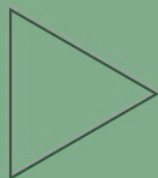
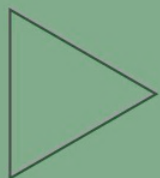
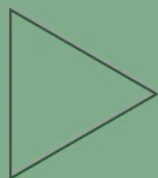
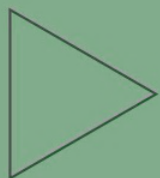
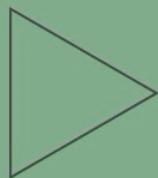
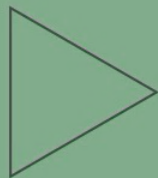
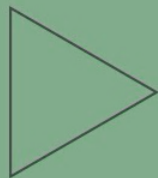
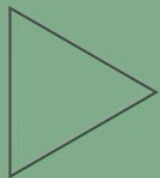
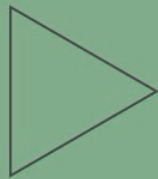


CARE + COUNSEL

PROVIDE COUNSEL
THROUGH CARE



GROWTH Groups

A HIGHPOINT RESOURCE

Highpoint Church
1805 High Point Drive
Naperville, Illinois 60563

www.highpoint.church

All Scripture is from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

CARE + COUNSEL | November 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	7
CONNECT	13
with empathy	
through questions	
by listening	
ASSESS	23
spiritual condition	
heart issues	
severity-ownership-support	
RESPOND	35
with hope	
in grace and truth	
ENCOURAGE	45
a next step	
prayer together	
a care plan	
TOOLBOX	53
Topical Scripture Index	
Care+Counsel worksheets	



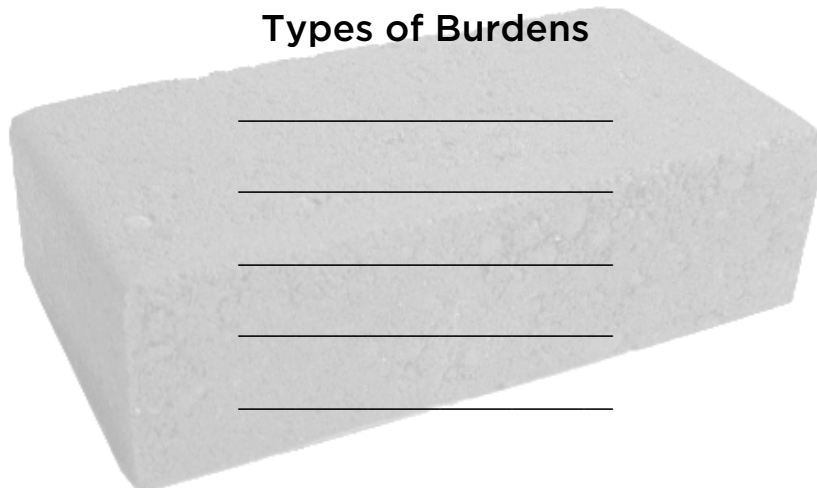
Introduction

¹ Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. - Galatians 6:1-2

1 | _____ **the** _____ (1)

2 | _____ **the** _____ (2)

Types of Burdens



We all suffer in many ways. Our struggles may be different, but our struggle is the same.

CARE + COUNSEL	
C_____	... with empathy ... through questions ... by listening
A_____	... spiritual condition ... heart issues ... severity-ownership-support
R_____	... with hope ... with grace ... with truth
E_____	... toward a next step ... in prayer together ... through a care plan

We exist to help people
believe in,
belong to, and
become like Jesus

CARE + COUNSEL is about helping people help people.

At Highpoint Church, our goal is to be the church to each other by being a church full of people helping people. This training provides the framework for helping people *believe* in, *belong* to, and *become* like Jesus through providing care + counsel.

This training will help you develop competencies to connect with people and point them to Jesus with hope through grace and truth within a supportive community. In doing so, we are helping people help people.

Why Care + Counsel?

¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. - Ephesians 4:12-16

To help people help people (12a)

The work of ministry is a shared role for all believers – including helping people. We exist to help people believe in, belong to, and become like Jesus. This training is about helping people help people through equipping people with competencies to minister to others, including those who are suffering or struggling.

To build the body of Christ (12b)

As believers are equipped and engage in providing care and counsel to others, the body of Christ is built up and is strengthened.

To grow in spiritual maturity (13)

Our mission is to make disciples. Our end goal isn't just helping other people become more like Jesus; it's also about helping all leaders grow in spiritual maturity as well.

To apply biblical theology (14-15)

Growing in spiritual maturity involves developing a biblical theology with an applied theology – having convictions plus competencies for actively applying our convictions. It's both orthodoxy and orthopraxy – what we believe and how we live our beliefs.

To grow together in love (16)

We desire to be a church where the whole body is doing it's part by engaging in ministering to each other in love.

CARE + COUNSEL

Connect

with empathy
through questions
by listening

Assess

spiritual condition
heart issue
severity-ownership-support

Respond

with hope
with grace
with truth

Encourage

a next step
prayer together
a care plan

Prayer After Service

Someone comes forward for prayer

Connect - *How can I pray for you? Actively listen. Model empathy.*

Assess - *Is the person a believer? Are there other issues beyond the initial prayer request?*

Respond - *Share a word of hope and a Bible verse.*

Encourage - *Can I pray for you now? What group are you in? Can I help you get connected into a group?*

Parenting Moment

Teenage daughter comes to you in tears

Connect - *Drop everything to focus. "What are your tears about?" Listen without interrupting. Enter into her world. Be present.*

Assess - *Gently probe to discern if there a deeper emotional or relational issue than the difficulty being shared?*

Respond - *Give hope grace, and love. Remind her of her identity in Christ.*

Encourage - *Can I pray for you now? Commit to keeping an open conversation.*

Care Center Appointment

Guest comes to an appointment with a Care Center team member

Connect - *What brings you here today? Can you tell me a bit about your story?*

Assess - *Is there a spiritual issue beyond the financial or physical issue?*

Respond - *Share hope. Speak truth in love.*

Encourage - *What a practical next step or care plan? Provide a financial worksheet or homework. Provide groceries or referral.*

Relationship - Resources - Referral

Managing an Employee

Monthly Management Meeting

Connect – *Take an interest in the person, not just his/her performance going for the company. How do you feel things are going in your role?*

Assess – *What is an area of competency or performance that the employ can grow in?*

Respond – *Provide feedback and coaching to help the employee grow in a competency.*

Encourage – *What are some specific action steps for follow through and follow up.*

Ministering to Students

Leading a student small group

Connect – *Take initiative to get to know the students in your group – family situation, interests, activities, fears, etc. Make sure every student is noticed and cared for.*

Assess – *How to help students grow spiritually?*

Respond – *Provide affirmation and positive reinforcement. Share God's Word in a genuine way.*

Encourage – *Specific application of the teaching time. Ask: How can I pray for you? Take notes. Follow up during the week.*

Providing Comfort in Grief

A woman in your group lost a loved one

Connect – *Be present. Listen. I can't imagine how you feel. My heart hurts for you.*

Assess – *Levels of grief and healing to watch out for in the weeks/months ahead.*

Respond – *Share hope from God's Word. Remind of God's presence and promises.*

Encourage – *Pray together. Keep in touch. Provide practical and tangible care.*

Supporting the Struggling

A man shares about struggle with pornography

Connect – *Thank you for trusting me enough to share this struggle with me.*

Assess – *SOS: Severity (how long has this been an issue?), Ownership (is there a desire to change?), Support (is he isolated or in community?). What is the deeper issue behind his struggle?*

Respond – *You're not alone in your struggle. There is hope. Speak truth in love.*

Encourage – *Develop a care plan and accountability plan. Pray together. Keep in contact.*

Addressing Anxiety

A woman in your group shares about anxiety

Connect – *Thank you for telling me what you're going through. Please know we are here for you.*

Assess – *What is causing the anxiety? What is at the root? How severe is the anxiety? What lies is she believing?*

Respond – *Facilitate self-discovery in God's Word. Remind her of her identity in Christ.*

Encourage – *How can we best provide support for you? Develop some next steps and a care plan. Pray together.*

**CARE +
COUNSEL**

Pray for _____ as you care + counsel.

LORD, fill me with insight and wisdom from God to be a minister of grace and truth.

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. | James 1:5

LORD, empower me to show and share God's love in a spirit of compassion, humility, and love.

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. | 1 Peter 3:8

LORD, give me pure motives and a clean conscience.

⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. | 1 Timothy 1:5

LORD, give me Your words to share.

¹⁹ do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. | Matthew 10:19

LORD, help me to trust You with outcomes.

⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. | 1 Corinthians 3:7

*God alone is the One who changes lives,
but He chooses to use people to
show the love of Jesus and
share the truth from God's Word.*

Pray for _____ as you care + counsel.

LORD, give them ears willing and a heart ready to receive from You.

⁹ He who has ears to hear, let him hear. | Mark 4:9

LORD, may they experience comfort from the Holy Spirit if suffering or conviction from the Holy Spirit if struggling with sin.

²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. | John 14:26 (KJV)

⁸ And when [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment | John 16:8

LORD, allow them to embrace Your love and experience hope in You.

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. | Ephesians 3:17-19

LORD, empower them to take courageous steps of faith in obedience to You.

⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight | 2 Corinthians 5:7

²⁴ I believe, help my unbelief | Mark 9:24

LORD, may they be strengthened by God and His grace.

*¹ You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus
2 Timothy 2:1*

¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. | 1 Peter 5:10

CARE + COUNSEL

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with empathy
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by listening

Assess

spiritual condition
heart issue
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Respond

with hope
with grace
with truth

Encourage

a next step
prayer together
a care plan

CONNECT

Connect with Empathy

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. | Peter 3:8

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. | Colossians 3:12

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. | 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

1 | Enter into Another's _____

- _____ > _____
- _____ before speaking, _____ before fixing, _____ before guiding

2 | Identify with _____ or _____

- We all _____ in many ways. Our _____ may be different, but our struggle is the same.
- You are not _____ - whatever your suffering or struggle

3 | Incarnate the _____ of Jesus

- People _____ God's love through our love.
- People _____ God's love through our love.

People don't care how much you know
until they know how much you care.

Tips for Connecting with Empathy

1. Avoid Superficial Clichés

“Everything happens for a reason.”

“God has a plan.”

“I know how you feel.”

2. Acknowledge Their Pain

“I’m sorry that you’re going through this.”

“That must be so hard.”

“I can see how that would be difficult.”

3. Express Gratitude For Sharing

“Thank you for sharing with me.”

“I’m glad you told me what you’re going through.”

“Thank you for trusting me with this. That really means a lot.”

“This must be so hard to talk about. Thank you for opening up to me.”

4. Share How You Feel*

**but don’t make it about you*

“I can’t imagine how you feel.”

“My heart hurts for you.”

“It makes me sad to hear that this happened.”

5. Show Genuine Interest

“It’s hard for me to know what to say but know that I care.”

“How are you feeling about what you’re going through?”

“Is there anything else you’d like to share?”

6. Be Supportive

“I’m here for you.”

“How can I help you?”

“Call me anytime.”

Empathy is less about what you say and more about showing up and listening well.

Connect through Listening

⁵ *The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.* | Proverbs 20:5



Jesus & Questions

Who do people say that I am? ... But who do you say that I am? | Matthew 16:15

Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I command? | Luke 6:46

Why are you anxious? | Matthew 6:27

Why do you doubt? | Luke 8:25

Do you want to be healed? | John 5:6

Do you want to leave me, too? | John 6:67

Do you love me? | John 21:16

Reflect + Discuss

Since Jesus is omniscient (all knowing), why did He ask so many questions?

What can we learn from how Jesus used questions?

Types of Questions

¹⁵ *An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge ...*
Proverbs 18:15

Ask _____ Questions

- to provide flexibility of response
- to determine what is important to the person
- to help you to better understand

Sample Intro Questions

- *What is it that you want to talk about?*
- *Can you explain to me what is going on?*
- *What brings you here today?*

Ask _____ Questions

- Sample Diagnostic Questions:
 - *When did it start?*
 - *Where does it hurt?*
 - *What makes it worse?*
 - *How long has it been an issue?*
- Sample Care Center Questions:
 - *How did you hear about the Care Center?*
 - *Do you have children? Who do you live with?*
 - *Do you have a job?*
 - *What is your church background?*
 - *Do you believe in God? What do you believe about Him?*
 - *Have you sought financial assistance from a church or agency before? What was your experience?*

Remember: questions are to connect, not to interrogate.

Ask _____ Questions

Value of Clarifying Questions: a) clarify your understanding and b) help the other person explore their thoughts to correct or reinforce your understanding

- *When you say "x", what do you mean?*
- *It sounds like I hear you say "x", am I hearing you correctly?*
- *Can you tell me a little more?*
- *On a scale of 1-10, when "x" happened how did it make you feel?*
- *What was your role in the situation?*
- *How are you doing in the midst of that?*
- *How are you feeling about that?*
- *How have you been responding to the situation?*
- *Do you want help?*

Ask _____ Questions

- *What do you think you should do?*
- *What's your plan? Do you need help developing one?*
- *How can you best honor God through your response in your situation?*

Ask _____ Questions

Jesus focused on internal heart questions more than external behavioral actions.

- Ask questions to probe their wants, affections, and desires.
 - *What do you love?* This asks about objects of desire.
 - *What makes you happy?* This asks about desires satisfied.
 - *What makes you sad?* This asks about desires postponed or denied.
 - *What makes you angry?* This asks about desires denied.
 - *What do you fear?* This asks about desires at risk.

Note: Our emotions are connected to our wants, affections, desires.
- Ask questions to get beyond behavior to thoughts and feelings to heart motive.

Five Heart-Revealing Questions

1. **What was the *situation*?** (Proverbs 18:13, 15, 17)
2. **How did you *respond*?** (Psalm 139:23-24; Ephesians 4:22-24)
3. **What were you *thinking* and *feeling*?** (Matthew 6:19-21)
4. **What did you *want* in the moment?** (Luke 6:43-45)
5. **What was the *result*?** (Galatians 6:7-8)

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
What was the <i>situation</i> ?	<i>I was corrected by my spouse in front of my kids.</i>	<i>I was concerned about a performance review at work.</i>	<i>I was alone.</i>	<i>I was driving and my mind recalled a regret from the past.</i>
How did you <i>respond</i> ?	<i>I blew up in anger.</i>	<i>I felt extreme anxiety. I could not sleep. I could not get out of bed the next day.</i>	<i>I got drunk.</i>	<i>I kept mentally beating myself up for what I did.</i>
What were you <i>thinking</i> and <i>feeling</i> ?	<i>I felt disrespected and unappreciated.</i>	<i>I was filled with fear.</i>	<i>I was thinking no one will know. I'm not hurting anyone. I deserve a stress relief.</i>	<i>I feel despair things will never change.</i>
What did you <i>want</i> ?	<i>I wanted respect.</i>	<i>I wanted control.</i>	<i>I wanted comfort.</i>	<i>I wanted peace.</i>
What was the <i>result</i> ?	<i>My temper made the situation worse and I said some things that I regret.</i>	<i>I didn't go to work.</i>	<i>I felt shame and commit to not do it again - until the next time.</i>	<i>I keep living in the mental cycle of regret.</i>
Heart Issue				

Five Classes of Questions

- WHAT? questions uncover general information.
- HOW? questions reveal the way something was done.
- WHEN? questions uncover order of events.
- HOW OFTEN? & WHERE? questions reveal themes and patterns in a person's life.
- WHY? questions uncover a person's purposes, desires, goals, or motivations.

Each class of question uncovers different information to broaden understanding.

^adapted from Paul Tripp

Connect with Listening

¹³ *If one answers before he hears, it is his folly and shame ...* ¹⁵ *An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge ...* ¹⁷ *The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.*

Proverbs 18:13, 15, 17

¹⁹ *let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*

James 1:19

1 | Listen to _____, not only to _____.

- Avoid making _____, drawing conclusions, giving advice.
- Practice _____ eye contact.
- Make mental or written _____ to increase understanding.

2 | Listen to the _____, not only to the _____.

- Listen to _____ - anger, fear, frustration, discouragement, tears, etc.
- Listen for negative _____ - *I am a failure. I guess I deserve this. I am the problem.*
- Listen for _____ of faith
- Listen for _____, minimizing, rationalizing, defensiveness, victim mentality

3 | Listen to what is _____, not just to what is _____.

- Observe _____, non-verbal communication, tone
- Be aware of _____ of topics, lack of personal responsibility

Role Play

Scenario 1: Share about a time you were frustrated recently.

Role play with empathy, questions, listening. Refer to notes as helpful. Practice the questions on page 18. Then, switch roles.

Scenario 2: Share about a personal time of suffering or struggle.

Did you feel alone? Did you open up to others? Did you feel like God cared? Who/what helped you the most? What did God teach you A) about yourself and B) about Himself? How can you use this experience to help others who are suffering or struggling?

Reflect + Discuss

Why is it important that our care starts with connecting with empathy, through questions, and by listening?

What did you learn about connecting through ... ?

- empathy
- questions
- listening

How can you grow in connecting through ... ?

- empathy
- questions
- listening

What questions do you have?

CARE + COUNSEL

Connect

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ASSESS

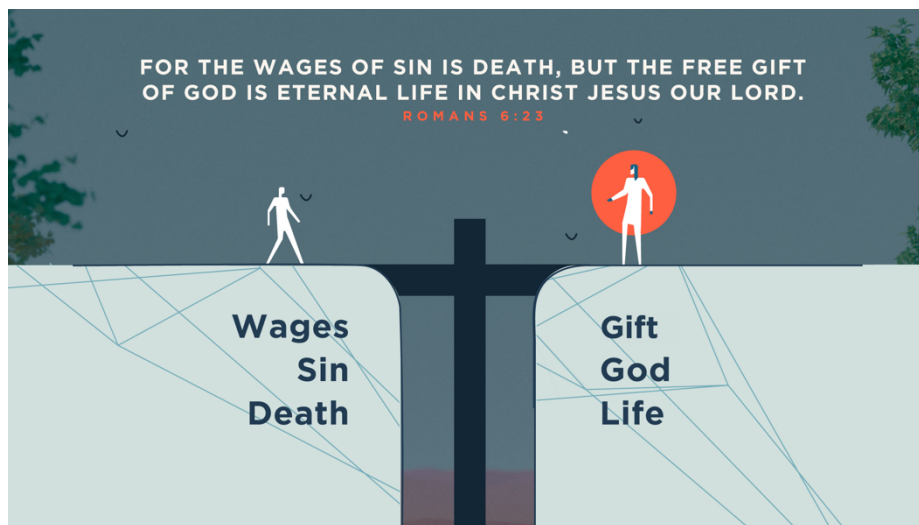
Assess Spiritual Condition

¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes | Romans 1:16*

1 | Is the person _____?

Step 1: Ask: *What is your personal faith story? Do you have assurance of salvation?*

Step 2: If unclear or unsure: Share the Gospel



Romans 6:23 contrasts the bad news with the good news

A *wage* is something we earn, we deserve. A *gift* is something we cannot earn, we don't deserve.

Sin is to miss the mark of holiness. *God* alone is holiness.

There are *three kinds of death and life* – physical, spiritual, and eternal. We deserve death because of our sin. But God's gift of grace is *eternal life to all who will believe in Jesus*.

Being Good is not Good Enough.

Good people do not go to heaven. Forgiven people go to heaven.

We are not saved by what we DO. We are saved by what Jesus has DONE for us on the cross.

All religions are spelled DO - earn favor, improve self, pay penance, follow rules. This is also the popular belief in America culture - I'm not that bad, I try to be good. I am better than most, God will grade on a curve. But Christianity is spelled DONE. We are not justified by works, but by faith.

Our family and friends cannot save us. A church or a pastor cannot save us. We cannot even save ourselves. Only God saves us.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
Ephesians 2:8-9

ABC's of Salvation

Admit you are a sinner and unable to save yourself

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God | Romans 3:23

Believe Jesus died and rose again to offer you forgiveness and life

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God | John 1:12

Confess Jesus as Lord with your mouth

⁹ if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. | Romans 10:9

The Gospel is not just the ABC's but the Gospel is the A-Z.

The Gospel is not just how you begin the Christian life. The Gospel is the Christian life. The way we begin the Christian life is also the way we continue in the Christian life.

MY REASON FOR HOPE

Nick Serna | Hope Group Member

We were all created in the image of God. All the emotions that we feel, love, joy, happiness, even laughter all those things God intended us to have with Him. To laugh with Him, have joy with Him in perfect fellowship with Him.

However, in the Garden, Adam and Eve, instead of enjoying God wanted to be like God. Believing the lie from the enemy that surely they would not die but be like God, they ate the fruit.

And at that moment God would have been fully justified in wiping us out. However, He created a plan for redemption to save us. God became a man and sent His only Son so that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but be saved.

That's like you becoming an ant to save ants. It makes no sense. But God is love. So, God came down and became a man. And again, instead of loving Him and enjoying Him we killed Him. Showing again, we want to be like God and not enjoy Him. But Jesus rose three days later defeating death and the grave.

To this day God is still pursuing us.

While we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). We were predestined in love (Ephesians 1:5) by the foreknowledge of God you are where you are in life (1 Peter 1). And Jesus says no one comes to me unless the Father has allowed it (John 6)

I say all that to say, the fact that you are hearing this hope and wanting to know about Christ is only proof that to this day God is still pursuing you and still wants you to know that He loves you.

And it is not the wrath of God that changes but Christ kindness that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

Condemnation makes us feel like we can't change while conviction makes us want to.

That's my reason for hope.

¹⁵ ... always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect | 1 Peter 3:15

2 | Does the person desire to grow in _____?

Ask: Do you want to become like Jesus?

Note: You cannot help someone more than they want to be helped.

_____	_____	_____
Past	Present	Future
At Salvation	Lifelong Process of becoming like Jesus	In Eternity
Freed from the penalty of sin	Being freed from the power of sin	Freed from the presence of sin

*²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed** to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**. | Romans 8:29-30*

Soil	Heart	Issue
Path		Not teachable; God needs to convict
Rocky		Lacks maturity in Christ; seeks to grow
Thorns		Competing desires; needs to focus
Good		Eager to learn, apply, grow

4 Soils = 4 Hearts

In Matthew 13 and Mark 4, Jesus tells a parable about a sower who was sowing seeds. The seeds landed on four types of soils. Each soil type yielded a different result. The soils represent our hearts related to our salvation and sanctification.

The Christian life is not just about salvation, it's about sanctification - becoming like Jesus in our character and conduct.

⁶ *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,*
⁷ *rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. | Colossians 2:6-7*

A Word of Caution

⁵ *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test! | 2 Corinthians 13:5*

- The Lord alone is the judge of our spiritual condition.
- Avoid: being critical, condemning, self-righteous.
- Use appropriate questions may prick the conscience; accusations harden the heart.
- Assess actions, not one's heart motives, with humility and grace.

Assess Heart Issues

⁴³ "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,
⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from
thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out
of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his
evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth
speaks. | Luke 6:43-45 (See also Matthew 7:17-19, 12:33, 15:18-19)

If you plant apple seeds you will get an apple tree. There is an organic connection between the roots of a plant and the fruit it produces. And so it is with people.

Fruit is what the root of the tree produces. Behavior is what the heart produces. All behavior flows from the heart - what you think (thoughts), what you say (words), what you do (actions).

Behavior management focuses on external behavior. Failure to address internal root issues of the behavior (the heart) will only lead to a temporary, cosmetic fix.

Lasting change requires heart change.



Our Behavior Flows from our Hearts

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Proverbs 4:23

All behavior flows from our hearts - our words, our thoughts, our actions, our reactions to situations, our interactions with people.

Therefore, we need to guard, protect, fortify our hearts. The heart is like a spring. It's the source. If a spring is polluted, pollution will flow. If the spring is clean, life will flow. And so, it is with our hearts.

Jesus talked about the importance of our hearts throughout the Gospels. He equated our hearts to our treasure, to our master.

¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. | Matthew 6:19-21, 24

A *treasure* is what rules our hearts - it's what we live for. The example of treasure in this passage is money. But treasures are not limited to money. In fact, the list of treasures is endless.

Three treasure principles from this passage:

1. Everyone lives for some kind of treasure.
2. Whatever you treasure will control your heart - *where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
3. Whatever controls your heart will control your behavior - *no one can serve two masters.*

Therefore, our behavior reveals what we truly treasure in our hearts. This is why Jesus didn't focus on behavior. He didn't say, "love God with your behavior" but rather "love God with all your heart" because from our heart flows behavior.

Assess Severity, Ownership, Support

When assessing an issue of suffering or struggling, these questions are helpful for discerning the level of severity, ownership, and support. Answers to these questions will help decide the best approach for addressing the issue - including who should be involved in providing care and counsel.

Severity

- *How long has it been going on?*
- *Is it getting better or worse?*
- *How difficult is it right now?*

Ownership

- *Are you wanting to address the issue?*
- *How have you contributed to the situation?*
- *Are you willing to listen to and implement spiritual counsel?*

Support

- *Do you have spiritual support through family, friends, or group?*
- *Have you been honest with others?*
- *Are you willing to join a group for counsel and support?*

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Severity	Wisdom Issue Mild stress Everyday problems	Moderate conflict Distressed but functioning More complex issues	Crisis Stronghold sin Significant Suffering
Ownership	Repentant Open Highly Teachable	Sees sin Makes excuses Moderately teachable	Blame-shifts Defensive Denial - not teachable
Support	Close family Intimate and accountable Vulnerable in Small Group	Some family support Few friends Somewhat open in group	Estranged from family No friends Isolated, not in a group

^Biblical Soul Care

Levels of Care

LEVEL 1	<p>Issues: Everyday suffering and struggles</p> <p>Caregiver: Any maturing believer, a godly friend</p> <p>Setting: Growth Group, meet informally for care and prayer</p> <p>Process: Care comes primarily through existing relationships</p>
LEVEL 2	<p>Issues: Deeper suffering or struggles - medical illness, grief, marriage/family conflict, job loss, financial need</p> <p>Caregiver: Growth Group leaders, Highpoint Staff</p> <p>Setting: Growth Group, Hope Group, Care Center</p> <p>Process: Care comes in community; meet 1:1 as needed for a short-period of time</p>
LEVEL 3	<p>Issues: Destructive and debilitating struggles - shame, guilt, substance or behavioral addiction, anger, anxiety-worry-fear, resentment, emotional hurt, depression, marriage/family issues</p> <p>Caregiver: Hope Group leader, Highpoint staff, elder couple</p> <p>Setting: Hope Group and formal counseling</p> <p>Process: Care comes primarily through Hope Group or counseling</p>
LEVEL 4	<p>Issues: Life-dominating suffering or struggles - adultery, abuse, violence, suicidal threat, criminal offenses, mental health issues</p> <p>Caregiver: Highpoint staff or elders to assess referral</p> <p>Setting: Formal counseling, resident programs, outside ministries or organizations</p> <p>Process: Care from Highpoint through referrals</p>



Role Play

Scenario 1: Share the Gospel.

How would you share the Gospel with someone else? What are the essentials of the Gospel? How would you encourage a response?

Scenario 2: Probe deeper into the frustration story (from “connect” role play).

Role play questions to ask to get to possible heart issues behind the emotion. What does the frustration reveal about the heart? Who/what was ruling the heart?

Reflect + Discuss

Why is it important that our care assesses spiritual condition, heart issues, and severity-ownership-support?

What did you learn about assessing ... ?

- spiritual condition
- heart issues
- severity-ownership-support

How can you grow in assessing ... ?

- spiritual condition
- heart issues
- severity-ownership-support

What questions do you have?

CARE + COUNSEL

Connect

with empathy
through questions
by listening

Assess

spiritual condition
heart issue
severity-ownership-support

Respond

with hope
with grace
with truth

Encourage

a next step
prayer together
a care plan

RESPOND

Respond with Hope

¹² *Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.* | Romans 12:12

²¹ *But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope.* ²² *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;* ²³ *they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.* ²⁴ *“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”* | Lamentations 3:21-24

¹³ *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.* | Romans 15:13

1 | No matter the _____ - there is always _____.

- Things are never as _____ as they may seem.
- Sometimes it _____ to hope or _____ to hope, but there is *always* hope.

2 | Hope is confidence God’s _____ and _____ will prevail.

- God’s _____: *for all the promises of God find their Yes in him.* | 2 Corinthians 1:20
- God’s _____: *all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* | Romans 8:28

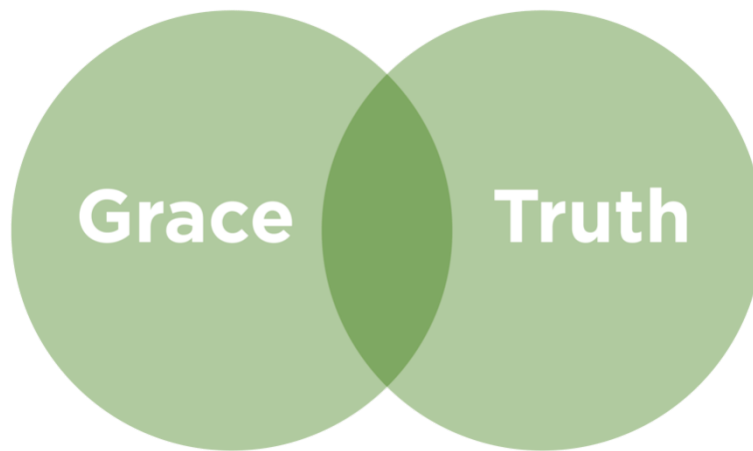
3 | Because God promises to always be _____ - there is always _____.

- We have _____ because God’s presence is *promised* | Deuteronomy 31:8
- We have _____ because God’s presence is *personal* | Isaiah 43:1-2
- We have _____ because God’s presence is *powerful* | Isaiah 41:10

Respond with Grace + Truth

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth ... | John 1:14

Jesus was all grace, all truth, all the time. He was simultaneously, equally, and perfectly grace and truth. To become like Christ is to be grace-filled *and* truth-filled - to live in the tension of between showing grace and sharing truth.



1 | Grace and Truth are _____ important.

Grace People	Truth People
Desire to be _____	Desire to be _____
Driven by _____	Driven by _____

What is your primary tendency - grace or truth?

How does your primary tendency influence your _____
(marriage, parenting, ministry, etc.) for good and bad?

All Truth	_____	_____
No Truth	_____	_____
	No Grace	All Grace



Being grace and truth is not seeking a balance of equality of time spent being grace-filled or truth-filled; rather it's simultaneously being grace-filled and truth-filled.

2 | We _____ grace by pointing people to the _____ of grace and the _____ of God.

- For the _____, God's grace is _____.

⁹ *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. | 2 Corinthians 12:9*

- For the _____, God's grace is _____.

²⁰ *... but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more | Romans 5:20*

⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. | 2 Corinthians 9:8

3 | We _____ truth by pointing people to _____.

¹⁵ *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.* | Ephesians 4:15

- Our _____ = *speaking*
- Our _____ = *truth*
- Our _____ = *love*
- Our _____ = *to become like Jesus*

¹⁷ *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* | John 17:17

³¹ *So Jesus said ... "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,*

³² *and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

John 8:31-32

¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹² *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

Hebrews 4:12

A Word of Caution

- Earn the right to share by showing love.
- Talk with people about God's Word, not at people with God's Word.
- Counsel is not one size, one verse, fits all.
- Use appropriate questions may prick the conscience; accusations

Responding with Grace + Truth

1. Focus on _____, not only _____.

Indicative	a _____ of what God has done.	<i>What is God saying to you about your _____ in Christ?</i>
Imperative	a _____ of what God calls us to do.	<i>What is God asking you to do in the _____ of Christ?</i>

God will empower you to do what He calls you to do.

**We are to live *from* our identity in Christ
not *for* our identity in Christ.**



**You are not what you do, nor what has been done to you.
You are not your biggest regret, nor your worst mistake.
You are not what others say you are, nor who you say you are.
You are who God says you are.**

2. Discern Appropriate _____.

¹⁴ *And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, patient with them all.* - 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Issue	Description	Response	Approach
<i>Idle</i>	knows what to do and is not doing it.	<i>Admonish</i>	
<i>Fainthearted</i>	knows what to do but lacks confidence	<i>Encourage</i>	
<i>Weak</i>	does not know what to do	<i>Help</i>	
<i>... be patient with them all.</i>			

Reflect + Discuss

- Can you think of a time in your life when you were idle, fainthearted, or weak? What was going on? What did you need from others?
- What are practical, real-life examples of each category?
 - Idle -
 - Fainthearted -
 - Weak -
- How can the wrong response to the idle, fainthearted, or weak hurt them?
- How can the right response to the idle, fainthearted, or weak help them?
- What happens if we fail to respond at all to the idle, fainthearted, and weak?

Additional Biblical Guidance	
C _____	<i>Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? - Matthew 7:3</i> <i>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. - Hebrews 3:13</i>
C _____	<i>Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. - 1 Thessalonians 5:11</i> <i>who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction - 2 Corinthians 1:4</i>
C _____	<i>But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. - 1 Thessalonians 2:7</i> <i>but that the members may have the same care for one another. 1 Corinthians 12:25</i>
C _____	<i>Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience - Colossians 3:12</i> <i>Love is patient and kind. - 1 Corinthians 13:4</i>
⁵ <i>The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. - 1 Timothy 1:5</i>	

3. Identify _____, Insert _____.

² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* | Romans 12:2

Lies	Truth
You are what you do nor what was done to you.	You are what Christ has done for you
You are a sinner because you sin.	You are a saint who sins.
You are your worst moment.	You are forgiven and redeemed.
You are what others say about you.	You are what God says about you.
Your behavior tells you what to believe about yourself.	Your belief about yourself determines your behavior.
You are a victim to your past.	You are a victor in Christ.

4. Facilitate _____ in God's Word.

Our goal is not to fix issues but rather to point people to God and His Word. The following series of questions leads people to self-discovery in the Word versus telling people what they should do. This lets God's Word speak and allows you to support.

Question	Objective
What is the issue?	<i>Help the person discern the real issue for himself/herself.</i>
What does God's Word say?	<i>Guide the person to a passage in God's Word related to the topic. Let him/her read it.</i>
As a result of what God's Word says, what should you do?	<i>Encourage the person to self-identify an appropriate response to the truth of God's Word.</i>
How can I support and pray for you?	<i>Offer to follow up and follow through in support, prayer, encouragement, counsel, and hold accountable.</i>

The appendix contains a topical Scripture index to provide suggested verses for specific topics.

A Word of Caution

When using the Bible to speak truth in love, avoid reducing the Bible to these common dangers:

1. _____ - *making the Bible about a list of do's and don'ts's with an emphasize on works-based rule following.*
2. _____ - *using a Bible verse in a trite way that communicates lack of empathy or sincerity.*
3. _____ - *calling others to moral goodness through self-effort instead of being empowered by God.*
4. _____ - *taking Bible verses out of context to have it say what you want it to say instead of what God said.*

Instead, we need to always be growing as students of the Word to correctly handle the word of truth.

¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2:15

As previously stated, it is best to facilitate self-discovery by encouraging the person to read a passage and discern personal application of the passage. Allow God's Word to be a mirror to reveal sin issues.

²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.
James 1:23-25

Telling someone about their sin issue shifts the responsibility for recognition from them to you. In doing so, they may become defensive, blame-shift, rationalize, or disagree with you. Allow God to speak through His Word and the Holy Spirit to convict of sin.

Role Play

Scenario 1: Someone discloses an area of suffering.

One person role plays someone suffering (pick a topic - grief, relational strain, medical issue, etc.). The other person seeks to respond with hope, grace, and truth. Reverse roles for next role play.

Scenario 2: Someone discloses an area of struggling.

One person role plays someone struggling (pick a topic - anger, anxiety, pornography, etc.). The other person seeks to respond with hope, grace, and truth.

Reflect + Discuss

Why is it important to connect and assess before responding? What does it mean to respond with hope, grace, and truth?

What did you learn about responding with ... ?

- hope
- grace
- truth

How can you grow in responding with ... ?

- hope
- grace
- truth

What questions do you have?

CARE + COUNSEL

Connect

with empathy
through questions
by listening

Assess

spiritual condition
heart issue
severity-ownership-support

Respond

with hope
with grace
with truth

Encourage

a next step
prayer together
a care plan

ENCOURAGE

Encourage A Next Step

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

Value of a Next Step

- It encourages personal _____.
- It provides _____ addressing one next step not trying to solve every issue.
- It provides _____ for follow up and follow through.

Examples of Next Steps

Spiritual

- Read a Psalm a day, the Gospel of John, an article, a book
- Attend worship service – take notes, identify one application
- Join a Hope Group or Growth Group
- Memorize a verse
- Pray
- Complete a Care + Counsel worksheet

Relational

- Talk to _____ about _____
- When wrong, ask for forgiveness from _____
- When wronged, forgive _____ for _____

Financial

- Contact the Care Center.
- Do this action: _____ (fill out cash flow worksheet, call this referral resource, apply for a job, limit spending, talk with family, etc.)
- Is the next step a resource, referral, or relationship?

When necessary, have the person write out a plan for their next step.

Encourage Prayer Together

*¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.
To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making
supplication for all the saints | Ephesians 6:18*

Ask

- *How can I pray for you?*

This question helps the person to reflect internally and respond verbally.

Pray Together

- Don't simply say, "I'll pray for you." Stop then and pray.
- Encourage the person to pray before you pray.

"Before I pray for you, would you be willing to pray first? It can just be a simple prayer to tell God what's on your heart."

- Keep your prayer short and genuine.
- Follow up within a few days as appropriate.

*³ Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great
and hidden things that you have not known.
Jeremiah 33:3*

Encourage A Care Plan



² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ ...
Galatians 6:2

Care Center	Growth Group	Hope Group
one-on-one session with a Care Center team member in a safe, non-judgmental space.	the primary place for discipleship and care at Highpoint.	a safe, shame-free, and supportive space for people to be honest with themselves, with God, and others.
help individuals experience the hope and help of Jesus through caring and sharing Jesus.	help people believe in, belong to, and become like Christ through intentional discipleship.	provides hope through the Word of God by the Spirit of God within the community of God.
provides connection to inside and outside resources and referrals.	provides mutual ministry - group members ministering to each other.	seeks to help people experience emotional, relational, and spiritual health.
Identifies practical next steps to progress relationally, physically, or spiritually.	are encouraged to move beyond the superficial to experience authenticity, transparency, and vulnerability.	involves real-life testimonies, teaching from God's Word, and small group support.

Hope Group

Experience hope in your suffering and struggling

Hope Group is a gospel-based, mixed-issue support ministry for people suffering or struggling.

We believe in the power of Gospel and the authority of God's Word. We intentionally avoid labeling people by their "issue". Our identity is in Christ, not in our area of suffering or struggle. Together, we are being redeemed by Jesus.

We are more than a recovery ministry. We support anyone who wants biblical community and biblical counsel in areas of suffering or struggling.

We all suffer in many ways - emotionally, relationally, spiritually. We minister to people seeking healing from a past wound, dealing with grief, addressing anxiety, recovering from a divorce, etc.

Our struggles may be different but our struggle is the same. We minister to people seeking to overcome unhealthy patterns of thinking or behaving including marriage struggles, finding freedom from a destructive behavior, overcoming struggle with sin, etc.

Fall Series	Spring Series
There is Always Hope John 5:2-9	Hope at Rock Bottom Luke 15:11-24
Hope to Change 2 Timothy 2:22	Hope for a New You 2 Corinthians 5:17
Hope in the Gospel Ephesians 2:1-10	Hope as a New You Colossians 3:1-15
Hope when Suffering 2 Cor 4:7-16	Hope for a Renewed Mind Romans 12:2
Hope when Struggling Romans 7:14-25	Hope to Guard Your Heart Mt 7:17-20
Hope in Shame Psalm 103:1-5	Freedom from Foolishness Eph 5:15-18
Hope when Tempted 1 Corinthians 10:13	Freedom from Fear 2 Timothy 1:7
Hope when Wrong Psalm 51	Freedom from Despair Romans 15:13
Hope when Wronged Ephesians 4:31-32	Freedom from Anger Eph 4:26-32
Hope When Waiting Psalm 13	Freedom through Forgiveness Col 3:13
	Hope in the Battle Ephesians 6:10-24
	Hope for Supporting Others Gal 6:2
	Hope through Accountability 1 Jn 1:5-10

Levels of Care

LEVEL 1	<p>Issues: Everyday suffering and struggles</p> <p>Caregiver: Any maturing believer, a godly friend</p> <p>Setting: Growth Group, meet informally for care and prayer</p> <p>Process: Care comes primarily through existing relationships</p>
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Role Play

Scenario 1: Someone discloses an area of suffering.

Refer to the first “responding” scenario. What would be some possible ways to encourage a next step, prayer together, and a care plan?

Scenario 2: Someone discloses an area of struggling.

Refer to the second “responding” scenario. What would be some possible ways to encourage a next step, prayer together, and a care plan?

Reflect + Discuss

Why is it important to encourage after connecting, assessing, and responding?

What did you learn about encouraging ... ?

- a next step
- prayer together
- a care plan

How can you grow in encouraging ... ?

- a next step
- prayer together
- a care plan

What questions do you have?





CARE + COUNSEL

TOOLBOX

Topical Scripture Index	54
Worksheets	67
Addiction	
Anger	
Despair	
Fear	
Forgiveness	
The Gospel	
Holy Spirit	
Identity in Christ	
Peacemaking	
Renewing Your Mind	
Repentance	
Rock Bottom	
Temptation	
Shame	

TOPICAL SCRIPTURE INDEX

ACCOUNTABILITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

Being mutually allied in honesty to encourage and exhort each other to become like Jesus.

each of us will give an account of himself to God - Romans 14:12

Accountability now prepares us for our future accountability with God.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. - James 5:16

We don't confess our sins to others to others as an act of penance or to have our sins absolved. Only God forgives sins. We confess our sins to others for the assurance of confession and to receive encouragement, support, and prayers from others.

⁷ *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.* ⁸ *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* ¹⁰ *If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.* - 1 John 1:7-10

Be honest with yourself.
Be honest with God.
Be honest with others.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but

encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. - Hebrews 10:23-24

¹³ *But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.* - Hebrews 3:13

ADULTERY

ADULTERY

Giving something promised to someone to someone else.

¹⁴ *"You shall not commit adultery.* - Exodus 20:14

³ *For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil,* ⁴ *but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.* - Proverbs 5:3-4

²⁰ *Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?* ²¹ *For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths.* ²² *The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.* ²³ *He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.* - Proverbs 5:20-23

²⁷ *Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?* ²⁸ *Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?* ²⁹ *So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished ...* ³² *He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself.* ³³ *He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away.* - Proverbs 6:27-29, 32-33

Sexual adultery often begins with mental or emotional adultery

²⁷ *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'* ²⁸ *But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* - Matthew 5:27-28

⁴ *Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.* - Hebrews 13:4

ADDICTION

ADDICTION
being obsessively or compulsively occupied with something.

'All things are lawful for me,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be dominated by anything - 1 Corinthians 6:12

¹¹ *So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.* ¹² *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.* - Romans 6:11-12

Learn to say, "I'm dead to that."

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. - Galatians 5:1

So, if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. - John 8:36

¹⁹ *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,* ²⁰ *for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.* - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ *Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.* ²⁰ *Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat* - Proverbs 23:19-20

ANGER

ANGER
A strong feeling of displeasure or hostility.

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. - Proverbs 15:1

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention. - Proverbs 15:18

An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins. - Proverbs 29:22 (NIV)

²⁶ *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,* ²⁷ *and give no opportunity to the devil.* - Ephesians 4:26-27

Be angry ... express anger
But do not sin ... express anger appropriately
Do not let the sun go down on your anger ... resolve anger in a timely way.

let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. - James 1:19-20

⁸ *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.* - Colossians 3:8

The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness - Exodus 34:6

ANXIETY

ANXIETY
Fear and worry on repeat.

⁶ *do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* ⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* - Philippians 4:6-7

⁷ *casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.* - 1 Peter 5:7

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. - Matthew 6: 34

BAPTISM

BAPTISM
the public profession of the
personal decision to follow Jesus.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. - Acts 2:41

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. - Acts 8:12

Belief then baptism.
One is not baptized to be saved,
but saved then baptized.

Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. - Acts 8:13

"See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" - Acts 8:36

Baptism is a picture of Christ - His death (standing), burial (immersed), and resurrection (raised). And it's a picture of our testimony - dead in sin, forgiven, and raised to new life.

⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. - Romans 6:4

BITTERNESS

BITTERNESS
Unresolved anger.

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. - Ephesians 4:31-32

¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled - Hebrews 12:15

CONFLICT

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you - James 4:1

Conflict is internal, not just interpersonal

CONFRONTING

Confront sin issues, not preference issues,
with the goal of forgiveness and restoration,
not condemnation.

³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." - Luke 17:3-4

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. - Galatians 6:1

³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? - Matthew 7:3-4

Check your heart, your life, and your motive
before confronting someone else.

¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. - Matthew 18:15-17

STEPS TO CONFRONT:

1. Talk to the person directly.
2. Take someone else with you.
3. Bring the issue to church leadership.

COMFORT

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

¹⁸ The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. - Psalm 34:18-19

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

COMMUNICATION

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. - Ephesians 4:29

let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. - James 1:19

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. - Proverbs 15:1

DIVORCE

³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴ He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' ⁶ So they are no longer

two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." ⁷ They said to him. "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" ⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

THREE BIBLICAL OBSERVATIONS TO DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE:

1. It is complicated (Matthew 19:3)
2. It is painful (19:4-6)
3. It is permissible (19:7-8)
4. It is controversial (19:9)

	HUSBAND	WIFE	WHO MIGHT BE "FREE"
1	Hard heart; disobedient	Hard heart; disobedient	Neither, but neither do they by nature care.
2	Hard heart; disobedient	Soft heart; discipling	Wife
3	Soft heart; discipling	Hard heart; disobedient	Husband
4	Soft heart; discipling	Soft heart; discipling	Neither, they by nature can work it out

[^]From Untying the Knot, Ron Zappia

ETERNAL LIFE

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" - John 11:25-26

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. - John 14:1-3

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. - 1 John 5:13

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." - Revelation 21:3-4

FAITH

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. - Hebrews 11:1

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. - Hebrews 11:6

FEAR

FEAR
Thinking something bad will happen.

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. - Psalm 34:4

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? - Psalm 27:1

³ When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. ⁴ In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?... ¹⁰ In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, ¹¹ in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? - Psalm 56:3-4, 10-11

⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. - 2 Timothy 1:7

I don't need to fear circumstances;
God gives me power.
I don't need to fear people;
God gives me love.
I don't need to fear irrationally;
God gives me a sound mind.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. - Isaiah 41:10

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. - Isaiah 43:1-2

⁸ It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. - Deuteronomy 31:8

FOOLISHNESS

Foolishness is following the will of self.
Wisdom is following the will of God.

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. - Ephesians 5:15-17

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. - Proverbs 1:7

FORGIVENESS

FORGIVENESS
Is a choice to trust God by letting go of resentment and vengeance toward someone who hurt you.

¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. - Colossians 3:12-17

FORGIVEN PEOPLE FORGIVE
 As the Lord has forgiven you ...

- graciously (didn't deserve it),
- generously (totally, completely),
- gladly (not reluctantly)

... so you must also forgive.

Forgive others as God has forgiven you - Ephesians 4:32

Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the prison of hurt and provides healing for hurts

²¹ *"Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"*

²² *Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. - Matthew 18:21-22*

Forgiveness is a point in time and a process over time, continuing to forgive when the offense comes to mind.

And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. - Mark 11:25

Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, - Luke 17:3

Forgiveness is first internal, then verbal if the person repents and seeks forgiveness.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
²³ *gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. - Galatians 5:22-23*

FRUIT	OPPOSITE
Love	Hate
Joy	Despair
Peace	Anxiety
Patience	Impatience

Kindness	Selfishness
Goodness	Hypocrisy
Gentleness	Harsh
Self-control	Impulsive

GOD'S PROMISES

²⁰ *For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. - 2 Corinthians 1:20*

²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. - Romans 8:28*

³⁸ *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8:38-39*

⁶ *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. - Philippians 1:6*

⁹ *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:19*

GOD'S WORD

¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

¹² *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. - Hebrews 4:12*

GOSPEL

GOSPEL

- Bad News: We are dead in sin.
 - Good News: We are alive in Christ
- The good news isn't good news without understanding the bad news.

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved – Ephesians 2:4-5

THE ROMAN'S ROAD:

Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9, 10:13

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God – Romans 3:23

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

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. – Romans 5:8

⁹ if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. – Romans 10:9

¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” – Romans 10:13

“Jesus is My Place.”

We owed a debt that we could not pay.
He paid a debt He did not owe.

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. – 2 Corinthians 5:21

We become children of God through believing and receiving Jesus.

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – John 1:12

GRACE

GRACE

Being given what you do not deserve.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. – Ephesians 2:8-9

Being good enough is not good enough.
Good people don't go to heaven.
Forgiven people go to heaven.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? – Romans 6:1-2

⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. – 2 Corinthians 9:8

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. – 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

GREED

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. – 1 Timothy 6:10

Money is not evil. The love of money is the root of all evil.

² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant ... – 2 Timothy 3:2

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” – Hebrews 13:5

HEART

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. – Proverbs 4:23

All behavior flows from your heart.
-Your thoughts - *what you think*
-Your words - *what you say*
-Your actions - *what we do*

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? – Jeremiah 17:9

²⁰ *And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” – Mark 7:20-23*



⁴³ *“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the*

heart his mouth speaks. – Luke 6:43-45

²⁶ *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. – Ezekiel 36:26*

³⁷ *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. – Mathew 22:37-39*

HOPE

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. – Romans 15:13

I don't need to despair -
- God gives me joy.
- God gives me peace.
- God gives me hope.

¹² *Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. – Romans 12:12*

¹¹ *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. – Jeremiah 29:11*

²⁴ *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. – Romans 8:24-25*

²³ *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. – Hebrews 10:23*

¹⁸ *In hope he believed against hope – Romans 4:18*

IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. – 2 Corinthians 5:17

You are not ...
-what you do or what's been done to you
-your biggest regret or worst moment
-who others say you are or who you say you are.
You are who God says you are.

²⁰ *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. – Galatians 2:20*

⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight – Ephesians 1:4-8

MARRIAGE

⁶But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’⁷ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh.⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” – Mark 10:6-9

God's design for marriage is a husband and a wife for a lifetime.

⁴Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. – Hebrews 13:4

Sex is to be exclusively between a husband and wife.

PEACEMAKING

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. – Matthew 5:9

²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. – Matthew 5:23-24

¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. – Romans 12:8

PEOPLE-PLEASING

⁴³for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. – John 12:43

³But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. – 1 Corinthians 4:3

¹⁰For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. – Galatians 1:10

⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. – 1 Thessalonians 2:4

PRAYER

³Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. – Jeremiah 33:3

- God invites us to pray: call to me.
- God promises to answer prayer: I will answer you.
- There is power in prayer: I will tell you great and hidden things?

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.– Matthew 7:7-8

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing,¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. – 1 John 5:14-15

PRIDE

⁵ *Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* ⁶ *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you* - 1 Peter 5:5-6

There are two schools - school of humiliation and school of humility.

PURITY

So, flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. - 2 Timothy 2:22

Run *from* temptation.
Run *to* godliness.
Run *with* like-minded believers.

¹⁸ *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.* - 1 Corinthians 6:18

³ *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;* ⁴ *that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,* ⁵ *not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;* - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

³ *But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.* - Ephesians 5:3

⁸ *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* - Matthew 5:8

REPENTANCE

REPENTANCE
The acknowledgement of sin (mind), with genuine sorrow (emotion), leading to a change in behavior (will).

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. - Proverbs 28:13

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death." - 2 Corinthians 7:10

Worldly Sorrow	Godly Sorrow
Focus on Self	Focus on God & Others
Turns to Sin	Turns from Sin
Feeling Sorry	Being Grieved
Prideful & Conceited	Broken & Contrite

Repent therefore, and turn back that your sins might be blotted out that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. - Acts 3:19

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!* ³ *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.* ⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.* - Psalm 51:1-4

RENEWED MIND

² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* - Romans 12:2

1. Free your mind from unhealthy thoughts.
2. Fill your mind with truth.
3. Filter your mind for healthy thoughts.

³ *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.* ⁴ *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.* ⁵ *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every*

thought captive to obey Christ. - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

STRONGHOLDS:
habitual patterns of thinking based on lies that we believe.

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. - Romans 8:5

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. - Romans 8:5

SALVATION

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes - Romans 1:16

ABC'S OF SALVATION

ADMIT you are a sinner and you need a Savior.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Romans 6:23

BELIEVE Jesus is the Son of God and that He died and rose again to offer life and forgiveness.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. - John 1:12

CONFESS with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. - Romans 10:9

SUFFERING

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed ... ¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light

momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. - 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, 16-18

With God's power in me - pressure will not defeat me, confusion will not discourage me, opposition will not deter me, and hard hits will not destroy me because I embrace the spiritual realities of my suffering:

- I am being renewed by suffering
- My suffering is temporary
- I am rewarded at the end of my suffering

³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. - Romans 5:3-5

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. - Romans 8:18

TEMPTATION

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. - 1 Corinthians 10:13

Lie #1 - My struggle is unique.
Truth: temptation is common to man.
Lie #2 - God has abandoned me.
Truth: God is faithful.
Lie #3 - My struggle is overwhelming.
Truth: God will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.
Lie #4 - I'm trapped.
Truth: God will also provide a way of escape.

¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin

when it is fully grown brings forth death. - James 1:14-15

Like bait to a fish – we are lured to sin by our desires. We see the bait, take the bait, and we're hooked. Sin always over promises and under delivers.

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. - Galatians 5:16-17

Temptation cannot exist where desires don't exist. Desires seek fulfillment. We doubt that God can provide. We're deceived thinking our way is better. So, we disobey God.

TRIALS

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. - James 1:2-4

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. - James 1:12

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 1:6-7

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. - Job 23:10

WEARINESS

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:28-30

³¹ but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. - Isaiah 40:31

⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. - Galatians 6:9

WISDOM

Wisdom is following the will of God.
Foolishness is following the will of self.

⁶ For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; ⁷ he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity - Proverbs 2:6-7

¹³ Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, - Proverbs 3:13

⁵ Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. - Proverbs 4:5

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. - Proverbs 9:10

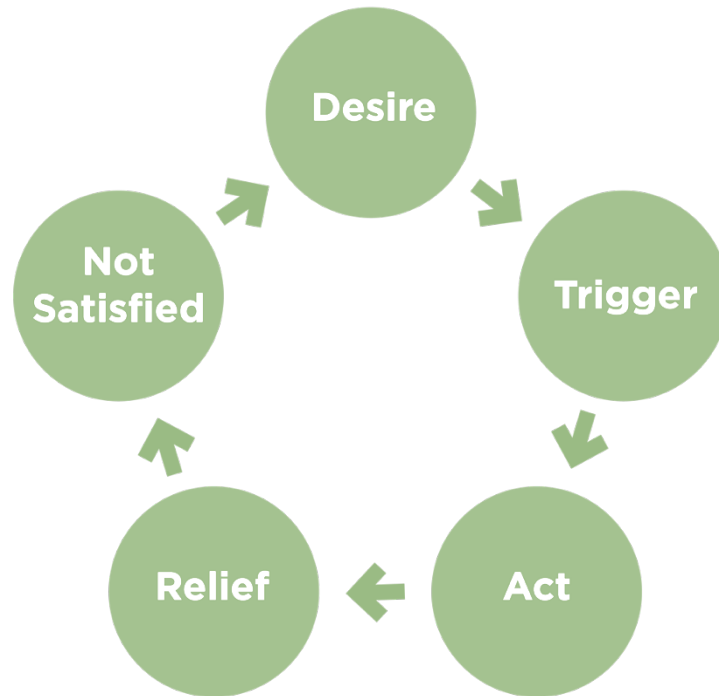
¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. - Ephesians 5:15-17

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. - James 1:5



ADDICTION

A Care+Counsel Resource



The addiction cycle is a trap because it repeats itself endlessly.

- **Desire** - a craving.
- **Trigger** - anything that elevates desire and provides opportunity. Triggers can be impulsive, but often follow a predictable pattern.
- **Act** - respond to the trigger.
- **Relief** - short-term fulfillment.
- **Not Satisfied** - never fully fulfilled, sometimes accompanied by remorse or shame. Left unsatisfied, it demands increase in frequency and intensity, which leads to greater desire

And the cycle continues.

The key to breaking free from the addiction cycle is not at action nor trigger. But at desire.

The Addiction Struggle

Romans 7:14-25

The Struggle is Real

¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. - Romans 7:14-17

When you are struggling, you need to get to heart of the struggle. When you are struggling ...

- what do you desire?
- what do you fear?
- who are you trying to please?
- what do you believe at the moment?

The answers to these questions reveal your heart.

Sin arises when we desire something or someone more than God. Overcoming our struggle with sin begins by reversing this process and desiring God more than other things or other people.

The Struggle is Repeated

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. - Romans 7:18-20

Have you ever said, "God, I'll never do that again." Only to do it again the next day. We make a promise, and we break it. We say, "I will" and we don't or "I won't" and we do. Our struggle is not just real. It's repeated again and again and again. Like someone who struggles with addiction, Paul says his struggle is repeated.

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. - 1 Corinthians 6:12

Substance Addictions	Behavioral Addictions
Alcohol, drugs, nicotine	Gambling, pornography, sex, eating, shopping, television, cell phone, work, etc.

An addiction is not always about quantity, but frequency. If you need a beer every day after work or need a glass of wine before you go to bed - you have an alcohol issue - even if it's not in excessive amounts.

There are neurological elements to all addictions - including the release of dopamine into the body - but there are also spiritual elements to all additions. I do not deny neurological nor medical elements, but we are focusing on spiritual elements.

Addiction is a form of idolatry; they are false gods. Addictions are what we worship - we give our time, our attention, our money.

All addictions - whether substance addictions or behavioral addictions - cause harm to ourselves, others, and our relationship with God. Those who struggle with addition tell the same story of mental, physical, relational, sexual, and spiritual decay. All addictions are on a path to ruin.

Sin thrives in secrecy.

We become very adept at hiding them, but hiding them feeds them. You feel bad about yourself, so you eat compulsively. You eat compulsively, so you feel bad about yourself. You feel lonely, so you engage in pornography. You engage in pornography you feel more alone. You want to avoid an issue, so you drink to cope. You drink to cope, and you create another issue. You fear exposure so you withdraw from community and retreat into isolation. You retreat into isolation and the struggle becomes greater.

Sin thrives in secrecy. You don't need to tell everyone, but you need to tell someone.

The Struggle is Relentless

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. -

Romans 7:21-23

Do you see how the struggle is relentless ... it's constant. Evil lies close at hand because it's in us ... and there is a war going on ... a struggle between what we know what we should do and what do ... sin is trying to deceive you, destroy you, discourage you.

Notice the importance of your mind. The enemy wants to take our minds captive, that is why we need to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Jesus. This why need to keep renewing our mind with God's truth.

"you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." - John 8:32

Do you believe God is bigger and better than your sinful desires? I believe this question is at the heart of our struggle.

Is there hope in the struggle? Is there hope in addiction? Yes! Addiction does not need to be a life sentence.

Steps for Hope in Your Struggle

[24] Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. - Romans 7:24-25

Step 1: Acknowledge your Condition

Wretched man that I am! You need admit where you are at. Don't minimize, excuse, rationalize, deny, hide. Admit your struggle. Cry out to God for His help.

Be honest with yourself.

This is where it starts: admit your foolishness. Refuse to minimize or rationalize. Ask yourself: Do I want to change? If so, why? If you don't know why you want to change, you will not change. You will not find freedom from foolishness without being honest with yourself.

Be honest with God.

He already knows and loves you as you are and loves you enough not to leave you as you are.

- Confess the sin of your foolishness to God. Not because you feel sad or guilty or "got caught." But because you know your foolishness is sin and you're ready to turn from your sin.
- Ask God to transform your mind and heart, to fill you with His Spirit, and give you strength to break the pattern of foolishness so you can walk in wisdom.

Be honest with others.

Foolishness often leads us to isolation. Proverbs 18:1 says, *"whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment."*

Isolation is the opposite of what we need. We need each other. We need each other for: Support, Prayer, Encouragement, Accountability, and Counsel Who are you allowing to "SPEAC" into your life?

Step 2: Acknowledge your Need

Who will deliver me from this body of death? You need admit your need for help. You need to feel helpless to get help. You can't change on your own. And you won't change on your own. You can't get help until you want help. Acknowledge your need for rehab or to see a counselor or to embrace accountability.

Write out a plan.

What do *you* need to do? What is *your* next step?

- Do you need rehab? Do you need further counseling? If so, when and where?
- What specific boundaries need to be established to avoid avoidable triggers? What do you need to get rid of?
- What will you do when you're tempted? Who will you call?
- How will you fill your mind and your heart with truth from God's Word?

What is your plan? Do you have a plan? Do you know it? Do others know it?

Get to the root desire.

What are you really seeking through your addiction?

And after identifying what you're seeking, address the "Why?" Why am I seeking relief? Or pleasure? What is the root? Is it a hurt, need, or void? You can't blame your actions on something from the past. But if you can identify it, you can begin to address it. This step may take some time and involve a Christian counselor.

Why are you seeking to -

- Find relief?
- Forget?
- Fill a void?
- Manage an emotion?
- Fit in with others?
- Be in control?
- Have significance?
- Get attention?
- Experience pleasure?

The truthful answer to these questions gets to your heart.

And once you get to your heart, you can seek healing and allow God to be sufficient for you. This is a journey. But to make progress on the journey will require some action steps.

Step 3: Acknowledge Jesus as Lord

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Surrender to Jesus - not just as Savior, but as Lord. Rather than being mastered by your struggle, submit to Jesus as your Master. Rather than being the Lord of your life, allow Jesus to be your Lord.

Live from your identity in Christ.

What lies do you need to identify and what truths do you need to embrace?

*Jesus died on the cross to set you free! Are you living in the freedom
that God wants you to experience?*

ANGER

A Care+Counsel Resource

Anger is a powerful emotion that can damage and destroy.

Like a tornado that destroys communities, anger can rip through our homes and destroy marriages, destroy families, destroy relationships. Each of us have seen and experienced the consequences of anger. Anger can negatively affect our health - our physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual health.

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God | James 1:19-20

The Problem of Anger: *“the anger of man.”*

The Solution of Anger: Quick to Hear + Slow to Speak + Slow to Anger x Desire for Righteousness

Three Types of Anger in the Bible

Divine Anger	God’s holy anger toward sin and disobedience	<i>The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness. - Romans 1:18</i>
Righteous Anger	Human anger that acts and reacts for right reasons in the right way, right degree, right time	<i>Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger Ephesians 4:26</i>
Unrighteous Anger	Human anger that acts and reacts for wrong reasons or in the wrong way	<i>for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:20</i>

How do we know if our anger is righteous or unrighteous?

- 1. Is my anger for right reasons* - because God’s will is not being done, not my will is not being done? Is my anger because God is dishonored or because I am dishonored? Is it because God is offended, or I am offended? Am I reacting to sin? Or am I reacting to a personal inconvenience or preference? Has a personal desire become a demand of others?
- 2. Is my anger expressed in a right way, right degree, right time?* Is it self-controlled or out of control? Is your anger expressed through screaming, cursing, threatening, manipulating? Or does your anger lead to self-pity, despair, withdrawing? Is your anger red-hot or ice-cold?

Angry for wrong reasons	Angry for right reasons	Anger for wrong reasons	Angry for right reasons
Angry expressed wrongly	Anger expressed wrongly	Anger expressed rightly	Anger expressed rightly
Unrighteous Anger	Unrighteous Anger	Unrighteous Anger	Righteous Anger

You can be right to be angry but wrong in the way you are right to be angry.



Red Hot Anger	Ice Cold Anger
thumos (reactive)	orge (resentful)
<i>A hot-tempered man stirs up strife ... Proverbs 15:18</i>	<i>See to it that ... no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble ... Hebrews 12:15</i>
Explodes	Implodes
Blows Up	Clams Up
Anger Revealed	Anger Concealed
Aggressive	Passive Aggressive
Volatile	Vindictive
Reactive	Resentful

Which is expression of anger - red-hot or ice-cold - is wrong? Both are wrong. Red-hot anger is the most obvious. Even though ice-cold anger can be more subtle, it is still wrong. Both expressions of anger are unrighteous and cause tremendous damage to relationships.

Which expression of anger do you most often express? Most lean one way or another. It's easy to spot anger in others - your parents, your spouse, your kids. But do you have self-awareness about yourself? Several factors influence how we express anger - including personality temperament, home of origin, and life experiences.

Quick to Hear + Slow to Speak + Slow to Anger x Desire for Righteousness

Quick to Hear - “to understand, to consider, to perceive.”

*When anger increases, listening skills decrease.
But when listening skills increase, anger decreases.*

3 A's for Active Listening

Be available - Be present when you're present. Focus your mind on the conversation.

Be attentive - Eye contact, body language, minimizing distractions.

Be affirmative - Encourage others to open up as you're listening - “tell me more ...”

These A's apply in marriage, in parenting,
in friendships, in work relationships.

Slow to Speak - “to stop, to meditate, to ponder before speaking.”

Watch your words, filter what you say, use restraint to avoid saying things you later regret.

When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent - Proverbs 10:19

A soft answer turns away wrath. But a harsh word stirs up anger.
Proverbs 15:1

Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.
Proverbs 21:23

Slow to Anger - it doesn't say “don't be angry” but rather, “slow to anger.”

Anger as an emotion is like the warning lights on your dashboard. They alert you that there may be a problem - a deeper problem under the hood.

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit ... for out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. - Luke 6:43, 45

When there is anger in your mouth, there is anger in the heart. If you have a problem with anger, you need to get to the root that can fuel our anger.

Things That Fuel Anger					
Hurt	Guilt	Shame	Betrayal	Insecurity	Powerlessness
Rejection	Resentment	Hopelessness	Pride	Failure	Helplessness
Loneliness	Depression	Worthlessness	Grief	Remorse	Low Self-esteem
Exhaustion	Worry	Feeling Trapped	Jealousy	Stressed	Disappointed
Fear	Sadness	Embarrassed	Loss	Nervousness	Humiliation

Three Common Roots of Anger

- *Hurt from unmet needs:* When needs aren't met, we feel hurt. And when we are hurt, we become angry,
- *Frustration from unmet expectation:* When there is unexpected change or an unfulfilled expectation, we become frustrated. And frustration leads to anger.
- *Insecurity from being threatened:* When our self-esteem is under attack or our well-being is in danger, we feel insecure. Insecurity leads to anger.

The heart of anger is anger in the heart.

Our hearts have desires. Even healthy desires can become unhealthy. How do you know when a good desire becomes a sinful desire? Consider these three questions:

- Do I dwell on this unmet desire constantly?
- Am I willing to sin to get my desire met?
- Do I sin when I don't get my desire met?

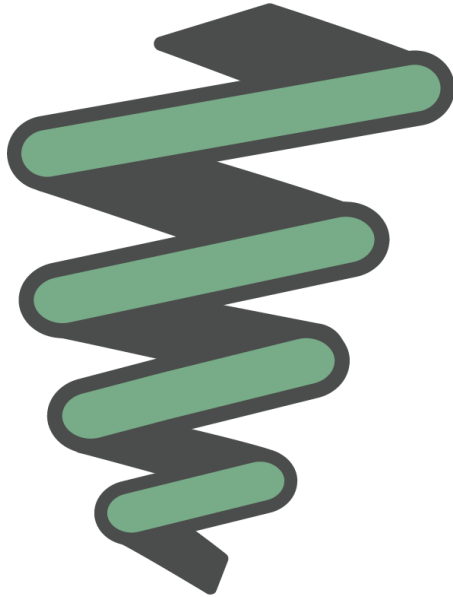
When you have any unmet desires, are you growing in godly contentment? Are you able to discuss it in healthy ways? Or do you show unrighteous anger?

¹⁹ *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;* ²⁰ *for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

James 1:19-20

DESPAIR

A Care+Counsel Resource



Disappointment

Discouragement

Depression

Despair

The spiral of despair begins with a disappointment - from everyday moments to traumatic events. A natural response to disappointment is discouragement. When discouragement is not addressed, it leads to depression. Depression can spiral further into despair - feeling helpless and hopeless. *Where are you on the spiral today?*

Despair can lead to suicidal thinking. According to the World Health Organization, there were 703,000 suicides in 2022 - one suicide every 40 seconds. Statistics also reveal that for every suicide there are 20 attempted suicides which would be 14 million attempted suicides last year alone.

Despair leads people to think the best way to escape their problem or end their pain is suicide. If you are feeling suicidal or know some who is suicidal, this is what the Mayo Clinic says on their website.

If you are feeling suicidal, but you aren't immediately thinking of hurting yourself:

- Reach out to a close friend or loved one - even though it may be hard to talk about your feelings
- Contact a minister, spiritual leader, or someone in your faith community
- Call a suicide hotline
- Make an appointment with your doctor, other health care provider or a mental health professional

Suicidal thinking doesn't get better on its own - so get help. @mayoclinic.org

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. | Romans 15:13

We don't need to despair - God gives Joy.

Happiness	Joy
Emotion	Attitude
External	Internal
Temporary	Consistent
About Circumstances	About Contentedness
Rooted in Self	Rooted in the Lord

We don't need to despair - God gives Peace.

God's peace is available in disappointment, hurt, & hardship. Our lives can be a hot mess, yet we can experience peace.

There are three references to peace in the New Testament – peace from God, peace with God, and peace of God.

- *Peace from God is a greeting* - like “Shalom, peace from God.” See Romans 1:7
- *Peace with God is being justified through faith in Jesus.* See Romans 5:1
- *Peace of God is the calm assurance that God is working for the good, even if I can't see it.* See Philippians 4:6-7

Most people want the peace of God, but you cannot have the peace of God without first having peace with God through faith in Jesus. This is the Gospel.

We don't need to despair - God gives Hope.

Hope is not wishful thinking like – i.e. “I hope it doesn't rain today” or “I hope the Bears win the Super Bowl.” Biblical hope is the confidence that God's promises and purposes will prevail.

The hundreds of promises in God's Word - they are credible because they are contingent on God's character and God's capacity.

God wants to give hope in abundance - so we are overflowing with hope.

**Joy, peace, and hope cannot co-exist with despair.
Therefore, they displace and replace despair.**

FEAR

A Care+Counsel Resource

Fear is a common struggle for many.

A 2018 survey reveals 80% of churchgoers say they live with moderate to severe levels of fear. Many legends of the faith in the Bible struggled with fear - Abraham, Moses, and Peter. Timothy had an internal struggle, a mental struggle with fear. And this internal, mental struggle is real for many people. If you struggle with fear, you are not alone. And you don't need to struggle alone.

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power
and love and self-control. | 2 Timothy 1:7*

Common Fears

Failure	Loneliness	Death	Uncertainty	Being judged
Love	Rejection	Illness	Abandonment	Getting caught
Getting hurt	Loss	Commitment	Financial loss	Change
Something bad	Losing control	_____		

Can you identify with any of these common fears? Can you locate your fear?

I don't need to fear.

This verse is not talking about short-term, situational fear.

Imagine driving across the train tracks, your car stalls as a locomotive is barreling toward you. Your brain receives the warning that danger is imminent and orders your body to release several hormones, including adrenaline. Your muscles begin to tense up, your heart rate quickens, your hearing and vision is more acute. When our bodies sense danger, God has created us with the ability to recognize and survive in a dangerous world.

The problem is not short-term, situational fear. The problem is when fear is imagined or irrational. The problem is when fear is perpetual, prolonged, and paralyzing.

Personal history can contribute to fear, especially if you have experienced significant trauma in your life from living in a fallen world marked and marred by sin. We don't minimize your experience nor the effects of your experience. We are sorry for whatever you went through. But know this: God wants to heal your hurts, free you from your pain, and give you victory in

areas where you were victimized so that you no longer need to live in perpetual and paralyzing fear.

As humans, God created us as two parts - material and immaterial; body and soul; biological and spiritual. Sometimes there are physical issues related to fear that need to be addressed by a medical professional. However, fear can relate to issues of the soul.

We are focusing on the spiritual side of fear. Because the Bible addresses fear, worry, and anxiety, there is a spiritual aspect to each of these.

Fear is being afraid of something - real or imagined. Fear tends to be specific.

Worry is being worried about something. Worry tends to be general, assuming the worst.

Anxiety is when our minds get stuck dwelling on fear and worries - like a one loop roller coaster or a soundtrack stuck on repeat.

Can you identify with any fear, worry, and anxiety in your life?

These terms are similar, but different. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, the root of worry and anxiety is fear.

I don't need to fear ... I can rely on *power* from God.

God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. - 2 Timothy 1:7

The Greek word "power" is "dunamis" from which we get the word "dynamite." Think about all the power contained in a stick of dynamite. God has given us His power. We don't just have access to His power, His power is in us.

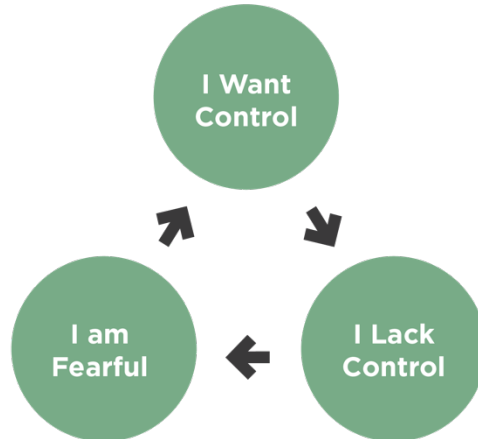
The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in you. | Romans 8:11

⁷ *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.* ⁸ *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;* ⁹ *persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed* | 2 Corinthians 4:7-9

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. | 2 Corinthians 12:9

No matter what you face - a medical diagnosis, a financial hardship, a tragic loss, a strained or broken relationship, a past hurt, an unmet expectation, an extended season of trouble and trial, an unknown future - God's grace is sufficient. In our weak moments of suffering and struggling, God is strong. His power is perfect in our weakness. To rely on the power of God requires releasing control and believing His grace and power is sufficient.

The root of fear is control. We want to control *circumstances*, control *people*, control *outcomes*. This is a common cycle of fear -



Being fearful, worried, anxious is an endless cycle on repeat - until we release control and rely on the power of God in us.

The Bible contains more than 300x commands to not fear. Perhaps you hear these verses as angry commands from an angry Father. But there is another way to understand these verses. Instead of angry commands from an angry Father, receive them as loving commands from a loving Father.

Parents often say to their child “be careful”? Technically it’s a command. But it’s not “be careful because I am angry with you.” Instead, it is “be careful because I love you and want you to be safe.” This is the same heart behind the 300 commands to not fear - not to admonish, but to encourage, to give courage.

Fear, worry, and anxiety are reminders and opportunities. Like a notification on your phone to remind you to pick up milk on your way home, when you feel fear, it’s a notification to trust God. Fear is not only a reminder, but it is also an opportunity to rely on the power of God in you.

*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;
I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? - Psalm 56:3-4*

Does David say when I am afraid, I will remain fearful. No. Instead, what does he say? When I am afraid, I will put my trust in God and praise God. It’s a personal choice.

When you are filled with thoughts of fear - do you run to God or from God?
Do you turn to God or turn to your ability control an outcome?

I don't need to fear ... I can rest in the *love* of God.

God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. - 2 Timothy 1:7

Paul reminds Timothy that He has been given the spirit of love. And God has given you the same - a spirit, a disposition, a capacity to love.

The enemy of love is fear. Fear grows in the soil of shame.

When our mind is filled with shame, we fear love. We hide from people & we try to hide from God.

We fear: if we are fully known, we will not be fully loved. But the reality is: you are fully known by God and you are fully loved by God.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. | 1 John 4:18

God's love is not a punishing love. It's a perfect love and a perfecting love.

God knows all about you. And He knows you better than you know yourself. He knows your past. He knows your struggles. Yet God loves you.

*You are not your darkest moment, your biggest regret, your worst mistake.
You are not what you have done. You are not what was done to you.
You are not what others say about you. You are not what you say about yourself.
You are who God says you are.*

When you embrace who you are in Christ and rest in God's love for you - you will have the ability and capacity to love God, to love others and to be loved, and to love who you are in Christ.

Fear drives us to isolation, not community. God is community - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And He created us in His image to be in community with Him and with others.

I don't need to fear ... I can receive *self-control* from God.

God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. | 2 Timothy 1:7

What is the opposite of self-control? Out of control. Undisciplined. Some Bible translations say, "sound mind" or "discipline". This reference to self-control relates specifically to your mind.

Have you discovered your mind can have a mind of its own? A mind that has a mind of its own is an undisciplined mind. An undisciplined mind wanders ... spirals ... dwells in the valley of fear, worry, and anxiety.

Did you know that research shows 97% of what we worry about are exaggerations and misperceptions? What's on your worry list today? What worries are consuming your mind? How much of your worry list is imagined, irrational, worst-case scenarios?

Have you heard the phrase - you are what you eat? If you eat healthy, you are healthy. If you eat items that are unhealthy, you are unhealthy. I guess this means ... if you eat kale, you are kale. If you eat Twinkies, you are a Twinkie.

As a person thinks in his heart, so is he - Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

In other words, if you think anxious thoughts, you will be an anxious person. If you dwell on fear, you will be a fearful and fear-filled person.

God has given you self-control to control your mind ... to discipline your mind ... to prevent it from wandering & spiraling. Let's look at a few verses about the need to control our minds.

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.
Isaiah 26:3*

²¹ But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: ²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. | Lamentations 3:21-23

fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. | Isaiah 41:10

Why fear not? Because of His presence, His power, His promise.

*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.
Each day has enough trouble of its own. | Matthew 6:34 (NIV)*

Perhaps this verse isn't very encouraging. But it's a reminder to live in the present, not the future. When we live in the present, we remember His grace is new each morning.

*⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6-7*

Is your mind anxious? What do these verses say? Bring your anxiety to the Lord in prayer. And the peace of God will guard (protect, defend) your heart from fear. When we pray, the peace of God is like having a personal bodyguard guarding my heart and my mind wherever I go.

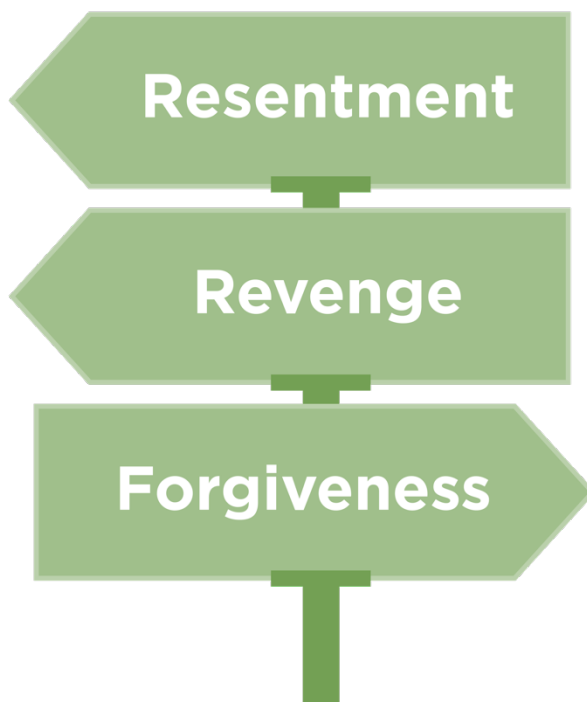
I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. | Psalm 34:4

Identify Fear, Insert Truth

Fear	Truth
Abandonment	<i>fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. - Isaiah 41:10</i>
Being Judged	<i>But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. - 1 Corinthians 4:3</i>
Death	<i>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:13</i>
Failure	<i>For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. - Galatians 1:10</i>
Financial Loss	<i>And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:19</i>
Getting Caught	<i>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. - Hebrews 12:6</i>
Loneliness	<i>"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Isaiah 43:1-2</i>
Love	<i>There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 1 John 4:18</i>
Rejection	<i>I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. John 16:33</i>
Uncertainty	<i>Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Matthew 6: 34</i>

FORGIVENESS

A Care+Counsel Resource



When we are wronged, we can take one of three paths - the path of resentment, the path of revenge, or the path of forgiveness.

- **The Path of Resentment** is choosing to dwell in the past and live in bitterness. Resentment is recycling hurt in your minds & hearts.
- **The Path of Revenge** is choosing to hurt others with your words and actions. Hurt people hurt people.

Resentment is in our minds and hearts. Revenge is in our words and actions. But we don't need to take the path of resentment or revenge. We can choose a third path ...

- **The Path of Forgiveness** is making a choice to experience "freedom through forgiveness."

Forgiveness is the choice to trust God by letting go of resentment and revenge toward someone who hurt you.

Forgiveness is a choice. It's a deliberate decision; an act of the will.

- Forgiveness happens at a *point in time*. I make the choice to forgive. Some here today need to make that choice today.
- Forgiveness is also a *process over time*. If, over time, you're struggling with resentment & revenge toward someone you thought you forgave, return to the choice to forgive.

Peter asked Jesus how many times do I need to forgive, seven times? Jesus said 70 x 7. The point is not to forgive 490 times. Rather the principle is to continue to forgive every time I remember how I was wronged.

To Trust God. Why is forgiveness about trusting God? It's trusting God at two levels:

- *Trust God to right the wrong.* That's God's job, not yours. Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. It's God's job to bring justice, either now or in the future. Don't take God's job or stand in His way.
- *Trust God for your healing* as you release your resentment and desire for revenge.

Releasing resentment and revenge.

- *Resentment is about your mind and heart* - letting go of bitterness, grief, shame.
- *Revenge is about your words and actions* - letting go of hurting someone for hurting you.
- *Releasing is letting go* of the need to make the other person pay for the wrong done to you.

Toward someone who hurt you. Relational and emotional hurt is a reality in life - in marriage, in families, in friendships, at work, in the church.

There are two aspects of forgiveness - internal forgiveness and verbal forgiveness.

- *Internal forgiveness* is forgiveness in your heart. It's talking to God about your hurt & releasing your resentment & revenge to God - for God to work & to heal. This is where forgiveness starts.
- *Verbal forgiveness* is expressing forgiveness to the person who wronged you. But this should only happen if: 1) the person comes to you, 2) expresses genuine repentance, and 3) asks for forgiveness.

To verbalize forgiveness without each of these necessary steps can cause more issues. It can be passive aggressive or enable sinful behavior. Let me give you two quick examples -

- To say, "I forgive you for interrupting me" without someone first acknowledging interrupting is passive aggressive and leads to more conflict.
- To say, "I forgive you for your anger" without someone saying "I apologize for my anger" only enables further sinful language.

1 | Forgiving People Are Free

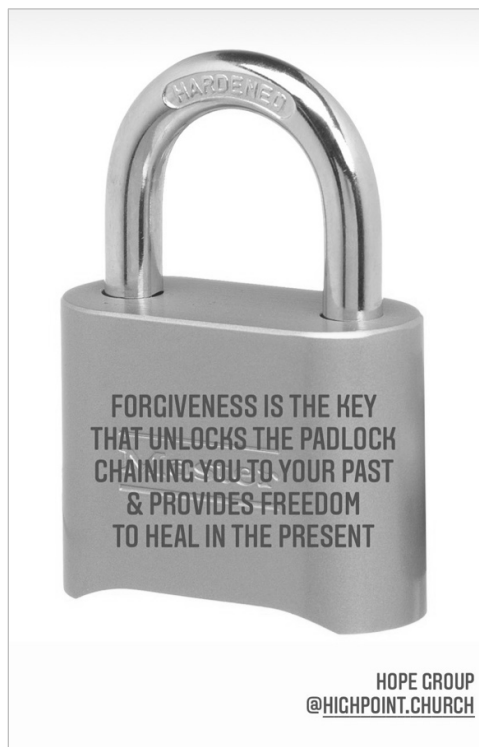
Free from what? Free from resentment and revenge.

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. - Ephesians 4:31

- Bitterness - recycling old hurts and holding on to grievances ... this is resentment
- Wrath - acting out because of unresolved issues ... revenge seeking
- Anger - red-hot anger and ice-cold anger - explodes, implodes; revealed, concealed, volatile, vindictive; reactive, resentful
- Clamor - the noise of relational strife
- Slander - evil speech used to destroy reputations and relationships
- Malice - bad-heartedness, evil intent

Do these words describe someone who is experiencing freedom? Or do they describe someone who is controlled by past hurt.

Notice the progression - it starts with bitterness. Bitterness is first in the list. It leads to wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice. In other words, it starts with resentment. Resentment leads to revenge.



Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the padlock chaining you to past hurt and provides freedom to heal in the present.

Do you want to experience freedom through forgiveness?

Many people do not want freedom through forgiveness.

- Some would rather feed their hurts than be freed from their hurts.
- Some prefer to be a victim to their past, rather than a victor in the present.
- Some choose resentment and revenge instead of forgiveness.
- Some think to not forgive punishes the other person when in reality they punish themselves.

It's been said to not forgive is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Unforgiveness hurts you more than it hurts the person who hurt you.

If you fail to deal with your past hurt, you will be enslaved to resentment and revenge - bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice.

Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the padlock chaining you to past hurt and provides freedom to heal in the present.

2 | Forgiven People Forgive

³² *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
Ephesians 4:32

When we are free from resentment and revenge, we are free to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.

The sequence is from God to you to others. Forgiveness starts with God, comes down to us, and then goes out to other people.

How has the Lord forgiven us?

- Graciously - Don't deserve it; can't earn it.
- Generously - Not partially, but completely.
- Gladly - Not reluctantly, but willingly.

Forgiveness is amazing to receive, but forgiveness is hard to give. Forgiven people forgive.

Forgiveness is not ...

- **A feeling** – Forgiveness is not an emotion; it is an act of the will. Don't say, "I'll forgive when I feel like forgiving" because that will never happen.
- **Forgetting** – You cannot always forgive & forget. Sometimes the pain is so hurtful that it will never be forgotten, but it can be forgiven. To say, "I'll forgive when I can forget" is backwards thinking. Perhaps the reason you are having a hard time forgetting is because you have not forgiven.
- **Excusing** – The wrong done was wrong. To forgive someone is not to excuse their wrong. Instead, to forgive someone is to acknowledge that wrong was done. Forgiveness does not justify, rationalize, minimize, or excuse wrong actions.
- **Always Verbalized** – Forgiveness is first a matter of the heart (internal forgiveness) and it's only communicated when the offender says – "I was wrong for _____, Will you forgive me?" (verbal forgiveness).
- **Reconciliation** – Forgiveness & reconciliation are separate topics. You can forgive but restoration requires trust & appropriate boundaries. Forgiveness is a necessary first step for restoring a relationship, but the journey toward reconciliation & restoration will take time based on the severity of the offense.
- **Fair** – Thank goodness forgiveness isn't fair! If it was based on fairness, who of us would be forgiven by God? It was not fair for the sinless Son of God to bear our sin. You do not deserve His forgiveness. It is His great love and mercy poured out for us.

Forgiven people are forgiving. Who is it that you need to forgive? A parent? A spouse? An ex-spouse? A friend? A co-worker? A family member? In the same way we have been forgiven, we need to forgive. As God forgives us, we forgive us. Forgiven people are forgiving.

3 | Forgiven People Don't Forgive Themselves

You might be struggling to forgive yourself because you have feelings of regret, guilt, and shame from our past. So, we feel like we need to forgive ourselves. But to forgive yourself is not a biblical concept.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say, "forgive yourself." The Bible does say, "love others as you love yourself." But never "forgive others as you forgive yourself." Instead, what does it say?

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. - Ephesians 4:32

Many people falsely believe they need to earn their forgiveness, to pay penance. But you cannot earn forgiveness or pay for your forgiveness. God gives you forgiveness.

If I purchased a gift for you and gave it to you, you cannot say ...

- *"I gave myself the gift."* You cannot give to yourself what was given to you. Why? Because it was already purchased for you and given to you as a gift!
- *"I need to pay you for the gift."* To try to pay for me for the gift misses the point of a gift. If you pay for the gift, it no longer is a gift.

Only God can absolve sins - a priest can't absolve your sins & neither can you. God forgives you because His Son, Jesus Christ, purchased your sin on the cross. The cross is not a down payment. The cross isn't rent with an option to buy. The cross is not splitting the check with you - like when go out to eat with a co-worker. No, the cross is your forgiveness paid in FULL!

To think that you need to forgive yourself means that the cross is not sufficient. But the cross is sufficient. Because God's forgiveness is sufficient - you don't need to forgive yourself.

- If God has forgiven you, He has wiped your slate clean. You are white as snow.
- If God has forgiven you, what more is there to forgive that you need to forgive yourself of? Instead, receive His forgiveness and believe you are forgiven.

Forgiven People Forgive

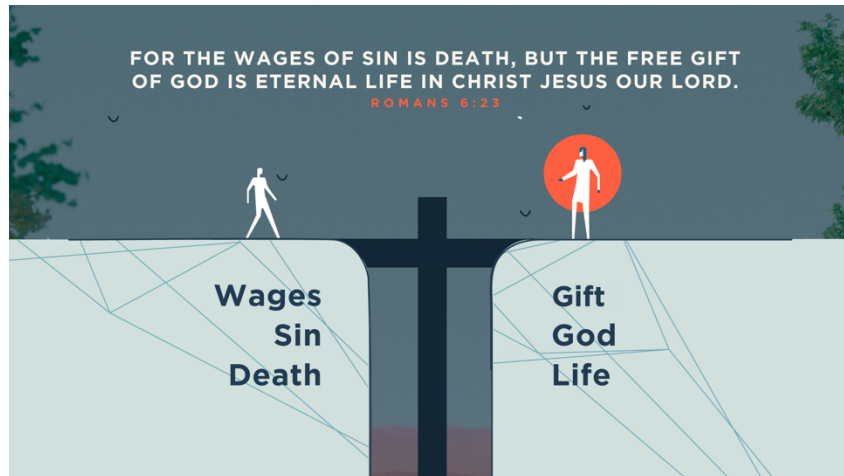
Use this worksheet to journal areas of forgiveness.

<p>WHO? List people with whom you have unresolved hurt</p>	<p>WHAT? List specific offenses. What ways were you wronged?</p>	<p>HOW? List how you responded or will respond to who/what</p>
<p>List names (or initials) of people who have sinned against you and with whom you currently have unresolved issues in your heart.</p> <p>The goal of this exercise is to identify areas of forgiveness.</p>	<p>List specific ways you have been sinned against by those in the first column.</p> <p>You don't need to try to dredge up things you don't recall. God may have erased some painful memories from your mind. Harm can be done to seek to conjure up memories that God may have mercifully removed.</p>	<p>Have you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> retaliated? withheld love? been bitter? gossiped? prayed for? forgiven? talked it out? <p>You're not responsible for what happened to you, but you are responsible for your response.</p>

As the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. – Colossians 3:13

THE GOSPEL

A Care+Counsel Resource



Romans 6:23 contrasts the bad news and good news.

A *wage* is something we earn, we deserve. A *gift* is something we cannot earn, we don't deserve.

Sin is to miss the mark of holiness. *God* alone is holiness.

There are *three kinds of death and life* - physical, spiritual, and eternal. We deserve death because of our sin. But God's gift of grace is *eternal life to all who will believe in Jesus*.

Like any gift that is given, it must be received.

Being Good is not Good Enough.

Good people do not go to heaven. Forgiven people go to heaven.

We are not saved by what we DO. We are saved by what Jesus has DONE for us on the cross.

All religions are spelled DO - earn favor, improve self, pay penance, follow rules. This is also the popular belief in America culture - I'm not that bad, I try to be good. I am better than most, God will grade on a curve. But Christianity is spelled DONE. We are not justified by works, but by faith.

Our family and friends cannot save us. A church or a pastor cannot save us. We cannot even save ourselves. Only God saves us.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. - Ephesians 2:8-9

ABC's of Salvation

Admit you are a sinner and unable to save yourself

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God - Romans 3:23

Believe Jesus died and rose again to offer you forgiveness and life

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - John 1:12

Confess Jesus as Lord with your mouth

⁹ if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. - Romans 10:9

Have you turned from sin and embraced Jesus for the forgiveness of your sin?

- What is your salvation story?
- Do you have assurance of your salvation?

If you don't have a salvation story, you might not be saved. Salvation doesn't happen by going to church, reading your Bible, or being around other believers. Salvation is a free gift that is offered to all who believe. But each person must receive Jesus by faith for themselves.

If you have not placed your faith in Jesus, or are unsure, what is holding you back from believing in and receiving Jesus today? Today is the day of salvation!

If you have received Jesus by faith as your Savior and Lord, how are you growing in your faith?

- How is Jesus changing you?
- How are you becoming more like Jesus in your character and conduct?

The Christian life is not just about salvation, it's about sanctification - becoming like Jesus in our character and conduct.

*⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,
⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. | Colossians 2:6-7*

HOLY SPIRIT

A Care+Counsel Resource

We experience greater victory in Christ when we walk by the Spirit, follow the Spirit, yield to the Spirit, and feed the Spirit.



Walk by the Spirit

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

To walk is intentional, directional, relational, spiritual.

<i>Do not grieve the Holy Spirit</i> Ephesians 4:30	Grieve the Spirit: Doing things the Spirit doesn't want me to do	Ways I have Grieved the Spirit:
<i>Do not quench the Holy Spirit</i> 1 Thessalonians 5:19	Quench the Spirit: Not doing things the Spirit wants me to do	Ways I have Quenched the Spirit:

Follow the Spirit

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. | Galatians 5:19-21

Sexual Sins	sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality
Religious Sins	idolatry, sorcery
Social Sins	enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy
Sins of Excess	drunkenness, orgies

This is a sobering warning. Paul is not referring to an *act* of sin, but a *habit* of sin. This is not an occasional lapse in sin, where you feel conviction and repent. Rather This is a warning to those who engage in habitual, unrepentant sin as a lifestyle will not inherit the kingdom of God. You will not lose your salvation, but this gives evidence that there never was salvation.

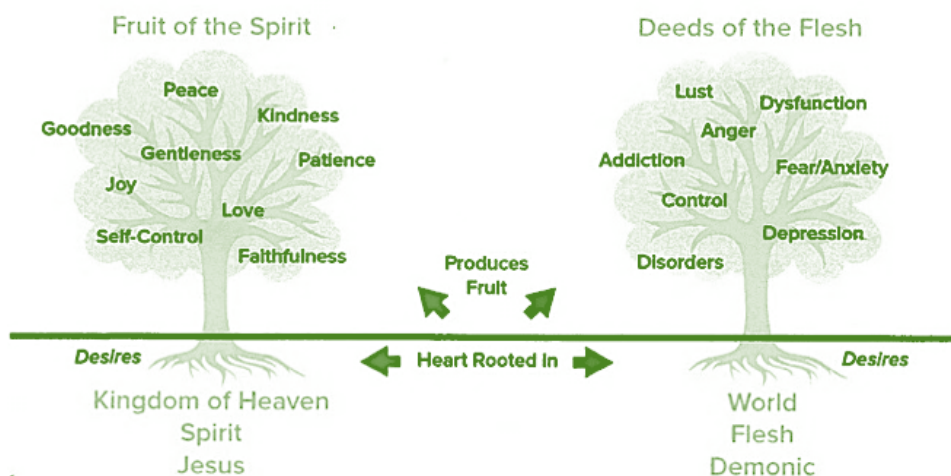
examine yourself to see if you're in the faith
2 Corinthians 13:15

Yield to the Spirit

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³ *gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* - Galatians 5:22-23

Fruit	Opposite
Love	Hate
Joy	Despair
Peace	Anxiety
Patience	Impatience
Kindness	Selfishness
Goodness	Hypocrisy
Gentleness	Harsh
Self-control	Impulsive

Which column best describes you? The left or the right?



^STEPS: Gospel-Centered Recovery, Lifeway

The fruit reveals the roots. If you are rooted in the flesh, the deeds of the flesh will result. If you are rooted in the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will result.

Feed the Spirit

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
Galatians 5:16-25

Live by the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit.

5 Benefits of the Spirit

1. The Spirit Comforts - John 14:16-17
2. The Spirit Teaches - John 14:25-26
3. The Spirit Confirms - John 15:26-27
4. The Spirit Convicts - John 16:8-11
5. The Spirit Guides - John 16:12-13

Holy Spirit's job to convict. God's job to judge.
Our job to love.

Pray to be Filled with the Spirit

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.
Ephesians 5:18

If we want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must *pray* for it. This is what Paul does in Ephesians 3:19. He asks the Father in heaven (v 14) that the believers might be “*filled with all the fullness of God.*”

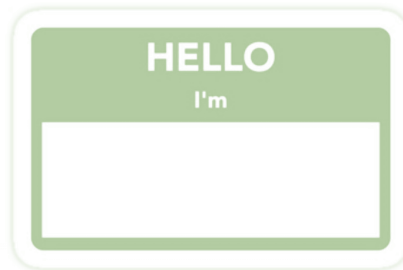
We need the Holy Spirit’s filling in our lives, in our homes, and in our church. We are filled with the Spirit when we surrender ourselves to His control and ask Him to fill us. When we do so, the Holy Spirit fills us.

And being filled with the Spirit is to be a daily reality in our lives - rather than being full of self, we are to be full of the Spirit.

<p>²³ <i>Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!</i> ²⁴ <i>And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting!</i> Psalm 139:23-24</p>	<p>Ponder</p>	<p>This is a bold and vulnerable prayer to pray. Ask God to search you and to show you how you are grieving or quenching the Spirit. You cannot fully be filled with the Spirit if you are unwilling to open all areas of your life to the Lord to do some house cleaning. We clean out our house through repentance.</p>
<p>⁹ <i>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.</i> 1 John 1:9</p>	<p>Repent</p>	<p>The Holy Spirit cannot fill you if you are filled with sin. As you confess your sins you are not only forgiven, but you are cleansed. You are clearing out sin and creating room for the Spirit.</p>
<p>¹¹ <i>What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!</i> Luke 11:11-13</p>	<p>Ask</p>	<p>The Father gives the Spirit to those who ask him! It’s as simple as praying, “<i>Lord, fill me with your Spirit today. Fill me with your presence and your power.</i>” This a great prayer to pray every time you eat. At the same time, you eat to replenish your body you can ask to be replenished with the Spirit.</p>
<p>¹⁹ <i>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own</i> 1 Corinthians 6:19</p>	<p>Yield</p>	<p>When you yield to the Lord, instead of grieving and quenching the Spirit, you maintain the filling of the Spirit. We do not need more will power in our lives; we need more Holy Spirit power in our lives.</p>

IDENTITY IN CHRIST

A Care+Counsel Resource



Who are you?

Not your name. Who is the person behind the name. Who are you? When you think of yourself, what comes to mind? How you view yourself influences how you live. So, who are you?

Your identity is not your ID. Your identity is not a series of digits. Your identity is not your age, height, and weight. Not the color of your skin, hair, or eyes.

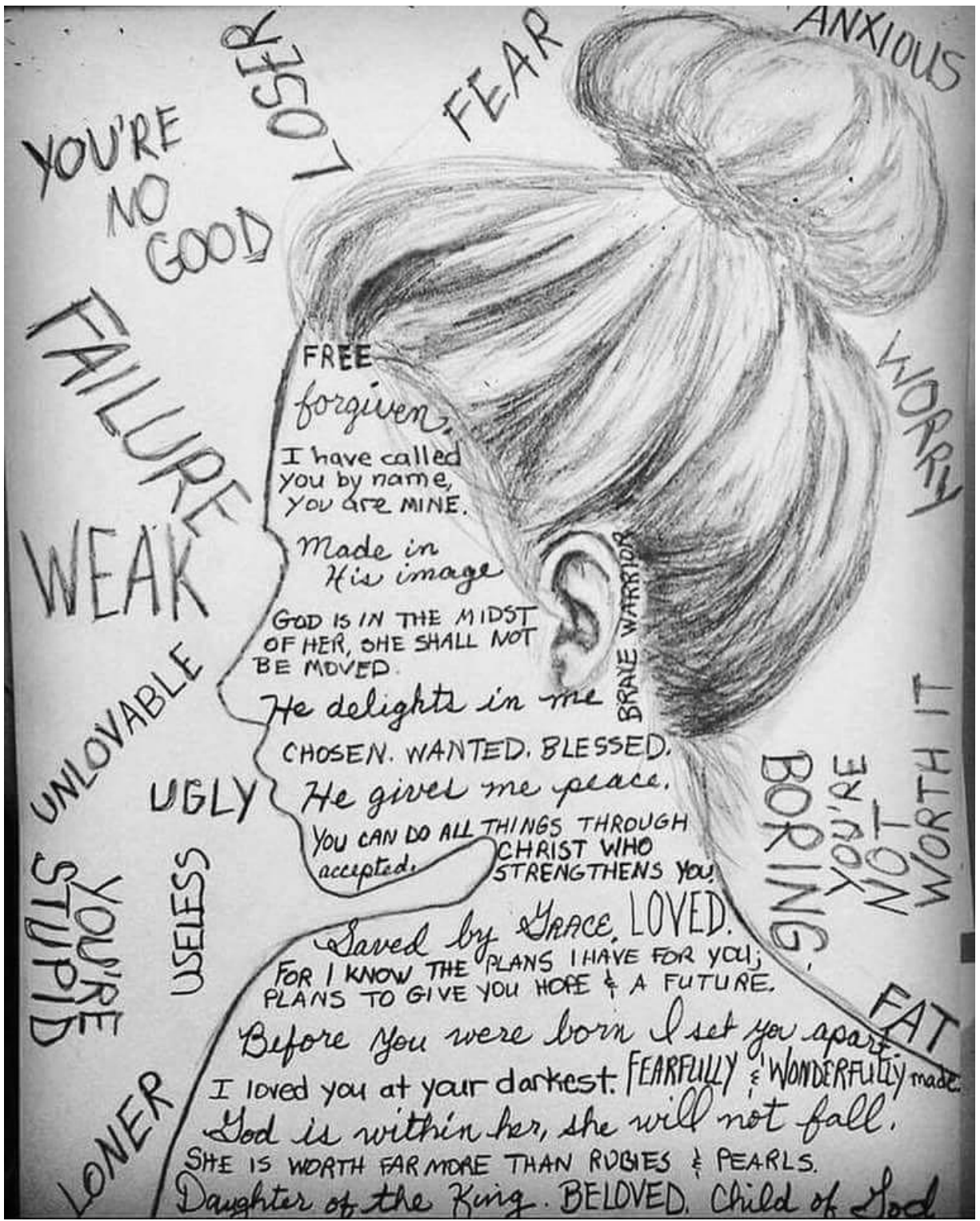
You are not what you do. You are not what was done to you. You are not your darkest moment, worst decision, or biggest regret. You are not what others say you are. You are not who you say you are.

You are who God says you are.



We do not live *for* our identity; we live *from* our identity is Christ.

<p style="text-align: center;">I AM ACCEPTED</p>	<p>I am God's child. - John 1:12</p> <p>I am Christ's friend. - John 15:15</p> <p>I am justified. - Romans 5:1</p> <p>I am united with the Lord. - 1 Corinthians 6:17</p> <p>I am bought with a price; I belong to God. - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20</p> <p>I am a saint. - Ephesians 1:1</p> <p>I have been adopted as God's child. - Ephesians 1:5</p> <p>I have access to God through the Holy Spirit. - Ephesians 2:18</p> <p>I have been redeemed and forgiven. - Colossians 1:14</p> <p>I am complete in Christ. - Colossians 2:10</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">I AM SECURE</p>	<p>I am free forever from condemnation. - Romans 8:1-2</p> <p>I am assured all works together for good. - Romans 8:28</p> <p>I am free from any charge against me. - Romans 8:31-32</p> <p>I cannot be separated from the love of God. - Romans 8:35-39</p> <p>I am established, anointed, sealed by God. - 2 Corinthians 1:21-22</p> <p>I am hidden with Christ in God. - Colossians 3:3</p> <p>I am confident the good work God has begun in me will be perfected. - Philippians 3:20</p> <p>I have not been given a spirit of fear, but power, love, and a sound mind. - 2 Timothy 1:7</p> <p>I can find grace and mercy in the time of need. - Hebrews 4:16</p> <p>I am born of God. - 1 John 5:18</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">I AM SIGNIFICANT</p>	<p>I am the salt and light of the earth. - Matthew 5:13-14</p> <p>I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life. - John 15:1,5</p> <p>I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. - John 15:16</p> <p>I am a personal witness of Christ. - Acts 1:8</p> <p>I am God's temple. - 1 Corinthians 3:16</p> <p>I am a minister of reconciliation for God. - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21</p> <p>I am God's co-worker. - 2 Corinthians 6:1</p> <p>I am sealed with Christ in the heavenly realm. - Ephesians 2:6</p> <p>I am God's workmanship. - Ephesians 2:10</p> <p>I may approach God with freedom and confidence. - Ephesians 3:12</p> <p>I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. - Philippians 4:13</p>



² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. - Romans 12:2

Father's Love Letter

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you (Psalm 139:1). I know when you sit down and when you rise up (Psalm 139:2). I am familiar with all your ways (Psalm 139:3). Even the very hairs on your head are numbered (Matthew 10:29-31). For you were made in my image (Genesis 1:27). In me you live and move and have your being (Acts 17:28). For you are my offspring (Acts 17:28). I knew you even before you were conceived (Jeremiah 1:4-5). I chose you when I planned creation (Ephesians 1:11-12). You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book (Psalm 139:15-16). I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live (Acts 17:26). You are fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14). I knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). And brought you forth on the day you were born (Psalm 71:6). I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me (John 8:41-44). I am not distant and angry but am the complete expression of love (1 John 4:16). And it is my desire to lavish my love on you (1 John 3:1). Simply because you are my child, and I am your father (1 John 3:1). I offer you more than your earthly father ever could (Matthew 7:11). For I am the perfect father (Matthew 5:48). Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand (James 1:17). For I am your provider and I meet all your needs (Matthew 6:31-33). My plan for your future has always been filled with hope (Jeremiah 29:11). Because I love you with and everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore (Psalm 139:17-18). And I rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17). I will never stop doing good to you (Jeremiah 32:40). For you are my treasured possession (Exodus 19:5). I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul (Jeremiah 32:41). And I want to show you great and marvelous things (Jeremiah 33:3). If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me (Deuteronomy 4:29). Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4). For it is I who gave you those desires (Philippians 2:13). I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine (Ephesians 3:20). For I am your greatest encourager (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17). I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you (Psalm 34:18). As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart (Isaiah 40:11). One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes (Revelation 21:3-4). And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth (Revelation 21:3-4). I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus (John 17:23). For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed (John 17:26). He is the exact representation of my being (Hebrews 1:3). He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you (Romans 8:31). And to tell you that I am not counting your sins (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you (1 John 4:10). I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love (Romans 8:31-32). If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me (1 John 2:23). And nothing will ever separate you from my love again (Romans 8:38-39). Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen (Luke 15:7). I have always been Father, and will always be Father (Ephesians 3:14-15). My question is...Will you be my child (John 1:12-13)? I am waiting for you (Luke 15:11-32).

Love, Your Dad, Almighty God

PEACEMAKING

A Care+Counsel Resource



AVOID: Peace-Faking

More interested in avoiding conflict than resolving conflict. Avoidant responses generally directed inward; more about “me”. Do what is easy, convenient, or non-threatening for themselves. More concerned with appearances than reality.

ATTACK: Peace-Breaking

More interested in winning a fight than preserving a relationship. Conflict is an opportunity to assert rights, control others, or take advantage of the situation. Attacking responses generally not focuses on “me”, but on “you” – blaming others, expecting others to solve the problem. Willing to sacrifice relationships to get what they want.

ADDRESS: Peacemaking

The better way than avoiding or attacking is to address the issue. It’s not about “me” or “you” but rather about “us.” Rather than giving into peace-faking or peace-breaking, this way is about biblical peacemaking.

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:18

FOUR G'S OF PEACEMAKING

The Peacemaker, Ken Sande

Glorify God - How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?

Get the Log Out - Before talking to others about their wrongs, with God's help I will ask myself:

- Have I examined my heart and motives first?
- Are there any sins I need to confess?
- What are the real issues?
- Is this something I should overlook?
- Am I treating the person as I would want to be treated?

Gently Restore - When I need to confront an issue, with God's help I will:

- Carefully choose a good time and location to talk in-person.
- Believe best about the other person.
- Plan my words in advance.
- Actively listen to enter into the person's life.
- Give hope and encouragement, avoiding shame and condemnation.
- Use the Bible to share truth in love.
- Encourage genuine repentance.

Go & Be Reconciled

- Forgive as the Lord forgives.
- Develop a plan future growth.
- Provide appropriate accountability.
- Commit to pray and encourage.

Essentials of a Genuine Apology

Who have you wronged and need to seek forgiveness through repentance? This worksheet is a guide to develop and express a genuine, heartfelt apology.

ADMIT specific actions & attitudes	<i>When I did / said _____, I was wrong</i>	
ACKNOWLEDGE hurt	<i>I know I broke your trust and I hurt you deeply.</i>	
APOLOGIZE by expressing regret	<i>I regret that I did _____. I wish I could go back and change my action.</i>	
ADDRESS needed restitution	<i>Is there anything I can do to make _____ better?</i>	
ALTER behavior	<i>All true repentance involves a change of behavior.</i>	
ASK for forgiveness	<i>Will you forgive me?</i>	
ACCEPT the consequences	<i>Don't apologize only to minimize your consequences.</i>	
ALLOW for time	<i>Apologize and leave it. You cannot control when and if someone will forgive you.</i>	

^adapted from Peacemaker by Ken Sande

RENEW YOUR MIND

A Care+Counsel Resource



Have you discovered that your mind can have a mind of its own?

A mind that has a mind of its own is an unmanaged mind. And an unmanaged mind leads to chaos – mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

What consumes your mind?

<i>Regret</i>	<i>Bitterness</i>	<i>Lust</i>	<i>Anxiety</i>	<i>Resentment</i>	<i>Worry</i>
<i>Jealousy</i>	<i>Fear</i>	<i>Pride</i>	<i>Shame</i>	<i>Insecurity</i>	<i>Discouragement</i>
<i>Fantasy</i>	<i>Doubt</i>	_____			

“As he thinks in his heart, so is he”

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

What we think about, our brains become. What we fixate on is neurologically who we will be. Our thoughts shape our emotions and our actions.

An unmanaged mind leads to chaos – mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. So, if you can manage your mind, you manage your life. It’s simple, right?

There are countless self-help books written about how to manage your mind. Some include helpful tips and exercises. The problem is your mind doesn’t need to be simply managed. It needs to be *transformed*. Self-help books only help you be a better version of yourself. But Jesus transforms you into a whole new you.

You need to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind* if you want to have victory over anxiety, lust, bitterness, addiction, and more.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. | Romans 12:2

1. Free Your Mind from Unhealthy Thinking

The first step to renewing your mind is to understand there is a battle in your mind. You're not just facing one enemy, you're facing three enemies – the world, your flesh, and the devil.

The World – Romans 12:2 starts with “*don't be conformed to the pattern of this world.*”

What's the pattern of the world? It's the popular philosophies of the world like ...

- There is no God. You're the god of your life. This is humanism.
- Live for pleasure. Do whatever pleases you. This is hedonism.
- The more stuff you have the happier you will be. This is materialism.
- We determine our own meaning of life because human existence centers on the lived experience of thinking, feeling, and actions. This is existentialism.

These messages are pervasive in our culture –and these messages can mess with our minds conforming us to pattern of this world. But these messages are all lies.

Your Flesh – This is the old you; it's your sinful self.

Do you feel the battle between your flesh and you spirit? Your spirit is willing, but your flesh is weak?

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. | Romans 7:18-20

²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. | Romans 7:23

The Devil – The goal of the devil is straightforward: to seek, to kill, and to destroy (see John 10:10). This is what he wants to do to you.

He is a lion that wants to devour you by getting at your mind. Satan is the deceiver, the father of lies. He has no power apart from his lies.

His strategy is the same as it was with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. His strategy is to cause doubt and deception.

- Did God really say that?
- God is withholding from you.

The devil can't force you to do anything against your will. But he can suggest things to you.

How do we free ourselves from unhealthy thinking?

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ. | 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Strongholds:

habitual patterns of thinking based on lies that we believe.

Examples of Strongholds:

God doesn't really love me.

I know better than God what will make me happy.

I can't forgive that person.

I can never forgive myself.

I'm never going to amount to anything.

If something bad is going to happen, it will be to me.

I will always be a victim.

I keep relapsing; there's no hope.

I'm not hurting anyone.

I am what was done to me.

One more _____ will make me happy (image, drink, bite, item).

Behind every sin is a lie you believe. Satan desires to enslave you. Jesus says, I am the truth and truth will set you free.

Do you have any strongholds?

What are we supposed to do with strongholds? We need to demolish strongholds in our lives. But how?

- a) Take each thought captive
- b) Make each thought obedient to Christ

To take captive is to conquer; to make it obedient is to bring it under submission.

Studies show that the average person has 31,000 thoughts a day; 31 thoughts a minute. When we take each thought captive and make it obedient to Christ, we are freeing our minds – no longer enslaved to our unhealthy thinking.

But you might say, "I don't have the power to do that!" Well, yes and no. No, you don't have the human power to do that. But, yes, God has given you divine power to destroy strongholds.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:11

2. Fill Your Mind With Truth

All truth originates with God and His primary method of communicating truth is in His Word. When we are transformed by the renewal of your mind you are *“able to discern what is the will of God”* (Romans 12:2).

Would you like to know the will of God?

You can know the will of God and it's not as complicated as you might think. The will of God is:

- *Less about where you live, it's more about how you live.*
- *Less about what job you have, it's more about what kind of person you are on the job.*
- *Less about who you marry, more about who you are in marriage or as you wait for marriage.*

In other words, the will of God is more about following God's Word. The will of God is the Word of God.

We need to fill our mind with God's Word. We believe God's Word is true and transformative. Therefore, we open the Word of God believing God has a word for each of us. If we are disciplined in the Word, we will be disciplined in our mind. If we are undisciplined in the Word, our minds will be undisciplined as well.

Renew Your Mind With The Word

Hear the Word – Make it a priority to participate in church and a small group. Listen to Word throughout the week. Put yourself in places where you can hear the Word.

Read the Word – Open your Bible during the week. What if you were to give the first minutes of each day to reading the Word? How could spending a few minutes reading the Word each day transform you?

Meditate on the Word – There are two prevalent forms of mediation in the world – mystic meditation and biblical meditation. And they couldn't be more opposite. Literally. Mystic meditation is about emptying your mind. Biblical meditation is filling your mind. It moves beyond reading the Word to reflecting on the Word throughout the day and personalizing it for yourself.

Memorize the Word – Each week at Hope Groups we identify a verse a week to memorize. We call it the “Renew Your Mind” verse. Many people think they can't memorize the Word. But that's a lazy answer. Anyone who truly wants to memorize the Word can memorize the Word. Simply write the verse on an index card. Read it 5x/day for a week and you'll have it memorized.

Discuss the Word – This is what we do each week at Hope Groups. We hear the Word and read the Word. Then we discuss it together to applying it in our lives.

How are you doing with renewing your mind with the Word?

Which statement of identity do you need to claim today for this week?



When you claim true statements of identity you are replacing lies about your identity.

3. Filter Your Mind for Healthy Thinking

When you're transformed by the renewing of your mind, you will focus your mind on closing the GAP -- that which is "good, acceptable, and perfect" (Romans 12:2).



The subway system in London is called the Underground. This symbol is iconic in London. It's a visual and audio warning that a train is approaching.

When we're filtering our thoughts, we need to "Mind the Gap" - Is my thinking Good, Acceptable, Perfect?

We need to filter *out* unhealthy thinking and filter *in* healthy thinking.

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Romans 8:5

You need to filter your mind - is my mind set on the flesh? Or is it set on the things of the Spirit?

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. –
 Philippians 4:8

This grid is to help filter out unhealthy thinking and filter in healthy thinking.

Grab The Thought <i>What is it?</i>	Diagnose The Thought <i>Is it true?</i>
Take It To God <i>What does God say?</i>	Make A Choice <i>Am I going to believe God?</i>

True – Is it true?

- How much of what I worry about isn't true or won't ever happen?
- How much of my thinking is has been from conforming to lie rather than be transformed by truth?
- Not everything you think is true ... Just because you think something doesn't mean that it's true. You don't have to believe everything you think.
- Instead, run it through the filter of: Is it true?

Honorable – Does this thought honor the Lord, the person I'm thinking about, my spouse (or future spouse)? It needs to check all boxes. If it doesn't, it's not honorable. Is it honorable?

Just – Is it right? Not just right to me or others, But what's right in God's eyes. Am I focused on righteous things?

Pure – Is this thought pure? Will it lead to greater purity in my mind and life? Are you allowing impure images to come through your "eye gate"?

Lovely – This literally means – "love towards". Are you thinking about how to show love to others?

Commendable – Or admirable. Positive not negative. Constructive not destructive. If others knew what you were thinking, would you be embarrassed?

Praiseworthy – How much worship fills your mind? How much time do you spend thanking the Lord for who He is and what He has done?

Often our minds are like a glass of water filled with contaminants, dirt, muck, lust, impurities due to unhealthy thinking from the world, our flesh, and the devil.

The way we need to free our minds is to fill our minds with truth – truth from God’s Word about who God is and who we are. And by His Spirit through His Word, He frees us from lust, bitterness, regrets, shame.



Imagine a PUR water pitcher representing inputs into your mind. God’s Word is the filter that is used to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ. To filter out unhealthy thinking and filter in healthy thinking.

The secret to being transformed by the renewing of our minds in Romans 12:2 is found in Romans 12:1 –

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

It begins with surrendering our bodies ... including our minds to him – day after day, minute by minute, thought by thought.

REPENTANCE

A Care+Counsel Resource

Repentance is acknowledging our sin (mind), with genuine sorrow (emotion), and changing our behavior (will).

Genuine repentance involves our mind, emotion, and will.

- **Mind** - acknowledging our sin

Not minimizing, not rationalizing, not excusing, not blame-shifting.

- **Emotion** - genuine sorrow; a broken and contrite heart

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. - 2 Corinthians 7:10

Worldly Sorrow	Godly Sorrow
Focus on Self	Focus on God & Others
Turns to Sin	Turns from Sin
Feeling Sorry	Being Grieved
Prideful & Conceited	Broken & Contrite

- **Will** - turning from sin and changing future actions

All true repentance involves a change of action. It's not enough to confess sin. True repentance involves forsaking sin.

¹³ Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. - Proverbs 28:13

My Psalm of Repentance

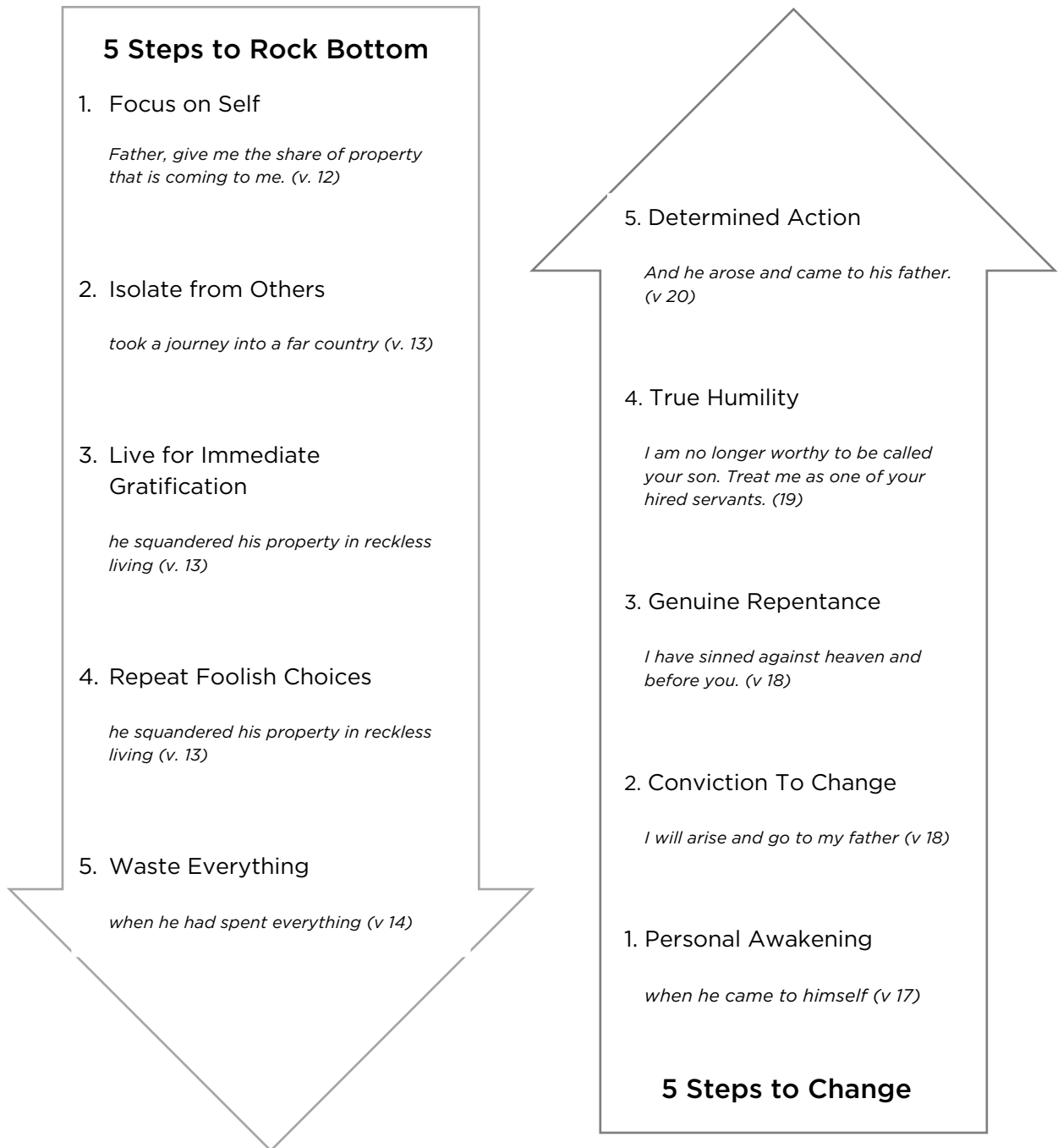
*Write out your Psalm 51 following the framework of David – repent, renew, restore.
This is your prayer to God. Be completely honest; “a broken spirit and contrite heart he will not despise” (v 17). Be raw and gritty; God can handle it. Be specific; He already knows.*

<p>REPENT: I have sinned</p>	
<p>RENEW: Clean my heart</p>	
<p>RESTORE: Give me joy & purpose</p>	

ROCK BOTTOM

A Care+Counsel Resource

In Luke 15 Jesus tells a story of a guy who made a series of foolish choices and found himself at rock bottom. But when he was at rock bottom his life changed for good and for the good.



Where you are you? What's your next step?

SHAME

A Care + Counsel Resource



Shame is pervasive and painful feeling of humiliation from guilt, disgrace, regret, and insecurity.

Four Roots of Shame

- Guilt - *true guilt is conviction when wrong; false guilt is condemnation when wronged*
- Disgrace - *being wronged by others (abused, abandoned, mistreated)*
- Regret - *soundtrack of “woulda, coulda, shoulda” on repeat*
- Insecurity - *not satisfied about appearance, abilities, phase in life, etc.*

When people feel guilt, disgrace, regret, or insecurity they often carry shame.

Shame is from lies from self, others, and the enemy.
Shame is never from God.

³ *who **forgives** all your iniquity, who **heals** all your diseases,* ⁴ *who **redeems** your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,*
⁵ *who **satisfies** you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's*
 Psalm 103:3-5

God forgives all our iniquity - our sin, our guilt. Through faith in the work of Jesus on cross, even though we are guilty of all charges. God declares over us what we cannot declare for ourselves - "Not Guilty!" Psalm 103:12 says that as far as the east is from the west, God removes our sin from us.

God heals all your diseases. God heals physically, relationally, and emotionally. Psalm 147:3 says, *He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.* We don't need to live in the shame of disgrace. We can let God heal us emotionally. That said, many would rather ignore the issue, remain the victim, feed the hurt, fuel the anger, refuse to forgive.

God redeems your life from the pit ... of regret. Often those who carry shame from regret struggle with the concept of forgiving themselves. But to forgive ourselves is not a biblical concept. God gives forgiveness. We cannot absolve sin - only God can. Forgiveness is a gift from God - so we cannot give it to ourselves nor pay for it.

God satisfies you with good. The root of insecurity is not being satisfied in ourselves. But God satisfies. So, we need to find our identity not in ourselves, but in who we are in Christ.

Our Shame	God's Provision
Our Guilt	God Forgives
Our Disgrace	God Heals
Our Regret	God Redeems
Our Insecurity	God Satisfies

looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. - Hebrews 12:2

Because Jesus carried our shame on the cross, we don't need live in shame.

- Jesus carried the shame of your guilt ... so we could be forgiven.
- Jesus experienced disgrace ... so we could be healed.
- Jesus paid for your regret ... so we could be redeemed.
- Jesus experienced the insecurity of being forsaken by His Father ... so we could be satisfied through a new identity in Christ.

Therefore, we need to leave our shame at cross and pick up forgiveness from guilt, healing from disgrace, redemption from regret, and satisfaction from insecurity.

TEMPTATION

A Care + Counsel Resource



The devil's goal is to seek, kill, and destroy. His names reveal his schemes. He is the accuser; Jesus is our advocate. He is the adversary, a roaring lying seeking people to devour. He is the father of lies. He lies because he is a liar - and has been from the beginning.

His strategy has been the same since the Garden - to deceive, to make sin appear to satisfy. When deceived, we begin to doubt God (did God really say? Is God withholding something? Is following God worth it?). When we're deceived and doubt, we disobey. But sin always overpromises and underdelivers. What follows is death - regret and consequences.

How have you seen this cycle play out in your life?

<i>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. - 1 Corinthians 10:13</i>	
Lie	Truth
My struggle is unique	<i>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.</i>
God has abandoned me	<i>God is faithful</i>
My struggle is overwhelming	<i>God will not let you be tempted beyond your ability</i>
I'm trapped	<i>God will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.</i>



Desire leads to temptation. Temptation cannot exist where desires don't exist. Desires seek fulfillment.

All temptation leads to a decision. Regardless of whether the temptation is alcohol, lying, cheating, stealing, pornography - all temptation leads to a decision.

The decision is a fork in the road - the decision to doubt God or the decision trust God.

- When you doubt that God satisfies and will you provide, you are deceived into thinking your way is better. So, you disobey.
- When you act in faith, the outcome is obedience and life.
- One path leads to bondage, the other leads to freedom. One path leads to guilt and regret, the other leads to peace. One path leads to consequences, the other path leads to blessing.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.
Proverbs 14:12

I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life ...
Deuteronomy 30:19



CARE + COUNSEL is about helping people to help people.

We all suffer in many ways. Our struggles may be different, but our struggle is the same. Discover how to restore the struggling and support the suffering in practical ways through providing care + counsel.

The goal is not to develop professional counselors, nor replace formal counseling. Instead, the focus of providing care + counsel in everyday life. Through interactive teaching, role playing, and group discussions, you will learn how to CARE for others.

Connect - with empathy, questions, and listening

Assess - spiritual condition, heart issues, severity-ownership-support

Respond - with hope, grace, and truth

Encourage - a next step, prayer, and a care plan

This practical training will help you be a more effective Growth Group leader or Care Center team member as well as a better spouse, parent, friend, and coworker.

