

Discipleship Training

**A Venture in
Learning and Accountability**

Level 2

Certificate Requirements

- Perfect attendance except in the case of unavoidable absences relating to work, illness or serious emergency. (Only two unavoidable absences are allowed. Three absences necessitate dropping out and repeating the course later).
- Memorization of all scripture passages required.
- An honest attempt to pray weekly with your prayer partner.
- Turning in an accountability form each week.
- For Discipleship Training 2, nine hours of Bible Study (one hour weekly).
- To encourage at least one other person to take Discipleship Training when next offered, or to disciple at least one other person on a one-to-one basis.

My Commitment to Discipleship Training

To the best of my ability, I hereby commit myself to the next nine weeks of Discipleship Training....to be faithful in my attendance and in applying daily the disciplines I am taught within the course.

Signature _____

Schedule Of Discipleship Training 2

Week	Lesson	Assignment
1	The Bible: An Overview	Daily Quiet Time Study the Bible Overview for Quiz next week Scripture Memory: 2 Timothy 3:16–17 Learn Old Testament books: Genesis – 2 Chronicles Bible Study: One hour per week in 1 John Prayer partnership
2	Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts	DQT <i>Discovering Your Gifts</i> Worksheet SM: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Learn Ezra – Song of Solomon Bible Study Prayer Partnership
3	Developing your Spiritual Gifts	DQT <i>Developing Your Gifts</i> Worksheet SM: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Learn Isaiah – Daniel Bible Study Prayer partnership
4	My Commitment to My Church	DQT Listen and evaluate a sermon SM: 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 Learn Hosea – Jonah Bible Study Prayer partnership

Week	Lesson	Assignment
5	The Ministry of the Holy Spirit	DQT SM: 1 Corinthians 13:11-13 Learn Micah – Malachi Bible Study: 1 John 4 Prayer Partnership
6	Dealing With Temptation	DQT Read <i>Christ and Your Problems</i> SM: 1 Corinthians 10:13 Review all Old Testament Books Bible Study Prayer Partnership
7	Disciplining the Mind	DQT Read <i>What To Do About Worry</i> An experiment in <i>Disciplining the Mind Worksheet</i> SM: Philippians 4:6-8 Learn New Testament Books: Matthew – 2 Thessalonians Bible Study Prayer partnership
8	The Lordship of Christ	DQT Read My Heart Christ's Home SM: Romans 12:1-2 Learn 1 Timothy – Revelation Bible Study Prayer Partnership
9	Check-up and Evaluation	DQT SM: Review all the verses of DT 2 and all the books of the Bible Bible Study Prayer Partnership

WEEK

1

The Bible: An Overview

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible is God's written revelation of His will to men. Its central theme is _____ through _____.

The Bible was written by nearly _____ authors and contains _____ books: _____ Old Testament (OT) and _____ New Testament (NT).

The Old Testament (*testament means covenant or agreement*) was originally written in the _____ language and translated in Greek about 100 B.C. The Greek version was known as the _____. The OT records God's plan from _____ to approximately _____ years before Christ.

Old Testament – 39 books

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| _____ Law | _____ Major Prophets |
| _____ History | _____ Minor Prophets |
| _____ Poetry | |

Periods of Old Testament History

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

The New Testament was originally written in the _____ language and translated into _____. This version was called the _____. The New Testament records God's plan from Christ's _____ to approximately _____ A.D.

New Testament – 27 books

- _____ Gospels – “good news”
- _____ Church History
- _____ Pauline Epistles (letters written by Paul)
- _____ General Epistles (letters written by others)
- _____ Apocalypse (Vision and Prophecy)

Eight Known Authors of the New Testament

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 5. |
| 2. | 6. |
| 3. | 7. |
| 4. | 8. |

Study the above and the following pages in preparation for a brief quiz next week.

Bible Overview Quiz

The Old Testament contains _____ books and was written originally in the _____ language. Its first translation, into Greek, was known as the _____. It covers a period of time from _____ to _____ B.C.

Old Testament Books

_____ books of Law _____ Major Prophets
_____ books of History _____ Minor Prophets
_____ of _____

The 6 periods of O.T history are:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

The New Testament contains _____ books and was written originally in the _____ language. It covers a period from _____ to approximately _____ A.D.

New Testament Books

_____ Gospels: _____

_____ History: The book of _____

_____ Pauline Epistles

_____ General letters

_____ Prophecy: The book of _____

Eight known authors of the N.T. are:

1. _____

5. _____

2. _____

6. _____

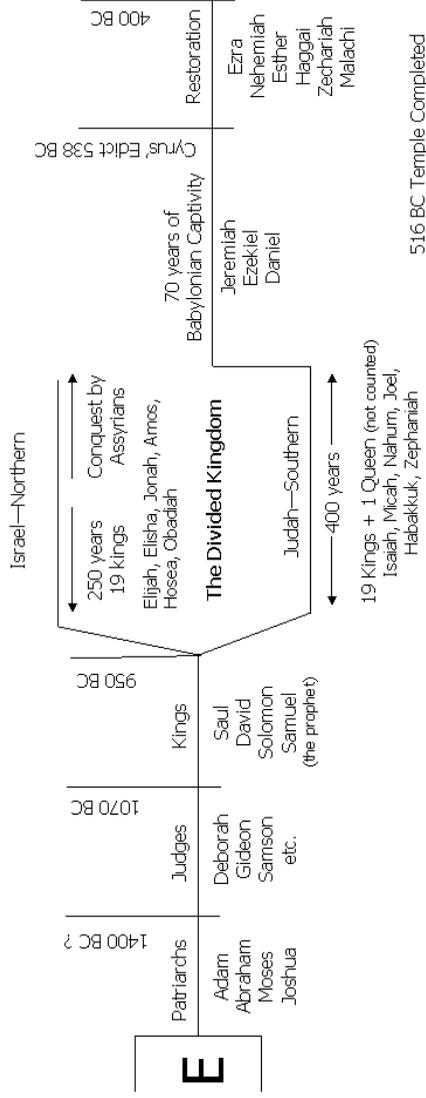
3. _____

7. _____

4. _____

8. _____

Old Testament Survey—Date Line



Genesis Exodus Leviticus Deuteronomy Numbers	Judges Ruth	1 & 2 Samuel 1 Kings 1—11 1 Chronicles 1-29 2 Chronicles 1-9	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> North 1 Kings 11-12 2 Kings 1-17 Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Obadiah </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> South 1 Kings 11-22, 2 Kings 1-25 2 Chronicles 10-36 Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah </td> </tr> </table>	North 1 Kings 11-12 2 Kings 1-17 Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Obadiah	South 1 Kings 11-22, 2 Kings 1-25 2 Chronicles 10-36 Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah
North 1 Kings 11-12 2 Kings 1-17 Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Obadiah	South 1 Kings 11-22, 2 Kings 1-25 2 Chronicles 10-36 Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah				
			Books of the Prophets Jeremiah Ezra Ezekiel Daniel Nehemiah Esther Haggai Zechariah Malachi		

WEEK

2

Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s)

Definition of Spiritual Gift

For Discussion:

1. Does every Christian have a spiritual gift? Can he/she have more than one? (1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 12:7)
2. "Others often can help you discover your spiritual gift(s)."
3. "You do not always discover them all at one time."
4. Should a Christian seek to possess certain specific gifts? (1 Corinthians 12:11, 31, and Hebrews 2:4. In verse 31 "you" is plural).

The Gifts of the Spirit (as listed in Romans 12:6-8)

Write a brief definition for each of them.

1. Prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:3)
2. Serving (Acts 6:1-4)
3. Teaching (Titus 2:1; James 3:1)
4. Encouraging (1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14)
5. Contributing (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)
6. Leadership (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17)

7. Showing mercy (Matthew 5:7; James 3:17)

Begin considering what your spiritual gifts are!

Have three of your friends fill out the *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts* Worksheet this week. They are located at the back of this book and can be torn out.

Note: This lesson is only an introduction to spiritual gifts. Ask your pastor for more information about spiritual gifts.

Developing Your Spiritual Gifts Worksheet

Gift	Ways It Can Help My Church	Development Suggestions

WEEK

4

My Commitment To My Church

What should my commitment be to my church in regard to the following areas?

1. Attendance (Hebrews 10:24–25; Luke 4:16)
2. Giving (Malachi 3:10; Numbers 18:14-21; Hebrews 13:16)
3. My Pastor (Hebrews 13:17)
4. Fellow Believers (Hebrews 10:24-25; Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:15-16)
5. Serving/Ministry (Acts 6:3; Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 2:10)

6. Growth (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41, 47; Acts 5:14)

List five practical things you can do to deepen your commitment to your church.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Listening Effectively to a Sermon Worksheet

"For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe." 1 Corinthians 1:21

Sermon Topic: _____ Date:

Speaker _____ Place

Scripture reference:

Outline of Main Points:

Illustrations: (from the Bible and others)

Application to my Life:

Was the sermon a good one? Why or why not?

WEEK

5

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit? (Matthew 28:19; John 14:16-20, 26)

The Greek word for Holy Spirit is _____. The New International Version translates it _____. It literally means _____.

Follow these steps of the Holy Spirit in your life to this point in time:

Conviction (John 16:8-11)

Change (John 3:5-8)

Assurance (Romans 8:16; 1 John 3:23-24)

Indwelling (Romans 8:9)

Beyond Conversion, The Holy Spirit Is Our...

1. _____ of spiritual truths. (John 14:26; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:14)
2. _____ in witnessing to others. (Luke 12:11-12)
3. _____ in prayer. (Romans 8:26-27)
4. _____ for victorious living. (Acts 1:8)
5. _____ of our hearts. (Acts 15:8-9)

A Question to Think about:

How much of what you do for the Lord is done in complete dependence upon the Spirit?

List some areas of your life in which you need to be more dependent upon the HOLY SPIRIT'S power, presence and purity:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

An Optional Extra

Find time to read John 13–17, the last teaching of Christ to His disciples before His crucifixion. Notice the references to the Holy Spirit.

WEEK

6

Dealing With Temptati

“A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is...A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in.” C.S. Lewis

Overview of Temptation

It is “an _____ or _____
to do _____ by offering some apparent
_____.”

Read Genesis 3:1-5

1. What was the enticement? (vs. 1)
2. What evil was to be done? (vs. 2-3)

3. What apparent advantage was offered? (vs. 4-5)

The Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-14)

1. Physically (vs. 1-4)
2. Mentally (vs. 5-7)
3. Spiritually (vs. 8-11)

Remember, temptation is not sin.

Don't get discouraged. "*Count it all joy.*"

Counterattack – "*Overcome evil with good.*"

Maintain constant vigilance. "*Be diligent.*"
(Dr. Billy Graham)

The Time of Temptation (Matthew 4:1-2; James 1:13-14)

The Reason for Temptation (James 1:2-4)

The Resources for Resisting Temptation (Ephesians 6:13-18; James 4:7)

What to do (1 Corinthians 10:13)

List areas in your life where you are the most easily tempted.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Christ And Your Problems

By Jay E. Adams

EXCUSE ME, PLEASE

"But if you had to live with a wife like mine"... "Listen, pastor—no one has ever had to face anything comparable to this at work before." "But the other kids' parents don't make rules like mine do." "Well, you'd have done it, too, if he had said that to you!"

These and a hundred and one similar protests are heard daily by Christian counselors. Boiled down, they all say one thing: "Please excuse me from my responsibility to live like a Christian, on the grounds that my problem is unique."

But is it? Does God ever allow a Christian to face a test that is utterly unique? Even if He does, would that be an adequate excuse? In an unmistakably clear reply, Paul says, "No!" You cannot evade your responsibility to think and act like a Christian by pleading that your case is

unique. As a matter of fact, he shows that no case is unique. Listen to his words in 1 Corinthians 1-13: "There is no trial that has overtaken you but such as is common to men."

To begin with, let's nail down one thing: 1 Corinthians 10:13 allows for no exceptions of the sort that many of us are inclined to make for ourselves. Our sin simply cannot be excused.

The reason why Paul declares that there are no exceptions is that at the bottom all men in all times face the same basic problems. There are no special cases. That is why in this chapter Paul can appeal to the history of God's dealings with the Jews in the days of Moses when writing to a Gentile church in Corinth that outwardly, at least, seemed to be facing quite different cultural problems. Looking beneath the surface of time,

geography, language and culture, Paul said, "These things happened" to the Jews, but they are "examples to you upon whom the ends of the ages have come." Of course, he says the same to you and me today.

To be sure, there are unique features to each problem. No two situations are ever exactly alike. But what Paul insists upon is that beneath these features you will find that the problems of the Jews in the wilderness, the temptations of the Corinthians in the Roman Empire, and the frustrations of modern day Christians are not significantly different. God has not changed; His commandments have not been altered; and sinful man, below his modern sophisticated exterior, is still the same. Men today stand in the same relationship to God and to one another as they did in Biblical times. Therefore, the message of the Bible is as fresh today as when Paul's scroll was first unrolled and read in Corinth. Sinful men, who disobey the

law of God, still find that God's message of forgiveness in Scripture is the only answer to this life's most fundamental problem.

That message tells of Jesus Christ who became man in order to live and die in the place of His elect people. He too faced the hunger, misunderstandings, hatred, discouragements and excruciating pain that we endure. He also knew the difficulty of making agonizing decisions, stark loneliness in the midst of a superficial and fickle crowd, the bitterness of betrayal by companions and denial by those with whom He had openly shared His love. Yes, He was "tested in all points...yet without sin." If ever a man might have pleaded for exemption on the grounds that His case was unique, He might have done so. Yet He never shirked His responsibility to God or His neighbour. No, God's truly unique Son became one of us, not only to save His own from the wrath to come by dying for their sins on the cross, but

also to live a holy life fully satisfying all of God's requirements on their behalf, so that His righteousness might be counted to them when they trust in Him as Saviour. Since He, without sin, experienced all that we must experience today, He knows that by His grace His redeemed children can follow in His steps. That is why He who knows our problems through and through from personal experience says: "There is no trial that has overtaken you but such as is common to men." If He says so, you may count on it! And you may also count on the fact that He will hold you responsible to meet each problem as God commands.

Christian, there are no special cases. Christ Himself has demonstrated that by His life and death, and He expects you to do the same. In a day in which the Freudian ethic of irresponsibility permeates every aspect society, and men find it stylish to blame their sinful behaviour upon someone or something else,

Jesus Christ calls you to live a life of responsibility.

There is no ground for failing to "turn the other cheek" or to "do good to those who despitefully use you." Christ prayed for you and died for you although you have been His enemy. He took the responsible course to Calvary.

When He took upon Himself the common lot of men, Jesus showed once and for all how God expects His children to live and die. So, Christian, throw off excuses, stop shifting blame to others and instead, by the power of God's Spirit, "walk in a manner of the calling wherewith you have been called."

WE'RE ALL IN IT TOGETHER

When the doctor says "I'm afraid it will have to come out, but don't worry, it'll only be a minor operation," perhaps you think of the words of the man who said, "Any operation on me is major surgery." All right—so he's given you the report.

The diagnosis is unfavourable and an operation is indicated; what do you do now? Stunned you go home, tell your wife, and hope she'll say something that will bring hope out of despair. Sure enough, she comes through: "Phil," she says, "it can't be too bad. Uncle Fred had that same operation 18 years ago, and you know that he's been the picture of health ever since."

The next day at work you mention your problem to the boss. Tom assures you: "I had that operation myself and I was up and around in two days." Bill, who sits beside you at work, chimes in: "Yeah, and I have a neighbour who was back to work in less than two weeks." Again and again you get similar reports whenever you mention the coming operation. And—it's not long before the fear and apprehension are greatly lessened.

I once drove through the "Garden of the Gods" outside Colorado Springs. In this beautiful natural wonder

you can see rocks balanced on a pinpoint and vividly coloured scenery on all sides. As you drive along slowly, viewing the marvels about you, suddenly you are confronted with a problem. Directly ahead of you looms a wall of sheer rock, and the road on which you are traveling disappears into what seems to be a crack so narrow that it looks as though you'd have a hard time driving a Cooper Mini through it. Looking around for a place in which to turn and go back, your eye falls upon a small white sign. It reads: NARROWS. YES YOU CAN – A MILLION OTHERS HAVE. What do you know – a minute and a half later, a million and one have done it!

What makes us go confidently to the operating table? Why do we risk getting stuck in the Narrows? One answer surely is that we are helped to face such problems by the assurance that others have successfully done it before us. That is the second reason why Paul told the Corinthians: "No trial has

overtaken you but such as is common to men.”

In our first discussion of 1 Corinthians 10:13, we noticed that Paul’s statement places our responsibility to handle life’s problems squarely before us. If at bottom, our problems are the same as those faced by Christ and by other Christians, we can never plead that we must be excused from solving problems God’s way because our problems are unique. But Paul is not merely calling us to responsibility by these words; he also wants to encourage us and give us hope. We think:

"If others have successfully undergone the same operation with little or no ill effects, it is likely I shall to. If a million other vehicles can pass through the Narrows, so can mine. If hundreds of other Christians have endured misunderstandings, have learned to discipline their

children, have lived with husbands and mothers-in-law like mine, have walked through the shadow of death secure with Their Shepherd at their side, so can I."

That is the spirit men need to go on in a world in which there is plainly much to suffer. It is true that problems, though basically similar to those of men in other eras, may take on a new complexity in our time and that they may multiply at a previously unknown rate. But, Christians, you’re not in this alone. We are in it together. And God says you can solve these old problems though they may appear in new forms. Others have in the past, and by the help of God, there are many others who, in this complex rapidly moving age are doing so today.

Remember, too, that Jesus Christ faced problems of a complexity that would stagger the most sophisticated IBM computer—and solved them without sin. You do not have

to face problems as intense, as complex, as momentous; but you, too, have the same resources that He had.

Calling upon the Scriptures three times on the Mount of Temptation, Jesus successfully thwarted the attempt of the devil to divert Him from the divinely charted course that was to lead Him to the cross where He would shed His blood in the place of His people. Here He would have to endure the taunts of earth and the wrath of heaven. Here He would die for me. What love was exhibited in His steadfast refusal to gain the kingdoms of this world by taking a seemingly "easier" path!

And in that steadfastness—steadfastness after 40 days and 40 nights of fasting—we see the strength that came from the Word of God. Jesus did not act according to feelings (even the intense feelings of near starvation), but rather according to the Word of God. Truly when Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by all the words that come from

the mouth of God," He was giving us the key to solving the problems of life. Their solution lies in following the Bible which He quoted, which sustained and guided Him successfully through the deepest trials.

That same Book can do the same for you. Christians, no matter how serious your present problem, you are not alone. You have a sympathetic high priest who can enter into all your problems, for they have been His problems, too (Hebrews 4:15). He knows your heartache. He knows your sorrow. He knows your pain. He knows! And through Paul, He says in effect:

"Others—other Christians—are now facing the same problems successfully by My grace. I have done so before them, and you can too."

When others around you who do not know Christ cave in under life's load, you may stand. No, you must stand!

For God has caused you to face the same problems that they face in order that He may demonstrate in you the wonder of His power and grace. When trees outside are bent to the ground and the storm rages with ever-increasing intensity and the hearts of men are failing for fear, your heart must be like the clock inside the house that never misses a beat, that steady as ever ticks away at the same pace. You must demonstrate that the Lord of the Word has kept His word.

Stop complaining, whining, worrying. Pick up the Bible again; feed upon its strengthening message and solve those problems God's way, to the glory of His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOU CAN HELP ONE ANOTHER

Where do you turn for help? Well, where can you find it? Bill was in trouble. In spite of the fact that he was a Christian, in a time of need he had embezzled funds, and now as a result he was

becoming so depressed over the guilt of this sin and the fear of discovery that his ability to function at work began to be seriously impaired. His wife began urging him to see a psychiatrist. In desperation, Bill went to his pastor. He complained of his despair and asked for help. Half wishing he could talk over the problem with the minister, but also half afraid of the possible consequences of confessing the truth, he hoped the pastor would somehow be able to extract the story from him. But to his deep disappointment, the pastor, who had been well-trained in the recognition of depressed persons, and just as thoroughly instructed that whenever he detected such depression, he should immediately defer and then refer, suggested that Bill seek "more professional help."

While everyone played a sympathetic role during his infrequent visits home, he knew their real feelings. All this, and much more,

because Bill had failed to confess his sins and make right his debts as God requires!

But this is not the only sad feature in the story. Bill failed, but so did his wife and his minister. Bill did not need shock therapy, or admission into a mental institution. Bill needed to pursue God's path for forgiveness and restitution. But his family and church had not confronted him with the fact that his depression might possibly stem from sin. The possibility did not even occur to them. So thoroughly had both the minister and the family been indoctrinated in the current Freudian ethic that they never suspected the real cause of Bill's depression. Consequently, they failed to help him.

Every counselor who has worked in mental institutions has discovered—as I did several years ago—that these institutions are filled with people like Bill. These people (and a number of them are Christians) might be leading productive,

fruitful Christian lives today if their fellow Christians had confronted them with the possibility of sin as the root of their difficulty. Not all peculiar behaviour, of course, stems from specific acts of sin; there are people who have toxic problems, tumours on the brain, brain damage, etc., who because of physical damage or chemical malfunction perform badly. But by comparison, the number of those whose problems are organic in origin (as over against those who are simply not "making it" in life because they are not solving life's problems biblically) is negligible. Great numbers of supposedly "mentally ill" persons are not ill at all. It is true that they may worry ulcers on their stomachs or become paralyzed through fear of discovery; but these illnesses are effects, or results, or consequences of their problem, not the causes of it. The real answer to their problem does not lie with psychiatrists or shock therapy; it may be found only in Jesus Christ.

But the Church of Jesus Christ has failed to recognize this fact, and has, indeed, cooperated in perpetuating the Freudian hoax which declared homosexuals and drunkards, adulterers and liars, cowards and slanderers, boasters and the covetous "not responsible" for their actions because they are "mentally ill." Consequently, the church has virtually lost its image as the loving, forgiving, helping and healing society of people who gather together to "build up one another." There is plenty of talk about the church as the institution in which you can find coldness, and slander and alienation; but what has happened to her first century image?

What has happened to it? Why, it has gone! Gone because her works of mutual love and care have also disappeared; gone with the coming of "competent professional" help; gone as the fearless use of loving discipline evaporated. Today, where can you find a church in which the

members really "provoke one another to good works?" Where do you find those who are spiritually restoring a brother who is caught in a trespass? How often do Christians help to carry the weight of another's burdens (Galatians 6:1-2)? How many Christians do you know who regard the interest of others (Philippians 2:3, 4)? Where in the church do you see the confrontation of brethren who have offended one another taking place (Matthew 5:23, 34; 18:15-20)? No wonder there is so much bitterness and slander and resentment when Christians fail to employ God's means for reconciliation!

What has happened? I'll tell you what has happened. Because it was all too easy to follow the course of least resistance and minimal self-sacrifice, the Church of Jesus Christ fell easy prey to the propaganda. This Freudian propaganda claimed that people who are having difficulty in solving life's problems are, as one

hospital chaplain put it, "morally neutral" persons and, therefore, are not responsible. In short, they are sick and there is nothing we can do to help them; they need the expert. They need "professional help." Ministers and other Christians alike have concluded that they are incompetent to counsel such people. But are they? Has the Church lost her power for good? Is there no hope of regaining fellowship of Christ's flock where believers do assist one another in works that mutually edify (or build-up)? Can each individual part of the body begin to function in such a way that the entire body will build itself up in love (Ephesians 4:16)?

Psychiatrists, apart from dispensing tranquilizers (which any physician can do), rarely use their medical background. Instead they spend their time talking to their patients about values. They attempt to alter character and behaviour. Do we want psychiatrists telling our Christian brothers that

their value systems are too stringent and therefore need watering down? Do we seriously believe that a man who is himself living apart from the saving grace of Jesus Christ can lead members of the flock into more loving and faithful obedience to the Lord? Do we really think that the fruit of the Spirit will grow in an atmosphere in which the Spirit is ignored and the principles of His Word are challenged and undercut?

Jesus Christ came (Luke says) doing and teaching (Acts 1:1)—not only teaching, but also doing. He left a charge to His Church that the works which He did His followers also should do; and indeed, even more extensive works (John 14:12).

Where are the Church's works today? Where is the power and authority of Christ? When we return to the mutual works of building up one another in our faith, we shall know! Christian, in the Name of Jesus Christ your Lord, go help another today.

YOU CAN COUNT ON IT

How do you know? How can you be sure? In the last three chapters you have been stressing the need for, the possibility of taking responsible biblical action—action that solves problems. You’ve been talking about hope. You’ve been saying that Christians can endure and solve problems and even ought to be able to help one another to do so. Are you offering too much? Can you really deliver? Is this hope you are offering simply another false hope that in the end will only bring greater despair and distress to those who depend upon it? Are you sure that you’ve not engaged in an unscriptural oversell?

Well, if you’ve been thinking this way, let me congratulate you. Often people too quickly “buy” supposed solutions that produce temporary happiness but eventually let them down flat. If you were to adopt the viewpoint that I have been presenting on any other

basis than that you yourself have searched the Scriptures and found it to be true, I should be deeply disappointed. Your real hope in trouble, your only certain hope in despair, is in God, the God who against all odds promised redemption for lost men—and delivered! All hope lies in Him, and that hope is realized only through His Son, Jesus Christ. He delivered by fulfilling God’s promise of salvation in dying on the cross for the sins of those whom the Father had given Him that they might have forgiveness and life.

When you rest on the certainty that is in Jesus Christ, you are depending upon the dependable One who, in Scripture, speaks clearly; the One whose yes is yes and whose no is no. His words are not ambiguous and vague. He does not hedge or say yes and no at the same time. When He promises, He does so plainly, and then follows through.

And that is precisely why—when I say that there is hope, that there are

solutions that mutual help is possible—I am not overselling. All this—and in the chapters to come (we shall see) even more—is true in the Christ who delivered not only on His promise to come and die, but even delivered on the promise to rise from the dead! Hope is certain because it is He who promises His own:

"There is no trial that has overtaken you but such as is common to men, and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tried beyond what you are able to endure, but with the trial also will make a way of escape in order that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Don't you see that the answer to all of your questions lies in these three solid words that are embedded in the heart of this gracious promise, these words, "God is faithful"? Those are words of certainty. And it is on this

granite-like foundation that the hope of which I have been speaking rests. This is the promise of God; you can count on it.

Doubtless, the Apostle, who often anticipated objections and questions, suspected that some might think he too was overselling when he penned so sweeping a promise. So under the inspiration of God's good spirit, he nailed the promise tightly to the very faithfulness of God. That, of course, is the firmest foundation of all. If God's faithfulness can fail, doubt these words; if God's faithfulness can fail, then you can find loopholes and voice valid objections. But if "God is faithful" – as you know that He is –then you have no choice but to believe and act upon this promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

In pastoral counseling we find that many people come for help with little hope. They have tried all they know to do, they have often sought advice elsewhere, but matters have continued

to go from bad to worse. So, you can understand why they come with little hope. In fact their attitude might be described as a hope-against-hope stance. Many, who for years have consulted psychiatrists and other counselors to no avail, come expecting nothing, and indeed often hold hope at arm's length. So often have their previous expectations failed to materialize, and so often have their hopes been dashed to fragments, that they are wary of promises. For fear of being hurt again, they almost defy initial suggestions that there is hope. Such people need to hear Paul's words: "God is faithful." Past disillusionment came from setting one's hope upon man and his promises. But when one's hope is properly set on God, fixed upon His promises, and founded upon His word that hope does not fail.

Perhaps you are discouraged; perhaps you too are hesitant ever to hope again. If so, listen to God's word to His own: "God is faithful." There is hope! The

problem you face—seemingly impregnable; seemingly insoluble; seemingly impossible—has a solution in Christ. The psychiatrist may say to his prospective client, "Now you know that analysis will probably take a long time and I can not guarantee anything." But God does not speak that way!

Indeed, He says in effect, "Based upon my own faithfulness, i.e., upon the integrity of My own Word and Person, I declare that there is no problem that My redeemed sons and daughters ever face that is either unique or beyond their ability to handle if they meet the problem in My way, using My resources." God gives a guarantee. And there is no fine print to make it worthless!

No, you can be different today. The beginning of a solution to your problem can take place right now as you acknowledge your own responsibility to face whatever God sends to you. Confess your sin of despair in the light of God's gracious

provisions for you as He has explained them in this promise. Not all of your problems will disappear immediately, but at least your attitude toward them can change radically today. You can look at them with hope. God does not permit you to lose hope if you are His child. The very concept of a child of the faithful God in utter despair is an anomaly. God's hope will not fail; it is hope that delivers! Throw aside then all self-pity, abandon every vestige of hesitation, strip yourself of excuses and rationalizations and cast yourself wholly upon this promise of God and the God of this promise. Then you will learn the joy of echoing those ringing words of faith and trust: "Great is thy faithfulness."

YOU CAN'T SAY CAN'T

"I can't do it!" Those were the words of a Christian woman who had just learned Christ's will from the Scriptures, which, she protested, it was impossible for her to obey. Her claim

was that she simply did not have the courage and strength necessary. Was she right? Does God ever put Christians into a situation in which He demands behaviour of them that He knows they cannot perform?

Bill was married to a woman who cared nothing about anyone but herself. She had sacrificed her marriage, her children, and her friends in order to satisfy her own selfish desires. The picture he painted was bleak; there was no ray of light. When he had finished recounting the last sad detail, Bill sat back in despair with a sigh and said, "So you see why it is that I can't take it any longer." Could he?

That's the question, isn't it? Could he take it? Could that woman do Christ's will? Can you assume that responsibility and accomplish that task about which you too have been saying, "I can't?"

Most Christians who need counseling have one thing in common. Every observant pastoral counselor has

noticed this all-but-universal characteristic: their conversation is full of the word "can't." This common trait may be explained in various ways. Some might suppose that it is indicative of a basic weakness or inability that underlies their other problems. This explanation leads to the conclusion that these are people who constitutionally, or for some other reason, really can't do what God requires. That is, of course, an explanation that accepts the counselor's view that he is helpless. It also renders the counselor helpless, you will notice.

But there's another explanation of this phenomenon: The biblical explanation is that men "cop out" on their responsibilities and fail to accomplish their tasks because of sin. Paul allows no Christian to escape by the use of the word "can't." He writes:

"There is no trial that has overtaken you but such as is common to men,

and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tried beyond what you are able to endure"
(1 Corinthians 10:13).

Paul neither ignores the severity of your problem nor minimizes it when he says you can endure it; he simply tells the truth about God and about you. And if you doubt him, then remember that he was careful to preface this promise with the assurance that God's Word is as certain as His own faithfulness: "God is faithful who will not allow you to be tried beyond what you are able to endure." But you protest – "I don't think I could stand firm for my faith before a firing squad as other Christians have." You may be correct. But you do not now have to face a firing squad. The promise is not that you will have strength to meet tomorrow's problem today, but only that, when it comes, God will provide the needed wisdom and courage to do so. Often the strength comes in the doing.

Perhaps that problem which yesterday seemed utterly unbearable can now be endured because you have read this message today. The promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13 itself may provide the courage and direction that God's Spirit knows you need to make that pressing decision you once thought you never could make.

Given the grace of God, given your knowledge of God's Word, given your present state of sanctification, given the resources of the Holy Spirit within, there is no trial into which God calls you that is beyond your ability to withstand. Instead of saying "can't," you should say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

This is an important principle to grasp. Perhaps a bit of background into the problem will help. Sin brought about a reversal of man's rule over the earth, so that it became possible for the earth to gain dominion over man. It fought back, bringing forth thorns. Man's task is no longer to trim and dress the

garden, but now, in the sweat of his face, he found it necessary to toil against the earth in order to eke out an existence. Whenever he gives up on this task, the impact of the reversal becomes evident. Contrary to God's mandate to subdue the earth, sinners give up and allow the environment to control them. The Christian who whines, "I can't; I'm helpless" is submitting to the rule of sin in a world set against him. A Christian must not act that way.

To reflect the image of God, he must subdue and rule the world. The picture of a man crippled by and subjected to his environment is a pitiful distortion of God's image. The Bible is able to equip every Christian fully for every emergency in life. To fail to use God's gracious provision of the Scriptures in which lie the principles needed for a life of godliness is to misrepresent God to unbelievers. It is no less than a slander against the One who died for our sins on the cross and who, if He did

that for us, will also freely give us all things necessary for life and godliness.

Indeed, those who do not know Christ are repelled daily by Christians who live and act in the spirit of the word "can't."

Christian wife, your home can be different. Young man, you can help your behaviour when you are out alone with girls.

Businessman, you can meet that irate customer tomorrow. Mzee, you can overcome the feeling of loneliness and uselessness that seems to be driving you to despair.

Whatever the problem, through Jesus Christ, you can. So, go ahead and prove to yourself and those around you that God's promise is true.

I'M IN A BOX

Jean, a Christian woman, sat across the desk. Her worn face and swollen eyes underscored the sorry story she told. Her marriage had gone sour. Her husband had seriously neglected her and

mistreated his children. He had done just about everything short of adultery to make her life miserable, and even seemed to enjoy it. It became clear, however, that what disturbed her most was not this or that particular abuse or insult, or even the accumulation of all of these, but rather the fact that she could see no way out of the situation. She could see no ray of hope for the future. As she, herself, put it, "I'm in a box!"

Perhaps that's the way you feel too; as you read Jean's words you may even have said to yourself, "You're not the only one!" Your children are grown, the last one is about to be married and leave home, and all that you and your husband have left is one another. The rest of your life is going to be spent with him (or her). Life was tolerable when there were still children at home who could bring some meaning, some cheerfulness, some laughter into it. But now, now your home suddenly has become a hermetically-sealed box; a prison cell;

solitary confinement! Locked up for life with a husband or wife who does not understand you and whom you do not understand either. You say, "I'm in a box!" Or perhaps that wonderful home you once had exists only in your fond memories. Your loving husband is now gone. You come home every evening to an otherwise empty cold flat where you stare at the four walls until it's time to go to bed. You have often thought: "These four walls are no better than walls of a pine box." You're in a box all right; you're in a box in which you have been buried alive!

Or, as a businessman, you know you are caught in a swirl of ever-increasing demands upon your time. Your four-walled trap consists of escalating responsibilities and pressures. Pressure—pressures to produce, pressures to earn, pressures to be a better husband, pressures to spend more time with the family. To do the one is to neglect the

other...pressures, pressures, pressures—all of which seem to push you in opposite directions. The walls of the whole unwieldy structure threaten to cave in on you. "I could spend more time with the family," you say, "if..."; but with the rising cost of living...where can I break out? I'm in a box—tightly nailed shut—with no way out! Are you? Christian, listen to God:

"There is no trial that has overtaken you but such as is common to men, and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tried beyond what you are able to endure, but with the trial also will make a way of escape in order that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Did you get it? God says He never puts us into a box to leave us there for good. Jean needed to understand this. She needed to know that God provides a way of escape from every trial.

Christians are never in a box from which they cannot escape. God can make the wall of the box fall as flat as the walls of Jericho; He can open up the lid, reach down and lift you out. Or, He can make the bottom fall out. Because Jean thought she was in a box, Jean had taken the only way she knew to get out of the box—she had tried to “cop out” by giving up, quitting. But letting down on her responsibilities as a mother and wife had only complicated the problem—and had simply proved to be a blind alley rather than a way of escape. It was not a solution; her guilt had led to depression and her depression had led to further irresponsibility which, in a downward spiraling fashion, had led in turn to further guilt, and so on...and on.

God promised that with the trial He will also “make a way to escape in order that you may be able to endure it.” Every box has its way out; every problem has a solution; every trial will come to an end for God’s

children. This is not true, of course, for others. One of the most fearful facts about the eternal punishment of hell is the great eternal gulf that separates it from Jesus Christ, forever. There is no exit from hell, no way of escape, no end of suffering and trial. That is why men without Christ fear death; somehow they realize that death is a box without an exit. And the fear of death (with its consequences) makes life itself a box.

But the Christian, who knows that Jesus Christ entered the box for him and broke through the walls of death that the fear for its eternal engulfing power might be removed, no longer need fear death nor life. Whatever way of escape God may provide, even if it’s the very best of all, (i.e to take you to be with Himself) if you have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, you may be certain that the way out will come just as surely as the problem itself. God says that together with the trial there will also be “a way of escape.”

Knowing this, simply knowing that there will be an end to the trial, is itself most assuring. The knowledge enables you to go on. It spurs you on and helps you to continue to assume your responsibilities before God. It gives hope. You can endure anything when you know it has an end. Depressed, discouraged Christian, let me urge you to take God at His Word. No matter how dark the night may seem—the morning will come. With the darkness there is also light. There is Christ; and in Him is light, light that will enable you to endure it. The box may seem impregnable, but it isn't—not to God.

You're in a box? Then sing—sing as bleeding Paul and Silas sang at midnight in their cell at Philippi, and soon (i.e, in God's time) you too will hear the rumble of the earth and feel the

shaking of the foundations of your prison, and the doors—the doors of your box—will fly open according to the promise and power of God.

Summary of Main Points

- Our problems are not really unique.
- We are not excused from responsibilities to God and each other.
- If others have faced this problem, so can I with God's help.
- We need to help others in facing their problems.
- You can count on God's faithfulness to provide a way to endure your problem.

WEEK

7

Disciplining The Mind

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” Colossians 3:1-2

Whatever gets your attention gets you. What we think about most has the most influence on our lives. The human mind always finds an object upon which to fix its attention. Man controls the choice of that object. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was concerned that they learn to discipline their minds and set their attention on godly things.

Philippians 4:8 “Whatever things are...think about such things.”

1. _____: things you can rely on; things that are certain. Examples include the Bible and the truths displayed in God’s creation. Dwelling on false or uncertain things can confuse your perspective and get you off course.
2. _____: things that are highly moral; honourable and awe-inspiring. Examples include “taking the

high road” or “turning the other cheek” when tested.
Vengeance, retaliation, and resentment make you unworthy.

3. _____: things that are proper and just. This includes our high calling to treat each other righteously and with justice. Taking unfair advantage of a person is wrong.
4. _____: things that are clean, unstained, or free from defects. Examples include sexual innocence or motivations that are untouched by worldly influences. Sordid, shabby or dirty thoughts separate us from God.
5. _____: things that inspire love or are spiritually attractive. Examples include sympathy, patience, forgiveness, and adoration. Hateful or divisive thoughts only destroy.
6. _____: things that are commendable, laudable, praiseworthy, and respectable; things about which God would say, “Well done.” Examples include spiritual victories in your life and in the lives of others. Shameful or indecent behaviour cannot please God.

*Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, stressed purity of thought. “Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28) *Heart* means the intellect, affections, and the will. Jesus places adultery (and other sins) in the mind before an outward act is performed. If a person mentally decides to do evil, although the act is not done because of lack of opportunity, he or she is still fully responsible for the guilt of that act. Godly thinking helps keep us from sinning.

The Prescription

“And the peace of God...will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7, Colossians 3:15)

1. Don't let a disturbing thought upset you. Give it to God in prayer. (Philippians 4:6)
2. Give thanks for the opportunity to learn and grow in every situation. (Philippians 4:6)
3. Fill your mind with good thoughts. Be positive in your thought life, rather than negative. (Philippians 4:8-9)
4. Remove things from your life that tempt you to think wrong thoughts. (Philippians 4:9; Matthew 18:8)

When Wrong Thoughts Come

1. _____.
Don't feel guilty for being tempted; everyone is tempted by bad thoughts. Accept the temptation as an opportunity to prove your faith.
2. _____ with the
Word of God.
3. _____ of God's
Word which have to do with temptation.
4. _____ and think
on those things which are worthy.
5. _____ that you are allowing Him to
be Lord of your thoughts.

"I can't stop the birds from flying over my head, but I can keep them from nesting under my hat." Martin Luther

Discussion Question

What are some things which make us think wrong thoughts that we can remove from our lives?

Read: Adams, Jay E – *What To Do About Worry* – Exposition of Philippians 4:4-9, begins on the following page.

What To Do About Worry

By Jay E. Adams

Joe used to worry all the time about everything. His friends all knew him as a worrier. One day Bill was walking down the street when he saw his worrying friend bouncing along as happy as a man could be. Joe was actually whistling and humming and wearing a huge smile; he looked as if he did not have a care in the world. Bill could hardly believe his eyes; it was obvious that a radical transformation had taken place. Bill had known Joe from way back as a confirmed worrier, so he had to find out what had happened.

He stopped Joe and asked, "Joe, what's happened to you? You don't seem worried any more; I never saw a happier man." Joe replied, "It's wonderful, Bill. I haven't worried for several weeks now." Bill continued, "That's great; how did you manage it? What brought about the change?" Joe explained,

"You see, I hired a man to do all of my worrying for me." "You hired a man to do all of your worrying for you?" "Right," Joe assured him. "Well," Bill mused, "I must say that that is a new wrinkle; tell me, how much does he charge you?" "Seventy thousand shillings a week." "Seventy thousand shillings a week? How could you possibly raise that many shillings each week to pay him?" Joe answered, "That's his worry."

Wouldn't that be great? Don't you wish it were possible for someone to handle your worries for you? Well, the Bible says that it is possible; indeed God encourages His children to cast all their cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7). And what is best of all—it won't cost you anything. He freely offers to take your worries and cures upon Himself. Because He does, and because He frequently has ordered us not to worry, all worry is sin.

We don't often think about worry as sin. But it is sin because constantly in the Scriptures God tells us not to worry. When we disobey His Word, that is sin. Worry is sin.

THE EFFECT OF WORRY

Worry tends to destroy the body. It can put ulcers in the stomach, sap vitality out of living, and drive us to an early death. Worry makes us incapable of handling life's problems. Worry keeps us from assuming responsibilities and engaging in activities in the service of Jesus Christ. Worry is sin.

Perhaps you have not overcome worry. Perhaps you are letting worry keep you from serving Jesus Christ as faithfully as you would like. Perhaps you have even reached the point where you worry about your worry! What you want to know is, what can be done about it? What does the Bible have to say about overcoming this sin? You want to remove this impediment and with joy in

your heart—learn how to cast your cares on God and serve Him more fully. You can; you really can.

Christian counselors are aware of the fact that many Christians are stymied by this problem. Take Phil, for example. Phil was an engineer who came for counseling. He had been given the task of building a large office building. This assignment was larger than any other he had ever handled, and it was full of problems—problems that he allowed to get to him. He began to worry about them. The worry became so powerful a deterrent to action that one day he simply walked off the job.

The contractor and the subcontractors were fighting; the electricians and the carpenters couldn't get along. Deadlines were not being met. All kinds of difficulties arose. He worried about the job day after day, and as he sat there becoming more and more immobile and less able to handle the day-to-day problems with which he was

faced, he himself added to the problems and things went from bad to worse. As he looked at it day after day he finally concluded, "It's just too much; I can't take it." As he saw more and more of the complexities and thought of all of the things that might go wrong, it all finally got to him. Finally one day he laid down his pencil, got up out of his chair, turned around and walked out of the room.

Phil was a Christian. He ended up in our counseling office. As we talked about it, he commented about how destructive worry can be. It could destroy everything that he had worked for. He had been assigned the largest opportunity of his life. He had looked forward to this and worked toward it for years, and he knew that he was capable of doing the job but for one problem—worry. And now it seemed as if worry would destroy it all. This is the sort of thing that worry can do.

WHAT WORRY IS

What is worry? In the Bible the word worry is usually translated "anxiety" or "care." It ought to be translated "worry" so that we understand in contemporary language what God is talking about. The word in the New Testament means "to divide, part, rip or tear apart." The word describes the effects of worry; that is what worry does to us. But worry itself is concern over the future. Worry is concern about something that one can do nothing about, and that he cannot even be sure about. That is why it tears us apart. One who worries looks off into the future. But he finds that as he tries to get hold of it he can't because the future is not here yet. There is no way to grasp it, there is nothing to lay a hand on; there is nothing that can be done. The future is future and the worrier cannot control it; he is not even sure of what it will look like. No one but God knows its true shape. So the worrier worries about what might happen. First, he imagines that matters will be this way.

But then (he thinks), they might be that way. Because he cannot be sure and cannot control the future, he allows it to tear him apart if he dwells on it and becomes overly concerned about it. That is what worry is according to the Bible: it is concern over the unknown and uncontrollable future that tears one apart. "If that is what worry is," you may say, "what can be done about it?"

WHAT TO DO ABOUT WORRY

Listen to Jesus: he spoke plainly about worry. He has the answer. Jesus directs, "Do not be anxious," i.e., don't worry: (Matthew 6:31). But He does not leave the matter there; He goes on to explain how to overcome worry. He concludes a vital discussion concerning anxiety over life's necessities with these tremendously significant words: "Therefore do not be anxious for (worried about) tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself" (Matthew 6:34). You see, Jesus made it clear

that worry focuses upon tomorrow. That is what is wrong with worry; it is the wrong focus on life. Jesus says that it is wrong to let tomorrow's possible problems tear you apart today.

RECOGNIZE TOMORROW FOR...

What It Is

In this passage Christ contrasts two days. He says first, "Do not worry about tomorrow because it will take care of itself." Then He emphasizes what has so often been missed, the fact that each day has enough trouble of its own: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil (trouble or problems) thereof." In these words you have God's answer to worry. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Don't focus your concern upon tomorrow's problems; there are enough to handle today. The two days indeed are contrasted by Christ. Tomorrow is not for us today. It does not belong to us. Tomorrow

belongs to God. Tomorrow is in His hands, and whenever we try to take hold of it, we try to steal what belongs to Him. Sinners always seem to want, in their perversity, what is not theirs to have.

Today belongs to us. God has not given tomorrow to us today. He has given us only today. He strongly forbids us to become concerned about what might happen. That is entirely in His hands. The tragic fact, as we shall see, is that not only do we want what has been forbidden, we also fail to use what has been given to us.

Plan As A Christian

But before we discuss our failure to use today, one point must be made perfectly clear: Christ does not object to the proper kind of planning for tomorrow. He is not opposed to thinking about tomorrow or preparing for tomorrow; what He forbids is worry, the sort of anxiety that tears one to shreds.

There is nothing in Matthew 6 against planning for tomorrow. Nor is there anything against such planning in the book of James. James' words are crucial to an understanding of this matter. James speaks about planning for tomorrow (James 4:13ff) and some have mistakenly understood James' words to indicate that he is against all kinds of planning. But that is exactly what he is not against. Indeed, in that passage James is teaching us how to plan. He does forbid improper planning, it is true, but at the same time he shows how we may plan as God requires. Planning and worry are two entirely different matters, as Jesus and James both point out.

Listen carefully to what James has to say: "Come now, you who say today or tomorrow we shall go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business there and make a profit." James uses the example of a traveling salesman. He continues: "Yet you do not

know what your life will be like tomorrow." "Here you are," he observes, "planning out a whole year's activities, just as if you had control of the future, just as if you knew what the circumstances were going to be, just as if you had a clear picture of that whole year ahead; ridiculous! Worse than that: sinful! You must not do that. Think! You don't even know what tomorrow is going to be like. You may wake up and find out that during the night an earthquake has smashed all of your plans. Everything may change overnight. There are literal earthquakes and personal earthquakes; and they all come so unexpectedly, so suddenly. And not only do you not know what tomorrow will be like, you may not even see tomorrow. You are just a vapour. Like the vapour that appears for a little while and then quickly vanishes away, you are here and gone before you know it. A vapour is the thinnest kind of substance; it is there one moment and – pffft!—it's

gone. So you have no right to make plans that way."

"How else can one plan?" you might wonder. James supplies the answer to that question. "Instead," he says, "here is how you ought to plan (he doesn't say you ought not to plan, but he says instead, there is another way to plan, God's way): you ought to say, "if the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil." Now you see the difference. James says that you must plan (you can't avoid planning), but you must plan without worry. Because he acts as if he holds the future in the palm of his hand, the worrier is arrogant. James says that you must plan in such a way that you lay your plans before God and say, "Lord, to the best of my ability I have tried to sketch out my plans according to Your will as I have learned it in the Bible, but Lord, You are my sovereign God; You are in control of my life; I submit

my plans to You. Your will must be done.”

As a Christian, you know that you do not really have control of your life. Your life belongs to God by creation. But you also have been bought with a price by the death of Jesus Christ, Who gave His life to redeem you from sin and eternal death. In Jesus Christ your very life consists (holds together). Your next breath is in His hands. So you must say, “Lord, this is the plan that I have been able to devise in the light of biblical principles, using the gifts that you have given to me and according to circumstances as best I can read them. Lord, I lay it before You for Your blue penciling.” When you plan that way, submitting your plans to the Lord for revision (or scrapping), joyously accepting the scratched-over page that He may hand back to you, then you plan as James says you should; but only then. As our Saviour prayed, so must we: “Your will, not mine be done.” That is the only way for a Christian to look forward to

tomorrow. Planning that is subject to God’s alterations fits the words of Christ, because it is planning that does not lead to worry. What is there to worry about when you truly put your best plans into the hands of God?

Focus on Your Concern for Today

Now then, let us return to Matthew 6 to discover Jesus’ alternative to worry. What can we do about our concern if, as Jesus says, we must not be worried about tomorrow? That is the question: What do we do with our concern? You cannot (must not) turn off concern. This is where so many Christians have given up hope. They know that it is impossible to be free from concern. “How can I turn off my emotions?” they plead. “It is well enough to forbid me to worry, but how do I stop being concerned?” In the answer to that question lies the key to the whole problem of worry. The key that many have missed in talking about worry is this:

Christ does not ask you to cease being concerned; instead, He tells you to redirect your concern. You must learn how to refocus it. Concern ought not be about tomorrow; if you have laid your best plans in the Lord's hands, you can turn your attention away from tomorrow. You need no longer be concerned about that, but your concern, your efforts, your energies, all that you have now can be poured into today. That is the key that locks the door on worry and opens the door to peace: focus your concern upon today. Concern is right, not wrong. Every emotion that God has put in man is in its right place. It is right when it is properly used according to the commandments and principles of His Word. While every emotion is right per se, every emotion may be used wrongly. Emotional concern is the God-given ability to mobilize the forces for the body and the mind (for the purpose of), focusing upon and utilizing our energies to solve life's problems. But when we

focus upon tomorrow, the chemical and electrical energies of the body are frustrated, because they are poured into the body, but not used. They cannot be released in action, because we cannot act upon the future. Rather than releasing bodily energy through productive activity, worry activates more and more energy that is unused, some of which in chemical form may eat away at the lining of the stomach.

All of your time and your energy and your efforts ought to be burned up during today, which God has given you, not transformed into worry about tomorrow which belongs to Him. And if you focus on today, then you can accomplish something by those efforts. The energy is not wasted but will be used. Unused acids will not eat away at your stomach, and your concern will count for something. When you focus upon your responsibilities today, your energies can be used fruitfully in the service of Jesus Christ to solve

problems rather than worry about them. That is what Jesus is saying: "Do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Take care of today's problems; take care of the troubles that you have to handle now. That is the key to eliminating worry.

Work on Today's Task

Concern for today's problems does not tear you up because you can get a handle on them. You can do something about today's problems. You can do something because they are here; you are dealing with concrete reality. Phil, the engineer who walked off his job because of worry, learned that he could be something about today's problems. First, we sat down and looked at the problem, and sketched out a tentative plan for the whole, subject to the Lord's alterations, and put it into His hands in prayer. Then we looked more closely at the coming week to

determine (if the Lord wills) what he might do this week. Finally we looked at today and asked: "What can be done right now?" Phil was shown that each day God wanted him to look at that day's task and address himself to it. He had been looking at the whole forest and had concluded that it was too dark, too thick, and too large to cut down. Instead, Phil had to learn to say, "By the grace of God those three trees are coming down today." Then, he was to focus and concentrate all of his energy on chopping down those three trees. He must forget the rest. By the end of the day he was to be sure that those three trees were down. The next day he must take down three more and the following day three more, and possibly the next day four. As he continued to chop down, three or four a day, the time came when through the forest, he began to see daylight on the other side. Phil solved the problem of worry by solving each day's problems one day at a time.

If you work faithfully for Christ, doing what you can about the problems that present themselves today, using all of your energies, and all of your strength and buying up all of the opportunities that He has put at your disposal, you can go home tonight, tired—but satisfied. How long has it been since you have had that good feeling; not that tired—dissatisfied, but that tired-but-satisfied feeling at the end of the day, that comes only when you go to bed knowing that you have expended your energies as God has directed you?

There was once a very small fellow who applied for a job as a woodsman out in the Pacific Northwest. He approached the boss (who was a big strapping brute) while he was chatting with a half dozen others of the same sort. The little man said, "I want a job cutting wood." They all began to laugh. "You're too small for this work," the boss replied. But one of the men said, "At least give him a chance to show you what he can do"

(it looked like an opportunity to have some fun). The boss, catching on quickly said, "Okay, come over here." He selected one of the largest, hardest trees he could find. He said, "Let's see what you can do with this." The big bruisers gathered all around. They began to whisper, "I couldn't chop that one down in a day!" Another: "Yeah, his axe'll bounce off and hit him in the head." He lifted his axe and, swish-whooff! Down it came with one clean stroke. The big fellows looked from the tree to the little man in disbelief.

"What's wrong with that tree? Do that again." They took him over to a harder one and a bigger one. Swish-whooff! Down it came in the same way. "Well," said the boss, "you're hired, but first tell me one thing. Where did you learn to cut wood like that?" The little fellow replied, "In the Sahara Forest." "You mean the Sahara Desert, don't you?" The little fellow answered: "That's what they call it now." That's just the

point, isn't it? One tree here, two trees there, one tree here, three trees there; that is Christ's way. Day by day faithfully working for Jesus Christ will soon change the name of the game. That is the answer to worry according to God's Word.

Do Not Allow Problems to Mount Up

Your shoulders and mine are large enough to carry only one day's problems at a time. This stress upon one day at a time is constant throughout the Scriptures. Take a look at one or two passages in which it appears. A good example involves problems that arise between Christian brethren, and this is of particular significance for husbands and wives. To such, the Bible says, "Let not the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). This means in effect, settle each day's problems—that day—before you go to bed. Paul is quoting a nighttime Psalm (Psalm 4) in Ephesians 4. Many people seek counseling

because they have been building bitterness and resentment for years. You can't carry that sort of load for long without discovering that it destroys you physically and every other way. Test yourself. When you see that the toothpaste tube is squeezed in the middle instead of rolled up from the bottom what do you say or think? Is your immediate thought, "That woman (or man) has been at it again"? Or do you say, "That toothpaste tube is squeezed in the middle?" If it is the former, and particularly if you are emotionally upset over it, then something is wrong. You are bringing more than that day's emotion to the problem. It is likely that there are other unsolved problems piled up behind that one.

When Sam sought counseling, he said that he was ready to break up his marriage over such an inconsequential matter. He explained, "My wife always leaves drawers out. Every time I go around a corner,

uhnnh, I get a stomach full of drawer." That is what he said, and we believed him. But this problem was not only that Sam had a stomach full of drawers; it was bigger than that. He had had a stomach full of his wife! There were many other things involved. If their relationship had been right, Sam and his wife could have solved the drawer issue. It is so simple to solve such problems if both parties are really anxious to solve them.

You must have the right attitude: You cannot come to the problem with dozens of other unsolved problems backed up behind. That exerts too much pressure. What can you do about toothpaste tubes? Well, if you can't come up with a better solution, at least you could buy his-and-her tubes.

You could get a pink one and a blue one, or perhaps green mint Crest and a regular, red, white and blue Crest. You can learn to solve many other more complex problems when you do so every day. But the right attitude is basic.

What makes it possible to have the right attitude is keeping accounts current; that is, solving problems each day: "Let not the sun go down on your wrath." Often husbands and wives claim to have sexual problems that basically are not sexual at all. The real problem is that they carry unresolved conflicts into bed at night and yet expect to have good sexual relations. It is difficult for a husband or wife (especially) to make love physically when he (she) doesn't have a good attitude toward the other person. If you haven't solved other problems and you drag all of that baggage into bed with you, it will get in the way. People come for counseling who have let not only the sun, but many moons, go down on their wrath. Just as we cannot bring tomorrow's problems into today, we cannot bring yesterday's problems into today: "Sufficient unto the day are the people thereof."

Look at another passage: "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and

follow me" (Luke 9:23). The Christian life is a daily battle. Daily a Christian must put to death (crucify) his selfish desires and instead follow the will of Christ. Part of that battle is grappling with today's problems. Remember, your shoulders are large enough to carry only one day's problems at a time.

THREE STEPS TO DEFEATING WORRY

Now it is important to plug in Philippians 4:4-9. In this passage Paul gives the formula for solving the problem of worry in three plain steps.

Step One—Pray With Thanksgiving

Beginning at Philippians 4:6, note that he says, "Be worried about nothing." There is never an excuse for worry. Instead, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving you are to let your requests be made known to God. Every word in the New Testament for

prayer is used in that verse. In it Paul speaks of prayer in general, the specific items of concern, earnest entreaty and thanksgiving. In other words, instead of worrying, you must bring both your concern and your concerns about the future to God.

But supplication is not all. If you have missed the startling word in verse six, you have missed the whole point. It is not prayer for solutions to problems (alone) that eliminates worry; rather it is thankful prayer for the problem itself. Notice what Paul says: "Be worried about nothing but in everything in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known." What you are truly thankful for, you do not worry about. Isn't that true? If someone offers to pay a huge hospital bill for you, you stop worrying about the bill. Instead, you are thankful.

"But," you say, "how do I become thankful for problems? How do I become thankful for sickness, for loss of salary or employment, for

adverse turns of events? I can understand how to be thankful for a gift, but how can I be thankful for trouble?" Well, the answer is found in Romans 8:28: "All things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." The problem is a gift; God has said so: "All things work together for good." You must believe this of course.

If you are a genuine Christian, God has brought you to the place where you have recognized your sin before Him. You have confessed that you have broken His commandments and disobeyed His Word and that you have offended a holy and a righteous God. You have been enabled not only to see your sin, but also have come for forgiveness to the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore you have recognized what God did for guilty sinners, and you have personally put your trust in Him. You have repented of your sin and you have cast yourself upon the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for

your sins. You know too that God has promised that with Christ He will freely give you all things (Romans 8:32). You know that He died to save you from your sins. You know also that Jesus Christ so loved you that He has promised to provide all things necessary to meet your needs (Matthew 6:32). You do not have to carry a load of care any longer. He who died for you did not save you only to abandon you to a hostile world to fend the best way that you can. He says to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). The King of all who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of His revelation as King. He works in your life continually. According to His promise He cares for you. Your King has so ordered "all things" for those He has saved that all things (those problems, those troubles, those heartaches, those sorrows, that grief), all things work together for good. You must believe that. Your sovereign

God controls all things and orders them all that they work together for your good. Then even when you don't see how, you must believe Him. When the pain is so great that you can't imagine how it works for good, you can still believe Him. That is what faith is all about (cf. Matthew 6:25-30; especially verse 30). And you can give thanks.

One day John was invited by Fred to visit his tapestry shop where, he was told, beautiful tapestries were on display. As John entered the large display room he was struck by a huge tapestry stretched from the four corners of a balcony up above. His guide remarked, "This is the loveliest tapestry of all." John looked up at it and couldn't believe what he saw; it was a hideous tangled mess of thread. He thought, "That is without a doubt the ugliest tapestry that I ever saw; it is a meaningless web of discolour and disharmony." He said, "Fred, I can't understand why you would hang up an ugly thing like

that." Fred replied, "Wait a minute, John; withhold your judgment." He then led them up the stairs to the balcony. "Now," he asked as they looked over the rail, "what do you think?" Below was the upper side of the tapestry on which was woven the most magnificent pattern John had ever seen. Yet it had been woven with those same threads that from below seemed so disordered. Now he could see the gorgeous pattern of breathtaking beauty.

You now look at the underneath side of life. Often you can't understand God's plan: it looks tangled, garbled, ugly. But some day you shall know as you are known: you will understand the purpose of each dark thread. You will see that it was truly a beautiful and necessary part of the whole pattern, but then you will see the whole in all of its perfection. When you know this, you can thank God for problems, you can pray with thanksgiving instead of worrying.

Step Two—Find God's Solutions to Problems

The second thing that God says in Philippians 4 is to set your mind on positive biblical solutions to life's problems. Notice Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." This is not Norman Vincent Peale; this is Paul writing to the Philippians. This is the Word of God putting the finger on the main problem in life of many worried Christians.

We have already seen one way in which worries focus their minds on the wrong things; they centre upon tomorrow rather than on today. Here is another. Often people who seek counseling are depressed and immobilized. They may have stopped working for God, and they may have given up on life. Frequently they get that way because

when problems pile up, they begin to worry about these in self-pity. Sometimes they wallow deep in it with both feet. Self-pity and worry are kissing cousins. Worriers tend to focus on problems themselves. Some also talk to their friends about their troubles, and as they rehash them they have an opportunity to shake their heads all over again. Paul says that if you want to have peace, if you want to get rid of worry, you must not spend your time thinking or talking about the dark, the dull, and the miserable side of life. That does not mean that you are to become a Christian Scientist who denies the existence of evil. But what it does mean is that after having taken a hard realistic look at each problem, rather than indulging in self-pity, you must then search for God's solution to it. You must find the positive things that you can do; the things that are good and true and right and pure. Every problem has its upper side. Ask questions like, "What good can be brought out of this?" "How

can I handle it to bring honour to God?"

Much advice given to counselors concerning ventilation and talking about problems is quite erroneous. Talk can be one of the most destructive forces in life. The worst you could do if you counsel another is to talk to him about his problems. Take this tip to heart: don't ever talk to anybody about his problems. Does that advice puzzle you? Were you led to think that talk is "therapeutic?" Let's consider that idea for a moment. Take an example. Here is a man who has a problem, and he has been worrying about it. He has been staying in self-pity. You talk to him about his problem. What are you doing? Probably you are giving him some new insights into the depths of this problem; you are probably showing him new angles that had not occurred to him before, etc. He may get a temporary ten-minute (or even ten-hour) relief from getting it off his chest. But when he begins to reflect on the

problem again, he now sees how much larger it has become. You have helped to increase his problem. It was big before; now it is huge. Talking about problems only aggravates the difficulty. Such talk is destructive because it centers on the problem.

You say, "But I thought counselors were supposed to talk about problems." Very well, they are; but not merely to talk about problems. They must learn always to talk through problems to biblical solutions. You must learn to do the same to conquer worry. You must focus upon what God says should be done about problems. You must not focus just upon the problem or how bad it is. A biblical counselor sympathizes, but he knows that real sympathy means helping another to dig through to God's answer. The task of excavating the treasures of the Scriptures to help another to find the answer is harder than just talking over the problem. But this is what is involved in

helping somebody who has problems. If a counselor is unable or unwilling to do this, he should not be a counselor. You see, then, that to stop worrying you need to focus on the positive side, on solutions rather than upon the gravity of the problem.

Step Three – Work On The Problem God's Way

Thirdly, Paul insists, “The things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice, and the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:9). Here is the final step to peace. First comes prayer with thanksgiving. Then a focus upon what can be done about problems. Now Paul says that you must go to work on the problem; you must do the things that God says must be done to solve it. The solution involves work; don’t miss that. The final solution to worry is work. No man who really deals with problems is a worrying man. God has

made our bodies with a two-sided nervous system. You automatically switch one on as you switch the other off. One is the worrying side and the other is the working side. And if you are really working on today’s problem, you cannot worry about what might (but probably won’t) happen tomorrow. You must pour your energies, your efforts, and your whole person into solving today’s problems. Put all of your concern there.

You probably won’t believe this until you see it for yourself, but do you know that the Scriptures indicate that many worrying people are lazy? Well, that is what Jesus Himself said concerning one worrier who was afraid of the future, and sought to be excused from his present responsibilities on the basis of such fear. Instead, Jesus called him lazy. In Matthew 25, Christ told the story of three servants who were given money to invest. When their Lord returned, He inquired about their investments. The one who had been given the

most doubled the amount and the second did the same. But the third confessed that he hid his money in the ground. When the Lord returned he dug it up, brought it to Him and said, "Here is your money, Lord. I buried it because I was afraid" (verse 25). The slave worried about the possible consequences of investing the money. He worried about what might happen if he should lose rather than gain. He worried about what the Lord might say or do. He worried and worried, and worried, and became trapped. He worried and did not work. But his master answered, "you wicked (note, it is sinful to worry), lazy slave...You ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest" (Matthew 25:25, 26), i.e., "At least you should have done the minimal thing you could, but you didn't. You are a lazy slave."

You see, the worrier doesn't have to do anything: indeed he can't do anything

because he is working on tomorrow's problem. But that really boils down to no work at all. You can't do anything about problems that are yet in the future. Worrying is like rocking in a rocking chair; you expend a lot of energy but you don't get anywhere. You say, "Oh my, this is a serious problem! It is really terrible. I've already spent eight hours worrying about it. Oh my, oh my." Worriers then are often (perhaps always) lazy people. Something can always be done about a problem (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13). Even if you can't change a thing outside of yourself, by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit your attitudes toward problems and your behavioural response towards them can be changed. You can change in the situation if nothing else will. There is always something that can be done.

Here is a simple procedure that you might want to use when you find yourself worrying instead of working. Instead of worrying, immediately sit down and

write out the following three questions on a piece of paper, leaving spaces beneath each so that you can fill them in later. You might even have a few of these sheets mimeographed for yourself and put them on your desk or carry them in your pocket. The questions are:

1. What is my problem?
2. What does God want me to do about it?
3. When, where and how should I begin?

Sometimes just defining a problem by forcing yourself to write it out leads to a solution. When it is defined, you must begin immediately to look for the solution in the Scriptures. Look for the positive side. Ask, "How can I handle this problem for the glory of God?" But then, don't settle for the good solutions and noble ideals; get to work. Schedule your actions and put the hardest task first. Don't forget Abraham, who got up early, the Scriptures say, when he was given the heartrending

command to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, whom he loved (Genesis 22:3). There you have God's solution to worry.

ONE REASON FOR WORRY

One final thought: this booklet is written for Christians, but if it should happen that you do not know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, let me say one word to you. While God says that Christians do not have anything to worry about, you have everything to worry about. There is no such promise as that in Romans 8:28 for you. That promise was made exclusively to God's own: "All things work together for good to those who love God." There is no solution to your problems apart from Jesus Christ. There is nothing but unending hell at the end of your road. "Well," you say, "then I'll have plenty of company." That is the way that many joke about hell, I know.

But have you really read what the Bible says about that question? Not only does it describe hell as a lake of fire and brimstone, a place where the worm dies not and a place where people will weep and wail and gnash their teeth in pain, but it also pictures hell (in what are perhaps the most fearful terms of all) a place of utter darkness and loneliness. Persons in hell are like wandering stars, light years away from each other (Jude 13). Think of the loneliness! And worse still, you will wander forever in isolation, in darkness from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). That is the most terrible fact of all. Hell is going to be an extremely lonely place where men, instead of worrying about the future, will anguish in memory of the past. There alone is the future certain; there the terror of an everlasting future apart from God will be the awful certainty.

But perhaps God has been working in your heart to

convict you of your sin. Possibly He has put this pamphlet into your hands because He wants you to put your trust in Jesus Christ. Why don't you do so right now? Don't merely worry: Act! Act in obedience to the Word of God. To those of you who know Him, let me ask, "Do you need to repent of the sin of worry?" Do so, then take each day's problems as they come, and do business that day for Jesus Christ.

Summary of Main Points

- Worry is concern over something we can do nothing about, and it is a sin.
- Rely on God with tomorrow's worries because He alone knows the future.
- God has not given us tomorrow yet. He has only given us today.
- Plan for the future God's way: See James 4:13ff.
- Define your concern, ask God what to do, and put your plan into action.

An Experiment In Disciplining The Mind

This week complete this exercise using the numeric codes listed below the chart.

Day	Negative Temptation	Positive Response	Application of Scripture
Example	4	6	"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word." Psalm 119:9
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

Sunday			
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Negative Temptations

Positive Thoughts

1. Dwelling on false or uncertain things
2. Vengeance, retaliation, resentment
3. Taking unfair advantage
4. Pure, clean and innocent things
5. Love, patience, and forgiveness
6. Prayers of praise and thanksgiving

1. Things that are true or certain
2. Honourable and awe-inspiring things
3. Things that are proper and just
4. Impure and dirty things
5. Hateful or divisive thoughts
6. Shameful or indecent behavior

WEEK

8

The Lordship of Christ

*“But in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord.” 1 Peter 3:15
(R.S.V)*

Somewhere in the writings of Dr. Samuel Shoemaker is found the statement that along the path of Christian growth the believer will at sometime come to a crossroads – a crossroads at which he must make a very important choice—the choice between one of two pains, the pain of a divided loyalty or the pain of a crucified self.

In Dr. J. T. Seamand’s book, *On Tiptoe With Joy*, he shows the difference between the Holy Spirit living in our hearts as a resident but not completely ruling our lives. “Christ may be Saviour, by not Sovereign—living in our hearts, but not completely ruling our lives.”

Watchman Nee in the *The Normal Christian Life* speaks of presenting oneself as the third step to a deeper life in Christ. Referring to Romans 6:13, 19: “Present your members, all your faculties, as belonging wholly to Him.” It a great discovery when a believer discovers he is not his own but Christ’s.

How to be Filled with the Spirit by Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, speaks of giving up the throne of our lives. Building on Romans 12:1, Mr. Bright suggests that we cannot control ourselves and be controlled by the Holy Spirit at the same

time. "Christ cannot be in control as long we are on the throne. As an expression of our will, we must surrender the throne of our lives and begin drawing upon His resources to live a holy and fruitful life."

All of the above references speak to the matter of reverencing Christ as Lord of our lives. The concept of The Lordship of Christ implies:

Attributes of Lordship	Definitions of Attributes
1.	
2.	
3.	

Discussion

Apply the above to the following areas of your life:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Life work plans | 5. Spiritual gifts |
| 2. Material possessions | 6. Sex life |
| 3. Our affections | 7. Physical bodies |
| 4. Parental responsibility | 8. Other areas |

The Big Question

“Is Jesus Lord of Your Life?” (If not, why not?)

Before answering that question, read the following pages, Robert Munger’s “My Heart, Christ’s Home.”

If your answer is YES, praise Him for His Lordship. Live a life of continual surrender to His will and purpose.

If your answer is NO, then TRANSFER THE TITLE of your life to Christ.

1. Desire to make Jesus Lord of every area of your life.
2. Surrender your life to His control.
3. Confess any known sin in your life that would keep Him from having complete control.
4. By faith, accept His forgiveness, cleansing and indwelling presence.
5. Begin drawing on His resources for victorious living.
6. Pray about the decisions you make every day.

My Heart Christ's Home

By Robert Boyd Munger

One evening I invited Jesus Christ into my heart. What an entrance He made! It was not a spectacular emotional thing, but very real. Something happened at the very centre of my life. He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire in the fireplace and banished the chill. He started music where there had been stillness, and He filled the emptiness with His own living, wonderful fellowship. I have never regretted opening the door to Christ and I never will: not into eternity!

In the joy of this newfound relationship, I said to Jesus Christ, "Lord, I want this heart of mine to be Yours. I want to have You settle down here and be perfectly at home. Everything I have belongs to You. Let me show You around."

The first room was the study; the library. In my home this room of the mind

is a very small room with very thick walls, but it is a very important room. In a sense, it is the control room of the house. He entered with me and looked around at the books in the bookcase, the magazines upon the table, the pictures on the wall, and as I followed His gaze, I became uncomfortable.

HANG THIS PICTURE IN YOUR MIND

I turned to Him and said, "Master, I know that this room needs some radical alterations. Will you help me make it what it ought to be, and bring every thought into captivity to You?" "Surely," He said. "First of all, take all the things that you are reading and looking at which are not helpful, pure, good and true, and throw them out. Now put on the empty shelves the books of the Bible, fill the library with Scriptures and

'meditate therein day and night' (Joshua 1:8) As for the pictures on the wall, you will have difficulty controlling these images, but there is an aid." He gave a full-size portrait of Himself. "Hang this centrally," He said, "on the wall of your mind."

I did so, and I have discovered through the years that when my attention is centred upon Christ Himself, His purity and power cause impure imaginings to retreat. So He has helped me to bring thoughts into captivity.

From the study we went into the dining room, the room of appetites and desires. I spend a good deal of time here and put forth much effort in satisfying my wants. I said to Him "This is a very commodious room, I am quite sure you will be pleased with what we serve." He seated Himself at the table with me and asked, "What is the menu for dinner?" "Well", I said, "My favorite dishes: old bones, corn husks, sour garbage, leeks, onions, and garlic right out of Egypt." These

were the things I liked – worldly fare.

When the food was placed before Him, He said nothing, but I observed that He did not eat it. I said to Him, "Master, You don't care for this food? What is the trouble?" He answered, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of... If you want food that really satisfies, seek the will of the Father, and seek to please Me. That food will satisfy you." What flavour! What nourishment and vitality it gives to the soul! There is no food like it in all the world. It alone satisfies.

WONDERFUL HOURS IN THIS ROOM

From the dining room we walked into the drawing room. This room was intimate and comfortable. I like it. It had a fireplace, upholstered chairs, a sofa, and a quiet atmosphere. He said, "This is indeed a delightful room. Let us come here often. It is secluded and quiet, and we can fellowship together."

Well, as a young Christian I was thrilled. I could not think of anything I would rather do than have a few minutes apart with Christ in intimate fellowship. He promised, "I will be here early every morning. Meet me here, and we will start the day together."

So, morning after morning, I would come downstairs to the drawing room, or "withdrawing room", as I like to think of it. He would take a book of the Bible from the shelf. We would open it and read together. He would tell me of its richness and unfold to me its truths. My heart warmed as He revealed the love and the grace He had toward me. These were wonderful hours.

Little by little, under the pressure of many responsibilities, the time began to be shortened. Why, I don't know, but I thought I was too busy to spend time with Christ. This was not intentional, you understand. It just happened that way. Finally, not only was the time shortened, but I began to

miss a day now and then. I would miss it two days in a row and often times more.

I remember one morning when I was rushing downstairs, eager to be on my way that I passed the drawing room and noticed the door was open a little. Looking in I saw a fire in the fireplace and the Master sitting there. Suddenly in dismay I thought to myself, "He is my guest. I invited Him into my heart! He has come and yet I am neglecting Him." With a downcast glance, I said, "Blessed Master, forgive me. Have you been here all these mornings?" "Yes," He said, "I told you I would be here every morning to meet with you. Remember, I love you. I have redeemed you at a great cost. I desire your fellowship. Even if you cannot keep the quiet time for your own sake, do it for mine."

The truth that Christ desires my companionship, that He wants me to be with Him and waits for me, has done more to transform my quiet time with God than any

other single factor. Don't let Christ wait alone in the drawing room of your heart, but every day find time, when, with your Bible and in prayer, you may have fellowship with Him.

TOYS FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

Before long, He asked, "Do you have a workshop in your home?" Down in the basement of the home of my heart I had a bench and some equipment, but I was not doing much with it. Once in a while I would go down and fuss around with a few little gadgets, but I wasn't producing anything substantial.

I led Him down there. He looked over the workbench and said, "Well, this is quite well furnished. What are you producing with your life for the Kingdom of God?" He looked at one or two little toys that I had thrown together on the bench. He held one up to me and said, "Are these little toys all that you are producing in your Christian life?"

"Well", I said, "Lord, I know it isn't much and I really want to do more, but after all, I don't seem to have strength or skill to do more."

"Would you like to be better?" He asked. "Certainly", I replied. "All right. Let me have your hands. Now relax in me and let my Spirit work through you. I know that you are clumsy and awkward, but the Holy Spirit is the Master Workman, and if He controls your hands and your heart, He will work through you." Stepping around behind me and putting His great, strong hands under mine, holding the tools in His skilled fingers, He began to work through me. The more I relaxed and trusted Him, the more He was able to do with my life.

SORRY ABOUT THE PLAY ROOM

He asked if I had a play room. I was hoping He wouldn't ask about this. There were certain associations and friendships, activities, and amusements

that I wanted to keep for myself. One evening when I was leaving to join some college companions, He stopped me with a glance and asked, "Are you going out this evening?" I replied "Yes." "Good", He said, "I would like to go with you." I answered Him rather awkwardly, "I don't think, Lord Jesus, that you would really want to go with me. Let's go out tomorrow night. Tomorrow night we will go to prayer meeting, but tonight I have another appointment." "I'm sorry," He said, "I thought that when I came into your home, we were going to do everything together, to be partners. I want you to know that I am willing to go with you." "Well", I mumbled, slipping out the door, "we will go someplace tomorrow night."

That evening I spent some miserable hours. I felt wretched. What kind of friend was I to Christ when I was deliberately leaving Him out of my associations, doing and going places that

I knew very well He would not enjoy.

When I returned that evening, there was light in His room, and I went up to talk it over with Him. I said, "Lord, I have learned my lesson. I cannot have a good time without you. We will do everything together." Then we went down into the rumpus room of the house and He transformed it. He brought new friends into my life, new satisfactions, new and lasting joys. Laughter and music have been ringing through the house ever since.

SOMETHING IS DEAD IN THIS HOUSE

One day I found Him waiting for me at the door. There was an arresting look in His eye, and He said to me as I entered, "There is a peculiar odour in the house. Something is dead around here. It's upstairs. I'm sure it is in the hall closet. As soon as He said the words, I knew what He was talking about.

Yes, there was a small hall closet up there on the

landing, just a few feet square. In that closet, behind lock and key, I had one or two little personal things that I did not want Christ to see. I know they were dead and rotting things, and I wanted them for myself and I was afraid to admit they were there.

I went up with Him, and as we mounted the stairs the odour became stronger and stronger. He pointed to the door. I was angry. That's the only way I can put it. I had given Him access to the library, the dining room, the drawing room, the workshop, the rumpus room, and now He was asking me about the little two-by-four closet. I said inwardly, "This is too much, I am not going to give Him the key."

Said He, reading my thoughts, "If you think I'm going to stay up here on the second floor with this odour, you are mistaken. I will go out on the porch."

I saw Him start down the stairs. My resistance collapsed. When one comes to know and love Christ, the

worst thing that can happen is to sense His companionship withdrawing.

I had to surrender. "I'll give You the key." "Authorize me to take care of that closet and I will."

TAKE OVER THE WHOLE MANAGEMENT

With trembling finger I passed the key to Him. He took it, walked over to the door, opened it, entered, took out all the things which were smelling and threw them away. Then He cleaned the closet and painted it. It was done in a moment's time. Oh, what victory and release to have these dead things out of my life.

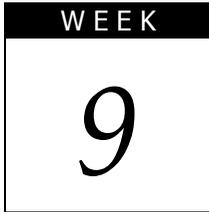
A thought came to me. "Lord, is there any chance that You would take over the management of the whole house and operate it for me as You did that closet? Would you take the responsibility to keep my life what it ought to be?"

His face lit up as He replied, "Certainly, that is what I

want to do. You cannot be a victorious Christian in your own strength. Let me do it through you and for you. That is the way. "But," He added slowly, "I am just a guest. I have no authority to proceed, since the property is not mine."

Dropping to my knees, I said, "Lord, You have been a guest and I have been the host. From now on I am going to be the servant. You are going to be the Lord." Running as fast as I could to the strongbox, I took out the title deed to the house describing its properties, assets, and liabilities. I eagerly signed the house over to Him alone for time and eternity. "Here" I said. "Here it is, all that I am and have, forever. Now you run the house. I'll just remain with You as a servant and friend."

Things are different since Jesus Christ has settled down and has made His home in my heart.



Check-Up and Evaluation

The Growth Process (Hebrews 5:12-6:3)

1. Master the foundational truths. (5:12,6:1-2)
2. Develop biblical skills. (5:13)
3. Train (discipline) your spiritual senses by constant use. (5:14)
4. Obey the Word ("solid food") in your own life. (5:14)
5. Teach and minister to others. (5:12)

Discussion

Rate the three most helpful areas with the most helpful indicated by a 1, and next helpful by 2, and the third helpful by 3. Write a 2 or 3 sentence summary statement of how each area helped you.

_____ THE BIBLE: AN OVERVIEW

_____ DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

_____ DEVELOPING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

_____ MY COMMITMENT TO MY CHURCH

_____ THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

_____ DEALING WITH TEMPTATION

_____ DISCIPLINING THE MIND

_____ THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

1 John

*(Taken from **The International Inductive Study Bible** compiled by Kay Arthur and staff of Precept Ministries)*

As a boy, John thought of Jesus as just a cousin, one of the sons of Aunt Mary, his mother Salome's sister. Little did he realize that someday he would be chosen by God to be one of His twelve apostles.

He had been known as a "son of thunder" (Mark 3:17); but a transformation had taken place. Now he was called "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

Even though John's name is not mentioned in this epistle, there is much evidence that he is the author. John had been with Jesus. He had seen Him, heard Him, touched Him, and been filled with His love. This is evident as you hear John's fatherly heart for those who belong to Jesus. He loves the fathers, the young men, the dear children. Yet as he writes about the antichrists and deceivers, you can hear the rumble of thunder in the background.

We don't know when John wrote this first epistle. It may have been between A.D. 85 and 95, when he was in Ephesus before being exiled to the Isle of Patmos. Love—and thunder—compelled him to write. He had to protect his children from a deception that could darken their understanding if they were not warned about the brewing storm of gnosticism—a teaching which could keep them from having fellowship with him (1 John 1:3).

Week 1

If you want to handle a passage of Scripture accurately you must always interpret it in the light of its context. Context means that which goes "with" the "text." Context must always rule when it comes to interpretation. Identifying the author's purpose for writing will help you discern the context of a passage. What the author says, he says in the light of his purpose for writing.

- ❑ In this particular letter the author tells us his purpose in seven different verses: 1:4; 2:1, 12-14, 21, and 26. Then in 1 John 5:13 he concludes by summarizing his purpose for writing. Read these verses and write down his reasons for writing on the chart *I am Writing to You*.
- ❑ Then read 1 John 5:13 and write down on the *Observations Chart* the author's purpose for writing.

Week 2

- ❑ Read through the whole book at one time.
- ❑ One of the major heresies the church would face was gnosticism. Gnosticism wasn't in full bloom in John's time, but the seeds had been sown. Understanding gnosticism will help you better understand why John concentrated on the truths contained in his writing. Do some research to find out what Gnostics believe(d).

Week 2

- ❑ Mark each of the key words (with their synonyms and pronouns) and write down how many times they are used throughout the whole book. This will help you see the main themes of 1 John.
- ❑ List the truths you learn about each key word from the text on the chart.

Week 3

- ❑ Read 1 John 1 and 2.
- ❑ Chart paragraph divisions and give each paragraph a title.

Week 4

- Read 1 John 3 and 4 this week.
- Chart paragraph divisions and give each paragraph a title.

Week 5

- Read 1 John 5 this week.
- Chart paragraph divisions and give each paragraph a title.

Week 6

- John uses a number of contrasts in order to make his point: light/darkness; children of God/children of the devil; etc. Watch for these contrasts, and write down what you learn from them.

Week 7

- 1 John was written "in order that you may know." Trace throughout 1 John the repeated use of the word "know" and write down what you learn from the text on the *What I Can Know and How I Can Know It* chart.
- Watch the matters that John deals with in respect to wrong behaviour or wrong belief.

Week 8

- Go back through 1 John and write down everything you learn about God, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit.

Week 9

Think about these questions and write down your thoughts.

- ❑ Based on the criteria given in 1 John, how can you know whether or not you have eternal life?
- ❑ What have you learned about sin from 1 John? Do you practice sin or righteousness?
- ❑ Do you love the things of the world? Are you caught up in the pride of life, in boasting, or in desiring whatever your eyes see?
- ❑ According to 1 John 3, what are you to do when your heart condemns you?
- ❑ Does your belief about Jesus Christ match what 1 John teaches about Him?

1 John

Theme of 1 John:

Author:	Segment Divisions	Chapter and Paragraph Themes
Date:		1
Purpose:		2
Key Words: know love fellowship		3
		4
		5

Truths about the Key Words

Know	Love	Fellowship

Dear _____

In my Discipleship Training 2 class we have been studying "Our Spiritual Gifts." After prayerful consideration, I have decided what I perceive are my gifts. Now, I'm looking for comments from others who know me well.

Would you take the time to read over the list below and tick the gift you think I have? I value your opinion and will use it toward confirming my gifts for fruitful service. As you comment at the bottom of the page, please be open and honest with me. Thanks for your help.

- ❑ Prophesying – the ability to interpret the authoritative Word of God and explain its truth so that it becomes clear, living and powerful. 1 Corinthians 14:3 states its purpose is "to strengthen, to encourage and to comfort." Not for preachers only. Read also 2 Peter 1:9.
- ❑ Serving – also means "helps" – the ability to demonstrate love by meeting the practical needs of others. Greek word from which we get "deacon." Often demonstrated in the church by communion stewards, ushers, hostesses, etc. Read Acts 6:1-4.
- ❑ Teaching – the ability to study and interpret God's Word in order to present it to others in a clear, interesting, and helpful way.
- ❑ Exhorting – the ability to encourage, strengthen, and lift up another by way of personal counsel. The ability to

inspire others to action, awaken renewed spiritual interest, or help those who are in trouble.

- Giving – the ability to earn and give money or things for the advancement of God’s work or the meeting of individual needs.
- Ruling – “leading,” “one who stands in front.” The ability to lead in matters of church organization and government. To direct and organize the larger group of believers so that each one is released to perform his ministry without problems of disorganization.
- Showing mercy – (empathizing) the ability to identify with and comfort those who are in distress.

COMMENTS: Can you give any examples or share any statements which lead you to your choices? You may write on the back of this sheet.

Pastor

Teacher

Close Friend

Spouse

Discipler

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Close Friend

Spouse

Discipler

Accountability

Week _____

Name: _____

Exercised: M T W T F S S
(circle the days)

Scripture memory: Yes No
Prayer Partner Yes No

Day 1	Time began: _____ Time Ended: _____ Scripture: _____ <i>Application:</i>
Day 2	Time began: _____ Time Ended: _____ Scripture: _____ <i>Application:</i>
Day 3	Time began: _____ Time Ended: _____ Scripture: _____ <i>Application:</i>
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Discipler's comments:

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