

Men's JCI Encounter Weekend

(Adapted Version)
As of 8 May 2017

STUDENT WORKBOOK



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PRE-ENCOUNTER SESSIONS

Introduction

Welcome to the Encounter Weekend. Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to be here. You will be glad you did!

We have set aside this special weekend for you to have an encounter with God. We believe that when a person encounters God, he or she will encounter change. Hundreds of people have attended these dynamic seminars and have walked away with tremendous testimonies of how God has transformed their lives.

Many people struggle with issues in the past, which affect their daily lives and relationship with God and others. As you open up your soul, you will learn how to break free from past issues and discover the joy of walking in the fullness of God's plan for your life.

IMPORTANT:

To receive the maximum benefit of an Encounter, a person must be able to be open and transparent before God and before others. This is a critical aspect of the retreat. Because of the nature of ministry during this weekend, complete confidentiality must be agreed upon during all ministry and small group times. What is spoken during ministry or in your small group remains there and goes no further.

The standard of openness and transparency that must be established is a high one, but the Bible gives us many illustrations for encouragement. See the following examples:

Jesus Christ – [Matthew 26:36-39]

Mary Magdalene – [Mark 16:9]

The Gerasene demoniac – [Mark 5:1-19]

Don't be afraid to let God work in you and through you. Remember, He knows everything and wants the best for His children. You will receive from Him to the same degree you are open to Him.

Be blessed this weekend and expect God to do something awesome in you as you encounter Him!

What is an Encounter?

An Encounter Weekend is a dramatic experience that completely changes the course of our lives. All of us have already experienced many important milestones, or encounters, in our lives: falling in love and perhaps getting married, being accepted into a university, obtaining a job, etc... But of all the encounters we could have, the most important one is an encounter with the living God! Matthew 16:26 says, *What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?*”(NIV).

The Encounter Weekend presents a series of experiences and personal teachings that result in visible manifested change in the lives of all who participate. It offers people an environment and opportunity that allows them to discover how to establish their relationship with God, how to have direct fellowship with Him, and how to commit to His Lordship in their lives. Participants are given the opportunity to know and accept Jesus, if they have not previously done so. They are taught the claims of the Gospel and experience forgiveness of sin, deliverance from bondage, emotional and physical healing, and restoration of worth and value. They also learn how to walk in the blessings of a covenant relationship with God and His family.

Being a Christian means to live by God’s Word – learning it, personally experiencing it, and obeying it. The Bible gives us many examples of people who did just that and were radically transformed by their personal encounters with the Lord Jesus. The Samaritan woman (John 4:5-29), Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), the Gadarene demoniac (Matthew 8:28-34), and all the disciples of Christ were never the same again after encountering Jesus. Consequently, we can be assured that when we, too, have an encounter with him, we will never be the same.

It is our desire and prayer that every person here this weekend seizes the opportunity to experience God. The results will be manifested in transformed lives – lives that are saved, forgiven of sin, set free, and healed by the power of the living God, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Objectives for the Encounter

1. To assure that each participant knows and accepts Jesus Christ as his or her own personal Lord and Savior.
2. To make known the claims of the Gospel and for each participant to experience personal forgiveness of sin issues, deliverance, healing, and prosperity.
3. To motivate the participant to develop a personal relationship with the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and to help him or her grow in the knowledge of God's Word.
4. To experience a fresh visitation of the Cross of Christ and to witness its power to regenerate every issue a believer may experience.
5. To understand the power of the Holy Spirit as he works in the personal life of each participant and to set a process through which that participant can continually walk in freedom and overcome every obstacle.
6. To encourage each participant to give witness to the work of God in his or her life at home, at work, at school, etc... in order to win souls.
7. To clarify the vision of the church – win, integrate, disciple, identify, and send – by motivating each person to continue in a walk of freedom and to begin training in the School of Leaders.
8. To experience God in an extreme and revolutionary way.

Pre-Encounter Student Notes

- **OPENING:** *[Matthew 16:26 - NIV] 26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?*

- **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND:**
 1. To assure that each participant knows and accepts Jesus Christ as his or her own personal Lord and Savior.
 2. To make known the claims of the Gospel and for each participant to experience personal forgiveness of sin issues, deliverance, healing, and prosperity.
 3. To motivate the participant to develop a personal relationship with the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and to help him or her grow in the knowledge of God's Word.
 4. To experience a fresh visitation of the Cross of Christ and to witness its power to regenerate every issue a believer may experience.
 5. To understand the power of the Holy Spirit as he works in the personal life of each participant and to set a process through which that participant can continually walk in freedom and overcome every obstacle.
 6. To encourage each participant to give witness to the work of God in his or her life at home, at work, at school, etc... in order to win souls.
 7. To clarify the vision of the church – win, integrate, disciple, identify, and send – by motivating each person to continue in a walk of freedom and to begin training in the School of Leaders.
 8. To experience God in an extreme and revolutionary way.

- **IN PREPARATION – participants should apply the following:**
 1. Focus on God through daily worship and prayer each day between now and the beginning of the weekend.
 2. Think through root issues, stumbling blocks, habits, or walls that may be hindering you in your walk with God.
 3. Plan a three-day partial fast Monday – Wednesday of your encounter week (just preceding the actual encounter weekend).
 - * There is no need to be legalistic about fasting. What individuals do will vary from person to person. The emphasis is on devoting ourselves to preparation for the encounter weekend as the Holy Spirit leads. We recommend fasting breakfast and lunch followed by a light dinner on these three days.
 4. Prepare your heart and mind by reading the assigned scriptures each day between now and the encounter retreat.
 5. Keep a journal during the pre-encounter weeks and the encounter weekend to record your experience and things the Lord will speak to you. This will play an important role in your testimony in days to come.

Pre-Encounter Session 1

Introduction: Most people encounter weariness, defeat, frustration, and shame in some area of their lives. There can actually seem to be an unseen hand holding them to a course they feel incapable of changing.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ into your life or even if you know God has provided a way for you to walk in His light, yet you continue to grow weary or walk in defeat, you are among the majority of Christian people today.

- I. Three Reasons for Defeat [1 John 3:8] For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**
- A. Many people deny the existence of the _____ or have a lack of knowledge about how it operates.
 - B. Many people have simply “bought into” a _____ of the enemy.
 - C. _____ with the enemy, even unknowingly, becomes a major cause of failure and results in deeper bondage.
- II. Victory through Christ** – The conflict in the universe centers on who will have authority – _____ or _____. These two forces are always at work.

[Ephesians 2:4-6] 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

- A. The _____ of God
- B. The Birth of the _____ (see Genesis 3).
- C. God’s _____ Plan
- D. The Conflict _____!
- E. Saints in the _____

- III. **The Roaring Lion Today** – If Jesus defeated Satan, why is the earth covered with sin, violence, and injustice rather than love, joy, and peace. These are some of the reasons:

[1 Peter 5:7-8] *8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

- A. Believers often walk in _____ concerning their liberty in Christ.
- B. Satan is a _____.
- C. Satan uses _____ and _____ in our minds and hearts to convince us that we are still somehow subject to his authority.
- D. We must step into our _____-_____ training to overcome!

Conclusion:

CHRIST'S VICTORY IS FOR US! Christ didn't conquer Satan for Himself. His entire sacrificial work at Calvary was for us. As a result, our identification in Christ's death sets us free from sin, self, the Law, the world, and Satan!

Sins: [1 Corinthians 15:3]

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...

Self: [Galatians 2:20]

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The Law: [Romans 7:6]

6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

The World: [Galatians 6:14]

14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Satan: [1 John 4:4]

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

Pre-Encounter Session 2:

INTRODUCTION: The schemes of the demonic realm do affect your life. It's time to sharpen your spiritual sight and realize there is more in this life than what can be seen! For example, if you are Christian, chances are you have experienced an attack or a temptation from Satan. In your heart, you knew what was happening, but you may not have understood how to deal with it or withstand it.

Be encouraged! You are not required to fight a blind match for which there are no rules! There are spiritual laws that operate in the universe, and Satan himself must play by these rules. All of us have experienced Satan's attacks in our lives, but we can learn his devious ways and withstand these attacks.

IV. Five Strategies of Satan [Ephesians 4:27 KJV] *Neither give place to the devil.*

A. Strategy 1: _____ and _____ [John 8:44] ... *He (the devil) was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it*

1. The devil cannot tell the _____
2. The devil is a master _____

B. Strategy 2: _____ and _____ [Revelation 12:10] ... *"Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.*

C. Strategy 3: _____, _____, and _____ [Psalm 27:1] *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

1. Don't let doubt attack your _____
2. Fear is the opposite of _____

D. Strategy 4: The battle of the _____ [2 Corinthians 10:5] ...*casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

1. Everything you do begins in your _____

2. If you have inappropriate or evil thoughts, don't get worried. You haven't _____

E. Strategy 5: Attacking the _____ of _____ [Psalm 119:11] *Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!*

1. Satan tried to use God's Word to tempt and ensnare Jesus, but Jesus continually replied back "____ _ _____..."
2. As a believer, you are equipped to handle the devil's _____ in your life
3. Avoid _____ where Satan is concerned

V. **Five Open Doors** – There are five doors that invite darkness into our lives. If one or more of these doors is open, Satan has ground to operate in your life. These doors create hooks or handles in your soul that difficulties, stumbling blocks, and demonic forces can attach themselves to.

A. _____ [Romans 6:16] *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*

B. _____ [Matthew 6:14-15] *14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

1. Unforgiveness is the refusal to let go of or excuse a debt owed by another person – regardless of how _____ or _____ that other person may be.
2. Forgiveness is a _____ ability given to you by God. It is almost impossible to walk in forgiveness outside of a relationship with Jesus.

3. It is important to understand these three factors about forgiveness:

- a. Forgiveness must come from the _____
- b. Forgiveness is not an _____
- c. Forgiveness is not _____

4. Forgiveness is not always _____

C. _____ [Luke 4:18] *18 The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed...*

- 1. Emotional trauma is inner wounds caused by sudden physical _____ or emotional _____.
- 2. There are two kinds of Emotional trauma or wounds:
 - a. Wounds that we had a part in _____
 - b. Wounds that we had no part in _____
- 3. Although different people are affected by their experiences in different ways, _____ must come.

D. Inner _____ and _____ [Matthew 7:1-2] *1 Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*

E. _____ [Proverbs 26:2] *Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.*

- 1. A curse can be compared to an extended, evil _____ with one end tied to you and the other end attached to “who knows what” in the unseen past.
- 2. Symptoms of a curse will leave a person feeling _____ and _____

3. Curses can be transmitted through _____ or physical _____

4. Seven common evidences of a curse:

a. _____, _____, and emotional _____

b. Hereditary afflictions, chronic _____

c. Difficulties with _____, _____, and other female problems

d. _____ and division in family relationships

e. Persistent _____ shortage

f. Being _____ – prone

g. _____ or unnatural, premature, or violent _____

5. Once curses are broken, a person must remain under _____ at home, work, and especially church to stay protected and safe.

VI. **Three Steps to the Place of Victory and Deliverance** – If Jesus has defeated Satan, and then we too have His authority to enforce the victory of the cross.

A. Confess your _____ in Jesus and make Him your _____

B. Yield yourself completely to God, and _____ totally on Him and His power to _____ you.

C. Take away Satan's _____ by closing any open doors.

Conclusion: PREPARE FOR VICTORY!

- As we close this session and prepare to go to the encounter weekend. Let your life be marked with praise.
- Praise celebrates God and irritates Satan. God alone is worthy. His Son has made you free.

READ PSALM 34

Pre-Encounter Homework

Homework Instructions:

We ask that you take this Encounter Experience and the preparation for it very seriously. Your life, spiritual development, and relationship with God can be dramatically and powerfully affected in the next two weeks. Please stay focused during this time and don't allow the enemy to distract you or deter you during this time. We also ask that you do each homework assignment on the day it is assigned exactly as it is laid out on this syllabus.

Each homework assignment should require approximately fifteen to twenty minutes of your time, not including your personal prayer time. Find a quiet place with few distractions to do your reading and prayer for the next two weeks. Expect God to speak to you.

Each day, your homework will be centered on the comparison of Satan's lies with God's truth. You should read the comparisons with their accompanying scriptures then pray for God to open your understanding concerning any areas in your heart where He wants access. Read the "Strategy for Today" and write down a way you can apply that strategy in your life. Spend some personal time in prayer, asking God to meet with you in a transforming way in the upcoming weekend.

JCI TWO WEEK ENCOUNTER SPIRIATUAL GROWTH EXERCISE

Week 1:

Monday

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>I am rejected</i>	<i>I am accepted</i>	<i>Ephesians 1:3-6</i> <i>Ephesians 4:16</i> <i>1 John 3:1-3</i>
2.	<i>I feel guilty</i>	<i>I am totally forgiven</i>	<i>Ephesians1:7-9</i> <i>Psalm 103</i>

Strategy for Today: *The enemy would have you believe that you are defeated through guilt and rejection, but God has appointed you to be alive at this time to do his will in the earth. His desire is that you spread his truth of acceptance and forgiveness to others.*

Application: _____

Tuesday

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>I am a fearful, anxious person</i>	<i>I am free from fear</i>	<i>2 Timothy 1:6-7</i> <i>1 John 4:17-19</i>
2.	<i>I am not that smart</i>	<i>I have God’s wisdom</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:26-31</i> <i>Colossians 2:1-10</i>

Strategy for Today: *Many believers are hindered by feelings of fear, insecurity, or lack of ability. God is your ability. You can discover and fulfill your destiny in Him. Walk according to the power whereby He has made you free and do something which requires faith everyday.*

Application: _____

Wednesday

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>I am in bondage</i>	<i>I am free</i>	<i>John 8:30-36</i> <i>Psalm 146</i>
2.	<i>I am unloved</i>	<i>I am loved beyond measure</i>	<i>John 15:9-17</i> <i>Ephesians 2:4-10</i> <i>Romans 8:37-39</i>

Strategy for Today: *The love and power of God is stronger than any other force in the universe and that love and power is directed straight at you. Walk in freedom and courage with every decision and in the face of every crisis. Let his love shine on you and through you.*

Application: _____

Thursday

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>I am unwanted</i>	<i>I am the beloved child of God</i>	<i>Romans 8:14-17</i> <i>Psalm 17</i>
2.	<i>I am hopeless</i>	<i>I am full of hope</i>	<i>Romans 5:1-5</i> <i>Romans 15:13</i> <i>Psalm 31</i>

Strategy for Today: *Satan is the purveyor of hopelessness and abandonment. He hates every person and desires that they be destroyed. But, God is the King of all the earth and we are His children. We have access to Him and everything in His Kingdom. Let your hope be renewed. Don't stop believing for the things He has promised.*

Application: _____

Friday

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>I have no strength</i>	<i>I have God's power</i>	<i>Ephesians 3:20-21</i> <i>2 Corinthians 12:9-10</i> <i>Psalm 71</i>
2.	<i>I feel lonely</i>	<i>I am never alone</i>	<i>Hebrews 13:5-6</i> <i>Psalm 139</i>

Strategy for Today: *When you feel as though you are not good enough or not equipped to deal with a situation is when God will show His power the greatest. You can trust in Him always and know that He is there in every circumstance. Put your confidence and reliance in his power and presence.*

Application: _____

Saturday

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>I feel condemned</i>	<i>I am blameless</i>	<i>Romans 8:1-4</i> <i>John 3:16-21</i>
2.	<i>No one takes care of me</i>	<i>I am protected and safe</i>	<i>Proverbs 18:10</i> <i>Psalm 32</i>

Strategy for Today: *Guilt says "I've done something wrong." Shame and condemnation say "I am something wrong." The battle for your destiny is connected to your identity. Remember, the hand of God is upon you, He watches over you and will perform His word in you. Take a risk and move into a spiritual or ministry area the enemy has convinced you to stay out of. You are covered, forgiven, and free!*

Application: _____

* NOTE: Don't forget to be at Part 2 of your Pre-Encounter tomorrow morning. This is an important time of preparation for the next weekend. Also, the first three days of next week are your fasting days. Seek God earnestly between now and Thursday. The Encounter leaders are calling your name in prayer every day and will be fasting with you on your behalf next week.

Week 2:

Monday: Prayer and Fasting - Day One

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>There is nothing special about me</i>	<i>I am specially chosen by God</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 6:9-11 1 Peter 2:9-10 Psalm 33</i>
2.	<i>I am not good enough</i>	<i>I am perfected in Christ</i>	<i>Hebrews 10:12-17 James 1:2-4</i>

Strategy for Today: *There is a design and destination for every believer. Determine to fully discover your design so you can fully walk in His will. God has placed inside of every believer the potential for perfection (completion). You are complete in Him and chosen by Him to walk in His will. Do it!*

Application: _____

Tuesday: Prayer and Fasting - Day Two

	<u>The Lie</u>	<u>The Truth</u>	<u>Scriptures to Read</u>
1.	<i>I am defeated</i>	<i>I am victorious</i>	<i>2 Corinthians 2:14 1 John 4:4 1 John 5:4-5</i>
2.	<i>I am afraid of Satan</i>	<i>I have authority over Satan</i>	<i>Luke 10:17-20 Romans 16:19-20</i>

1 John 3:8

Strategy for Today: *God is not going to give you victory and authority; He already has given you victory and authority. We must learn to walk in that victory and authority so we can rescue others and see God’s power in our prayer and lives.*

Application: _____

Wednesday: Prayer and Fasting – Day Three

	The Lie	The Truth	Scriptures to Read
1.	<i>I can’t reach God</i>	<i>I have access to God</i>	<i>Hebrews 10:19-25</i> <i>Ephesians 3:10-12</i>
2.	<i>I feel inferior</i>	<i>I am designed for greatness</i>	<i>Deuteronomy 28:1-14</i>

Strategy for Today: *You are not created for defeat, but for greatness. God doesn’t make junk. Because of Jesus, we have access to the throne of Father God where we can make our petitions boldly known. God’s mercy and blessings surround us. Change your outlook about yourself and your circumstances to God’s outlook. Prepare for His mighty works to move on your behalf.*

Application: _____

Thursday-Friday: Complete Spiritual Profile and read “Opportunity Knocks”

Saturday: Encounter Weekend Seminar

5. Are you aware of the existence of any ancestral sins, such as?

- Violence Sexual abuse Sexual immorality
 Alcohol abuse Drug abuse Adultery

6. Were there major sins committed against you in your childhood by a family member or by any other person?

- Sexual abuse Rejection Physical abuse
 Abandonment Verbal abuse

Personal:

7. With what areas of obedience to the Word of God do you habitually struggle?

- Prayer Fasting Faith
 Submission to authority Meditation Fellowshiping with believers
 Tithing Self-control Growing in Christ-likeness
 Supernatural work of the Holy Spirit

8. Have you ever participated in or been a part of any of the following sexual sins?

- Fornication Adultery Pornography
 Homosexuality Molestation Bestiality
 Lust Incest Masturbation
 Sexual fantasizing Telephone/cyber sex Desire to see others' nakedness
 Exhibitionism (wanting others to see your nakedness)

9. Do you have any of the following addictive/destructive habits present in your life?

- Sleeping disorders Stealing Making light of things
 Forgetfulness Alcohol addiction Excessive foolish talking
 Illegal drug abuse Prescription drug abuse Disorganization
 Smoking Violence Dirty language
 Envy/jealousy Lying Selfishness/greed
 Manipulation Eating disorders Seductive behavior
 Frequent tardiness Breaking promises Addiction to TV

- Excessive computer play Bad attitudes Obsessive indulgences
- Addiction to video games Gambling Adult movies
- Being argumentative Other

10. Do you habitually experience any of the following emotion, thoughts, feelings, or dispositions?

- Anxiety/fear Bitterness Being critical of others
- Anger Confusion Chronic counseling
- Apathy Racism Rationalizing
- Perfectionism Loneliness/isolation Long periods of depression
- Feelings of inferiority Pride/superiority Indecisiveness
- Hatred of someone Unforgiveness Other

11. Do you experience any of the following spiritual encounters?

- Nightmare Demonic visitations Fearful or unclean thoughts
- Demonic/driving thoughts Premonitions Demonic visions

12. Do you have any of the following problems preventing you from having a normal physical condition?

- Chronic illnesses Internal organ problems Major disease(s)
- Sense impairment External problems Low energy levels
- Dyslexia Attention deficit disorder

Relationships:

Give a one or two word answer to describe the following (good, bad, not applicable).

- 13. Your relationship with your mother: _____
- 14. Your relationship with your father: _____
- 15. Your relationship with your children: _____
- 16. Your relationship with your spouse (if married): _____
- 17. Your relationship with any other significant individuals in your life: _____
- 18. Your social life: _____
- 19. What is the one thing you hoped would not be asked in this interview? _____

Curses, Vows, and Judgments:

20. Curses are words spoken against you by someone. They are usually a result of rebellion against authority (Genesis 3:14-17, Mark 11:20-21). Have you any knowledge of curses at work in your life, past or present (teachers, bosses, public leaders, or spiritual leaders speaking negative words over your life, such as “You are cursed because of your dad.”)?

21. Vows, oaths, and swearings are promises or pledges made (James 5:12). Have you any knowledge of vows or oaths at work in your life, past or present? This includes words spoken by you (Example: “If it takes every penny I have, I’ll get you back. Second example: “I’ll go to hell rather than live with them.”)

22. Judgments are negative conclusions about a person that are projected into his future. Usually these are precipitated by a person’s performance (Matthew 18:18). Do you know of any made against you, past or present? (“You are stupid.” “You never do anything right.” “You’ll never amount to anything. “You’re lazy, ugly, dumb, etc.”)

Encounter Session Notes

Opportunity Knocks

KEY VERSE: Eph 5:15-16 15 *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* (NIV)

INTRODUCTION: Life is filled with countless opportunities. This weekend, you have a very special opportunity: the chance to encounter Jesus in a way that you have never done before. Decide right now that you are not going to let this opportunity pass you by. Go after it with all that is in you, and watch what happens.

The Scriptures record a very moving story of a man named Zacchaeus who would not let anything stop him from encountering Jesus (Luke 19:1-10).

And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. (verse 3)

Zacchaeus wanted an _____ with Jesus, but he was limited by the crowd and by his short stature.

What is limiting you from seeing Jesus as He truly is? Are you held captive by fear, _____, unforgiveness, or some other negative emotion? Will you let this cause you to miss your opportunity to see and experience the true and living God?

So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. (verse 4)

Nothing was going to keep Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus. He was desperate to see the man that everyone was talking about. He pushed past his _____ and found a way around it so that he could take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to see Jesus? Will you lay down your excuses and seize the unique opportunity being given to you this weekend?

And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house” (verse 5).

When Jesus saw Zacchaeus’ effort to see him, He quickly responded. He expressed His _____ to be with him and have fellowship with him.

When you move toward Jesus, He will run to meet you. He wants to be with you and set you free from all that _____ you.

Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.” (verse 8)

After Zacchaeus’ effort to see him, He quickly responded. He expressed His desire to be with him and have fellowship with him.

You can expect, like Zacchaeus, to be radically changed by your encounter with the Lord. You will never be the same, as old habits and attitudes are _____ through the gentle, healing presence of the Lord.

And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house...” (verse 9)

Not only was Zacchaeus changed, but true salvation came to him because of his choosing to grasp the opportunity that presented itself to him. He was persistent in his _____ of Jesus and reaped a glorious reward.

Why are you here this weekend? Do you need the touch of the Lord in your life? Do you need to be free from bondages that have enslaved you and kept you from serving God in the way that you want”? Is there sin in your life that you must deal with? Whatever the circumstance, opportunity is knocking at the door of your heart. Will you seize the moment, and let the One who knows you and loves you enter and do the work He desires to do this weekend?

The Way of Death

INTRODUCTION: Before we can be set free from anything, we must first recognize the magnitude and significance of the issue of sin and be willing to deal with it. This issue is the root problem that separates every man and woman from God.

Sometimes we get uncomfortable when the subject of sin is brought up. However, a proper understanding of sin and its devastating consequences will help us abhor it and take whatever steps are necessary to overcome its evil influence in our lives.

What is sin?

The word sin may be defined in several ways.

- ii. The Bible defines sin for us (James 4:17)
- iii. Webster's Dictionary defines sin as a "transgression of the law of God."

Sin can also be defined as iniquity, which is another word for _____.
Simply put, sin is "missing the mark," the way an archer might miss the target in shooting an arrow.

The ultimate fruit of sin is _____ (see Romans 6:23).

Not only does the person who sins suffer as a result of his actions, but almost without exception innocent victims also suffer the repercussions of sin.

This is especially true in closely-knit units such as families, friendships, and churches, where people let down their defense mechanisms, granting one another varying degrees of trust and vulnerability.

Sin should be treated as a spiritual _____.

Who has sinned?

Many Scriptures make it clear that ALL of us, without exception, have sinned (see Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8, and Romans 3:10).

Good works do not make us good and put us in right standing with God.

Although we should perform good works as a _____ of our faith in God, in and of themselves, good works do not make us right with God or earn us a place in heaven.

Isaiah 64:6 says *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...*

Sin is a _____ in every person's life (James 1:14-15)

In what ways, have we sinned?

The most obvious way we sin is in the wrong actions that we engage in (see Galatians 5:19-21).

We can also sin in the actions that we do NOT take. These are sins of _____ rather than sins of commission.

To know the will of God but to refuse to do it is sin (Luke 6:46-47).

Obedience is required in our walk with God. _____ to Him is sin (John 14:15-16).

To turn from the opportunity to do what is right is also sin (James 4:17)

Not only can we sin in our actions and inactions, but we can also sin in the words we speak.

Cursing and profanity (James 3:10)

Obscenity and coarse joking (Ephesians 4:29, 5:4)

Complaining (Numbers 11:1)

Other ways we sin through our speech include lying, gossiping, criticizing, using harsh words, giving insincere praise, etc... (Phil. 2:14-15)

Finally, we can sin in the _____ and intentions of the heart.

- iv. Entertaining sinful thoughts and acting them out in our minds is sin, even though we do not actually carry out the action (Matt 5:27-28).
- v. Sin begins in the _____ and if not dealt with will manifest itself in action (Mark 7:20-23).
- vi. There is a definite _____ to the process of sin. It begins as a desire in the heart; it entices and leads to the act; and finally, it results in both spiritual and physical death (James 1:14-15).

What are the consequences of sin?

Unresolved sin in our lives usually results in feelings of guilt (Ezekiel 33:10).

- a. Our sin causes us to be completely _____ from God. For example, after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, they were driven from Paradise and lost

their intimate fellowship with God. We, too, lose our communion with God when we sin (Isaiah 59:2).

- b. Many times physical illnesses, broken relationships, and curses operating in our lives have their roots in sins committed by others or ourselves.
- c. If we continue in _____sin, our minds become clouded and our judgment impaired (Ephesians 4:18).
- d. Eternal judgment and spiritual death are the inevitable results of a life marked by a lack of _____ (Revelation 21:8, Colossians 3:5).

NOTE: Sin is devastating to individuals, married couples, families and their communities. The ultimate fruit of sin is death (Romans 3:23, James 1:15); Sin can also affect innocent victims due to its repercussions. This is especially true in closely-knit settings, such as friendships, marriages, families, and churches. In these intimate settings, people often let down their defense mechanisms and grant one another varying degrees of trust and vulnerability.

What is the “way out” from sin?

- a. The only provision for the sins of the world is found in the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).
- b. Jesus paid the full price for our sins that we might go free. There is nothing more we need to do to earn our salvation.
- c. Admit that you are a sinner; commit to change (repentance); confess your sins; and accept the free gift of salvation (John 1:12).

The Cross

KEY SCRIPTURE: MARK 15:1 – 40

INTRODUCTION: It is imperative that every believer who desires to know Christ truly grasps the significance of what Jesus accomplished by His death on the cross. Sometimes we have heard the story of the crucifixion so often that we fail to realize what actually took place. We see the pictures and watch the movies, but they do not begin to reveal what really took place in that moment.

When the Holy Spirit reveals to us the depth of Jesus' sufferings on the cross and the spiritual significance of His death, we will experience freedom in a new way in our lives. Close your eyes and let your mind go back to that time – A remote location in the earth with no electricity or running water where every idea about life, laws, and custom are completely foreign to what we know today...

Mark's account of the cross vividly emphasizes Christ's agonizing sufferings and death.

The cross was Christ's _____ to man's need for a redeeming Savior. Sin ultimately required a substitutionary death.

The cross was a Roman form of execution symbolizing that the one who died in such a fashion was cursed. It involved tremendous suffering, both physically and emotionally, before the person died.

The cross was one of the most degrading, humiliating, mortifying forms of execution ever invented by man. There is perhaps not a more grueling way to be tortured to death. This death was so profoundly horrid and painful; the word "excruciating" in the English language (meaning the most intense form of pain) was developed from the word "crucifixion."

Why the cross?

The cross was the place where God _____ His Son Jesus as the supreme Sacrifice for the sin of mankind (Hebrews 9:22).

The cross is a vivid picture of Jesus "great commandment:" *Love God and Love your neighbor* (Matthew 22:37-40) - the restoration of your _____ relationship and the restoration of your _____ relationship.

Jesus' sufferings expressed His love and commitment to and for all mankind. [John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:4; John 4:9-10]

- a. Take a few moments and ask God to make the cross a greater reality in your life. He will!
- b. Consider His sufferings. Every lash He took upon His back unequivocally declared His great love to every human being who would ever live on this planet that He created...
- c. Look upon Jesus who bore your sins upon the cross. Radically renounce and turn from all known sin in your life. Now receive forgiveness for every wrongdoing in which you have ever been involved. Receive God's forgiveness as a gift. You cannot earn or deserve His forgiveness; it has already been paid in full! (1 John 2:1-2)

Receiving the power of the cross

- a. The cross did not only come for your salvation – the cross is available for every issue, every struggle, every stronghold, every sickness, and every difficulty you will ever encounter!

Begin to cry out for the power of the cross to deal with every issue. You are free because of the cross – Declare your freedom in the cross!

You must die to live. Many want the beauty of the flower of life without the death of the seed of self. Have you associated with Him and His sacrifice?

The Prodigal Son: A Story of Restoration

Introduction: There is no sin so great that it cannot be forgiven. There is no wound too deep that it cannot be healed. There is no life so broken that it cannot be restored and made into something beautiful by the healing touch of the Master's hand. In Christ, there is always a sure hope of fresh, new beginnings, with the past totally forgiven as though it had never happened. In the story of the prodigal son, we see the all-encompassing love of the father, his abiding concern for his wayward son, and his great joy at the son's restoration. [Luke 15:11-24]

- I. ***...Father, give me my share of the estate*** (Luke 15:12)
 - A. The prodigal's problems began with his _____ of his father his rightful inheritance. He made the decision to leave the love and security of his father's house and to venture out into the world on his _____.
 - B. We oftentimes do the same thing. We consciously choose our own path in life, _____ of the Father's will for us.

- II. ***After he had spent everything... he began to be in need*** (Luke 15:14)
 - A. For a while, the prodigal enjoyed himself to the fullest. Whatever he wanted was at his disposal, and he soon had wasted his entire wealth on wild _____.
 - B. Things became so bad for him that he even dreamed of eating what the pigs ate! He had left home a rich, cocky young man, and now he was reduced to a starving, penniless hired hand with nothing to his name.
 - C. The _____ of sin may last for a season, but if we continue in sin, ultimately it will catch up with us.

- III. ***I will set out and go back to my father...*** (Luke 15:18)
 - A. Just as the prodigal had made the decision to leave his father, he now purposed to return to his father. It was a conscious _____, just as his original decision to leave had been.

- B. We always have the choice to return to our Father when we have walked away from Him. But like the prodigal, we must determine to return and take the necessary steps toward _____.

IV. *Father, I have sinned against heaven and against You* (Luke 15:18)

- A. The prodigal accepted total _____ for the distance between his father and himself. He did not try to blame others for his problem or to sugarcoat the seriousness of the situation.
- B. He fully _____ where he had failed and knew that he was not worthy to call himself a son anymore. He was a broken man, and he knew it.
- C. Before we can be restored to God or others, we must admit our sin and accept responsibility for the mess we find ourselves in. True repentance, as evidenced by a change in actions and not just by remorseful feelings, is a prerequisite for genuine healing, restoration, and freedom.

V. *His father saw him and was filled with compassion for him...* (Luke 15:20)

- A. When the prodigal began the journey of reconciliation, his loving father rushed out to meet him. He was overcome with joy that the son who had been lost to him was now restored to him. The past was forgotten and forgiven in the tender embrace of the father.
- B. Not only did the father totally forgive his son, but he also completely restored him to his former status in the _____.
 1. He put a robe upon him, clothing him in new garments free of the stench of his sinful life.
 2. He gave him a ring, signifying the covenant that existed between them as father and son.
 3. He put shoes upon his feet, representing his rightful place as a son.
 4. And finally, he killed the fatted calf, demonstrating his great joy and delight at the return of his prodigal son.
- C. Everything the father did for his son, God will do for you as you move toward Him in sincerity of heart. Acknowledge your desperate _____ for Him.

Confess the areas of rebellion and independence, and put yourself once more under His control. He will accept you and restore you, just like the father did to the prodigal son.

Created to Conquer

Introduction: [Romans 8:37] *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

NOTE: Everything in the Kingdom of God is about _____.

The Word of God states unequivocally that we are uniquely created from the very hand of God... and he created you to conquer.

- In the beginning, God created man in His image and declared him good (Genesis 1:31). He carefully fashioned man with all his marvelous intricacies.
- The God of the universe neglected not one detail in his creation of man and gave him _____ and dominion and the privilege of living in a lush, beautiful garden.

The familiar story of creation goes on to chronicle the tragic fall of man and the resultant expulsion from the garden. From that time on, all mankind entered this life with the _____ of sin upon them. But our loving Father sent a Savior, Jesus Christ, who would redeem us from sin and restore us to God's original plan for our lives.

Many of us, unfortunately, have not moved into that realization of who we are in Christ. We see ourselves as flawed, imperfect, and unworthy, even after receiving the atoning work of the cross.

- The enemy wants you to learn to "lie about who you are so you can pretend to be someone else"
- We become our own "_____ consultants" – teaching ourselves how recreate ourselves and ultimately to live a lie about who we are.
- A right understanding of our true identity and worth in the eyes of the Father is essential if we are to walk in _____ and confidence. A look at Psalm 139 will help us to grasp just how special we are to the Father.

[Read Psalm 139] *1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me.*

2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.

5 You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," even the night shall be light about me;

12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.

19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

20 For they speak against You wickedly; your enemies take Your name in vain.

21 Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

22 I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties;

24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

I. For You created my inmost being... (verse 13)

Do you really believe that God created you? There is no such thing as an "_____," when you acknowledge God as the Giver of all life.

1. No matter the circumstances surrounding your birth, your very existence came only from _____.
2. Man can manipulate science and employ sophisticated technology, but that spark that initiates life _____ from God alone.

From your very conception, God saw you and was _____ in you. His love for you always has been and always will be unconditional. You cannot earn it, and neither can you lose it.

II. I praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made... (verse 14)

Your self-image must be based on what the Word of God says about you. You are indeed "fearfully and wonderfully made." You are totally _____; there has never been anyone just like you and there never will be. You are one of a kind!

Everything God does is right. He never makes mistakes, and He doesn't make "junk."
That means you were made just the way He wanted you to be—your looks, intelligence, talents, etc...

We are all different. There is no one kind better than another. Which is more important your eyes or your ears? It depends... Do you need to see something or hear something? There is no way you can make an accurate comparison among the two. Each has its own unique beauty, and each serves its own unique purpose.

It's the same way with people. We come in different sizes, shapes, and colors, each specially _____ by God. To compare ourselves with others is foolish at best and is detrimental to embracing a healthy _____ of who we are.

III. ***All the days ordained for me were written in Your book...*** (verse 16)

From the beginning of time, God had a wonderful plan for your life. You have a specific purpose for being on this earth because God _____ it that way.

You can miss your divine destiny, however, if you fail to accept God's view of yourself and continue _____ yourself down for all your inadequacies and mistakes.

Many of us struggle to grasp this simple understanding of God's eternal love for us and His desire to give us a productive, fruitful life in His kingdom. Listed below are some of the hindrances to seeing ourselves as God sees us.

1. _____ – This could take many forms, but one particularly damaging doctrine that tears down self-esteem is the idea of evolution. Those who accept their identity from this view of life do not recognize God as a Creator.
 - a) Worshiping the creation rather than the Creator, they exchange the "glory of the immortal God" for the very things He made (Romans 1:21-23). Such foolish thinking reduces life to chance circumstance, a random throw of the dice.
 - b) The evolutionary idea devalues the worth and dignity of human life. Infanticide, assisted suicide, and euthanasia are upheld as desirable, humane actions.
 - c) With evolution being taught as "fact" in so many public schools, is it any wonder that many of our children suffer from poor self-image and low self-esteem?

2. _____ – The experiences we live through often shape our concept of ourselves. If our lives have been dominated by hurtful,

negative experiences, we will believe that we are not worth much to anyone. Because others have rejected us, we often reject ourselves.

- a) Self-rejection can begin very early in life. A baby in the womb can be affected if its mother rejects her child as an unwanted “accident.” Small children whose emotional needs are neglected by their parents will probably struggle with a poor image of themselves.
 - b) Teenagers are particularly susceptible to self-rejection. Because peer approval is so important to them, rejection from their friends, real or perceived, can lead them to erroneously conclude that they are not as “good” as others.
 - c) Adults are not immune to self-rejection. Disapproval from spouses, employers, friends, and relatives are still destructive forces even at this stage in life.
3. _____ – When we fail to accept ourselves as we are and constantly compare ourselves to others, we will never be satisfied.
- a) Comparing is a no-win situation. There is always someone who has more than we do or who can do more than we can.
 - b) The mirror of comparison is like the distorted mirror at an amusement park. We can see ourselves in it, but it is not a real picture of what we really look like. It is a false, distorted image.

If you are struggling with accepting who you are and seeing yourself as more than a _____, go back to Romans 8 and Psalm 139. Begin reading it daily, reminding yourself that this is God's image of you. Embrace the love of the Father, let Him gently take you into His arms, and find peace for your troubled soul as you rest in Him.

Conclusion:

[Romans 8:29-30] *29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

- You are ordained by God walk and live in His image, specifically the image of _____. Any other image is really a lie.
- A key step in freedom is to understand your image and to let Him create that in you from the inside out.
- There is a place in God designed specifically for you. Your destiny in Him is directly connected to walking in the image God created you to walk in.

[2 Corinthians 3:18] *18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

- Living and walking in the image He created me to walk in is a _____. I am changed as I see Jesus. I am changed as He works in my life. Remember, He is the divine creator.
- In the end I will look like Him!

Closing the Open Doors (Part 1)

Past Wounds and Hurts

KEY SCRIPTURE: [Luke 4:17-19] 17 *And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:* 18 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed;* 19 *to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."*

INTRODUCTION: In the Scripture above, Jesus quoted from the book of Isaiah in describing His ministry here on the earth. Good news for the poor, sight for the blind, freedom for the captives, and liberty to the oppressed are integral parts of His ministry to us. As we receive His healing touch in our lives, we are transformed from hurting, wounded individuals into "oaks of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:3), strong and vibrant believers who display the splendor of the Almighty in all aspects of our lives.

God wants you experience the abundant life that He desires to give you. Satan will try to short-circuit God's plan for you. His mission is to kill, steal, and destroy. But God's will is that you have life and have it more abundantly! We must discover how Satan gains entry into our lives and how to close those doors that may have allowed him entrance.

Two Main Ways Satan Gains Entrance into Believers' Lives.

Illegal intrusion

Satan has no legal rights in the life of a _____. He intrudes and trespasses illegally, hoping that we will permit it or tolerate it.

James 4:7-8 As we draw near to God and resist the devil, he will _____!

If the devil is only an intruder and has no right in our lives, then we need to bind him and cast him out to solve the problem. However, sometimes we may be offering him legal rights to stay.

Legal intrusion

Ephesians 4:27 warns us not to give the devil a foothold in our lives.

Romans 6:16 makes it clear that we become _____ to whatever we offer ourselves to obey. When we submit to Satan, our sin makes us slaves to him and gives him legal access into our lives.

Many people fail to understand that sin brings a _____. Sins of the past affect the future. If Satan has found legal grounds of entry, we must close all doors before we can effectively bind him and cast him out of our lives.

The “Lie”

Five truths about lies:

- i. Lies affect the way we _____ life around us
- ii. Lies affect the way we choose relationships
- iii. Lies create perpetual life _____ that replay over and over
- iv. Lies will cause pain, shame, guilt, fear, etc... to be transferred into present relationships, hindering intimacy.
- v. Lies will create an insatiable _____ which the person will seek to fill with things such as people, money, careers, sex, food, pleasure, etc...

My present situation is not the _____ of pain or issues in my life.

- vi. If I try to resolve a present conflict without finding solutions or healing from past, root issues, I will only find temporary relief. But if I discover the root issues and get healing there, I will redeem my present.
- vii. Negative issues and emotions are _____ of the past and can actually be an open window into hidden areas of my life.

Discovering an internal “lie”

- viii. Understanding a lie is crucial because it is the connecting point to the enemy and the factor that distances your relationship with God.
- ix. Don’t apply logic or try to determine how “true” the lie is, but rather concentrate on how true it _____.
- x. Pain, problems, and negative reactions do not come from an event or a memory, but from the _____ interpretation (the lie) connected to that true moment.
- xi. Once you discover the lie, you should embrace it, take it captive, confess it – You may feel its emotion and pain when you do it, but it puts you in a position to encounter God in His healing and _____.

Encountering God and breaking the Lie

- xii. When you have identified a “lie” in your soul and embraced it, you can take it captive by allowing the intensity of the moment to increase.
- xiii. In the midst of this experience, be aware that Jesus is ever present and wait for Him to show up and speak His _____.
- xiv. You may not see, hear, or feel Jesus – but He will show up. When He does, receive His healing, let him break the lie and _____ you.

Doorways of Intrusion – Where the Lie Begins

Rejection – [Isaiah 53:3, 54:4; 1 Peter 2:4]

Prenatal: Sorrow, disappointment, fear, and rejection can be perceived by the unborn.

Childhood: Relationships with siblings, peers, teachers, coaches, relatives, and spiritual leaders are greatly influential at this time.

Adolescence and Early Adulthood:

During this time, adolescents experience tremendous hormonal upheaval, and physical characteristics take on undue importance.

Society dictates three major factors that determine how adolescents feel about themselves: 1) physical beauty 2) intelligence 3) personality.

Adulthood: Rejection of a spouse, coworkers, spiritual leaders, etc... becomes a potential source of wounding and great emotional pain.

Jesus took rejection upon Himself that we might be healed from the hurt and pain of any form of rejection we might experience in this life!

Abuse – [Verbal, Emotional, Physical]

- Childhood: Condescending, degrading, and condemning words along with physical abuse in its many diabolical forms pervades our society. Carnal knowledge, molestation, and rape are heartrending realities.
- Adolescence and Early Adulthood: Effects of alcohol and drug abuse become apparent at this time. Shame, in various forms, results in hiding procedures to limit the pain of potential embarrassment or abuse.
- Adulthood: Spousal and societal abuse also manifests itself in many different ways.

Anger, rage, violence, resentment – [John 2:13-16, Mark 3:1-5, Ephesians 4:31]

- We know Jesus became angry on at least two occasions. In neither case, however, did He lose _____ of His faculties. In other words, He maintained self-control (Galatians 5:23).
- _____ is a particularly destructive emotion, for those harboring it and also to those receiving it.

Jealousy, envy – [1 Samuel 18:6-10]

Jealousy was first seen in heaven itself when Lucifer desired the adoration that God alone is worthy of. This led to his ultimate expulsion from heaven.

If not properly dealt with, jealousy and envy can devastate marriages, families, and even church fellowships.

Fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, homosexuality, masturbation, etc... (Romans 1:24-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 3:5-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)

God forgives and cleanses us of our past. It is our responsibility, however, to break wrongful _____ ties by separating ourselves from wrong relationships.

We are not to be yoked together with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). This is especially true regarding soul ties and _____ intimacies.

Gossip, evil reports, lying, slander, character assault – [Colossians 3:8-9, Ephesians 4:25]

There are not many people we are commanded to avoid associating with. One person, whom we _____ to avoid, is the gossip (Proverbs 20:19). Do not receive evil _____, slanderous statements, or character assaults against other people (James 4:11, Titus 3:1-2).

If you have been involved in these kinds of divisive behaviors, ask God if you can actively help to heal the hurts you've caused.

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contentions quiet down (Proverbs 26:20)

Personal sins: Personal sins primarily involve only the individual committing them.

Pride, arrogance, abominable sins (Proverbs 6:7, 16, 17)

God hates _____. In fact, it is abominable to Him (Numbers 14:1-6)

If we become persistent in attitudes of pride and _____, God will humble our arrogant, _____ attitudes (Acts 12:23).

Idolatry, witchcraft, sorcery, self-worship (Leviticus 19:4)

Independence, rebellion (1 Samuel 15:23; Numbers 12:1-10, 16:1-35)

Addictive bondages: alcohol, drugs, abuse of prescription medicines, sexual bondages, etc...

Materialism (Matthew 6:24, 1 John 2:15-17, 1 Timothy 6:10)

Dealing with Unforgiveness and Bitterness – [Ephesians 4:31-32; Hebrews 12:14-15; Matthew 5:14-15, 18:23-35]

Because God has forgiven us, he commands us to _____ our fellow man.

An unwillingness to forgive others causes us to _____ God's forgiveness in our lives. Unforgiveness declares that we have not grasped the true meaning of the Cross.

True forgiveness involves more than just a _____ to forgive. It must be expressed through actions that _____ its reality in the mind and heart of the believer. In addition, forgiveness must be continual.

Forgiveness begins with a decision to _____ those who have hurt or disappointed us. This means that we now react toward our offender as if he had never offended us. This is way that Christ has forgiven us.

The next step is to begin to walk out the forgiveness we've granted to others. We release them from all personal _____; we do not wish evil toward them; we do not give place to malice; we do not desire for God to punish them; and we abandon all desires of evil intent toward them.

Finally, by beginning to bless our offenders, we personally experience release and blessing in our own lives.

THE FORGIVENESS PATTERN:

FORGIVE → RELEASE FROM PERSONAL JUDGMENT → BLESS

Closing the Open Doors (Part 2)

Breaking Generational Bondages

KEY SCRIPTURES:

EXODUS 20:5-6 *For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

[JEREMIAH 16:10-13]

INTRODUCTION: Generational bondage is the result of sin that moves through the family line. It may be called by various names, such as transference, inheritance, or familial sin. In some cases, demons seem to become identified with a family line. Sometimes it is very obvious that sins have been passed from one generation to another. There are instances in which the generational sin, a type of a curse, afflicts only one person or multiple members of a family, but not the entire family. In other cases, an entire generation remains unscathed by the devastating power of a generational curse. However, unless the curse is rendered powerless, it will emerge again at some appointed time and in some diabolical form.

Although demonic transference is not clearly defined in the Bible, there are clear, divine warnings that sins of parents can have devastating consequences on their children. In these instances, heads of families, usually males, have rebelled against and deliberately turned away from God. Usually, such action involves serving other gods and denying God the love and obedience that He alone deserves. In these cases, authority figures deliberately turn from God to serve other gods, Satan, or demons and commit gross, terrible sins. They often commit their families and future generations to other gods, demons, Satan, and evil.

Jewish heads of households knew that whatever they did would affect their families for generations. God told them so. In times of crisis, they stood before God and confessed the sins of their families and even the sins of their nation [Nehemiah 1:4-9, Jeremiah 14:20, Daniel 9:1-19]. They realized that the family's sin or judgment for a particular sin flows through the family line, affecting later generations that had nothing to do with the sin(s) in question. This same principle still applies today; however, generational bondages are easily broken once recognized, repented of, renounced, and cast off in the name of Jesus.

Three Characteristics of a Generational Curse

a. An inability to prosper

The person studies and works very diligently to little or no avail.

He or she acquires skills yet rarely sees tangible achievement.

Success somehow always seems to elude me no matter how hard I try.

There seems to be a never-ending struggle against something I cannot openly identify.

_____ seems almost inevitable.

Somehow I cannot pinpoint the problem or get a grip on it.

Things are said like: "Nothing ever works for me. My father (or mother) had the same problems I do. I'm just a failure like the rest of my family.

b. An inability to "be yourself"

A dark, oppressive arm inhibits the full expression of the individual's

_____. He never feels completely free to be himself, and there is always some _____ influence present. He wants to be himself, but somehow the freedom he so desires eludes him.

He senses that he has _____ within him that is never fully developed.

c. An inability to succeed

- i. The path of this individual seems clear as he moves toward his desired goals, but then somehow he is prevented from _____ the course.
- ii. Just before he reaches his goals, something always seems to cause him to _____ and fall.
- iii. There is no logical or natural reason for failure. It seems that there is some force or influence at work that is not subject to the usual laws of nature and the law of averages.
- iv. _____ is commonplace. He finds himself wondering why he can never succeed. This may be true in one or multiple areas of his life.
- v. He may experience certain degrees of success, but there is no fulfillment.

Seven indications of a possible curse [Deuteronomy 28:15-68].

If any of the following symptoms are present or repetitive, the probability of a curse increases. However, only the Holy Spirit can provide a totally accurate account. Because this is true, we need to be extremely _____ in dealing with those experiencing any of the following conditions.

- Mental or emotional breakdowns
- Repeated or chronic sickness (especially if hereditary)
- Barrenness, a tendency to miscarry, or similar problems

- Breakdown of marriages and family alienation
- Continuing financial insufficiency
- Being accident-prone
- History of suicides, or unnatural or untimely deaths

A curse cannot come upon the child of God unless he chooses to sin and to continue living an ungodly life. Proverbs 26:2 says *Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.*

Self-imposed curses

Witchcraft [Deuteronomy 7:25, 26] – exercising control of someone else’s will – is a wide open door to multiple curses.

Because rebellion against authority is as the sin of _____ and because it has its roots in “control” and false power, it will also bring a curse (see 1 Samuel 15:23). A nature toward rebellion can also be _____.

Provocation, intimidation, manipulation, and domination are all building blocks in the walls of self-_____ curses.

In Matthew 27:20-26, the Jews spoke a curse upon themselves – *His blood be upon us and our children*. Since that time, they have experienced nineteen centuries of continual persecution, subjection, and bloodshed.

How to break generational bondages and curses

Confess your faith in Christ and in His sacrificial death on your behalf.
 Believe in your heart that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead [Romans 10:10].
 Confess with your mouth that you believe this fact [Romans 10:9].

Repent of all rebellion and sin.

Claim forgiveness for all sins.

Forgive anyone who has ever harmed or wronged you.

Renounce all contact with anything occult or satanic. Pray the prayer for release from any curse, from all sins, and practices of your forefathers, even to the fourth generation.

A prayer like this is included in your packet notes following this lesson.

Believe you have received it and go in God's blessings.

Six Common Beliefs that can Hinder Absolute Freedom

- a. *Time will heal all wounds*: Time can actually make wounds worse. Time only heals wounds that are dealt with.
- b. *Forgive and forget*: This is simply another way of saying "suppress and repress." Forgiveness is a necessary part of freedom, but it is a process. Besides, it is impossible for the human mind to actually "forget" anything. Forgiveness simply removes the anger and pain out of "remembering."
- c. *They didn't mean to hurt me*: Some people never walk in freedom because they don't hold the wounder accountable for damage done. Freedom forgives and separates the "good" person from the "bad" action, but it still identifies accountability and responsibility for the injury.
- d. *If I bring up the past, it may jeopardize my present*: The past must be able to be faced and resolved so absolute victory can be attained. If anything, the past can enrich the present when true freedom is realized.
- e. *Just leave well enough alone*: This is commonly known as denial. The truth is, more harm will come if issues or hurts are not uncovered, stirred up, and faced.
- f. *It really isn't so bad*: This theory is called minimizing. As long as a person downplays the enemy's lies and curses, they will not walk in absolute freedom. What may be small in one person's eyes may be huge in another's.

Conclusion

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8).

There are spiritual forces wrestling and battling against us

The only thing that has the power to cancel all the arguments of the enemy against us is the redemptive work accomplished by Jesus on the cross.

1. When Jesus died on the cross, He died in our place, thus atoning for our sins. When we embrace this fact, every argument against us immediately disappears.
2. According to 1 John 1:9, Confessing our sins and accepting the finished work of the cross will bring us freedom from every curse and bondage.
3. There is nothing like the freedom. Rise up today and receive the freedom that the shed blood of Jesus purchased for you. Take courage and boldly proclaim, "The devil has no hold on me!"

THE DIVINE EXCHANGE

Jesus was punished that we might be forgiven.

Jesus was wounded that we might be healed.

Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness that we might become righteous with His righteousness.

Jesus died our death that we might share His life.

Jesus became poor, without poverty, that we might become rich with His riches.

Jesus bore our shame that we might share His glory.

Jesus endured our rejection that we might have His acceptance as children of God.

Jesus became a curse that we might receive a blessing.

THE PRAYER OF RENOUNCEMENT

Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You are the way to my relationship with God. I believe that you died on the cross to pay for all my sins and to deliver me from all bondage.

I give up my rebellion and independence, my pride and self-centeredness, my harboring of rejection and inferiority, and my bitterness and unforgiveness. I give up all my sin and submit myself to You.

I confess all my sins before You now and ask for Your forgiveness and mercy. Release me now from the power of the enemy of my soul. I willingly forgive all who have harmed me or wronged me, just as I want You to forgive me.

[Be specific here with your confession to God and with any individuals you need to forgive.]

I believe that on the Cross You paid the full price so I could have a life of victory and freedom. I receive deliverance from every curse and all bondage now!

Through Christ Jesus, I pull down every stronghold built up in my life and family by the devil. I pull down the strongholds of:

[Pray specifically about the strongholds you list below]

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, I renounce the power of Satan in my life. I take authority over every plan of the devil, and I curse the curse in my life. By faith I receive the release of my soul, and I thank You and praise You for it... AMEN

Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit

KEY SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 12:43-45 43"*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.*"

INTRODUCTION: After being set free from bondages and after experiencing the mighty hand of the deliverance of the Lord, Christians must understand the importance of maintaining their freedom through receiving and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is so important for believers, once they are free from spiritual obstacles, to be completely filled with the Holy Spirit. The enemy will quickly look for an open door to take back his place in a person's life. But when you are full of the Holy Spirit, there simply is no room for him anymore.

What is Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the _____ of Jesus' words concerning the "promise of the Father" [Luke 24:49]. It is a baptism with power!

After receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we have the power to _____, to resist sin and the devil, and to be all that God intended for us to be in His kingdom. The phrase *baptism in the Holy Spirit* literally means a _____ in a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

It is a _____ and separate act of God from being "baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit" (Galatians 3:27, 1 Corinthians 12:13). This baptism refers to our "born again" experience into the body of Christ, His church.

The Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ, but Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. When this occurs, we are totally filled and surrounded by God.

Speaking in Tongues

- a. In Acts 2:1-4, the followers of Christ were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of _____, fulfilling Jesus' command to wait in Jerusalem for this experience (Acts 1:4).
- b. When they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in tongues. These tongues were not a language that they learned, but a Spirit-_____ utterance that came directly from God Himself.
- c. This is a language from God, to God (1Corinthians 14:2-4; Jude 20). Speaking in tongues _____ the believer and is the initial physical evidence that someone has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- d. Speaking in tongues is often referred to as the believer's "prayer language." This powerful utterance which comes from your spirit is _____ for your daily life, if you desire to stay full of Him.

Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues?

- e. The first to understand is that the Holy Spirit of God gives you the words to utter. You must actually move your mouth and speak out the syllables, but He is faithful to give them to you.
- f. When you speak, your voice box, tongue, lungs, and mouth all work together to form words. When this happens, the very words that you want to speak come out. The same thing happens when you speak in tongues. Without your having to think about it, the Holy Spirit will direct all your speaking faculties to speak the words of the Spirit.

In John 7:38-39, Jesus tells the disciples *38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke*

concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a _____ experience that enables believers to receive the power of God in their lives.

Some Things to Remember Concerning the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

If you are saved, you already have the person of the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 3:16; Romans 8:9].

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a promise for all who ask [Luke 11;11-13]

Any believer may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [Joel 2:28-29].

The Holy Spirit gives power to witness [Acts 1:8].

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray [Romans 8:26].

A person may be water baptized and saved but _____ yet be baptized in the Holy Spirit [Acts 8:14-16].

Speaking in tongues and praising God are _____, or evidences of the Holy Spirit [Acts 10:44-46].

Some believers may receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit _____ they are baptized in water [Acts 10:46-48].

The word *baptize* means “to put under,” or “to cover.” When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, he is totally immersed, or _____ in the Spirit of God.

Speaking in tongues is the one experience that is _____ to all the New Testament examples of believers receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Some Steps to Help you Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Remove all barriers.

Sin, unforgiveness, doctrinal hang-ups, pride, or any unclean thing in you may block you from receiving.

Pray confess your sin, renouncing anything from your past that would _____ you from receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Request

Jesus said that all we had to do is ask, and we would _____.

Tell the Lord that you want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Receive

Reach out by faith and take hold of the _____ that God freely gives to you. Don't analyze with your mind, but allow your spirit to receive this gift.

Release

By faith, stop praying in English (or your native language), and begin speaking in tongues. You may at first have only a few words or syllables, but go ahead and speak those in faith, and more will follow.

As you _____ your tongue to the Spirit, you will begin to feel a wonderful release of worship.

Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit

When you have experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you must develop the _____. As with any relationship, it takes time and communication to grow and build it.

Pray in the spirit every day. Make your prayer language a part of your _____ prayer time.

Pray in the spirit everywhere: In your car, at home, at work, etc...

As you walk every day, allow the Holy Spirit to guide you and protect you. Make Him your accountability partner. Let Him become your best friend.

Living and Walking in Freedom

KEY SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

INTRODUCTION: When you are called by God to become a champion of His Light, the fight is on! There is no hanging up the gloves. As you begin to dismantle personal strongholds and experience inner healing from emotional wounds, you will begin your life of freedom.

Deliverance from demonic oppression and receiving inner healing is a giant step toward freedom, but you must maintain your freedom by continually walking in it. The liberation you have experienced will not automatically be there a year from now, or even a week from now. Satan does not give up easily. Instead, he will test and tempt you in numerous ways, trying to regain access into your life.

Twelve Life Principles for Walking in Freedom for the Rest of Your Life

- Step 1: The Holy Spirit will empower you to live a _____ life (Ephesians 5:17-18)
A "one time" baptism in the Holy Spirit experience is not enough to sustain you.
You must be filled with His presence _____.
Submit to the Holy Spirit and His plan every day.
Know that He is constantly with you.
Don't focus on an attempt to discipline your flesh or focus on following a list of do's and don'ts to accomplish the _____ of God.
- Step 2: Each morning, yield yourself to God (Proverbs 3:5-6)
Ask the Lord to take _____ of your life and guide you every day.
God directs your life by speaking to your _____ though the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and various life situations.
- Step 3: As the Holy Spirit leads, make _____ to anyone you have wronged (Matt 5:23-24)
If you have an issue against another person, settle it and be reconciled. If you have mistreated someone, ask their forgiveness
Do whatever you need to do to restore the relationship with the person.
- Step 4: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you anything that needs to be removed from your _____ (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Take away anything that could be associated with the kingdom of darkness – an object, a picture, or a book.

Don't freak out about little things, the Holy Spirit is greater, and you are newly created in Him. Accordingly, do not destroy another person's property without their permission.

Step 5: Establish a new mind-set and identify yourself with the purposes and the plans of God (Ephesians 5:26)

Truth is what God's Word says about you, not what someone else says, or even what you have _____ about yourself.

Establish a new mind-set by memorizing the Word and thinking God's thoughts.

Step 6: To walk in _____ you must stop talking and fellowshiping with demons (2 Corinthians 10:4-6)

- i. Refuse to _____ on or think about past failures, hurts, sins, problems, and difficulties, or who did you wrong.
- ii. When you became a believer, your old _____ died with Christ. As far as God is concerned, that's all over. He does not want us to fellowship with demons. He wants us to fellowship with Him.
- iii. Make the following things part of your daily lifestyle:
 1. Recognize which thoughts are not from God and rebuke them.
 2. Pray, using the name of Jesus and declaring his blood over every wrong thought or difficult circumstance.
 3. Use the word of your own testimony. Remind yourself and the devil of God's identity and purpose, and your past victories.
 4. Praise God for His blessings toward you. Demons hate praise.
 5. Use the power of the cross.
 6. Ask God to surround you with His Angels.

Step 7: God is calling you to a life of righteousness (Romans 13:14)

Treat all sin as if it were a _____ or cancer!

Do not make compromises for the flesh and give any place to the devil. Bring your flesh under the control of God.

Step 8: When you fail or sin, _____ confess it (1 John 1:9)

Be cleansed, refilled, and continue to walk with Jesus.

You do not have to punish yourself or hide from God. You are forgiven!

Step 9: There is no such thing as an empty mind (Philippians 4:8)

If you stay busy doing the right things, you will not have as many _____
to do sinful things.

Fill your life and time with good things – helping others, encouraging others,
giving to others, serving at the church, etc...

Step 10: Cultivate fellowship with other believers (1 Cor 15:33)

Connect and _____ your life down for your local church. Build relationships
with other believers who want to know God deeply.

Cut off relationships that lead you _____ from God and entice you to sin.

Establish Godly habits – Get into the Word, pray, and walk in the Spirit. Don't
ever give up!

Step 11: Focus on getting to know God better and better (Psalm 46:10)

What is God really like? Learn to hear his voice. He is _____ speaking;
we must learn how to listen.

_____ yourself to sit quietly before the Lord. An important part of
your prayer time is attentive silence. Read His Word. Seek to know His ways.
Become His friend.

Step 12: God wants _____ obedience so learn to instantly obey Him (Romans
6:16)

God is serious about instant obedience. Doing something next week that God
said to do today is not obedience.

Obedience is doing what you are told, when you are told, and how you are told
to do it.

The ways of the Lord are perfect and will lead you in perfect freedom.

Evidence of Freedom: [John 8:31-32]

- g. Freedom is meant to be _____
 - i. When you encounter God and He begins to change you, remember it is a
process. God will work on you one piece at a time – but do not let your mind
or circumstances pull you back to where you were.
 - ii. The enemy will often try to _____ to you and tell you that you are not free,
but these feelings are not exposing your past problem which you were freed
from, but a new problem (lie) that has never yet been exposed.

- h. Freedom always results in a _____ of life-style
 - i. The greatest evidence of freedom is not the “healing” or “deliverance” itself, but the way a person’s _____ life changes after that moment.
 - ii. When you think about it, true freedom in an area of our life should not require great effort and attention to maintain it. True freedom by the Lord makes you so free, that when you focus on _____ or events from that area, you only see and hear God’s truth!

- i. Freedom provides the power to confront “monsters” in our lives
 - i. One of the things freedom in Christ allows you to do is to confront people, places, events, and thoughts without fear, pain or a sense of revenge.
 - ii. A mark of an _____ is the ability to see things and _____ to things as Christ sees them and responds to them.

- j. Freedom will impact your _____ relationships
 - i. Relationship problems are _____ about one’s relationships. So, when Jesus enters the scene and renews a person on the inside, there is a natural change in that person’s relationships.
 - ii. When the “lies” of Satan are _____ in our lives, there is no trigger, no hook, and no handle in our souls to connect us to pain or difficulty in our relationships.
 - iii. Now that freedom is living in our _____, we can share the genuine love for one another, the way God intended.

CONCLUSION:

It is our prayer that you will continue to experience the freedom that Jesus intends for you. Becoming liberated is an ongoing process that takes place throughout our lifetime.

Getting free is often like peeling an onion; it occurs one layer at a time. Be encouraged to apply the principles of this encounter over and over in your life. You don’t have to have a minister or a retreat to encounter God. You have been given all the authority you need to walk as a child of Light. The victory of the Cross is yours. Jesus has won – so you will win if you don’t quit.

Sexual Purity

Introduction: Sexuality is a _____ from God; however, it is an area of our lives that often causes many problems. Many people have been wounded and shamed by their sexual experiences and, as a result, continue to struggle with their sexuality even after coming to know the Lord.

The Lord desires for us to be _____ in every area of life, including this most intimate aspect of our humanity. As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, He will heal, deliver, and restore us so that we can properly enjoy this gift from God.

I. The creation of sex

A. God created sex as a healthy, intimate part of _____.

1. Sex is of God; it is good (Gen. 2:24-25, Heb. 13:4). God's intention was for a man and woman to be united in this most intimate of relationships and become one flesh. This physical act was designed by God to cause the man and woman to forsake all others and _____ together as one unit.

2. Sex is to be used only within the context of marriage (Gen. 2:22-24, Prov. 5:15-23). Any other use is a _____ of the sacred intent that God gave for this part of our lives.

B. Satan _____ sex and made it something shameful and sinful.

1. Sex outside of marriage is a sin (Heb. 13:4, 1 Cor. 6: 15-20). It makes no difference what excuses are given ("We're in love," "I'm getting a divorce", "My spouse doesn't understand me," "I'm not hurting anyone," etc.), sex in any context other than marriage is *wrong*.

2. Sexual sin includes lust, pornography, masturbation, and sexual _____ as well as the more obvious forms of sin (Matt. 5:27-28).

II. Sex is a natural, God-given desire that is meant to bring pleasure and unity in a marriage.

A. Sexual _____ are to be met only through a God-ordained marriage relationship.

1. God designed sex as a natural part of marriage. It has no place in a relationship between two _____ people. Real happiness comes when we decide to find pleasure only in the marriage relationship God gave us.

2. Single people are called to live lives of _____. They are not excused from demonstrating holiness in regards to how they manage their physical bodies.

a. Modesty in dress, speech, and actions should be paramount. Flirtatious, _____ behavior has no place in the single Christian's life.

b. Courting relationships must be held to a high _____. The standards of the world are not the standards for the Christian single. If in doubt about any behavior, don't do it! It is always better to have too high a standard than too low of a one.

3. If you are married, God does not intend faithfulness in marriage to be boring, lifeless, pleasureless, or dull. Married couples have the _____ to care for each other's sexual needs.

B. Commit yourself to making sex pleasurable for your spouse.

1. Learn what pleases your spouse, and put her needs before your own.

2. Give of yourself _____, if necessary, in order to meet the sexual needs of your spouse. Don't always think of yourself and what you want, but consider your spouse. If you will give of yourself to meet your partner's needs, you will reap the benefits of a happy, fulfilled marriage.

III. The power of sexual sin

A. Never underestimate the _____ of sexual sin!

1. It is destructive (Romans 1:24-25). Sexual sin gives the _____ of pleasure, but any pleasure it gives is short-lived. It degrades the participants and leads them into shameful behavior.

2. It has terrible consequences, such as:

a. Soul ties are formed (1 Cor. 6:16). When you join yourself sexually to another person, you become one with them. More than a physical union results; emotional union occurs, too. Even though you may think that sex is no more than a _____ act, ties are formed with whomever you have sex. In addition, sexual sin is a sin against your own body, which is a temple of the Holy Spirit. To sin against your body is to degrade the presence of the Holy Spirit.

b. Physical disease can result (Rom. 1:24-27). The Scriptures say that God will allow men to _____ within their physical bodies the results of sexual sin. There is a vast array of sexually transmitted diseases, of which AIDS is only one. Sexual sin

comes with a high price attached to it.

c. It destroys respect and _____. Those who engage in sexual sin often live in shame and fear that others will find out what they have done. If they are married and violate their vows, the shattered trust is extremely difficult to _____. The effects of the sin reach to husband, wife, children, and even extended family members.

d. Partners lose the ability to be open with each other. Sexual sin leads to _____ in the marriage relationship. The partner engaging in the illicit behavior has to build a wall around himself to keep his partner from finding out what is going on. The distance between the two grows, and intimacy is lost.

e. Sexual sin leads to an inability to fulfill _____. The person involved leads a _____ life and has to make excuses for missed commitments and appearances.

B. Sexual sins of all types-adultery, fornication, masturbation, homosexuality, bestiality, sodomy, and incest-must be repented of before God.

1. All types of sexual sin are abhorrent to the Lord. One kind is not worse than another kind. They are all _____ wrong and damaging.

2. We must confess before the Lord all areas of sexual sin, ask for _____, and receive His cleansing from it. If strongholds have been erected in our hearts, we must be set free from them so that we can have a clean, healthy understanding of the role of sex in our lives.

IV. Purpose of God's laws

A. God's laws are not arbitrary.

1. He desires for you to have clean fun. Laugh together and share moments that are meant for you and your spouse alone. Enjoy each other's company, not only in the context of the sexual relationship but also in everyday _____ of life. Find interests and hobbies that you can share.

2. Be creative in the marriage relationship!

a. Look at your spouse with eyes of _____, not lust. See her as an equal partner, not as an object to satisfy your sexual desires.

b. Cultivate kindness, respect, and tenderness in your _____. The words that you say throughout the day go a long way towards determining what happens at night! Women, particularly, appreciate kindness and respect and will

respond to that. Without that tenderness, most women will not be able to respond sexually as freely as their husbands would like.

c. Learn to express _____ through nonsexual touch. Again, sexuality is expressed as a sum total of what goes on throughout the relationship in the ordinary facets of life. Make an effort to show affection in _____ ways so that your partner will know that you love him/her as a person, not as a sex object.

d. Develop new ways to show love to your spouse. This is important to keep the marriage fresh and exciting. Plan a getaway with your spouse, or send the children to visit friends and have an evening alone at home, just the two of you. The ideas are limitless as to what you can do to keep the flame of love and _____ kindled in your marriage.

B. Marriage is a gift from God meant to be shared only with your spouse.

1. Cherish your _____ as the very special gift she is. Accept her as God's uniquely chosen mate for you. Value and esteem her before any other person in your life, including children.

2. Your spouse is meant for you alone, and you are meant for her alone. There should be no _____. Guard your relationships with the opposite sex, and avoid even the very appearance of impropriety. Don't go to lunch with **members of the opposite sex, accept rides, and engage in overly personal** conversations with them. Reserve your heart and actions for the mate God has given you. *Drink from your own well!*