

Victorious Living

AS YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN TAUGHT

Unmasking What Steals the Joy

and

Emotional

Mental

Physical

Financial

Relational

h e a l t h

God Purchased for You

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**What hurts
hang-ups
habits
health problems
relationship heartaches
or financial headaches
would you like to
live *w i t h o u t*?**

ADD or ADHD	Acid reflux	Addiction	Alcohol compulsion
Allergies	Food allergy	Food intolerance	Approval addiction
Arrogance	Alzheimer's	Anger	Anorexia
Anxiety	Arthritic or Joint problem	Ashamed/shame	Autoimmune condition
Back problem	Bankrupt	Bitterness	Blaming
High or low blood pressure	High or low blood sugar	Breathing issue	Busy/preoccupied
Bulimia	Cancer	Codependent	Contentious
Cholesterol problem	Circulation issue	Condemnation	Crohn's or other Bowel issue(s)
Chronic constipation	Compulsion(s)	Controlling	Excessive debt
Dementia	Melancholy or Depression	Despair	Digestion issue
Doubt or Unbelief	Driven	Drug addiction	Prescription drug abuse
Eating disorder	Emptiness	Endometriosis	Erectile dysfunction
Exercise compulsion	Envy	Fear of abandonment	Fear of rejection
Fibromyalgia	Financial distress	Fixation(s)	Gambling compulsion
Glandular problem	Gluttony	Gossip	Greed
Gallbladder	Gut issue	Hatred	Hardened heart
Heart disease	Headaches	Heartbroken	Heartburn
Hoarding	Chemical hypersensitivity	Aroma hypersensitivity	Hormone issue
Immune system problem	Infertility or sterility	Inflammatory issue	Insecurity
Insomnia	Jealousy	Judgmental	Kidney stone or condition

What hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartaches,
or financial headaches would you like to live *without*?

Leukemia	Lewdness	Lonely	Low self-esteem
Lukewarm	Lupus	Lust compulsion	Materialistic
Migraines	Unsettled mind	Miscarriage(s)	Money obsession
Metabolic or weight problem	Negativity	Neurological problem(s)	Nicotine compulsion
OCD	Obesity	Obsession(s)	Oppression
Oppressive	Osteoporosis	Over or under-achiever	Oversensitive
Pain	Parkinson's	Passive	Lack of peace inside
Perfectionist	Personalize what's not personal	Fearful/Phobia(s)/phobic	Pornography compulsion
Poverty	Overspending	Pretentious	Pride
Prostate problem	Procrastination	PTSD	Resentment
Respiratory issue	Dysfunctional relationship(s)	Fractured relationship(s)	Painful relationship(s)
Religious righteousness	Inordinately quiet	Prolonged sadness	Scleroderma
Selfish	Self-abuse	Self-centered	Self-pity
Self-righteous	Self-unforgiveness	Meaningless sex	Shopping compulsion
Sinus issue	Skin condition	Sleep issue	Obsessive social media
Compulsive spending	Spiritually complacent/smug	Sports obsession	Stress
Stomach problem(s)	Stroke	Excessive talking	Thyroid issue
Tumor or cyst	TV Compulsion	Ulcer	Unforgiveness
Unteachable	Vain/vanity	Victim	Victimizing
Violent	Compulsive working	Worry	Any other _____

A Warm Welcome!

The warmest of welcomes to you and yours, sincerely. Realizing genuine joy and emotional, mental, physical, financial, and relational health & wellness is a challenging yet rewarding journey. May this Bible study richly bless you and those you love in this rich journey. As 3 John 1:2 proclaims, “I pray above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers!”

What You Are About to Receive

Be reminded that God graciously informs us at Hosea 4:6-8 NKJV, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” Note that God did not say, “My people *were* destroyed for lack of knowledge...” Rather, God said, “My people *are* destroyed for lack knowledge.” God is referring to relational knowledge of Him, His ways, the ways of the opposition, and the ways of sin. And “The fear (humble, reverential awe) of the Lord *is the beginning* of knowledge (Prov. 1:7).”

This Bible study unveils our Bible’s unique insight into how emotional, mental, physical, financial, and relational “issues” have developed in the lives of our generations—our family tree—as well as in our own lives. And as expected, it not only biblically establishes that no issue is irreversible but that that truth bears its fruit in your life. You can be a living blessing to others!

Start by Receiving Not Doing

Scripture is filled with exhortations to “set our minds on things above,” not on the negatives we see around us in the natural. God graciously informs us at John 3:17: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” And He continues at 2 Corinthians 5:19 with, “For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell and show others.” Without a doubt, this includes what He is helping us to believe about others as well as ourselves.

We can believe the best about ourselves when we believe the truth about who we are to Jesus.

If we try to believe our best based on sheer willpower, we will eventually come to the end of our own strength. If we come to God first and restore our souls in how He believes the best of us, then we will have an abundance of security, purpose, and goodness to give away.

Instead of 'believing our best' becoming a command that we feel the weight of keeping, our experience of God becomes a place of restoration—regardless of our situation. So consider taking these steps:

1. Read this Bible study about how God desires us to believe Him from a stance that He is going to be all these things to you first (Rom. 11:36; John 3:27; 1 John 4:16).

Start by receiving, not doing. From that place, allow this study to create a sense of anticipation for you, not apprehension that you can't live up to them (Eph. 2:8-9; Php. 3:9; Titus 3:4-5).

2. Ask God to enable you to see you as He does.

Look at yourself through His unconditionally loving, forgiving eyes and begin to think from that perspective; there is zero expectation to perform, as your faith is not in your works but in what Jesus has already done. (Eph. 1:4-11; Php. 3:9; Titus 3:4-5; Heb. 4:9-10).

3. God realizes there is no such thing as perfection in a descendant of Adam. "God showed His great love for you by sending Christ to die for you while you were still a sinner [at your worst]!" (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:1-9; 1 John 1:8).

God made you for a relationship with Him, and with others (Gen. 3:8-9; Matt. 22:37-40; John 17; Eph. 1:5). And in the words of Graham Cooke: It is impossible to grow in relationship in an atmosphere of disapproval. That also applies to your 'believing the best about yourself' is not about ignoring faults, but about recognizing that we all hope to become more and more like Jesus, more and more free from hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartaches, and financial headaches.

We are all a work-in-progress deserving of His mercy, grace and love! (Rom. 5:16; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Heb 4:16; 1 Pet. 1:2-3.)

The Miracle of Adam's Creation

Personal Needs

We all have *needs*—emotional, mental, physical, relational, and financial. Please consider that to enjoy the victorious, happy, joyful, and healthy fulfillment of these needs, we must briefly review the beginning.

The Breath of Life

Based on a Derek Prince Bible study: Consider the unique [and wonder-filled] way in which Adam—the ancestor of our race—was created. In John 1:1–2, we discover that the actual agent in creation was not God the Father, but the divine Word who was with God from eternity—the Person who was later manifested in human history as Jesus of Nazareth: “All things were made through Him [the Word], and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

Creation, as a whole, was brought about by the spoken word of God: “By faith we understand that the word of God framed the worlds” (Hebrews 11:3). “For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:9). But as described in Genesis 2:7, the creation of Adam was uniquely different: “And the Lord God formed [molded] man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being [literally, a living soul].”

Picture the scene! The Lord didn't speak humankind into existence; rather, He made humankind by His hands. He stooped down, took dust in His hands, mixed it with water, and molded it into the body of a man. So there it was—the most perfect piece of sculpture ever fashioned—more perfect than any masterpiece of Michelangelo. But it was lifeless! Then something marvelous happened. The Creator leaned forward, putting His divine lips against the lips of clay and His divine nostrils against the nostrils of clay. Then He breathed into those lips and nostrils. His breath penetrated the form of clay and transformed it into a living human

being, with every organ of its body functioning perfectly, and with all the marvelous spiritual, intellectual, and emotional responses of which a human being is capable. No other being has ever been created in such a way.

A Powerful Breath

The words used to describe this miracle are particularly vivid. Hebrew is one of those languages in which the sound of certain words is directly related to the action they describe. The sound of the Hebrew word translated breathed can be rendered *yipakh*. It consists of a tiny internal “explosion,” followed by a forceful, ongoing release of air from the throat. Thus, it vividly represents the action which it describes.

As the Lord breathed into those lips and nostrils of clay, He did not let out a droopy sigh—He forcefully breathed *Himself* into that body of clay, which thus received a miraculous impartation of the very life of God!

Immediately, humankind became a triune being, composed of spirit, soul, and body (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23). The spirit came from the inbreathed breath of God transforming humankind’s body of clay into living, pulsating flesh. His soul, produced by the uniting of spirit and body, became a unique, individual personality, capable of making its own decisions—I will, or I will not.

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“And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper for him.’ ...And the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took a part of the man’s side [original language] and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the part of the man’s side, and brought her to the man...” (Genesis 2:18-22)

Now Eve’s soul, too, produced by the uniting of spirit and body, became a unique, individual personality, capable of making its own decisions—I will, or I will not. Woman is said not to have been taken

out of man’s head to be lorded over by him, nor from his feet to be trampled on by him, but from his side to be equal with him, from under his arm to be protected by him, and from his heart to be loved by him.

And the Kingdom of God is universal — God is the Supreme Moral Governor of the universe, and everything was in harmony with His plan and “very good.” (Gen. 1; Job 38; Daniel 4; 1 John 4:8).

Secure Meaningful Identity

Adam and Eve knew their Maker, and they knew their Maker’s delightful perception of them. They knew their value, that they were made in love, through love, and because of love; “God is love.” They knew that they were “made as God’s image and likeness (Gen. 1:26; 1 Thess. 5:23-24).” Adam & Eve truly felt secure.

They also enjoyed a meaningful purpose—Adam had already chosen names for all the other living creatures when God said to Adam & Eve, “be fruitful and multiply...have dominion over every living thing upon the earth (Gen. 1:28; 2:19, 20).” From the moment they were formed, their needs were already fully met in a personal relationship with God unmarred by sin. Zero stress, zero worries. Their value, their true *identity*—their maker’s perception of them, and who He was for them—was a quality already within their personalities, so they never needed to give it a second thought.

God’s Representatives

Together with his God-given mate, Adam was appointed to rule the earth as God’s representative (Genesis 1:26-2:15; Ps. 8:4-8; 115:16; Heb. 2:6-8). The triunity of his inner nature represented the likeness of the triune God. Both in his inward nature and his outward form, he uniquely represented God to the rest of earth’s creatures.

Furthermore, Adam and Eve enjoyed regular personal fellowship with the Lord. At the close of each day, He came to spend time with

them (Gen. 3:8). God's will is always to live life *with* His kids. And who knows what revelations of Himself God shared with them!

Despite this privileged relationship, the greatest tragedy of human history followed. Tricked by Satan's false accusations, Adam and Eve traded their God-given identity with its inheritance for a piece of fruit. This disobedience affected every part of Adam's triune nature. His spirit—now cut off from God—had instantly changed masters. In his soul, he became a rebel, at war with his maker from that time onward. His body became subject to emotional, mental, and physical malady, aging, and ultimately death.

God had warned Adam concerning the tree of knowledge, "In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die (Gen. 2:17)." It was Adam's spirit that "died"—changed masters—yet his body did not die for more than 900 years.

The First Con The First Coup

When Adam & Eve fell, the results were catastrophic. They, and therefore humankind, lost dominion of the earth realm and Satan gained it. This world changed governments—from God's Kingdom to Satan's kingdom. Utterly wicked. And as always, God was graciously truthful with Adam & Eve and with us: Doubting God's love, willfully violating His word bears consequence—a separation from His blessings—a curse (Gen. 4:11; Deut. 28:15-67; Prov. 26:2; Jer. 11:3; 17:5; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:8; 5:4).

"Cursed is the earth because of you, Adam" (Gen. 3:17)

"The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one [the devil]." (1 John 5:19)

Recorded at Luke 11:18, Jesus stipulates Satan's jurisdiction as a "kingdom." The original Greek word used is *basileia*, meaning "(through the notion of a foundation of power); a sovereign realm with rulership and reign;" *a government system*. (Author's emphasis throughout.)

"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood [ourselves, peoples], but...against the unseen *spiritual forces of evil* in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12)."

Satan is by nature deceptive, often masquerading as a place of light, happiness, success, health, and healing. Second Corinthians 11:14-15 informs us that, "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness."

"...*Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air*... is the spirit at work in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2)."

"...*The god of this age [the devil]* has blinded those who are perishing..." (2 Cor. 4:4)

"Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in *these evil days* (Eph. 5:16)."

"Be self-controlled and alert. *Your* enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8 NIV)."

Revelations 12:8-10 also graciously informs Christians about the cunning Devil and his disciples:

"And the dragon...and his angels were forced out of heaven. This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world...For the *accuser of our brothers and sisters*...has been thrown down...the one who accuses them [our brothers and sisters] before our God *day and night*."

Evidently and experientially, our enemy accuses *us Christians*, continuously—"day and night." Please note that our enemy accuses each of us in three ways: he accuses us to ourselves, so we tend to blame ourselves and not him. He accuses others to

us so we tend to blame others and not him.
And he accuses God to us so we tend to
blame God and not him (Gen. 3:1, 4, 5, 10-13;

Eph. 6:12; Rom. 7:20-23; Rev. 12:9-10).

"The human heart is [now]...desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" (Jeremiah 17:9)

2 Timothy 2:16-26 also alerts Christians: "...A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's [Christian's] hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. *For they [Christians] have been held captive by him to do whatever he [the devil] wants.*

The Bible warns that the Devil's evil influence will reach new heights in the future (Mark 13:22; 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Timothy 4:1).

Although God is totally in charge, He is graciously informing us that He is not in control. This is according to God's own words (quoted above). He (love) does not want to *control*.

Scripture also reveals that God sovereignly permits these evil spirits, their expression of sin, and its devastating effects for only a finite time, until His coming judgment.

First Corinthians 10:13 confirms to us: "Remember...God is faithful. He will keep temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, *He will show you a way out* so that you will not give in to it." (See also Psalms 11:4-7; 24:1; 89:33-34; 96:1-13; Romans 2:1-16.)

Please notice that our Bible graciously informs us that everything is spiritual. Religious traditions do not teach us this, but God's word does. "We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4:18; 5:16). Our adversary and his weapons are distinctly spiritual (Rom. 7:15-23; see also above passages). And our God, His weapons, His solutions, our weapons and remedies are "not carnal;

they are *spiritual*" (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Mk. 7:18-23; John 4:24; 6:63; 1 Cor. 2:4-5, 10-16; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 1:3; 8:10; 10:16). This will be gently proven more and more in this study, for your benefit.

The Very First Stolen Identity

Adam & Eve's identity, formerly an attribute, now became a great need to be met. Even though God did not turn His back on them, leave them or reject them, Adam & Eve suddenly hid from God in fear of His rejection (Gen. 3:8-9). They both immediately blamed each other for their sin. Fear suddenly came; they were now stressed; they immediately felt ashamed; they suddenly felt worthless, insecure (Gen. 3:10-13). And this negativity came immediately into their lives by Satan—unlearned —*they were not taught it*.

The earth realm was now cursed, and it was now necessary for Adam to "work by the sweat of his brow." In addition to insecurity, Adam was now wrestling with the loss of meaningful purpose and significance. There was now a struggle between man and opposition (Gen. 3:17-19).

After the fall, Adam & Eve, and therefore humanity, lost their innocence and gained shame. We lost our security—dependence on the length, width, height, and depth of God's love—and gained the insecurity of independence. We lost our meaningful purpose of serving God and became self-serving. After the fall, humanity lost our true identity and gained a self-reliant, self-serving mindset; an "orphan" identity. Consider also www.gotchoices.net/normal

Jesus directly connects *identity* with both the security and the meaningful purpose that it provides us at John 8:29: "*He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.*"

And **Jesus is now in each of us** (John 17:20-26; Gal. 2:20). He is our redeemer, our pattern, and our power in life. "**He is the way [the journey], the truth, and the life!**"

Fallout from The Fall

After the Fall, corruption, evil, suffering, dis-ease, and death now reigned in the earth realm (Romans 5:12). Adam & Eve were now under a sin-cursed, deviant government system. Satan's kingdom could not provide the needs of humanity. These needs included emotional, mental, physical, financial and relational health.

Stress (fear) had come (Gen. 3:10).

As we've clearly seen in the last section, this sin-cursed world system is still in effect today. Our emotional, mental, physical, relational, and financial health is opposed because of this twisted kingdom. Naturally, wellness in these areas now requires labor—time, energy, and money. For some, physical health and wellness don't even exist at birth.

This warped system is what we have been raised in—it is “normal” for us. The self-reliant (orphan) mindset has been perpetuated in every one of Adam & Eve's descendants, deeply ingrained in each of us. It even operates beyond our conscious level. And because of this sin-cursed world system, stress (fear) is now “normal.” For example, the *U.S. National Institutes of Health* states that “75 – 90% of visits to the doctor are now related to stress.”

“When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. (Rom. 5:12)” When Adam sinned, mental, emotional, physical, relational, and financial issues entered the world, and these issues spread to everyone. It seems “normal” for us to live with hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartache or financial headache. And sadly, we Christians bear the same ‘issues’ as non-Christians, and at the same rate of occurrence.

Satan continues to deceive each of us into living as an independent; he steals our identity; he cunningly convinces us that our identity is based on trying to live the Christian life, and our ability to please others. Satan's first target is us, followers of Jesus.

“This equation reflects Satan's primary lie:”

Identity = Performance [good works] + Others' opinions ¹

In Christ, our works are not *for* God, but *of* God. And as you continue in this Bible study, you will realize that Romans 4--7 and Galatians 2--5 confirm that, "when we try to keep rules, law [behave right, perform], it condemns us" because we can never do, or not do, well enough. The devil's primary lie inevitably produces hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartache, and/or financial headache.

The enemy of your soul does not give you any freedom to fail. He wants you to live in relentless bondage to performance and hiding behind your fig leaf when you fall short. Every one of us, without exception, has experienced a level of inner pain, hurt, and disappointment in life—a type of wound which is very hard to bear. This is stated so succinctly in James 3:2, "For we all stumble in many things." And it is described quite accurately in Proverbs 18:14: "The spirit [heart] of a person can endure their infirmity, but a wounded spirit [broken heart] who can bear?" We, with an independent (orphan) mindset, suffer from just such a wound in our heart. We may tolerate a lot of things, but a broken heart is an unbearable affliction. (Other common terms for this wound would be humiliation, shock, or trauma. See also Proverbs 15:4, 13)

That is a primary reason Jesus promises each of us at John 14:18: "I will not leave you as orphans [independents]." (Be reminded that He was encouraging His followers, not unbelievers. That is good news!)

Deeper Than We Realize

Scripture also says in 1 Corinthians 2, "For who knows the things of a person except their *own spirit* which is within them? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (verse 11). The spirit of a person is deeper than the mental understanding or the faculties of memory and reason, and that spirit is the only thing that knows all about you. Your mind doesn't know all about you. There are things about you that your mind hasn't yet discovered. It is very possible to carry wounds, trauma, for years that your mind never

knows about—deeper than the mind, deeper than reason, deeper than the memory. It is in the spirit.

The independent (orphan) attitude is in that deep area in our spirit. And often, *because it's so deep, we do not even realize our problem.*

This subtle independent (orphan) spirit can begin at any age, even before we are born. King David reminds us of our condition at Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

Vulnerable Targets

Again, this independent perspective can begin at any age. Based on another Derek Prince lesson: It may also come later in life. Like the woman we read about in Isaiah 54:6. This is a very poignant picture of a brokenhearted, recently married woman: "'For the LORD has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife, when you were refused,' says your God." A wife may love her husband and have a picture in her mind of what married life should be. She imagines how her husband is going to love her, and how she'll be blessed with children. But somehow it turns out otherwise. Maybe the husband loves her for a little while, but then gets interested in another woman. Or he may be one of those men who just doesn't know how to show love. After a while, this young woman feels, "My husband doesn't want me. He doesn't care for me. He doesn't devote time to me." Scripture describes her as "forsaken and grieved in *spirit [heart]*." www.gotchoices.net/derekprince "The spirit [heart] of a person will sustain their infirmity, but a wounded spirit [**broken heart**] who can bear?"

This leads us to another example. All of us have known of a church pastor with a lovely wife and children, who got caught having an extramarital affair. Even our spiritual gifts do not free us from independent drive. It drives many to become posers, looking for manhood in detrimental ways. And the independent outlook tempts many women to give their precious body away in hopes of feeling the love and intimacy an independent lacks. Some of us may cheat on a

committed romantic companion—even though we know it’s wrong, and even if the cheating is only emotional—to *feel worthwhile*.

As an early result of the independent (orphan) spirit, the co-author of this Bible study felt indifference. Outwardly, I was very friendly. I talked to people, I joked a lot, but there was something inside me they—and I—could not get through. Not surprisingly, one of my main goals became to obtain acceptance, validation, recognition, and, as a guy, especially from women. These thoughts, feelings, and goals occurred beyond my conscious level.

After indifference came rebellion, and rebellion led to what our Bible calls ‘witchcraft,’ which isn’t such an obvious connection, but is closely associated with rebellion in Scripture. 1 Samuel 15:23 states, “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” When I say witchcraft, I mean the occult realm—including seeking false spiritual experiences (pursuing an identity). I didn’t consciously realize that this is an expression of rebellion—turning from the true God to a false god (Exodus 20:3). Using Saul as an example, I now see that witchcraft also leads ultimately to spiritual and physical death (1 Chronicles 10:13–14). I was certainly spiritually dead. And seven times (according to healthcare practitioners), I came as close to physical death as one can without actually dying.

So many of us have hearts of stone. We’re not born that way. Over time, the adversary hardened our hearts by inflicting arrows of pain. Recall C.S. Lewis’s story about a lion named Aslan in the land of Narnia; four children find that many of the inhabitants of Narnia have been turned into stone. They are alive, but dead. It’s the same with so many people. We live, but our hearts are actually frozen hard.

All of us have experienced a level of inner pain, hurt, and disappointment in life. For some of us, it could go back to unfortunate childhood experiences. For others, it may be a more recent event. And for many, it could be both. Regardless, these are wounds, small or large, that can affect us every day. They cloud our future, making it impossible to embrace who we are, embrace who God is for us, embrace God as Father, and live in His promises.

Getting to the Root

This study, along with the Holy Spirit, helps us discover that we engage in compulsive ways of living as a means of coping with the powerful feelings of loss, a stolen, or a mistaken identity—living as a self-reliant, independent (orphan). And these feelings of loss and coping almost always happen beyond our conscious level.

Through this study, in relationship with the Holy Spirit, we’ll understand that freedom from the “normal” living with hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartache, or financial hardship comes directly from allowing the Holy Spirit to compassionately teach us His basis for feeling worthwhile. And that feeling worthwhile comes directly from *experiencing* His healing pathway to realizing our true identity in our heart of hearts. Fortunately, the problem is not resolved by trying to *behave* right. *A change in our thinking is required*. Some renew behavior. Some renew situations. Some renew feelings. Jesus renews minds. And then we behave right. Please consider these Spirit-empowered, flesh-opposed passages of truth:

“Set your *mind* on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3).”

“You [God] will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose *thoughts* are fixed on you (Isaiah 26:3)!”

“*Be renewed in the spirit of your mind...* (Eph. 4:23)”

“For, ‘who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach Him?’ But we understand these things, for *we have the mind of Christ!*” (*We mind the same things that Christ did; we have the same Spirit!*) (1 Corinthians 2:16)

“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same *mind...*” (1 Pet. 4:1)

“Have this *mind* among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Php. 2:5).

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a *sound mind* (2 Tim. 1:7).”

“For as man *thinks* in his heart, *so is he*... (Prov. 23:7 NKJV).”

“I see in my members another law *waging war against the law of my mind* and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ...Do not be conformed to this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that *good* and acceptable and perfect will of God (Apostle Paul at Romans 7:23; 12:2).”

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 graciously instructs us: “We are human, but the weapons we fight with are not mere worldly weapons. On the contrary, our weapons have divine power to demolish *enemy strongholds*, casting down *imaginations*, and every high thing that exalts itself *against the knowledge of God*, and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ...”

The great conquest of *spiritual* weapons:

The Holy Spirit, in relationship, compassionately trains us to take every thought prisoner and lead it into captivity to obey the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). That includes negativity, reasonings, lusts, any system of philosophy, metaphysics, doctrines, ethics, mythology, and religion that defies the knowledge of God, as well as any thinking which is contrary to virtue, purity and righteousness-in-love. (See also Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21-22; 1 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 5:19; Php. 4:8; Gen. 6:5; Prov. 15:26; Isa. 55:7; 59:7; Jer. 4:14.)

“Brothers and sisters, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—*think on these things* (Php. 4:8).”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and *do not lean on your own understanding* (Prov. 3:5).”

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

Along the way, the New Way, of Jesus renewing our minds, we are released to receive His love and love ourselves, God, and others. We enjoy sublime relationship with God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and live for Him. Our desire to behave right is a fruit, not a goal (Eph. 5:9; John 14:15; 2 John 1:6).

Many evangelical pulpits compound the problem by doing little more than listing the do's and don'ts of Christian responsibility. People who are afraid to live responsibly because they might fail are taught to feel guilty for their irresponsible behavior. That's an elemental aspect of the independent (orphan) mindset (the 'old self'), a primary stronghold from which Jesus came to deliver us. Biblical teaching must first communicate that the realization of the Christian individual's truest identity is what produces the responsible, obedient, Christ-pleasing behavior. This Christ-pleasing behavior is the glad *fruit* of the Christian coming to know that they know, that they know in their heart of hearts, their truest identity.

Please understand that it is not merely intellectual knowledge. This Bible study, in relationship with the Holy Spirit, helps us know that we know, that we know *in our heart of hearts*, our truest identity. Again, **everything is spiritual**. Religious traditions do not teach this, but God's word does.

Apostle Paul at Ephesians 1:13-17 prays for us to receive *revelation*: “...I pray for you constantly, asking God...to give you spiritual wisdom and *revelation* so that you might grow in your knowledge of Him [*revelation*; know that you know in your heart of hearts]...” (See also Matt. 16:16-19; Col. 1:9-10.)

"I pray that from Father God's glorious, unlimited resources, He will give you mighty *inner strength through His Holy Spirit*. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your *hearts* as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. And may you have the power to comprehend, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. May you *experience the love of Christ—it is so great it passes knowledge [revelation]*. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and *power* that comes from God. Now glory be to God! By His mighty power at work *within* us, He can accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope! (Eph. 3:16-20)"

"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. (1 Cor. 8:1 NIV)"

"God has revealed to us *through the [Holy] Spirit...so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us...We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words* to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means. We who have *the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us* at all. (1 Cor. 2:10-15)"

In this new covenant (New Testament), God has put His laws in your mind and *wrote them on your heart!* (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16)

"It is the [Holy] Spirit who gives life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are *spirit and life*. (Jesus at John 6:63)"

"...After starting your new lives *in the Spirit*, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? (Gal. 3:3)"

"...It is not by [your] force nor by [your] strength, but *by my Spirit*, says the LORD Almighty! (Zechariah 4:6)"

"For all who are *led by the Spirit* of God are sons and daughters of God (Rom. 8:14)."

"Jesus replied, 'You are blessed, Simon [Peter] son of John, because my *Father in heaven has revealed* this to you. *You did not learn this from any human being* (Matt. 16:17).'"

"And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God [who is spirit] (1 Cor. 2:4-5; John 4:24; 6:63)."

"Jesus prayed this prayer: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding the truth from those who think themselves so wise and clever, and *for revealing it to the childlike* (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21)."

"...Your heart affects everything you do (Prov. 4:23)." *The most important priority of God is to heal your heart. It is the deepest seat of who you are, your spiritual spirit. It is the interface with the kingdom of God*, as Jesus confirmed at Luke 17:20-21. Broken-heartedness inevitably produces inconsistency.

I Will Not Leave You Self-Reliant

Be reminded that even though His disciples were never recorded as thinking they were orphans or self-reliant, Jesus promised them, and each of us: “I will not leave you as orphans [self-reliant independents]. (Jn. 14:18)” I would humbly submit that each of our self-reliant mindsets mostly reside beyond our conscious level. And I would also humbly submit that there is a spectrum of this independent, self-reliant (orphan) attitude ranging from low severity to high severity. This is only to help us get out of any denial and receive everything Jesus promises us.

Adam’s disobedience was terrible in its consequences, but it brought to light an aspect of God’s nature that would otherwise never have been fully revealed: the unfathomable depth of His love. God has never given up on Adam and his descendants. He longs to bring us back to Himself.

This is beautifully expressed in James 4:5: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”—the Spirit that was breathed into Adam at his creation. Incredible though it may seem, God continues to long for the personal fellowship which He once enjoyed with Adam. This relationship was broken by Adam’s rebellion, a rebellion that has been perpetuated in every one of Adam’s descendants.

Furthermore, at infinite cost, God has made a way for each of us to be restored to Himself. It is always His will to live life *with* each of us. He sent Jesus “to seek and save those who are lost.” (Luke 19:10; see also Isaiah 9:6; 53:2-6). By His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, Jesus has made it possible for each of us to be forgiven and cleansed from sin and to become a son or daughter of God’s own family!

Your True Worth

Be reminded to read the following text from the stance that He is going to be all these things to you first. Enjoy simply *receiving*, *not doing*.

In Matthew 13:45–46, Jesus told a parable which beautifully describes the wonder of our redemption: “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

For many, this depicts the redemption of a human soul. Jesus is the merchant—not a tourist or a sightseer—but a man who has dealt in pearls all his life. He knows the exact value of every pearl. The pearl that He has purchased is just one human soul—yours or mine. It cost Jesus all He had—everything He owned.

In contemporary terms, this is perhaps the scene when that merchant broke the news to his wife.

“Honey, I’ve sold our car.”

“You sold our car! Well, at least we still have a roof over our heads.”

“No, I sold our house, and liquidated our 401k too!”

“Whatever made you do all that?”

“I found the most beautiful pearl I’ve ever seen. I’ve been looking all my life for such a pearl. It cost everything we owned—but wait until you see it!”

“Oh, how I love beautiful pearls too!” she replied.

What does this mean to you and me? Each of us are to allow the Holy Spirit to train us in picturing ourselves as that one priceless pearl.

Your Redeemer

As promised, God sent His own Son, Jesus the Christ, to take the place of all persons in death, so that everyone who would trust in, rely (believe) on Him might be fully rescued and restored children of Father God forever and ever. When Jesus came and offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross, a divinely ordained exchange took place. The nature of which was this: All the evil due by justice to descendants of Adam (you) came on Jesus, that all the good due to Jesus, because of His sinless obedience, might be made available to descendants of Adam (you). Or, more briefly: *All the evil came on Jesus that all the good might be made available to you* (Isaiah 61; 53:4-6; 1 Peter 3:18; 2:24; John 14:6; www.gotchoices.net/covenants).

It cost Jesus everything He had to buy you and me back to Himself. Though He was Lord of the entire universe, He laid it all

aside and died in absolute poverty. He owned nothing. The robe and the tomb in which He was buried were both borrowed. “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)”

Perhaps you have never seen yourself as significant. Deep down, you may have insecurities or a poor self-image. The hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartaches, or financial headaches, and your future may convey the same message: failure!

Not to Jesus! He loved you so much that He gave up everything to redeem you for Himself. In the words of the apostle Paul: “He loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). It is now time to begin to allow the Holy Spirit to help you realize in your heart of hearts you are that pearl held in the nail-scarred hand of Jesus, to hear Him saying to *you*, “You are so beautiful! You cost Me everything I had, but I don’t regret it for a second. Now you’re Mine forever!”

That message was adapted from a Derek Prince message. You can’t do anything to earn this love and acceptance. You can never change yourself enough or make yourself good enough. All you can do is allow Him to help you realize in your heart of hearts what Jesus has done for you and thank Him! Because you belong to Him forever! (gotchoices.net/derekprince)

Most of us have an intellectual knowledge of Galatians 2:20 but this Bible study, in relationship with the Holy Spirit, will help you come to know that you know, that you know it in your heart of hearts, and therefore victoriously live out of this truth (Gal. 1:11-12; Eph. 3:16-19; Matt. 11:25; 16:17; Acts 28:27; Rom. 10:10; 1 Cor. 1:19; Pr. 4:23). And as this is happening, all of your hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartaches, and financial headaches completely go back to Jesus. Jesus has paid the ultimate and full price for all of them; they all belong to Him now.

This study certainly provides the necessary biblical foundation of how to access the joy, and emotional, mental, physical, financial and relational health God purchased for you. And how to keep it! “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all you ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within you!” (Eph. 3:20)

Orphan or Son or Daughter *in Messiah* Part I

From the moment Adam & Eve fell, the ultimate purpose of God in all His dealings with humanity is to bring us back to the place where we were before the fall—back to our truest identity—as His image and likeness—joyfully dependent—in abundance—and free of issues (Genesis 1:26; Romans 8:28, 29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 2:6-10; 3; 1 Thess. 5:10; 23-24; 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 3 John 2).

A primary purpose of this Bible study is to help you experience in your heart of hearts your truest identity because the reversal and the prevention of your hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartaches and financial headaches are the fruit of that heart-experience. You will also come to know that fruit is rarely instantaneous, but a rich, worthwhile process of development (Ex. 23:30; 2 Cor. 3:18; Php. 2:12). That process is a glad, relational work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). And it is that process that makes you rich.

Be reminded to read the following text from the stance that He is going to be all these things to you first. Start by acceptance, not doing. From that place, allow the passages to create a sense of expectancy for you, not trepidation that you can't live up to them. *There is zero expectation to perform.*

The Benefits of Your Renewed Relationship

The equation below reflects God's primary definition of your truest *identity*:

True Identity = How you are known in heaven + who God is for you
(including what God wants to be for you in any situation)

Please consider that your truest identity is *relational*, as God always wants to walk through life *with* you, closely. And it also meets the two intrinsic human needs: the deep tranquility of *security*, and *meaningful purpose*.

The very first thing God reports about your truest identity—how you are known in heaven plus who God wants to be for you—begins as early as Genesis 1:26-28: “Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings [____ your name] *as our image, and as our likeness*. They will reign over

the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.’ So *God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them*; male and female He created them. Then God *blessed* them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it, [____ your name].’” And the second feature of your truest identity is who God wants to be for you. God wants to be your provider, meet your every need, and in every situation. Genesis 1:29 states, “Then God said, ‘Look! I *have [already] given* you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food.’” (Genesis 9:3 also states, “All the animals...*have also [already] been given* for you to.” (See also 1 Tim. 4:3-5; 1 Cor. 6:13.)) God had *already* freely provided everything else needed including authorization, work, companionship, and personal fellowship with God. The garden was *already* a five-star, all-inclusive accommodation! As we continue, we’ll clearly understand that you really are a son or daughter of God and He provides *all your needs in advance* and in every situation. “Then God saw everything that He *had* made, and indeed it was *very good!*’ (Gen. 1:31)”

Notice that this was all God’s initiative in advance; your forebearers and you did nothing to earn this. God is love. You have a God-given identity and are made in love, through love, and because of love.

Psalms 8:4-6: *God thinks about you and cares for you continuously. He made you only a little lower than Himself and crowned you with glory, honor, and authority over & above everything He made!*

God upgraded Abram’s identity—He changed his name to ‘Abraham,’ and his wife’s name from Sarai, to ‘Sarah’ (Gen. 17:5, 15). God revised Jacob’s identity—his name was changed to ‘Israel’ (Gen. 32:28). In the Bible, renaming people is a symbol of the truth for each of us presently who are born-again: “*The old life is gone. A new life has begun!*” (2 Corinthians 5:17)”

When God’s people needed the freedom from slavery that their true identity compelled, God *first introduced Himself to them* through Moses with identity language, announcing how they are known in heaven + who He is for them: “Say to them, ‘The LORD God

of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, ‘...I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to...a land flowing with milk and honey [prolific blessing].’ (Exodus 3:16-17)”

And the second thing God said to His people was also regarding their true identity: “I AM the LORD...*I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.* Then you shall know that I AM the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; *and I will give it to you as a heritage:* I AM the LORD.’ (Ex. 6:6-8)” Although the Hebrews earnestly asked for help, they did nothing to earn this.

Recorded at Deuteronomy 7:6, God lovingly stated, “*For you are a holy people, who belong* to the LORD your God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God *has chosen you to be His own special treasure.*”

The following are God’s very first words to doubting, fearing Gideon. They are regarding Gideon’s true identity—how Gideon is known in heaven + who God is for him: “The Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree...while...Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, ‘*The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!*’ (Judges 6)” Kindly note that Gideon had done absolutely nothing to earn his value—worth—his true identity.

Before he was born, Gideon already had a book in heaven with his name on it, complete with his specific calling, its gifting, and purpose. According to Psalms 139:1-18 and Eph. 1:3-5, 11, God saw Gideon and his role long before the foundation of the universe.

God cannot be partial to anyone (Acts 10:34); the only difference between you, me, and Gideon is our specific role and its gifting. God explains the following about you, Gideon, me, and each person at Psalms 139:16: “God saw you before you were born. Every day of your life was recorded in His book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed!”

Notice the identity language God used in His first words with the prophet Jeremiah; how Jeremiah is known in heaven + who God is for him. Beginning at 1:4, Jeremiah states: “The LORD gave me a

message. He said, 'I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. *Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you...*' 'O Sovereign LORD,' I said, 'I can't speak for you! I'm too young!' 'Don't say that,' the LORD replied, 'for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for *I will be with you and take care of you.* ...For see, today *I have made you immune* to attacks. *You are strong* like a fortified city that cannot be captured, like an iron pillar or a bronze wall. None of the kings, officials, priests, or people of Judah will be able to stand against you. They will try, but they will fail. *For I am with you, and I will take care of you.* I, the LORD, have spoken!' (Jeremiah 1:4-19)"

Note that Jeremiah had done absolutely nothing to earn his value—his true identity. God cannot be partial to Jeremiah, Gideon, Sarah, Abraham, Jonathan, etc. over you. You already have a book in heaven with your name on it as well, complete with your specific calling/gifting/purpose, and it is good— "'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the LORD. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope!' (Jeremiah 29:11)"

And Jeremiah 32:38-41 is joyfully crystal clear to God's children: "They will be *my people, and I will be their God.* And I will give them one heart and mind to worship me forever, *for their own good and for the good of all their descendants.* And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, *promising not to stop doing good for them.* I will put a desire in their hearts to worship me, and they will never leave me. *I will rejoice in doing good to them and will faithfully and wholeheartedly replant [secure] them* in this land [of promises]!"

"I sing praises, for you, O God, are my refuge [my ____ perfect Father, friend, provider, helper, teacher, comforter, healer, peace, rest, deliverer, rewarder, holiness, preserver, salvation—anything I ever need, always] the God who shows me unfailing love! (Ps. 59:17)"

Second Thessalonians 2:13 declares, "You are loved because *God chose you from the beginning* to experience salvation, a *salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy* and by your belief on the truth."

"So now *Jesus and you, who He makes holy, have the same Father.* That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call you *His brother or sister!* (Heb. 2:11)"

"Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD is the one *who goes before you.* He will be with you; He will neither fail you nor forsake you. (Deut. 31:8). Isaiah 41:8-14: "As for you, (____ insert your name), *I have called you...I have chosen you* and will not throw you away. Don't be afraid, for I AM with you (not I *was* with you). Don't be discouraged, for I AM your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. See, all your angry enemies lie there, confused and humiliated. ...For I hold you by your right hand—I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, 'Don't be afraid, ____ (your name)... *I AM here* to help you. ...Don't be afraid for I will help you. I AM the Lord, your Redeemer. I AM the Holy One of Israel.'" "

The first time God audibly spoke, as recorded in the New Testament, was about His son, Jesus' true *identity*: "And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' (Matthew 3:17; see also 2 Peter 1:17)" Note that Jesus hadn't yet begun to do anything His ministry called Him to.

Please understand that when you were born again, God immediately placed Jesus in you and placed you in Jesus. That means God is stating the same about *your* true identity: '*This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased!*' (John 14:20; 17:26; Rom. 6:11; Gal. 3:26; 4:7; Col. 1:22)"

God may not have formally changed your name like Abraham, Sarah, and the others. However, His Holy Spirit pursued and initiated your salvation—your adoption as a son or daughter into His family (Eph. 1, 2). *He saved you* (you could not save yourself); He provided your Savior. He immediately put you in Christ and Christ in you, a gift prepared for you. And God did this when you were yet a sinner, at your worst (Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 2:4,5; 1 John 4:10). "*You yourself [your ego] no longer lives, but Christ lives in you.* So you live your life in your earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, *who loved you and gave*

Himself for you!” (Gal. 2:20.) Like Abraham’s identity and experience, God is willing and able to meet all your needs in every situation.

Very early in Jesus’ ministry, it is written at Luke 4:17-19: “When Jesus came to the village of Nazareth, His boyhood home, He went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll containing the messages of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him, and He unrolled the scroll to the place where it says: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor [afflicted]. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the brokenhearted will be freed from their oppressors, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come. (Isa. 61)’” Jesus was telling us His truest identity—*how He is known in heaven plus what He wants to be for you and me in its essence. All while you are in Him and He is in you!*

Jesus amended Simon’s identity—He changed his name to ‘Peter’ (Matt. 16:17,18). The apostles revised Joseph’s identity—his name was changed to ‘Barnabas’ (Acts 4:36). Saul conducted killings of Christians. His identity was amended—Saul’s name was changed to ‘Paul’ (Acts 13:9).

God chose “orphans” with a history of deficiency and who repeated their flaws. He always accepts orphans who require extensive training just to be steady, let alone flourish. He chooses them because He wants to love us in such a way that we would always be safe and whole, whether we were strong or not (Micah 4:6-7; Ps. 34:18). And consider also that even God’s own, perfect son Jesus, “*grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.*” (Lk. 2:52)”

Each of us are made for relationship with God, yet many of us feel distant and disconnected with Him. As if He’s more of an idea we believe in our head than a person we relate to. But be encouraged; God is not an abstraction, not an ‘entity,’ not just a supreme being. He is a real person who has a real name. God’s name is “Yahweh” (pronounced, “Yehovah,” often spelled, “Jehovah”). God’s name is

personal, unchanging, eternal, and heavenly. He graciously revealed it to us as early as Genesis 2:7-19 when He, as a personal God, made man, “Adam.” A personal God created a personal man. What for? For personal fellowship between the two.

God’s personal name, Yehovah, יְהוָה, and one aspect of His nature is connected with unchanging, eternal “covenant.” A primary aspect of Yehovah’s nature is that He is a covenant-making, and covenant-keeping God (e.g., Psalm 89:28,34). Above everything else His covenants mean *union—two parties coming together functionally to make one* (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:17). They are person-to-person, sacred, promissory, and unchanging.

God’s personal, unchanging, eternal name, Yehovah, is also directly linked to seventeen (17) specific names or titles representing seventeen aspects of His covenant-keeping faithful nature—*who He is for you—what He wants to be for you in any situation.* In the order of their occurrence, these seventeen names reveal Yehovah in the following remarkable aspects for you in every one of your life circumstances:

1. *The Eternal Creator* (“Yehovah-Elohiym;” Gen. 2:4-25)
2. *The Lord our Sovereign Master* (“Adonai-Yehovah;” Gen. 15:2, 8)
3. *The one who sees* (to it) —*provides* (“Yehovah-Yireh;” Gen. 22:8-14) This is the basis of all God’s covenant commitment
4. *The one who is your victory banner* or victorious rallying, gathering point in battle (“Yehovah-Nissi;” Ex. 17:15)
5. *The one who heals, cures* (“Yehovah-Rapha;” Ex. 15:26)
6. *The Lord thy God* (“Yehovah-Eloheka;” Ex. 20:2, 5, 7)
7. *The one who is your peace* (“Yehovah-Shalom;” Judges 6:24)
8. *The one who is your righteousness* (“Yehovah-Tsidqenuw;” Jer. 23:6; 33:16)
9. *The one who sanctifies you, sets you apart for God in love, who is holy through you* (“Yehovah-Mekaddishkem;” Ex. 31:13; Lev. 20:8; 21:8; 22:9, 16, 32; Ezek. 20:12)
10. *The Lord of hosts (military)* (“Yehovah-Sabaoth;” 1 Sam. 1:3)

11. *Lord of the breakthrough*; the one who breaks through your enemy opposition for you (2 Samuel 5:19-20; “Baal-perazim”)
12. *The one who is there for you* (or *ever-present*) (“Yehovah-Shammah;” Ezekiel 48:35)
13. *The LORD Most High* (“Yehovah-Elyown;” Ps. 7:17; 47:2; 97:9)
14. *The one who is your shepherd*; you have everything you need (“Yehovah-Raah;” Ps. 23)
15. *The LORD our Maker* (“Yehovah-Hoseenu;” Ps. 95:6)
16. *The LORD our God* (“Yehovah-Eloheenu;” Ps. 99:5, 8, 9)
17. *The LORD your God* (“Yehovah-Elohay;” Zech. 14:5; Gen. 2:4)

“Those who know Your name will trust in You, for you, Yehovah [יְהוָה], have never forsaken those who seek You (Ps. 9:10).”

God is your Deliverer (Ps. 30:1), Healer (Ps. 30:2), Preserver (Ps. 30:3), Holiness (Ps. 30:4), Comforter (Ps. 30:5), Provider (Ps. 30:6), Protector (Ps. 30:7), Helper (Ps. 30:10).

The Holy Spirit, in relationship, is your Helper, Trainer, and Comforter (your ultimate “life coach” already paid-for in full) (Jn. 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; 1 Cor. 12:3; Acts 9:31; Rom. 8:26; 1 Jn. 2:27).

Notice that God is the initiator, not us. We respond.

“No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. (John 3:27)”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. *All things were made through Him*, and without Him nothing was made that was made. *In Him was life*, and the life was the light of everyone. (John 1:1-4)”

After God promised Abraham (“Abram” at the time) land and countless descendants including you and me (Gen. 13:13-18; Gal. 3:29), God initiated the covenant—sacred union—with Abraham, the human father of our faith. God did the formal covenant process *while Abram slept!* See Genesis 15.

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel *was sent by God* to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women [notice that identity language]!’ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, ‘...Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall *call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.* And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’ ...Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! *Let it be to me according to your word.*’ (Luke 1:26-33, 38)”

God initiates, Jesus responds. John 17:1, 7 states, “Jesus looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come. *Glorify your Son so He can give glory back to you...* Now they know that everything I have is a *gift* from you.’” God initiates, we respond. The onus to initiate is not on us; the onus to initiate is not on you or me!

“*You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.* (Jesus at John 15:16)”

“Jesus poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.” “Jesus said, ‘...For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.’ (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:5; Php. 2:5-8)”

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends. (Rev. 3:20)”

“We love God because *He first loved us.* (1 John 4:16-19)”

“*This is real love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.* (1 John 4:10)”

“Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above, who created all heaven's lights. Unlike them, He never changes or casts shifting shadows. (James 1:17)”

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:36)”

“Sharing in Christ’s death by our water baptism means that we were co-buried with Him, so that when the Father’s glory raised Christ from the dead, *we were also raised with Him. We have been co-resurrected with Him so that we could be empowered to walk in the freshness of new life.* For since we are permanently grafted into Him to experience a death like His, then we are permanently grafted into Him to experience a resurrection like His and the new life that it imparts. (Rom. 6:4-5 TPT)”

Second Peter 1:3-4 stunningly confirms this: “By His divine power, *God has [already] given us everything we need for living a godly life.* We have received all of this by coming to know Him, the one who called us to Himself by means of His marvelous glory and excellence. And *because of His* glory and excellence, *He has given us* great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to *share His divine nature* and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires!” “For all of God's promises have [already] been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding ‘Yes!’ And through Christ, our ‘Amen’ (which means ‘Yes’) ascends to God for His glory! (2 Cor. 1:20)”

First Corinthians 1:7: “*Now you [already] have every spiritual gift you need* as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. *God will do this, for He is faithful to do what He says,* and He has invited you into partnership with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!”

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing* in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ. Long ago, *even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ* to be holy and without fault in His eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us

into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this *gave Him great pleasure.* So we praise God *for the wonderful kindness He has poured out on us* because we belong to His dearly loved Son. He is so rich in kindness that *He [already] purchased our freedom through the blood of His Son, and our sins are forgiven. He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.* God's hidden plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, *designed long ago according to His good pleasure.* And this is *His plan:* At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ – everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because of Christ, *we [already] have received an inheritance from God,* for *He chose us from the beginning, and all things happen just as He decided long ago...And now you also have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that He will give us everything He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people!* (Eph. 1:3-14)”

“And by God’s will, *you have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ* once for all! (Hebrews 10:7-18)”

“But for us, there is one God, the Father, by whom *all* things were created, and *for whom we live.* And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live! (1 Cor. 8:6)”

“Hallelujah! *Salvation is from our God.* Glory and power belong to Him alone. (Rev. 19:1)”

Consider that you walk in favor, that the nature of God is *for you* not against you, and that your true identity is already nestled in the heart of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

“God changes not. (Malakai 3:6)” And “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! (Heb. 13:8)”

Orphan or Son or Daughter *in Messiah* Part II

All of us have been shaped by somebody else's perception. Predictably, these ideas even humiliated, traumatized, or shocked us, leaving us feeling insecure and/or insignificant. Unfortunately, they can stay with us and hold us back from seeing ourselves the way God does (Pr. 18:14; 15:13; Jas. 3:2). These kinds of misconceptions will need to be replaced because they have no place in the measure of His grace and truth towards us!

And, be reminded to read the following text and scriptures from *understanding, not doing* (i.e., Prov. 2:10-11; 16:22; Hosea 4:6). Consider allowing this section to create a sense of expectancy, not discomfort that you're somehow in-lack. In a later section, we will get to the intentional, personalized application of God's empowering Word.

God is love (1 John 4:7-8, 16). But not all love is God. God's love is best defined as: *The perfectly pure, immaculate and complete selfless disposition to do good; good will; kindness; charitableness; benevolence; the love of you (and me and all other persons), accompanied with a selfless desire to promote your happiness, and in eternity. And it is properly, whole, entire or perfect, and just in a moral sense.* Note that "selfless" needs nothing in return.

Additional characteristics of God's love include: "God's love is patient and kind. It is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. God's love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. God's love *never* gives up, *never* loses faith, is *always* hopeful, and endures through *every* circumstance. (1 Cor. 13; Lev. 19:18; Gal. 5:14, 22-23)"

God's primary personality traits are: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and a grip for you that is firm.

"How precious is your lovingkindness, O God! All your sons and daughters take shelter in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house and you give them to drink of the river of your delights. (Psalms 36:7-8)" Kindly note that this is yet another sample of your true identity defined: How you are known in heaven plus what God is for you.

And “That Psalm 36:7–8 (above) is also a most beautiful picture of Father God’s goodness. First of all, we turn to Him out of our need. We come to Him for shelter because we’re oppressed, because we cannot handle our problems. We take shelter in the shadow of His wings, but when we get in there under the shadow of His wings, then we discover that He’s provided much more for us than mere shelter. He’s provided a feast. He’s provided abundance. We feast on the abundance of His house, and not only that, but He gives us to drink of the river of His delights. That’s staggering! God does not give us to drink of a river of our own delights, but of His delights. He shares with us the things that delight Him.

“There are so many things that we would naturally take pleasure in that are harmful. The difference with God’s pleasures is that they are never harmful, and God wants to share with us His pleasures. He wants to give us to drink from the river of His pleasures, and not only are they pleasant, but they are beneficial. They’re never harmful.” — Bible teacher, *Derek Prince*

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the person who takes shelter in Him. (Psalms 34:8)”

Quoting Bible teacher Derek Prince again, “Notice that first word, taste: ‘Taste and see that the Lord is good.’ You realize, of course, that we are endowed with five physical senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. What is it that’s distinctive about the sense of taste? One distinctive feature of taste: if we see something, it’s external to us. If we hear something, it’s external. If we touch something, it’s still outside us. If we smell something, it may be still far from us. But there’s one thing about taste: when we taste something, we take it right into us and it becomes part of us. And that’s why the Lord challenges us to ‘Taste and see.’ Don’t let the Lord remain external, don’t let Him remain something outside of you.

“Paul says in the New Testament, ‘*Christ in you*, the hope of glory.’ You’ll never really have that hope of glory until you’ve actually tasted of the Lord, till you’ve taken Him within you, and then you’ll know [that you know that you know] in your heart of hearts He is good. Not because the preacher says it, not because the radio evangelist declares it, but because you’ve proved it in your experience, you’ve tasted, you’ve invited the Lord to come in and be an integral part of your life. And when you do that, you’ll *know* He’s good.” (www.gotchoices.net/derekprince)

Once again, in an upcoming section, we will learn how to take God’s goodness within and come to know that we know, that we know it in our heart of hearts, and not merely intellectually.

“O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever (1 Chronicles 16:34)!” “Every good thing I have comes from You! (Psalm 16:2)”

“The unfailing love of the LORD never ends! By His mercies we have been kept from destruction, they never cease. Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each day! (Lam. 3:22-23)”

“Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above, who created all heaven’s lights! Unlike them, He never changes or casts shifting shadows. (James 1:7)”

“I will tell of the LORD’s unfailing love. I will praise the LORD for all He has done. I will rejoice in His great goodness...which He has granted according to His mercy and love! (Isaiah 63:7)”

“The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to His name. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for You are close beside me. Your rod and Your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor [protect] me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. *Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life*, and I will live in the house of

the LORD forever! (Ps. 23:1-6)” Kindly note that this illustrious passage is yet another clear sample of your true identity defined: How you are known in heaven plus what God is for you in any situation:

Perfect God; unfailing perfect love, deliberately chosen desperately helpless and in need of supervision, your perfect keeper, perfect care-giver, perfect healer, perfect security, perfect fulfilment, perfect leader, perfect supply, perfect guidance, perfect peace, perfect restoration, perfect character, holiness, perfect purpose (‘honor to His name’), perfectly trustworthy, perfect protection, perfect companionship, perfect defense, perfect help, perfect solace, perfect provision, perfect food & drink, perfect presence, perfect safety, perfect anointing, perfect joy, perfect assurance, perfect benevolence, perfect compassion, perfect life, perfect home, perfect destiny.

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around *doing good* and healing *all* who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him! (Acts 10:38)”

Ephesians 2:8-10 states: “By God’s grace you have been saved through faith. And you cannot take credit for this; it is a *gift* from God. ⁹Salvation is *not* a result of works, so that no one may boast about it. ¹⁰For you are God’s masterpiece; He has created you anew in Christ Jesus, so that you can do the good works He planned for you before the foundation of the world [long before you were born].” Ephesians 2:8 & 9 detail a loving reminder of the *security* from your true identity—God’s permanent unconditional love continually expressed for you and me. And “God demonstrates His own love toward you, in that while you were still a sinner [*at your worst*], Christ died for you.” (Rom. 5:6-8; see also Eph. 2:4,5; 1 John 4:10.)

And then Ephesians 2:10 proclaims how God has now met another major aspect of your true identity—meaningful purpose, significance: “For you are God’s masterpiece; He has created you anew *in Christ Jesus, so that you can do the good works He planned for you before the foundation of the world [before time began].*”

In Christ Jesus, our works are not *for* God, but *of* God.

Be encouraged to consider this paraphrase by husband, father, Christian Counselor and author, Larry Crabb, Ph.D. in his remarkable book entitled, *Effective Biblical Counseling*:

“My true identity demands that I be unconditionally loved and cared for, now and forever. God has seen me at my worst and still loved me to the point of giving His life for me. That kind of love I can never lose. I am completely loved by God regardless of my past, present, and future behavior. I am under no pressure to earn or to keep His love. My love from God depends only on the truth that *God is love*. God loves me one hundred percent, one hundred percent of the time; God is love. *My job first is to be loved by God.*

“Now that I know *God’s* love I can rest, secure, regardless of what other jobs He has for me to do. I *rest* knowing that the eternal God of creation has pledged to use His infinite power and wisdom to ensure my welfare and my success. That’s the security of my true identity. I will experience nothing that my loving God will not empower me to handle. When problems mount and I feel alone, insecure, and afraid, I am to fill my mind with the security-building truth that at this moment a sovereign, loving, personal, infinite God is always and absolutely for my success. In this realization I *rest* secure in my true identity. [And this is not an intellectual-knowledge but a revelation, something the Holy Spirit helps me come to know that I know in my heart of hearts; Eph. 3:16-19; Matt. 11:25; 16:17; Acts 28:27; Rom. 10:10; 1 Cor. 1:19; Pr. 4:23.]]

“My true identity also depends upon a revelation in my heart of hearts of who I am in Christ, and that *Christ is in me*. [These truths are not mere head-knowledge also.] I will come to feel purposeful and significant as I have an eternal impact on people around me by blessing them or ministering to them. If I fail in business, if my spouse leaves

me, if my church rolls drop, if I work in a menial occupation, if I can afford only a small house and one used car, I can still enjoy the thrilling identity of belonging to the Ruler of the universe, who has had a meaningful purpose for me since the very beginning. He has equipped me for the job. As Christ-like traits develop in me, I enter more and more fully into the identity of belonging to and serving the Lord.” (See also Isa. 43:7; Mark 3:35.)

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed. (Psalms 34:18)”

“The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God. (Psalms 51:17)”

Broken hearts do have to be healed before love can break through. “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me [Jesus], for the Lord has anointed me [Jesus] to bring good news to the poor [afflicted]. He has sent me [Jesus] to comfort [heal] the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. (Isaiah 61:1)”

When we think about being in a relationship, it’s normally a two-way street. It’s the same with God. He knew you before you were ever aware of Him, and now in response, He wants you to draw near to Him—to know Him too. The nearer you are, the more you discover who He is. In discovering who He is, you discover more of who you are—a masterpiece!

Your Truest Personal Identity

Your true identity is not found in your moral performance—what you do or don’t do. Your true identity is found in how you are known in heaven plus who God wants to be for you in any situation.

Jesus was intentionally led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1-10). “For forty days and forty nights Jesus fasted.... During that time the devil came and said to Him, ‘If you are the

Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.’” The devil first tempted Jesus in the area of Jesus’ truest identity. “But Jesus told him, ‘No! The Scriptures say, ‘*People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*’” Clearly, the devil tempted Jesus in the area where you and I are most tempted—identity. In response, Jesus, our pattern, declared truth—something God is for Him (and us) — when the opposition tempted Him. And note that Jesus is now *in* each of us!

“As many as received Jesus, He gave to them *power* to become the sons [and daughters] of God...to them who believe on His name. (John 1:12 KJV)” You or I cannot become a son or daughter of God’s without His benevolent *power* granted to us. We cannot do even this without Him.

“I will be *a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,*’ says the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:18).” You are never an orphan.

1 John 3:1-2 declares: “*What marvelous love the Father has extended to you! Just look at it—you’re called a child of God! That’s who you really are.* But that’s also why the world doesn’t recognize you or take you seriously, because it has no idea who He is or what He’s up to. But *beloved, that’s exactly who you are: a child of God...*”

“...For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’ (2 Cor. 6:16)” This began when you were born again—*when you were dead in your trespasses* (Eph. 2:4; Rom. 5:8). And God always wants to be *with* each of us.

“God commends His love toward you, in that, while you were yet a sinner [at your worst, exposed for what you really are, no masks], Christ died for you. (Rom. 5:8; 2 Pet. 1:2-4)”

“*God, who first saved you and then called you to this holy work. You had nothing to do with it. It was all His idea, a gift prepared for you in Jesus long before you knew anything about it.* (2 Timothy 1:9)”

“Jesus intentionally revealed Father God to you and is continuing to do so, that *Father God’s perfect love for Jesus is in you, and Jesus in you!* (John 17:26)”

“Now you are no longer *a slave* but God’s own child. And *since you are His child, everything He has belongs to you!* (Gal. 4:7)”

“You are Christ’s and Christ is God’s. (1 Cor. 3:23)”

“Your Father knows what you have need of before you ask Him. (Matt. 6:8)”

“O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge. (Ps. 62:8)”

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” (Jesus at John 15:16)

“The Father [God] has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to His people [you], who live in the light. For He has rescued us [you] from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us [you] into the Kingdom of His dear Son, who purchased our [your] freedom and forgave our [your] sins! (Colossians 1:12-14.)”

“I [Jesus] am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in Me, and I in them, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing [good]. (John 15:5)” In Him, the question is not one of doing a thing *for* God, but *of* God.

“As the Father loved Me [Jesus], I also have loved you; abide in My love. (John 15:9)”

“As a father loves and pities his children, so the Lord loves and pities those who fear Him [with reverence, worship, and awe]. (Ps. 103:13)”

“For in Him [God] you live and move and have your being, as also some poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ (Acts 17:28)”

“‘For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall my covenant of peace be removed,’ says the LORD, who has mercy on you. (Isaiah 54:10)”

Luke 15:11-32 states the familiar parable of the outrageously loving father a.k.a. the “Prodigal Son.” Most of us have enjoyed more than a couple of great sermons from it. My understanding is that culturally, the returning, wayward, younger son who prematurely took his inheritance to another land [kingdom] and squandered it was liable to be killed by the guardians of the community for his transgression. And therefore, the unconditionally-unlimited-loving

father [God] literally saved his self-serving son’s [your life, and humanity’s] life also when he ran out to him.

Note that both sons had the orphan mindset. The wayward one exchanged his sonship for despairing independence. Notice too (v. 19) that he was returning to his father to become “one of his hired servants;” *being made right through performance*. And the older son lived more like an orphan than the unruly son. He defined his relationship by his performance not by his relationship to his father as a son. He felt entitled, so he was bitter when his brother returned. Performance and its pride, among other challengers, can make God’s children view life through a skewed lens.

True Identity = How you are known in heaven + who God is for you (including what God wants to be for you in any situation)

How you are known in heaven: “A masterpiece,” a deliberately chosen, adopted, unconditionally loved, forgiven, redeemed, healed, whole, blessed, highly favored son or daughter in Christ, co-heir with Jesus in this life too, who is being personally, compassionately empowered, tried, purified, transformed more and more in the image of Jesus, seated with Him in the heavenly realm, who, compelled by His love can do the good things He planned for you before time began, through faith.

Psalm 68:5 states, “Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy.”

“We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in Him. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and *God lives in them*. (1 John 4:16)”

“Nothing, absolutely nothing can separate you from the love of God! (Romans 8:38-39)”

“For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body, and *you are complete through your union with Christ*. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe! (Col. 2:9, 10)”

Truly Foundational

“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of *adoption* by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with your spirit that you are *a child of God*... (Rom. 8:15, 16)”

“And it was only right that God—who made everything and for whom everything was made—should bring His many *children* [including you] into glory. Through the suffering of Jesus, God made Him a perfect leader, one fit to bring you into your salvation. So now Jesus and the ones He makes holy [you] have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call you His brother or sister. For He said to God, ‘I will declare the wonder of Your name to my brothers and sisters [you]. (Hebrews 2:10-13)”

“This is the confidence you have in God: that if you ask anything according to His will, He hears you. And if you know that He hears you—whatever you ask—you know that you have what you asked of Him. (1 John 5:14, 15)”

“*He chose you from the beginning.* (Eph. 1:5)” “For whom He foreknew He also predestined you to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many *brethren*. Moreover, *whom He predestined, He also called; whom He called, these He also justified [acquitted & made right]; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.* (Rom. 8:29, 30)”

Note that we’re graciously informed at Eph. 1:11-13 that “predestined” means that based on His unconditional love for you, God mapped your unique destiny, uniquely gifted you, and charted a personalized path, beforehand, for you to be conformed more and more to the image of His Son, glorifying Him. You always have a choice to exercise your free will on His premeditated, custom, and specific path for you. God offers salvation to everyone (Titus 2:11).

“This is love, not that you loved God, but He loved *you* and sent His Son to be the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for *your* sins.” (1 John 4:10) *You were in sin, and He loved you. “He made you accepted in the beloved.* (Eph. 1:6)”

To the degree that I allow the Holy Spirit to train me in clinging to, trusting in, relying (believing) on the copious passages above, I am freed from living as a self-reliant, independent (orphan), as the 'old self'—a life of self-centered compulsion in whether or not my own needs are met. I am able to move on to real Christian maturity, confidently knowing (not necessarily always “feeling”) that “*all* of my needs are met according to God’s glorious riches in Jesus Christ [not according to your moral works].” My physical needs will be met according to God's purposes, and my personal needs are now and forever perfectly met!

And my personality becomes more and more like “the fruit of the Spirit: love, its joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and a firm grip.* Against such things there is no law [no effective opposition]! (Gal. 5:22-25)” * A more accurate translation and theology; see also Colossians 1:11.

In addition, my hurts, hang-ups, habits (including addictions), health problems, relationship heartache, and/or financial headache get reversed because they go back to Jesus, who paid for them! (3 John 1:2 KJV) *Our Bible clearly proves that no issue is irreversible!*

Kindly note that to trust in this in the face of tremendous pressure to agree with the sin-cursed world's system of living for money, pleasure, or fame requires a strong commitment to the authority of Scripture.

“It can be distressing to hear some Christians treat the Bible as helpful but not authoritative. Some seem to regard Scripture as accurate in its teaching on spiritual matters but possibly incorrect in the realm of scientific concerns. If we are followers of Jesus in any meaningful and practical sense, we must dogmatically insist that wherever Scripture speaks, it speaks with infallible authority [2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20]. If the Bible says my personal needs are met, then they are met. Even though my entire being may rebel and scream within me, ‘I feel I am not worthwhile,’ I must forcibly, by an act of my will, and *empowered by the Holy Spirit*, bow before the Word and admit that somewhere I am not perceiving things accurately.”³

You will continue to receive practical help that addresses those inaccurate perceptions and enables you to transition into a life and love that aligns with Scripture.

Additionally, we will truly learn to enjoy being a child of God, allowing Him to meet all our needs in every circumstance. God realizes that we haven’t been taught this—we’re just learning. He always looks at you, a son or daughter, based on your future. He never defines you by your past failures. God always sees the best in you (2 Cor. 5:17). *Failure is merely a stepping stone in your maturity process; it is never an event to define your identity.* If it were, no one would want to continue on their life journey.⁵ Recall that Jesus informed Peter that before the rooster crowed in the morning, Peter would deny Him three times. Jesus’ very next words to Peter were, “Do not let your heart be troubled...There are many rooms in my Father's home...for I go to prepare a place for you. (John 13:38—14:4)” And recall how Jesus responded to Peter after His resurrection, after Peter’s three denials. Jesus loved Peter with open arms (John 21:10-19). For God’s love is always greater! (1 John 3:20; see also Luke 2:52; John 3:17; Rom. 8:1; Titus 3:5; Heb. 4:16; 1 Pet. 2:10.)

Realizing Your Truest Identity is Imperative

In various places, the Bible compares the life of a believer to the construction of a building (i.e., Pr. 24:3; Ps. 127:1; Jer. 22:13-14; Mt. 7:24-27; Heb. 3:3-4). Naturally, the first and most important feature of any permanent structure is its foundation. The foundation sets a limit to the weight and height of the building to be erected upon it. The realization of your true identity in your heart of hearts is indeed your life’s *foundation* so that you enjoy and fulfill your life’s purpose that God lovingly wants to erect. And just as a building’s foundation rests on bedrock, your realization of your true identity in your heart of hearts yields a serene *rest* in your spirit, soul, mind, and body! (Hebrews 3:6—4:11.)

All Things for Your Sake

To quote prominent Bible teacher and author, Derek Prince: “Psalm 119:67, 71, 75 contains a lesson about affliction [hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartache, and financial headache] and the purpose of affliction and why affliction comes in our lives and how we Christians should respond to affliction. After all, there’s nobody who won’t encounter affliction in his or her life. Be encouraged to listen to what the psalmist says about affliction and what he learned from it:

“Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I obey your word. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. I know, O LORD, that your laws [instructions] are righteous and in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

“Note that the psalmist didn’t view affliction as a disaster. He saw it as a kind of corrective medicine. It was something that he needed to adjust in his life. He says, *‘Before I was afflicted, I went astray and I paid for it, but now,’* he said, *‘I obey Your word. I’ve learned my lesson. It pays to obey.’*

“And then he says at the end, *‘O LORD... in faithfulness you have afflicted me.’* You didn’t do it because You were cruel or because You were angry with me. You did it to straighten me out, to bring me back from my own evil way into Your way, to find the way of peace.

“The New Testament tells Christians, *‘All things are for your sakes’* (2 Cor. 4:15; see also John 15:1-2; Rom. 5:3; 8:28; 1 Cor. 5:5; 11:32; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 12:5-7; James 1:2-5, 12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; Gen. 50:20; Judges 3:1-2; Ps. 51:1-12; Jer. 29:11) we must grasp that. God’s principles and purposes — they are all *for* us. They’re all working out that which is good for us and they control the universe. Many other factors may seem to enter in, but ultimately, it’s God’s laws and our associated choices that determine our destiny.

“When we are in the midst of affliction, we needn’t fight. We needn’t argue with God. We need to ask what the reason is. God permits our affliction in His faithfulness. He has a reason. His spiritual principles and purposes are *for* us to turn us back from something, to bring us out of the dark and bring us back under His blood covering

— a lifestyle of yielding to His [loving] instruction.” (John 14:15; 8:31; 1 John 5:2-3; www.gotchoices.net/derekprince)

His guarantee is unlimited. And, there are still warning signs to make it work for us. A red light flashes at a railroad crossing when the train is coming, to prevent us from getting killed. A fire engine sounds a siren to warn us of its approach. An ambulance and a police car flash lights when there is danger, and the wail of their siren warns us to pull over and get out of the way. A fever warns us of sickness and infection.

All of these signals are good, and so are God's warning signs. They are just as effective to keep us from getting killed spiritually as the flashing lights at a railroad crossing are to keep us from getting killed in the natural. God loves us so much that He has posted warning signs all along the lake of joy, just for our protection!

Your God-Given Auto-Anointing

It gets even better: Whatever hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartache and financial headaches God sets you free from He automatically gives you an anointing [distinctive power of God's love to accomplish His will at a specific time & place] to set other people free from the very same issue(s) you were a victim to. God not only delivers you from what the enemy has done in your life, but He actually gives you an anointing in the area you used to be a victim (2 Cor. 1:3-4; Php. 1:12). He turns that into your ministry. That is your payback to the enemy. Your restitution is to set other people free from the very thing that Satan made you a victim to. All of God's kids have this in common. That is one of the many ways God frustrates the enemy's plans against His kids. What he means for evil and destruction for God's kids God turns around and uses against him (Gen. 50:20). What we were a victim to is now to be a lifeline for many others. These issues are used to train your hands for war (Ps. 144:1).

Adversity is God's Currency for Maturing You

Not all affliction is hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartache, or financial headache—a warning sign to turn us back from something. There is another kind of ‘affliction’—*adversity* that is “a fire of testing and purifying.” To quote Bible teacher Max Lucado, “God loves you just the way you are, and He refuses to leave you that way. For your own good and His purposes, He wants you to become more and more like Jesus.”

So often, the entry door to your destiny begins at the door of a crisis. Instead of seeing situations as a crisis, or even a warning to turn us back from something, consider that these events may be the entry door to something new God has planned for you.

“If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me [Jesus], you are not worthy of being mine. If you cling to your life [of self-serving], you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it. (Mat. 10:38-39)”

Adversity is God's currency for maturing a son or daughter to know Him intimately and move His heart. The very thing we ask Him to change is the thing that is making us the son or daughter who blesses Him and others. Without these crises, we would fall into complacency and self-satisfaction. We would not seek Him with a passionate heart. Fervent hunger for God often only comes through the fires of testing. It is the nature of God's sons and daughters to desire a life without trials. However, we know not what we are asking. If we knew what awaits us on the other side and the inheritance we are gaining through these trials, we would ask God to send more! Remember, God only allows what you can handle to keep you growing in your relationship with Him (1 Cor. 10:13).

“Whenever God takes a son or daughter to a low place, it is to accomplish something only that process can do. Job learned that “I reveal the deep things of darkness and bring deep shadows into the light” (Job 12:22). Job's trials allowed him to gain insight into God, himself, and his friends. He had assumed things about God that he had to recant: ‘Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things

too wonderful for me to know (Job 42:3).’ God has sent you ahead to learn these things so that you and others will benefit from your experience. While you feel you have been brought low, God views this place as a high position. God realizes the world views it as a place to be despised. But look at Joseph's life.”⁵

“F. B. Meyer, in his book, *The Life of Joseph*, describes a time in the life of the 12 sons of Jacob in which they were driven from their lives of self-satisfaction to an unlikely place to save their lives. Many years earlier, they had thrown their youngest brother into a pit and then sold him into slavery. Thirteen years later, he became the second most powerful person in Egypt. At that time, the world was experiencing a famine, and Joseph controlled all the stored grain of Egypt.

“As long as the hills were green and the pastures clothed with flocks, as long as the valleys were covered over with corn and rang with the songs of reapers, Reuben, Simeon, and the rest of them would have been unconcerned and content. But when the mighty famine came, the hearts of these men were opened to conviction. Their carnal security was shattered. They were being prepared for certain spiritual experiences they would never have dreamed. And they were being prepared for the meeting with Joseph. This is how God deals with us; He breaks up our nest, He loosens our roots, He sends a mighty famine that cuts away the whole staff of bread. Then, at such times, weary, worn, and sad, we are prepared to confess our sins and receive the words of Christ when He says, ‘Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest’ (Matt. 11:28).

“A missionary once said, ‘There is a place where we will all be obedient.’ Joseph was a depiction of Christ in the Old Testament. The famine was an event designed to bring the brothers to repentance and a saving knowledge, physically and spiritually. It created the circumstances that led to freedom for these men, for they had been in bondage to a wicked crime against their brother for many years. It was Joseph's forgiveness that led to that freedom.

“Centuries later, recorded at Psalm 105:16-19, God gave David supernatural insight into Joseph’s life while held captive: ‘They

bruised Joseph’s feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true.’ It was in low places that Joseph was prepared to be the most powerful man in the world by the time he was thirty years of age. And for the next eighty years, he continued in that high position. He learned many things about God during his captivity that he later used as ruler of a nation.”⁵

“Joseph named his second son 'Ephraim' and said, 'It is because God has made me fruitful *in the land of my suffering*.'" (Ephraim means “twice fruitful” Genesis 41:52) “Go down there and buy some [grain] for us, so that we may live and not die.” (Jacob to Joseph’s ten older brothers at Gen. 42:2b) “But as for you, *you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive*.” (Joseph to his older bro’s at Gen. 50:20.)

“If you find yourself in a lowly state, realize that from God’s vantage point, it is a high position, providing rich soil for growing the deep things He will cultivate in you.”⁵ “Let the *lowly* Christian glory in his exaltation. (James 1:9)” Romans 5:3: “We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that *suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope*.”

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because *you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance*. Let perseverance complete its work so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing. (Jas. 1:2-4)”

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, *though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ*, who having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9)”

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted

beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13)"

"Make me hear joy and gladness, that *the bones You have broken* may rejoice. (Psalm 51:8)"

"And we know that *all* things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [*charted a personalized pathway beforehand*] *to be conformed to the image of His Son*, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:28-29; Gen. 1:26; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 5:23-24)"

Another note that regarding 'predestination,' God desires that *all* would be saved and come to repentance (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). "For the LORD God is a sun and shield...No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalms 84:11)" Science has discovered a God-given physical structure in our brains which is our free will. In over 4,000 scriptures, "choose," "will," and other words expressing choice are used. We cannot be free if we have no choice—if God imposes His will on ours. From what would we be free?

"I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. (Paul at Philippians 1:12)" "Even though Jesus was God's Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered. In this way, God qualified Him as a perfect High Priest, and He became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey Him. (Heb. 5:8-9)"

"*Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.* (1 Thess. 5:18)" "'No challenge, no change.' That'll preach!" —Bible teacher and author, Joyce Meyer, quoting her exercise coach. "And Jesus was saying to them all, 'If any of you wishes to come after Me, you must deny yourself [your ego], and take up your cross daily and follow Me. (Luke 9:23; see also Matt. 23:12; Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; Rev. 12:11.)" "Likewise, you also, consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom.6:11; 6:4; 8:6)" "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone.

But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives." (Jesus at John 12:24). Dying to old thinking, its patterns and the ego can be difficult. However, as you yield your life to Him, this death *allows Jesus to live through you, giving life to all you come in contact with* (John 17:20-26; Gal. 2:20).

"One of the signs that will tell you that your adversity is about to end is this: When the adversity no longer matters to you, your season is almost over. This is a sign. You have become dead to your circumstances and only desire God's will. This is a good place to be. This is where the Holy Spirit can really work in your life. It is the letting go of rights [by faith (love); not by despair] that is so hard for humans. When Joseph came before Pharaoh to interpret his dream, his deliverance from prison and elevation meant very little to him. He had died to his circumstances. He lived for God in the midst of his hardship. Father God has called you to do the same. Learn to let Jesus live *through* you so that others will experience your life as a sweet-smelling aroma." ⁵

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, *so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.* ...We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But *this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.* (2 Cor. 1:3-4, 8, 9)"

How Problems Develop Part I ²

Please be reminded to read the following from a stance of simply learning, rather than doing something. We can't fail or make a mistake while we're just learning. In another section, we will learn to allow God's Spirit and Word to reverse the specific issues in our lives.

It has wisely been said, "Eliminating our problems starts with knowing the cause." If we don't have a basic understanding of the cause, we won't recognize the biblical solution.

To some degree humans will forever remain a mystery. We're discussing a complex creation of an infinite God! A good, clear progression that describes the basics of human functioning is extremely beneficial.

Most of us are terribly confused about our own behavior. Why don't we take God at His word? And why do we do what we do? The apostle Paul expressed agonizing bewilderment over his own behavior in Romans 7. He tells us that he regularly found himself doing precisely the opposite of what he honestly felt he wanted to do. As he observed his perplexing pattern of behavior, he could only conclude that there was a law of some sort operating within the structure of his personality that completely opposed his conscious and sincere intentions. Most of us can easily identify with Paul's dilemma.

- A man with a hot temper honestly intends not to lose control again. Within minutes, he's bellowing at his wife, sometimes hitting her. (Both wife and husband beating, by the way, is reportedly on the rise, not just in low-income, minority homes, but in middle- and upper-class "respectable" homes as well.)
- Two young people pledge with deeply felt sincerity to love, honor, and mutually care for each other until parted by death. A few years later, they lie in bed with their backs to each other, wondering why their marriage is dead.
- A wife determines not to let her husband's behavior get her visibly annoyed, but before the evening ends, she has bitingly expressed her irritation.
- After screaming at her child, a mother vows never to raise her voice again. Junior stubbornly refuses to pick up his toys or her

teenage son arrogantly smart-mouths her and her vow is broken with an ear-splitting shout.

- A middle-aged man obsessed with a perverted sexual fantasy feels guilty every time he enjoys his own private world of erotic pleasure. Certain movies and magazines offer such strong temptations that he succumbs. Wrecked by deep remorse, he promises God he will never allow his mind to dwell on his sexual daydreams again. That evening in bed, he rehearses in arousing detail another fantasy.

Why? Why, despite our best intentions, do we fail to carry out our sincerely made resolutions? It is not uncommon, when asking this question, to hear any number of completely unhelpful evangelical clichés like, “You're not trusting in the Lord's power, you're depending on your own” or “Let go and let God” or “You're not reckoning your old nature to be dead” or “Pray more earnestly for deliverance, then repeat phrases including 'the blood of Christ' your problem will disappear.” But the problems continue. Many people who are conscientiously trying to change for the better often experience profound dissatisfaction, which only compounds their difficulties in self-control. What is the answer to the problem? Why do we do what we do even though we consciously may not want to?

The helpful answer is not an authoritarian, rigid set of principles, or a simple pat answer easily expressed in a few words. What follows in this section is an earnest attempt to articulate language about human behavior that is informed by a scriptural view of humanity.

1. We Need a True Identity

The first stage in the progression is the concept of *need*. As we are both physical and personal beings, we have both physical and personal needs. *Physical needs* consist of whatever is necessary to survive and keep the body alive physically—food, clothing, shelter, etc. *Personal needs*, however, consist of whatever is required to personally survive, to keep us alive.

Our true identity is the primary *personal need and as the basis for our feeling worthwhile*.

e.g., “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!”

We must have the unconditional love (security) and meaningful purpose that come out of our true identity if we are to remain alive as persons (Gen. 1:26-28; John 17; 1 Thess. 5:23-24). Many of us are in the process of dying and do not realize our plight. For as long as we entertain the hope that more money, prestige, sex, fame, vanity, travel, whatever will provide us with identity, we keep going. And as soon as we face the horrid blackness of no worth and no hope of attaining it, a deep despair sets in. At that point we either plunge into irrational efforts to dull the inner pain (alcohol, drugs, working, porn, meaningless sex, human remedies, commendation, retail therapy, overeating, self-pity, isolation, enabling, coercing or manipulating others, narcissism, etc., etc.), have a meltdown, become psychotically withdrawn or bizarre, or commit suicide.

When we come to know that we know, that we know the truth in our heart of hearts of how we are known in heaven + what God is for us in any situation and begin to practice that truth by rational, responsible, obedient, and committed living, we become more and more whole, alive, vibrant, full. Life, no matter how difficult the circumstances, is worth living. It makes sense. There is joy and reason to go on—all the characteristics of a truly gracious, mature personality and transcendent life begin to emerge.

The first concept, then, is *identity*, not wants, not acquired needs, but *identity*. To understand how a person functions, we begin with identity. (Reference also the stated biblical passages on pages 15-29 above.)

(Earlier, it was established that Satan counterfeits our identity. “Identity = Performance [good works] + Others' opinions” versus “True Identity = How you are known in heaven + who God is for you including what God wants to be for you in any situation”.)

2. We Are Motivated

It wasn't until after God declared about Jesus, "...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" that Jesus stated at John 8:29:

"He who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."

Notice the direct connection between His worth (identity), the security and meaningful purpose it produces, and *motivation*. Jesus knew that He knew in His heart of hearts His true identity; He realized His sonship vs. an orphan mindset; He realized He was secure (unconditionally loved) and had a meaningful purpose.

The second concept in the stages of human behavior is *motivation*. Simply stated, motivation is the drive or urge for identity. It is that sense of momentum that compels us to do something to feel worthwhile. We as people experience an acute, keen desire for identity. We are willing to expend tremendous personal energy to satisfy this need. We call this profound, involuntary willingness to feel worthwhile *motivation*.

Basic motivation considered by itself is little more than random, undifferentiated energy. I am willing to do something, to move, to work hard at becoming a worthwhile person. But what do I do? In what direction do I choose to move? What am I motivated to do? What becomes important to me? In what pursuits do I expend my motivational energy? The answer to these questions is as important as it is simple: *The direction that I am motivated to follow in an effort to meet my identity need depends neither on the need nor on the motivational energy but rather on what I think will meet that need.* The need is there and I am anxious to meet it, so I am motivated to do whatever I *believe* will give me identity.

We're generously informed at James 4:3 that our motivation is usually wrong. Saul of Tarsus was motivated to "harshly persecute" Christians before God redeemed his identity to "Paul." (Acts 7:54-58; 8:1-3; 9:4.)

After allowing the Holy Spirit to renew Paul's former motivation for identity (Gal. 1:17-18), Apostle Paul graciously shares with us his

motivation, and to what motivation the Holy Spirit is renewing every Christian's: "...**Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**" (1 Cor. 10:31)" "For **Christ's love compels us... those who receive His new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ...**" (1 Cor. 16:14; 2 Cor. 5:14-15)" "**Let this motivation** of Christ Jesus be also in you...When He appeared in human form, **He humbled Himself in obedience to God to the point of death** on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)"

We are motivated to enjoy living from the unshakable security and meaningful purpose of our true identity. If we feel hungry, we behave in ways designed to procure food. If we feel insecure, we try to find love. Jesus is now *in* each of us (John 17:20-26; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3). His motivation is our pattern, and our power in life. As we yield to Him, it's His role to train us in aligning our motivation. "I will not leave you as an orphan [independent].") Therefore, in truth, as a follower of Jesus, my basic motivation is to come to realize my true identity in my heart of hearts—and not my mere intellect.

Colossians 2:9 reminds us, "For in Christ is the fullness of God in human form, and *you are complete through your union with Christ!*" (See also Eph. 4:19.) Until our identity need feels met by God, we are operating from a lack, a deficit. Therefore, our basic motivation can be characterized as self-serving. **Motivation to find identity is at the core of all our behavior. We are trying to meet our need ourselves.**

And our truest identity is required before we will be motivated to genuinely express who God created, simply because **until we truly realize in our heart of hearts God's loving appraisal of us, we do not believe we really are anyone.**

The Holy Spirit through Paul reports this at 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: "If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth but *didn't have love, I would only be making meaningless noise* like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I knew all the mysteries of the future and knew everything about everything, but *didn't have love, what good would I be?* And if I had the gift of faith

so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, *without love I would be no good to anybody*. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but *if I didn't have love, I would be of no value whatsoever*."

"I pray that you, being rooted and established in...the love of Christ...and to know *this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God [new and genuine security out of a right motivation]* (Eph. 3:17-19)!"

However, we develop ideas from interaction with 'the flesh' and the sin-cursed world system about what is required to feel worthwhile. To understand why we do what we do, we must recognize that we operate from deficit motivation—seeking to obtain something we believe will provide our identity, even if it involves dishonesty and/or sin to achieve it. Many times this includes the sin of self-righteous religiosity as did Saul (Acts 7:54-58; 8:1-3; 9:4, later redeemed as "Apostle Paul").

Again, rest assured that it is the Holy Spirit's compassionate role to lead, guide, and empower us in renewing our motivation.

Until we know that we know in our heart of hearts our true identity, we feel a lack or a deficit *and act in ways designed to fill the void*. Our basic motivation is amiss. It is one thing to say that we can claim by faith that our needs are already met in God. It is quite another thing to disentangle ourselves successfully from the sticky web of deficit motivation—*fundamental motivation coming out of a vigorously convincing yet fictitious lack of identity*.

And much of the time, this ensues beyond our conscious level.

So far the progression looks like this:

Start Here:

1. The inherent personal need for a true identity
2. *Motivation* or the drive or urge to meet that identity need

3. Trauma, 'The Flesh,' and Our 'Basic Assumption'

Who has defined your true identity? We all have a self-image. Each of us has a perception of ourselves. God, who *is* love, also has an image of you, one that He imagined before time ever was. Is the image you have of yourself the same one that He has? So once again, who has defined your identity?

As children, we pass through an orderly series of developmental stages. In these stages, we are motivated to find our identity. At some point, we each hit upon a strategy that seems to work.

And as part of our mental functioning, we make *basic assumptions* about how to meet the need of our true identity. Usually, we develop a broad guiding idea. The most common guiding ideas include:

"My identity comes from

- money
- a loving spouse
- excelling
- child; children; and/or my kids turning out well
- perfectionism
 - not making a mistake
 - not criticized
- acceptance from everyone
- business prestige, or career prestige
- being a steady worker
- being a sexual object
- recognition by my peer group, or inclusion
- no one is rejecting me in some way
- a merit-based walk with God, or 'my' ministry."

Compare this list above of how we typically meet the need of our true identity with God's way of meeting the same need:

True Identity = How you are known in heaven + who God is for you
(including what God wants to be for you in any situation)

Realizing our true identity is so necessary that we hold onto our basic assumptions, or attitudes, firmly and emotionally about how to meet our need for a true identity. Our assumptions, or attitudes, solidify into beliefs about our identity.

We, as children, developed a strategy for meeting our identity need. Our parents or caregivers, the sin-cursed world system, and mostly “the flesh” teach us *a false* assumption about how to meet the need of our true identity. And this early, false assumption for meeting our identity need connects to a life-event in each of our lives that was traumatic, shocking, humiliating, heartbreaking, sexual, or frightening. This event happens to all but a hundred percent of us before age eleven. It involves one or more of the following wounds: neglect, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, fright, sexual abuse, or rejection that was obvious or veiled. This is consistently when our self-reliant, independent orphan perspective begins.

**This wound was not, in any way,
your fault or your responsibility.**

“Your age-old enemy has no new methods because the following three strategies have worked well for him for literally thousands of years since he fell from heaven. He seeks to defeat and control God’s sons and daughters through: 1) the lust of the flesh, 2) the lust of the eyes, and 3) the pride of life (1 John 2:15, 16). Whenever one of us falls, it is due to one or more of these sins. Satan will entice you to fulfill your intimacy needs through your sensual soul nature; he will entice you to acquire possessions to fill empty places in your heart; and he will make you feel like you are more important and special than anyone else. Beware of his schemes.”⁵

It is vitally important to realize the truth that the apostle Paul graciously informs us at Ephesians 6:12: “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood [ourselves, parents, caregivers; peoples], but against...the unseen *spiritual forces of evil* in the heavenly realms.” And the truth at Romans 7:17-23, that Paul candidly informs us, “the sin that dwells in us” is *separate* from ourselves. Paul explains: “I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. ...If I do what I don’t

want to do, *I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. ...There is another power within me that is at war with my mind.* This power makes me a slave to *the sin that is still within me!*”

In truth, we are not our problems. We are not our wounds. We are not our sins. You and other people are not the problem. That reality is important, good news.

And now, returning to the significant occurrence that we as children developed a strategy for meeting our identity need before the age of eleven. As the apostle Paul has already described the cunning power of indwelling sin in all of us, *it readily deceives each of us in our minds by giving us thoughts through ‘the flesh.’ We experience these thoughts as our own thoughts because they cleverly come in the form of first-person singular pronouns.* Because of this, Paul confesses to us that he actually carried out what he didn’t want to and didn’t do what he wanted to do. Sound familiar?

By this same tactic, ‘the flesh’ teaches us *a false* assumption about how to meet the need of our true identity. ‘The flesh’ delights in offering any god that does not submit to Christ. The Holy Spirit graciously explains this dynamic concisely through Paul, highlighted at Galatians 5:13-17: “The Holy Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what ‘the flesh’ desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.”

Romans 7:23 states, “There is another power within me [Apostle Paul] that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me!” And Romans 8:6 testifies, “For the *mind* set on ‘the flesh’ is death, but the *mind* set on the Spirit is life and peace (NIV).” Evidently, God’s best for us is to learn to live Holy Spirit-*minded*.

Notice that we humans can be ‘fleshly minded’ and we humans can be ‘Spiritually minded.’ Reported at Ephesians 2:3, it is “the mind of the flesh” that is sinful because of being controlled by sin (NIV). And those who *mind* the things of ‘the flesh’ will naturally fulfill them (James 1:13-15; see also Rom. 7:5, 23; 8:4-13; 13:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 6:12; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:29-32; 6:11-16, 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Col. 3:5-10; 2 Tim. 2:26; Rev. 12:10b; Mark 7:19-21).

Clearly, a part of our personal thought life does not take God into its consideration and is thoroughly fervent with the idea that *fleshly* pursuits lead to personal victory. For example, “Those who are after the flesh, *mind* the things of the flesh,” as well as “Let us ...make no provision for ‘the flesh,’ to fulfill *its lusts*” (Rom. 13:14 NIV).

“And let me carefully indicate that this concept corresponds to what modern psychology calls *the unconscious mind*.”³

It is crucially important to realize that ‘the flesh’ and ‘its mind’ do not originate as part of our own God-given personality. ‘The flesh’ is really not you, and you really are not ‘the flesh.’ “It is ‘*the mind of the flesh*’ that is sinful because of being controlled by sin.” Therefore, “make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill *its lusts*.” (Reference also Eph. 6:12.) Repeating important good news: *you* are not the problem, in reality!

Until we come to know in our hearts that God has already met our true identity need, ‘the flesh’ is part of the reservoir of basic assumptions that we firmly and emotionally hold about how to meet that need.

When we, as children, experience the aforementioned trauma event, a predictable downward spiral to the independent (orphan) perspective commences. We immediately lose the knowledge that we are loved. We saw it happen with Adam & Eve in the Garden (page 10). ‘*The flesh*’ ushers in *fear, shame, and guilt* from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The walls of our heart become thick protective armor for fear of being hurt again. We suffer the loss of our sense of worth, value, identity. We suffer the loss of the *security* aspect of our identity; we lose the sense of safety through God’s unconditional love; ‘the flesh’ offers a warped, self-serving counterfeit and makes it not possible to receive love without fear. This is a primary root cause of our issues, including addiction.

We’re deceived by ‘the flesh’ into distrust. We are now inclined to trust ourselves to meet our needs. We become our own authority to rationalize our irrational conduct, and for personal survival. We’ll

hold others to standards different from our own. We fear or reject counsel and being counseled by Godly leadership in authority. We feel unsure about what is true. ‘The flesh’ deceives us away from accepting the protection and provision that Godly leadership in authority bestows. And even though our wounding was not at all our fault, we *all* believe that it must be all our responsibility; “I must be faulty.”

When the co-author of this Bible study was eleven years old, “the sin that dwelled within” gave my dad the following whammy through ‘the flesh:’ My dad verbalized to me that he and my mom wished they hadn’t had me. When children experience rejection, ‘the flesh’ convinces us to continually try to avoid further rejection, including suspecting others’ motivations, and even fibbing. We’re convinced to take most everything personally, even when it is not personal. ‘The flesh’ sabotages relationships. ‘The flesh’ offers us the expectation of being rejected. Some of us, feeling rejected, follow ‘the flesh’ into loneliness, misery, and self-pity: “Nobody understands me.” The steps following self-pity are often criticism, depression, despair, and hopelessness: “It’s no good. I might as well give up.”

Others of us, feeling rejected, follow ‘the flesh’ into hardness. “Well, if they don’t love me, so what? Who needs them anyhow? I can do without them.” Then the hardness leads to unconcern. “I don’t care! Nobody’s ever going to hurt me that much again. I’ll put up a barrier that nobody will ever get inside.” Outwardly, we’re one way, but inwardly, we’re another way. After ‘unconcern’ frequently comes rebellion. “Well, they’re against me, so I’ll be against them.” Rebellion quite often leads to victimizing, and ‘witchcraft,’ which includes the seducing power of controlling others, as well as moving in the occult (consider 1 Samuel 15:23).

‘The flesh’ gives us a false sense of security when we’re included in a peer group, especially when it’s dysfunctional. Most rejection is much more subtle, and even silent, than the obvious rejection wounding in my childhood. And now, after God exposed Rejection, and my applying God’s prescription, detailed later, I realize that

feelings of rejection felt “normal” to me—‘the flesh’ keeps us in denial. You will also learn that later as an adult, I was diagnosed with a lethal disease of which “rejection by the earthly father” is a primary root cause. As I come out of rejection and after accessing my Divine healing, I want you to know that our Father God gave me the honor and privilege of leading my dad and my mom to the Lord!

When a girl or boy goes through loss, including parents’ divorce, a death, even of a close Grandparent or caregiver, wounding comes from feelings of abandonment. ‘The flesh’ will deceive us not to love for fear of future abandonment. When a girl or boy is sexually abused, ‘the flesh’ warps their perspective into connecting their identity with rejection and being a sexual object.

Because of our wounds from childhood, ‘the flesh’ blames others through us rather than us being honestly responsible and answerable for our conduct, compensating for feelings of insecurity. Before long, we need justice to be served through methods of ‘the flesh,’ outside of God’s and His timing. Sooner or later, we’re deceived into agreeing with pride, criticism, and bitterness to cope with the feelings of shame and guilt. ‘The flesh’ can lead us to accomplish managing, controlling, or manipulating others through anger or self-pity as a form of protection from more devastating feelings of worthlessness.

‘The flesh’ is behind eating disorders, self-mutilation, criticism, self-criticism, judgment, codependence, conflict, etc., etc. ‘The flesh’ conjures fantasies in our lives, including a fantasy spouse to meet our needs of security and meaningful purpose. This diabolically sets us up for failure because that ‘chosen’ individual also has ‘pre-existing conditions’ (issues) from their childhood wounds. And only God meets our needs of security and meaningful purpose—our true identity. *We were too young to understand trauma’s shocking effects on our soul.* Sooner or later, we live a shame-based, fear-based, reactive, and compulsive life—compliments of the self-reliant, orphan, the ‘old self’ mindset.

This self-reliant, independent (orphan) lens is obviously distorted and insecure. But when someone disagrees with our (orphan) viewpoint, we compulsively react; we experience that as personal, rejection, insulting, offensive, and shame. In due course, our childhood wounding literally stunts our emotional and spiritual growth; we remain childish (not *childlike*, as in Matthew 18:4), needy, self-reliant, and independent (orphans) in certain areas of our lives.

Each of us has been trained through ‘the flesh’ to believe that identity, security, meaningful purpose, joy, abundance, health & wellness, victorious happiness—all the good things of life—depend upon something *other than dependence on God*. The flesh (that unconscious opposition to God) happily provides the sin-cursed world’s teaching that we are sufficient unto ourselves. And that we can figure out a way to our true identity and victorious living without humbly submitting to Jesus. Satan has led the development of a belief that we can meet our needs if only we had _____.

The blank is filled in differently, depending on our particular family and cultural background, our early traumatic wounding, spiritual understanding, and especially our teachability. ‘The flesh’ energized by a sin-cursed world system has squeezed us into the mold of assuming that something other than God offers personal reality and fulfillment.

As part of our mental functioning, human beings make basic assumptions about how to meet the need of a true identity; *Correct assumptions*, as Jesus demonstrated, or *mistaken assumptions*. Without exception, we all develop some mistaken assumption about how to get our needs met (James 3:2a). Dr. Alfred Adler rightly calls this assumption a person’s “guiding fiction,” a belief based on a *deceivably convincing lie* that determines much of our feelings and behavior.

The Anatomy of Our Assumptions, Attitudes, and Actions ⁴

It's imperative to have a basic understanding of what happened, biologically, when we were wounded, and as children. God says, "My people perish from lack of knowledge, or they reject knowledge (Hosea 4:6)." And, "The truth shall make you free (John 8:32)!"

All the above-mentioned behaviors and emotions connected to our wounds originate as thoughts; thoughts come with emotions. These negative emotions are physically stored in the form of chemicals in an area in your brain that also forms your *behavior*. This area of the brain, a component of the limbic system, is called the *amygdala*. We experience all woundings through our physical senses. Information from your physical senses does not go directly to your brain. All your sensory info is first sorted, processed, and prioritized by a structure within your brain. This structure is also a component of your limbic system, called the *thalamus*. And yet another area in your brain is responsible for rational decision-making. It is called the *prefrontal cortex*.

Here is one of the main points: *the connection between the emotional part of the brain* (the amygdala) and the rational decision-making part of the brain (the prefrontal cortex) has not even begun to develop in children before age 18 and remains incomplete until age 25. Therefore, when neglect, verbal, emotional, physical, sexual abuse, fright, or rejection wounding occurs before we are 18 years old, *we completely lack rational decision-making capabilities*. Without Godly, adult guidance at the time (Prov. 22:6), our thalamus stores the event, and the negative emotions are processed by the amygdala, with no *rational context*. *As a result, we, as children, cannot rationalize that the wounding is not our fault*. With no rational decision-making, we all feel fully responsible for the neglect, verbal, emotional, physical, sexual abuse, fright, and/or rejection wounding in our life. We lose our innocence and gain shame & guilt. We lose our security and gain the insecurity of independence. We become chronically self-serving. We gain an orphan identity mindset from an orphan lens.

Another gland of our limbic system, called the hippocampus, holds all your wounds from prenatal on.

As adults, without realizing in our heart of hearts God's personalized healing prescription (detailed later), we compulsively react out of the same irrational memories when we experience a situation that even smells like a painful event of our childhood wounding. One well-known example is the 'fight or flight' automatic reaction in non-life-threatening conditions. Neuroscience and medical research explain that chronic 'fight or flight' in our lives is directly connected with chronic harmful stress and maladies.

When we are wounded as children, our limbic system unwittingly brings our irrational emotions, unresolved conflicts, and reactive behaviors from our childhood into our adulthood. The thalamus and hippocampus glands of our limbic system get 'stuck in the past.' This is the primary source of negativity and "double-mindedness" (Jas. 1:8) in our adult lives. And it even prevents the reasoning that a painful event from our childhood did not just happen now; that it is a stored memory from our past; and that it was not our fault.

It is very common to carry wounds, trauma, for years that your mind never knows about, deeper than the mind, deeper than reason, deeper than the memory. The orphan wounding and attitude are in that deep area. And often, because it's so deep, we do not even realize our problem (page 12 above; 1 Cor. 2:11).

As adults in relationship, when an imperfect person's conduct reminds 'the flesh' of our previous wounding, the correlated negative emotions get expressed without the vital rational aspect. No one is perfect. People 'touch' our 'open wounds.' As adults, we continue to be reactive and compulsive because the negative emotions from a childhood wounding event are involuntarily experienced as negative emotions with no rational context (Matt. 7:1-3; Mk. 7:20-23; Rom. 2:1-3; Jas. 1:14; 4:1). After 25 years of research, Dr. Paul Hegstrom uncovered that *almost 98% of the issues couples struggle with are rooted in childhood wounds each of them suffered before the age of eleven.* ⁴

Dr. Hegstrom's research also found that "the earlier the wounds were inflicted, the more people need rules." ⁴ And, "We don't need to delve into our past and search for a specific trauma that may have caused lasting results [Lk. 9:62]. *What's relevant is that we identify our behaviors and emotions and realize that they have a source. What we identify and can understand, we can deal with [God's way].*" ⁴ This is a significant active ingredient of God's personalized prescription, detailed in another section.

Ephesians 4:14-15 states, "*We will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with clever lies that sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church.*"

"When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things (1 Cor. 13:11). "

Mistaken Assumptions, Scriptural Absolutes, Unconditional Love ²

We have a self-consciousness; we can talk to ourselves in sentences (e.g., Ps. 103:1). The sentences we consciously tell ourselves strongly influence how we feel and what we do. And we can now see where these sentences originate. The content of the sentences we tell ourselves in our conscious minds draws upon the mistaken assumptions haunted by early-life wounding held by 'the flesh.' All in all, we are not aware of our mistaken belief about our identity. Yet that ungodly belief controls our feelings and behavior. *The battle is for our minds. Influence what we believe and you influence the whole person* (Matt. 8:13; 9:29; Prov. 23:7).

To understand how our problems develop, we must add another element to the progression—what we say to ourselves as *basic assumptions or attitudes*. Expressed like this:

Start Here:

1. The intrinsic personal need for my true identity
2. Motivation or the drive or urge to meet that need
3. *Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by 'the flesh' of what provides my true identity*

Understandably, we as children select our strategies for identity in negative association with our prepubescent traumatic, shocking, humiliating, heartbreaking, sexual, or frightful wounding. Additionally, it seems quite reasonable to suggest that we are also influenced by whatever consistent pattern of living our parents (or primary caregivers) display.

Proverbs 22:6 tells us to train up our children in the way they should go. The Hebrew word for "train up" was first used (according to Howard Hendricks in his superb material on child training) to refer to a Hebrew midwife placing her finger in the mouth of the newborn infant to stimulate the sucking reflex. The general thought contained in the word is to do something that triggers basic reflexes, to prompt a natural activity, or, even more broadly, to create a desire. We, as children, are inherently motivated to find our identity. A primary role of parents is to prompt that basic reflex by the way they live. Parents are to instill in their children a desire to look to the Lord for the satisfaction of their identity and physical needs.

Make no mistake. We, in some form, have reproduced our parents' (or caregivers') efforts to meet our identity need. If they really believed that money or performance or other people's opinions bring identity or that compliments or attractive clothing bring it, they could chatter all they want about the joys of knowing Jesus. We learned to depend on what they really were depending on for their satisfaction in life. No amount of teaching, family devotions, or church trips effectively countered the message they conveyed through their lives. As children, we learned that our identity can be found if we reach the same goal for which our parents (or caregivers) strived.

The church of Jesus Christ needs to live out the reality of our true identity by our unswerving and uncompromising commitment

to the absolutes of Scripture and by our practice (not merely our expression) of unconditional love. Unless young people find the rational, legitimate answer to their deepest needs that only Christianity affords, they will become either machine-like puppets, mechanically conforming to society's expectations. (Is that what we really want, down deep? It may be.) Or they will plunge into the horrible blackness of utter despair—no meaning, no love, no nothing; moving on as zombies going nowhere or, if they have the courage, committing suicide.

The clear challenge for us as parents is to live in such a way that we genuinely do depend on the Lord alone for our true identity. And beloved, this is not meant to condemn but to help us access everything that our loving God has purchased for us, including forgiveness, redemption, freedom, and the reversal of any and all brokenness. “With God, all things are possible!”

It is vitally important to realize that our spiritual maturing and therefore our freedom from hurts, hang-ups, habits, and issues depend directly upon how we perceive and think (Rom.12:2; Mk. 7:21-22; Rom. 7:23, 25; 8:6; 2 Cor.10:4-5; Eph. 4:23; Php. 2:5; 4:7-8; Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 1:7; Jas. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:1; Prov.3:5; 23:7; Isa. 26:3). Or in other words, our spiritual advancement and our emotional, mental, physical, relational, and financial health depend directly upon what sentences with which we fill our minds. Therefore, it becomes crucial to know what determines the sentences that we consciously speak to ourselves in our minds.

4. We Set a Goal

Be reminded of Saul-pre-Paul’s goal of persecuting Christians before God amended his identity to “Paul” (Php. 3:6). But after allowing the Holy Spirit to begin redeeming his ‘fleshly’ *motivation* and mistaken *assumption* for identity, the apostle Paul graciously shares with us his personal *goal* at Philippians 3:10: “I want *to know Christ* and *the power* of His resurrection and the fellowship of...becoming [more and more] like Him in His death...”

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:21).” When we, as children, latch onto an assumption of what provides identity, our motivation acquires direction. A goal is set (i.e., money, a loving spouse, a sexual object, or inclusion in particular circles, etc.). We now will engage in behavior designed to meet the goal that our assumption has determined. Our progression can now be expanded.

Start Here:

1. The inherent personal need for my true identity
2. Motivation or the drive or urge to meet that need
3. Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
4. Set a goal based on what ‘the flesh’ offers for my identity
5. Goal-oriented behavior

5. Goal-oriented Behavior

“There is a way that seems right to a person, but in the end it leads to death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).” Our misguided behavior (Point 5) is designed to meet the misguided goal (Point 4) that our misguided assumption (Point 3) has determined. And it seems right to us, or we wouldn’t behave as such. The progression, as it now looks, strongly suggests the primary way in which problems develop. We can move effectively or ineffectively toward our goal. Assistance that helps us reach a goal determined by a *mistaken* assumption actually amounts

to teaching a tick how to drain a dog more productively. If we can achieve our goal through more effective strategies, we will attain a measure of satisfaction. But if it is true that only Jesus can truly satisfy our needs and if our goal was determined by a mistaken assumption about what provides true identity, those of us who reach our goal will not be thoroughly satisfied, our needs still will be unmet, and we will be motivated to go through the cycle again and achieve *new* goals.

Our goal-oriented behavior can be intelligent, realistic, and sensible, or it can be misinformed, unrealistic, and utterly ineffective. The goal, therefore, may not be reached, we will feel threatened as our identity need remains unmet, and we will become stressed and/or resentful.

All our lives, we will chase after things that never satisfy. God told Jeremiah that His people “have forsaken Me—the fountain of living waters. And they have dug for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13).”

Our Lord told the Samaritan woman that people who rely on any source of nourishment other than Jesus Himself will never be content. The cycle of drawing water from the well becomes perpetual, wearisome labor, continually toiling for that which never satisfies. What a tragedy to see men and women locked into a vocational structure, sacrificing their families to “make it” in business. An expensive home with a Bentley in the garage and a bulging bank account amounts to nothing more than a broken cistern.

Paul came to know how to abound and how to be abased. He could enjoy luxuries if they came his way, but he also could do without them. He realized that depending on material possessions for happiness was like lowering a bucket into an empty well to satisfy one's thirst. Material possessions hold no water that can nourish the soul with a true identity, but so often we get a longer rope to drop the bucket deeper into the bottomless, waterless well, hoping that eventually we will find what we seek. Some of us give up on the life of affluence, sell everything, and move to a fishing village or a farm in the

country, all to quiet that uneasy sense of dull, aching independent, (orphan), the ‘old self’ emptiness. Many of us cannot afford either to buy more things or move to the country, but longingly imagine that if we could, our needs would be met. However, nothing apart from a relationship with Jesus the Christ will ever satisfy.

When the desired goal is not reached, we are motivated to protect ourselves from the painful feelings of worthlessness.

“The *spirit [heart]* of a person can endure their infirmity, but a *wounded spirit [broken heart]* who can bear?”

Our hurts, habits, hang-ups, relational heartaches, financial headaches, compulsions, obsessions, stress, phobias, fixations, addictions to or obsession with alcohol, chemicals, work, spending, sex, approval, overeating, vanity, excuse making, blaming, sexual dysfunction, allergies, hypersensitivities, food intolerances, syndromes, the various cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and our other physical health problems are quite often the result of our compensating for the emotional pains of a mistaken identity. We will gain a further clear understanding of this in the upcoming sections.

Now adding to the progression of how problems develop:

Start Here:

1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
2. Motivation or the drive or urge to meet that need
3. Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
4. Set a goal based on what ‘the flesh’ offers for my identity
5. Goal-oriented behavior
6. Goal reached
7. *Partial, temporary satisfaction*
8. *Vague (independent orphan) sense of emptiness*

Returning Back to Start

1. Inherent personal need for my true identity

The stages now reflect how most “well-adjusted” people live. We have set goals for ourselves according to religion’s assumptions and/or the sin-cursed world’s assumptions about what provides identity. Through hard work, careful planning, or “dumb luck” (many would call it that), we have reached our goals. We have money, nice kids, good health, business prestige, whatever we value, and we enjoy a real measure of personal prosperity and happiness. We don’t feel the need to seek help. Some of us feel no need for God in our lives—we do fine without Him. The problem is that when everything goes according to plan, we really do feel good. The way that seems right has been achieved and is bringing temporary satisfaction. It is hard to convince us that the end of our way is personal death — eternity with neither legitimate meaning nor authentic love.

Jesus is the way [the journey], the truth, and the life—He was Paul’s pattern and his power, and Jesus, *in us*, is our pattern and our power. Jesus’ basic *motivation* was right, He completely repelled ‘the flesh’ (Jn. 14:30), therefore His basic *assumption* was correct. And Jesus engaged in *conduct, actions, and behavior* while He was physically on the earth. But which conduct, actions, behaviors? (See John 5:19-20; 14:10, 18, 23-24.)

James 1:22-25 also teaches us, “And remember, do not *merely listen* to the word [of God], and so deceive yourselves. *Do what it says*. ...And if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then *God will bless you in doing it*” (see also Php. 4:13). Jesus teaches us at John 15:5, “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. *Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit*. For apart from me *you can do nothing [good]*.”

As we now understand, the Holy Spirit graciously empowers Christians to be the most compassionately loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, long-suffering, kind, good, faithful, gentle, gracious, merciful, the most free from egocentricity and pettiness, squabbling, sulking, self-pity, and other manipulation, emotional, mental and physical issues, dis-ease, resulting from a selfish concern with getting one’s own identity need met. Colossians 2:9, 10 states, “For in Christ all the

fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and *you have been given fullness in Christ*, who is the head over every power and authority!” (See also Luke 10:19.) Christians are in a position to be free from the “deficit motivation” described above—motivation coming out of a mistaken identity. Yet we often differ not one whit from the self-seeking worldling who is preoccupied with meeting their own identity need. The apostle Paul rebuked Christians for living like ordinary men and women.

The reason for such carnal behavior is not hard to unearth. In a word, the problem is unbelief, or, as Christian counselor Dr. Larry Crabb prefers to think of it, mistaken belief. God has promised to meet our every need. What remains for us is to “possess our possessions,” to intentionally, aggressively, and persistently believe that He is looking after our needs thoroughly, and to thus live in joyful abundance and authentic peace.

There are some of us who, when we reach all our (mistaken) goals, are brought face-to-face with the horrible fact that “dreams come true” have not really satisfied; we are still in the empty, self-reliant, independent (orphan), the ‘old self’ condition.

Non-Christians may, of course, meet their needs at a given moment without consciously relying on the Lord. If physical health is good and there is plenty of money in the bank, people can apparently be motivated by their need for identity. It is here that a non-Christian gets stuck.

Without the Lord, it is possible to derive a sense of identity from the love of a spouse or friends, and to feel a definite sense of identity in devoting oneself to “humanitarian” purposes that many would agree are important. Based on counterfeit replicas of satisfying sources of identity, some people do move on to what most observers would agree is a healthy level of self-giving. But if it is true that every attempt to meet a personal identity need apart from a committed relationship to Christ must logically fall short of its goal, then every non-Christian must in some sense be forever trapped in searching for identity. Because we are not and cannot be fully satisfied in our

most basic personal needs, there will always be an undercurrent of motivation to find identity in *all our behavior*. We are doomed to self-serving until we *amend our performance-based identity, which we cannot really do without becoming a pupil of Jesus*.

Many non-Christians exhibit a commendable humanitarian interest in others. Is this not an expression of a truly whole person? No, because underneath whatever worthy, conscious motivation may exist, there must be the demanding rumblings of unsatisfied needs for their true identity. If there are no such rumblings, then it must be possible to become a truly self-giving person without knowing who God is for them. An example may be the late Robin Williams' suicide. Accomplished, famous, actor, comedian, husband, and father, Robin Williams was also very well-known for his humanitarianism. Why suicide? He apparently reached the pitiable but honest stage of utter despair: "I've reached all my goals, but they don't satisfy. I'm empty. Life is not worth the living. There's nothing else to try. I've tried everything. Nothing relieves that deep, self-reliant, independent (orphan) pain inside me. Death is now the only possible relief."

God is utterly indispensable in meeting personal needs. Therefore, no matter how whole or giving or loving we as a non-Christian may seem to be, we still are operating from a lack—a deficit. The motivational core of our behavior must be stained with a desire to meet our needs ourselves. We are still fundamentally self-centered, prompted by deficit motivation to supply ourselves what is missing. Advice on how to live a victoriously happy life has simply taught us how to more effectively manipulate others to meet our needs. God, who sees to the innermost depths of our hearts, cannot commend behavior that is in any way selfishly motivated.

"Most power is power to coerce somebody." —*Charles Koch*

Adding this kind of experience to our progression, it now looks like the following.

Start Here:

1. Inherent personal need for my true identity

2. Motivation or the drive or urge to meet that need
3. New mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by 'the flesh' of what provides my true identity
4. Set a new goal based on what 'the flesh' offers for my identity
5. New goal-oriented behavior
6. New goal reached
7. ~~Partial, temporary satisfaction~~
8. ~~Vague (independent orphan) sense of emptiness~~
7. Revealed orphan mindset; 'broken heart;' despair (including questioning the meaning of life & death)
8. Suicide

Your Super Powerful 'Will'

Science has discovered a God-given physical structure in our brains which is our free will. And in over 4,000 scriptures where "choose," "will," and other words expressing choice are used, not one suggests that God forces any person to accept Him, His love, or do His will! Our relationship with God is entirely on a voluntary basis (Rev. 22:17; Mark 16:16; John 3:16; John 7:17; 1 Peter 5:2). If we did not have the freedom of choice, God would be entirely responsible for all evil, sickness, poverty, rebellion, and the like.

No one recognizing that endless decisions are necessary to daily life can deny the fact of free acts and behavior, for we know we have freedom of action—moral action—concerning right and wrong. Obedience is meaningless without the possibility of disobedience. We cannot be free if we have no choice—if God imposes His will on ours. From what would we be free?

We generally choose to do what makes sense to us. Practically speaking, our freedom of choice is restricted by the limits of our rational understanding. For example, a primary problem an unsaved person has is not their inability to choose God. His or her will is

perfectly capable of choosing to trust Christ, but their darkened understanding will not allow their will to make that choice (2 Cor. 4:4). He or she does not need a strengthened will; they need an enlightened mind (1 Cor. 2:16), and that is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).

Ministries, coaches, family, or friends can spend their energy exhorting people to change their behavior. But the human 'will' is not exactly a free entity. It is bound to a person's understanding (i.e., Prov. 2:10-11; 16:22; Hosea 4:6). We will do what we believe (Matt. 8:13; 9:29; Prov. 23:7). When we experience the revelation of who Christ is (Matt. 16:17), on what basis we are worthwhile, and what life is all about, we have the preparation necessary for any sustained increase in lifestyle. Christians who try to "live right" without correcting a mistaken perception about their identity (how they are known in heaven, plus who God wants to be for them in every situation) will always labor and struggle with Christianity, not resting in but grinding out their responsible duty in a joyless, strained fashion.

Christ taught that when we come to realize the truth, we can be freed. We are now free to choose the life of obedience because we realize that in Christ and only in Christ, we are now a worthwhile person. And we are free to express our service and gratitude in the worship of the One who has met our needs; *our will becomes aligned with God's will for us, and we authentically want to serve Him, and Him alone.* ("If you love me you'll keep my commands;" "...And His commands are not burdensome;" "God loves a cheerful [a 'prompt'] giver." (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3; 2 Cor. 9:7; Matt. 11:30; see also Heb. 12:2; Pr. 17:22; Rom. 14:17; John 16:24))

Obedience does not automatically follow from correct understanding. Our *perceptions* determine the range of options we can choose. 'The will' is a real part of the human personality with the function of responsibly choosing to behave consistently with how the Holy Spirit, in relationship, trains us to evaluate our world (Jn. 14:26). And such choices are not always easy (Gal. 5:17). It often involves teeth-gritting effort to choose to behave rightly. It is vital to

decide to do what is right moment by moment. And apart from the clear exercise of the will, there will be no consistent obedience. As the Christian continues to choose the path of righteousness-in-love, his or her capacity for right choices in the face of adversity and temptation enlarges. We become a stronger Christian, one whom God can trust with greater responsibilities (Ps. 25:9-14).

From a biblical perspective, there really are only two possible basic directions that one may choose: live for self or live for God (2 Cor. 5:15). If with our heart we decide to live for self (which we all naturally do; 1 Cor. 2:14), then we will never have our personal needs fully met. By cutting God off (what a staggering concept of freedom—mere humans can cut God off from our lives), we cut off the only source of the security & meaningful purpose our true identity ensures. We are then left to ourselves, and so we do the best we can in meeting our personal needs.

The mistaken beliefs that we Christians have learned still enter our conscious minds, but we deliberately evaluate our world from a biblical framework & heart (2 Cor. 10:5). We evaluate our lives from God's perspective; we choose to behave as God tells us and empowers us to; we feel compassion for others and behave accordingly. We *experience* a deep sense of our own personal worth and know experientially the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). But suppose I am a Christian living as a carnal man or woman. In that case, I am still living for myself, still evaluating my world from a fraudulent perspective, and I therefore behave selfishly, manipulating others to meet my needs, disobediently, and without compassion. I think, feel, and act just like an unbeliever. What a tragedy!

Our Will and Our Progression

Regarding our progression of how problems develop, be reminded that we each do have *a will* with which we make many, many choices, including our identity choices. Therefore, it is quite appropriate to incorporate the involvement of your *will* in Points 4,

5, and 6 (listed above) and with this description: “Basic direction choice: Self-serving or Christ-like.” You will also see it throughout the following illuminating synopsis:

‘What This Looks Like Monday Morning’²

Now that we have a simplified progression of how problems develop, the following practical illustration is an earnest attempt to clarify how it explains our common behaviors:

I need to feel worthwhile based on my true identity, and I am motivated to fulfill that need in some way. I have been taught by a sin-cursed world system that money conveys significance, security, and identity. I therefore assume that financial wealth gives a person identity. My goal thus becomes making as much money as I can. I listen to the preacher tell me that the love of money is a primary root of all evil, that I can't serve God and money, that I am to seek first His kingdom and set my goal for laying up heavenly treasures.

Because I am a Christian and because I believe the Bible is God's inspired word, I fully agree with what the preacher is telling me, *but to feel worthwhile*, I still feel an inner drive compulsively spurring me on to make money. I try to shake it, but I can't. Prayer, repentance, and dedication all make me feel better for a while, but the lust for money remains strong. My real problem is not a love of money, but rather a mistaken belief—a learned, deceptive assumption—that *personal identity depends on having money. Until that idea connecting identity with money is deliberately and consciously rejected, I will always covet money*, no matter how many times I confess to God my sin of lusting for money.

If I make a ton of money, I may feel guilty because I know my desires are wrong, but I will likely feel rather good on the inside. I do attain a measure of identity, *albeit according to a* mistaken but firmly held assumption. If I do not make money, I feel worthless. Perhaps I give up a lucrative job to enter full-time Christian service, but I will not find a sense of genuine fulfillment until my thinking changes

about what gives a person identity. If I continue in my compulsion to earn big money, but experience financial reverses, I then may redouble my efforts to rid myself of this consuming desire for money. But again, as long as I unconsciously believe that money equals identity and the security or meaningful purpose it provides, I will never stop lusting after money because I always will be motivated to meet my needs.

The New Testament says that transformation depends upon renewing our minds. Said in another way, our motivational energy can be channeled in different directions when we allow the Holy Spirit, in relationship, to retrain our thinking about what will meet our need (Jn. 14:26; Rom, 12:2). My efforts to change is not to focus on my behavior but instead on renovating my mistaken thinking.

If I don't reach my goal of money and don't correct my thinking, I may resort to unethical strategies to achieve my goal. I will know I'm wrong and will hate myself for behaving sinfully, but I'll do it anyway. Motivation to meet personal needs is overwhelmingly strong. I may develop a seared conscience to give myself some sense of peace. Or I may resort to creating a series of maneuvers designed to protect an injured sense of worth. Perhaps I will even develop fatigue, dizzy spells, headaches, or other health problems.

I might experience emotional problems like depression, anxiety attacks, sleep issues, or other health issues. These *problems will serve a useful function in dulling the inner pain of feeling worthless. I can comfort myself by believing that were it not for this unfortunate problem, I likely could become quite successful. My worth is therefore safeguarded in the face of financial failure.*

Although the symptoms I develop *may be neither consciously fabricated nor deliberately intended* to serve a useful psychological function, they nevertheless are effective in preventing *the worst possible hurt: the conscious admission that I am worthless.*

Until I reach that point, any suicide notions I have will be basically manipulative, designed somehow to further protect my sense of worth. And, *when I can no longer avoid the admission that*

I am worthless, suicide becomes in my mind a rational alternative. The co-author of this Bible study speaks from experience.

This motivation for money to feel worthwhile is only one example. In other examples, I may participate with any lust, compulsion, attitude, or inordinate affection in any area of my life—even though I know it’s wrong—to feel worthwhile. Or I may isolate, emotionally and/or physically isolate myself, even though I’m called to be in relationship, to actively love others as myself. The point being that *in any area of my life*, I might sin *to feel worthwhile or to protect my sense of worth or identity*.

“You are going to serve the one (kingdom) that you think best meets your needs, period.” —*Pastor Gary Keese*

Wrong patterns of living develop from wrong philosophies of living. “For as man *thinks in his heart*, so is he... (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV; 27:19; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23)”

In Summary

Everyone wears a pair of glasses. These glasses are not physical glasses purchased to help us see up close or in the distance. These are a different kind of glasses. Most people don’t think about the fact that we see life differently, depending on what glasses we are wearing and how they were formed. These glasses are really what we call our ‘basic assumption’ or attitude of what provides our intrinsic need of our true identity.

We could say that your inherent need of worth, value, true identity, is the foundation that builds your beliefs, and behavior. Ultimately, there are only two foundations for this: a mistaken assumption held by ‘the flesh’ & indwelling sin of what provides your true identity, or God’s loving truth of what provides your true identity (Gal. 5:13-17; Rom. 7:17-25; 8:6, 14).

You see, we all have the same innate need for true identity. Now as Christians—to understand and experience this need being met fully by God—we must start from the foundation of God’s word. Only God

knows everything, and in His word He has revealed to us the key understanding we need to put on the right glasses. Sadly, even we Christians look at life through the wrong glasses because we’ve been guided by our early wounding, ‘the flesh,’ indwelling sin, our family shaping, religiosity, and the sin-cursed world system.

Not only does this determine how our innate personal needs are met but also how we behave. As the Bible clearly states:

“Do everything with love.” “Christ’s love compels us. ...Those who receive His new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.” —the one who has already met our true identity need. “...Whatever you do, do it *all* for the glory of God.” “Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let your bodies be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him.” (1 Cor. 10:31; 16:14; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 12:1) As you would expect, our motivation ultimately forms our conduct.

What we experience as emotional, mental, physical, relational, and financial issues are the symptoms of unmet needs for security and meaningful purpose inherent in our sense of worth, truest identity. We’ve been deceived by indwelling sin, our family training, religious legalism, the sin-cursed world system, and ‘the flesh,’ to dismiss God freely meeting these needs. We are compulsively trying to meet these personal needs ourselves. This perpetuates the self-reliant, independent (orphan), the ‘old self,’ and double-minded mindset. And a primary characteristic of this mindset is denial. Problems develop from a mistaken assumption (haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’) of what provides our true identity. It is the real root cause of all our chronic issues.

Also, we now understand that as young people, our parents (or caregivers) were also allured by seducing lies of indwelling sin, their family shaping, religiosity, the sin-cursed world system, and ‘the flesh’ about how to meet the need of their true identity. And their parents or caregivers were also allured by the undercurrent seducing lies

about how to meet the need of their true identity. No different from us, when they, as young people, latched onto a mistaken assumption of what provides identity, their motivation acquired a wrong direction. A mistaken goal was set. Without exception, *we've all engaged in behavior designed to meet the goal that the mistaken assumption had determined*, courtesy of 'the flesh' and the aforementioned undertows.

A little earlier in this Bible study, the might of our 'will' was discussed. Kindly note that 'the flesh' & indwelling sin influence your will, and God influences your will. And we exercise our will as we move along in either opposing direction. The opposing influences—'the flesh' & indwelling sin, and God—need us to exercise our 'will.' In accord with God's influence, He empowers us to align our will with His then exercise our God-given will (Php. 2:13). (Reference Points 3 - 8 of the progression.)

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow...be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided...and they are unstable in everything they do. (James 1:2-8; see also Rom. 5:3-4)"

Please be reminded that our Bible indicates we each have deep, hidden parts of our personalities where we hold tenaciously to, and have choices, regarding our identity. Do trust that the Holy Spirit, with the Bible, provides the unique solution.

Please consider how much more loving our lives, families, and relationships with Christians would be if we each understood the above human behavior progression.

Also, rest assured that, to access God's emotional, mental, physical, relational, and financial health, there is no need to try to re-script memories, or somehow re-live past events or situations (Isa. 43:18;

Luke 9:62; Php. 3:10, 13). We'll learn in another section why that would actually be counterproductive.

You now have a simple progression of the opposing kingdom's groundwork in developing life problems through human behavior. In the next section, you will have one more very key element in the progression.

Understanding Through Audio & Video

Please be strongly encouraged to view the following *introductory overview*. It is an illustration and further confirmation of this unmasking—discovery of who we are and how come. The author of this lesson is Dr. Henry Wiright, a Bible teacher, author, and founder of *Be In Health*® ministry. Visit www.gotchoices.net/discover at your earliest convenience. Consider watching while you're doing a menial task or chore, or in place of a TV show or a social media session. Consider viewing in your devotional time.

How Problems Develop Part II³

Be reminded to read the following from a stance of understanding, not doing; letting go of all programming to 'do.' In another section we will learn to allow God's Spirit and Word to reverse or prevent the specific problems in our lives.

God wants to ensure that we operate from our (true) God-given identity—how we are known in heaven, and who God truly is for each us in every situation. He also wants to ensure we disentangle ourselves from the enemy's alluring counterfeit. And if God is going to help us shift, we need to understand an additional basic principle of personal functioning.

Well-known psychologists Freud and Skinner, and much of this sin-cursed, fraudulent world, teach that what *happens* to a person is responsible for their problems. A primary theme of the Bible indicates that how we *perceive* what happens to us has much to do with our emotional and behavioral reactions (i.e., Matt. 8:26; 16:8; 6:30; 14:30-31; Mark 7:15; Rom. 2:1-5; 5:3, 12:14; Jas. 1:2; Josh. 24:15).

As detailed in the previous section, we have a self-consciousness; we can talk to ourselves in sentences. With this ability to say things to ourselves in propositional form (e.g., we clothe impressions in words), we evaluate our world. When an external event or situation catches my attention, I respond to it by first talking to myself about it. I may not always notice the sentences I am telling myself. Still, I am responding in verbal form, nevertheless, and if I paid attention to my mind, I could observe what sentences I am using to evaluate this event. For example, suppose I wake up to a rainstorm on a morning planned for golf. In that case, I may mentally evaluate the event with sentences such as, "My golfing partner is a potential client who will be leaving town tomorrow and I perhaps am losing a chance to make big money. This storm is a terrible thing." My emotional reaction would be very negative. If my wife asked me why I felt depressed, I might say, "Because it's raining outside." But that wouldn't be accurate. A rainstorm has no power to make me depressed, but a strong negative mental evaluation of the storm does.

In other words, events do not control my feelings. My mental *evaluation* of events (the sentences I tell myself) does affect how I feel. Suppose I were to change my assessment from “This storm is a terrible thing” to “Money is important, but I trust God to meet my needs. Therefore, although I would prefer to play golf today, it is not terrible that I can’t.” With that sentence in my mind, my emotional reaction would include real disappointment but also a quiet sense of peace.

When we perceive an event as a threat to our identity, we will experience strong negative feelings and respond to it in a personally defensive manner. Perhaps we will launch an emotional attack on the situation, trying to change it. (Husbands and wives are specialists in working hard to change each other to have their own needs better met.) Or we might withdraw from the event to avoid further hurt. If, however, the event is perceived as personally fulfilling (“to feel significant, I need recognition; my boss just complimented me on my management ability”), we will feel good. If we perceive what happens as irrelevant to our identity (“the co-author of this Bible study repeats himself”), we likely will have no deep emotional reaction. How we mentally *evaluate* an event or situation determines how we *feel* about that event and how we will *behave* in response to it.

The Positive Role of Negative Emotions

Now consider a scenario where you get such headaches; your doctor says nothing is wrong with you physically, but your head sure hurts. You know you’re tense. But if these are really tension headaches, you don’t know what to do. What do you do for help?

Perhaps you’re a pastor, an elder, or a Christian in the church body. You might be tempted to think, “Look, this seems like a psychosomatic problem that frankly is beyond my church’s abilities to handle. I’m going to consider seeing a psychologist.” Or, you might consider behaviors designed to aid relaxation. (“Maybe I need a

hobby?” “How about propping up my feet and tuning out the world?”) Perhaps you may unwisely consider transcendental meditation, unaware of its insidious pull toward a godless view of life. Perhaps your church counselor would attempt to identify the source of tension and help you address it biblically.

As indicated earlier, we require a good conceptual understanding of how problems develop. How do we understand what caused our problem and what is maintaining it?

In this section, you will better understand the idea that we are motivated to reach whatever goal we assume will fulfill our true identity need. The progression illustration will be expanded to help explain how most relational, emotional, mental, physical, and financial problems develop. And it will be unfolded in that order — first relational, then emotional, mental, and physical symptoms, and then the financial clues in the upcoming sections.

The key element behind most issues is an obstacle that interferes with reaching our chosen identity goal. Suppose the obstacle can be overcome by making changes in goal-oriented behavior. In that case, the threat of addiction, hurt, negativity, habits, hang-ups, health issues/problems, relational heartache, or financial headache can be averted. And repeating, if the goal is based on unbiblical assumptions, the result is either partial satisfaction—and more treadmill-style chasing after fulfillment—or despair. Sometimes the obstacle cannot be overcome (“I can’t get my spouse to love me,” or “No matter how hard I try, I keep making mistakes.”). Often, these stubborn obstacles that remain standing despite the best efforts of frustrated people fall into one or more of four forms:

1. Unreachable Goals
2. External Circumstances
3. Fear of Failure
4. Rejection; any or all of the above obstacle forms 1, 2, and 3

Unreachable Goals

Whenever we encounter an obstacle on the road to a desperately desired identity goal, we experience frustration. The emotional form that the frustration assumes usually depends on the nature of the obstacle encountered. When the identity goal we set is unreachable, the primary emotional response is *shame/guilt* or *feelings of self-degradation*.

Consider for a moment the case of Stacy, a young Christian who became pregnant when she was seventeen.¹ Stacy gave up her baby for adoption, and only her family and a few close friends knew of the incident. Several years later, Stacy fell in love with a compassionate man named Ron and married him. Fearing his reaction, she didn't tell Ron about the baby. Over the years, Stacy concealed her guilt and grief until the pressure finally became so overwhelming that she admitted the entire episode to him.

Surprisingly, Ron did not respond in anger. He understood the agony his wife had carried for so many years and loved her despite her past. It was Stacy who was unable to cope at this point. Unable to accept Ron's forgiveness and knowing she had failed according to her own standards and those of society, Stacy felt insecure and unworthy of his love. The kinder her world was, the more she believed that the fault was hers, that she was imperfect. She refused to forgive herself and chose to leave her husband.

In this case, Stacy fell victim to one of the devil's most effective lies: Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be blamed and condemned. Because she failed in her own eyes, Stacy's *self-perception* was detrimentally affected.

Certain identity goals that we set for ourselves cannot be reached, no matter how hard we try. Stacy's objective (basic assumption) had become the *unreachable goal* of perfection. Whenever there is a self-imposed unattainable standard against which we measure ourselves, the most common emotional response is shame/guilt or feelings of self-degradation. (When we accept responsibility for *not reaching our unreachable goal*, we feel

unworthy. Often these feelings are expressed in statements of self-hatred, attitudes of despairing disgust with ourselves, and a loss of motivation to try. And, be reminded that Stacy is a Christian.)

CO-AUTHOR'S NOTES

Shame *falsely* accuses us of being *inherently bad*; *an inherent failure* because of past failure, and therefore, forgiving ourselves feels ridiculous. *Guilt* falsely accuses us that our behavior has been unforgivable.

Self-unforgiveness is toxic and progresses to self-hatred (self-bitterness) quickly.

Conversely, God lovingly *convicts* us of unrepentant sin in our accountability and responsibility in yielding to becoming more like Jesus. And that loving conviction offers clarity & direction, not confusion, criticism, judgment, discouragement, blame or condemnation. Please be reminded that our adversary's shame & guilt accusations are false because God graciously informs us of our acquittal in Romans 5. And He clearly tells us again at John 3:17; 8:11; Rom. 6:5-7; 8:1; Col. 2:12-14, and 1 John 3:20 of the great news: "There is now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ!"

"God understands the human condition of His sons and daughters and builds into your life allowances for the mistakes. Isn't it comforting to know 'He makes *all* things work together for good for those who love Him and are called to His purposes (Rom. 8:28).' God redeems Satan's greatest victories to bring greater glory to Himself. Satan is continually frustrated by God when He does this. God makes even your shortcomings bring glory to Himself. It's part of the journey!"⁵

Second Corinthians 5:19, Colossians 1:13-23; 2:11-14, and Hebrews 10:12-14 assure us that God was in Christ, reconciling you to Himself, *no longer counting your sins against you; the blood of Jesus covers your sins, period*. Flesh-opposed, Spirit-empowered forgiveness for your agreement with shame, guilt, and self-condemnation, and forgiveness for your past, present, and future wrongdoings is very good news (1 Jn. 1:7-9).

External Circumstances

If we believe that our identity goal is reachable (whether it is or not), but that an external circumstance has blocked the path to it, our emotional response is typically *resentment*. What appears to be the most common problem behind the variety of our troubles is resentment. And resentment leads to divisive anger.

The children of Israel offer instructive examples of this problem emotion. Whenever difficult circumstances arose, they repeatedly murmured against Moses, complaining about how badly things were going for them. Their resentment against unpleasant events in their lives boiled to the point that they were ready to stone Moses, the man they blamed for all their problems.

If I am trying to reach a goal to gain favor with God, I will feel angry when another gains favor with God (Matt. 12:1-14; 21:43-46; Mk. 2:23—3:6; 11:15-18; 12:1-12; Lk. 4:17-30; 6:1-11; 19:45-48; 20:9-19; John 5:1-18; 8:48-49; 10:31-39; 11:45-57). If I am trying to reach a goal but you frustrate my efforts by getting in the way, I will feel angry toward you.

Consider an actual middle-aged Christian woman seeking help concerning severe headaches that had required intermittent hospitalization over three years. Her psychiatrist had indicated possible organic brain problems and was treating her with enough medication to justify a hotline to her druggist. It turns out, however, that she was filled with anger against her mother for interfering in her life and against her husband for failing her emotionally for years.

Her basic assumption was that her family needed to accept her and strongly support her in all she did to fulfill her identity need. When they became a barrier to her identity goal of strong support, she developed deeper bitterness toward them but was unable to express it for fear of further rejection. She continually tried to change both her mother and her husband to better fit her needs and, as usually happens when one person tries to change another, she failed completely.

Her goal-oriented behavior was totally ineffective. The basis of her ailment was unexpressed resentment. She had violated the

biblical principle of “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry” (Eph. 4:26). The solution, however, was not primarily a series of exhortations to behave biblically but instead involved an exploration and fundamental revision of *the source of her identity*. As she learned that God's love was sufficient to meet her needs and then put that belief into practice by sharing her feelings with her husband and by giving up her need to change him, her headaches disappeared.

CO-AUTHOR'S NOTES

Resentment is an unforgiving accusation of some act, remark, person, or group that we regard as wrong. Resentment starts with unforgiveness (i.e., Matt. 20:21-24; 6:14-15; Ps. 37:1-10). Unresolved resentment broods retaliation (e.g., Rom. 12:17-19). Retaliation propagates **anger**. Anger then produces its wrath (e.g., Jas. 1:18-21). Then **hatred** joins in (e.g., Titus 3:3-5), and when we hold on to hatred or its critical attitude and irritation, it allows violence (e.g., Gen. 6:13). Violence may then include slander or murder with words and/or murder (e.g., John 8:42-44). This is the progression of what our Bible calls *bitterness*. Each stage in this progression offers a twisted illusion of significance and/or security. But Hebrews 12:15 warns, “Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no *poisonous root of bitterness* grows up to trouble you, *corrupting many*.”

“...Get rid of *anger, rage, slander*, malicious behavior, and dirty language (Col. 3:5-10)...” “*People's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires [can never make things right with God]* (Jas. 1:20).” “*Stop being angry!* Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper—it only leads to harm.” (Ps. 37:8; see also Prov. 29:11; Ps. 73:21-22; Ecclesiastes 7:9.) “We love each other because God loved us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar, for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God whom we cannot see? And God has given us this

command: Those who love God must also demonstrate love to others (1 John 4:19-21)."

Resentment or anger is sin when it is our reaction to another obstructing our personal need for significance, security, or acceptance.

God has already met our need for true identity, which produces acceptance, security, and a meaningful purpose (significance).

"Adams, in his Study of Christian Counseling, has a useful section on dealing with anger. He points out that there are two wrong reactions to anger: (1) Bury it and hold a quiet, perhaps unconscious grudge. Ephesians 4:26 instructs us, "Do not sin by letting anger control you. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, for *anger gives a foothold to the devil.*" (2) Express it in a lashing out, attacking way."³

It is my conviction that rejection pairs with bitterness, beginning with unforgiveness and resentment. Each of us has experienced a level of hurt in life through relationship. As a result, many of us feel a level of worthlessness and helplessness. And forgiveness requires a most unnatural determination that the wrongdoer experience no retribution. We try to meet our need for worth by withholding forgiveness. And yet God forgives us "as we forgive others." Be strongly encouraged to meditate on this potential life-giving blessing or potential devastating torment. The blood of Jesus covers sin, including *all* those sins and those people who wound us. There is so much power in the Gospel (Matt. 6:12; 18:21-35; 11:25-26; Luke 7:36-50; 11:4; Eph. 4:32; Heb. 12:14-16; Isa. 53; see also Ps. 38:7; Lk. 6:28; Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 6:7)!

Again, 2 Corinthians 5:19 reminds us: "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, *no longer counting people's sins against them.* This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell and *show* others!" And Jesus graciously alerts us with this significant parable at Matthew 18:23-35: "The Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in, who owed him

millions of dollars. He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, children, and all his possessions—to settle the debt. But the man fell before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. But when that man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. His fellow servant fell before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and imprisoned until the debt could be paid in full. When some of the other servants saw this, they were distraught. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be *tormented* until he had paid his entire debt. *That's what My heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.*"

Which torment is worse, the torment of an unhealed open wound, or the torment by the tormentor permitted by our Father as discipline for unforgiveness? Honest question. This lesson crystallizes the essence of forgiveness—the cancellation of a debt. See also Job 33:14-22; Ps. 51:8b; 119:67, 71, 75; 1 Cor. 5:1-6; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Eph. 6:12.

And this is also Jesus at Matthew 5:21-22: "'...If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' But I say, *if you are even angry* with someone, you are subject to judgment!"

Psychiatry researchers at Yale University of Medicine believe the

science of addiction can be used to understand bitterness—the progression of unforgiveness, retaliation, violence, and perhaps even violent crime. Recent peer-reviewed, published studies show: “Cues such as experiencing or being reminded of a perceived wrong or injustice—a grievance—activate the reward and habit regions of the brain, triggering cravings in anticipation of experiencing pleasure and relief through retaliation. The retaliation doesn’t need to be physically violent; an unkind word or an electronic message can also be very gratifying. This is different from a one-time grievance or even a revisited grievance. The underlying momentum shaping a grievance into an addiction is when a grievance is pushed into re-animation through the emotional triggers and experiential anchors that first created the trauma or grievance. The specific reward and habit regions of the brain are the ‘nucleus accumbens’ and ‘dorsal striatum.’”⁴ Please consider also referencing neglect, humiliation, shock, fear, abuse, trauma, and our limbic system (pages 38-43 above).

The Holy Spirit instructs us at Romans 12:19: “Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, ‘I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it,’ says the Lord.” (See also Lev. 19:18; Deut. 32:35, 43; 1 Sam. 24:15; Isaiah 1:24.) He has His perfect timing. In this context, revenge and justice are not our roles. The challenging truth, yet good news, is that Jesus has already and fully paid the debt for all injustice and wounding done to you as well as to each of us (Is. 53:5-10; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24). Secure in our true identity, we face resentment, and we decide to deal with it God’s way and overcome it. The Holy Spirit, in relationship, gives us the training, comfort, and power of our identity to walk in the fruit of the Spirit and to forgive those who do injustices in our lives and/or wound us. And to love the unlovely. None of us is without sin; through God’s grace—His power becomes our power—we can love the sinner while hating the sin. “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

The Truth About God’s Grace—Empowering Good News

As you may know, God’s “*grace*” defined in the Old Testament is: “*the free, unmerited favor of God toward the*

undeserving and the ill-deserving.” The original Old Testament Hebrew word for God’s ‘grace’ is “*ax.*”

Grace is always associated in the Bible with the big-heartedness, love, compassion, mercy, and kindness of one individual to another, whether it be person to person or God to person.

God’s New Testament original Greek word translated “grace” is “*chairis.*” It is defined primarily: “*the cheerful, divine influence upon a person’s heart [spirit] and its reflection in the person’s life; including gratitude.*”

In other words, God’s grace (or *chairis*) is now the power of God’s love cheerfully transforming the person more and more into the image of Jesus from the inside-out (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:17; Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Thess. 5:23; Gen. 1:26; Isa. 64:8, versus the law, affecting only the external life), producing good fruit that includes genuine gratitude. Or, in short, *His power cheerfully becomes your power.* That is good news!

To help us understand: By the Old Testament original definition of “grace”—*the free, unmerited favor of God toward the undeserving*—Jesus wouldn’t have had God’s “grace.” Yet Jesus was full of God’s grace as it is written at John 1:16-17.

This New Testament definition—*the cheerful, divine influence upon a person’s heart [spirit] and its reflection in the person’s life, including gratitude*—certainly doesn’t exhaust the whole meaning of God’s grace. But it is an excellent start. And repeating, *grace is always associated in the Bible with the big-heartedness, love, compassion, mercy, and kindness of one individual to another, whether it be person to person or God to person.*

Forgiving because you believe it is the right thing to do is usually ineffective. The supernatural gift of forgiveness came to us from the heart of the Father by faith, love, in the humble, powerful love gift of His Son, Jesus. “Father, forgive them for they don’t know what

they are doing.” “As they stoned him to death ... Stephen shouted, ‘Lord, don’t charge them with this sin! (Acts 7:59, 60)’” None of us can love and forgive like that without Father God’s Holy Spirit doing it *through* us. Please understand that faith comes first, then love, and then grace, which empowers our forgiveness (Gal. 5:6; Rom. 5:2). By faith, we intentionally let Father God love us first. Then He forgives through the power of His love in us. “Love...is not proud...does not demand its own way...and *it keeps no record of being wronged* (1 Cor. 13:4).” And, King David, whom God called “a man after His own heart,” also provided us a righteous pattern by expressing and overcoming anger, recorded throughout the Psalms. We, too, can be transformed from the inside to deal with resentment and anger God’s way. If necessary, consider: www.gotchoices.net/unforgiveness

If anger is a response to a moral wrong against someone else (e.g., human trafficking), it is righteous and Spirit-produced.

Fear

A third kind of block involves fear of failure. The identity goal may be reasonable and attainable. The path to the goal may be free from interference. But if we are afraid we might not reach the goal, we often will waver in stressful indecision. In bringing this to light, our Lord led Bishop Andrew Williams to Isaiah 51:1, 12, where He says, “Listen to me, all who seek the LORD! ...I, yes, I, am He who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid...?” “It struck me as curious that the Lord would say, ‘Who are *you* that *you* are afraid?’ If, however, we recognize that fear is so very often a manifestation of our pride, then this begins to make a lot more sense.

“For the first time, I began to see how fear very often seeks to push God aside and take over responsibility for my comfort, care, and protection, all of which God has said He will faithfully do. The Lord very emphatically says, “I, I am He who comforts you!” And yet fear barges in and tries to take over the role of protector, guide, and comforter. It’s as if fear climbs up on God’s throne and presumes to say, ‘Don’t do that; You could get hurt!’ I think for the first time I saw

clearly that fear has the most toxic capacity to set limits on our obedience to God. When you think about it, isn’t it often the case that we serve the one we fear?” —Bishop Andrew Williams’ *Watchwords Devotional* www.watchwordsonline.com

Be reminded, we set an identity goal. Initially, we believe the goal is desirable and set out to achieve it. As we proceed toward the goal, we find ourselves wanting it more and more. Our motivation becomes more intense. And we fail under pressure usually because we reach a point where our ability to focus on *accomplishment* yields to *concern about an outcome*. This worry about outcome forces us to lose our focus on God. The fear of failure begins to dominate our emotions and actions, ultimately leading to our own failure. Job 3:25 teaches us this valuable lesson: “*What I feared has come upon me.*” *It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

In life, we see giving in to pressure in the form of the self-serving, independent (orphan) compulsions and their negativity. As we continue to move toward the goal, we begin to feel a little uneasy.

We will continue to move toward the goal until we reach the point where to go further would produce a fear of failure more intense than our desire to reach the goal. To go backward would result in a desire for the goal that is stronger than our fear of failing to reach it. As long as the beliefs remain where they are, we may spend our life in frozen indecision.

Generally, the basic emotional experience is *stress* when the obstacle to reaching our goal is fear of failure. *Stress* is a modern term for the Bible word, *fear*. Those with psychology or sociology backgrounds call it anxiety. The co-author of this Bible study recently did a very quick count of how many times our Bible instructs us to “Be not afraid” and “Fear not.” And my quick count was 101 times. That’s certainly God’s most repeated command.

F alse

E vidence

A ppearing

R eal

If we allow mistakes to define our future, we won't risk again. We will live in fear of failing. However, some of life's greatest lessons can be learned from the experiences gained through our failures. God's empowering desire for you is to live free of stress and performance, willing to risk and *trust Him for outcomes*. We needn't yield to pressure. We needn't make decisions based on outcome.

As you may know, TIME Magazine® in April 2001, reported on the number of irrational, unwarranted, or disabling fears that totaled more than 550. It's the conviction of this study's co-author that other fears may cunningly join fear of failure to torment us. It's also my conviction that fear of rejection is the most common perpetrator coalescing with fear of failure. Later in this study, we will understand the one thing that fear and faith have in common: Both project into your future tirelessly, intending to be fulfilled.

We can walk in faith without wavering, no matter the circumstance, when we realize in our heart of hearts our worth. Receiving the supernatural revelation of our truest identity, we can enjoy a life based on absolutes, not circumstances. Fear of failure hinders our ability to walk with God, leaving us uncertain about our identity. What we fear comes upon us (Job 3:25).

God *never* defines you by your past, only by what He sees as your potential. Consider again God's first words to Moses, Israel, Gideon, and Paul, among others. God saw each one of them for who they were to become. Be released from thinking about your past to think only of the future God has for you! (Consider also 2 Tim. 1:7; Job 3:25; 4:14-16; Ps. 37:8; Eph. 6:12; 1 Jn. 4:18; Rom. 8:15; Matt. 10:31; Jn. 14:27; 2 Thess. 2:2.)

Negative Emotions that Spawn Others

The three common negative emotions behind the vast amount of our personal difficulties are shame/guilt, resentment, and stress. A lot of evidence strongly suggests that other negative emotions are either shadings or derivatives of these basic

feelings. And after 20+ years of ministry, I humbly yet sincerely submit that if 'rejection' (or fear of rejection) had been researched, it would be the fourth most common negative emotion behind the vast majority of our personal difficulties.

Two Pathways

There are generally two 'pathways' by which we experience our problems. One pathway is where we continue to agree with alternative strategies to meet our identity need; strategies obtained from the subtly deceiving 'flesh' energized by the sin-cursed world system. Typically, this path eventually leads to a vague sense of emptiness, and then sooner or later to despair (including questioning the meaning of life & death).

The other pathway is when our plans to find our identity go awry. Many of us develop symptoms as protection from feeling bad about ourselves. We can find some way to hide behind our fig leaf, to opt out, to shrink back. Our irrational pattern produces genuine emotional pain, but it seems less painful than the suffering we would have to endure if our protective symptoms—coping strategies—were not there. And we had to acknowledge fully our own personal worthlessness. Better to hurt badly for other reasons and to maintain some sense of worth than to be relieved of the suffering our irrational pattern produced and to feel utterly worthless. The choice is "between the devil and the deep blue sea." This is the other track—self-protection, safety, and survival mode.

Safety

Many of us are, in these terms, living in chronic negativity: If we're honest, we are angry with our world (resentment), and/or we feel down on ourselves (shame/guilt), and/or we live under a cloud of consistent stress (or fear or anxiety). It is heart-hardening. We still keep on trying, plodding along in a daily, grudging routine.

Christianity is a “grind it out” experience in which we bravely endure an unhappy life, forcing an occasional “Praise the Lord anyway,” and wondering what the joy of the Lord really is.

Underneath this horribly unabundant life lurks some mistaken assumptions that have resulted in one or more of the four negative emotions. God did not design the human personality to operate with negativity. Either the obstacles will give way to renewed efforts to behave differently and the wrong but temporarily satisfying goal will be reached, or eventually, some form of inner meltdown will occur. The pathway to an acute “broken heart” is easily traced. At some point, after the frustration is incredible enough or lasts long enough, we will stop trying to overcome the obstacle. We will look for a safer existence, away from the painful frustrations of never feeling good or, in these terms, of never experiencing our true identity or worth.

“...a broken heart crushes the spirit.” (Prov. 15:13)

The flight to safety may include any one of the many classical forms of disorder: phobia(s), sexual dysfunction, compulsion, obsession, fixation, habits, addiction, hang-ups, tics, financial headache, relational heartache, hypersensitivities, allergies, food intolerances or allergies, and many, many, many other health problems.

But—and this is the point—that is precisely what they are designed to do. That is, they are intended by ‘the flesh’ to either overcome the obstacle, or more often to help us avoid further frustration by providing us safety from bumping into the obstacle again. Our fear is not “crazy;” it seems useful as self-protection, a protection totally unnecessary for one who realizes the biblical basis for their true identity in his or her heart of hearts.

Wrong patterns of living develop from wrong philosophies of living. “For as man *thinks in his heart*, so is he...” (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV; 27:19; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23).

“Now the just shall live by faith; but *if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in them.*” (Heb. 10:38 NKJV; see also Heb. 3:12-19.)

We are now able to complete the progression of how problems develop.

Path I—Development Leading to Emptiness

1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
3. Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my identity
4. Set a goal to meet my identity need
5. Goal-oriented behavior
6. Goal reached
7. Partial temporary satisfaction
8. Vague (independent orphan) sense of emptiness

Back to Start

1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
3. New mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my identity
4. Set a new goal to meet my identity need
5. New goal-oriented behavior
6. New goal reached
- ~~7. Partial temporary satisfaction~~
- ~~8. Vague (independent orphan) sense of emptiness~~
7. Revealed orphan mindset; ‘Broken heart;’ Despair (including questioning the meaning of life & death)
8. Suicide

Path II—Development Leading to ‘Safety’ and Issues

1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
3. Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
4. Set a goal to meet my identity need
5. Goal-oriented behavior

6. FRUSTRATION & OBSTACLE

<i>Type of Obstacle</i>		<i>Form of Frustration</i>
1. Unreachable Goal	→	Shame/Guilt
2. External Circumstance	→	Resentment, anger
3. Fear of Failure	→	Stress
4. Any / All types (above)	→	Rejection; Fear of
7. Frustration; Revealed orphan mindset; Broken heart, Hardened heart		
8. Safety (negativity, compulsions, addiction, hang-ups, relational heartache, financial headache, or bodily health problems)		

Our worth, our identity, has been mistakenly defined as what we do or don't do (performance, moral works) + others' opinions of us. Many of us develop symptoms as protection from feeling badly about ourselves, stemming from this mistaken definition. We can find some way to opt out, to escape, to draw back. Once more, our irrational pattern produces genuine emotional pain. Still, it *seems* less painful than the suffering we would have to endure if we had to acknowledge fully our own personal worthlessness. Better to hurt badly for other reasons and to maintain some sense of worth than to be relieved of the suffering our irrational pattern produced and to feel utterly worthless. Shrink back—self-protection—safety—survival mode.

“A glad heart makes a happy face; a broken heart crushes the spirit.” (Proverbs 15:13)

Nearly all emotional and mental issues consist of, or stem from, mistaken identity in the form of negatives like shame/guilt, stress, resentment, feelings of personal unworthiness, lack of self-acceptance, insecurity, uncontrolled appetites, addiction, wrong priorities, and self-centeredness. Even the most casual reading of Scripture quickly reveals that it has a great deal to say about these sorts of issues.

This self-reliant (orphan), the 'old self,' which is the thinking behind the problem emotions of stress, resentment, and shame/guilt (and their shades or derivatives), has biological correlates that result over time in almost all of our physical health issues and problems.

To Summarize

"You can come across to others as nice, friendly, concerned, and helpful, believe you embrace each of those virtues, and still be mostly committed to your own well-being. The devil has many of us fooled. Self-centeredness is easily hidden beneath congeniality and, even when recognized, is often seen as necessary to personal comfort and therefore not really wrong." —Crabb, Larry, *A Different Kind of Happiness*, "True or False? It's Sometimes Hard to Tell," p 138

Our problems arise when the 'old self' mindset prevails over *the love of Christ*. ("...Those who receive His new life will *no longer live to please themselves*. *Instead, they will live [empowered] to please Christ*, who died and was raised for them (2 Cor. 5:14-15).") I live unto myself—trying to meet my identity need myself—rather than living to glorify Jesus who died for me—the one who has already met my true identity need.

The key element behind most issues is an obstacle that interferes with reaching our chosen identity goal. If the obstacle can be overcome by making changes in goal-oriented behavior, then the threat of negativity, compulsion, obsession, and/or phobia is averted. But most times, the obstacle cannot be overcome. These stubborn obstacles remain standing despite our best efforts. They produce the four common negative emotions (and their derivatives) that underlie the vast majority of our personal difficulties. Many of us live in a state of chronic negativity, often beyond our conscious awareness.

Most of us experience chronic symptoms of negativity as protection from feeling badly about ourselves. When the mistaken goal is reached, we are motivated to protect ourselves from the painful feelings of worthlessness. Our hurts, habits, addiction, hang-ups, health problems, relational heartaches, and financial headaches are most often the result of our compensating for the inner pains of a mistaken identity.

Gloriously, the Holy Spirit *utilizes* the testimony of the above-mentioned negativity in His personalized path to us enjoying our truest identity. And therefore, enjoying our freedom from hurts, hang-

ups, habits, addiction, health problems, relationship heartache, and financial headache! Be reminded of Psalm 119:67, 71, 75: “Before I was afflicted, I went astray, *but now I obey your word. It was good* for me to be afflicted *so that I might learn your decrees [ways]*. I know, O LORD, that your laws [the way things work] are righteous and in faithfulness you have afflicted me [permitted my exposure to the Afflicter].” Consider Genesis 50:20; Job 1:12, 3:25, 32:1, 42:6.

And Romans 8:28-29 states: “And we know that God causes *everything* to work together *for the good* of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them. For God knew His people in advance, and *He chose them to become like His Son*, so that His Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters!” (See also Gen. 1:26; Isa. 64:8; 1 Thess. 5:23-24.)

Freedom from hurts, hang-ups, habits, addiction, health problems, relationship heartache, and financial headache ultimately comes out of the Holy Spirit’s loving *redemption* of our mistaken basis for feeling worthwhile, and victorious living out of our true identity.

For when we know that we know, that we know in our heart of hearts our true identity—how we are known in heaven plus what God is for us in every situation—we “count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus...offering less and less of our self to sin as its instrument, but rather offering more and more of our self to God as an instrument of righteousness... Our mind becomes less and less governed by ‘the flesh’...and we live more and more in accordance with the Holy Spirit...which is life and peace...and the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children! ...Therefore, dear brothers and sisters... *Let your bodies be a living and holy sacrifice*—the kind God will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him.” (Rom. 6:12—8:16; 12:1)

And our personality becomes more and more as “the fruit of the Spirit: love, its joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and a firm grip. Against such things there is no law [effective opposition]!” (Gal. 5:22-25)

We now have sound answers to why we find it so difficult to take God at His word and act on the fact that, in Christ, we enjoy our personal

worth, self-image, and true identity, which meets both our needs for security (God’s unconditional love) and meaningful purpose.

“Jesus answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with every passion of your heart, with all the energy of your being, and with every thought that is within you. This is the great and supreme commandment. And the second is just as important: You must love your friend in the same way you love yourself. Contained within these commandments to love you will find all the meaning of the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40; see also Mk. 12:31; Lk. 10:27; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8 TPT.)

“For as man *thinks in his heart*, so is he...” “Now the just shall live by faith; but *if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in them*. (Prov. 23:7; Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38 NKJV)” God’s New Testament original Greek word translated “grace” is “*chairis*.” It is defined primarily: “*the cheerful, divine influence upon a person’s heart [spirit] and its reflection in the person’s life; including gratitude*.” In other words, God’s grace (or *chairis*) is now the power of God’s love cheerfully transforming the person more and more into the image of Jesus from the inside-out (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Thess. 5:23; Gen. 1:26; Isa. 64:8, versus the law, affecting only the external life), producing good fruit that includes true gratitude. Or in short, *His power cheerfully becomes your power!*

Once again, this valuable basic understanding and reference points will greatly help you apply God’s personalized prescription, detailed in another section.

How Relational Heartaches Develop

In this section, we will continue to apply what we've been learning. We'll better understand that we are motivated to reach whatever goal we assume will meet our personal need of identity, but in our relational lives. Remember to read the following from a stance of receiving understanding, not doing; letting go of all shame, guilt, and expectation to perform.

'The Flesh' vs. The Spirit

Once again, "Eliminating our problems starts with knowing the cause." If we don't have a basic understanding of the cause, we won't believe God's prescription.

Every one of us, without exception, has experienced a level of inner pain, hurt, and disappointment in life—a type of wound described accurately in Proverbs 15:13: "A glad heart makes a happy face; a broken heart [trauma] crushes the spirit." We, with a broken heart, suffer from just such a wound in our spirit. We all develop some mistaken assumption about how to get our relationship needs met (Jas. 3:2a).

Healthy, life-giving relationships are vital to God, and therefore, to our joy and victorious living. Thus, it is one of the Holy Spirit's top priorities, in relationship, to train and empower each of us in this regard. And therefore, we bear witness to the proverbial *battlefield of our mind* between 'the flesh' and the Spirit in us (Rom. 8:12-14; Gal. 5:13-24; Rom. 6:16, 7:23; 12:2; Eph. 4:23; 6:12; 1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Col. 3:2; Php. 4:8; 1 Pet. 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:7; Rev. 12:10b; Pr. 23:7; Isaiah 26:3).

Be strongly encouraged to utilize the progression of "how our problems develop" in the last section. We frequently manipulate others to have our inherent need of identity met. Dr. Hegstrom's research reports, "Our wounds drive our behaviors. We do not have automatic control of these reactive behaviors, because they're unthinking reactions."⁴ *Motivation to find identity is at the core of all our behavior.*

In due course, when the schemes promoted by 'the flesh' do not fulfill our inherent need for identity, we then develop symptoms as a form of protection from feeling bad about ourselves. 'The flesh' advocates a way to withdraw into emotional and/or physical escape. "A broken heart crushes the spirit."

Relationship issues consist of, or stem from, mistaken identity in the form of negatives like shame/guilt, fear of failure, resentment, anger, or any of their derivatives: stress, anxiety, fear, phobic, vague sense of emptiness, insecurity, compulsion, obsession, fixation, hang-ups, controlling, rejection, self-rejection, unworthiness, insignificance, bitterness, self-bitterness, unloving, looking for love, promiscuity, envy, jealousy, uncontrolled appetites, broken heart, heartache, hardened heart, pride, blame, frustration, loneliness, despair, addiction, self-centeredness, or suicidal. Be strongly encouraged to consider reviewing the above discussion of negatives resulting from our early wounding on pages 38 – 43. We can probably agree that such negatives are relationally dysfunctional.

We each have been deceived by 'the flesh' to dismiss God freely meeting our intrinsic identity need. We are self-servingly trying to meet the need ourselves.

Jesus, Paul, and James Summarize Our Relationship Heartaches

Jesus, Paul, and James summarize our indispensable need for the healing of our hearts & souls through the Holy Spirit. Prepare your heart. Be reminded that "the truth makes us free," and it usually stings at first.

"And Jesus said, '...It is what comes from *inside that defiles you*. For *from within, out of a person's heart*, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things *come from within; they are what defile you*.'" "Do not judge others, and you will not be

judged, for you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. And why worry about a speck in another's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to them, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your eye?" (Mark 7:15-23; Matt. 7:1-4.)

Jesus, in Luke 6:45, teaches that from within, come our words, "What you say flows from what is in *your* heart."

Apostle Paul states, "You may think you can condemn others, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! *When you condemn others, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things* (Rom. 2:1)." "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words... Instead, *be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you* (Eph. 4:31-32)."

Apostle James notes, "God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. ...*Temptation comes from our desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions...* So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow...

"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in *your* lives and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. But don't just listen to God's word. You must *do what it says*. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves...

“Yes indeed, it is good when you keep the royal law as found in the Scriptures: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ...So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free. *There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others.* But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when He judges you...

“If anyone among you thinks they are religious and does not bridle their tongue but deceives their own heart, this one’s religion is useless. ...The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. ...Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it breaks out into curses against those who have been made in the image of God [people]. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! ...If there is *selfish [self-serving] ambition* in your hearts, don’t brag about being wise. That is the worst kind of lie. ...Selfishness is not God’s kind of wisdom. Such is earthly, unspiritual, and motivated by the Devil. For wherever there is...selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and *every kind of evil*. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all *pure. It is also peace-loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.*

“What is causing the quarrels and fights [disunion] among you? Isn’t it the whole army of evil desires at war *within you*? You want what you don’t have, so you scheme...to get it. And even when you ask, you don’t get it because *your motives are all wrong*; you want only what will give you pleasure. ...*The Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us...gives us more and more strength to stand against such evil desires.* As the Scriptures say, ‘God sets Himself

against the proud, but He shows favor to the humble.’ So *humble yourselves before God*. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you.

“Wash *your* hands, you sinners; purify *your* hearts, you hypocrites. Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter and gloom instead of joy. When you bow down before the Lord and *admit your dependence on Him*, He will lift you up and give you honor. *Don’t speak evil against each other, my dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize each other and condemn each other, then you are criticizing and condemning God’s law [of liberty (1:25)]. ...What right do you have to condemn your neighbor?*” (James 1:12-26, 2:8-13; 3:5-18, 4:1-17.)

To quote Dr. Sam Peoples: “...*The people around me in life do not make me the way I am, but reveal the way I am.*”

Without exception, we all see the world through our lens formed by our wounded childhoods. It warps our self-image, how we perceive God and others, and that cripples us in relationship. As a coping strategy for our inner pain, we make unspoken agreements with ourselves and others that our needs should be heard and met. So when people inevitably disappoint us and fail to meet those needs, we are sent back to that painful time we endured as children. Not always consciously, of course. People ‘trigger’ the memories of these unmet needs persistently.

Control

We seek to avoid inner pain in different ways. Husband, father, Christian counselor, and author, Larry Crabb, Ph.D., has summarized on page 10 of his book entitled “Shattered Dreams” *the two most common strategies we use to avoid inner pain*:

"All of us are trapped by addiction to desire for something less than God. For many, that something less is relational control. *'I will not be hurt again, and I will not let people I love be hurt. I'll see to it that what I fear never happens again.'* They therefore live in terror of vulnerably presenting themselves to anyone and instead become determined managers of people. Primary aspects of their identity remain safely tucked away behind the walls of relational control [manipulation].

"For many others, it is an addiction to non-relational control. *'I will experience deep and consuming satisfaction without ever having to relate meaningfully with anyone.'* They keep things shallow and safe with family and friends and feel driven to experience a joy they never feel, a joy that only deep relating can provide. Their commitment is twofold: to never risk revealing inadequacy by drawing close to people [manipulation] and, without breaking that commitment, to feel powerful and alive."

"...We must face the damage done to us by other people. When we honestly acknowledge how others have failed us, we begin to see how hard we work to avoid further injury by withholding from others whatever makes us feel vulnerable. Such withholding generates a longing within us to exist more fully with all that we are, to give our tenderness to others who may trample it underfoot, to move more strongly even though we may fail." —Crabb, Larry, *Finding God*, "Darkness Before Light," pp 158-159

Be compassionately reminded of what God promises His children at Isaiah 51:12: "I, yes I, am He who comforts you..." First John 4:18 kindly informs us, "God's perfect love expels all fear. If we are in fear, it is torment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced His perfect love." See also 2 Timothy 1:7.

And it is vital to realize that addiction, like disease, has a definable onset, symptoms, and a predictable outcome. Addiction

also operates like sin as it is progressive, demands more, is denied, and happens mostly beyond our conscious level.

Spirit-Empowered Flesh-Opposed Relational Instruction

"Our adversary has a particular strategy to destroy relationships. Whether these relationships are in friendships, matrimony, or business, the strategy is the same. He causes a conflict, judgments are made, and feelings are hurt. What happens next is the defining point of whether the enemy gains a foothold, or mercy and forgiveness originating from God covers the wrong. When a root of bitterness is allowed to be planted and grown, it not only affects that person, but it also affects the others who are involved."⁵ It's like a contagious, harmful virus — "corrupting many." (Heb. 12:15)

"Don't use unwholesome [rotten; worthless; corrupt] language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them (Eph. 4:29). Galatians 6:1-2 states, "Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome in a fault, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself [and fall away]. Share each other's burdens..." (No accusing back and forth.)

Also consider this vital Spirit-empowered, flesh-opposed instruction in our New Covenant to **establish love**: "Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with *tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive those who offend you.* Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive each other. Above all, clothe yourselves with *love*, which binds us together in perfect harmony." "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, *no longer counting people's sins against them.* This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell and *show* others!" "Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old self. Christ died for everyone so that those who

receive His new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. So we have stopped evaluating others from a human perspective. At one time, we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know Him now!" "It is the goodness and kindness of God that causes people to repent, change." "We are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us! Now, is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from His love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, *loving each other, and working together with one mind and purpose.*" "Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then...I will know that you are standing together with *one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith*, which is the Good News." (Col. 3:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:14-16, 19, 20; Rom. 2:4; Phil. 2:1, 2, 27)

Perhaps it is obvious why, when we were born again, God put each of us in Jesus and Jesus in us. The 'old self,' the self-reliant, independent (orphan) mindset cannot accomplish any of this without allowing the Holy Spirit to love through us, our 'new self.' God is entirely confident in His unfailing and empowering love—grace—transforming each of us more and more like Jesus! "Jesus will not leave you as an orphan [independent]." This is He at Luke 6:27-35 and Matthew 5:44: "To you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. Give to anyone who asks, and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. Do to others as you would like them to do to you. If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit?

Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. *Love your enemies! Do good to them.* Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for He is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be [become more and more] compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate."

What Do We Want the Holy Spirit to Help Us Change?

If we are clear that we want to draw closer to God, regardless of whether our immediate feelings are positive or negative, we can evaluate what we are asking God to help us change.

Shame/guilt

"The experience of *shame/guilt* sometimes is the focal point in family, friends, counselors, coaches, or ministry efforts to change things. Bruce Narramore and Bill Counts have written an excellent book on guilt from a Christian perspective. They point out that guilt is a complex emotion, not always relieved by simple appeals to the forgiveness of Christ. In our model, the false accusation of shame/guilt is the result of failing to reach *an unreachable goal*. Again, the cure must involve a change in goals that requires a change in thinking about what provides our sense of worth—identity."

Resentment and Anger

"Other times, family, friends, counselors, coaches, or ministry may deal directly with *resentment*. 'Let it out, express your anger.' Or perhaps they will help the person to identify the blocking circumstance responsible for the anger and assist the candidate to either change or accept the obstacle. Neither approach solves the problem. The real problem again is mistaken thinking that led to a mistaken goal. If I believe I need a job promotion for security or

significance—identity—but I am passed over, I likely will resent the company. I may, of course, beat myself over the head for failing, but often the emotion of resentment will lurk underneath such self-castigation. My resentment is the product of misplaced dependency for security or meaningful purpose—identity.

“Resentment or anger is sin when it is my reaction to another blocking my need for security or meaningful purpose—my identity—because God alone has already met these inherent needs.”³

The understanding of resentment, anger, and bitterness is on pages 54-57 above. “To let loose with a violent tirade is a waste of the valuable emotion of anger. Rather, be filled with the Spirit. Use the anger as a motivator to do what you can under God's direction to correct the anger-producing situation.”³

If your coworker, in-law, friend, family member, spouse or ____ really treats you poorly, feel angry. Honestly *acknowledge* how you feel. *Pause; “be slow to anger.” Realize the reason you’re feeling anger is because you were looking to them at some level to meet your worth/identity need, and they failed at that. Only Jesus can meet, and has met your worth/identity need—take your peace.* Honestly feel the anger, and then ‘don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry.’ Your personal goal, however, is not to change the person. If that is your goal, you will add Basic Anxiety to your problems. Partner with God to become a vehicle that He can utilize to change them (Gal. 6:1).”³

We are all completely powerless over other people. We cannot make them do what we want them to, no matter how much we care, no matter how much we want it, no matter how much sense it makes. Just as you, others must realize “truth that sets them free” by the Holy Spirit. And they won’t realize it until it makes sense to their rational understanding, and they are ready. Attempts to change other people often make us part of the problem. (We can, however, allow God to change us. Please recall our earlier discussion about the free will that God necessarily gave each of us.)

“Whenever we set out to achieve a goal (Point 5) that responsible effort involves another human being’s free will, we experience what is

appropriately called Basic Anxiety (or Basic Stress or Basic Fear).”³ Your goal is to keep your peace; an entirely reachable, Spirit-empowered, flesh-opposed goal (Matt. 5:38; Rom. 12:17; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet. 3:9).

Your prayer is that God will reach your in-law’s broken and hardened heart. You’re reading this Bible study, so you might already know it was much less about your in-law. It was mostly about you, your unhealed childhood wounding, conditioning, fear of rejection, and your resulting mistaken assumptions about how to get your identity need met, altogether facilitated by ‘the flesh.’

Stress

Sometimes, stress (or fear or anxiety) is the factor in our progression that coaches, counselors, or ministries try to change. Drug therapy (antianxiety preparations) and behavior therapy (particularly systematic desensitization) are two direct ways of dealing with stress. But a Christian called to maturity will never stop with that. He or she will trace the stress back to an obstacle in route to a goal determined by mistaken thinking, an assumption that something other than God and what He chooses to provide is necessary to meet personal needs.

“Negative symptoms may be dealt with directly, again with behavior modification techniques, but a Christian always will retrace the reason for the goal of safety and eventually will return to the level of basic *assumptions*.”³

Despair, Broken Heart, Vague Sense of Emptiness

“Despair, a broken heart, and a vague sense of emptiness (the remaining elements in the progression) may yield somewhat to encouragement, relationship, and support. But the Christian remedy will again involve a change in wrong thinking about how to meet our true identity need.

“Hopefully, it is obvious that the untaught and critical change needed to live victoriously involves altering our basic *assumption*, the third element in the progression. *Every problem in the progression can be avoided completely if the basic assumption aligns with revealed biblical Truth.* The relationally healthy person depends on God alone (and on what He chooses to provide in His Body) to give them their true identity. A sense of emptiness, frustration, despair, negative emotional shadings, and their symptoms can be traced directly to a mistaken assumption about how to meet our personal identity need.”³

Hebrews 10:21-26 directs us, “Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other... Dear friends, if we willfully *continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins.*”

These are harsh truths when we’ve still got a self-reliant, ‘old self,’ (orphan) perspective—when we haven’t come to know that we know, that we know in our heart of hearts our true identity—how we are known in heaven, plus who God wants to be for us. The Holy Spirit, through Jesus, Paul, James, Peter, and others, summarizes our relationship dynamics and our need to learn to cling to, trust in, and rely on the Holy Spirit in relationship for our true identity.

It was author Will Bowen who wisely stated, “*Hurt people hurt people.*”

“*The enemy looks for people to yield their identity to their own circumstances.*” —Graham Cooke; see also Matt. 4:3

Jesus promises His followers, “I will not leave you as an orphan [independent].” The untaught truth is, without realizing in our heart of hearts how we are known in heaven (e.g., a dependent child of God) and who God wants to be for us (i.e., our perfect father, the perfect father to our parents, the perfect father of our brothers & sisters, the perfect father of our brothers & sisters in Christ, the perfect father of our romantic companion, the perfect father of our

in-laws, the perfect father of our children, and the perfect father to our enemies), we fall prey to what alluring counterfeit ‘the flesh’ offers instead. *We’ll look to others—even manipulate them, many times unwittingly—to provide us identity. Or, we may push them away to protect our insecurity of a broken, hardened heart.* But these times are actually cause for us to **depend more and more on our gracious loving God, in exchange for our (self) idolatry**—what ‘the flesh’ has persuaded us to rely on. In every situation, the broad goal is obedience to Christ by faith. (And it’s God’s grace that empowers us to do so. That’s good news!)

Quoting prominent Bible teacher, Derek Prince: “Christianity is much less of a religion of right doctrine, it’s much more a religion of right relationships.” www.gotchoices.net/derekprince

Prolific results of ‘the flesh’ have been unmasked in this Bible study. This is part of what Apostle Paul enunciated is “the law of sin” at Rom. 7:15-23. And it’s vital to understand that once ‘the flesh’ comes into operation, there is no certain amount of time it takes for the demonic to set in and ensnare us—as it is written in Ephesians 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Rom. 7:20-23.

Thankfully, God has graciously provided a personalized prescription for you in your relationships, detailed in another section.

Romantic Relationships and Holy Matrimony

Mistaken basic assumptions haunted by past trauma of what provides our identity produce mistaken goals on how to meet our need for a true identity. These mistaken goals compulsively produce dysfunctional thought, language, and deed as well as irrational *expectations* of our spouse. And as Dr. Paul Hegstrom confirms: “*Expectations are premeditated resentments.*”⁴ It’s essential to recall that resentment for our spouse originates from us looking to them to meet our need of identity—security, unconditional love, or meaningful purpose. God alone meets these personal needs; spouses cannot. And please be gently reminded that “almost 98% of

the issues couples struggle with are rooted in childhood wounds each of them suffered before the age of eleven.”⁴ When we look at our relationship through the lens of childhood trauma and/or fear of rejection, we might see a very different spouse than the one we married.

Authentic Unity⁶

“God reveals a very significant part of His design for holy matrimony at Genesis 2:24 (“a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and *the two are united into one*”) and Ephesians 5:21-33. In verse 32, He instructs us that holy matrimony is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are united as one. A holy matrimony that is developing all three aspects of unity—Spirit, Soul, and Body—provides a couple with a living parable of the eternal union of Christ and His bride, the church. God’s goal for holy matrimony, then, can be summarized as:

- “Genuine spirit unity: Trusting in Christ alone to meet your own personal need of worth—identity—security (unconditional love) and meaningful purpose;
- “Genuine soul unity: Ministering to your partner in a way that enhances an awareness of his or her worth in Christ;
- “Genuine body unity: Enjoying sexual pleasure as an expression and outgrowth of this personal relationship.

“A personally meaningful holy matrimony depends on the development of soul unity. And genuine soul unity cannot grow without genuine spirit unity. When both levels of oneness are present, the relationship is vital and intimate. Core parts of the personality are touched and engaged. Communication reaches far beneath the routineness of ‘What’s for supper?’ or ‘Where shall we go on vacation?’ or ‘Do you want to have sex? ...It’s been a month.’ An awareness of unusual closeness develops toward a pattern of generally increasing unity. Genuine unity is felt subjectively as a relationship so intimate that only sexual intercourse can fully express it.

“The holy matrimony relationship is one of God’s creations for helping another realize more deeply their value in Jesus Christ. It gives husbands and wives the chance to minister to an immortal human being in a uniquely intimate fashion. To enjoy the meaningfulness of holy matrimony, then, requires a once-made but ongoing commitment of mutual ministry to build up our mates. The more we see opportunities to minister to our mates and the more we seize them, the more meaning our holy matrimony will have.

“And yet while I am trying to minister to my spouse’s personal needs, I sense needs within me. It is at this point I must take very seriously the conviction that my unity with Christ—Him in me and me in Him—is my only good, that God alone is sufficient to satisfy what I need to live as I should. Upon considering what is true—that I am secure and significant in my truest identity—I must by faith approach my spouse as personally full in Christ, willing to share the love shed abroad in my heart, needing nothing in return. When my spouse reacts with loving respect, I feel great. When my spouse reacts with something else like neglect, criticism, or indifference, it will sting—but I must hold on firmly to the truth that I am whole in Christ and therefore not threatened by my spouse’s response.

“God has chosen our spouses as His special instruments for helping us to experience more fully what it means to be loved and significant. All our longings for warmth, kindness, understanding, respect, and faithfulness from our spouses are real desires. We seem to feel significant and secure when these desires are met; however, the Lord has not promised to grant these desires. This is a crucial point—what we *desire* from our spouse must not be our *goal*.

“A *goal* is an objective that does not require cooperation from another person—my spouse, in this context. When reaching an objective depends solely on *my* willingness to do certain things, it may properly be called a *goal*. I must set the *goal* of pleasing God by fully accepting and lovingly ministering to my spouse.

“Christians are wholly secure and significant in Christ, whether they feel it or not, and are capable of operating from fullness. They can give because they have something to give.

“A *desire* is an objective that I may legitimately and fervently want but cannot reach through my efforts alone. To fulfill a desire requires the uncertain cooperation of another.

“If or when our *desire* [that our spouse ministers to us or treats us a certain way] becomes our *goal*, we resort to *manipulative* efforts for another—our spouse, in this case—to meet our *desires*.

“The more that spouses react to each other on the basis of their perceived fullness in Christ, the more their holy matrimony will progress toward genuine soul unity.

“Many people deal with their needs erroneously by

- a) “Ignoring the existence of their *personal* identity need and looking for satisfaction with *physical* pleasures;
- b) “Settling for counterfeit personal satisfaction through achievement, recognition, affluence, and the like, which can never provide real security or significance;
- c) “Turning to their spouses for security and significance. The result is a manipulative relationship designed to use each other for personal satisfactions. Because no human being is fully adequate to meet another's personal needs, such an exploitative relationship will inevitably experience conflict. “Expectations are premeditated resentments.”⁴

“Only Christ can meet our personal needs, that is, provide us with identity—authentic security (unconditional love) and legitimate meaningful purpose. Personal meaning in God's world depends finally on participation in God's purposes. We therefore must rely on Him to give us what our personal natures require.

“Relationships built on manipulative efforts to enhance our own feelings of being loved, significant, or to protect ourselves against further hurt will never achieve the oneness God has for us to enjoy. *A shift from the principle of manipulation to the principle of ministry is a primary route to genuine unity.*

“It is difficult for us to grasp deeply the reality of our worth in Christ. To become subjectively and convincingly aware of our security and significance in Christ, we must

- a) “Trust His love enough to give ourselves fully to our spouses in an effort to minister to their needs and choose to continue our efforts to minister regardless of our spouses' response to us;
- b) “Honestly explore the impact we make on each other's experience of self-acceptance as worthwhile persons. Examples include:
 - “A shift from manipulation to a decisive and continuous willingness to adopt the commitment to full acceptance of the other and ministering to the other
 - “A substantial awareness of your partner's needs
 - “A conviction that you are God's chosen instrument to touch those needs
 - “What do I do when I'm angry?
 - “What do I do with my feelings?
 - “When should I tell my partner how I feel?
 - “When a barrier goes up between us, how does it get torn down? Should we talk out the problem? Who goes first? Suppose one partner won't open up?
 - “What does it mean to submit to one's husband?
 - “Does headship give husbands the right to make decisions for their wives?

“It is possible to shift from manipulation to ministry. Consider an example of how it's done. Nathan enters his home after a stressful day at work. His automatic, unplanned, and perhaps unconscious goal likely involves a desirable response from his wife, Lea, perhaps a friendly greeting, a warm hug, or a prepared dinner. After dealing with her own work challenges all day, suppose the first thing she says is, ‘Why are you so late? You said you'd be home nearly an hour ago.’ Lea has blocked Nathan's goal.

“Reflect for a moment. How do people feel when their goal is blocked? Most often, they become angry or at least frustrated. Nathan feels anger towards his wife. He admits to himself that he feels like retorting with a snappy comment like ‘Hey, thanks for the warm welcome! Sure is nice to come home!’ What should he do? His options are (1) to express his anger, (2) to defend his late arrival, (3) simply to ignore Lea’s comment and wash up for dinner, or (4) to soothe her with an apology and a warm embrace. Remember the essential point here. Soul unity depends on our motives for what we do more than on the specifics of our actions. *The question Nathan needs to ask is not ‘What should I do?’ but rather ‘What is my goal?’* Nathan’s anger should be a strong warning that his goal was manipulative. He was demanding a response from his wife that would meet his immediate need.

“If Nathan is (1) committed to the principle of ministry, (2) aware of his wife as a person who longs to feel loved, and (3) convinced that he is God’s instrument to represent Christ’s love to his wife tangibly, then he is able—empowered by God’s grace—to change his goal. The actual operation involves replacing thoughts like ‘Why can’t she be pleasant when I come home?’ to ‘My goal right now is to let Lea know that she is loved and special to me.’

“Think of the mind as an audio recorder. The ‘auto play’ reflects our manipulative goal of changing our spouse: ‘Why can’t she greet me warmly?’ To change goals, we must decisively reject that old, dying audio and choose a new one, that is, choose a new sentence to reflect our changed goal: ‘I want her to feel loved.’

“Choosing new ways of thinking must be more than a mechanical procedure. As we replace our self-serving thoughts with giving intentions, we need to remind ourselves that we are freely choosing to minister because we believe God and His power becoming our power—grace. Although our feelings may not immediately shift from anger to compassion, we can convey noncritical acceptance to our spouses if ministry is our freely selected purpose. The crux of the matter is, do we really want to

accept the (Spirit-empowered) goal of ministry at this moment? The more we are willing to do so, the more surely our marriage will move toward satisfying levels of Soul Unity.”⁶

How Problems Develop in Matrimony

We all see the world through our own lens, formed by our own wounded childhoods. We all make unspoken agreements with ourselves and our spouse that our needs should be heard and met. So when our spouse inevitably disappoints us and fails to meet those needs, we are sent back to that painful time we endured as children. This happens mostly beyond our consciousness. Our spouse triggers our irrational memories of our unmet needs. This is true of all couples, in one way or another.

What you are about to read regarding the romantic and matrimonial relationships is from another prominent book by husband, father, Larry Crabb, Ph.D., entitled *Effective Biblical Counseling*, pages 119, 120, 137-142. And please strongly consider referencing the above progression of “how problems develop” in our lives on pages 59-60, and consider what we’ve learned so far, but now in the context of the romantic and holy matrimony.

The referenced progression suggests a primary way in which romantic relationship problems develop. Our goal-oriented *behavior* (Point 5) can be intelligent, realistic, and sensible or it can be misinformed, unrealistic, and utterly ineffective. When our goal (Point 6) is not reached, we will feel threatened as our needs remain unmet, and we will become stressed, resentful, or angry.

For example, if a wife believes that her identity depends on her husband loving her, she will likely try to reach the goal of winning her husband's love. But perhaps she does not understand what predominantly turns a man on. She may help him with his business, or she may take over family budgeting and do it efficiently, but she may become unkempt or neglect to warmly greet him when he comes home. Problems develop in this marriage. Her husband is cool to her.

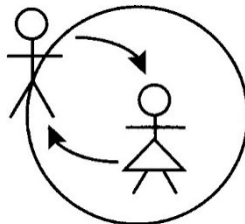
The goal is not reached (6th Point). Or what if he doesn't love her by her precise 'love language'? The goal is not reached (Point 6).

When she consults the counselor, hurt and bitter, complaining about her unaffectionate, distant husband, she may come to understand what she is doing wrong. Her 'goal-oriented behavior' (5th Point) is misinformed and ineffective. So she runs to the local bookstore and picks up a few books on becoming a complete woman, a sizzling sex partner, a feminine delight. In an attempt to win his love she learns to cook special meals, she admires his body, wears sexy lingerie and cute, frilly dresses, and on and on and on and on.

There is probably no husband alive who would have a single objection when his wife does all the above. Husbands like it. More wives might give it a try. But there are two fundamental problems with an approach that seeks only to change irrational goal-oriented *behavior* (5th Point) into more intelligent and effective efforts to achieve the same goal (4th Point).

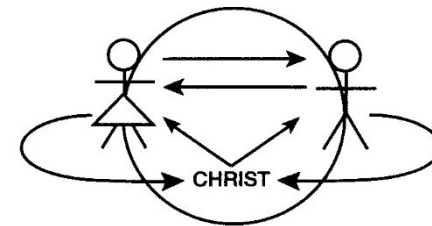
- (1) The goal of winning her husband's love may be absolutely unreachable, no matter what the desperate wife tries to do. If so, then what? Is she doomed to insecurity until her husband changes or until she can find another man to 'love' her?
- (2) The wife's basic *motivation* (2nd Point) is self-centered. All the advice on how to be an effective woman has taught this woman how to manipulate her husband to meet her needs more effectively.

A wife (or a husband) with an unfulfilled need operates from a 'lack' or 'deficit *motivation*' (Point 2 without this Bible study's biblical insight). She is at the center of her world, trying to fill the emptiness within her.



In the above diagram, the arrow pointing to the husband represents the wife's behavior toward him. The arrow from her husband back to her indicates the desired outcome of her efforts, namely, his loving her. The circle around her symbolizes her self-centered *motivation*. Sadly, she is giving to get. In reality, she is doing nothing more than using her husband to meet her needs. *Both husbands and wives are specialists in working hard to change the other to have their own needs better met.*

Victorious Christian holy matrimony is different. Perhaps it could be sketched like this:



In this diagram of an ideal holy matrimony, the Lord is meeting the basic needs in each spouse. Their behavior now toward each other is an *expression of Christ in them*, giving to help the other become closer to Christ. Both are full and operating, therefore not from a lack or deficit motivation, but from *expression motivation* (Point 2; fruit of this study's endeavor). The wife may be doing most of the things the books told her to do, but now her *motivation* is different. She longs to see him come closer to Christ. If he loves her in return, that's icing on the cake. Although icing is sweet and makes the cake much more appealing, it's not the central, most substantial element.

If he does not love her, she remains secure and desires to minister to him as God directs, and so she continues to willingly submit, praying that God will use her behavior to bring him closer to the Lord.

In review: Problems, then, can develop at the point of goal-oriented behavior. We can move effectively or ineffectively toward our goal. Assistance that helps us reach a goal determined by a *mistaken* assumption actually amounts to teaching a tick how to

drain a dog more productively. If we can achieve our goal through more effective strategies, we will attain a measure of satisfaction. But if it is true that only Christ can truly satisfy our needs and if a mistaken assumption about true identity determined our goal, those of us who reach our goal will not be thoroughly satisfied; our identity need will still be unmet. We will be motivated to go through the cycle again and reach new goals. All our lives, we will chase after things that never satisfy. God told Jeremiah that His people “have dug for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13).”

Jesus said that people who rely on any source of nourishment other than Christ Himself will never be content. What a tragedy to see men and women locked into a vocational structure, sacrificing their families to “make it” in business. An expensive home with a better car in the garage and a bulging bank account amounts to nothing more than a broken cistern.

What Do We Want the Holy Spirit to Help Us Change?

The primary problem with romance, holy matrimony, and family today is misplaced dependency. We depend on everything but God to meet our fundamental needs. What then do we try to change? How we think, what we are depending on, and what we believe we must have if we are to feel truly worthwhile. We must allow the Holy Spirit to change our mind. Transformation depends on renewing not our feelings, not our behavior, not our circumstances, but our minds. Jesus the Christ renews *your mind* (Rom.12:2; see also Mk. 7:21-22; Rom. 7:23, 25; 8:6; 2 Cor.10:4-5; Eph. 4:23; Php. 2:5; 4:7-8; Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 1:7; Jas. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:1; Prov.3:5; 23:7; Isa. 26:3).

Most of us, as well as most preachers, pastors, counselors, coaches, and ministries, neglect this key to true Christian transformation and try to change something else. Some try to change goal-oriented *behavior* from irrational and sinful to rational and biblical. Christians are, of course, interested in rational, reasonable behavior, but only on the foundation of right thinking.

Right behavior without right thinking produces the labored, pressured, performing, deadly religiosity Christians are warned about most clearly in Galatians 3:3-5 and Hebrews 4:1-13. Right behavior springing from right thinking yields a joyful, natural, desired obedience to the God who makes us whole persons (Eph. 6:6). This obedience gladly flows out of our true identity, with both security and meaningful purpose.

Even if *right behavior* accomplishes the goal, if the goal is not biblical, is the Christian freer from the self-reliant ‘old self’ and more like Jesus? If a woman believes that her reason for living depends on her husband's love, more effective wifely behavior may help her reach the goal of more attention from her husband, but she will not have added an inch to her spiritual stature. She must first realize that *Christ* is her reason for living (right thinking), *then* she can become a better wife (right behavior), not primarily to win her husband, but rather to please the Lord and minister to her husband (right goal). If he loves her in return, praise the Lord. She should enjoy his love thoroughly. If her husband does not return her love, she still is a whole, secure woman, capable of going on for God.

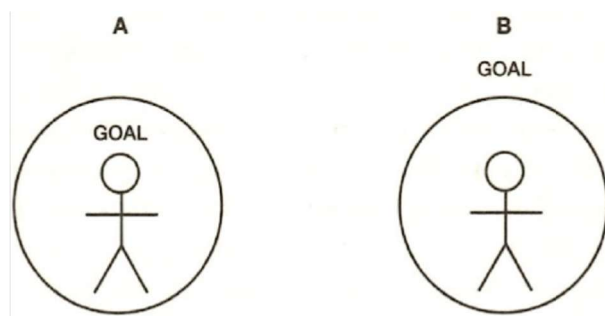
Some of us try to change the *goal*. To meaningfully change the goal, however, requires that we change our thinking. As shown in the previous section, we set goals that may be unattainable. For example, when disciplining our children, we may set the goal of getting our child to respond properly. But that goal involves an element not totally within our control, namely, another human being. Rather than a goal of a proper response from our child, setting our goal to act responsibly according to God's principles is reachable. Before we can change our goal, however, we need to change our thinking from “I need my child to turn out right if I am to be worthwhile” to “I am worthwhile as a responsible child of God. I do, of course, want my child to turn out right, so I will discipline him in what I understand to be a biblical manner. If my child responds poorly, I will be grieved and will reevaluate my discipline procedures to make sure they are biblical, but I will not be personally threatened

because my needs are not at stake. They do not depend on my child's response."

As thinking changes, goals will, of course, change because goals depend upon the basic *assumption* about how to meet personal needs. When our thinking is sound and we understand that meeting our true identity need depends only on our relationship with Christ, we are in a position to set reachable goals consistently. Again, in every situation, the broad goal is obedience to Christ.

Perhaps that involves responsibly making dinner for our family. Our personal value does not depend on our family liking our dinner. Compliments are appreciated, of course, but they are not *needed*. Insults are no fun, and they do provoke legitimate inner pain, but they are not *personally threatening*. Yet how many women do a slow burn when their husbands complain about dinner. Why? Because at that moment, they are depending on their husband's response for their personal worth. The goal of their dinner-making behavior was really to control their husband's response.

As mentioned earlier, efforts to make the best dinner ever to elicit security-building approval are sheer manipulation. It also involves accepting a goal that involves another human being's free will—in this case, her husband's. Whenever we set out to achieve a goal that responsible effort involves another human being's free will, we experience what is appropriately called Basic Anxiety (or Basic Stress or Basic Fear).



Above, let a circle represent the limits of what you can accomplish if you responsibly choose to do your best within the limits of your

ability as an empowered follower of Jesus. If your goals are within the circle, you will not experience Basic Stress. There is no fear (stress) that the goal cannot be reached. It depends on whether you're willing to put out the effort. But let your goal fall *outside* the circle. Now your goal is elusive because the Holy Spirit will not empower you in swaying another's free will. You may reach it. Your husband may smile warmly over a delicious dinner and express love for you *but deep inside, underneath the security your husband has given you, is Basic Stress*: "I need something that involves another's free will."

In Circle A a Christian can behave *irresponsibly* and therefore not reach appropriate, attainable goals. The result is not stress but rather authentic conviction. Exhortation is the Holy Spirit's key: "Shape up and live responsibly. Your goals are consistent with right thinking. You are secure, significant, and empowered in Christ. Now He wants you to kiss your wife, play with your kids, bless your friends, go to work each day, and re-present Jesus. These goals are attainable and appropriate for a Christian. Now go ahead and do it." Do what God expects because He has already given you everything you need to live responsibly.

Shame/guilt

If needed, please consider simply reviewing the discussion in the previous section regarding shame/guilt in what do we want the Holy Spirit to help us change in our relationships (page 66).

Resentment and Anger

"I'm feeling angry right now. Don't worry, I'm not going to attack you. Is this an okay time to talk?"

If not, "When is the soonest we can talk?"

If needed, please consider simply reviewing the discussion in the previous section regarding resentment and anger in what we want the Holy Spirit to help us change (pages 66, 67).

Stress

If needed, please consider simply reviewing the discussion in the previous section regarding stress in what do we want the Holy Spirit to help us change (page 67).

Despair, Broken Heart, Vague Sense of Emptiness

If needed, please consider simply reviewing the discussion in the previous section regarding despair, broken heart, and a vague sense of emptiness in what do we want the Holy Spirit to help us change (pages 67, 68).

Control

Because our hearts are more deeply involved in the area of romance, it's worth briefly summarizing the two most common relational strategies we use to avoid the perpetual inner pain, originated by 'the flesh:'

"I will not be hurt again, and I will not let people I love be hurt. I'll see to it that what I fear never happens again."

Primary aspects of these people's indispensable identity remain safely tucked away behind the walls of relational control. They become addicted to managing people because they live in terror of vulnerably presenting themselves to another.

Often, 'the flesh' utilizes fear coupled with resentful, misplaced anger to manage (manipulate) others. And frequently pride is involved, as many times 'the flesh' offers pride as a coping strategy covering for the inner pain of shame, also enabled by 'the flesh.'

"Anyone who loves to quarrel loves sin; anyone who trusts in high walls invites disaster (Pr. 17:19)."

This addiction to control is the origin of 'scapegoating,' 'gaslighting,' and narcissism.

And for many others is an addiction to non-relational control. *"I will experience deep and consuming satisfaction without ever having to relate meaningfully with anyone."* These people's commitment is twofold: to never risk revealing inadequacy by drawing close to people and, without breaking that commitment, to feel powerful and alive. They keep things shallow and safe with family and friends and feel driven to experience a joy they never feel, a joy that only deep relating to another can provide.

The resistance to revealing inadequacy has been a battleground for most of this co-author's family-line as well as myself because of the rejection and judgmental early family environment, courtesy of 'the flesh.' And frequently pride covering for shame is also involved, promoted by 'the flesh.'

Have you ever heard the age-old saying concerning romantic relationships, "Opposites attract"? That's also not always 100% the case, but it's close. And again, this mostly happens beyond our conscious levels.

The Addicting Idol of Meaningless Sex

It is vital to understand that the deep, deep soul-level connection formed between a fantasy sex-object and orgasm sooner or later becomes a genuine idol. Even though 'the flesh' is involved, the imagined visual perfection with associated orgasm is intoxicating. This intoxication results from a hormone produced in the brain called 'oxytocin.' The research reveals that when the person makes use of the same visual—including when the visual is imagined—more than a few times along with orgasm, the brain accepts the fantasy as

reality. This becomes an extremely complex and dangerous idol, operating at more than a physical or emotional level. And a spouse simply cannot ‘measure up’ to it.

Although ‘the flesh’ is in operation in meaningless sex with an actual person, an intoxicating, deep, profound soul-level union is also formed. And although there may be some chance for the spouse to ‘measure up’ with this sex-object, it also becomes a very complex, treacherous idol, operating at more than one level.

Addiction and Codependency

This Bible study unmask the source and symptoms of the most rudimentary compulsion, addiction—self (serving) idolatry—out of which also comes addiction to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, shopping, dysfunctional relationship, people pleasing, etc., etc. Behind addiction lies insecurity from a mistaken identity. People with an addiction become master manipulators. This is because their life inevitably revolves around what (or who) they are addicted to. This is the point where emotional, mental, physical, relational, and/or financial issues and torment become painfully obvious. As long as they get their next fix, it doesn’t matter who they neglect, trample over, or have to manipulate to get it (this includes self). This is an authentic form of abuse—mistreatment, neglect, exploitation, victimization, cruelty.

Codependency is enabling the addict—self (serving) idolator—by compulsively doing the prudent things that the addict is to be doing themselves. It masks evil in the name of love. Generally, both the addict and the codependent are in denial.

Love instructs the following: “Speak the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15)” “If another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ [love]... *We are each responsible for our own conduct...Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who plant to please ‘the flesh’ will harvest decay and*

*death. But those who plant to please the [Holy] Spirit will harvest life from the [Holy] Spirit. (Gal. 6:1-8)” “An open rebuke is better than hidden love! (Prov. 27:5)” And perhaps in due course, “Do not associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet continues in sexual sin, or is *greedy*, or worships idols [*self-idolatry*], or is *abusive*, or is a drunkard, or *cheats people*. Get rid of the old ‘yeast’ by removing this wicked person from among you and hand them over to Satan so that ‘the flesh’ will be destroyed and they themselves will be saved on the day the Lord returns. (1 Cor. 5:7—6:10; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Rom. 11:22; 16:17-18)”*

Traits of an Abusive Spouse ⁷

The key motivational factor that defines an emotionally abusive person is ‘guiding fiction’ haunted by past trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides his or her worth—truest identity (Point 3 of how problems develop). They are trying to cope with feelings of a low sense of worth—worthlessness—produced from an orphan independent self-reliance. Because of the abuser's feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, insignificance, and their accompanying distorted beliefs about holy matrimony, they feel they must control their spouse to meet their own need of identity. The abuser will use manipulative and heavy-handed tactics to keep their spouse off balance. For example, the abuser may resort to intimidation, eliciting fear, shame, guilt, pity, or anger manipulating a person, exposing their vulnerable or helpless feelings; put-downs, criticism, or verbal abuse exposing shame or humiliation; controlling the other's schedule; keeping the other ignorant regarding themselves, the world, or others; promoting crisis, and thus occupied and off balance; conspiracy and turning others away from aiding the person; creating situations in which there is no way to ‘win;’ lying, half-truths, or gossip; threatening self-harm or suicide; possessiveness and jealousy.

Although the behaviors in and of themselves are forms of abuse, it is the constant climate of destruction that leaves a person believing they are trapped, with no confidence or hope that there is a way out. A person in an emotionally abusive matrimony does not

believe they have any choices. They think they carry the responsibility for the bad marriage and that if only s/he could change, their marriage would improve. No matter what s/he does differently, however, the marriage never seems to get better.

The abuser has a typical profile. Like their spouse, the abuser has a low sense of worth, and their identity is often tied to their performance, image, or personal charm, facilitated by 'the flesh.' They have a strong sense of insecurity that includes a fear of receiving or losing love, and/or esteem of others. They are generally distrustful of others and believe they lack a secure place in important relationships—the self-reliant (orphan) state of mind.

The abusive person is typically self-referenced, meaning they see things from their own frame of reference rather than empathically looking at things from another's perspective. This is not quite the same as being selfish. It can be said that the self-referenced person would give you the shirt off their back, but they don't know you need it. The self-referenced person frequently violates the holy matrimony partnership by failing to thoughtfully consider their partner's point of view and needs.

The abusive individual's feelings of worthlessness also typically cause emotional dependence, feeling that they are less than complete, inadequate, or unable to live without the other person. The emotionally dependent person tends to assume responsibility for another, taking on the role of rescuer, enabler, or controller (e.g., 'I know what is best for you.'). Frequently, the abuser intends to prevent the loss of the partner because they feel dependent on the other for their identity. It is understandable, then, why possessiveness is another characteristic of the abuser. They typically try to monopolize their spouse's time and attention or claim exclusivity in areas where others move closer to the object of their so-called love. "Hurt people hurt people." Often, the abusive individual's haunting early traumatic wounding held by 'the flesh' will cause them to angrily push their spouse away from their broken,

hardened heart; 'the flesh' convinces them to behave less 'dependent' and more 'self-reliant,' out of fear.

For anyone who works with abusive persons, the most frustrating characteristic is the denial of their broken, hardened, frightened heart, their low sense of worth, insecurity, and fear of failing. When interacting with this type of individual, one is often left feeling as though they have just gone in circles. Issues presented are minimized, denied, or turned around to make someone else responsible, or a host of other topics are brought in to sidetrack the conversation. Because of early wounding, 'the flesh,' along with the sin-cursed world system, they've been deceived by fear of feeling hurt yet again. The process of change is most often slow or nonexistent.

Traits of an Emotionally Abused Spouse⁷

Every individual in an emotionally abusive relationship can be characterized as having low sense of worth — the 'old self' (orphan) mindset. Although low sense of worth is always characteristic of an abused person, it is not always obvious. Many with low sense of worth appear confident and in control, and many seem to 'really have their act together.'

Low sense of worth makes a person vulnerable to the controlling tactics of the abuser. Because of 'the flesh' along with the sin-cursed world system, they feel they have little value; they look to their spouse's acceptance as the measure of their worth. Instead of mirroring to them the truth about their God-given value and dignity, the abuser pulls them down even further by their critical and non-affirming posture toward their victim. They exercise a form of mind control that results in the victim taking on the frame of reference of the abuser, developing feelings of guilt and inadequacy for not meeting the abuser's standards and needs. This is complicated even more by the victim's perceived worth--identity--need in the marital relationship.

As discussed earlier in this Bible study (page 37), one of the most common features of a person's mistaken assumption of what provides their value is having a spouse, and they will do anything

they can to maintain that identity. As a result, many form a false sense of dependency, believing that they cannot stand emotionally without their partner. The abuser reinforces this with criticism and condemnation. A victim of emotional abuse believes the abuser is right, or at the least they have strong doubts about themselves.

One of the most consistent characteristics of an emotionally abused individual is their feelings of loneliness, distrust, guilt, inadequacy, fear, detachment, and helplessness.

These feelings commonly result in depressive episodes alternating with reactive behavior. Discussed earlier, if a person is not taught what we're learning about God alone meeting their need of value, worth, identity, they may engage in self-deprecating behavior, or they may find expression of their negative emotions in health issues or disease. At the extreme end of the continuum, a person may plan, attempt, or commit suicide.

It cannot be emphasized enough that even if individual controlling and hurtful acts of the abuser are not extreme, the *cumulative* effect of their tactics is oppressive and destructive to the person experiencing them.

Holy matrimony is intended to be lifelong, in which God meets *the basic needs of value in each spouse*. Each committed to allow *God to heal their individual brokenness* facilitated by their past woundings held by 'the flesh.' Their behavior toward each other is dedicated to becoming more and more an *expression of Christ in them*—giving for the purpose of helping the other become closer to Christ. Both are devoted to becoming full and operating therefore not from a *lack* motivation, but from *expression* motivation. Out of mutual reverence, each is committed to becoming more and more respectful, honest communicators, in knowledge of one another, realizing the other is an entirely different person with different past life experiences. Devoted to becoming more vulnerable, "quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger, communicating the truth in love, clothing each other with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, making allowance for each other's faults, and

forgiving. Above all, clothing each other with [sacrificial] *love*, which binds together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:14-16, 19, 20; Rom. 2:4; Eph. 4:15; Phil. 2:1, 2, 27; Jas. 1:19; see also Gal. 6:1-3). *And this right behavior is a fruit, not a goal* (Eph. 5:9; Jn. 14:15; 2 Jn. 1:6).

This kind of relationship and abuse are mutually exclusive. When abuse occurs in holy matrimony, the relationship becomes a setting for oppression, personal disintegration and pain rather than a context for promoting the well-being of their partner.

To suggest that a spouse continue being abused in a relationship rejects Scripture on several counts. First, God places great value on those whom He has called (1 Chron. 16:34; Ps. 6:4; 139:13-18; John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Abuse is in direct contradiction to how God's children should be treated, according to His plain biblical instruction. Second, by allowing an abuser to continue in their destructive patterns, a spouse is not loving him or her. S/he enables them, permits them to continue in sin. Finally, abuse places a spouse in a relationship in which they are unequal to their spouse. The victim becomes an object to satisfy the abuser's self-serving, and their need to continually act out the unresolved inner wounding and pain for which Jesus paid the full price of healing. The victim is a means to an end—the result of a personal mistaken assumption, a guiding fiction, an attitude, of what provides their sense of worth/identity.⁷

A spouse allowing *God to heal their own individual brokenness*, facilitated by their past woundings, does not require their spouse's cooperation or presence at all. Once one spouse takes God's personalized prescription themselves, you'll frequently watch the other spouse change in front of your eyes wondrously. When a spouse looks at *their own* mistaken assumptions, old stories, agreements, fantasies, expectations, trauma, and fears—they can see their spouse with new eyes. That shift is so monumental that it's enough to inspire their spouse to access their own healing from God. And they no longer felt like they had to do the heavy lifting.

When we're children, we each make an agreement with 'the flesh' that love is a commodity that we have to be good enough to

earn. And it's simply not true. It's not something you have to be good enough or bargain for. There's nothing you can do to cause God to love you more, and there's nothing you can do to cause God to love you less. God *is* love.

When you recognize that God is the source of love in your life, you'll look at your spouse's role in your life differently. They are not there to be your source of unconditional love. When you look at your spouse as your source of love, they are going to let you down. They will fail to meet your needs. But when God is the source, His unconditional love heals your past wounds.

Hopefully we're gaining the understanding to stop blaming our spouses for our feelings of discontentment. You receive God's unconditional love. And you have lots of love to share. That frees your spouse from having to get it right for you. When they feel that freedom, they can choose you as their partner without feeling like they're failing to meet your needs. Thinking they're failing you causes them to shut down and hide. Knowing that there's no way they can fail you because God's the source of your love, they gravitate toward you and aren't afraid of letting you down. That lack of fear in them stokes flames of attraction.

This very same dynamic expressed about our *security* through God's unconditional love can be expressed about *meaningful purpose* in your life and your spouse's life. Only God is your source of meaningful purpose. Not you or your spouse.

Even Infidelity

For most of us, infidelity is an unforgivable offense. It doesn't have to be. It's incredibly unfortunate and causes a lot of upheaval, but it can also serve as a catalyst for healing and deeper love. If you were the one who strayed and you're reading this Bible study, you might already know it wasn't really about your spouse. It was about you, your unhealed childhood wounding, conditioning, and your resulting mistaken assumptions about how to get your identity need met, altogether facilitated by 'the flesh.'

If your spouse strayed, it's not because you failed to keep them interested. In fact, it had nothing to do with you. Infidelity can trigger our deepest insecurities and feelings of not being good enough. It touches the vast inner pain that was created the first time we felt rejected by the people who were supposed to love us God's way—unconditionally—and who also were haunted by trauma held by 'the flesh.'

The remedy? Take God's personalized prescription yourself. Only then can one move to forgiveness, trust, and joy. Our God has a personalized, proven process that works. If we don't allow His healing now, it'll just crop up again later in a different way.

We cannot fix ourselves. We cannot fix another. We cannot take someone else's personalized prescription for them. And as popular as human remedies are, they cannot authentically help. God wants each of us to live free of the trauma and pain of infidelity.

Summary

God has already met each of our deepest needs of security [unconditional love] and meaningful purpose [significance]—value—through our truest identity. And as we have learned, our past wounding held by 'the flesh' produces the **self-idolatry** of meeting our inherent identity need ourselves. This dynamic is directly connected to our chronic problems in matrimony as well.

This is part of what Apostle Paul enunciated is "the law of sin" at Rom. 7:15-23. And it's vital to understand that once 'the flesh' comes into operation, the demonic sets in and ensnares our **matrimony**.

"Those who receive Christ's new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ..."

Please continue to avoid going into works mode. Our freedom comes only with the compassionate, all-knowing, and empowering Holy Spirit. And rest assured, you will gain specific, practical understanding of God's personalized prescription for you in each of your relationships in another section.

How Health Issues and Problems Develop

In this section, you will gain a deeper understanding of the principle that we are motivated to reach whatever goal we assume will first meet our personal need for identity, as well as our emotional, mental, and physical health needs. Be reminded to read the following in peace, simply receiving understanding, not doing; letting go of all programming to do something. In another section we will learn to allow God's Spirit and Word to reverse the specific problems in our lives.

Be compassionately reminded that each one of us has experienced a level of inner pain, hurt, and disappointment in life—a type of wound which is very hard to bear, that is described accurately in Proverbs 18:14: “The spirit [heart] of a person can endure their malady, but a wounded spirit [broken heart] who can bear?” We, with a self-reliant, independent (orphan) mindset, suffer from just such trauma in our heart. We all develop some mistaken assumption about how to meet our needs (Jas. 3:2a). And as we have been learning, *thoughts come with emotions*. And the negative emotions of stress, resentment, and shame/guilt (and their derivatives) have biological connections that result in the vast majority of our physical health problems.

“The latest cutting-edge medical research has made a startling discovery: by our thinking and choosing, our physical brain is actually changing moment by moment. This latest research shows 87 to 95 percent of mental, behavioral, and physical issues come from one's thought life. This staggering and eye-opening statistic means *only 5 to 13 percent* of emotional, mental, and physical problems come from the environment and genes.

“What has now been shown in research on the brain is that everything that goes on in your thought life is converted into a physical reaction. A massive body of research has now shown that the mind-body connection is real—what we think affects us emotionally, intellectually, and physically.” ⁴

Front-line neuroscientific research can help us affirm the Bible and this Bible study.

Beloved, the following is not meant to condemn but to help us access everything that our loving God has purchased for us, including emotional, mental, physical healing, and health & wellness. Prepare your heart. The Holy Scriptures provide us with remarkable insight into health problems, dis-ease, bodily healing, and health & wellness.

Mental, emotional, and physical health issues don't 'just happen.' That's good news! Other than medical accidents and accidents in general, approximately 98% of our mental, emotional, and physical health issues are the result of reaping what we have sown in thought—our basic assumptions of what provides our true identity that we have not submitted to our redemptive God.

These issues include and not limited to addiction, allergies, food intolerances or allergies, ADD, ADHD, anorexia, arthritic problems, autoimmune conditions, back problems, high or low blood pressure, chronic bowel issues, breathing issues, bulimia, cancer, cholesterol problems, circulation issues, chronic constipation, compulsions, Crohn's, diabetes & hypoglycemia, digestion issues, dementia, fibromyalgia, problems involving glands, gut issues, heart disease, headaches, migraines, hypersensitivities to chemicals, fragrance, smells, or mold, hormone issues, infertility & sterility problems, immune system problems, chronic inflammatory issues, insomnia, kidney stones and conditions, leukemia, MS, metabolic & weight problems, miscarriages, neurological problems, OCD, obesity, obsessions, osteoporosis, pain, Parkinson's, phobias, prostate problems, PTSD, respiratory issues, self-abuse/self-injuring, sinus issues, skin conditions, sleep problems, stomach problems, stroke, thyroid issues, tumors & cysts, ulcers, *"also every health problem which is not written in this book (Deut. 28:15-61)."*

It is vital to come to realize this is completely contrary to what we, as well as most health care practitioners, have been trained to believe (1 Cor. 1:18-28; Col. 2:20 - 3:7; Prov. 3:5-8). God's kingdom operates by a whole different set of principles than the sin-cursed world

around us, especially regarding our healing, and health & wellness. That's why God is merciful, patient, long-suffering, and compassionate in His steadfast devotion to training and empowering us in His journey—His ways.

We learned earlier through Romans 8:4-13, that we humans can be 'fleshly minded' and we humans can be 'Spiritually minded.' Ephesians 2:3 informs us that it is "the mind of the flesh" that is sinful because it is controlled by sin. And those who *mind* the things of the flesh will naturally fulfill them. This is part of what the apostle Paul describes is "the [tormenting] law of sin" at Romans 7:15-23.

Psalm 107:17-20 states this about God's people: "Because of their sins, many were afflicted." Jesus healed a lame man, then instructed, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, that nothing worse comes upon you. (John 5:15)" Sometimes Jesus combined "you are healed" with "your sins are forgiven" when He healed (Mat. 9:1-5; Mark 2:5-10). "'Oh Lord,' I prayed, '*have mercy on me. Heal me, for I have sinned against you.*' (Ps. 41:4)" And James 5:14-16 instructs us to "confess your *sins so that you may be healed.*" The connection between the mind, sin, and our maladies is also contrary to what most of us have been trained to believe. (Repetition can help us learn: sin is a result of continuing to choose something else besides God to fill a void in our heart. It will not change God's love for us, but it will separate us from Him (Heb. 3:12; 4:6, 11)

Let's look at a brief portrayal of what our 2,000-year-old Bible teaches about what twenty-first-century neuroscience is now calling "the mind-body connection."

Proverbs 14:30 graciously informs us of the real root cause of Osteoporosis. It states: *...Envy is the rottenness [decay] of the bones.* Osteoporosis is not contagious, but it is a degenerative, progressive condition characterized by a decrease in bone density that weakens bones and increases their likelihood of fracture. It is also shown in the Bible to have its origin in thought. Allow me to explain. Or, allow me to affirm your keen discernment because you already see it.

Let's let Noah Webster formally define *envy*: "To feel uneasiness, mortification or discontent [stress], at the sight of

superior excellence, reputation or happiness enjoyed by another; to repine at another's prosperity; to fret or grieve one's self [shame/guilt] at the real or supposed superiority of another, and to hate him or her on that account; to grudge; withholding maliciously [resentment]. Jealousy is nearly allied to envy, for jealousy, before a good is lost by ourselves, is converted into envy, after others obtain it. Jealousy is awakened by whatever may exalt others or give them pleasures and advantages which we desire for ourselves."

Incidentally, the co-author of this Bible study inserted the "stress," "shame/guilt" and the "resentment" emotions in their obvious places in Noah Webster's definition.

To make this easier to unfold, let's say that a Christian by the name of *Ishmaeley* has been diagnosed with Osteoporosis.

According to the Bible at Proverbs 14:30, *Ishmaeley* has been having feelings of envy, most likely for years, since the health issue of Osteoporosis progresses over years. *Ishmaeley's* feelings of envy originate as thoughts regarding his (1) personal identity need, (2) motivation, and (3) basic assumptions concerning his sense of worth, his true identity. *Ishmaeley's* thinking then fixed on a goal. His thought-life and the feelings it produces may even feel perfectly "normal" to *Ishmaeley*.

In this case, *Ishmaeley* has essentially the physiological manifestation of unhealthy thinking over time—Osteoporosis. And be reminded that thoughts come with feelings. In this particular case, feelings of envy.

By the way, the co-author of this study knows a woman who had been diagnosed with Osteoporosis at approximately 30 years of age. At 60 years old, she learned what you're learning, applied God's Word to her life, by faith, and her healing was loosed into her body "as it is in heaven" (even within the jurisdiction of this sin-cursed world). At 60 years of age, her long-time doctor documented that she no longer has Osteoporosis. Her doctor's testing reported that, in 90 days, this woman experienced a bone density increase of 15 - 18%. And

although her doctor could not understand it, he reported that she now has the bone density of a 30-year-old woman.

That is good news! And this is only one example of one health problem arising from a mistaken basic assumption made in the pursuit of meeting the need for our true identity.

"For as man *thinks in his heart*, so is he... (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV; 27:19; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23)" Again, this is utterly contrary to what we, as well as health care practitioners, have been programmed to believe (1 Cor. 3:19).

Our Number One Killer Today

Luke 21:25-26 informs us that in "latter days," "there will be signs... with perplexity...*Many people's hearts failing them from fear...*"

Be reminded that *stress* is a modern term for the Bible word, *fear*, and that "75 – 90% of visits to the doctor are now related to stress." –*National Institutes of Health*

According to the CDC – *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Atlanta, GA, "The first heart attack was diagnosed in 1912. Today, heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the United States. About 610,000 people die of heart disease in the United States every year. There are key risk factors [early symptoms] for heart disease, and about *half of Americans* (49%) have at least one of these early symptoms. Every year, about 735,000 Americans have a heart attack. Of these, 525,000 are their first heart attack, and 210,000 happen in people who have already had a heart attack. Heart disease has been the leading cause of death in the United States for the past 80 years *and is a major cause of disability*" (emphasis added).

Take a moment to consider that all these large numbers, spanning over 80 years, represent an incomprehensible amount of human suffering. Much of it is ongoing. And this does not mention the exponential number and immeasurable amount of family members' and friends' hardship and grief.

Be reminded that this is not God's plan. "Beloved, I pray above *all* things that you may prosper and *be in health, even as your soul prospers.*" (3 John 2 KJV)

What is also important to note is that most of our health issues & problems begin as a mistaken basic assumption for meeting our *personal* needs. Then they often infringe on the necessity to meet added needs—those of our physical health.

Our Critically Important Immune System

Proverbs 17:22 wisely informs us, "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit [heart] dries up the bones." The bone marrow is considered the center of our immune system. If the marrow in our bones dries up, our immune system is weakened. As you may know, your immune system fights off various threats, including cancer and infections. A stressed immune system is also a primary key in all allergies and sensitivities—including those to foods, fragrances, scents, chemicals, environmental-related syndromes, maladies, and illnesses, etc.

My Personal Healing Case History

The co-author of this study was an evangelistic health, nutrition, and fitness freak for 18 years, actively involved in the thriving business of providing herbal and nutritional remedies.

Then, in November 1997, I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia (A.L.L.).

Three-and-a-half years after my diagnosis of leukemia, I was diagnosed with a second disease that is considered "lethal & incurable," called Scleroderma.

In December 2003, I was taught many of God's health principles, which are included in this study. Soon after learning how to participate with Father God and accessing His healing by faith, I received a clean bill of health from my doctors at Emory University in Atlanta, GA, in April 2004.

God cannot be prejudiced—what He does for one He'll do for another (Rom. 2:11; Jas. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:24). "*Healing is God's children's bread.*" (Jesus at Matt. 15:24-28)"

Additionally, I want you to know that one of my great-grandfathers was diagnosed with leukemia in November 1949. Sadly, that disease killed him in five months. He entered the hospital because of leukemia on November 10th, and I entered the hospital because of leukemia on November 10th, exactly forty-eight years later.

Two of the great-grandfather's adult children were diagnosed with leukemia. One died because of leukemia directly, and the other died from its complications. I was unaware of any of this leukemia family history until late 2004.

What is true in the physical is true, first, in the spirit/soul. And we will gain practical understanding of God's personalized prescription for our *inherited* or *genetic* issues & problems in another section.

My Personal Allergies Case History

In addition to the above, God cured me of severe allergies.

I mentioned my history of being an evangelistic health, nutrition, and fitness freak for 18 years, actively providing (human) remedies to others. Approximately 9 years into that, I went through a heartbreaking romantic relationship experience. About a year and a half later, I experienced severe allergies to pollen and cats for the first time in my life. This happened in the early 1990s. I successfully treated my allergies with an ongoing nutritional remedy. My clients with allergies also experienced the same success from the nutritional remedy I provided.

Here's what I have learned since: what was happening when I experienced an allergic reaction was a result of excessive "B cell" activity in my immune system. Excessive B-cell activity is a result of "T cells" in our immune system being destroyed because of

something called a “cortisol drip.” Cortisol is released in response to a “fight or flight” situation and is a normal bodily function.

But when we are in fight or flight for an extended period of time (weeks, months, years), this steady cortisol drip destroys our T cells and creates excessive B cell activity. This is what weakens the immune system and causes an “allergic reaction.” I learned the real problem behind allergies is chronic fear (or stress), not the environment. I wasn't allergic to anything.

It bears repeating that what is true in the physical is true, first, in the spirit/soul.

After I earnestly repented for not receiving His perfect love, in my agreement with fear, God delivered me from it. My immune system healed, and all “allergic reactions” have completely ceased for good. Since 2004, I've had no reason to continue the former allergy remedy because “my allergies” are gone. *Healing is God's children's bread*. That aspect of God's prescription is outside the scope of this particular section. But be reminded that 'stress' is a modern term for the biblical word, 'fear;' those with psychology or sociology backgrounds call it anxiety; see also 2 Tim. 1:7; Job 3:25; 4:14-16; Isa. 51:12; Ps. 37:8; Eph. 6:12; 1 John 4:18; Rom. 7:20-23.

And be reminded also that God cannot play favorites—what He does for one He'll do for another (Rom. 2:11; Jas. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:24).

Stalking Negative Thought in Your Biology

The understanding in this section on negative thought comes from pages 180 – 197 of Dr. M.K. Strydom's book entitled *Healing Begins with Sanctification of the Heart*, available for your download free of charge from the resource list at: gotchoices.net/health/directory

How negative thought and stress affect our bodies:

1. Heart rate increases to pump as much blood as possible to the brain, and arm & leg muscles; “fight or flight.”
2. The brain becomes highly alert for thinking clearly.
3. The liver increases sugar in the blood for increased energy.

4. More blood is released into the bloodstream by the spleen.
5. Breathing increases for more oxygen.
6. Blood is directed away from digestion to the brain, heart, and muscles.
7. Production of saliva, stomach enzymes, and digestion decreases.
8. Two separate hormonal chemicals are released into the bloodstream from two separate glands in the brain. And then two glands on top of the kidneys secrete “adrenaline” and “cortisol” to keep you alert and focused.
9. When there is enough of these specific chemicals in the blood, the two glands in the brain stop secreting the two hormones.
10. The process stops, and you go into a settled, peaceful state of processing and actually building memory—short bursts of these chemicals for brief periods.

Stress becomes harmful when we are in stages 1 – 8 for too long or when it is triggered by negative thought. This then causes our shift into stage 11 of stress:

11. If you shift from being alert to being worried, anxious, fearful, angry, or bitter, one of the glands in the brain responds by secreting too much of one of the hormones. In large quantities, the chemical structure of that hormone changes. Because its chemical structure changes in this stage of stress, we'll now refer to it as the “dread hormone.” The medical field calls this the chemical of negative expectation (dread).

“Dread hormone” stimulates the other gland in the brain to release the other hormone in large quantities. In large amounts, it is referred to in the medical field as the fear hormone. This is fear in physical form! The large amounts of “dread hormone” and “fear hormone” overwhelm the healthy stopping process and then cause

the overproduction of adrenaline and cortisol from the two glands atop the kidneys.

As high levels of cortisol flow over your brain, it's actually restructured and rewired. The branches of memory on your nerves temporarily shrink so that you are unable to access those memories. Your thinking becomes foggy, you begin to have difficulty concentrating, and creativity levels drop.

Lengthy living in stage 11 of stress is where we start feeling physically unwell with a variety of vague symptoms—not so sick to be bedridden but wake up in the morning without the joy of the Lord. We start feeling tense, anxious, overwhelmed, and out of control, and we begin to feel like giving up. We start to experience consistent aches and pains, and our immunity begins to decrease.

Eventually, after 10 or 20 or 30 years of consistent living in stage 11, it gets very dangerous – this is where we see the major maladies appearing. When the high levels of stress chemicals are flowing through your body in stage 11, something very interesting is that they don't move randomly through your body, causing damage just anywhere – they move in a particular sequence of attack:

1. Toxic retention – our bodily cells hold on to toxins and restrict nutrition due to something called “cell wall rigidity”
2. Cardiovascular system – the heart and blood vessels are where the destructive stress chemicals generally go first. Includes high blood pressure and stroke. Our heart is very sensitive to our thought life and its emotions. Recall the CDC statistics as well as Luke 21:25-26 discussed above.
3. The next area these harmful stress hormones attack, generally, is the immune system. As you may know, this is an army of cells that defends you from harmful things such as viruses, bacteria, cancer cells, parasites, and fungi. As I mentioned in my “My Personal Allergies Case History” above, allergic reactions are symptoms of an unhealthy immune system. The same is true for asthma, food intolerances, and hypersensitivities, including those involving smell.
4. The Brain. Fatigue, lethargy, exhaustion, sleep issues, lack of peace, type A behavior, overeating, phobias, panic attacks, poor memory, and/or fogged thinking set in. By this stage, we are really feeling sick.

To quote Dr. Strydom on page 187, “I just want to make a point here: not everybody will get an illness on all three levels – it depends where your genetic weakness is. So if you have a great heart, then you might get a little rise in blood pressure and maybe a bit of angina, but you won't have a heart attack. Someone who has a weak heart may have a massive heart attack or a stroke. If you have a strong heart, you may experience manifestations in your immune system, such as affecting your pancreas or skin. In other words, wherever you have a weakness, that is where you are going to see the most problems in your body. The chain will break at the weakest link. It may bypass both your heart and immune system, where you have minor nagging illnesses, and then when it gets to your brain, the exhaustion, foggy thinking, or insomnia set in.”
5. Our digestive system is the next area to be affected – indigestion, constipation, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, cramping, stomach ulcers, reflux (heartburn), irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, and malabsorption.
6. Fertility problems, irregular menstrual periods, frigidity, impotence.
7. Affects growth of children – stress can affect the growth hormone by 87%.
8. Muscular tension – for example, a tension headache, sore neck, or muscle contraction backache.
9. The common cold (caused by the Rhinovirus).
10. High levels of the stress hormone cortisol delay healing of wounds, cause inflammation, and decrease bone formation.

The list goes on and on—almost all twelve systems in your body are affected by negativity, unresolved stress, fear, and anxiety. God created and designed our immune system to be strong enough to kill

off any infection. However, there is a condition: We must be well in our spiritual life. We must begin to allow God to help us renew our minds if we want to live the robust lives He purchased for us. “For as **man thinks in his heart, so is he...**” Health issues, problems, or disease aren’t formed in a vacuum. Thought becomes part of our biology (Prov. 23:7 NKJV; see also Mk. 7:21-22; Rom. 7:23, 25; 8:6; 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 4:23; Php. 2:5; 4:7-8; Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 1:7; Jas. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:1; Isa. 26:3).

1 John 4:18 graciously informs us: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. If we are in fear, God’s love has not been accomplished in us.”

(*Stress* being a modern term for the Bible’s word, *fear*. Psychology and sociology call it *anxiety*.)

‘There is no stress in love; but perfect love casts out stress, because stress involves torment. *If we are stressed, God’s love has not been accomplished in us.*’ (co-author paraphrase.)

Unmistakably, stress (fear) is the real root cause of many, many mental, emotional, and physical problems. And, not every malady has that root; some originate from the negative thoughts and their feelings of bitterness, self-bitterness, rejection, confusing antilove, depression, envy, shame, guilt, despair, etc. Neuroscience understands negativity’s pathway to other maladies, which, likewise, involves chemical structure changes due to hormonal variations, impacting our other ten bodily systems, including the immune system, cardiovascular system, nervous system, skeletal system, and others.

For greater understanding of how bodily issues develop, visit: www.gotchoices.net/health/mind-body

Now that we have a true foundational knowledge of the sources of nearly all bodily health issues, we are in a position to complete the progression of how health problems develop:

Path I

1. Inherent personal need of my true identity
2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need

3. Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
4. Set a goal on how to meet my identity need
5. Goal-oriented behavior
6. Goal reached
7. Partial temporary satisfaction
8. Vague (independent orphan) sense of emptiness
9. Emotional, mental, and/or physical health problem(s)

Back to Start

Or, how the *unsatisfied* need of our true identity might lead through health issues onto suicide; ‘assisted suicide:’

1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
3. New mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
4. Set a new goal for how to meet my identity need
5. New goal-oriented behavior
6. New goal reached
7. Revealed orphan mindset; ‘Broken heart;’ Emotional, mental issues and problems, physical health needs, despair
8. Suicide

Path II

1. Inherent personal need of my true identity
2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
3. Mistaken basic assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
4. Set a goal on how to meet my identity need
5. Goal-oriented behavior

6. FRUSTRATION & OBSTACLE

<i>Type of Obstacle</i>		<i>Form of Frustration</i>
1. Unreachable Goal	→	Shame/Guilt
2. External Circumstance	→	Resentment, anger
3. Fear of Failure	→	Stress
4. Any / All types (above)	→	Rejection; Fear of
7. Frustration (negativity, compulsion, obsession, fixation, or phobia); Revealed orphan mindset; 'Broken heart,' Hardened heart		
8. Safety (emotional, mental, physical health issues and problems)		

What Do We Want the Holy Spirit to Help Us Change?

Consider that researchers estimate, “Medical error is now the third leading cause of death; it outranks respiratory disease, accidents, stroke, Alzheimer’s, and diabetes.” —*National Center for Health Statistics*.

WARNING: Do Not Consider Stopping Any Medication Without the Help of Your Health Care Practitioner. We will gain practical understanding of God’s personalized prescription for our issues & problems in another section.

Beloved, this is not meant to condemn but to help us access everything that our loving God has purchased for us.

The Bible has much to say about the dynamics of disease. Health issues, problems, or diseases are not random. The Holy Spirit compassionately, and relationally, wants to train and empower each of us, to enjoy “the children’s bread”—our healing, health & wellness that Jesus already paid for in-full, and being “made more and more in His image” (Mark 7:27; see also Exodus 15:26; 23:25; Psalms 30:2; 91; 103:3; 105:37; 107:17-20; Isaiah 53:4-5; 58:8; Matt. 8:17; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24; www.gotchoices.net/health/directory)

Health was normal before sin entered (Gen. 1:26-31; Gen 2:17). And health issues originated with sin and are still being propagated by the rulers of this cursed world government system (Job 2:6-7; Matt. 4:23-24; 15:22; 17:14-21; Luke 13:16; John 10:10; Acts 10:38; Eph. 6:12).

Christ came to redeem from both sin and health issues (Isa. 53; 61:1-2; Mt. 8:16-17; 9:1-10; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:11; Acts 10:38; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Jn. 3:8).

God made a covenant with His people to heal them (Ex. 15:26; 23:25; Lev. 26:3, 14-14; Deut. 7:15; 28:1-65). And a covenant of healing was made a part of the new covenant, for Christ “took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses [health issues]” (Isaiah 53; Matt. 8:16-17; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24).

Satan had permission to afflict Job, but God used the affliction to purify and refine him (Job 2:6-7; Job 42:1-7). God did not leave him sick all his life; so, this is no example to prove that modern believers should remain sick. After the test, God healed him; so, if we, today, claim we are in a trial like Job’s, let us also learn our lesson and be healed. Let us believe the good news—God will heal us as He did Job! And consider that Job’s lesson is before ‘the law’ of Moses.

Divine health as well as divine healing is promised when certain Kingdom contractual conditions are met (Lev. 26; Deut. 28; Ex. 15:26; Ps. 91; Prov. 3:1-8; 12:18; 13:3; 15:4; 18:8, 21; Isa. 58; Jas. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 3:10-11).

God always healed when the lessons were learned and people came to repentance (Gen. 20:7, 17; Num. 11:2; 12:13-16; 21:1-9; Job 33:12-30; 42:1-12; Ps. 103:3; James 5:14-16).

Christ Jesus and the apostles dealt with issues and disease as they would deal with sin (Mt. 9:1-12; Mark 2:1-11; John 5:14; Jas. 5:14-16). Hopefully we can concur that continued agreement with envy, jealousy, resentment, shame/guilt, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear (stress, anxiety), rejection, despair, or their derivatives is missing the mark—sin.

Jesus promised healing power to every believer (Mark 9:23; 11:22-24; 16:15-20; John 14:12-15; 15:7, 16; 1 Cor. 1:7; 12:1-11; Rom. 12:6-8; 15:18-19,29; Jas. 5:14-16; Heb. 2:3-4)). And Jesus sent the Holy Spirit into this cursed world to carry on His healing ministry through believers, as promised (Acts 1:1-8; 2:33-34; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; Heb. 2:3-4; John 14:12).

In all cases of healing in Scripture, prayer, atonement, and spiritual means were used instead of human remedies (Gen. 20:7,17; Ex. 15:26; Ps. 103:1-4; 105:37; 107:20; Isa. 53:4-5; 58:8; Matt. 8:17; Mark 5:26-34; Acts 3:6-8; 10:38; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24).

Spiritual means is all that God has promised and commanded to be used in health issues (Jas. 5:14-16; Ex. 15:26; Ps. 91; 107:20; Isa. 53:4-5; 58:8; Matt. 8:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24). And once more, what is true in the physical is true, first, in the spirit/soul (Mk. 7:14-16; Rom. 7:15-23; 2 Cor. 4:18; 5:16; Eph. 6:12; Jas. 5:16).

Spiritual means to heal health issues and diseases is all that God has provided for people (Ex. 15:26; Ps. 91; Isa. 53:4-5; 58:8; Matt. 8:16-17; Mark 5:26-34; Acts 3:6-8; 10:38; Jas. 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24).

“And Jesus said, ‘*As you believe, be it done unto you...*’ and, ‘*According to your faith be it unto you.*’ (Matt. 8:13; 9:29)

Be gently reminded that, since this 21st century, the cutting-edge medical research shows 87 to 95 percent of emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical issues come from one’s thought life.⁴ Health issues and problems might be *managed* by prescription or over-the-counter drugs, herbal, nutritional, surgeries, and other modalities available, but genuine healing or sound health for a Christian will entail a change in thinking about how his or her true identity need has already fully been met by God.

The critical change needed to live victoriously healthy involves redeeming our basic assumption, the third element in our progression detailed above. *Every problem in the progression can be avoided entirely if the basic assumption aligns with revealed biblical Truth.* The truly sound, healthy person depends on God alone (and on what He chooses to provide in His Body) to give them their true identity. Emotional, mental, and physical health issues & problems, a broken heart, negative thought and their emotional shadings can be traced directly to a mistaken assumption about how to meet our personal identity need, originated by ‘the flesh.’

A chief priority of God is to heal your heart—you cannot unite with God without that deepest part of you (Prov. 4:23; 1 Cor. 2:14). Broken-heartedness is inevitably going to produce issues.

The untaught truth is, without realizing in our heart of hearts how we are known in heaven (e.g., a needy child of God) and who God wants to be for us (e.g., our healer), we fall prey to what alluring counterfeit ‘the flesh’ offers instead. And these times are actually cause for us to depend more and more on our gracious, loving God in exchange for whatever ‘the flesh’ has persuaded us to depend on.

Once ‘the flesh’ comes into operation, opportunity opens for the demonic to ensnare us—as it is written in Ephesians 6:12; Rom. 7:20-23; 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

The primary problem with us today is misplaced dependency. Sinister spiritual dynamics have us compulsively depending on ourselves to meet our fundamental needs. Our Bible calls this (self) idolatry. This is part of what Apostle Paul explained is “the law of sin” at Romans 7:15-23.

“The enemy looks for people to yield their identity to their own circumstances.” —Graham Cooke; see also Matt. 4:3
“Confess your sins one to another so that you may be healed. (James 5:14-16)”

The above Scripture passages and science are tough when we’ve still got a self-reliant, independent (orphan) perspective—when we haven’t yet come to know that we know, that we know in our heart of hearts our true identity, including *what God wants to be for us* (e.g., our healer). And we’re gaining some further confirmation that God’s kingdom government operates by a whole different set of principles than the sin-cursed government system around us, especially regarding healing, health & wellness.

Once again, we shall gain practical understanding of our God’s personalized prescription for our emotional, mental, and physical problems—including those inherited or genetic—in an upcoming section.

The Money Thing

How Financial Headaches Develop

James 3:2 states, “For we *all* stumble in many things.” We each have inner pain from past wounds in life that affect us every day. It distorts our identity, how we perceive God and others, and that obscures our financial acuity. And people seek to avoid pain in different ways. In this section, you will continue to apply what you have learned to better understand the principle that we are motivated to reach whatever goal we assume will meet our personal needs and our perceived financial needs as well. Remember to read the following to gain understanding, not to do.

God’s kingdom economy operates differently from the sin-cursed world’s economy by which we’ve been trained. The world “sweats and toils” for their provision. But God tells us that when we, as His children, seek Him and His righteousness-in-love, all things will be provided to us (Mt 6:33; see also Php. 4:19). In God’s kingdom, provision comes because of our child-like **obedience**, not our sweat and toil. In His kingdom, we rely on Him as our source. Sure, He requires us to work (Gen. 2:15; 1 Thess. 4:11), but our work is not our provider; God is our provider. In His kingdom, sometimes we will receive more than we think we deserve. At other times, we may receive less than we think we deserve. Our job is always in the loving response of our true identity, to follow and obey. God’s job is to meet your needs abundantly and richly bless our *obedience*.

When God’s people went into the wilderness after their deliverance, they had to trust Him—“Jehovah Jireh”—as their Father of provision. God provided His people guidance and complete sustenance until they came to their promised land (Exodus 13, 16). It doesn’t matter what circumstances you go through; God can provide regardless of your current state.

“I [God] have given you [my people] a land for which you did not labor, and cities you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.” (Joshua 24:13)

Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...” (Ps. 127:1-2)

Those of us who have an obsession or compulsion in the area of money need our true identity. We all do. Our real goal is an *identity as a basis for feeling worthwhile*. We need to be someone. And our real problem is rather a *mistaken belief* about where, or in whom, we find our true identity, its security, and meaningful purpose. We can effortlessly fall for the devilish myth that money and prestige make us someone and reject the Lord's teaching that to find oneself, we must submit our life, including our mistaken identity, to God's version of our life—"a more excellent way." (Lk. 9:23; Jn. 12:24; Col. 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:31.)

Like our other chronic issues, most financial problems serve the purpose of self-protection, 'safety.' And frequently, our financial headaches are the direct result of emotional unhealth. Our negative thoughts and their emotions of stress, resentment, anger, shame/guilt, rejection (and their shadings or derivatives), despair, and emptiness produce much of our financial problems.

God's nature, however, is to bless His children abundantly.

"And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is He who gives you power to get wealth*, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." (Deut. 8:18)

"The blessing of the LORD, *it makes rich, and He adds no sorrow [painful, laborious toil] with it.*" (Proverbs 10:22)

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet *for your sakes He became poor*, that *you through His poverty might be rich.*" (2 Cor. 8:9)

"*Beloved, I pray above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.*" (3 John 1:2)

'And [by faith] God can make *all* grace abound toward you, that you, *always* having *all* sufficiency in *all* things, may have an **abundance** ['superabound, in excess'] **for every good work!**' (2 Cor. 9:8; See also Rom. 1:17; 5:2; Heb. 11)

And please understand, we must not confuse the sin of pride (I want to run the show, I want my way) with the need for a true identity.

Identity is a normal need, an intrinsic part of humanity as a personal being, a need that only God Himself can fill, and a need that He so wants to fill.

What is most important to note about most of our financial headaches is they begin as a 'guiding fiction' for meeting our true identity need.

"Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income..." (Ecc. 5:10)

The greater independence money gives us, the less dependence on God we need. Christ talked much about money in the Kingdom because He knew how much of a problem it was. This is why we have so few who are bearing 100, 60, or 30 times what is sown.

"God graciously informs us at Jeremiah 17:5-8: 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on mere human strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.'

"So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" (Luke 16:11) "As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the person." (Prov. 27:19; see also Prov.23:7; Isa.26:3; Rom.12:2; 2 Cor.10:5; Eph.4:23; Philippians 4:8; Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Peter 4:1; Matt. 8:13; 9:29.) We must allow God to help us renew our minds if we want to enjoy the prosperous lives He purchased for us. Rather than a severe wake-up call, this Bible study may be the only one we need.

Please be strongly, strongly encouraged to consider reviewing “What This Looks Like Monday Morning” on pages 48, 49 above.

Now with that true foundational understanding of the sources of most financial issues, we can complete the progression of how financial problems develop:

Development Leading to Financial Headaches

- 1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
- 2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
- 3. Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
- 4. Set a goal for how to bring identity
- 5. Goal-oriented behavior
- 6. Goal reached
- 7. Partial temporary satisfaction
- 8. Vague (independent orphan) sense of emptiness
- 9. Financial insufficiency, debt, and/or financial compulsion

Back to Start

- 1. Personal inherent need of my true identity...

Or, because our need for our true identity had led to financial dissatisfaction, we come into agreement with another strategy of ‘the flesh’ that then progresses through worse consequences:

- 1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
- 2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
- 3. New mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
- 4. Set a new goal on how to meet my identity need

- 5. New goal-oriented behavior
- 6. New goal reached
- ~~7. Partial temporary satisfaction~~
- ~~8. Vague (independent orphan) sense of emptiness~~
- 7. Revealed orphan mindset; ‘Broken heart;’ despair; financial lust, insufficiency and/or debt, hoarding money, or greed
- 8. Suicide

Development Leading to Misplaced Destiny

- 1. Inherent personal need for my true identity
- 2. Motivation, desire, or urge to meet that need
- 3. Mistaken assumption haunted by trauma held by ‘the flesh’ of what provides my true identity
- 4. Set a goal for how to meet my identity need
- 5. Goal-oriented behavior
- 6. FRUSTRATION & OBSTACLE

<i>Type of Obstacle</i>		<i>Form of Frustration</i>
1. Unreachable Goal	→	Shame/Guilt
2. External Circumstance	→	Resentment, anger
3. Fear of Failure	→	Stress
4. Any / All types (above)	→	Rejection; Fear of
7. Frustration (negativity, pre- or post- financial obsession, compulsion, or phobia); Revealed orphan mindset; ‘Broken heart,’ Hardened heart		
8. Safety (financial lust, insufficiency, debt, and/or idolatry, hoarding money, greed)		

What Do We Want the Holy Spirit to Help Us Change?

Hopefully, it was evident that the critical change needed to live victoriously involves altering our basic assumption, the third element in this progression. Every problem in the progression can be avoided completely if the basic assumption is in line with revealed biblical Truth. The truly solvent, financially healthy person depends on God alone (and on what He chooses to provide in His Body) to make them significant and secure. Despair, frustration, a sense of emptiness, negative symptoms, resentment, stress, shame/guilt, rejection, and their emotional shadings, debt, insufficiency, poverty, and/or financial compulsion, idolatry, hoarding money, greed—every issue—can be traced directly to a mistaken assumption about how to meet our personal identity need.

The primary problem with us today is misplaced dependency. We depend on everything but God to meet our fundamental needs. What then do we try to change? How we think, what we are depending on, what we believe we must have if we are to feel truly worthwhile, and what we must do to be fiscally well. We must change our mind. Transformation depends on renewing not our feelings, not our behavior, not our circumstances, but our minds. (Rom. 12:2; see also Mk. 7:21-22; Rom. 7:23, 25; 8:6; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 4:23; Php. 2:5; 4:7-8; Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 1:7; Jas. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:1; Prov. 3:5; 23:7; Isa. 26:3.)

Most of us, as well as most preachers, financial planners, ministries, and coaches, neglect this key to true Christian transformation and try to change something else. Some try to change goal-oriented *behavior* from irrational and sinful to rational and biblical. Christians are, of course, interested in rational, reasonable behavior—without credit card & debt headache, for example—but only on the foundation of right thinking. Right behavior without right thinking produces bankrupt religiosity—a labored, performing, legalistic, counterfeit obedience. Change is a fruit, not a goal. (Eph. 5:9; Jn. 14:15; 2 Jn. 1:6) Right behavior springing from lovely, right thinking yields a joyful, natural, desired obedience to the God who makes us whole persons, both significant and secure.

Even if right behavior accomplishes the goal, if the goal is not biblical, has Christian maturity been advanced? Jesus compassionately informs us: “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” And, “Unless *the Lord* builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...” (Ps. 127:1-2)

Those are also tough passages when we’ve still got a self-reliant, independent, orphan, ‘old self’ perspective—when we haven’t come to know that we know, that we know in our heart of hearts our true identity, including *what God wants to be for us* (e.g., our provider). Jesus Himself summarizes the dynamics of our financial issues and our need to learn to relationally cling to, trust in, and rely on what the Holy Spirit promises. We’re gaining some further confirmation that God’s kingdom operates by a whole different set of ‘laws’ than the sin-cursed world system around us, especially regarding provision & finances.

Hopefully, we’re gaining a deeper understanding of how agreement with ‘the flesh’ can, over time, lead to emotional, relational, and financial issues. The Bible has much (more) to say about the dynamics of finances, as well as Who compassionately wants to train and empower each of us to receive “the blessing of the LORD, it makes rich, and He adds no sorrow [painful, laborious toil] with it.” (Prov. 10:22; Php. 4:19; 3 Jn. 2 KJV) ...becoming more and more like His Son, “made more and more in His image.” (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:28-29; Gen. 1:26; Isa. 64:8)

Be reminded that ‘the flesh’ continually offers attractive, tempting counterfeits to meet our true identity need. Our agreement with ‘the flesh’ inevitably produces the self-reliant, orphan mindset. In due course, that mindset generates its vague sense of emptiness, frustration, shame/guilt, resentment, fear of failure, rejection, despair, and/or related negativity (Points 3, 7, 8, both Tracks, above). And the orphan, the ‘old self’ negativity, is most often the root cause of financial headaches, debt, poverty, despair, compulsion, obsession, and greed.

And once 'the flesh' comes into operation, opportunity opens for the demonic to ensnare us—as it is written in Ephesians 6:12; Rom. 7:20-23; 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

“The enemy looks for people to yield their identity to their own circumstances.” —*Graham Cooke*; see also Matt. 4:3

This is part of what the apostle Paul describes as “the law of sin” at Rom. 7:15-23. Sin will not change God’s love for us, but it will separate us from Him (Heb. 3:12; 4:6, 11; 2 Pet. 2:20-21).

The untaught truth is, without realizing in our heart of hearts how we are known in heaven (e.g., a needy child of God) and what God wants to be for us (e.g., our every, abundant, provider), we fall prey to what alluring counterfeit ‘the flesh’ offers instead. And these times are actually cause for us to depend more and more on our gracious, loving, wealthiest Father God, in exchange for our self-idolatry the opposition has promoted.

Consider that you walk in favor, that the nature of God is *for you*, not against you, and that your true identity is already nestled in the heart of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. “God changes not (Malakai 3:6).” And “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8)!”

We will gain practical understanding of God’s personalized prescription through “the law of liberty” (Rom. 14:1-13; Jas. 2:12) and “the royal law of love” (Rom. 14:14-23; Jas. 2:8) in another section.

The Deliverance from ‘the Flesh’

Adopted from Derek Prince’s superb book, *Bought with Blood*

Galatians 5 lists *the works of ‘the flesh’*—ways the fleshly nature expresses itself in our lives. Works of the flesh "are evident." All too evident, we all could say. Not always apparent to the one who practices them, but evident to everybody else. “These works are (verses 19-21):

“adultery, fornication, uncleanness [original Greek word: *akatharsia*, whatever is opposite of purity; including sodomy, homosexuality, lesbianism, pederasty, bestiality, and all other forms of sexual perversion],

“lasciviousness [original Greek word: *aselgeia*: the promoting or partaking of that which tends to produce lewd emotions, anything tending to foster sex sin and lust],

“idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries *and the like [not an exhaustive list]*; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that *those who [continue to] do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*”

You can search in vain for anything good in this list (as well as in the prior 50 pages of real-life accounts). Note that most are expressions of broken relationships. Nothing good ever comes out of ‘the flesh.’ It is incapable of producing good. You cannot live according to ‘the flesh’ and inherit the Kingdom of God. They are mutually exclusive. See also Ephesians 5:3-7.

The keyword that describes the old self: corrupt. Anything ‘the flesh’ produces is corrupt. It cannot produce anything good.

Listed in Galatians 5:19-21, above, are four main categories of works of ‘the flesh:’ sexual impurity, the occult, division, and self-serving. Those who practice or repeatedly do these things are excluded from the Kingdom of God.

Sexual Impurity

Those who practice sexual impurity “will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Consider reviewing the original Greek words describing ‘sexual impurity’ at Galatians 5:19 listed just above.

Once 'the flesh' comes into operation, the demonic moves in and ensnares us. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood [ourselves; peoples]; we wrestle against...unseen evil spirit forces in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 6:12)" 2 Corinthians 2:11b indicates our "not being ignorant of Satan's schemes." And Hebrews 4:12-13 explains, "For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before His eyes*, and He is the one to whom we are accountable." This passage is profound because it unmasks our denial, the deception, and counterfeits of *our unseen adversary's kingdom*, and shows us the power of the living Word of God in our lives so we can overcome our unseen adversary.

Counterfeiting—The Occult

The second category of works of 'the flesh' is the occult: sorcery. An alternative translation for sorcery is witchcraft. Initially, witchcraft, though a satanic activity, is a work of 'the flesh.' Its objective is to manipulate and control. Once 'the flesh' comes into operation, the satanic moves in and entraps us.

Recall that the first desire of Adam and Eve that led them into trouble was *to know*. That is a desire of 'the flesh.' Uncounted millions are captivated by the occult because they want to find out things God has not permitted them to know—the knowledge of the evil of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Going to a fortuneteller, for example, is motivated by the fleshly desire to know—a work of 'the flesh.' The same applies to consulting the horoscope or connection with other spiritual paths (i.e., Hinduism, Yoga, Buddhism, Islam, Shaman, the New Age, Witchcraft, Sorcery, Sanskrit, etc.). These are abominations to our heavenly Father.

Gene B. Moody writes: "Occult means unseen, so all the occult practices are unseen traps to involve humans in Satan's evil world, to make the human think that s/he, the human, has it all."

Sometimes people are inclined to plead ignorance as an excuse, saying, "I didn't know there was anything wrong with that." But ignorance is no excuse. In 1 Timothy 1:13-15, Paul acknowledges that he was the chief of sinners for things he did "ignorantly in unbelief."

The original Greek word translated as "sorcery" or "witchcraft" in Galatians 5:20 is *pharmakeia*, from which we derive the term "pharmaceutical," referring to a human *remedy*. It may be important to note that the remedies of which the Bible warns us include all-natural remedies, as pharmaceutical chemical remedies were not invented until nineteen centuries later. The cult of remedies is sorcery. Those who practice or repeatedly do these things are excluded from the Kingdom of God, unless we earnestly turn back to God's ways in attitude and deed, renounce, and confess it as such.

WARNING: Do Not Consider Stopping Any Medication Without the Help of Your Health Care Practitioner. We will gain practical understanding of God's personalized prescription for our issues & problems in a future section.

For additional understanding of Satan's counterfeit program, consider visiting www.gotchoices.net/occult

Self-idolatry and Division

These other two categories of works of 'the flesh' (self-idolatry and division) have been pragmatically and systematically exposed in pages 37–94, above, and Galatians 5:20-21 as well. And it is essential to understand that 1.) "Those who regard lying vanities [self-idolatry] forsake their own mercy... (Jonah 2:8 KJV)" 2.) "Just as I also told you in time past, that those who [continue to] do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:21)" And 3.) *Once 'the flesh' comes into operation, the demonic moves in, and that's who influences us in these areas, and any area, of our lives.* Hebrews 5:13-14 explains, *For someone who lives on 'milk' is still an infant and unskilled in righteousness. Spiritual 'solid food' is for those who are mature, who, through application and practice, have the skill to*

recognize the difference between good and evil. See also Rom. 7:20-23; James 4:7; Mark 16:17.

Ephesians 4:7-24 states: "...Unto every one of you is given [empowering] grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ...Put off concerning the former conduct of the 'old self' which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts [your ego]; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind [meaning the whole course of life now flows in a different direction]; ...*Be renewed in the attitude of your mind* [by renouncing its vanity, its darkness and blindness and learning of Christ], and embrace the 'new self,' *who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*" The 'old self'—the ego, self-reliant orphan—is the spirit and nature of the devil. (Eph. 2:2-3) And the 'new self' is the Spirit and nature of God in renewed persons. The new self must be embraced, and it manifests righteousness-in-love and true holiness. (Eph. 4:23-24; Rom. 8:9,14-16; 2 Cor. 4:17; 5:17-18; 2 Pet. 1:4)

Deliverance From 'The Flesh'

There are many superlative benefits of the atonement – what took place when Jesus died on the cross! There are five different deliverances listed in Galatians that God offers us through the application of the cross within us:

1. Deliverance from this present evil age (Galatians 1:4)
2. Deliverance from the law (Gal. 2:19)
3. Deliverance from self (Gal. 2:20)
4. Deliverance from 'the flesh' (Gal. 5:24)
5. Deliverance from the world (Gal. 6:14)

Wonder-filled! Now let's look at the fourth deliverance, found in Galatians 5:24: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of 'the flesh' to His cross and crucified them there." Confirm for a moment what deliverance from 'the flesh' means. It does not mean we are delivered out of our physical bodies. 'The flesh' can be interpreted as the way the old nature, the old self (the rebellious inclination that each one of us has inherited by descent from Adam), expresses itself in and through us. 'The flesh'

and the old self (and the orphan spirit) are closely tied together. (Reference also the last 50 pages!) Please also see Galatians 2:20.

The original Greek word in Galatians 5:24 interpreted, "crucified" means "denied." We as Christians are empowered to "just say 'No!'" to the thoughts and, therefore, their accompanying emotions, that are offered up by 'the flesh.'

God wants us to have a wide variety of emotions. He does not want us to be *led* by our feelings; God wants us to be led by His Spirit: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons and daughters of God." (Rom. 8:14)

Since Galatians 5:24 states that "those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of 'the flesh' to His cross and crucified them there," we have a distinguishing mark of those who belong to Christ. In 1 Corinthians 15:23, speaking of the order in which the dead are to be resurrected, Paul uses the exact phrase:

"But there is an order...Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all *who belong to Christ* will be raised when He comes back.

Christ is coming back, and He will take only those who belong to Him.

Returning to Galatians 5:24, we discover the kind of persons for whom Jesus is coming: Those who "have nailed the passions and desires of 'the flesh' to His cross and crucified [denied] them there."

Belonging to Christ, then, is not a denominational matter. Jesus is coming back not specifically for Protestants or Catholics or Baptists or Pentecostals, but for people who voluntarily yielded to a particular condition: They have denied 'the flesh' with its passions and desires.

"Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness..." (James 1:17) Understand deliverance, redemption from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light here: www.gotchoices.net/yield

God's simple, effective prescription for deliverance, exchanging the bondage of 'the flesh' for all the freedom He purchased for you, will be detailed in an upcoming section.

God is Willing and Able to Reverse and Prevent All Our Issues

Life can be hard. Over the years, recurring enemy assaults have led us to erect and reinforce walls around our hearts, insulating us in hopes of protecting ourselves from future hurt. This is not good for you and your relationship with God. It always leads to independence from God as Father and from those around you because you think no one is there to protect your heart but you. You become calloused to God's work in you and hardened to those close by. We become posers, living for others' perception and acceptance. We inevitably contrive a fabricated personality, "performing" for others.

God's Holy Spirit wants to train you, relationally, in exchanging your carnal security from what you think you can do for the security of who He is for you! As you seek God and yield those places that have become places of hurt, God promises to mend your heart (Ps. 147:3). He has already begun this process. Our progressive conformity to Jesus eliminates our hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartaches, and financial headaches. All you must do is follow God's personalized prescription in a future section—allow Him to demonstrate His continual goodness, His constant trustworthiness, and invite Him into the places where the wounds need His loving touch. I AM the Great Heart Surgeon.

Jesus promised, "I will not leave you as an orphan [independent]"

Ephesians 3:20 declares: "God can do anything—superabundantly, far over and above all that we dare ask or think, infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams!" Not only is God *able*; not only is God *willing*; God is *yearning* to do far more than you could ever imagine or request beyond your dreams!

"The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and *His tender mercies are over all His works*" (Psalm 145:8-9).

"...I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. They are *plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope*" (Jeremiah 29:11).

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God." (Ezekiel 36:26-28)

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all His benefits, *who forgives all your iniquities and heals **all** your issues*" (Ps. 103:2-3 NKJV).

"...Jesus saw a great multitude, and He was *moved with compassion* for them, *and healed those with issues*" (Matt. 14:14).

"Now a leper came to Jesus, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, 'If You are willing, You can make me well again.' *Moved with compassion*, Jesus touched him and said, '*I AM willing. Be healed!*' Instantly, the leprosy left him, and he was *healed*. ...And then people came to Jesus from every direction (Mark 1:40-45).

"...Out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Jesus. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road ... cried out, saying, 'Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!' ... even though the multitude warned them that they should be quiet. ...Jesus stood still and asked them, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' They said, 'Lord, that our eyes may be opened.' *Jesus had compassion* and touched their eyes. And *immediately they could see!* Then they followed Him" (Matt. 20:29-34).

"Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching ... preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and wherever He went, *He healed people of **every** sort of issue*. When He saw the multitudes, He was *moved with compassion* for them because their problems were so great and they didn't know where to go for help. They were like sheep without a

shepherd. ...And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to *heal **all** kinds of issues*" (Matt. 9:35-10:1).

Jesus' compassion and powers haven't changed, for we read in the days thirty years after He ascended to the Father "*...**All** the people with issues came and were cured ... **every one***" (Acts 5:16; 28:9; the very last chapter of the Book of Acts).

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8)!" "God changes not (Malakai 3:6)."

Beloved, if Jesus can reverse all manner of emotional, mental and physical maladies, He can certainly reverse all manner of relational and financial issues too. Jesus gave you an entire new way of seeing, thinking, and perceiving yourself so that you can live as the new, true you in Him, free of hurts, hang-ups, habits, health problems, relationship heartaches, and financial headaches. Our Bible clearly proves that no issue is irreversible! (2 Pet. 1:2-4; see also Rom.12:2; 7:23, 25; 8:6; 2 Cor.10:4-5; Eph. 4:23; Php. 2:5; 4:7-8; Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 1:7; Jas. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:1; Prov.3:5; 23:7; Isa. 26:3)

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all you ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within you!" (Eph. 3:20)

Understanding Through Audio

Please be strongly encouraged to begin listening to the audio portion of this Bible study at your earliest convenience. I believe you will wholeheartedly agree that it is so very essential. The author of most of the audio lessons is Bible teacher, author, husband, father, ex-con, and successful businessman, Graham Cooke. If you're not used to listening to audio, consider listening while driving, while you're doing another menial task or chore, or listening in place of a TV show or a social media session. Consider listening in your devotional time. Listen to, at least, the audio lessons entitled "AUDIO LESSON 1A" and "AUDIO LESSON 1B" at www.gotchoices.net/successful/audios

Summary

God is not obsessed with sin (2 Cor. 5:19; 1 John 1:8, 10; 2:1). And yet it is a profound matter because of the law of “sowing and reaping” (Gal. 6:7-8; Rom. 6:16, 23; 8:13; Heb. 3:13; Eph. 4:18). Sin—shortcoming continued—is a result of continued choosing something else besides God to fill a void in our heart. We’re graciously informed at James 1:14-15: “We are drawn away of our own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin. Sin then progresses and when it is finished, brings forth death.”

Be strongly encouraged to consider the truth that sin is more than missing the mark of the Ten Commandments. It is vital to realize that sin, like disease, has a definable onset, symptoms, and a predictable outcome (Jas. 1:14-15; Deut. 31:24-30; 32:15-43; Rom. 1:16-32). It also operates like addiction as it is denied, progressive, and demands more. In his remarkable books, *Hope in the Fast Lane* and *A Hunger for Healing*, J. Keith Miller describes, in detail, the pathology of what he has appropriately named “the Sin-disease:”

“I realized that this disease can disrupt our everyday lives and relationships and *never be seen to even be connected to sin*. And I saw that this Sin-disease may well be the matrix for all compulsive, manipulative, and controlling behavior. In an instant of clarity, I saw that what we have always called sin just might be the source, the breeding ground, of all other issues and for the irrational, destructive, and addictive behaviors that are destroying our lives and institutions across the world.”

And please also note that *denial* is indeed the primary characteristic of sin (Gen. 3:12-13; 2 Cor. 11:14,15; Rom. 1:18-22; 2:1, 21-23; 7:11; Heb. 3:12, 13; 1 Jn. 1:8; Matt. 23:24-28; Mk. 6:4-5; Lk. 6:41-42; 19:42; Jn. 9:41; 11:47-53; Jas. 3:14; Tit. 1:16; Rev. 3:1,17). The Pharisees are depicted in the New Testament as religious individuals who saw themselves as respectable and righteous. And yet Jesus pointed repeatedly to their repressed sins and the danger of not facing themselves (Lk. 11:39-40; Isa. 17:9).

Like the rest of humanity, chances are extraordinarily high that your ‘mistaken assumption’ and coinciding misguided ‘goal-oriented behavior’ have become a shortcoming continued—the sin of self-idolatry. There is no set amount of time before this happens.

Most of us have not been taught to take responsibility for sin in our lives, simply yet earnestly:

“...If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all our wrongs. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us (1 John 1:7-10; see also Ps. 32:3; Jas. 5:14-16).”

And be reminded, there is *zero condemnation* in this admission, beloved. It’s part of life and maturity to acknowledge what isn’t working. Because of God’s grace and mercy, we fall forward, not backwards, when we repent! (Proverbs 24:16 states: “The righteous may trip seven times [completely], but each time they will rise again! But one calamity is enough to lay the wicked low.”)

‘Never Accused of Any Fault’ Yet Massacre

Saul of Tarsus was motivated to “harshly persecute” Christians before God amended his identity to “Paul.” (Acts 7:54-58; 8:1-3; 9:4; Php. 3:6.) Notice that he had been diligently studying the Scriptures without a relationship with the Author. He was one of *the* best religious leaders, “never accused of any fault.” An intellectual, highly trained, dutiful theological scholar, while lacking a relationship with God. As a result of this self-righteousness, he presided over murders of Christians and the separation of families. He was akin with those who actually had Jesus brutally murdered. Without a humble, childlike, dependent relationship with Father God, religious ones are motivated for people to think of them as holy, when in fact they’re nothing more than wicked posers. (The adversary’s identity equation = performance [works] + others’ opinions. ¹) “Of all bad men [and women], religious bad men [and women] are the worst.” —C.S. Lewis

“We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display *our* righteous deeds, they are *nothing but filthy rags*.” (Isa. 64:6) “It is the Spirit who gives life. *Human effort accomplishes nothing*. And the very words I have spoken to you are *spirit and life*.” (Jesus at John 6:63) “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God. (Rom. 8:14)”

Father God’s identity equation = How you are known in heaven (God’s unconditionally loved, chosen, adopted son or daughter) plus what God wants to be for you in any situation.

There are profuse voices telling us that we can live victoriously in one way or another without relying on God. This is the most common deception. God knows we are incapable of doing this thing—He is crystal clear that aside from Jesus Himself, we can do nothing good. We cannot in any way heal or renew ourselves or manipulate to become acceptable to God.

Sound Biblical Foundation

At last, the indispensable knowledge of what steals the joy and emotional, mental, physical, relational, and financial health that God paid for in full with the blood sacrifice of His own Son, Jesus, is unmasked. Sound biblical understanding of how our problems develop is now ours.

His reversal of our issues comes through surrendering our lives to God and trusting His power to change us once we have made that surrender. If you want to come to Him, come just as you are, and He is the one who lovingly empowers you to become more and more like His son, Jesus.

The biblical foundation has now been laid for God’s prescription for your becoming more and more like Jesus in your heart of hearts. And in His process of you becoming more like Jesus, the bondage of shame, guilt, stress, fear, anxiety, unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation, anger, hate, emptiness, despair, insecurity, insignificance, addictions, hurts, hang-ups, habits, emotional, mental, physical, relational, financial issues, and all the other bondages of sin go back to Jesus who paid for them in-full. Freedom is yours!

God's Personalized Prescription for You Begins

Your Personal Freedom Prayer Ministry Session

May God richly bless you as you continue in this journey of victorious, joyful living!

“Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin...” (Rom. 6:12-13; Ps. 19:13)

Jesus states at Mark 16:17: “These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name...” “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but *against...the unseen evil spirit forces in the heavenly realms.* (Ephesians 6:12; see also Rom. 7:15-23; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:24-26)”

“Flesh and blood” includes self, spouses, in-laws, exes, parents, children, organizations, etc.— our struggle is not against peoples but unseen evil spirit forces.

Taking Your False Accuser to Court

“The great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels. Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, ‘It has come at last—salvation and *power* and the Kingdom of our God, and the *authority* of His Christ. For *the accuser of our brothers and sisters* has been thrown down to earth—the *one who accuses them [our brothers and sisters] before our God day and night.* (Rev. 12:9-10)” Who falsely accuses whom, and how often?

Complete your personal freedom prayer ministry session request here: www.gotchoices.net/freedom/request

Victorious Living

AS YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN TAUGHT Volume II

Your personal freedom prayer ministry session will catapult you in your journey of joyful, victorious living! And you will enjoy the practical application of God's personalized prescription with Volume II.

End Notes

- ¹ McGee, Robert 2003. *The Search for Significance*, Thomas Nelson.
- ² Section based on *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Crabb, L. 1977, 2nd Edition. Zondervan Publishing, pp 112-123. Crabb was the spiritual director of the American Assoc. of Christian Counselors and co-led the School of Spiritual Direction, Larger Story Ministries
- ³ Section based on *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Crabb, L. 1977, 2nd Edition. Zondervan Publishing, pp 124-134.
- ⁴ Hegstrom, P. 2006. *Broken Children, Grown Up Pain*. Beacon Hill Press. 27-50. www.lifeskillsintl.org
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- ⁵ Hillman, O. *Daily Workplace Inspiration* at www.todaygodisfirst.com
- ⁶ Crabb, L. 2013. *The Marriage Builder*. 2nd Edition. Zondervan Publishing. pp 83-86, 101-102.
- ⁷ Section adopted from *Healing the Hurting*, Baker Book House Company, 1998. Clark, C., Kroeger, Beck, J

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Unmasking What Steals the Joy *and* Emotional, Mental, Physical, Financial, and Relational *Health* and Wellness

Motivation to find identity is at the core of all our behavior.

We've been deceived by 'the flesh' to dismiss God freely meeting our true identity need. We are compulsively trying to meet the need ourselves.

That sustains a self-reliant (orphan) mindset.

The inner pain from a self-reliant mindset stresses us to take counterfeit measures to meet our identity need ourselves. Continued inner pain from a self-reliant mindset inevitably leads us to a counterfeit sense of safety. And the self-reliant (orphan) mindset often defends each counterfeit with aggression.

The orphan (self-reliant) mindset is the real root cause of our chronic issues. The really good news is Jesus promises His followers He "will not leave you as an orphan!" (John 14:18)