie. Before you speak, use the acronym **THINK**: Ask yourself, "Is what I want to say…
True? **H**elpful? **I**nspiring? **N**ecessary? **K**ind?"

Do you remember the last argument you had with somebody? How did it start? Was your way better than theirs? As we reflect back on arguments, they usually are insignificant, but we forfeit our witness in Christ by walking in the flesh (giving in to our own desires) rather than walking in the Spirit. We are not a doer of God's Word when we don't bridle our tongues and our witness will be useless.

"Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent." (Proverbs 17:28 NLT)

6. What example does James give of "doing" God's Word and how can we apply this to our own life? (verse 27)

In the first century, orphans and widows had very little means of economic support. Unless a family member was willing to care for them, they were reduced to begging, selling themselves as slaves, or starving. By caring for these people, the church put God's Word into practice. When we give with no thought of receiving, we show what it means to truly serve others.

If we do not obey God's Word, we deceive ourselves and our actions are useless. We are only fooling ourselves. Our profession of faith must be evident by our actions. If we say we are Christians, then we will obey God's Word and do what it says. This brings glory to God and shows the world what "true" Christians are really like.

God tells us through the book of James that we are to hear His Word and then do it. Obeying God is the mark of a true believer.

Lesson 3

DON'T JUDGE OTHERS

"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well." James 2:8

A godly principle that will help us through trials and temptations is to be aware of our own shortcomings rather than looking at others' mistakes and failures. When we judge others, we tend to overlook our own accountability before God.

Read James 2:1-13: A Warning about Unfair Bias

1. What tends to make us show partiality and what happens when we do? See vv. 2-4.

We are often partial to the rich because we mistakenly assume that riches are a sign of God's blessing and approval. But God does not promise us earthly rewards or riches; in fact, Christ calls us to be ready to suffer for Him and give up everything in order to hold on to eternal life. If we say that Christ is our Lord, then we must not show favoritism and love all people regardless of whether they are rich, poor or different than we are.

2. Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and write what you learn.

3. According to Jeremiah 17:9, describe your heart and what you know about it.

4. As stated in Jeremiah 17:10, the Lord is the only one who knows someone's heart. What does God do to every person's heart, and why?

If we allow worldly thinking to influence us, we lose the love of Christ. Like the world, we will become partial, prejudiced and judgmental. When we are like this, it leaves us vulnerable to temptations and trials. We look at others instead of examining our own hearts.

5. Read James 2:8. What is the fulfillment of the "royal law?"

6. What happens when we show partiality? (vv. 9-10)

Note: The law here is referring to the Ten Commandments. The law shows our guilt and judges us. Have you ever lied? Then you're guilty too. In Christ Jesus we have been set free. We're at liberty from the law of Moses. James is seeking to show that we are all saved by grace; therefore, we should not be judgmental of others.

7. Read James 2:11-13. How can we show others the grace as God?

8. See James 2:13. How can we show mercy toward others?

If we have no mercy, then we will be shown no mercy when we are judged. People are often guilty of judging on misinformation. We all can make judgments without having all the facts, so we've got to be careful about that. Mercy rejoices against judgment.

9. Read Matthew 7:1-5. What does Jesus command?

When Jesus said, "Judge not, lest you be judged," He was condemning a hypercritical spirit. There is constructive criticism, but there is also destructive criticism that is harmful and hurtful. And what is usually behind a hypercritical spirit? Self-righteousness.

First Corinthians 13:7 says, "Love believes all things, hopes all things." There are some people who are always imagining the worst of motivations, and their spirit loves to find fault and blemishes. When Jesus said, "Judge not, lest you be judged," He was referring to the quick expression of our opinions before we have all the facts. And if we had all the facts, rather than being condemning, we might instead be very compassionate toward that individual.

10. Read James 4:11-12 and explain this passage in your own words.

To steer clear of the pitfalls of temptation and trials, examine your own life and don't judge others. You set the measuring stick for yourself and how you will be judged. If you are merciful, God will be merciful to you. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

The greatest work of doing God's Word is to love others just as Christ loves us. Loving others unconditionally is fulfilling the royal law of God.

Lesson 4

YOUR FAITH IS REVEALED IN WORKS

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (James 2:14)

James seeks to show the practical results of being justified by our faith in Jesus. As we truly believe in Christ, our new nature will produce good deeds out of the desire of our hearts. When our faith is revealed in our works, this proves our identity in Christ.

Read James 2:14-26:Faith Without Works Is Dead

1. James launches into a series of rhetorical questions. In verses 14-16, what three questions does James ask concerning faith and works?

2. Why do you think James asked the question, "Can faith save a person?"

3. In James 2:15-16, why does James give the illustration of helping someone in need as a mark of our faith?

4. Read James 2:17-18. How does James say we need to show our faith? Explain your answer.

5. Can you look at your life and see fruitful works as a result of your faith?

6. According to James 2:19, who else believes in God and what is their response?

In writing to the Romans, Paul quotes from the law of Moses about a confession of faith. Romans 10:8-9 reads, "But what does it say? *'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart'* (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you **confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 30:14, "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may **do** it." The word "confess" means you will "do" it. This is the sign of a believer's faith: confessing Jesus is God, and doing what the Bible says.

7. As stated in James 2:20, what kind of person is one who says he believes in God but does not change the way he lives?

Read James 2:21-24 and compare it to Genesis 15:1-6, 22:11-14. Notice that Abraham believed God (15:6) and obeyed God (22:2, 10-12). Abraham's faith was confirmed by his obedience. Note also that Genesis 22:1 says that God was testing Abraham's faith.

8. How does this story relate to James 1:2-4?

9. According to James 2:21-24, how was Abraham justified? How are we justified?

10. How was Abraham's faith proved? (verse 22)

11. What does the summary of Abraham's example prove to us?

12. Write out James 2:26.

God uses James in these passages to teach us that our faith needs to be powerful enough to change our thinking, our attitude and our actions. When our faith is backed up by our actions, this certainly will help us when we are faced with trials and temptations.

Lesson 5

TAMING YOUR TONGUE

"But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."(James 3:8)

Read James 3:1-12: God's Warning on What We Say

First James warns teachers to guard their tongues, because with one word they could misrepresent God and stumble others. Then James applies the warning to all generally—pointing out how dangerous the tongue is, how hard it is to control, and emphasizing the maturity of a person who can practice self-control on what they say.

Having self-control in what we say is a good biblical principle to learn and it will give us victory in trials and temptations.

1. What does James mean in verse 2 when he says, "If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body"?

2. In verses 3-5, James draws for us three illustrations that show us how much our tongue (words) affects our whole being. What are these three illustrations?

3. In verse 6, what is the tongue compared to?

4. Write out the remainder of verse 6.

5. Explain verse 6 in your own words.

James tells us that every beast, bird, reptile and creature of the sea can be tamed, but no one can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil and full of deadly poison. (vv. 7-8)

6. According to James 3:9, what is our tongue capable of doing?

7. What does James declare in verse 10?

8. Again in verses 11 and 12, James uses three illustrations to impress his point about what comes out of our mouths. List the three illustrations and its principle.

Our words can build up or tear down—edify and encourage others or quench and discourage.

9. Write Psalm 37:30-31.

10. What does Proverbs 17:27-28 say?

11. What did Solomon, the wisest man on earth (besides Jesus) advise? See Ecclesiastes 5:2?

12. What does Jesus tell us about our words in Matthew 12:36-37?

13. What does Paul the apostle remind us about our words? See Ephesians 4:29.

So what should a believer in Christ be talking about? We should be talking about the Lord! Discuss God's truth with others. If God's Word is in our heart, it will be the center of our conversations. When we speak God's Word, it will strengthen us when trials and temptations come.

"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." (James 1:19)

Lesson 6

GET GODLY WISDOM

"Who is wise and understanding among you?" (James 3:13)

Three things work together to pull us away from God and His service: the world, the flesh, and the Devil. So many people are following the wisdom of this world. Listen to their advice—"Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." "Just do it." "Enjoy yourself, it's later than you think." "Get while the getting is good."

That's not wisdom. That's foolishness. The wisdom of the world appeals to the sensual part of man's nature, and it's devilish. Wordly wisdom is self-seeking and it boasts and lies against the truth of God.

Read James 3:13-18: God's Wisdom Versus Worldly Wisdom
God will give His people wisdom—godly wisdom. But in order to receive wisdom, you must choose God's way and not the world's ways. Having godly wisdom is essential when we are faced with trials and temptations.

1. How does one receive wisdom? (verse 13)

Wisdom takes meekness, which means accepting God's dealings with us as good; and therefore, without disputing or resisting, wholly relying on God rather than on our own strength. Meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God's goodness and control over the situation. The meek person is not occupied with self at all. Meekness is a work of the Holy Spirit, not of the human will.

In James 3:14-16, James lists the worldly characteristics of wisdom. Worldly wisdom is envious and self-seeking. "If you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic" (James 3:14-15).

2. What do envy and self-seeking lead to? (verse 16)

The wisdom of the world will ultimately lead to confusion. It leads a person to be envious of what others have, causing them to feel bitter and empty, and pressures them to do evil. James 4:1 reminds us that wars and fights come from a selfish desire for pleasure.

3. Define the words "earthly" and "sensual."

4. Write out 1 Corinthians 3:3.

First Corinthians 3:3 uses the word "carnal." When we are carnal, we are controlled by our own desires. Mature believers are in tune with God's desires, and that should be our goal. Being controlled by our own desires will stunt our growth.

5. Write out 1 Corinthians 2:14.

James 3:17-18 contrasts the world's wisdom with God's wisdom. Godly wisdom leads to a life of purity, holiness and peace. The wisdom of the world leads to strife and wars and a life of sensuality and living after the lust of your flesh.

6. What are the attributes of godly wisdom and its end result? (vs. 17-18)

7. How does Jesus say we can get this godly wisdom? How will it help us in times of trials and temptations? See Matthew 7:24-25.

8. What does Jesus say about the person who does not listen and do His Word? See Matthew 7:26-28.

God wants us to live a life of peace, not be at war with Him. Before coming to Jesus, we were all enemies of God because we lived selfishly instead of obeying God's Word. We were controlled by the desires of our flesh. We were at war with God, and that put us at war with everybody else. But the wisdom that comes from God will bring peace—peace with God and peace with others.

When we know God's Word and do it, Jesus promises that when trials and temptations come, we will not fall. He will give us godly wisdom to help us through the storm.

Lesson 7

PRIDE VERSUS HUMILITY

"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" (James 4:6)

Proverbs 16:18 (NLT) reads, "Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall." "Those who listen to instruction will prosper; those who trust the LORD will be joyful." (Jeremiah 17:7 NLT)

Read James 4:1-10: The Consequences of Pride and the Benefits of Humility
In this passage, James teaches us the principle of humility and how this godly attribute is the secret to God's grace—especially in trials and temptations. James also teaches that God resists the proud.

1. Where do wars and fights come from? (verse 1).

When we don't get what we want, we fight in order to have it. War comes when we covet and envy what others have or when we want our own way (pride), instead of thinking what would be best for others (humility).

James 4:2-3 says, "You have not because you do not ask" or "you ask amiss." In other words, the things we desire (pride) should actually be a matter of prayer. Allow God to make the decision whether or not to satisfy that desire, or to replace or deny it (humility).

2. James talks about friendship with the world in verse 4. If you are a friend of the world, what are you to God?

3. First John 2:15-16 explains what it means to be a friend of the world. Write it here.

Worldliness begins in the heart and is characterized by three attitudes: (1) lust of the flesh—gratifying physical desires; (2) lust of the eyes—coveting and accumulating things, materialism, and (3) pride of life—obsession with one's status or importance.

James 4:5, in essence, says that the Spirit that is in us is jealous concerning our love. God doesn't want us to have any other love that would take away our love for Him.

4. Consider James 4:6. Whom does God resist? To whom does God give grace?

5. When you are tempted, what does James 4:7-8 say?

6. If a person is still enticed by the world, yet drawn to God, he is double-minded. According to verses 8-10, what would someone like that need to do to repent?

Read James 4:11-12: How to Be Humble

7. In verses 11-12, James tells us not to speak evil of another or to judge them. Explain how this could be prideful?

James 4:12 says, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." Paul said, "Who are you to judge another man's servant? Before his own master he either stands or falls" (Romans 14:4). It is God who will either accept or reject what you are doing. So to be a judge of another's servant is wrong. Judge not. Don't speak evil of another, because if you speak evil, you are judging your brother.

Read James 4:13-17. James is talking about people who are setting out their plan for life, not taking into consideration God's will. This kind of pride can lead to our downfall.

8. What should be our attitude toward the things we do? (verse 15)

9. According to verse 16, what is boasting?

Boasting is a type of pride that is rude and has empty assurance. It trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates God's laws and others' needs. Boasting is an empty presumption that trusts in the stability of earthly things.

God wants us to look to Him for guidance in everything. (James 4:15) As we do this, we will see that He is the One doing great things in our lives—not ourselves. We need to humble ourselves before God, laying aside our pride and worldly desires with willing and obedient hearts. Having a humble heart, God will give us grace when it comes to trials and temptations.

Lesson 8

PERSEVERANCE THROUGH PRAYER

"You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." (James 5:8)

PERSEVERANCE: Read James 5:7-12

James teaches us not to look to our wealth to save us but to be patient and persevere.

1. What do you learn from verses 7-8?

What if the Lord had come back ten years ago? Where would you be? As the Lord has patience, we too should have patience about our circumstances and with others—until God comes back!

2. In light of James instruction concerning patience and perseverance, what does he advise in verse 9, and why?

God is so good, and we tend to look at the negative aspects of others that irritate or trouble us, and forget how much God has blessed. This then becomes the main focus in our minds and it causes us to lose the joy of God's blessings—and it could stumble us in times of trials and temptations, causing us to fall into judgment and condemnation.

3. Verses 10-11 tells us about the prophets as an example of perseverance and suffering. Share your observation.

Verse 11 says, "You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful." These are good examples of men who learned to wait upon God. Job's end was more glorious than before his trial: more children and more riches. It takes great perseverance during a trial to know the end of the story, remembering God is compassionate and merciful.

4. Why do you think James makes such a strong emphasis about avoiding oaths and swearing in verse 12? See Matthew 5:33-37.

Jesus brings up the subject of taking oaths to verify that we are speaking the truth. Usually an oath is said when a person doubts your word. And of course some will say, "I swear to you by God." James says you don't need to do that. Be a person of your word so that people can trust what you say. And when you say yes, then do it. If you say no, then stand by it. Jesus says, "Anything more is from the evil one." We tend to get out of situations with our words instead of persevering through it.

PRAYER: Read James 5:13-18. James brings up the necessity of prayer and its benefits while persevering through temptations.

5. If you are suffering, what should you do? (verse 13)

6. What should you do if you are cheerful?

7. What does James instruct if you are sick? (verse 14)

In verse 15 James makes a correlation between sickness and and the forgiveness of sin. There are some sicknesses directly attributable to sin, so there is a direct tie between the sin and the healing.

8. We should only confess our sins to God. Verse 16 commands us to confess our trespasses (faults or mistakes—not sins) to each other—someone we trust. What happens when we do?

9. Explain what happens when a righteous person prays with us and for us fervently?

10 According to verses 17-18, who has a nature just like ours? Why did God answer his prayer?

An effectual, fervent prayer is from a sincere heart. It's a prayer that arises out of desperation or tremendous need. When it says to "pray earnestly," that means to pray continuously, again and again. In times of trials and temptations, we should model this type of prayer.

Read James 5:19-20. In closing, James instructs believers to encourage each other and pray for one another when we go through trials and temptations.

In review, James gives many practical guidelines for a faithful Christian walk. The bottom line is that our faith should affect every aspect of our lives; from our words to our actions, our faith needs to be sincere and committed.

Lesson 1
WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12)

In this lesson, we want to clarify what spiritual warfare is and how it relates to those who are overcoming addictions through God's grace. Here are the most commonly asked questions and answers concerning spiritual warfare. Write in the Scriptures that apply.

What is spiritual warfare?
Spiritual warfare is an everyday, constant battle between the Devil and his fallen angels (demons) against God, His angels, and His people (believers).

Why is there spiritual warfare?
All men will live eternally, either with God in His kingdom (heaven), or with Satan and his fallen angels in the place prepared for them, the lake of fire (hell). Once a person becomes a believer, he or she is in opposition to Satan. Therefore, the object of spiritual warfare is for the Devil to steal, kill, and destroy Christian souls eternally.

1. Matthew 10:28:

Does everyone know about spiritual warfare?
No. People who are not "born again" of God's Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ are not aware of a spiritual battle because they practice sin and evil. They are on Satan's side, not God's side. Note: It is possible that a non-believer may hear about spiritual warfare, but it would make little or no sense to them.

2. 1 Corinthians 2:14:

Can a believer truly love and serve Jesus and not be involved in spiritual warfare?
No. The moment you become a child of God, your life is no longer your own. You become a soldier in the Lord's army.

3. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

4. 2 Timothy 2:3-4:

What should a believer's attitude be toward spiritual warfare?
Positive! We are now on God's side and He wants all people to be saved. Winning souls for the kingdom of God is the number one priority of God. Therefore, if Satan wants to destroy all people and God wants to save them, we will experience this spiritual warfare.

5. 1 Timothy 2:4:

6. Matthew 28:19-20:

The Facts About Spiritual Warfare
Now that we have established the reality of spiritual warfare, we need to learn how to survive in this invisible battle. The first thing to remember is that "the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47). We must "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10). We have no natural power to defeat the forces of darkness. If I am to be victorious, I must draw my strength from the Lord.

7. Can the wicked one (Satan) touch me? Who lies under Satan's sway (control and power)? See 1 John 5:18-19.

8. Why does Satan (called the "god of this age") blind people? See 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Read 2 Timothy 2:23-26.
9. What must believers avoid and why? (verse 23)

10. What must a servant of the Lord do? (verse 24)

11. How are we to correct those who are blinded by Satan? (verse 25)

12. Why has Satan taken every non-believer captive? (verse 26)

These are facts. As a believer in Christ, it is important to see things as God does and realize that we are always victorious through Jesus. Even so, Satan will try many different tactics to discourage and distract us from the plans God has for our lives.

"But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one."
(2 Thessalonians 3:3)

Lesson 2
THE TACTICS OF THE ENEMY

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

Satan's goal is to destroy you. By knowing this, you will be better equipped to stand up against his attacks.

Here are Satan's three primary objectives:

- To destroy a believer's relationship with God.
- To prevent believers from sharing Jesus with others who are unsaved.
- To confuse the unsaved about the things of God.

Satan Wants to Destroy a Believer's Relationship with God
According to 1 Peter 5:8-9, Satan is our adversary, described as walking around like a roaring lion. He attacks when least expected and attempts to completely devour those whom he attacks. This passage tells us we are to be sober and vigilant.

To be sober means to be self-disciplined, to think rationally, and not to be under the influence of any mind-altering substance. To be vigilant means to be alert to the spiritual pitfalls of life and take appropriate steps to make certain that we do not stumble.

1. Write 1 Peter 5:9.

Satan Wants to Prevent Believers from Sharing the Gospel
In trying to prevent us from sharing Jesus with others, the Devil uses three basic tactics, and all three play on our emotions: doubt, guilt, and unforgiveness.

DOUBT. The Devil knows that if he can cause you to (1) doubt God's Word, (2) doubt your salvation, (3) doubt God's work in your life, and (4) doubt God's eternal plan, he can put you on the defensive. The Devil knows that if you doubt in any of these four areas, it is unlikely that you will share Jesus with anyone.

Satan has used this tactic since the beginning. In the garden of Eden, the serpent subtly asked Eve, "Has God indeed said…?" (Genesis 3:1) This question caused both Eve and Adam to doubt God's Word that led to their sin.

The word "serpent" here does not mean "snake." It is translated "the shining one." Satan transforms himself as an angel of light in order to deceive (2 Corinthians 11:14).

2. Write Proverbs 3:5-8

GUILT. Satan is a false accuser. He will tell you that God hasn't really forgiven you and cause you to dwell on your past sins. Satan knows that if you are dwelling on your own weaknesses, rather than the power of God's Spirit in your life, you will feel too guilty to share Jesus with anyone.

3. Write 2 Timothy 1:7-8.

UNFORGIVENESS. Satan knows that if he can create a spirit of unforgiveness toward others, you will become hardhearted and an ineffective witness. The less you can forgive others, the less you will see yourself needing forgiveness from Jesus. This will create self-righteousness and legalism in your life, and will actually turn unsaved people away from Jesus.

4. Write Ephesians 4:32.

Satan Wants to Confuse the Unsaved
Satan has been in the business of confusing people for a long time. These are his weapons: pride, drugs and alcohol, false religions, cults, humanistic psychology, philosophy and occults. Quite an array, isn't it? The believer has two weapons to fight these lies: the Word of God and prayer.

5. Write 1 John 4:1.

Read 1 John 4:2-3: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."

At this time you need to do something very important. First, realize that Jesus has already won the victory.

Read 1 John 4:4: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

Secondly, ask the Lord to show you how the enemy may be trying to use some of these tactics on you, and on your unsaved family and friends. As you do this, the Lord will surely open your eyes and show you how to pray.

"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother."
(1 John 3:10)

Lesson 3
THE ARMOR OF GOD

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil." (Ephesians 6:11)

Satan often uses his wily tactics to make us believe we are battling against flesh and blood. If Satan can draw you into the flesh, then he has the decided advantage over you. But if we fight against him in the Spirit, with the armor God provides, we can't lose. God calls all true believers to engage in spiritual warfare—and equips us to do it!

Read Ephesians 6:14: Gird Your Waist With Truth
For a soldier, the belt is perhaps the least noticed part of his armor—but the most important. It holds all his body armor in place. For believers, the truth is like a soldier's belt. If we stand on the truths in God's Word, we will experience victory in our lives. If we speak the truth about God, all of our Christian beliefs will remain in place.

Our world is full of lies. Yet in Christ we have found the truth about who we are, why we are here and where we are going. Satan is the father of lies, and when we speak the truth he must flee.

1. Write John 14:6.

Put On the Breastplate of Righteousness
The breastplate protected a soldier's vital organs—most importantly, his heart. All Christians should keep their hearts protected from the Devil's wickedness. The Bible tells us that our hearts are prone toward wickedness if left idle and unattended. Therefore, to fill our hearts with the righteousness of the Lord, we must study the Bible daily.

We need to sanctify our hearts unto God so that we're sensitive to hear His voice as He guides us in our daily battles. A righteous heart is a dead end for Satan's attacks.

2. Write Psalm 119:11.

Read Ephesians 6:15: Shod Your Feet with the Gospel of Peace
Proper footwear is important to any soldier. If Christians are going to fight victorious spiritual battles, we need a firm foundation to stand on. The peace of Christ is that foundation. For the Christian, Jesus is our peace—regardless of the circumstances.

3. Write John 14:27.

4. Write Romans 10:15.

Read Ephesians 6:16: Take Up the Shield of Faith
A soldier's shield offers protection from getting shot when he is in battle. The Devil will attack a Christian with different fiery darts: persecution, guilt, lies, fears, doubts, temptations and more. These darts are aimed at Christians when they are tearing down the strongholds of the Devil. If we are idle, he has little reason to attack. But as God uses us, the Devil will attack constantly.

As believers, we need to believe! We need the shield of faith to trust God and trust what He is doing for total victory in every spiritual battle.

5. Write Proverbs 18:10.

Read Ephesians 6:17: Put On the Helmet of Salvation
All soldiers need a helmet to protect their head. A Christian needs the helmet of salvation to protect against Satan's constant onslaught upon our thoughts. It is what we do with those thoughts that determine whether we will sin against God or not. It's crucial to submit our thoughts unto the Lord.

When our minds are thinking about God's goodness and His great love for us, we will naturally recognize thoughts and suggestions from the Devil. When ungodly thoughts enter our minds, we must cast out those thoughts and replace them with joyous thoughts concerning God. This is how we put on the helmet of salvation.

Satan cannot make us sin! He can suggest that we sin, but we decide whom we will submit our minds to—Christ or Satan.

6. Write 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

Use the Sword of the Spirit: God's Word
Ephesians 6:17 calls the Word of God "the sword of the Spirit." For Christians, the Word of God (the Bible) is our primary weapon against our enemy, the Devil. The truth and glory that is in God's Word overcomes the Devil so that he must flee—for he lives in lies and darkness. Jesus gave all believers an excellent example of how we can rebuke Satan's attacks by quoting Scripture (see Matthew 4:1-11).

7. Write Hebrews 4:12.

As believers, we need to go forward in spirit and truth. Satan will attack us, so we should force him to retreat by using God's Word. Stand on the promises in God's Word and share those truths with those who are unsaved and blinded by the Devil.

Lesson 4
THE POWER OF PRAYER

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." (Ephesians 6:18)

Prayer Is Essential for Victory
In the previous lesson we learned about the armor of God. Although a Christian soldier may be dressed in God's armor, if he goes into battle without praying, there's no guarantee. Prayer is the final piece of the Christian soldier's armor. Prayer reveals God's battle plan for victory.

God alone is all-knowing. God alone created us and saved us on the cross at Calvary. He is the final ruling authority. There is no greater power than the Lord God almighty. As believers, we are born again of God's Spirit, and when we pray, His Spirit will guide us in being victorious in the battle.

Ephesians 6:18 Teaches Five Components of Prayer for Spiritual Warfare

(1) Pray Always. Throughout the day, morning, noon and night, we are told to bring to God our concerns continually, without ceasing, with thanksgiving.

1. How are we to pray always? See Romans 12:12.

2. What should our praying look like? See Colossians 4:2.

3. Write 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18.

(2) Pray with Supplication in the Spirit. This means we are to ask God to give us insight into what we need to pray for. We ask God to give us the empowering of His Holy Spirit and for His Spirit to lead and guide us in our prayer.

4. How will the Holy Spirit help us in our prayer? See John 14:26.

5. What will the Holy Spirit give us? See Ephesians 1:17.

6. Write Jude 1:20-21.

(3) Be Watchful. The word "watchful" means "to keep awake, be attentive and to be ready." Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). We must be on alert and pay attention.

7. Write 1 Peter 4:7.

8. Write Colossians 4:2.

(4) Persevere in Prayer. This takes commitment, discipline, and self-sacrifice. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). The literal translation is to keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking. Don't give up.

9. Write Psalm 55:17.

10. Write Luke 18:1b.

(5) Make Supplication for All the Saints. We are to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ and bear one another's burdens. They fight the same war we do.

11. Write Philippians 1:4.

12. Write 1 Peter 5:8-9.

What a tremendous weapon prayer is in our fight against Satan. It's a spiritual collaboration whereby we can join hands with God, so to speak, in accomplishing God's purposes here on earth. By prayer we can drive Satan off of territory that he is holding by usurped authority and power. Praying for God's people is a privilege that each one of us possesses.

Are you looking for a ministry? Do you desire to serve the Lord, but have yet to discover your calling? Make this your work for the kingdom—pray for the church. Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36

Lesson 5
OUR VULNERABILITY

"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another." (Galatians 5:17)

What Makes Us Vulnerable?
Every one of us is vulnerable in the area of our flesh, our sinful nature. This is our area of weakness. When we are born again by the Spirit of God, the enemy, our flesh, comes to do battle. Satan once dominated our flesh life and now as a born again believer, it wars against the new life of the Spirit of God. The flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. These are contrary. They will always battle against each other.

A believer in Christ has both the fleshly and the spiritual natures. This is the battle.

1. Write Matthew 26:41.

2. Write Romans 7:22-23.

As a believer, our spirit finds delight in the law of God. This causes us to want the new nature God imparts to us. However, the law of sin (our sinful nature) seeks to draw us away from following God's work within us.

Read Romans 8:5-11. The Flesh Versus The Spirit
3. Write verse 5.

4. Write verse 6.

5. Write verse 7.

6. Write verse 8.

7. Write verse 9.

8. Write verse 10.

The solution to the problem of the flesh is the Holy Spirit. When we are spiritually minded, we can put to death our sinful deeds and live for God.

What Does God Say To Do to the Flesh?
Concerning your flesh, your sinful activities and desires, God says to stop it. Put an end to it. Destroy it utterly! Blot it out! Crucify it! Mortify it! Practice zero-tolerance.

9. Write Galatians 5:24.

If you fail to obey God in mortifying the deeds of the flesh, you can be sure that the day will come when your flesh will destroy you. By the power of the Holy Spirit working in your life, God orders you to put to death the deeds of the flesh so that you might live.

10. Write Romans 6:6.

How to Get Victory
In order to be free from the slavery of sin, the old nature **must** be reckoned dead but alive to God in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:11). What does the Bible mean by "reckon"? To count as true. We need to remember that the flesh life destroys and takes advantage. But through the power of the Holy Spirit we can know victory over the flesh and count the old man to be dead, crucified with Christ that we might be alive unto God through Him. We must choose the spirit over the flesh. This is God's ultimatum, not just a choice.

11. Write Romans 8:13.

The battle is fierce between the flesh and the spirit. It's important to know the area of our weaknesses so we can ask God for help and for the empowering of His Holy Spirit.

12. Write down the three weaknesses of our flesh. See 1 John 2:16.

These weaknesses point out how believers could be lured away from loving God. When it speaks about the lust of the flesh, this refers to desires for sinful sensual pleasure. The lust of the eyes refers to covetousness or materialism. The pride of life refers to being proud about one's position and denying the need for God's instruction.

God shows us our vulnerability and then tells us how to get the victory. We are to hate evil, not tolerate, accept or excuse it. We are to despise our old sin nature.

God wants to help us overcome our vulnerabilities and have victory. He wants us to walk in the power of His Spirit so we can overcome our sinful nature. Ask God for His help. Ask God for His strength. Ask God for His victory.

This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
(Galatians 5:16)

Lesson 6
VICTORY IN AND THROUGH JESUS

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." (Revelation 12:11)

Satan is relentless in his attacks. He is one of the most powerful of all of God's created beings. However, as a created being, he is not the opposite of God. He is in opposition to God, and he opposes the people of God. Although Satan is powerful, he is not invincible.

How to Get Victory Through Jesus
Satan attacks at our weakest point, the flesh. He would like to draw us away from the life in the Spirit to a life after the flesh. Nevertheless, when we read and apply the Scriptures, God teaches us how to prevail.

Rely on the Blood of the Lamb
In Revelation 12:7-8, Michael the archangel prevailed against Satan, yet he did not bring any accusation against him but said, "The Lord rebuke you" (Jude 1:9). If Michael would revert to the name of the Lord for victory and power over Satan, we need to even more. We dare not come against Satan or the evil in this world in our own strength. Rely on the Lord to fight the battle.

1. Write Isaiah 41:10.

Use Your Testimony
We have been redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ; and therefore, we are debtors to the Lord to live and to walk after the Spirit, not to our flesh. Our old nature, our flesh, was crucified with Christ. Today we live a new life after the Spirit. This is our testimony. And this is exactly how we can overcome the enemy through the word of our testimony.

2. Write Galatians 2:20.

Don't Love Your Life More than Christ
We must reckon our old nature as dead, crucified with Christ. When the flesh is reckoned dead, then Satan has no place to attack. He attacks my flesh to get to my spirit. He does not attack my spirit directly, since he is already defeated in the realm of the spirit.

3. Write 1 Peter 4:2-3.

How Will Jesus Help Us?
As a child of God, you are one of Satan's prime targets. Even so, Jesus is praying for you. As our mediator and advocate before the Father, Jesus is making intercession for us.

The word "intercedes" means more than just "to pray." It means that Christ meets with God the Father in order to speak on our behalf. Jesus searches our hearts and makes intercession for us according to God's perfect will for our lives.

4. Write Romans 8:26.

5. Write Romans 8:27.

Why Does God Allow Spiritual Warfare?
God allows spiritual warfare so we can mature in our faith. Spiritual warfare is a strength builder. God's ultimate purpose for these testings is to bring us into spiritual maturity and into a relationship with Him where we discover His faithfulness in all our circumstances.

6. Write 1 Peter 1:6-7.

7. Write 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9.

We cannot fight this battle living a life in the flesh.

Because it is a spiritual battle, we must fight with the spiritual weapons that God has placed in our arsenal. We must put on the whole armor of God. We need to pray without ceasing, and we must crucify our flesh and live a life after the Spirit. We must come against the enemy in the victory that Jesus accomplished on the cross.

We don't have to live after the flesh, defeated. We have overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. This is our testimony. This is the place of victory. It gives no place for the enemy. We can live in victory, in His victory, in the strength of Jesus Christ.

God has given us everything to win the battle, and right now He is making intercession on our behalf. In Christ, we have overcome spiritual warfare!

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
(1 Corinthians 15:57)

Lesson 1

WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

The fruit of the Spirit is the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit within us. The Spirit produces character traits that are found in the nature of Christ. We can't obtain this without His help. If we want the fruit of the Spirit to grow in us, we must join our life to Christ.

1. Write what Jesus says in John 15:4-5.

Unless you have a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, you cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. A good analogy is observing an apple ripening on a tree. Without the tree, there would be no fruit. Once the apple begins to grow, it doesn't struggle, strain, push or groan in order to ripen. It just hangs on the branch.

In our experience with addictions, we can struggle when we rely on our own best efforts when it comes to fighting temptation and pleasing God. But God's method isn't based on our own works and efforts. God's method is like that of fruit. As we abide in Christ and as He abides in us, that relationship brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Apart from Jesus Christ we can do nothing. Apart from Jesus, there is no power or growth. If your desire is to have the qualities listed in Galatians 5:22-23, you must be born again of the Spirit.

Notice Galatians 5:22 begins with the word "But." It's tying together two contrasting thoughts from the previous verses, the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

2. According to Galatians 5:19-21, what are the works of the flesh?

3. What is the spiritual remedy given in Galatians 5:16-17.

This passage describes two forces fighting within us—the Holy Spirit and our sinful nature.

If we rely on our own wisdom, we will make wrong choices. If we try to follow the Spirit by our own human effort, we will fail. Our only remedy is the empowering of the Holy Spirit which is found in a right relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord of our life.

4. Write Acts 1:8a.

5. Write Zechariah 4:6.

6. Write Ephesians 4:22-24.

When we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will fulfill the intended purpose of the law—to love God and our neighbors. The Spirit-filled life is in perfect harmony with the intent of God's law. A person who exhibits the fruit of the Spirit fulfills the law. If you have the fruit of the Spirit in your life, you will love your neighbor and not injure him or her. Laws are only necessary for unprincipled people.

7. Write Galatians 5:18.

In order to bear spiritual fruit, we need to turn from our sins and willingly nail our sinful nature to the cross. This doesn't mean that we will never see traces of our evil desires again. As Christians we still have the capacity to sin, but we have been set free from sin's power over us and no longer have to give in to it.

We all have evil desires and sometimes we can't ignore them. In order for us to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance, we must deal with our sin nature quickly and decisively.

8. What decision must be made about our flesh, our sinful desires? See Galatians 5:24.

Crucifying the flesh means we don't give in to our addictive sin nature.

Those who ignore addictive sins or refuse to deal with them reveal that they have not been born again of the Spirit. Being born again leads to a transformed life. Every day, we must commit our sinful tendencies to God's control, and moment by moment draw on the Spirit's power to overcome them.

When we are led by the Holy Spirit, we have a desire to hear God's Word and a readiness to obey it. When we live each day controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit, then the words of Christ will be in our minds and behind our actions. The power of Christ will help us control our selfish desires and enable us to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

Lesson 2
LOVE

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love…." (Galatians 5:22a)

There are not really nine fruits of the Spirit. There is one fruit of the Spirit, and that's love. The Scripture reads "fruit" singular, not plural. Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are all characteristics of God's love.

In the original Greek, the word for "love" in Galatians 5:22 is translated *agape*. There are two other primary words in the New Testament translated for love: *phileo*, which means tender affection, and *eros*, which means sexual love.

A good definition for *agape* would be divine love. You cannot have *agape* love without God. *Agape* is used to describe a love far greater than emotions and physical attraction. *Agape* is an unconditional love that our perfect loving God has towards us.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and write the characteristics of *agape* love.

We have the opportunity to experience this love every day as we wake up with the Holy Spirit in our hearts. To experience the power of this love in our lives, we need to seek God first thing in the morning and ask Him to pour out *agape* love in our hearts so that we can better love Him and love those around us.

2. Write 1 Peter 4:8.

When God's Spirit is working in us and leading us, our attitude will be kind, loving and compassionate toward others. Herein lies the real proof that you are a child of God. You will have a love and a compassion for people that you didn't have before. You'll want to serve them, help them in whatever way possible, reach out to them, and share with them God's love, power and work that He wants to do in their life.

Walking in the Spirit is walking in love and if we're going to walk as Jesus walked, we've got to walk in love. We will think of others' needs before our own.

3. Write Romans 8:14.

When a person becomes a Christian, the Spirit will lead them. We may not always feel as though we belong to God, but the Holy Spirit is our witness. His inward presence reminds us of who we are and encourages us with God's love.
The Spirit works from the inside out; He works within our hearts and changes our attitudes and desires, leading to activities that would be pleasing to God the Father.

When we are bound by a set of rules, we tend to rebel because the law deals with negatives; such as, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not commit adultry;" whereas, the Spirit is positive and He leads us to love, and to show love and kindness.

4. When asked which was the greatest commandment, what was Jesus' response? See Matthew 22:36-40?

5. How does God show *agape* love? Write John 3:16-17.

6. In John 15:13, how did Jesus, God the Son, show His love for us?

Jesus loved us so much that He gave His life for us. We may not have to die for someone, but there are other ways to practice sacrificial love. We can lay down our rights, our way, our wants, and think of others first before thinking of ourselves. Practically, we can be there for others by listening, helping, encouraging, and giving of our time.

7. Write John 13:34-35.

8. Write 1 John 4:7-11.

The greatest evidence that a person has the fruit of the Spirit is visible *agape* love in action. It is this kind of love that brings dynamic power to a believer's life and puts them in a place where God can use them. Pray daily and ask God to pour out this love by His Spirit into your life.

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
(John 13:35)

Lesson 3
JOY

"The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy." (Galatians 5:22)

The first experience or consciousness of *agape* love is joy. A heartfelt joy in the Lord—regardless of your circumstances—is strong evidence to others that God has truly transformed your life.

Have you ever watched a couple that's in love? They can be walking hand in hand on a dreary, smoggy day and yet assert it's the most beautiful day ever! Why? Because of love. When we're so in love with the Lord, we view life positively.

Joy that is the fruit of the Spirit goes beyond happiness. Happiness is the state of being happy because of your circumstances. Joy that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit is constant and peaceable—despite difficulties.

All believers experience a feeling of joy at the point of their spiritual rebirth. However, as trials and testings come along, many lose their joy and their desire to serve the Lord.

1. Read Mark 4:14-17 and Luke 8:11-13 to explain why people lose their joy.

Jesus talked a lot about the fullness of joy. Not just joy, the fullness of joy. God wants us to experience this joy on a daily basis, and has revealed in His Word how we can do so.

2. Keeping God's commandments and loving one another produces joyfulness. Write John 15:10-11.

3. Praying in the name of Jesus promises joy. Write John 16:24.

4. Fellowship with other believers is another way we can experience the fullness of joy. Write 1 John 1:3-4.

5. Being a faithful steward of what God has entrusted to us ensures joy. Write Matthew 25:21.

Life is filled with problems, burdens, heartaches, and misunderstandings. Sometimes we can feel we can't cope any longer and we're forced to reach out. It's what you reach for that's so critical because it can determine your destiny. Many reach for alcohol or drugs, which only compounds the problem.

When we get exhausted and we're pressured to reach out, if we will just reach out at that moment for the Lord, we'll find that He has been reaching out to us. When we do, the joy of God begins to fill us and He becomes our strength. We will be able to cope with the situation because the Lord strengthens us and gives us the ability to deal with problems.

6. Write the last sentence of Nehemiah 8:10.

7. Write Psalm 28:7.

The joy of the Lord gives us a surge when we think that we just can't make it any further. And suddenly God begins to minister to us of His love, and through that love we begin to experience His joy and realize the marvelous inheritance that we have as children of God. Burdens don't seem so heavy anymore. Suddenly we just have that energy and strength as God ministers to us. And our strength in the midst of adversity becomes one of the most powerful witnesses for the Christian gospel.

The joy of the Lord is attractive! It draws people and it's contagious. But so is depression. Our attitudes affect other people. When we express the joy of the Lord, it lightens up the whole room. It lightens up people. They're blessed because of our relationship with God and it demonstrates an unconditional love *(agape)* toward others. Our homes and places of work should be happier because we have the joy of the Lord.

8. Write Proverbs 17:22.

Our lives exude good or evil to those around us. No man lives to himself, but if you have the joy of the Lord, your life will be a positive influence to others. In addition, the joy of the Lord strengthens you, no matter how tough the battle. The joy of the Lord is your strength. He will see you through. You'll come out victorious.

The joy of the Holy Spirit in our lives is not based upon temporal pleasures. The joy that the Holy Spirit pours into our lives overcomes trials, tests and persecutions. It is a joy that is a direct result of our understanding and abiding in the *agape* love of God.

Joy is the sense of well-being that God is in control of all circumstances. True joy is a matter of perspective. **J**esus first, **o**thers second, **y**ou last. If you don't like being last, you'll never know true joy!

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

Lesson 4
PEACE

"The fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace." (Galatians 5:22)

One of the attributes of *agape* love is peace. For most people, peace is an ideal that seems unattainable. As much as man has sought peace, he has failed to truly achieve it. The history of man is full of war and violence, which is the same yesterday and today.

Peace is far more than the absence of war. For instance, if two boys are fighting at school and the teacher separates them and makes them sit in opposite chairs in the room, you may think that peace is restored. But they're still glaring at each other, snarling, and just waiting for the restraints to be lifted so they can resume the fight. That isn't true peace.

1. Write Isaiah 57:20-21.

The Bible explains why man cannot have peace. Mankind as a whole has rejected God's plan for peace. Peace between men can only happen if there is first and foremost peace between God and man. The only way a person can achieve peace with God is to believe in His Son, "the Prince of Peace," Jesus Christ.

God's righteousness must first be established before peace can be experienced. When we have faith in God's Word and accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the result is peace.

2. Write Romans 5:1.

3. Write Isaiah 32:17-18.

Simply put, as a believer we stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and we will always have peace **with** God. Because of Jesus, we now have a right standing with God. However, even though we have peace **with** God, we still have a choice to have the peace **of** God with others.

4. Write what Jesus tells us about peace in John 14:27.

The peace of God can fluctuate by our actions or with our situations. Sometimes we fail to hold our peace because we speak too much about the nonessentials. When we open our mouths, out goes the peace! Situations can also tempt us to be fearful and worried. When we look to Jesus to be our peace, pray for the Holy Spirit to teach us, and study God's Word, we will see what the spirit of peace looks like.

5. Peace is holy. Write Hebrews 12:14.

Holiness is coupled with living in peace. A right relationship with God leads to right relationships with others. Although we will not always feel loving toward all people, we must pursue peace as we become more Christlike.

6. Peace is our guard. Write Philippians 4:6-7.

Do you want to worry less? Then pray more! Whenever you start to worry, stop, pray, and be thankful. This will give you the peace of God to guard your heart from anxiety and misunderstanding. The peace that surpasses all understanding is the peace that God wants you to share with others.

7. Peace is our umpire. Write Colossians 3:15.

God's peace should rule in our hearts. It's our referee. When our emotions and desires conflict within us and cause us to fear, distrust and hate, we must allow peace to rule our decisions. We must choose whatever promotes peace. Let peace rule in your heart.

8. Peace is humble. Write James 4:1, 6.

The cure for war is humility. Pride makes us self-centered and when we don't get what we want, we fight in order to have it. When we humble ourselves before God, the Holy Spirit fills us and helps us to think of others so we are peaceable.

9. Peace blesses enemies. Write Luke 6:27-28.

Jesus gives the formula to achieve peace with others. Loving our enemies, doing good to those who hate us, blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who abuse us. These are the visible actions of the fruit of peace that others can see in our lives.

"With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:2-3)

"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." (Isaiah 26:3)

Lesson 5
PATIENCE

"The fruit of the Spirit is … patience." (Galatians 5:22)

Another characteristic of *agape* love is patience. The original Greek word used in Galatians 5:22 translates as "long-term patience" or "longsuffering with people. " There is another Greek word that means "maintaining patience under heavy circumstances." The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering (patient) with people.

God's desire for Christians is to show longsuffering with others—just as God has shown His longsuffering patience toward us. Suffering teaches us patience.

1. Write Hebrews 12:3.

Even though we were hostile sinners against Jesus, He never gave up on us. When we face difficulties with others, remember that Jesus was patient with us. It is easy to lose sight of God's purpose. Longsuffering is the training ground for Christian maturity. God wants to establish this same longsuffering in our lives too.

2. Write 1 Timothy 1:16.

The longsuffering of Jesus is a pattern for all believers. Jesus is our example to follow that we might be an example to others. What does this example look like?

3. Write James 1:19-20.

A person who is patient holds their peace. They do not speak quickly nor do they lose their temper. When we get angry, it does not produce the righteousness of God. As followers of Christ, we are commanded by God's Word to show patience toward others.

4. Write Colossians 3:12-13.

Spirit-filled believers are calm in the face of provocation. They do not complain about other people nor do they allow themselves to become irritated. These believers have the capacity to defer anger and are willing to accept pain inflicted by others.

5. Write James 5:11.

What is God's purpose in longsuffering? Why is it necessary to have patience with others? Why is patience an attribute of the fruit of the Spirit?

6. Write 2 Peter 3:9.

Even as people continue to mock God and the second coming of Jesus Christ, God patiently endures with mankind. He shows longsuffering because He is not willing that anyone should perish. The purpose for longsuffering is to bring people to salvation.

Longsuffering patience cannot come from human efforts or by striving for it. Patience that is the fruit of the Spirit becomes evident when the believer fully trusts God in every area of their lives. As we submit to God's will, His Spirit will guide us and we will begin to develop this fruit of patience in our lives toward God and others.

7. What does Jesus tell us in regards to obtaining the fruit of the Spirit? See Luke 11:13.

8. What happens after you ask God for patience? See James 1:3-4.

God expects us to suffer long even if the cause is just. The Bible tells us to be patient with all people. The length of our patience with people determines the measure of our spirituality. Remember, the purpose for longsuffering is to bring people to salvation.

How do you endure exasperating people? Do you lash back with insulting words?
So many of us can suffer shortly when it comes to our family, and say things we regret later—words that lead to bitterness, strife, and rudeness. These types of reaction will never improve anything!

Agape patience bears all things. It does not retaliate. It is not bitter. It is not provoked. It does not behave rudely. It endures all things.

Agape patience is quiet. It thinks before speaking. It has a long temper, and it always gains victory over the short temper. It has the quality of self-restraint.

"Love suffers long…" 1 Corinthians 13:4

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2)

Lesson 6
KINDNESS

"The fruit of the Spirit is … kindness." (Galatians 5:22)

The fifth characteristic of *agape* love is kindness. Kindness is an attitude or action toward others that is gracious and merciful. It carries the idea of goodness, generosity and compassion to all people—even to those who are ungrateful and wicked.

1. Write Romans 2:4.

The word "goodness" here is better translated "kindness." It means "having a tender concern for another to be upright." In His kindness, God is rich in goodness, holding back His judgment, giving people time to turn from their sin. His kindness is intended to lead people to repentance. Jesus is our great example to learn how to show kindness to others.

2. Write what Jesus says in Matthew 11:29-30.

Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart. His teaching is easy. This is why it's necessary to understand that kindness is the fruit of God's Holy Spirit, not a result of our best effort. When we acknowledge God's grace, we show that grace to others. Since God is kind toward us, we should be kind toward others, caring about them more than ourselves.

3. Read Matthew 14:13-21. How did Jesus show kindness and how can you apply this to your own life?

4. Read Matthew 19:13-15 and share the application.

5. Read Luke 18:35-43 and write what you learn.

6. Read John 4:5-26 and comment on what stands out to you.

Kindness to others mimics God's kindness to us. A kind person is not occupied with himself. Kindness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest. Kindness is others-centered. If what we say injures or slanders another person, this is the opposite of kindness. Before the Spirit can help us to be kind, we must take off certain aspects of the flesh nature that are unkind to others.

7. Write Colossians 3:8-10.

8. Write 1 Corinthians 13:4.

A kind person carries a spirit of steady calmness for he is not cast down by defeat or overly proud at his victory. A kind person does not react to every adversity that comes his way. On the other hand, he completely depends on God and commits his cause to Him.

Once we take off, or put away the clothes of the flesh (Colossians 3:8), we can put on the clothes of kindness (Colossians 3:12).

9. Write Colossians 3:12.

10. Write Colossians 3:13-14.

Kindness is the resulting character of someone who is allowing the Holy Spirit to develop maturity in his or her life. When we exhibit the kindness of God, we are caring, tenderhearted, and useful to others. Every action, every word will have the flavor of grace in it. We become more like the image of Christ.

To maintain this attitude toward those we love is hard enough. To express kindness to an enemy, or to those who are against us, requires the work of God. That is why kindness is a fruit of the Spirit. It cannot be manufactured by our best efforts.

Do you want to be fruitful and grow in the spirit of kindness? Then be upright toward others in your attitude and your actions. Be compassionate. Ask God to help you say the right thing at the right time or to help you keep your mouth closed.

Kindness is *agape* love. It is someone who acknowledges his grace from God and so acts upon that grace toward others.

"For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:8)

Lesson 7
GOODNESS

"The fruit of the Spirit is … goodness." (Galatians 5:22)

The words "kindness" and "goodness" are closely related. Although they are similar, the apostle Paul lists these two words separately. To better understand why, we need to look at the original Greek word origins.

As we read in the last lesson, the word for "kindness" means "having a tender concern for another to be upright." "Goodness" means "to desire after good," but it may not always result in acts of kindness. In other words, this fruit of goodness is a desire to do what is right with God, despite what others might say or do.

"Goodness" is used three other times in the New Testament. In each case it is always used in reference to those who are born again through faith in Christ. Doing what is right and good cannot truly take place until God has changed one's heart.

1. Read Romans 15:14 and share what you learn.

2. Read Ephesians 5:8-11 and write your findings.

3. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 and summarize Paul's prayer for God's goodness in the believer.

4. Jesus shows us a commendable example of goodness in Matthew 21:12-14. Write it here.

Jesus did what was good and right. He cleansed His Father's temple of the wicked moneychangers who were abusing the people. Once the moneychangers were gone, we read that those who were in need were then able to come to Jesus for healing.

We see the goodness and the righteousness of God in action. Even though Jesus was not reflecting kindness toward the moneychangers, His goodness resulted in kindness to the blind and the lame who came to Him in the temple.

A Spirit-filled believer shows goodness to a person although in doing so, it might cause them pain.

5. Write Galatians 6:1.

The word "gentleness" in this Scripture carries the idea of "stern" goodness to benefit the person receiving it.

6. Acts 11:23-24 gives us the example of the fruit of goodness exemplified by the disciple Barnabas. Write what it says.

7. Read Acts 11:25-26 and describe Barnabas' actions.

8. What other things did Barnabas do that bore the fruit of goodness? See Acts 4:36-37.

9. Write Psalm 145:8-9.

10. Write Luke 6:33, 35-36.

To summarize, the fruit of goodness is moral excellence, with a generosity to benefit others even when they are ungrateful and wicked. Goodness is an act of grace toward someone else and gives to others without any strings attached.

Sometimes direction given to us for our lives might seem unkind or uncomfortable, but it is goodness directed by God who loves us, and has our eternal perspective in mind.

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:9-10)

Lesson 8
FAITHFULNESS

"The fruit of the Spirit is … faithfulness" (Galatians 5:23).

As we continue to learn about the fruit of the Spirit, we come to faithfulness. A good definition is "adhering firmly and devotedly to a person, a cause, or an idea." It means loyalty. It means being worthy of trust and consistent with the truth.

God points to the Lord Jesus as our example of what faithfulness looks like and appeals to us to follow after Him.

1. Write 1 Peter 2:21-23.

Only God is faithful and the only way we can have the fruit of faithfulness is to rely on what Christ has already done for us, not according to our best efforts or logical reasoning.

2. Write 1 Corinthians 1:9.

As with all the qualities of Christlike maturity, faithfulness is the product of God's grace, which He produces in different ways to cause spiritual growth and maturity in a believer's life. The results are in His hands, not ours.

For example, sometimes we ask, "Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?" or "Why does He allow the wicked to prosper?" These are good questions. While we tend to think only of our present comfort, God is thinking of our eternal welfare. And when we look to the Bible to answer these kinds of questions, we discover that God doesn't test our faith to destroy us, but to strengthen us.

Wanting and expecting everything to go our way is not only unrealistic, it is self-centered. It also suggests we are seeking our security and happiness in good times rather than in the sovereignty of God. It is living according to sight, not faith.

By contrast, when the apostle Paul was chained to a Roman soldier awaiting trial, even though he was innocent, and not knowing if he would live or die, he trusted God. Paul believed God had a good purpose in his suffering and he trusted God for the outcome.

3. Write Paul's response when he was in prison. (See Philippians 4:4, 6-7)

6. Write 2 Samuel 22:36.

The opposite of gentleness is pridefulness and self-assertiveness. In the Jewish tradition, gentleness is among the greatest of virtues while pride and arrogance are among the worst of vices.

7. Write Proverbs 16:18-19.

The fruit of gentleness is being open-minded toward others and patient with others' faults and mistakes. When dealing with a sinning brother or sister in Christ, we need to have a gentle attitude toward them, esteeming them above ourselves.

8. Write 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

A gentle spirit listens to people's questions and treats them respectfully. If you do this, those who oppose you will be more willing to hear what you have to say and perhaps turn from their error.

No one is ever going to be perfect here on earth, so we must accept and love other Christians in spite of their faults. When we see faults in fellow believers, we should be patient and gentle. Then do even more—spend time together and see if you can learn to like him or her.

9. Write Ephesians 4:2-3.

The fruit of gentleness keeps unity by the power of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. In order to do that, we have to be willing to be led and do our part to keep the peace. We do that by focusing on God, not on ourselves. Without a spirit of gentleness, we could fall prey to bitterness and unforgiveness.

10. Write 2 Peter 1:5-7.

"Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand." (Philippians 4:5)

We read that one of the characteristics of Christian maturity is joy, even in the midst of trials and persecutions. The Greek definition for the word "rejoice" is "to jump for joy."

4. According to 1 Peter 1:6-7, why does God want you to rejoice during a trial of your faith?

5. What is God's definition of faith? See Hebrews 11:1.

When we get overwhelmed, we have a tendency to lose hope and give up because we focus on our own limited expectations rather than focusing on God's sovereignty and good plans for us in the future. The key to having the fruit of faithfulness is to look at God's promises instead of looking at the situation.

5. Write God's promise to the believer found in Romans 8:28.

6. How did Paul encourage the church of Ephesus in their faith? See Ephesians 3:20.

7. When faced with the most difficult times in life, how can we follow Jesus' example of faith when He prayed in Luke 22:42, "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done"?

For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Lesson 9
GENTLENESS

"The fruit of the Spirit is … gentleness." (Galatians 5:22)

The original Greek word for "gentleness" in Galatians 5:23 is translated as "meek and humble." It's a word that suggests emotional moderation and the restraint to get angry. It is the mindset and attitude of esteeming others as more important than yourself. Jesus is our example of gentleness.

1. Write what Jesus says in Matthew 11:29.

2. List the attributes of Jesus' gentleness found in Isaiah 42:1-4.

Jesus reveals a character of gentleness by encouragement, justice, and truth. When someone feels broken, bruised or burned out, God will tenderly pick them up. Through God's Spirit, we can show this sensitivity to others around us.

3. Write Matthew 23:11 and share how you can apply this in your life.

To Jesus, greatness comes from serving—giving of yourself to serve God and others. Service keeps us aware of others' needs, and it stops us from focusing only on ourselves. Jesus came as a servant. What kind of greatness do you seek?

4. Write Psalm 139:23-24.

The fruit of gentleness is open to being teachable by God. Gentleness comes from God who works within us, and we cannot have gentleness apart from Him. What happens within us is more important than what happens to us, and we are content with God regardless of circumstance.

5. Write 1 Timothy 6:11.

A gentle person carries a temper that accepts all God's dealings as good. He endures anything that may come his way because he accepts adverse circumstances as from God for his growth and maturity. He realizes that God is gentle, and everything is a gift from God; and therefore, he does not fight God on any issue.

Lesson 10
SELF-CONTROL

"The fruit of the Spirit is … self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:23)

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:24-25)

"Self-control" is often translated as "modesty" in reference to desires and passions, especially referring to sensual appetites. The meaning here literally means "inner strength" to master over one's passions.

Since the strength to turn away from evil to serve God comes from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, it is clear that this word ultimately refers to the life of Jesus within a person's heart, providing strength to serve and please God.

1. Write Philippians 4:13.

2. Write Ephesians 3:16.

Perhaps this is why this virtue is given last in the list, as a sort of summation of the other virtues. Just as the love of God is the source of all grace, so the life of God within a person is its result—self-control.

This is why the apostle Paul was able to write, "Against such there is no law," because the qualities manifested by the Holy Spirit within a person circumvent the greater end of the law, which is the outworking of God's love for all people.

Just as the fruit of a natural vine comes from the vine's own life, so the qualities of the spiritual vine comes from the life of God.

3. Write Jesus' words in John 15:5.

In order for the fruit of self-control to grow, we must daily crucify our sinful desires that keep us from following Christ. This is something God does, not us, by placing faith in Christ. And yet the focus of Christianity is not on dying but on living. In our daily life, we have Christ's resurrection power as we continue to fight sin.

4. Write Galatians 2:20.

5. Write John 12:24-25.

Another good definition for "spiritual self-control" is "zero tolerance." There must be zero tolerance for sin in our lives. You cannot make a peaceful coexistent pact with sin. We can't make a covenant with our fleshly desires. God said, "Kill it."

6. Write Romans 13:14.

7. Write Romans 6:6, 11.

Coddling or excusing fleshly desires leaves us open and vulnerable to sin, and ultimately leaving us open to its destruction. We've got to bring it to the cross, reckon it dead, so that we might live after the Spirit and inherit all that God has promised for us.

8. Write 1 Corinthians 9:27.

The apostle Paul recognized the necessity of reckoning the old man to be dead, of giving zero tolerance to the flesh, allowing the Holy Spirit to show plainly the fruit of self-control in our life.

Practice zero tolerance. Don't give the flesh an inch. Make no provision for it, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ. That means you put a block on your Internet so that you can't get access to pornography. It means you don't go to bars. It means you don't buy another pack of cigarettes. Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof. Instead we walk in purity. We walk in holiness. We walk in righteousness. We walk in truth. We want to be walking in the Spirit.

And the key to continue to walk after the things of the Spirit is reading the Bible every day and fellowshiping with other believers as much as possible.

Don't make excuses for your flesh. Don't live after your fleshly desires—it's an empty, frustrated life. It's not the life that God intended for you. He meant so much better for you. But you must be born again in order to live after the Spirit, and fulfill the very purpose of your existence, to live in communion and fellowship with God.

For every Christian, self-control over their sinful nature is mandatory. We need to receive God's love and respond to it by showing self-control as we walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh.

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self- control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness." (2 Peter 1:5-6)

Lesson 1
WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Let's examine the background when the apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church. Five things were already taking place in this group of believers. There was (1) inconsistent fellowship (2) an influence by the culture (3) a lack of biblical understanding (4) spiritual immaturity and (5) strife.

Using the children of Israel as an example, the apostle Paul warns the Corinthian believers how easy it is to fall into temptation.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-12. Write the lessons you learn that can lead to temptation.

1. Verse 6:

2. Verse 7:

3. Verse 8:

4. Verse 9:

5. Verse 10:

6. What were the consequences? (See verses 8-11.)

7. Write 1 Corinthians 10:12.

Before we criticize the Israelites, think about your own desires. Are they good and God-honoring or selfish? Do you forget about God during the week? Are you in an unhealthy relationship? Do you complain about your situation or do you thank God and trust Him?

Beware of becoming overly confident in your own abilities. All temptations are "common to man." We are all alike. We all face failure at every turn. But God is faithful.

8. Write the first portion of 1 Corinthians 10:13.

It is encouraging to know that God deems temptation a common experience among Christians. No one is exempt from evil. Temptations are not unusual. We are not the only person who ever went through a particular temptation.

9. Write the second portion of 1 Corinthians 10:13.

All temptations are under God's control and personal involvement. God may send us into the fire but He will bring us through. That is where our faith comes in. God personally intervenes and will stretch us spiritually but not beyond our ability to bear it. Temptation is an opportunity to grow in our faith.

10. Write the third portion of 1 Corinthians 10:13.

In God's providence (and foresight), He personally makes a specific way of escape from temptation so that the Christian does not fall into sin. The definite article "the" before "temptation" and "way of escape" points to the "particular escape" for the "particular temptation." However, if we intentionally put ourselves in the way of temptation, then we put God to the test—and this is sin. But for every temptation allowed by God, He provides an answer. God provides the way of escape.

11. Write the final portion of 1 Corinthians 10:13.

The word "bear" literally means to "bear from underneath," "to endure and undergo hardship patiently."

All temptations are under God's control and He personally knows what's happening to each one of us. Does God know about my lack of finances? Yes. Does God know I'm sick? Yes. Spiritual failure is avoidable when we realize that God is faithful no matter what is happening to me.

God knows that we all have different capacities to deal with problems. God designs every temptation for blessing and spiritual growth, and He is faithful in providing the means for each one of us to endure and overcome.

12. According to 1 Corinthians 10:14, what should be our response to temptation?

In the Greek, the word "flee" is a command. "Idolatry" is making anything more important than God. In love, Paul is appealing to the believers to flee from the idols that led to paganism, sexual immorality, ingratitude, and pride. Ultimately, Paul knew that their participation in idolatry would violate biblical principles.

Today, there are idols all around us. And this idolatry takes on the form of addiction. For many, victory over addiction seems to be an unattainable dream, while others see themselves as being too weak to overcome the grasp addiction has on their lives.

It is God's purpose to constantly test us to reveal to us our spiritual condition; nevertheless, there is always a divine provision for the temptation. The thing that makes the difference is not what we do about our temptation but what God can do about it. God is faithful in testing and temptation.

The great issue in it all is the character of God; He is immutable and faithful to His promises. God loves the believer who is out of fellowship as much as the believer in fellowship. He is faithful to both. There is always divine provision for temptation. You have His Word on it. Trust Him!

Lesson 2
NO ROOM FOR EXCUSES

"And Samuel said, 'What have you done' And Saul said, 'When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, "The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD." Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering"' (1 Samuel 13:11-12).

Benjamin Franklin once said, "The man who's good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else."

What does it mean to excuse our behavior? Making an excuse suggests trying to justify a mistake or failure, or to make it seem less serious, in order to escape being blamed or punished.

In the Bible, we see how God promises victory for all those who trust in Him. This victory is based on God's faithfulness and His ability to relate to, comfort, and rescue all who call upon Him. Therefore, if we come to God, there are no excuses for our sin.

Read 1 Samuel 13:5-14. Saul was the first king of Israel (approximately 1,000 BC). Because Saul failed to trust in the Lord, he did things his own way. Saul disobeyed God by offering a sacrifice to Him, but God had not ordained him to make such a sacrifice. That task was exclusively reserved for the prophet Samuel (verse 8-9). Nevertheless, when Saul disobeyed God, he excused his behavior—and it ultimately cost him everything.

1. Summarize Saul's three excuses? See 1 Samuel 13:11-12.

(1)

(2)

(3)

Saul excused his behavior when he saw the people scattered. He was afraid. This is called the "fear of man." The fear of man is when we fail to trust God in the midst of a crisis. Let's look at what God's Word says about the fear of man.

2. Write Proverbs 29:25.

3. Write Proverbs 3:25-26.

4. Write Psalm 34:4.

When Samuel the prophet didn't arrive in the timeframe that Saul expected, he became impatient. When we become impatient, we decide to take matters into our own hands instead of waiting on the Lord. It's like saying, we know better than God in a situation.

5. Write Samuel's response to Saul. See 1 Samuel 13:13.

6. Write Proverbs 21:5.

7. Write Psalm 27:14.

We read in 1 Samuel 13:12, Saul felt compelled to offer a burnt offering. God desires obedience over sacrifice. When facing difficulties, don't be rash or impulsive. This leads to pride and disobedience against God. Follow God's plan regardless of the consequences—even if *you* think it's the right thing to do. God still wants your obedience.

8. Write Proverbs 12:15.

9. Write Proverbs 16:18.

10. Write Proverbs 29:23.

It is important to recognize when we are tempted to distrust God. Don't be afraid. Wait patiently for Him to take care of the situation. Don't depend on your own reasoning, but be obedient to His Word. Do what God has asked you to do. Look to Him, and pray for the power of His Spirit to help you overcome.

11. Write Ephesians 6:10.

Saul had plenty of excuses for his disobedience. But Samuel zeroed in on the real issue: "You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God." Like Saul, we often gloss over our mistakes and sins, trying to justify our actions because of our "special" circumstances. Our excuses, however, are nothing more than disobedience. God knows our true motives. He forgives, restores, and blesses only when we are honest about our sins. By trying to hide his sins behind excuses, Saul lost his kingship (LASB NKJV).

When we rely on God's faithfulness and depend upon God's strength, we won't have to excuse our behavior.

> *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).*

Lesson 3
TREASURE GOD'S WORD

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."" (Matthew 4:4).

Jesus answered the temptation of Satan with the Word of God. It is our strength and our power against temptation. If we want to be strong against the temptation of the enemy, then we must study God's Word and search out His truths.

1. Write Psalm 119:11.

The apostle John wrote, "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14). We can overcome the wicked one by hiding the Word of God within us. When we face temptation, knowing God's Word will strengthen us. Jesus overcame temptation by knowing the Word of God. Knowing and memorizing Scripture is helpful to prevent sin.

Let's look at Psalm 119:162-168 to teach us how to treasure God's Word.

2. Write Psalm 119:162.

When someone finds a treasure, they are elated! We should have that same enthusiasm when we discover a great truth in God's Word. There's nothing more that will create excitement in your life than finding a new truth or something helpful when you read the Bible. But in order to discover it, you must search to find it. Look for the action words. When you get depressed or discouraged, seek God's Word for your answer, and then do it. Don't delve into your problem but dig in to the Bible! Searching and studying the Bible will produce joy.

3. Write Psalm 119:163.

Colossians 3:9 tells Christians to stop lying to one another. Ephesians 4:25 tells us to put away lying and let us speak the truth to one another. When we read God's Word it causes us to detest deception and hypocrisy. When we passionately read God's Word, it will build a resistance to lying. Search out passages that will build up a love for God's laws.

4. Write Psalm 119:164.

When the psalmist said, "seven times a day I praise you" he was not outlining a legalistic regiment. It was a figure of speech emphasizing that he did it all day long.

According to the Bible, praise is something we really need in our lives. It should be the dominant thing in our thinking and our vocabulary. But, sadly most of us suffer from some form of depression, discouragement, or become critical of many of the things around us. If you're feeling a little down, the only real remedy is praise. Praise is God's answer to discouragement.

5. Write Psalm 119:165.

Loving the law of God will bring you peace. Having peace with God brings peace within yourself, which gives you peace with others. Through studying the Word, we come into a vital relationship with the Prince of Peace. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace" (John 16:33). Treasuring God's Word sets in motion great peace.

Moreover, loving God's Word will give great stability in life. "Nothing causes them to stumble." Thinking about or quoting Scripture will help us to focus on Jesus and His promises of deliverance from temptation. It is a deterrent to sin.

If you go without the Word of God for one day, you'll notice it. If you go without it for two days, you begin to feel it. And if you go without it for three or more days, others see it.

6. Write Psalm 119:166.

Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Placing our hope in God stirs us to obey His Word.

7. Write Psalm 119:167.

The more I learn about who God really is, the more I love the Bible and love Him. When we study the Word of God we discover His testimony of love, grace, kindness, and mercy. When we treasure His testimony, we seek to know his Word more.

8. Write Psalm 119:168.

A resolve to obey God's Word demands that we know God's Word. A lot of us have the idea that we will automatically obey the Word of God without knowing what it says. But if we don't know what it says, we can't obey it.

In reality, the more we know God's Word, the more we will be motivated to obey it. Likewise, the less we know His Word, the less we are determined to keep it. If we commit to obey God's Word, we will learn it. And as we are learning it, our commitment will increase.

9. Psalm 119:169-176 ends in a prayer. Write the verse that speaks to you and share why.

The discovery of gold in 1848 sparked the California Gold Rush. Miners who were successful in finding treasure were disciplined and determined, despite the grueling hardships they endured. In the same way, if we are disciplined to read the Bible daily, in spite of what's going on around us, we will find great treasures hidden in God's Word.

If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:4-5)

Lesson 4
TO EQUIP AND EDIFY THE SAINTS

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

As we grow in Christ, we begin to get a spiritual understanding of God's faithfulness. When we continue to read God's Word, pray, and remain in church fellowship, we realize that all temptation is common to man. We're not alone and we are all in this together.

To strengthen our faith, the Lord gave **apostles** (one sent by God to give His message), **prophets** (one who speaks God's truth), **evangelists** (one who shares the gospel), **pastors** (one who oversees God's people), and **teachers** (one who teaches God's Word).

1. In addition to strengthening our faith, why did God give us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers? See Ephesians 4:12?

The word "equipping" in the KJV translation is "perfecting." This term means "setting a broken bone" or "putting something into the correct place." Pastors and teachers are to guide and direct us into a spiritual condition acceptable to God, where we can mature in our spiritual character. The purpose of the church is to mature us in our faith for that place of service that each one of us might fulfill the ministry that God has called us to.

2. Write Ephesians 4:13.

Have you ever wondered why it seems the pastor goes over the same teaching Sunday after Sunday, year after year? Because we have by no means "come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God." We have not become "a perfect man." Nor have we come "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Ministers have to keep teaching the doctrines of Christ to chip away at our old nature and allow the work of the Holy Spirit to conform us into the image of Christ. And so God is faithful to give us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to keep on discipling us for the benefit of our maturity so we are more like Jesus.

3. Write Ephesians 4:14.

Throughout history there have been many spiritual fads, and people follow after them looking for some kind of exotic, spiritual experience. But these winds of doctrine are just gimmicks that cause instability and confusion.

4. Write Ephesians 4:15.

Using the Word of God is often compared to a light. When God's teachers speak the truth in love, it exposes error, like a light shining in a dark place. When the pastor teaches verse by verse from the Bible, darkness is dispelled and exposes error, trickery, and deception.

5. Write Isaiah 28:10.

There is no spiritual gift of criticism. True spiritual growth occurs in the sphere of God's love, speaking God's Word. It calms and settles, guides and directs. God's teachers are to speak the truth in love that we might grow up into Jesus, who is the head of the church.

6. Write Ephesians 4:16.

In order to equip God's people, the prerequisite is speaking the truth in love "by what every joint supplies." "Joint" means "member." We are all members of the body of Christ. It is Jesus who lovingly joins us together with distinct functions and gifts to supply church growth.

7. Write 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

If you are an eye in the body of Christ, so to speak, then it would be very difficult for you to grip something, like a hand. Or if God's called you to be a hand, it's awfully hard then to see. Jesus fitly joins us together. We each have our place, and it's important that we each fulfill the place that God has put us in the body so the body functions fully and is equipped and edified.

8. Looking at 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, list the spiritual gifts for the profit of the church body.

God is faithful to perfect you for that place of service that you might fulfill the ministry that He has called you to fulfill. As believers, we have been called by God to serve Him. When we serve Him and fulfill that ministry, this equips and edifies God's people.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Lesson 5
GOD IS FAITHFUL TO DELIVER

"And the LORD said: 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey'" (Exodus 3:7-8).

Sometimes my circumstances are too stressful for me, yet knowing that God sees what I am suffering is a great relief. Just as God saw the oppression of His people in Egypt, heard their cry and knew their sorrows, He sees, hears, and knows our struggles too.

1. Write the first portion of Exodus 3:7.

In the book of Exodus, Egypt is used as a symbol of spiritual bondage when the Pharaoh held God's people captive. Egypt represented loathsome servitude for the Hebrews. Likewise, our addictions kept us in bondage too. We became enslaved and were held captive by its power. God saw our oppression. The Lord is watching.

2. Write the final portion of Exodus 3:7.

God hears the cries of His people. When we come to God, in the name of Jesus, and cry out for His help, God knows our sorrow and pain.

3. Write James 2:15-16.

A lot of times our friends will say, "Oh, I see. Oh boy, I hear you. Oh, I know this must be heavy. God bless you, brother. I hope you come out okay." What good is that in our time of trouble? But God takes it a step further. It's better to take our problems to God in prayer than to talk to our friends about our problems.

4. Write the first portion of Exodus 3:8.

If God went no further than mere words of reassurance, then what does it profit? But God said, "I have seen…I have heard…and I know."

Nobody really sees or knows—nobody really cares. But God does and He takes it one step further, for verse 8 says, "I have come down to deliver them." We need more than just sympathetic understanding from friends. We need someone who is able to step in and help us. Remember, God is faithful. He hears and delivers all who call upon Him.

5. Write Romans 10:13.

David wrote Psalm 18 when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies. David was a praying man, and God is a prayer-hearing God. If we pray as David did, we too shall see God's faithfulness to deliver us.

6. Write Psalm 18:1-2.

7. Write Psalm 18:3.

God's protection for us is unlimited and can take many forms. David characterized God's care with five military symbols. God is like (1) a rock that can't be moved by any who would harm us, (2) a fortress or place of safety where the enemy can't follow, (3) a buckler, or shield, that comes between us and harm, (4) a horn of salvation, a symbol of might that can save us, (5) a tower high above our enemies. If you need help, look to God.

8. Write Titus 2:14.

Not only is God faithful to deliver us, He is faithful to redeem us from our past sinful lifestyle and to purify us as His own special people for good works.

Christ's freeing us from sin opens the way for him to "purify" us. He freed us from sin (redeemed us) by dying on the cross for our sins. We are not only free from the sentence of death for our sin, but we are also purified from sin's influence as we grow in Christ.

9. Why is setting our hopes on man a common cause of past failures?

10. What should our attitude be toward self-pity, excuses and rationalizations?

God is watching you because He loves you so much He can't take His eyes off of you. He sees the things that you're going through. He sees the things that bring pain to your life. He sees the hurts that you're experiencing. No matter how your heart feels or what your doubts tell you, God hears every prayer.

God has come to deliver you. God sent His Son to deliver you from the power of evil, to give birth to a new and wonderful life within you. To a land flowing with milk and honey. A life of joy, blessing, and freedom awaits you if you are willing to accept God's deliverance.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

Lesson 6
I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Can we really do everything? Most of us believe we can do "some" things through Christ—but not all. Obviously this verse is not license to do anything in the area of our own will. "All things" refers to the will of God for the believer. So how was the apostle Paul able to make this statement? Let's look at what Paul said right before.

1. Write Philippians 4:11.

When Paul wrote this letter, he was in prison for his faith—and he was "content." Are you able to be content in difficult circumstances? Paul's secret was drawing on Christ's power for strength. God delivered Paul from dependence on things.

If you always want more, ask God to remove that desire and teach you how to be satisfied in every circumstance. He will supply all your needs, but in a way that He knows best.

2. Write Philippians 4:12.

Paul was content because he focused on what he was supposed to do, not what he felt he should have. His priorities were straight and he was grateful for everything. Paul had detached himself from the nonessentials so that he could concentrate on the eternal.

Often the desire for more or better possessions is really a longing to fill an empty place in a person's life. When you feel empty, what are you drawn to?

How can you find true contentment? The answer lies in your perspective, your priorities, and looking to Jesus as your source of power. Look to God's faithfulness.

3. Write Philippians 4:13.

The first verb for strength in verse 13 is the word "do." It means to overcome. Paul does not say, "I can overcome all things." That would be an empty boast. His strength was outside the inner resources of himself. The second verb "strengthens" means to surcharge with energy. This word carries the idea of being "infused with strength."

The name "Christ" does not appear in the older manuscripts. In the original text, "through Christ" reads "through Him." This suggests that this strength to overcome originates from multiple sources. The Father, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit all give strength.

4. God the Father gives strength. Ephesians 1:17-19 supports this statement. Read this passage and write what verse 19 says?

The world fears the power of the atom, yet we belong to the God of the universe, who not only created that atomic power but also raised Jesus Christ from the dead. God's incomparably great power is available to help you. There is nothing too difficult for Him.

5. Jesus gives us strength. Write 2 Peter 1:2-3.

6. The Holy Spirit gives us strength. Write Acts 1:8.

The "power" believers receive from the Holy Spirit includes courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority. If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you can experience this power of the Holy Spirit in your life to be a witness to others.

God's gospel has not reached its final destination. If someone in your family, workplace, school, or community hasn't heard the good news about Jesus Christ, you can contribute to the ever-widening circle of God's loving message.

God has work for you to do for Him, but you must do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. Wait and listen for God's complete instructions and timing to be truly effective.

7. The Word of God gives us strength. Write Hebrews 4:12.

8. Prayer gives us strength. Write Acts 4:31.

God imparted all this strength to Paul because he was "in Christ." The literal rendering means is "*in the one that strengthens me*." Not only was Paul independent from material things but he did all things through and in Christ who infused strength into his life.

Are you experiencing God's infused-strength? If not, acknowledge the Lord's strength. Allow the Lord to meet your needs and don't depend upon your own strength. Be content being "in Christ."

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:13)

Lesson 7
TRUSTING GOD

"God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

As we come to the last lesson in the One Step To Freedom curriculum, we want to encourage you to trust God. God is truth. God's Word is true. God cannot lie.

1. Write Numbers 23:19.

This is a wondrous truth about God: He is unable to change; He cannot lie. Whatever He has said in His Word, He will do.

2. Write Titus 1:2.

When the Bible uses the word "hope," it isn't referring to hope the way we tend to use the word. It refers to something that is certain. God imparts His eternal life to me; and as He imparts that life to me, I have the hope and certainty for the future.

3. Write Hebrews 6:18.

It's impossible for God to lie. But then God, who cannot lie, takes an oath to confirm the promise is true—that you might have great comfort knowing that you can trust in His promise, and you can flee to Him in time of need.

While you rebuild your life after confessing and repenting from life-dominating sin, you can now lay a new foundation based upon the promises in God's Word. As a believer, you will encounter temptations and trials (no one is immune). However, it is God who is faithful and if you trust Him, He will provide a way so that you will be able to endure.

4. Write 1 John 1:9.

5. Write 2 Timothy 2:13.

6. Write 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

God is faithful and He is the Creator and Savior of your soul. He wants you to put your trust in Him, and when you do, He will deliver you from every temptation.

One Step To Freedom
Chapter 7: God's Faithfulness

Our God reigns! It has been our privilege to serve with you as we traveled through the One Step To Freedom curriculum. Take some time to share what you have learned from the different chapters.

Chapter 1: Planning For Victory

Chapter 2: Initial Restoration

Chapter 3: Forgiveness

Chapter 4: Obedience To God's Word

Chapter 5: Spiritual Warfare

Chapter 6: Fruit of The Spirit

Chapter 7: God's Faithfulness

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
keep yourselves in the love of God,
looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear,
pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 20-25)