

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

UNIT I Key 7 RE-BUILDING

SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLE: Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things (Philippians 4:8).

Change begins on the inside and works outward. The Holy Spirit, Who works through the Word of God, plants faith in our hearts. He moves us to repentance, we receive God's mercy in Christ, and our self-will changes. We become willing to repent of anything and everything that stands between us and God. He is holy, sovereign, and just; and in Christ He becomes totally approachable.

When change has begun on the inside and worked outward, and it has become visible, how does it look? We begin to raise certain questions. How do we live our daily lives? What personal habits do we need to change? How do we speak to other people? How do we relate to our families, friends, acquaintances, strangers, the same sex, or the opposite sex? How do we respond to hostility and rejection? How do we use our time? Doing what, or with whom? How do we present ourselves? How do we spend our money or handle material possessions? How do we treat our bodies? Do we need to change our eating, drinking, sleeping, and exercise habits?

If we have caused problems, change includes working to solve them. If we have lived unhealthy lifestyles, we need to make changes that build healthier bodies. If we have hurt others, we need to explore ways to make amends where possible. If we contributed to broken relationships, we need to seek ways to improve those relationships. If we owe debts, we need to commit ourselves to paying them off. If we have rebelled against self-discipline and demanded instant gratification of our desires, we need to develop habits

that might be uncomfortable and frustrating at first but will pay off dividends in the long run.

When we surrender to God's will, our priorities change under His direction. We receive only 24 hours in a day and a limited amount of energy. How do we live so that we make the best use of our time and energy, and how do we practice self-care?

The more we surrender, the more we receive answers to these questions. Obviously we need to avoid people and situations that tempt us. Clearly we need to avoid sinful actions and speech. But we cannot live life in a vacuum, and something needs to replace the old habits.

This may be a time in your life to develop hidden talents and learn new things for which you never before had the time and energy. This may be the time to explore new interests. This may be the time to reach out for healthy relationships that are based on shared interests and common goals rather than on sexual activity.

When we get our priorities in order, we are building our self-esteem. We do not build self-esteem by giving into whatever temptation we feel at the moment. Our self-esteem and identities need to first be based on God's esteem of us. When we realize who we are in Christ – pardoned sinners – we become willing to obey God's will. We can then build self-esteem by willingly obeying God's will, because of love and gratitude for how much He has given us. If our lives of dignity and service gain us approval from others, that is an additional blessing, but approval from others is not what motivates us. Knowing that God approves our work becomes a source of our joy.

We are called to be good stewards of what God has given us. We need to be good stewards of ourselves and our surroundings. We need to learn to balance service to others with care of ourselves.

Everyone has spiritual gifts and a calling from God. There are paper-and-pencil tests that help one discover one's spiritual gifts. Such tests often affirm what people already sense in themselves. When surrender of self-will becomes an on-going habit, gradually one becomes more aware of one's gifts and calling. God has a special job that only you are equipped to fill. All your life experiences, both good and bad, have prepared you for it.

SCRIPTURE: Write what each of these verses or passages means to you and your situation.

Jeremiah 18:1-4

II Timothy 2:21

Luke 11:14-26

Matthew 25:14-29

STUDY GUIDE (Feel free to write on the backside or use additional paper if necessary.)

1. On a scale of 1-10, how much rebuilding have you done already (1 is the lowest, 10 is the highest)?
2. List the things you still need to do to rebuild.

3. Which ones do you think will give you the most trouble, and why?

4. What are the things that help to make you clean on the inside (I Peter 1:2)?

5. What always makes the battle difficult (Ephesians 6:12)?

6. How do we know that we can overcome Satan (John 12:31 & Luke 22:31)?

7. What have you learned about Re-building?

8. On a scale of 1-10, how victorious have you been lately? Please explain your answer.
(Victory is measured by how much you have overcome temptation.)

9. On a scale of 1-10, how much memory work have you done?

10. Did you use any memorized Scripture to battle temptations lately? What was the result?

11. How is your spiritual life in general, how are your private devotions, and how are things at your church/fellowship group?

12. Is there anything special you would like to talk about?

Plan of Action: (Read the handout Plan of Action and make plans as specific as possible.)