be transformed

workbook
be transformed
1. be cause
Because God loves you, you can be transformed pg. 6

2. be loved
What is God’s plan through Jesus Christ? pg. 10

3. be assured
Who is God? pg. 14

4. be empowered
The Holy Spirit—your personal trainer pg. 18

5. be real
Journey to the heart pg. 22

6. be forgiven
Cleansed and righteous pg. 26

7. be victorious over enemy 1
Victory over demons pg. 30

8. be victorious over enemy 2
Victory over the world around me pg. 34

9. be victorious over enemy 3
Victory over the world inside me pg. 38

10. be changed
Put off the old pg. 42

11. be renewed
Renew your mind pg. 46

12. be transformed
Put on the new pg. 50
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verse</th>
<th>home work</th>
<th>books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| John 3:16  
“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” |     |     |
| Proverbs 3:5-6  
“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.” |     |     |
| Deuteronomy 32:5  
“The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.” |     |     |
| Romans 12:2  
“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.” |     |     |
| 1 John 1:9  
“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” |     |     |
| Proverbs 28:13  
“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” |     |     |
| Ephesians 6:10  
“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” |     |     |
| 1 Corinthians 10:13-14  
“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. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” |     |     |
| Philippians 4:4  
“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice.” |     |     |
| Ephesians 4:22  
“To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.” |     |     |
| Ephesians 4:23  
“And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.” |     |     |
| Ephesians 4:24  
“And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” |     |     |
Welcome to “Be Transformed.” You can learn how God’s Word provides everything that is needed to live a transformed life.

We don’t have to stay in the rut we are in! God says that He gives us everything we need for godly living (2 Peter 1:3-4, 2 Timothy 3:17). When He gave us the Bible, He provided hope and encouragement for all our difficult situations (Romans 15:4). We can prosper and have good success, with the strength and courage of God’s Word, apart from theories or therapies (Joshua 1:8-9). Anyone stuck in self-destructive and defeating thoughts and behaviors can be transformed, but it must be done God’s way by God’s Word. “Be Transformed” puts those tools in your hands.

The format of “Be Transformed” calls for two hours per week. During the First hour, work with someone and be sure to look up verses and carefully talk through the concepts in the context of your life. The hour of homework, where you personally search Scripture, is ideally worked on together with a mature Christian friend, but if need be, you could complete it individually and review it later. The important thing is to commit to completing the entire book, and to be diligent to learn the memory verses each week. They will serve you well for the rest of your life.
Her eyes are cold, her face etched into hard lines. She walks alone, shoulders drooping, dejected. No place to go, no body to go to. Is there any hope?

Yes, there is hope. Dear sister, God loves you. Because He loves you, you can be transformed. Jesus Christ is proof that God loves you. God wants to forgive you, God wants to heal you completely (Psalm 103:2-3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Because God loves you, He sent Jesus to earth.</th>
<th>Imagine leaving eternal glory. The Prince of the Universe left glory and voluntarily took on the weaknesses of human skin and bones. Got covered in blood, squished through a woman’s birth canal. Felt a scratchy rough cloth around Him (no fleece back then). Left a throne to be lain in a feeding trough. The Creator (Col. 1:16) of woman became dependent on sustenance from the breast of woman.</th>
<th>What difference does Jesus’ coming to earth make in your life?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because God loves you, Jesus came and lived a sinless life.</td>
<td>Jesus always did what His Father wanted. He submitted Himself to the sin cursed authority of the people He came to rescue from the curse of sin. He ministered to hurting people, touched leprous skin with it’s horrid nodules, was touched by infected skin (1 John 1:1). He knew hunger. He knew need. He had no home or pillow. He knew the frailty of humanity.</td>
<td>What difference does this make in your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because God loves you, Jesus was crucified.</td>
<td>His body was beaten, skin was bruised, stripped, ripped off (1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53). It was meant to humiliate Him, to be horrible. It was murder. He tasted our sin, felt our sin on Him, bore our sins in His Body. And the Father turned His back on Him so we need never know what that’s like. All the Father’s wrath went onto Him. Not one of our sins need to be punished by the wrath it deserved because Jesus felt it all on Him.</td>
<td>What difference does Christ’s crucifixion make in your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because God loves you, Jesus was resurrected.</td>
<td>God the Father accepted the sacrifice of God the Son as payment for sins. The Father’s plan from the very beginning was to provide victory over Satan and sin (Genesis 3:15). The power of sin, the power of death, the power of problems, the power of addictions, the power of a body that doesn’t do right—it was broken in that resurrection.</td>
<td>What does it mean to you that there’s a possibility of life after death?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because God loves you, He made a way for you to be with Him forever.</td>
<td>Jesus is in heaven now, sitting at God’s right hand, preparing an eternal home for us. Those who accept His death as payment for their sins, and receive Him as Lord of their life, will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. There will be no crying or pain (Revelation 21:4). We can choose glory, rather than the eternal damnation and weeping that we deserve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes women ask, “If God is a God of love, how could I have been so badly hurt?” Dear sister, without that wound, you would never know the love God has for you, and the healing His love will bring you.

You can be one of the healed ones, but healing comes at great cost. The price for the healing of our wounds is a horrific, crushing, shame-filled murder. Think of
the worst picture you’ve seen of the naked, bruised and bleeding Christ, on the cross. Christ suffered for your healing (1 Peter 2:23). When you accept His suffering in payment for your sins, He also becomes your Lord and Master. You can’t have one without the other. He is not only Suffering Savior, He ascended to Heaven as Living Lord.

How can we be healed by the suffering of Jesus?

First of all, you must see things that you do to hurt others, or others do to hurt you, the same way God sees them. God calls them sin. You have sinned, and you have been sinned against.

Secondly, you must see how seriously God hates sin. Think back to before the cross. God hated sin so much that He had to punish it. The punishment would have to be horrific and torturous. Think of how God thought about sin from the other side of the cross. God is so perfect, He can never be around sin. He has to be separated from it. The easy way to take care of an earth full of sinners, would be to punish us all with hell. It makes perfect sense for sinners to be damned to hell. It does not make sense for sinners to be forgiven.

But God is love. He does not want any of His creation to be punished, even though the solution would hurt Him terribly. When Jesus was murdered on that cross, He could have stopped it at any time. But He wanted to do it so sinners could be forgiven. You see, as Jesus’ limp and torn body hung on that horrible cross, God was pouring out His wrath on sin, so that all sinners could be forgiven (1 Peter 2:24). When Jesus’ took the beating that stripped the skin off of his body, He did it for our healing. When we confess our sins, we are forgiven—washed clean. Then and only then will we have mercy for those who sin against us.

Healing transformation is only found at the cross of Jesus Christ

Sin’s debt can only be paid by the shedding of blood. Something had to pay the penalty for sin. That’s what Jesus did on the cross. He took our penalty, so we can be forgiven. His death is the only way we are forgiven for our sins, and it is only because of what Jesus did that we can forgive those who sin against us.

When God forgives us, here’s what He does:

- He will not dwell on it or replay it in His mind.
- He will not talk about it with you. If it comes to mind, it’s not God.
- He will not allow it to embitter himself against you and act in resentment against you.

That’s how God forgives us, and that’s how His stripes make it possible to forgive others and so be healed from the wounds they have inflicted. When we forgive others, we cancel the debt they owe us, because we understand that blood has been shed. If we accept Christ’s blood as payment for our sin, we must also accept it as payment for other’s sin. When we aren’t able to forgive other’s sin against us, it’s because we haven’t confessed our own sin and been forgiven by Christ’s blood. Jesus taught us to pray this way: “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” After He finished the prayer, He kept talking. He said, “Yes, I was serious about that. If you don’t forgive those who forgive you, I don’t forgive you (Matthew 6:14-15).”

Being forgiven by Christ’s blood, and then forgiving by Christ’s blood, is a key part of transformation (Colossians 3:13). But if we forgive on any other basis, we are playing god, and cheapening Christ’s blood. When we are forgiven by Christ’s blood, and we forgive others by Christ’s blood, we find ourselves healed (1 Peter 2:24).
my search—be cause

Because God loves you, you can trust Him

Read Psalm 42:8. What does God give you every day? ________________

What difference does it make to know God loves you every day?

______________________________

Read Psalm 63:3. What is better than life? ___________________________

When you understand that God’s love is better than life, what will you do? ____

______________________________

Read Psalm 100:5. To whom does God extend His love? ________________

If you have children, do you want them to know God’s love? ________________

Who do you think should tell them that God loves them? ________________

______________________________

Read Psalm 103:4. What does God’s steadfast love redeem you from? ______

______________________________

Do you prefer to live in a pit of depression or to have yourself crowned with love? You choose one or the other. Either you think about how hard your life is, or you think about how much God loves you.

Read Psalm 145:8-9. God’s steadfast love proves itself by His grace and mercy. Who can be covered by God’s mercy? ____________________

What does this passage teach about God’s anger? ____________________

______________________________
Read Jeremiah 31:3. How long does God’s love last? __________________________

This verse says that the Lord appeared from far away. Even when God’s love feels far away, it is faithful love. God cannot be unfaithful.

Read Hosea 2:19-20. What words in these verses describe God? ________________
To whom do the people who know God belong? _______________________________

Read Hosea 14:4. What will God do with the sickness of sin? __________________

God’s love flowed freely when He gave His son Jesus for our forgiveness.

Read Zephaniah 3:17. What does God’s love do? ____________________________
If God has saved you from your sin, you can know complete peace in the quietness of His love.

God forgives when you agree with Him about your sin

Read the following passages and write down what you learn about God’s forgiveness.
Psalm 51:7-10_______________________________________________________________

Psalm 103:8-12 _____________________________________________________________

Isaiah 1:18 __________________________________________________________________

Isaiah 43:25 _________________________________________________________________

Micah 7:18-19 __________________________________________________________________

Acts 26:18 ___________________________________________________________________

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”
What is God’s plan for you?

God desires to have a relationship with you. Ask God to speak to you as you read the following Scriptures.

- Romans 3:23—All have sinned.
- Romans 6:23—Eternal life is a free gift of God.
- Romans 5:8—Because God is love, Jesus paid the death penalty for your sins.
- Romans 10:9-10—Confess Jesus as Lord.
- Romans 10:13—Ask God to save you and He will.

God has a plan for you (Jeremiah 29:11). In order for His plan to become yours, you need to have a love relationship with Him (Matthew 22:37-38). In that love relationship, God reveals Himself and His plan to you, and invites you to join Him. You join Him by obeying Him.

God loves you

God is love. All real love comes from Him (1 John 4:16). God’s love is perfect and complete. He showed us what perfect love looks like when Jesus paid the price and penalty for our sin (1 John 4:10). God’s love is consistent, never changing. God’s love is unfailing and never exhausted. God loves you because you are His creation, not because you deserve it.

You will want to have God’s love for you when you hear and believe the bad news. The bad news is that you and I deserve God’s wrath, not God’s love. Apart from Jesus Christ, we are doomed (Romans 6:23).

You did not start life neutrally and choose to sin. Like me, you were born in sin. You keep choosing more and more sin (and so did I). You are separated from God and headed for eternity in hell. If God is perfect and just, and He is, He must and will pour out His wrath on everyone who doesn’t listen to and obey the truth about Him (Romans 1:18). You cannot save yourself from this punishment.

However, because God is also love, He performed an unfathomable act of mercy. He crushed His perfect Son, Jesus Christ. The cross was a horrific pouring out of God’s wrath on sin. Because God loves you, He punished Jesus instead of you (Romans 5:8), and you must believe and receive Jesus’ punishment for your sin. There’s nothing you can do to be saved, except believe and receive God’s gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). The blood that
spurted and dribbled from His beaten body on the cross was for you. He did that to pay for your sins—because He loves you (John 3:16).

You are loved. God paid a great cost to invite you into a love relationship with Him, as His beloved daughter.

**A right relationship with God**

To receive God’s love, you must look to Jesus Christ in confession of your sins. With trust that Jesus died for your sins, you confess that you are a sinner and believe that you are forgiven. Confess means “agree with God.” You say things that show Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, and you trust in your heart that you are saved (Romans 10:9-10).

Jesus said He came so that you and I would repent and believe (Mark 1:14). When we confess, God grants us repentance. Repentance means “completely changed in thought and behavior”.

When people mention your past sins, you can honestly say, “Yes, I did that, but I am free from bondage to it. Jesus forgave me for it, and I am changing.” If you have sinned against others, Matthew 5:23-24 tells you to go to that person, confess your sins, and be reconciled.

God says another surprising thing. He says that those who believe are completely and legally righteous. Not only is your sin put on Jesus, but also Jesus’ perfect righteousness is put on you (this is called double imputation). At the moment you believe, God is not your Judge any more. He becomes your Heavenly Father. You become His adopted child, an adoption that is unchangeable and comes with an incredible inheritance.

**New life**

How can God call us righteous? After all, we needed the cross because of our sin. When God saves us, He makes us into new creations. We are no longer the same person we used to be (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). We do not have to sin anymore. We can joyfully obey God and live for His plan and purposes.

Until the end of your life on earth, you are in the process of being changed to reflect Jesus’ righteousness, by God’s grace, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Christian lifestyle is full of daily repentance and training in biblical thoughts and actions. God’s love for you compels you to live for His glorious Kingdom (2 Corinthians 5:14). You learn to die to yourself and live for Him (Romans 6:11). Instead of doing what you want, you deny yourself (Luke 9:23). You no longer live for our own plan, but for God’s.

Do you believe God loves you and sent Jesus to die for you? Have you received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? In Luke 18:13-14, God says this is the prayer He hears, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” Confess your sin to God. Admit you are a sinner who has lived for your own plan, not His. Tell Him that you believe in Him as your Savior and want to be in a relationship with Him, where you will obey Him as your Lord.
This week we learned about God’s plan to have a relationship with us. The relationship is through Jesus Christ, proof that God loves you. God wants you to love Him, but You can’t love someone you don’t know! Therefore, today you will be researching the question, “Who is Jesus Christ?” Pray before you begin, asking God to show you the truth.

Whom does God the Father say Jesus is?

Matthew 3:17

In the following passages, how does Jesus refer to Himself?

John 4:25-26

John 8:28, 9:35-38

Matthew 27:42-43

In the Old Testament, “Son of God” and “Son of man” referred to the Messiah they were waiting for. The OT prophets knew this Messiah was God.

In the following passages, what does Jesus claim about Himself?

John 5:39

John 6:51

John 8:12
Now let’s look at what some other people knew about Jesus. People who saw Him face to face. What does Paul say about Jesus?

Titus 1:3-4

Colossians 1:15-16

Whom did Peter say Jesus was?

Mark 8:27-29

2 Peter 1:1

Whom did John the Baptist say Jesus was?

John 1:29, 34

Whom did John the Apostle say Jesus was?

John 1:1, 14

Revelation 19:16

What authority does Jesus have?

Luke 5:21

What did Jesus do to prove He has authority to forgive sins?

Luke 5:21-24

Jesus’ love is beyond comprehension. He paid the punishment for your sins by dying on the cross, and then proved His authority over death and sin by rising from the dead. When you receive Him in faith (as a gift of grace, not by works), He not only forgives you but also empowers you to be transformed.

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.”
Deuteronomy 32:4

"The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.

Why did God make you? God says He made you to glorify Him (Isaiah 43:7). What does that mean? It means we show people the One True Living God by how we live. We need to know what God is like to imitate Him, so today we’re studying eleven aspects of the glorious character of God.

Eternity

**Definition:** God is everlasting. That means He exists endlessly, backward and forward, without any interruption or limitation caused by events (Psalm 90:2).

**Effects on your life:** You can have confidence that God has never, nor will He ever, cease to exist. He will never disappear from your life, although if you ignore or deny Him, He will not force Himself on you.

**Application:**

Holiness = Apart from sin

**Definition:** God is separate from all that is common or unclean. He is positively pure and thus distinct from others (Leviticus 11:44, Isaiah 40:25; Revelation 4:8).

**Effects on your life:** The holiness of God becomes the standard for the believer’s life and conduct. Believers are set apart from sin (Hebrews 12:14).

**Application:** “Is it holy?”

Immutability = Unchangeable

**Definition:** God is unchangeable and thus unchanging (James 1:17).

**Effects on your life:** Immutability offers comfort and assurance that God’s promises will not fail, and encouragement that God’s attitude toward sin never changes.

**Application:**

Love

**Definition:** Love in God is His personal sacrifice for the good of everyone who believes (John 3:16).

**Effects on your life:** Love is not about getting, it’s about giving. Love gives. Lust takes. God gives us love by the sacrifice of His Son, we give Him love by obeying Him (John 14:21). We obey Him by loving others (doing what’s best for them).

**Application:**

Omnipotence = all powerful

**Definition:** God is all-powerful and able to do anything consistent with His own good nature (Revelation 1:8, 2 Corinthians 6:18).

**Effects on your life:** God’s power affects us by His creation (Psalm 33:9), His preserving all things (Hebrews 1:3), how He delivered Israel from bondage (Psalm 114). The greatest display of His power was the resurrection of Christ from the
dead (2 Corinthians 13:4). For the believer, God’s power relates to the Gospel (Romans 1:16), to the hope of bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 6:14), and to daily living (Ephesians 1:19).

**Application:**

_Omnipresence = everywhere present_

**Definition:** God is everywhere with His whole being at all times (Psalm 139:7-10).

**Effects on your life:** No person can escape the presence of God. This warns unbelievers and comforts believers who, because God is omnipresent, can practice the experience of His presence in every circumstance of life.

**Application:**

_Omniscience = knows everything_

**Definition:** God knows everything, things actual and possible, effortlessly and equally well (Psalm 147:4; Matthew 11:21; Psalm 139:16).

**Effects on your life:** Nothing you think, do, or say, can be hidden from God.

**Application:**

_Righteousness_

**Definition:** Has to do with law, morality, and justice (Psalm 11:7; Dan 9:7; Ps 19:9; Acts 17:31). Jesus Christ is the definition of righteousness (Philippians 3:9-10).

**Effects on your life:** In Christ, you can do right things according to the Bible.

**Application:**

_Sovereignty_

**Definition:** Means principal, chief, supreme. It speaks first of position, then of power (Psalm 135:6, Acts 17:24-27).

**Effects on your life:** Stop trying to control things, it’s impossible. God is sovereign even over the hurts others inflict, and can use them for redemptive purposes.

**Application:** *Let God be God.*

_Truth_

**Definition:** Supreme and ultimate reality, overriding every other perception of truth. In God there is only faithfulness and consistency, no falsehood or misconceptions (John 17:3; Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18).

**Effects on your life:** Because God is true, He can do nothing inconsistent with Himself. His promises can never be broken or unfulfilled. Because God is ultimate truth, His Word is absolutely true and without error.

**Application:**

_Unity_

**Definition:** There is one God. He is indivisible (Deuteronomy 6:4, 1 Corinthians 8:6).

**Effects on your life:** The unity of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit guarantees His full power, faithfulness, and presence.

**Application:** Let yourself be dazzled by God. You’ve spent your life chasing after lesser joys and lesser gods. As C.S. Lewis said, so far you’ve played in the mud puddles of a dirty street. It’s time to dive in and swim in the ocean at the most beautiful beach you could ever imagine.

Choose one specific way in which you will think differently this week:

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

What would be the result of such renewed thinking?

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

Choose one specific way in which you will think differently this week:
This week we learned about God the Father. Maybe you wonder why such an amazing God didn’t just leave us alone to rot in our sin. Truth is, God is too perfect to ignore sin. Because He is perfect, He has to punish sin. All sin will receive God’s wrath. Wrath is what we all deserve, but because God is love, we can get mercy and grace.

There is always punishment for sin. In Genesis 2:17 God said that sin would result in death, and it always does. The first man and woman listened to Satan instead of God, and chose sin. Ever since then, all men and women sin. In Genesis 3:15, we see God’s mercy, that He would make a way by which we don’t have to get the punishment we deserve. That way is Jesus Christ.

Read 1 John 4:10. What was God’s motive for sending Jesus to die for our sins?

________________________________________________________

Read Matthew 27:35. How was Jesus killed?

________________________________________________________

Read Mark 15:26. What did the sign over His head say?

________________________________________________________

Read Luke 23:35-37. What did the people say who were making fun of Jesus?

________________________________________________________

Make a list of what Jesus said while He hung on the cross:

Luke 23:34 __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Luke 23:42-43 _________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Luke 23:46 ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

John 19:26-27 _________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

John 19:30 ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

My search—be assured

Mercy = God saves me when I believe and receive Jesus’ payment for my sins.

Grace = God changes me so I become more like Him, by His Holy Spirit’s power.
Mark 15:34 ____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Look up these verses and write down the purpose of Jesus' death:

1 Peter 2:24 ____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Luke 23:42-43 _________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Hebrews 2:17 _________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Ephesians 1:7 _________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Romans 4:25 _________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Romans 5:9 _________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

1 Corinthians 15:3 _____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

In the Old Testament, over 700 years before Jesus came to earth, God gave Isaiah a detailed description of how Jesus took our punishment to ransom us from our old ways. Isaiah doesn’t call Him Jesus, but rather the “Servant.”

Read Isaiah 53:3. How was Jesus treated by men? _________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Read Isaiah 53:4. What did he “bear” for us? _____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Read Isaiah 53:5. What happened to Jesus because of our transgressions and our iniquities (sins)? _____________________________

Read Isaiah 53:10. What kind of sacrificial offering was Jesus?______________

____________________________________________________________________

Read Isaiah 53:11. Where was Jesus' anguish? _____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Read Isaiah 53:11-12. What will He bear? _________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Deuteronomy 32:4

“The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.
There are many ideas floating around about the Holy Spirit. A lot of them are unbiblical, which is pretty scary, because He is the power we need! It’s important to know Him correctly.

- The Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity (Ephesians 3:14-17).
- Jesus went to Heaven so the Holy Spirit could come and convict everyone of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8).
- Apart from choosing to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are in bondage to sin (Romans 7:18-8:4).
- The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian when they believe (Romans 8:9).
- We all need His power by which to put sin to death, so we can change and grow as God’s children (Romans 8:13-16).
- The Holy Spirit is grieved when we speak in ways that don’t build people up (Ephesians 4:30).
- The Holy Spirit is put out (quenched) when we are miserable instead of joyful, when we are ungrateful instead of thankful, and when we worry instead of pray (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

What about self-control?

Self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Self-control does not mean that you look inside yourself to control yourself. The Holy Spirit is the source of power by which you control yourself. You cannot control yourself by yourself. You need the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew this. When He went back to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to help us (John 16:17).

If you try to control yourself from within, you will fail. You must rely on the Holy Spirit as the power by which to control yourself, and ask His help. As you rely on the Holy Spirit, you also work hard to control yourself—your thoughts and your actions.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Source of self-control} &= \text{self} \\
\text{Object of self-control} &= \text{self} \\
\text{Source of self-control} &= \text{Holy Spirit} \\
\text{Object of self-control} &= \text{self}
\end{align*}
\]
Train your mind and body to obey the Holy Spirit

Our thoughts and behavior can fool us into thinking we are in control. Really we are involved in self-destruction (Proverbs 25:28). Without the walls of discipline and self-control, we easily fall to temptation.

But, with the Holy Spirit as our source of control, we train ourselves to exercise self-control in all things (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). There are many areas of self-control. Let's break it down into thinking and behavior.

Think right—MIND

Some areas of self-control of the mind are:

- **Joy**—choose joy by no longer being controlled by fears or circumstances, but by trusting completely in God (Philippians 4:4)

  Applying my life:

- **Peace**—pray instead of worry and anxiety (Philippians 4:6-7).

  Applying my life:

- **Patience**—control anger and frustration (Proverbs 16:32)

  Applying my life:

- **Faithfulness**—stick with it, endure, persevere during trials (James 1:2-3)

  Applying my life:

Do right—BODY

Some areas of self-control of the body are:

- **Love**—love God first by obeying His Word (John 14:21)

  Applying my life:

- **Kindness**—bless others, even enemies (Romans 12:20)

  Applying my life:

- **Goodness**—do only what is right, according to God’s Word (2 Peter 1:5)

  Applying my life:

- **Gentleness**—because you let God rule you, you speak softly (Proverbs 15:1)

  Applying my life:

The Bible teaches us to work hard to obey the Holy Spirit. Fill your mind with God’s Word, rely on the Holy Spirit to empower you, and then train yourself to do what God’s Word says. This process of working together with the Holy Spirit is called sanctification. All Christians are being sanctified—by God’s grace and power we are changing and growing, all of our lives.
We have learned about God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit (the Trinity). The Bible teaches us that in the power of the Holy Spirit, we work hard to think right and do right. He is the source of power by which we control ourselves.

Read the following passages, and write down what you learn about self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

1 Timothy 4:7-8

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read Galatians 5:16-17. When you don’t control yourself, what has happened?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Sin means we stopped walking in the Holy Spirit, and started relying on self. Read 1 John 1:9. What do you need to do when you sin?

______________________________________________________________________________

In the struggle with sin, you are not alone. Every believer experiences constant conflict with sin. Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, wrote down what the struggle feels like. See if you can identify with him.

Ever get discouraged? Think like Paul did, and you won’t have to be...

Read Romans 7:21-22. Underline the word “law.” Paul says he sins so regularly and so predictably, that it can be described as a law. It is a law that we don’t want to choose righteousness. Like Paul, our will to do good is not strong enough. No matter how much we wish to do good, our flesh resists rebelliously. There is no way for us to escape this law.

How does Romans 3:23 describe our sin problem?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Read Romans 7:23a. Underline the work “war” or “battle.” Paul says now that he is a Christian, he approves the law of God, but he still cannot do it because of the law of his flesh. Like Paul, our flesh is not neutral or passive, but busy mak-
ing war. This war is ongoing and will not end until we are in heaven. All of us are in a battle against sin.

Read Romans 7:23b. Underline the word “captive” or “prisoner.” Paul says he is held captive in this war. His flesh actively wars against his new nature, capturing him as a prisoner. Every time we obey the law of sin that dwells in our flesh, we find ourselves imprisoned and captive.

Read Romans 7:24. Underline the word “wretched.” When he sins, Paul is a wretched, distressed, miserable human being. He cries in frustration, “O wretched man that I am. I am the chief of all sinners.” In his humiliation, he longs to be delivered from this body of death. The longing of his heart is to be rescued. Is this the longing of your heart? Write out a prayer expressing your longing to be rescued from your desire to sin.

Discouragement over sin, shows that the Holy Spirit is convicting you (John 16:8). Paul’s description of the conflict with sin should describe the experience of every Christian, because we all sin (1 John 1:8,10). When you sin, don’t defend yourself or try to explain why you sinned. Instead, welcome the feeling of wretchedness and confess your sin (1 John 1:9). To confess your sin means to agree with God about your sin.

Read 1 John 1:9. When you confess your sin, what will God do?

The Holy Spirit is powerful

Read Romans 7:25. Hallelujah! Deliverance from the constant conflict is possible through Jesus Christ, who comes to rescue us from ourselves. The mind (new nature) of the Christian always serves the law of God. The flesh always serves the law of sin. But Jesus Christ rescues us from our wretchedness.

Read Romans 8:1 & 4. What is the power by which believers in Jesus Christ can walk in victory over the law of our sin nature?

A non-believer does not have the power of the Holy Spirit inside of them. But everyone can be a believer. Accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior by believing He is the Son of God who died for you, as you confess your sin.

When you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God puts Jesus Christ’s righteousness onto you, and your sin gets put on Jesus Christ on the cross. That means you CAN do right. Unbelievers can try with all their might to do everything right, but because they do not have Christ’s righteousness, they will always be motivated by their own desires.

Read Romans 8:13. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for you not to sin. How will that look in your life? Give an example:
Today we’re taking the hardest journey, the journey inside ourselves. Remember, we can’t look inside ourselves to control our behavior. As a matter of fact, it’s futile to merely try to control behavior, without going deeper.

Often we are tempted to go with the easy fix, to work on changing symptoms. After all, it looks like there’s success, and doing what’s right makes us feel better for a little while. But when we only tackle symptoms, eventually we go right back to where started, more discouraged than ever.

On the other hand, if you are willing to work hard because you want to glorify God, and if you will take the difficult journey inside yourself, you can begin to change and keep changing. There is hope when we look into our hearts, and let God change our hearts with His Word (Hebrews 4:12). As you check your heart this week, allow your self to be convicted.

Every behavior, good or bad, flows out of the beliefs of your heart. An easy way to understand this is the common saying, “You do what you do because you want what you want.” When God saves us, He makes us new (2 Corinthians 5:17). That means He changes us deep inside, in our hearts.

Now the “heart” can mean two things. There’s your physical, literal heart. It’s the organ that pumps blood through your body. Then, there’s the spiritual, innermost part of you. The word that the New Testament often uses for “heart” is “kardia.” The “kardia” can be defined as the place inside you from which your thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, motivations, obsessions, and compulsions flow. It is the part of you that will never die (John 10:28, Titus 1:2, 3:7).

When we talk about “heart,” we’re talking about our inner, spiritual part. Where we do our thinking, our believing, our choosing, our feeling. The terms “inner man,” “soul,” “spirit,” are interchangeable with “heart.” Not to discredit your physical body. God has made you a wonderful mix of both physical and spiritual, outer man and inner man.

God says that He does not look at the outer man, He looks at the inner man (1 Samuel 16:7). You are not an outer man with an inner man. You are an inner man encased in an outer man. You are not a body with a heart. You are a heart with a body that will die and rot away. But your heart will keep living, either in heaven or in hell (Matthew 25:46).

What matters most is what’s going on in your heart. When your heart wants to love and worship God, your actions will follow.

We’re going to think about three trees to understand this better. Start by comparing yourself to a tree. No, it’s not a crazy idea, it’s a good idea! The Bible does it a lot (Psalm 1:3, Jeremiah 17:5-8). First of all, what determines whether
trees (lives) will be prickly and dried up, or lush and fruit bearing? The roots (hearts). What makes a tree prove whether it has good or bad roots? Trials.

Tree #1
This tree is prickly and dried up. It has bad fruit: anger, rage, bitterness, manipulation, rebellion, compulsions and addictions, etc. It also has bad roots. The roots are underground, where no-one sees them. The bad fruit comes from the bad root. My bad behavior comes from my bad inner man (heart) that no-one sees. My heart has idolatrous desires—the wrong things I want and believe. These idols result in bad fruit, especially when a tough situation comes up. When there is a tough situation or trial, my bad fruit grows—I become shriveled and more prickly than ever. Sometimes I’m so dried up I might as well be dead.

Tree #2
This tree is luscious and fresh. When trials come, this tree produces even more delicious fruit. The good fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. The good fruit comes from the good root. The good root is watered by Jesus’ living water through God’s Word (John 4, 7:38, Psalm 1:2). My heart is like that root. If I want to grow good fruit, my heart has to desire to glorify God above all other desires. My good fruit (thoughts, actions, feelings) come from a heart that is watered by God’s living water, Jesus Christ. When trials come and I bear good fruit, it’s because I’m obeying God’s Word by the power of the Holy Spirit.

But sometimes, Tree #2 becomes dried and shriveled, like Tree #1. The solution is found in Tree #3.

Tree #3
This tree was a brutal, cruel tree. On it hung the bloody and beaten body of Jesus Christ. He came to earth to die, so that when we become dried and shriveled like Tree #1, we can confess, repent and be changed (1 John 1:9). Repentance means change inside my mind and heart. Confession means I agree with God about my sin. When I confess, or agree with God about my bad fruit and bad root, He gives me repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

When you bear the bad fruit of ugly Tree #1, look to Jesus on the cross for forgiveness, and become like the beautiful Tree #2. The root of beautiful Tree #2 is a heart that desires to glorify God by loving Him and loving others. The root of ugly Tree #1 is a heart of self-love and self-protection.

When your heart wants to love and worship God more than yourself, you can do well under difficulty. The streams of living water that flow from Jesus Christ empower you. You will want to do what’s right and you will bear good fruit regardless of the trial you are enduring.
This week we took the hardest journey, the journey inside ourselves. All of us have a sin problem, rooted in our hearts. When we confess our sins, Jesus forgives us because He took our punishment, but we must first recognize our sins and confess them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>What it teaches about my thoughts:</th>
<th>My personal confession of sin:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippians 4:4</td>
<td>I must choose joy in the Lord at all times. My joy cannot be dependent on circumstances or on what people do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 3:5-6</td>
<td>I must trust the Lord with all my heart, and not trust my own thinking. I must look to God in everything I do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippians 4:6-7</td>
<td>I may not worry, but must pray about everything. Then I will have peace. If I’m not peaceful, I’m not relying on the Holy Spirit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 8:6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 16:32</td>
<td>I must replace my anger with patience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James 1:2-3</td>
<td>When trials come, I must persevere in faith so that I will grow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 3:3-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read the Scriptures, and what they teach. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of areas you need to confess.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>What it teaches about my actions:</th>
<th>My personal confession of sin:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 22:37-38</td>
<td>If I love God, I will obey His Word.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 14:21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 12:20</td>
<td>I must bless others, even my enemies, with kindness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Peter 3:8-10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Peter 1:5</td>
<td>I must do only what is virtuous and pure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 15:1</td>
<td>My speech must be good, gentle, and gracious.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 12:18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 26:4-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
First of all, we'll resolutely fix our thoughts on Jesus Christ on the cross (Isaiah 50:7-9). Jesus endured brutal beating as he went to the cross. Jesus bore shameful suffering for you on the cross. Jesus experienced unbearable isolation from His Father as He hung there. He took our sins on Himself and deposited them in hell.

All sin will end up punished in hell. You have one of two choices. Either Jesus takes your sins on Himself and you go to heaven, or your sins go with you to hell and you stay in hell forever.

God requires the shedding of blood to pay for sin (Hebrews 9:22). In the Old Testament, God's people had to offer animal sacrifices, but Jesus abolished that by offering His body (Hebrews 10:11-12).

How does it happen that your sins get put on Jesus? There's only one way—you confess them (1 John 1:9). Confessing your sin means agreeing with God about it. When you see your sin the way God sees it, and agree with Him about it, you are confessing them.

Sin is not just actions we do that harm others. Sin includes thoughts and desires that don't honor and worship God above all else. Sin is thinking or doing anything that's contrary to God's Word.

Steps in confession of sin

First of all, let your mind say, “Yes, I have sinned.” Instead, we often build defenses that are very destructive. Break through the defenses you have built. Hate your sin more than you love your defenses. Some common defenses that stop us from agreeing with God are:

- Doubt of God's Word
- Denial of God's Word
- Covering up our sin, calling it something nice and defending it
- Hiding our sin
- Running away so we can keep doing it
- Blaming others

Next, talk to God about it. Tell Him you agree with Him. Name the sin specifically to Him (1 John 1:8-10, Proverbs 28:13= our memory verse). Ask Him to forgive you. Trust His promise to forgive you. When a sin that you have repented of comes to mind, thank God that you are forgiven (Psalm 103:2-3).

Next, confess it to the appropriate people. Who are the appropriate people? Whoever already knows about and has been affected or hurt by your sin (Matthew 5:23-24, James 5:16). If it is a sin in your mind, confess it to God. If it is something that has affected or hurt others, confess it to them (Mark 11:25).

Practice how you will confess to them using the example on the next page. Be
sure you are not using the words “but,” or “maybe,” since these are excuses. Tell them you know you hurt them. Rather than saying, “I’m sorry,” but tell them you sinned and ask them specifically if they would be willing to forgive you. Be willing to accept the consequences. If they are not willing to forgive you, perhaps it would be good to repeat your confession. But don’t insist on being forgiven. That is their choice.

You may need to make restitution. For example, if you stole, go to that person and offer to pay it back (Luke 15:18-19, Proverbs 6:30-31).

When you confess, God grants you repentance

When you truly confess sin, you don’t stay the same (2 Corinthians 7:10-11). For example, if you stole, you will begin working so you can give to others instead (Ephesians 4:28). The Bible calls this repentance. Repentance means a change of thinking that results in doing right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When you have confessed your sin, and been granted repentance, here’s what will be true about you:</th>
<th>If you haven’t confessed the sin, here’s what will be true about you:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **You’ll hate what you once enjoyed**
- **You’ll stay away from places and people that tempt you**
- **You’ll admit that you did it freely, and not hold back**
- **You won’t be angry, rather you’ll be sorrowful that you did it**
- **You won’t fear what people think or say about you**
- **You’ll work to change your desires**
- **You’ll accept the consequences**

**I’m forgiven!**

Once sin has been confessed, don’t wallow in it! God is not the one who ever brings it to your mind. He chooses not to remember it. Here are some of the ways God describes His forgiveness:

- He removes your sin from you as far as the east is from the west.
- He buries your sin in the deepest part of the sea.
- He washes you whiter than snow.
- He makes what was red as crimson as white as wool.
- When He forgives, He cleanses you from all unrighteousness.

Once you’ve confessed your sin, you rejoice in God’s forgiveness. You learn and live by the lessons you learn, and you move on (Philippians 3:12-13).

To be forgiven is so sweet that honey has no taste in comparison to it. But there is one thing sweeter still, and that is to forgive (Matthew 6:14-15). Because you have been forgiven, you can forgive (Colossians 3:13).
When God forgives me, He never thinks about my sin again.

This week we looked at confession and forgiveness. As you dig deeper, be sure that you are confessing sin to God. There are many examples in the Bible, Peter is one. He denied Jesus, but then readily confessed it. Jesus forgave him and gave him a job to do. Peter became the first preacher for the church (Acts 2). Judas, on the other hand, regretted that he had sold Jesus, but didn’t confess his sin (Matthew 27:3). He took his life. If you just have remorse or regret, that won’t get you anywhere.

If your thoughts are focused on the situation, and how hard it is, that’s not confession. Also, if you are sorry you got caught that’s not confession either. Confession means you totally agree with God about it, and accept the punishment Jesus took on the cross as payment for it (1 Peter 2:24).

When we’ve truly confessed our sin, we will always be willing to agree with God about it, just like Paul always admitted what he had done to the church. Agreeing with God about our sin and admitting to our guilt is the path to repentance and freedom from the sin. This is totally different than wallowing in it, or continuing to feel guilty about it. When you agree with God about sin and confess it, you will always agree with Him about it. When you think about it, you praise and thank Him for His forgiveness, and you are willing to do whatever it takes to change.

To be forgiven, confess your sins. God will forgive you and cleanse you, and grant you repentance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of conviction</th>
<th>Confession of my sin</th>
<th>Steps I will take to forsake my sin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

""
Once your sin has been confessed, what does God do with it?

Psalm 51:7-10

Psalm 103:8-12

Isaiah 1:18

Isaiah 43:25

Micah 7:18-19

Do you still talk about, think about, or feel guilty about past sin that has been confessed? If so, you are choosing to wallow in it. Answer the following questions regarding sin that you are choosing to wallow in.

1. Have I truly forsaken the sin? (Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 3:8, Acts 26:20) What must I do to prove repentance (be completely changed in thoughts and actions)?

2. Do I have a wrong view of sin, instead of seeing it as God does? He says the payment on the cross is sufficient to pay for our sins.

3. Am I prideful, thinking that my sin is bigger than God’s merciful forgiveness, and bigger than God’s grace (1 Corinthians 10:12, Proverbs 16:18)?

4. Do I wrongly equate “being forgiven” with “having forgotten”? Forgetting is a byproduct that sometimes happens when you no longer choose to remember. God never says He forgets, but that He chooses not to remember. If you are choosing to remember, or dwell on, the sin, then you are wallowing in it. Instead of speaking and thinking about the sin, train yourself to speak and think of God’s grace.

5. Do I not believe God’s promises of forgiveness? I must trust God, believe that what He says is true, and no longer listen to the lies of the devil (1 John 1:9, Psalm 103:8-14)

Proverbs 28:13

“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”
be victorious 1

The battle for your heart is a great war. There’s attack coming at you from three enemies. You don’t always recognize which one is coming at you, and sometimes it might be more than one at a time! But you don’t have to always be aware of which enemy is coming at you. You just have to deal with them well. With God’s Word and the power of His Spirit, you can and you will be victorious.

We are going to learn how God empowers you for victory over:
1. Satan and demons
2. The world around you
3. The world inside you

Ephesians 6:10

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”

One enemy the Bible warns us about is Satan (John 10:10, 1 Peter 5:8). Often we have a wrong view of him. If you are a Christian, Satan cannot exercise power over you. Jesus defeated Satan on the cross. Christians cannot be controlled by Satan, because we obey God’s Word about how to resist him. James 4:7 says there are two things you must do to resist Satan.

First, submit to God’s will. Maybe you are already praying every day for victory. Fine, but that’s only the passive part of it. You must also actively submit to God by obeying what the Bible teaches.

Second, resist the devil. A lot of people think we should pray, or rebuke the devil. But resisting is an active thing. Praying is a passive thing. After you pray you have to take action. Since the battle ground is in your mind, the way to resist the devil is to replace your thoughts about him with truth. Read Matthew 4:4, 7, & 10 to see how Jesus resisted Satan. Notice that each time Satan came at Jesus, He responded with “It is written.” You cannot allow your mind to think what Satan wants you to think. Recognize his lie, renew your mind with Scripture, and replace it with God’s truth.

seven ways to resist enemy 1

1. Wear the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14)
   - We must be honest about our sin before God (Psalm 51:1-4).
   - We must be honest about our sin in our own hearts and minds (Psalm 51:5-6)
   - When we wear the belt of truth, our thoughts focus on the truth of Christ’s victory over sin and death on the cross (Hebrews 12:1-3).
   - We must be honest when speaking with others. The reason for honesty with others is unity (Ephesians 4:25). When you lie, you separate yourself from the person you are lying to.
2. **Wear righteousness (Ephesians 6:14b)**
   - As we confess our sin, we wear the righteousness of Jesus Christ that has been imputed to us in justification (Romans 3:21-26).
   - Wearing the breastplate of righteousness means remembering “WWJD”, and then doing the right thing (Philippians 3:9-14). What does it look like for you to wear righteousness?

3. **Walk around prepared to talk about the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15)**
   - There is no peace unless we resolve our conflict against God. Sin and Satan results in a lack of peace because of the conflict between us and God. The path to peace begins with faith in Jesus Christ and the good news of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
   - We must be ready for action, ready to move in with thoughts that focus on the gospel (1 Peter 3:15).
   - As we share what Christ has done for us (the gospel), our faith grows (Philemon 6).
   - The path of sharing the gospel is not a smooth or easy road. You may be laughed at, you will be tempted. It’s a battle. Be sure you are ready (2 Timothy 2:3).

4. **Hold faith in front of you at all times (Ephesians 6:16)**
   - When times are hard, we must trust God rather than our natural thoughts and emotions. Faith obeys God rather than our common sense (Proverbs 30:5-6).
   - Take refuge in God when you feel doubtful, rather than hiding in self-constructed shelters (Psalm 46:1).

5. **Protect your mind by thinking about your salvation every day (Ephesians 6:17)**
   - The helmet identifies you as in Christ, the Messiah. Accept your identity, and know that He defends you.
   - Don’t focus on the problems at hand, think future! If you are saved, your future is secure!
   - Think about the hope and confidence of the salvation that covers you now and awaits fulfillment in heaven.

6. **Think and say Bible verses over and over (Ephesians 6:17)**
   - When you encounter problems, don’t rely on your own thinking! Go to God’s Word and renew your mind with His truth.
   - This is the offensive armor piece that you hold out before the enemy, like Jesus did when Satan tempted Him (Matthew 4).
   - Turn to, think about, and speak God’s Word (Deuteronomy 29:29).
   - Here’s how to begin submitting to God’s will and resisting the devil. Read Scripture, make yourself think about Scripture. When you wake up, get in the habit of reading or reciting a verse before you even raise your head from the pillow. When you go to bed at night, read Scripture till you fall asleep. During the day, speak it aloud. Tell a friend the verse you’re thinking about.

7. **Be steady to pray repeatedly, every day (Ephesians 6:18-20)**
   - This is our guard duty in battle—to pray constantly and about everything (Romans 12:12, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
   - Pray for each other to be bold in telling the truth of the gospel (Colossians 1:9, 4:2).
In the battle for your soul, you’ve been deceived. Bad things have seduced you—they have felt good, and they have been fun. The good things have not held your interest. There is a battle going on, the most important battle imaginable. Did you know that all people will spend eternity worshipping God? It’s true (Philippians 2:10-15). Satan wants to deceive you so you lost the battle and spend eternity worshipping God from hell’s torment. You don’t have to let Satan deceive you. You can be strong. But, here’s what you have to do:

**Put on the belt of truth**

Read Ephesians 6:14a. What piece of armor does this tell you to put on? ______

Read Philippians 4:8. What is the first thing we must think about? ______

What will change in your life when you wear the belt of truth? ______

**Wear righteousness**

Read Ephesians 6:14b. What piece of armor does this tell you to put on? ______

Read Titus 2:11. What does it look like to wear righteousness? ______

What will change in your life when you wear the breastplate of righteousness? ______

**Walk around prepared to talk about the gospel of peace**

Read Ephesians 6:15. What piece of armor does this tell you to put on? ______

Read Mark 1:14-15. What two things did Jesus say go with the gospel of God? ______

What will you talk about when your shoes are the preparation of the gospel of peace? ______
Hold faith in front of you at all times.
Read Ephesians 6:16. What piece of armor does this tell you to put on? ________

Read Psalm 3:3. When we hold the shield of faith, what happens to us?
What will change in your life when you take up the shield of faith?

Protect your mind by thinking about your salvation every day
Read Ephesians 6:17. What piece of armor does this tell you to put on? ________

Read Romans 1:16. What is the power of God? _______________________
What will change in your life when you put on the helmet of salvation?

Think and say Bible verses repeatedly
Read Ephesians 6:17. What piece of armor does this tell you to put on? ________

Read Joshua 1:8. What must we talk about and meditate on? ________________
What will change in your life when you hold up the sword of the spirit?

Here’s a practical way to begin submitting to God’s will and resisting the devil.
Read Scripture, make yourself think about Scripture. When you wake up, get in
the habit of reading or reciting a verse before you even raise your head from
the pillow. When you go to bed at night, read Scripture till you fall asleep.

Be steady in prayer
Read Ephesians 6:18-20. What piece of armor does this tell you to put on? ________

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. What three things do we know are the will of
God? ___________________________________________________________________

Read Philippians 4:6-7. What must you do every time you are anxious or wor-
ried? ___________________________________________________________________
What will change in your life when you pray always? ________________________
God says, “I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols” (Isaiah 42:8). God is serious about being worshipped, because He is the One True God. The world lures us to worship other gods (idols).

- The world is full of enemies. Anything we are willing to sin to get, or sin if we don’t get, is our enemy. When we repeatedly choose to sin to get it, or sin if we don’t get it, it becomes our personal idol.

- The idols are powerful because you may not even be aware of them. Here’s how to recognize an idol—do you let your desire for it replace your desire to please God? Desires that become idols are dangerous and deadly (James 1:14-15).

Do you know why God gave us the Old Testament? It is full of amazing pictures, or stories, of the great nation of Israel—and its horrible failures. These pictures are to warn us about our enemy, the world, and its idols. God says He gave us these true stories so that we will run from idols (1 Corinthians 10:6-7, 14).

Have you ever thought about what happened to the nation Israel? First of all, God set up a relationship with them as His special people. He wanted to bless them, make them great, so they could show other nations how great He is. God begged them to worship Him only, by keeping His rules. He used words like “listen,” “take care,” “keep your soul diligently,” “watch yourselves very carefully,” “take care lest you forget.” He said “What other great nation is there, that has statutes & rules so righteous as all this law that I give you?” (Deuteronomy 4:2, 4:6-9).

God told His people very clearly that He was to be their only God. The great nation Israel was not to worship anyone or anything but God. God wanted to show them His steadfast love, love that no other god could ever give. If they worshipped other gods, He could not be their God. God is the only One True God. He does not share His glory (Exodus 20:4, Deuteronomy 5:8).

The people of Israel had personally witnessed God’s power in action:

- God had rescued them from Egyptian bondage, from being forced to kill their sons and bear the beatings of slavery.
- They had walked across the Red Sea on dry ground, then turned and watched the water close in and drown the enemies chasing them.
- They had heard God thunder from the mountain, and seen the 10 Commandments written on stone.

O they knew God all right, by experience. However, they did not do the things God required. They did not honor Him as the One True God. And so, they lost the blessings of relationship with Him as their only God. They became useless in their thinking. Their hearts were darkened. They worshipped created things rather than the Creator (Exodus 32:1-6, Romans 1:18-25). They chose other gods, idols, over God.
God never forces anyone to worship Him. God gave them what they wanted, only it destroyed them. We choose to follow the world and it’s idols in exactly the same way. God never forces us either. The choice is up to us. Worship the One True God, or not. You get what you want. Only be warned—worshipping idols will destroy you, just like it destroyed Israel.

Warnings: God gave the nation Israel many warnings, and made sure they knew they would be cursed if they worshipped idols and disobeyed God’s rules (Deuteronomy 9:12, 27:15). He said their deluded hearts would make it impossible for them to be able to tell the difference between truth and lies. He pled with them to remember what a great and mighty God He is and to return to Him, for He had redeemed them (Isaiah 44:9-23).

Second chances: God gave them many, many chances. Samuel called the nation to return and worship and serve God (1 Samuel 12:20-25). Jeremiah begged them to return and remove the detestable idolatries (Jeremiah 14:1-2). In the index of your Bible you see the names of many prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi. Their job was to beg Israel to return to worshipping and glorifying God.

Consequences: God told Israel about the results of disobedience. He warned them that if they worshipped idols, they would have horrible devastations and punishments (Leviticus 26:1, 27-35). There would be great harm (1 Kings 14:8-10). They would be taken captive, so that they would know for sure that God is the One True God, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Ezekiel 6:9-10).

But there was always a future hope. That hope is the same as our hope. There would be One whom they could turn to, if they cast away their idolatries (Isaiah 31:6). They did not need to remain stuck worshipping the world and its idols (Zechariah 13:2,9).

What about me?

Idolatries hook us the same way they hooked the great nation Israel.
- They weren’t content with where God had them, but wanted something different.
- The sinful actions became sinful habits.
- Sinful habits became life dominating.

How can you know if something in the world has become your idol? Ask yourself these questions:
- Am I willing to sin to get it?
- Am I willing to sin if or because I don’t get it?

There are many things we are willing to sin to get! These are our idols. Anything that motivates us to sin (to not honor God and thank Him) is our enemy, because it easily becomes our idol (Romans 1:21).

Addictive and compulsive behaviors are nothing more than tools by which we worship or serve our idols. It could be anything—money, things, body image, drugs and alcohol, clothes, relationships, sex, attention from people, food, fame. Below are some ways we use tools to worship an idol:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools to help worship an idol</th>
<th>Possible Idols</th>
<th>Things I say to myself</th>
<th>How can I renew my mind?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinful eating, or not eating</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>“I must be in control”</td>
<td>Romans 8:28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation, lying</td>
<td>Security, control</td>
<td>“I must have what I’m about to lose if I don’t lie”</td>
<td>Philippians 4:6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs or alcohol</td>
<td>Pleasure, avoid pain</td>
<td>“I must feel good” or “I must escape”</td>
<td>James 1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laziness</td>
<td>Comfort, power</td>
<td>“I must have comfort” or “I’m in control of my life when I do what I want”</td>
<td>Psalms 115:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping/internet</td>
<td>New things, more things</td>
<td>“I must have more”</td>
<td>1 Timothy 6:6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex, or pornography</td>
<td>Pleasure, power, identity</td>
<td>“I must feel good” or “I must have someone”</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 6:9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tools are anything we use to help us cope, escape, get comfort, be in control, give us identity— apart from God. These tools are our enemies, and the world is full of tempting enemies that lure us away from God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you can battle them (Romans 12:2). There is places and people you need to completely avoid—such as bars, neighborhoods, parties, or places where you once purchased drugs. If you see an image on TV that lures you, turn it off. Listen to music that helps you praise God in your heart.
my search—be victorious II

Discouragement is a warning that my focus is wrong, and that it’s time to focus on God’s faithfulness.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:6-7, 14. Why did God give us the example of the nation Israel? ____________________________

Today we are going to work with one verse: “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

Let’s begin by defining the word temptation. What tempts you?
- Have you suffered a painful trial?
- Do you have a problem with sinful authority?
- Do you struggle with difficult people?
- Do you have too much to do? Are you stressed out?
- Are you frustrated?
- Are you confused?
- Are you in a situation where obedience is difficult?

In the blank space below, which word for temptation best fits your circumstance? pain, problem, difficulty, stress, frustration, confusion, situation. Fill in the blanks with the word that best fits your life:

“No _____________ has overtaken you that is not common to man...”

Talk with your mentor about what you think is unique about your life. List ways you think you have been singled out for particular suffering. ______________

We think we are the only one, but it’s not true. Consider ways in which what you face is not unlike what others face: ______________

“...God is faithful...”

Where have you tended to believe that God is unfaithful to His promises, and have felt forgotten? ____________________________

Talk about and list evidences of God’s faithfulness in your life: ______________
“...and he will not let you be __________________ beyond your ability...”

In what ways do you think you’ve been given more than you can handle? How have you thought sin was the only option to deal with the extreme pressures of your life? ________________________________

Talk about resources for dealing with your problems that are already present in your life, and how you could better utilize them. ________________________________

“...but with the __________________, he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

Notice that escape does not mean running away. You will be able to endure it. Where have you tended to feel trapped with no reasonable way to deal with your situation? List problems you are facing that seem unsolvable: ________________________________

Identify changes in your thinking that would enable you to endure your situation: ________________________________

CONNECT THE DOTS

[*] We are made to glorify God. (Isaiah 43:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31).

[*] We glorify God by submitting to His Word and bowing to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5-11).

[*] Jesus commands us to obey Him, with hearts of love and joy (John 14:21, 1 John 5:3).

[*] Notice that we aren't commanded to flee from the _______________ but to flee from the idolatry that makes us willing to sin to get it (or willing to sin when we don't get it (1 Corinthians 10:31).

[*] What enemies hinder you from obeying the Bible’s specific commands and principles?

Turn back to page 35, and review the examples of tools and idolatries. Can you identify idols you need to flee in order to obey the Bible’s specific commands and principles?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools I have used to help me worship idols</th>
<th>Idols</th>
<th>What I tell myself</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Corinthians 10:13-14

“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. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”
Your third enemy is perhaps the most powerful, because it is right inside you—your own flesh, your thoughts, your longings. Let’s look at some of the desires that hook us away from worshipping the One True God. Ask yourself which of these you are willing to sin to get:

- Comfort? Or avoidance of pain?
- Control? Or avoidance of authority, teamwork?
- Ease? Or avoidance of work?
- Pleasure? Or avoidance of discipline, hardship?
- Power? Or avoidance of obedience?
- Revenge? Or avoidance of forgiveness?

The Bible says that before you were saved, you were a slave to sin. You practiced being good at sin, just like a baseball batter practices his swing. So you have some established habits that must be replaced.

Often the sinful habits we practice in our thinking have to do with our responses to painful trials. We use tools like anger and anxiety to cope with pain. Then it’s an easy move to use other destructive tools like alcohol and drugs.

**PAIN**—“distress, or physical suffering.” Addictive behaviors numb pain. Often, those caught up in addictive behavior use to stop feeling pain. Tools used to numb or replace pain include drugs, alcohol, cutting, sex, food, even control. When you give up the addiction, you feel the pain again. This is frightening. The Bible teaches us not to fear pain, but welcome pain as discipline from God, or as a trial to change us (Psalm 23:4, Hebrews 12:4-9, Romans 8:28-29).

**ANXIETY**—“a feeling of nervousness, apprehension, fear or worry.” Anxiety is another tool that we use to numb the feeling of pain (Psalm 139:23-24). There are good fears—such as fear of God, fear of danger, fear of the consequences of sin. But there are also sinful fears that become worry and anxiety. Think differently about trials. They’re not your enemy. Think of them as a gift from God, by which He is calling you to depend and rely on Him in obedience (James 1:2,17). For victory over the sin of anxiety, count the trial a joy. How do you count a trial as joy? You use the mind God gave you. You tell yourself how to feel. In order to do that, you must pray about it every time it comes to mind (Philippians 4:6-7).

**ANGER**—“a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a wrong.” Anger is a common emotional response to pain and feeling we don’t like. It’s easy to fall into the habit of using the tool of sinful anger...
Anger shows itself in a number of ways—most commonly by external explosions, or by internal smoldering (Ephesians 4:31). During an explosion of rage, you feel strong, right, and powerful. But afterwards, you feel badly, and rightly so. Uncontrolled rage is a destructive and sinful response. Internal smoldering is a self-destructive way to deal with being wronged, that brings you nothing but trouble.

**RESENTMENT**—“bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly.” Resentment fuels addictive behavior and results in relapses of addictive behavior. When you are bitter and full of resentment, it is like feeding yourself poison, and hoping someone else dies from it. Bitterness is always a prison, and you are the prisoner. It stops the grace of God in your life, and defiles many (Hebrews 12:15). The solution to resentment and bitterness is forgiveness.

**FORGIVENESS**—“lifting the charge of guilt from one who has wronged me, choosing to no longer require payment for the debt someone owes me.” We do not forgive because the sinner has changed, or the sinner will no longer hurt us. We forgive because Jesus has forgiven us for our sins (Colossians 3:13). The basis of forgiveness is the blood of Christ. When you don’t feel like forgiving, you remember the cross of Christ and the price He paid so that forgiveness is possible. Let’s look at some of the lies we believe about, and some truths about forgiveness.

**LIE =** If I forgive, there will be no justice, and the one who sinned against me will go free.

**Truth =** God only knows what is just and God will justly punish all sin. Those who never repent of their sin will be punished for eternity. Read Deuteronomy 32:4. What do you learn about God? ______________________________________

**LIE =** Forgiveness is denial. It means I act like nothing ever happened.

**Truth =** Forgiveness is never denial because it is based on Christ’s punishment on the cross. Jesus never minimizes sin. A horrible, serious payment is required for forgiveness of sin. Read Colossians 2:14. How can the debt of sin be cancelled? ______________________________________

**LIE =** If I forgive, I will be vulnerable to the same thing again.

**Truth =** Forgiving doesn’t mean the person is safe and must be trusted. It does mean that I no longer dwell on the sin in my mind, and I no longer talk about it. It also means I trust God and live according to His wisdom. Although it may be wise for me never to go near that person again (Psalm 1:1), I must still have an attitude of forgiveness towards them. Read Proverbs 1:7. What kind of people despise wisdom and instruction? ______________________________________

**LIE =** My un-forgiveness is justified because I am right. If I forgive, they will never see the wrong and never repent.

**Truth =** Un-forgiveness hurts me when I do not forgive, because it allows what they did to control my life. Instead of denying myself, taking up my cross and walking in victory, I become bitter. There’s a serious consequence for not forgiving in Matthew 6:14-15. Why must I forgive? ______________________________________

**LIE =** Forgiveness always means reconciliation.

**Truth =** Forgiveness comes from the person who has been hurt, and chooses to cancel the debt owed to them because their own sin debt has been cancelled. However, although you have forgiven someone, there won’t be reconciliation until they confess their sin. Reconciliation comes when the sinner asks forgiveness, and the one who has forgiven them tells them they are forgiven. Read 2 Corinthians 5:20. How does Paul respond to those who aren’t reconciled to God? ______________________________________

Read Galatians 2:20. Have you been crucified with Christ? _________________ If so, you will be able to forgive, because of what Christ did for you on the cross.
This week you will study one example of victorious living. Read Ephesians 4:25-32, where you are given four specific principles for relationships, for victory over conflict, anger, sin.

1. **Do not lie**: As you speak truth, do you have the facts straight? Are you exaggerating? Or not saying something that should be said? (Ephesians 4:25)

2. **Deal with it today**: Are you letting it fester and build up resentment inside you? If you think about it again tomorrow, you give Satan a foothold (Ephesians 4:26-27)

3. **Be generous**: Work hard so that you can give to those who are needier than you (Ephesians 4:28)

4. **Speak graciously**: Are you saying only what needs to be said to tackle the problem, or are you attacking the person (“you always…” or “you never….“)? (Ephesians 4:29-30)

5. **Be kind**: Is your heart tender and ready to forgive? Or are you reacting in anger or bitterness? (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Work through a few past incidents. Whenever you have conflict, repeat this exercise.

***

**What happened that triggered your anger?**

**What did you hope would happen instead?**

**What did you want so much that you were angered by not getting it?**

**What did you say to yourself when you started to sense the anger? Did you pray and ask God for help? If so, how quickly?**

**How did you express your anger? Rate your expression according to the following measures:**

- Did I speak with honesty? Or did I exaggerate? Or did I ignore a problem?
- Did I deal with it quickly or let it fester?
- Did I help the person do better? Did I tackle the problem, or did I attack the person?
- Was I ready to forgive with a kind, tender heart?

**How can you learn from this?**

- What did you want so much you were willing to sin to get it?
- If you expressed anger sinfully, confess to God and those you sinned against.

***
Philippians 4:4

"Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice."

Put off means “get rid of,” “stop,” “finish with,” or “quit.” “Put off” is only the first step, but you can’t move on to steps two and three until you do step one.

The biggest thing to put off is self-deception. Some of us live in a make-believe world where sins like abandonment, rejection, or irresponsibility are OK. Some of us choose the self-deception of “denial,” wherein we deny that harmful things we do are sin, or we deny that harm others do is sin. If you don’t put off denial, lying, and self-deception, there’s a wall between you and change, that you won’t be able to climb over. The first step to change is to admit that you need to put off lying (Psalm 139:23-24). Putting off begins with confessing, or agreeing with God, about your sin.

Put off lying
You must put off lying, and accept full responsibility for change. Listen to some of the lies that commonly stop us from accepting full responsibility:

- If __________ would __________, then I would change.
- It’s ________________’s fault that I’m this way.
- I didn’t hurt anyone.
- They’re making it into a bigger problem than it is.

You must accept the truth that you are responsible. This is not a wall you can go around. Until you accept that you chose sinful methods of responding to the pressures of your life, you will not change. In order to move forward in freedom, you must honestly confess:

- I am fully responsible and will not blame-shift (Genesis 3:11-13).
- I will never change until I admit that I am fully at fault (1 John 1:9).

Many times, the Bible shows us that lying must be put off first. Truth is of utmost importance.

- In John 18:37, Jesus said the reason He came to earth is to tell us the truth.
- In Ephesians 4:25, lying is listed as the first example of what to put off.

Ephesians 4:22
“To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires..."
In Colossians 3:9, not lying is listed as proof that we have put off the old.

Ephesians 6 is that famous chapter we’ve studied, called “The Armor of God,” by which we fight against evil. The first piece of armor that is listed is truth (Ephesians 6:14).

In Philippians 4:8, God tells us how to think. You have 100% control over your thoughts, you can command your mind instead of living in a fantasy world. The first command God gives us in regards to our thoughts, is truth.

In John 8:32, Jesus said the truth will set you free.

**Put off negative influences**

Once you have admitted the truth, confessed your sin, and accepted responsibility, you must accept restrictions on what influences you. There are places you must no longer go, people you must no longer see, things you must no longer do (Psalm 1:1). That’s what putting off is all about.

As well as putting off the sin, you need to put off going near temptation. What are some of the temptations that might hook you, which you need to put off going near?

- People?
- Places?
- Smells?
- Tastes?
- Not going to church?

Jesus taught us to pray like this, “Keep me away from temptation, and don’t let me go near evil” (Matthew 6:13). After you pray it, you have to restrict yourself. We don’t like restrictions, do we? But in order to put off, you have to restrict yourself, and accept the restrictions others put on you.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ includes discipline. The One True God, the High King, puts up restrictions or boundaries because there is no other way to be free. He is not a killjoy, He is love. Without His loving restrictions, you will be in bondage.

Put off your rebellion towards boundaries, discipline, restrictions. Willingly allow boundaries or restrictions in your life.

One boundary you need is membership in a biblical church, with obedience to its biblical teaching. You need to become involved with other Christians at church (non-romantic relationships), and to do that you need to make yourself vulnerable (Hebrews 10:24-25). You may have lied to yourself that you can’t trust people, but God tells you that you’re cursed if you trust people (Jeremiah 17:5). When you fear God more than people, you will obey God (Galatians 1:10).
Put off lying

Ask your mentor (a trusted Christian friend) if she believes you are accepting full responsibility for your sinful actions of the past and present.

Is denial or self-deception stopping you from experiencing the forgiveness of God and others?

In what ways have you verbally and practically accepted responsibility for your past and present thoughts and actions?

Are you faithful to your assignments? 

Ask your mentor (a trusted Christian friend) to rate your faithfulness on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best).

Do you try to find short cuts or the easy way out? Is this an area where you need to change?

“Arising out of alienation from God, addiction is bondage to the rule of a substance, activity or state of mind, which then becomes the center of life, defending itself from the truth so that even bad consequences don’t bring repentance, leading to further estrangement from God.”

~ Ed Welch in “Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave.”

Lying can take many forms. Look up and write down what the following verses teach about deception, and about the results of falsehood.

Proverbs 6:12-19

Proverbs 10:9-10

Proverbs 11:9

Proverbs 12:19-22
Proverbs 19:5

_____________________________________________________________________________

Proverbs 20:17

_____________________________________________________________________________

Proverbs 21:6

_____________________________________________________________________________

Proverbs 26:18-19

_____________________________________________________________________________

Check off and make a list of ways you have covered up your guilty secret. Keep this list with you for a few days and add to it things that come to mind.

☐ Have I lied?
☐ Have I been sneaky?
☐ Have I hidden things?
☐ Have I rationalized behavior?
☐ Have I made excuses?
☐ Have I isolated myself from others?
☐ Have I blamed-shifted?
☐ Have I avoided people?
☐ Have I not followed up on commitments?
☐ Would my family say I have manipulated them?
☐ Do I change the subject when people talk with me about my addiction?
☐ Do I keep silent when people talk with me about my addiction?
☐ Other ways I have neglected the truth____________________________

Talk about ways in which you have been untruthful:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Practice telling the truth:

Recall an experience of the last day or so, something you remember well and can describe. It should be an experience in which you had a definite choice to honor or dishonor God. Recall it for someone else, telling him or her exactly what happened. Do not exaggerate one way or another. Try this assignment with another event tomorrow, and continue to practice truth-telling until it becomes second nature.

Ephesians 4:22

“To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires....”
Last week we looked at what to “put off.” This week, we’re looking at the most important part of the process. Let’s of people will tell you to stop what you’re doing and start something different (put off and put on). But God’s Word puts a huge twist into it. Changed actions are not the most important part of the process. The most important thing is a relationship. In that love relationship, every day, you think and look a bit more like the One you love.

Our memory verse calls this step “be renewed in the spirit of your minds.” That means it’s new, and it’s new again and again. When you repented and believed, you began to learn about Christ. As His Spirit teaches you, you put off what doesn’t look like Jesus. Your former conduct, and former desires. As you put off those old things, you change your thinking so it’s more like Jesus Christ’s (Philippians 2:5).

Renewing our mind doesn’t mean we fit a little of the Bible into our thinking here and there. It means we constantly and totally change our thinking to line up with everything the Bible says.

Renewed thinking about the Bible

God wrote a love letter to you. You’ve got to read it every day, because you can’t know what it means to think like God, unless you listen to His Word. You’ve got to read your Bible, study your Bible, memorize your Bible—and then change your ideas so they match up with the Bible. Whenever you see something in the Bible that sounds weird to you, you say, “NO, it’s my thinking that’s weird. The right way to think is like the Bible. Lord, reveal to me the lie I’ve believed.”

If all this sounds foolish to you, then you aren’t a Christian. God told us His message would sound crazy to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 2:14). I pray that by now you have heard and obeyed Jesus’ call to repent and believe (Mark 1:14-15).

Here are some of the ways the Bible describes renewed thinking.

- Be renewed in your mind (Ephesians 4:23)
- Be transformed by the renewal of your mind (Romans 12:2)
- We are being renewed in knowledge after the image of our creator (Colossians 3:10).

If we are going to be renewed in our thinking:

- We have to accept God’s love (confess sin) and love Him (obey Him).
- We have to be teachable, with soft hearts that are willing to hear hard truths.
- We have to constantly push our old ideas out of our minds and put God’s ideas and desires in.
Hebrews 11:6 says we must have faith that God rewards those who seek Him. Here are some feelings God rewards you with when you seek Him:

- Delight in God
- Joy in the Lord
- Peace of Christ
- A taste of God’s goodness
- Enjoyment of God
- A Father’s love
- Gladness in God’s house

Renewed thinking about addictions

One area in which we need to be open to renewed thinking is in the area of addictions. The world likes to categorize observable behaviors and give them a label. That way, when a person hears the label, they know what is being talked about. Labeling helps us understand what a person is like.

However, God has already categorized and labeled a lot of things that the world decided to re-categorize and re-label. For example, what we often hear labeled as “alcoholism,” is labeled by God as the sin of “drunkenness” (Proverbs 23:20-21, 29-36, Ephesians 5:18). When we believe God’s label of “drunkenness” as sin, there’s hope, because sin can be confessed and repented of.

When we think of the word “drunkenness,” we think of someone who is stumbling and staggering, with slurred speech. But that’s only part of the picture. To see the whole picture, we’d see that long ago, the person made choices to worship something other than God. The person disobeyed God in thoughts, speech, and actions. Eventually, those choices increased, and became regular and habitual. Now the person is in bondage and enslavement to those choices. There might be painful physical effects if they don’t keep choosing the thing they are enslaved to. That’s why people go into rehab to come clean.

Renew your thinking to accept God’s definitions about addictions. Addictions are rooted in idolatry. If you choose addictive or self-sabotaging behaviors, you are worshiping an idol, not the One True God. You might feel pain when you refuse to worship the idol, but God’s Word renews our mind to think about pain with joy (James 1:2).

Renewed thinking about feelings

You’ve probably been obeying the commands of your feelings. For example, when an addict feels like a hit of cocaine, she finds a way to get one. When a depressed person feels miserable, she lets herself wallow in the feeling.

The problem is that we listen to our feelings over God’s Word. We let our feelings be idols. Some feelings are good. You feel hungry, so you eat. You feel thirsty, so you drink. Other feelings aren’t good. You need to renew your thinking every day, so you can think right about feelings. Listen to some of God’s commands about our feelings:

- Trials must be counted joy (James 1:2). When you “count a trial joy,” your brain tells your heart what to feel. You can have intelligent emotions.
- Choose to rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4).
- Praying about everything with thanksgiving guards your heart and mind with peace beyond understanding (Philippians 4:6-7).
- We must be thankful for everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- We must love God first (Matthew 22:37-38).
- We must rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15)
- We must delight in God (Psalm 37:4)

Feelings aren’t something to follow, they are something to train, for God’s glory. We need renewed thinking about our feelings every day.
I will change by:

- Putting off my old ways
- Renewing my mind with God’s Word every day
- Putting on His ways

Renewed thinking about the Bible

Jesus told a story about two guys and what they thought about the Bible (Matthew 7:24-27). Notice the similarities amongst the two guys in the story.

- They both had houses that they built
- They both heard the Word of God
- They both had storms in their lives

Now let’s look at the differences.

- One guy is a fool, one is wise.
- Their foundations are different.
- The fool does not obey God, the wise man does obey God.

If you are a fool, often you know what God wants you to do, but you choose to go your own way. God wants you to memorize it so you can think about it and talk about it (Joshua 1:8, Proverbs 119:9&11).

Today you’ll be working on how to renew your mind

Read Colossians 3:16. Do you see the little phrase “one another?” That’s why it’s best to do with another Christian. God doesn’t intend for you to renew your mind alone. And as you focus on the Bible, His Holy Spirit will convict you when you sin, and empower you to obey.

First of all, choose one of these passages. Perhaps your leader will help you choose the one that would be most helpful for you.

Follow the instructions below to walk through it together so your mind can be renewed by the Holy Spirit. (If you have another passage you’d like to use, that’s fine.)

- Ephesians 4:22-24
- Colossians 3:5-13
- Romans 12:1-2
- Titus 2:11-12
- Other __________________________
Steps toward renewing your mind

1. Pray together before you read the passage. Pray that God would open your eyes to reveal lies you have believed and truth you must believe.

2. Read the passage one time without stopping.

3. Read the passage again slowly and break it into smaller pieces, and reword each piece into thoughts that you understand

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

4. Look each of those pieces over, with a personal view. What is God saying to you in each piece? Is there a lie you have believed that you need to renounce? Is there a truth God is announcing to you?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

5. Discuss each piece until you have a better understanding of each part of the passage and what God is saying.

6. Memorize the verse by writing it down piece by piece. Start with the first section, write it down, and say it over and over out loud.

7. Close your eyes and see if you can recite that first part, without looking.

8. Now, move to the next phrases of the Scripture and repeat #6-7.

9. Once you’ve done the whole passage, recite it together three times. Practice it every day three times (breakfast, lunch, and dinner.) You could make it into a prayer before you eat. Be creative!

10. Tell it to another Christian friend. Tell them what it means and how it helped you.

Ephesians 4:23

“And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self.”
Putting on means we replace what we put off with something different. We don’t just stop old thinking and behavior, we also start something new.

Consequences have a purpose

When you don’t do what God tells you to do, your life will fall apart (Proverbs 15:13). The storms of life will create a caved-in mess, unless you obey God and take responsibility for your thoughts and actions.

When you neglect your responsibilities, there are consequences. For example:

- If you don’t pay the electrical bill—the power gets shut off.
- If you don’t make a car payment—the bank repossesses your car.
- If you don’t pay rent—the landlord evicts you.
- If you use drugs—the court selects others to parent your children.
- If you do a crime—you serve time in prison.

These consequences provide an excellent opportunity. They have a purpose. They can give you what you really need: humility. Don’t let pride stop you from being humbled into repentance.

The power of repentance

God grants you repentance every time you are humbled into godly sorrow for your sin (Matthew 5:4, 2 Corinthians 7:10-11). But if you have worldly sorrow, you won’t have repentance. Here are some examples of worldly sorrow:

- I’m really upset because of the problems in my life.
- I’m so sorry that I’ve caused trouble for the ones I love.
- I’m sorrowful because of the consequences I face.

Godly sorrow says, “I sinned. I sinned again. I hate it. I agree with God about it.” Godly sorrow that leads to repentance is not a one-time thing. It’s part of your relationship with God. It’s the power that keeps you changing, gradually, one day at a time.
Do you know what Jesus is doing these days? He’s sitting next to God the Father. What’s He doing there? If you have godly sorrow, He’s advocating for you. Every time you confess your sin, He says to God the Father, “She’s ours Father. I love her. She’s the reason I died. Forgive her. Cleanse her. Change her. Use her. Convict her so she can honor and glorify You in new ways.” Jesus is advocating for you (1 John 2:1-4).

If you are a Christian, that means you repent and believe in the forgiveness of the cross, every time you sin (Mark 1:14, Luke 9:23). When you confess your sins, you are forgiven (1 John 1:9). Repentance is as important as believing and trusting God.

God delights in the heart that is broken and humbled about personal sin. He will not despise a broken and a contrite heart (Psalm 51:17).

“To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

“Thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

The most important things to put on are humility and repentance, every day. God wants you to do this in the fellowship of a Bible teaching and preaching church, with other Christians who are doing the same thing—humbling themselves and repenting, every day.

God wants your broken and contrite heart. These are the hearts Jesus came to heal. Jesus said God sent Him to preach to the humble and to bind up the broken-hearted (Luke 4:18). Jesus delights in the work of binding up, soothing, and healing the heart that is broken for sin. To this heart He speaks pardon, and applies the soothing balm of His own most precious blood.

Cast yourself down at his feet. Throw yourself into His arms. They are wide open to receive you. He will revive your heart and heal your heart and enthrone Himself forever in it, as you love Him and obey Him.

You need the gospel every day

Jesus came to earth because of the gospel of God (Mark 1:14). What is the gospel of God? That you would repent and believe (Mark 1:15). If you have repented and believed, every day when you wake up, remind yourself that Jesus came to earth for you, died for you, was buried for you, and rose again for you.

Before you leave your bed in the morning, remind yourself that you are a sinner, but that you have died with Him. “Jesus, I am a wretched sinner, but today I will deny myself of __________________________.”

Thank Him that He didn’t stay in the grave but rose again so you can live in eternity with Him. “Jesus, because you rose to defeat sin and death, I can live right today, and with your for eternity. Empower me by Your Spirit today. Thank you.”

Choose one specific way in which you will think differently this week:

What would be the result of such renewed thinking?

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________
This week you will look at specific thoughts/behaviors to put off, at the Scripture that renews our minds, and at thoughts/behaviors to put on. Read pages 52-54, asking God to convict you of the specific areas in which He wants to transform you. Circle each of those rows, then go to the bottom of page 54 and write down the top three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUT OFF</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE RENEWS YOUR MIND</th>
<th>PUT ON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger ... be put away from you, along with all malice. Ephesians 4:29</td>
<td>Self controlled responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentativeness/Quarrelsome</td>
<td>A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1</td>
<td>Gentle answer/peace and harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad companions/wrong friendships</td>
<td>Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” 1 Corinthians 15:33. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 2 Corinthians 6:14</td>
<td>Associate with believers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad language or careless joking</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Good language/edifying talk = think before speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming others</td>
<td>Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will find mercy. Proverbs 28:13</td>
<td>Taking responsibility Acknowledging your own sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruel, cutting words</td>
<td>There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18</td>
<td>Kind, helpful words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitterness/resentment</td>
<td>Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32</td>
<td>Tenderheartedness/forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bragging/conceit</td>
<td>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Rom 12:16</td>
<td>Humbleness/modest opinion of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily harm</td>
<td>A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good. Proverbs 16:29</td>
<td>Gentleness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression caused by the sin of others</td>
<td>Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. Hebrews 12:3</td>
<td>Hope in God Focus on Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression caused by my sin and guilt</td>
<td>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9</td>
<td>Confess my sin and do what is right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontentment/wanting more</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Content and grateful for God's provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUT OFF</td>
<td>SCRPTURE RENEWS YOUR MIND</td>
<td>PUT ON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Disrespect for church leaders   | Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls ...  
Hebrews 13:17                     | Submission, respect, and honor                        |
| Disrespect for governing autho-  | Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution ...  
1 Peter 2:13                              | Submission, respect, and honor                        |
| rities                          | 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  
|                                 | And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.   
Ephesians 5:18                     | Controlled by and obedient to the Holy Spirit        |
| Doubting God                    | Love covers many offenses                                     |                                      |
| Drunkenness                     | Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense. Proverbs 19:11 |                                      |
| Easily offended, hurt, or irri-  | Serve Christ only, find out what is helpful and do it          |                                      |
| tated                           | "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything  
1 Corinthians 6:12                |                                      |
| Enslaved or mastered by some-  | Live truthfully in reality                                     |                                      |
| thing                            | ...walks blamelessly and does with is right and speaks truth in his heart. Psalm 15:2 |
| Fantasy, escape from reality    | For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy  
1:7                                 | Self controlled thoughts                 |
|                                 | There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punish-  
ment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 1 John 4:18  
|                                 | For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags. Proverbs 23:21 |                                |
| Gossip, being a busybody         | Guard your mouth                                              |                                      |
| Hopelessness/self pity           | Hope in God/focus on God’s faithfulness                       |                                      |
|                                 | Regardless of your social status, you are God’s chosen people,  
1 Peter 2:9                          |                                      |
| Laziness/sloth                   | Serve Christ only, find out what is helpful and do it          |                                      |
|                                 | Love covers many offenses                                     |                                      |
| Lying                            | Serve Christ only, find out what is helpful and do it          |                                      |
|                                 | Live truthfully in reality                                     |                                      |
| Man pleasing                     | For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags. Proverbs 23:21 |                                |
|                                  | Eat healthy, moderate, and regular meals                       |                                      |
| Overeating, binging (binging and  | God pleasing                                                   |                                      |
| purging)                         | God pleasing                                                   |                                      |
|                                  | "And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of  
God in true righteousness and holiness." |                                      |
Ephesians 4:22-24

“To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THOUGHTS OR BEHAVIORS TO PUT OFF</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE RENEWS YOUR MIND</th>
<th>THOUGHTS OR BEHAVIORS TO PUT ON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pride/arrogance/self-importance</td>
<td>Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18</td>
<td>Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebelliousness</td>
<td>Fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and faithfulness. Joshua 24:14</td>
<td>Obeying Jesus Christ as Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self focus/self centered/self absorbed</td>
<td>Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4</td>
<td>Other’s focus/consider others/serve others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual sin</td>
<td>Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality...will inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10</td>
<td>Purity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex apart from marriage</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Sex with a husband (1 Corinthians 7:2-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing/boosting</td>
<td>Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Ephesians 4:28</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much attention on feelings</td>
<td>A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back. Proverbs 29:11</td>
<td>Paying attention to commandments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-eating, anorexia, bulimia</td>
<td>They loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. Psalm 107:18-19</td>
<td>Crying out to the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting things I don’t have</td>
<td>You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” Exodus 20:17</td>
<td>Being contented with what I have, grateful for God’s provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
<td>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6-7</td>
<td>Prayer about everything Thankfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will put off</td>
<td>Scripture that renews my mind (include your plan to put it to use)</td>
<td>I will put on (include when it will happen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ephesians 4:22-24

“To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I will put off</th>
<th>Scripture that renews my mind (include your plan to put it to use)</th>
<th>I will put on (include when it will happen)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heavenly Father, You will be glorified as I put off and put on what pleases you. On these pages, I’ve written out some of the changes that I will make in my life. I need you. I need to renew my mind. I need to be diligent. I need to be decisive. I need to be disciplined. I need to choose joy. I need your power. I am weak, but You are strong. Empower me by Your Word and Your Holy Spirit. Help me be faithful, and not fearful or anxious. Take my story and write it into Yours. I love you. You are my Savior, Master, and the King of my life. Amen.