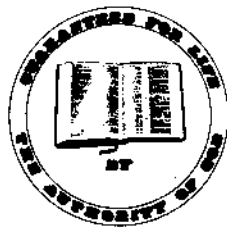


DESIGN FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING



Your Prayer Partner is...



THIS PERSON/COUPLE IS AN ALUMNUS OF THE

Design For Successful Living Seminar

BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN
THEIR LIFE, THEY HAVE CHOSEN TO PRAY
FOR YOU FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE SPECIFIC
OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR IN YOUR LIFE.

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Reproaches

Developing a dislike or contempt for a person or group of people.

1. Who has wronged someone you like.
2. Because of theological prejudice.
3. Because of hearsay or inferences.
4. Who's characteristics remind you of someone you dislike.

The real problem

1. It is a sin against God rather than the individual.
2. The sin is failure to love the person as God wants him loved.

1. "Love" for "hate"
2. "Blessing" for "cursing"
3. "Prayer" for "being used"
4. "Doing Good" for "Evil"

"Steps to correct"

1. Confess the reproach to God.
2. Exchange God's response for old attitudes.
3. Reject the temptation to believe your first negative impressions about another person.

4. Refuse to listen to others with negative attitudes,

Help them forgive.

Help them make restitution.

**PREREQUISITES
FOR A
SUCCESSFUL
PERSON**

THE SUCCESSFUL PERSON:

A UNIQUE DESIGN	PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY	DEVELOPING MEEKNESS	A FORGIVING SPIRIT	RENEWING YOUR MIND	DEVELOPING TRANSPARENCY	DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL APPETITE	STANDING ALONE
<p>Realize personal worth by <u>discerning God's unique design.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge any resentment toward God for the way He made you. 2. Ask for forgiveness. 3. Based on His Word, thank Him for the way He has made us thus far. 4. Purpose to become the person God wants you to be. 5. Concentrate on developing God's inward ideal. 6. Begin to help others and share with them what God has done for you. <p>Ps. 139:14-16 Eph. 2:10</p>	<p>Stabilize one's personal faith by a broken will and mature attitudes in responding to God's <u>principle of authority.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge that God is bigger than your authority. (Prov. 21:1) 2. Differentiate position from personality. 3. Understand God's use of chain-of-command in developing mature attitudes. 4. Discern the basic intentions of those in authority. 5. Learn to develop creative alternatives. 6. Develop confidence in God's ability to change decisions and commands. <p>Rom. 13:1-2 Eph. 6:1-3</p>	<p>Allow God to work supernaturally by <u>yielding ownership of all property and possessions to Him.</u></p> <p><u>Overcoming Anger:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discern the denied rights which caused you to become angry. 2. Commit each right to Jesus Christ. 3. Realize that God will test "His rights". 4. Learn God's response to the loss of rights. <p><u>Overcoming Worry:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yield all you possess to Him. Therefore He's primarily responsible. 2. He will only allow situations to occur which will produce greater future benefits than present losses. 3. Thank God ahead of time for the situations which occur beyond your control. <p>Phil. 2:5-9 (Living Letters)</p>	<p>Turn <u>wounds and offenses</u> into an opportunity to communicate the love of Christ.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge your bitterness to God. 2. List the faults of those who have wronged you. 3. Fully forgive them for their offenses. <p>-----</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand God's purpose for wounds and offenses. 2. Thank God for the source of the wound and offense. 3. If the offense stirred up a negative trait, acknowledge. 4. If I'm not responsible for the offense, I'm free to reflect God's qualities. <p>1 Pet. 2:19-25</p>	<p>Gaining a <u>pure heart</u> by allowing Scripture into expression of your thoughts and emotions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set aside a specific time each week to memorize. 2. Select a key section of Scripture related to personal needs. 3. Write the verses memorized on a card. 4. For next 3 days during your spare thought time, repeat the verses from memory. 5. For the last three days begin to personalize the verses by quoting them in the first person singular. 6. Exchange your thoughts for God's thoughts. Allow His Word to renew your mind. <p>Josh. 1:8 Ps. 1:2-3</p>	<p>Develop the quality of transparency by gaining and maintaining a <u>clear conscience</u> toward others and God.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List the wrongs you've done toward another in order of importance. 2. Overcome rationalizations that hinder you from making things right. 3. Be fully confident that God's solutions done God's way will always get His response. 4. Comprehend how your wrongs have affected the other person's life. 5. Know the right wording and communicate your sincerity in asking forgiveness. 6. Ask forgiveness of each one wronged. 7. Be ready to make any future wrongs right as soon as possible. <p>1 Tim. 1:5, 18-19</p>	<p>Discover purpose and fulfillment in life by <u>obeying the impulses of the Holy Spirit</u> through Scripture and prayer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept God's Word as basis for my authority of how to live. 2. Have a systematic plan to read and study God's Word. 3. Know how to spend a day in the Word. <p><u>*Developing Sensitivity</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience the value of prayer and fasting. <p>John 15:7</p>	<p>Overcome the fear of people by learning to <u>stand alone</u> on the side of right.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Realize that God's ways are a superior way of life. 2. Be willing to verbally identify with Jesus Christ whenever I am tempted to compromise. 3. Recognize that key to right friends is to be willing to have right kind of enemies. 4. Realize that anyone who won't accept me with my commitment to Christ will reject me and thus were "using" me. <p>Luke 6:22-23</p>

AN
INTRODUCTION

THE SUCCESSFUL LIFE

☐ *Success in the Christian life is not an accident. It is a direct result of living in harmony with the basic principles of life set forth in Scripture.*

- JESUS CHRIST'S FIRST STAFF MEETING

The underlying principles to Jesus Christ's first words to his disciples are the keys to becoming a successful person. The average person today is not living nor experiencing a meaningful and purposeful life. Instead, there are conflicts in practically every relationship of his life (e.g. God, parents, partner, friends, employer, children).

- A HAPPY & SUCCESSFUL LIFE IS POSSIBLE !

Jesus said, *"I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."* John 10:10b

He also said, *"Whoso drinketh of the water that I give him, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water."*
John 4:4

David said of the Lord, *"Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."* Acts 2:28

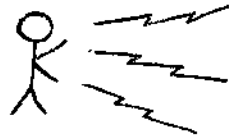
- AN "INWARD IDEAL"

Real outward success in a person's life is a by-product of inner achievement. God is seeking to develop an "inward ideal" that is comprised of eight qualities. As an individual applies the basic principles of Scripture to his life, these qualities are developed from within. The result is a transformed life that reflects the love of Jesus Christ in his words, attitudes and actions.

RELATIVE OR ABSOLUTE?

Jesus Christ wants to relive His life all over again through us. To the degree that we respond to God, people and the circumstances around us in the same way Jesus Christ would have responded to them, we become more like Him!

THE BASIC ISSUE IS NOT WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME BUT HOW I RESPOND TO WHAT GOD ALREADY KNEW WOULD HAPPEN TO ME.



If I react to my situations based on how I think or how I feel



the result is conflicts.



If I respond to the situation from God's point of view



the result is a conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8: 28 - 29:

"For we know that all things work together for the good to them who love God . . .

. . . that we might be conformed to the image of His Son."

Jesus Christ called his disciples to a NEW WAY OF LIFE in which the underlying principles of the Beatitudes are NOT OPTIONAL but are ABSOLUTE. This is true for every individual who will follow Him and who wants to be completely successful as a Christian!

A MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

☐ MAN CAN ONLY GIVE PHYSICAL LIFE -

BUT ONLY GOD CAN GIVE SPIRITUAL LIFE !

It is easy to purpose to follow Jesus Christ as a way of life as long as it is convenient and all goes well. But it is entirely another matter when, to acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord (boss) of my life means to obey Him regardless of the circumstances. This cannot be done without the power of God in my life.

☐ GOD'S PLAN :

*We aren't saved from sin's grasp
by knowing (intellectual knowledge)
the commandments of God, because
we can't and don't keep them . . .*

*But God put into effect a different plan
to save us. He sent His own Son in a human
body like ours - except that ours is sinful -
and destroyed sin's control over us by giving
Himself as a sacrifice for sins.*

*So now we can obey God's laws if we follow
after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey
the old evil nature within us.*

Romans 8:3,4 (Living Bible)

TWO BIRTHS!

PHYSICAL

A person is physically born into this world

SPIRITUAL

he personally receives the Spirit of God into his spirit to take control of his life.

BUT he is not spiritually born until

Jesus replied, "With all the earnestness I possess I tell you this: Unless you are born again, you can never get into the Kingdom of God."
John 3:3 (Living Bible)

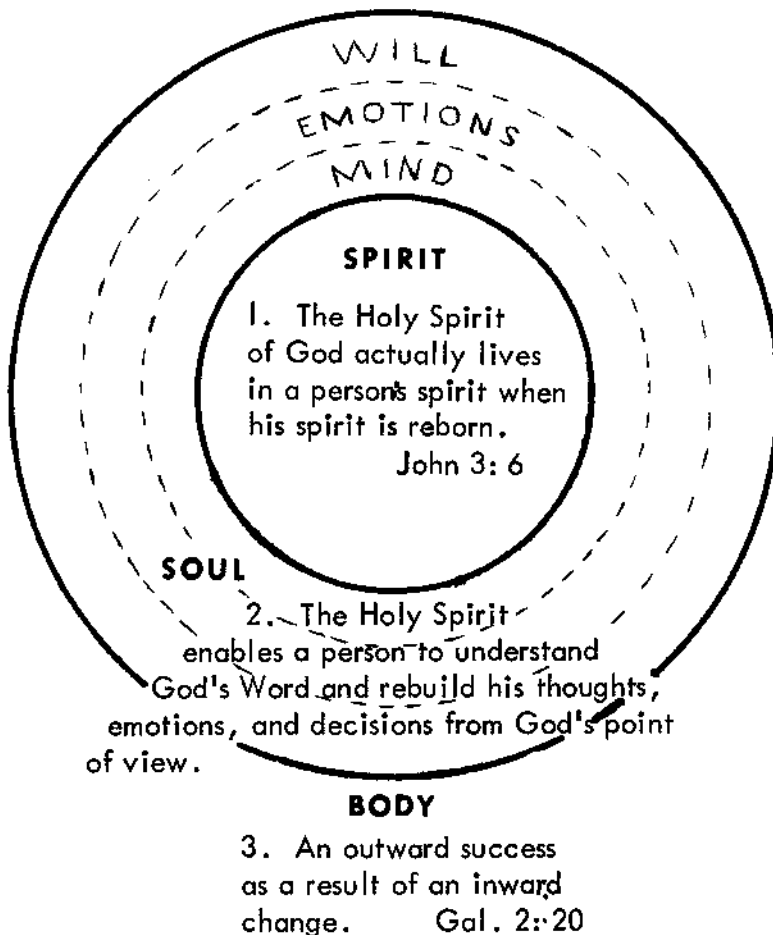
EACH PERSON MUST MAKE A DECISION:

"To as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God."
John 1:12

Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives (eternal) life, the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

John 6: 63

A NEW BIRTH!



"MAN CAN ONLY REPRODUCE HUMAN LIFE
but
THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES NEW LIFE FROM HEAVEN."
John 3: 6 (Living Bible)

Related Scriptures:

1. Spirit - Rom. 8:16; Prov. 20:27; John 4:24; I Cor. 15:45; Heb. 4:12; Gal. 5:16-18
2. Soul - Matt. 11:29; I Peter 4:19; Phil. 2:5-8; Is. 55:8-11
3. Body - Rom. 8:11; I Cor. 6:20; II Cor. 4:10; Phil 1:20-21; Rom. 12:1-2

THREE WORLDS

☐ A person's life is composed of three parts: a spirit (spiritual), soul (psychological), and body (physical). These operate on three independent systems, yet are interrelated and have a significant relationship to one another.

GOD'S ORDER:

- A relationship with Him in which His Word and principles are the foundation and basis for living.
- The mind, emotions and will are related to God's thought patterns thus rebuilding our minds, emotions and will to think His thoughts, refocus on His emotions and make decisions based on His Word.
- The physical is brought into under control of the spiritual principles; the result is a proper balance and freedom which enables the person to live in harmony with God's principles. The actions and attitudes communicate inner motivation of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:21,22)

SPIRIT	Sensitivity to truth SPIRITUAL SYSTEM "FAITH" Conscience
SOUL	Mind Emotions Will PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEM "LOGIC"
BODY	Sight Sound Taste Touch Smell NERVOUS SYSTEM "SENSES"

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole Spirit, and (whole) Soul, and (whole) Body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23

VIOLATING GOD'S ORDER

Most people are unaware there is a force within each human being which God calls a "LOWER NATURE." To ignore the God-shaped vacuum within that causes a man to search for meaning and purpose, and to seek instead to fill the life with "what I want" or to react to life because this is "what I think," or "how I feel," will result in experiencing the consequences of violating God's spiritual order. These frustrations are clearly described by the Apostle Paul in Romans 7:15-25.

VISIBLE SYMPTOMS

RESULTING CONFLICTS

<p>SPIRIT</p>	<p>A "facade" of spirituality, or the rejection of God and a spiritual world.</p> <p>"LAW OF GOD"</p>	<p>Pride/ critical spirit Anger/ anxious spirit Resentments/bitter spirit Moral impurity/ sensual spirit Guilt/ condemning spirit Apathetic spirit Lack of meaningful prayer life Lack of purpose in life Compromise, fear</p>
<p>SOUL (Mind, Will and Emotions)</p>	<p>A facade of intellectualism, approaching issues of life on a philosophical basis.</p> <p>"LAW OF THE MIND"</p>	<p>The natural inclinations are the opposite of the spiritual principles. When the above principles are violated, an inner tension and turmoil result. Often times this will result in a "nervous breakdown."</p>
<p>BODY</p>	<p>Physical</p> <p>"LAW IN MY MEMBERS"</p>	<p>The physical and sensual drives dominate the individual. He is thus controlled by his sensual drives in his "lower nature."</p>

VIOLATED LAWS

A person naturally gives much attention to the physical and psychological areas of his life. However, the most essential aspect of a man, his spiritual life, has been neglected. Before he realizes it, a deterioration of his spiritual life results in broken lives, marriages and families.

CONSEQUENCES WHEN PHYSICAL LAWS ARE VIOLATED :

There are physical laws which govern the universe as well as the physical life of the individual.

IT MATTERS NOT
WHETHER YOU
KNOW THEM, THE
CONSEQUENCES
ARE THE SAME !

Whether a person has a degree in physics or knows nothing of the law of gravity, if he willfully or accidentally violates gravity from the top of a 20 story building, the same consequences result.

In the same manner, if a person neglects to feed his body food, the result will be illness; if he continues to neglect the physical law that a body needs food, death will be the consequence.

CONSEQUENCES WHEN PSYCHOLOGICAL LAWS ARE VIOLATED :

THERE IS MORE
THAN ONE LOGICAL
WAY TO DEAL WITH
A SUBJECT OR
SITUATION.

A person has basic intellectual and emotional needs as well as the ability to make the right decisions for a successful life. The mind calls for a "logical" approach and explanation in relating to life. Though a specific approach and conclusion may seem right at the time when confronted with a situation, if the insight is contrary to God's solution to the problem the ultimate results will manifest themselves in mental confusion, emotional disorders, wrong decisions.


AN EXAMPLE OF WRONG LOGIC evidenced in many lives: I reason, "God made everything. He has allowed everything to happen. There are some things that I wish hadn't happened to me. Therefore, I can't trust God with my whole life."

🔴 CONSEQUENCES WHEN SPIRITUAL LAWS ARE VIOLATED :

A foundational principle of God's Word is that an individual is personally responsible for his thoughts, attitudes and actions. Society today has deceived a person into thinking that the "problems" he is experiencing are the fault of others who were the "cause" of the difficulty. Society's assumption is that if the person understands (mentally) why he is acting the way he is then hopefully he will be able to cope emotionally with the situation and make a better decision next time.


A person will say "I know (intellectually) I'm bitter, but I can't get rid of it !" The Scriptures point out - "a wounded spirit, who can bear it ?"

THE FOLLOWING PAGES EXPLAIN AND ILLUSTRATE THE BASIC SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH A SUCCESSFUL LIFE IS BUILT SO THAT WE MIGHT ACCOMPLISH OUR ULTIMATE GOAL:



"We are asking God THAT YOU MAY SEE THINGS, AS IT WERE, FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW by being given spiritual insight and understanding. We also pray that your outward lives, which men see, may bring credit to your master's name, and that you may bring joy to his heart by bearing genuine Christian fruit, and that your knowledge of God may grow yet deeper. As you live this new life, we pray that you will be strengthened from God's boundless resources, so that you will find yourselves able to pass through any experience and endure it with joy. You will even be able to thank God in the midst of pain and distress because you are privileged to share the lot of those who are living in the light."

Colossians 1: 9-13 (Phillips)



**THE
BEATITUDES**

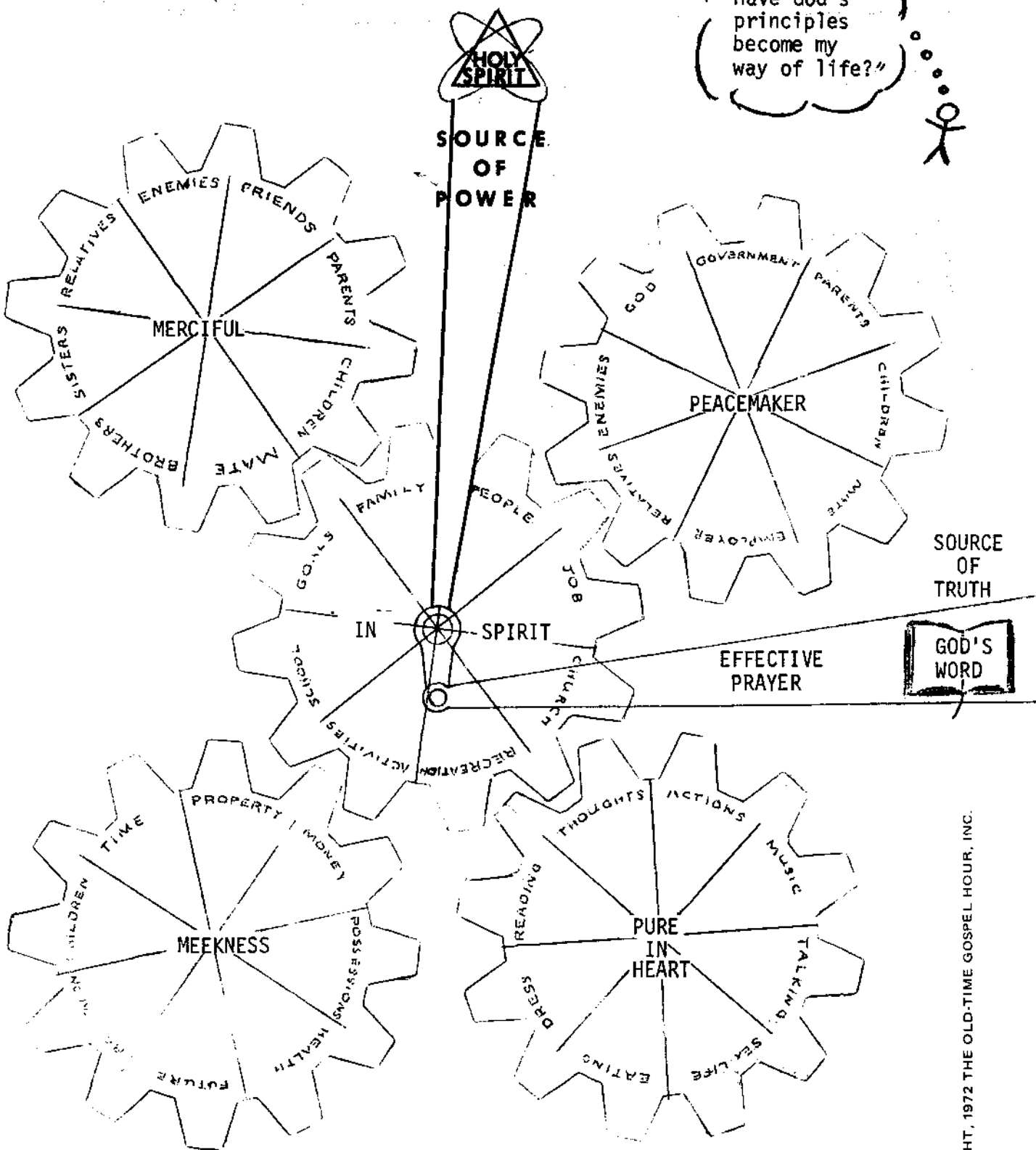
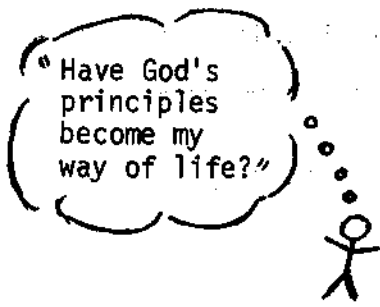
T H E B E A T I T U D E S

DEFINITION OF

BEATITUDE	EXPLANATION	UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE	CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION	RESULTS
POOR IN SPIRIT	One who has surrendered his will to God and by faith has put Christ first in his life.	Salvation A Unique Design Understand The Principle of Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation from God (Rom. 6:23) • Critical Spirit/Pride (Prov. 13:10; 29:23) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eternal life 2. Mature attitudes in understanding yourself from God's point of view
MEEKNESS	One who has submissively yielded ownership to all his earthly possessions, and who views them as temporarily loaned to him by God.	Developing Meekness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stubborn/Rebellious Spirit (I Sam. 15:23) • Anxious Spirit (Phil. 4:6) • Angry Spirit (Eph. 4:30-32; Prov. 14:17) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Power to supernaturally live by faith 2. Ability to claim God's promises. 3. Victory over anger and worry
MERCIFUL	One who is sympathetic, projects love, and genuinely forgives those who offend him.	The Spirit of Forgiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wounded Spirit (Prov. 18:14) • Root of Bitterness (Heb. 12:15) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Power to understand God's love 2. Freedom to communicate God's love
PURE IN HEART	One who has cleansed his heart by allowing the Holy Spirit to control his mental, emotional, and physical activity.	Renewing Your Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impure Thought Life (Rom. 1:28) • Sensuality (Jude 17:19) • Uncontrollable Drives (I Thess. 4:28) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self control Spiritually, mentally, and physically 2. View life through God's eyes

<p>PEACEMAKER</p>	<p>One who is willing to admit he is wrong and to ask forgiveness of all whom he has offended.</p>	<p>Becoming Trans-parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgmental Attitude (Rom. 2:1) • Guilt/Inward Distress (Rom. 7:15, 17) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Projecting genuine Christian love 2. Achieving inward peace 3. Having a conscience free of offense 4. Assuming full responsibility for my thoughts and behavior
<p>HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS</p>	<p>One who desires to please the Lord to such a degree that his goals to make every principle of Scripture a natural part of his life.</p>	<p>A Systematic Plan For Studying God's Word</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emptiness/ Vacuum (Nah. 2:10) • Unconcerned Spiritual Attitude (I Cor. 3:1,2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased prayer 2. Satisfied Spirit 3. Spiritual Growth
<p>MOURN</p>	<p>One with a compassionate heart that is sensitive to the Spiritual and physical needs of others.</p>	<p>A Meaningful Prayer-Developing Projects to Meet the Needs of Others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Vision (Prov. 29:18) • Insensitive/Frivolous Spirit (Eph. 5:4) • Unanswered Prayers (Js. 4:2,3) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A life with a purpose 2. Ability to be creative 3. Supernatural results through prayer
<p>PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE</p>	<p>One who is not afraid to share his faith and convictions with others. He recognizes that those who will not accept him with Jesus as Lord of his life will reject him.</p>	<p>Standing Alone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirit of Fear (II Tim. 1:7,8) • Loss of Will Power (Rom. 7:18) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boldness in witnessing 2. A special reward in heaven

THE INNER MAN



THE RESULT: A RADIANT LIFE AND WITNESS !!
II Cor. 4:7-12 (Phillips)

PERSONAL EVALUATION

IF THE "GEARS" ARE "JAMMED,"
 1) prayerfully read through and identify the areas listed. 2) Circle the areas that need improvement. 3) Purpose to deal specifically with each area.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE	AREAS AFFECTED	SPECIFIC GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p><input type="checkbox"/> POOR IN SPIRIT</p> <p><u>DOES JESUS CHRIST CONTROL EACH AREA OF MY LIFE ?</u></p>	<p>Private life</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Family</p> <p>Vocation</p> <p>Recreation</p> <p>Church</p> <p>School</p> <p>Goals</p> <p>Other _____</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> MEEKNESS</p> <p><u>HAVE I YIELDED ALL PERSONAL RIGHTS TO GOD ?</u></p>	<p>Time (schedule)</p> <p>Property</p> <p>Money</p> <p>Possessions</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Future</p> <p>Reputation</p> <p>Children</p> <p>Business</p>	

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE	AREAS AFFECTED SPECIFIC GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>☐ MERCIFUL</p> <p><u>HAVE I FORGIVEN ALL THOSE WHO I FEEL HAVE WRONGED ME ?</u></p>	<p>Parents</p> <p>Mate</p> <p>Children</p> <p>Brothers</p> <p>Sisters</p> <p>Relatives</p> <p>Friends</p> <p>Enemies</p> <p>Employer</p> <p>Others _____</p>
<p>☐ PURE IN HEART</p> <p><u>HAVE I BROUGHT MY MOTIVES AND PHYSICAL DRIVES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ?</u></p>	<p>Thoughts/Imagination</p> <p>Actions</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Conversation</p> <p>Eating</p> <p>Sex Life</p> <p>Dress</p> <p>Reading Materials</p> <p>Other _____</p>

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE	AREAS AFFECTED	SPECIFIC GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>☐ PEACEMAKER</p> <p><u>HAVE I MADE ALL PERSONAL WRONGS RIGHT WITH THOSE WHOM I'VE OFFENDED?</u></p>	<p>God</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Mate</p> <p>Children</p> <p>Employers</p> <p>Relatives</p> <p>Enemies</p> <p>Past friends and relationships</p> <p>Present friends</p> <p>Other _____</p>	

D E V E L O P I N G
A U N I Q U E
D E S I G N

- A person has a significant decision to make about himself: Whether he places his values on people's opinions of his appearance, background, associations, and goals, or on God's opinion of his appearance, background, associations and goals. The basis of a person's self worth is directly related to this decision. The following pages give insight for achieving self worth.

THE PURPOSE OF SELF WORTH

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES AND PREREQUISITES FOR DEVELOPING SELF WORTH ARE:

1. TO ENABLE A PERSON TO LOOK AT LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW - TO SEE HIMSELF AS GOD SEES HIM.

"We are asking God that you may see things as it were from His point of view by being given spiritual insight and understanding . . ." Col. 1:9 (Phillips)

2. TO DEVELOP A VALUE SYSTEM THAT IS BASED UPON THE VALUE GOD PLACES ON ONE'S APPEARANCE, BACKGROUND, ENVIRONMENT, AND ABILITIES, RATHER THAN THE VALUE OTHERS PLACE ON OUR APPEARANCE, BACKGROUND, ENVIRONMENT AND ABILITIES.

"Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all." Rom. 12:3 (Phillips)

3. TO GAIN A CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE FOR DESIGNING US THE WAY WE ARE

"That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ . . ." I Peter 4:11

4. TO ALLOW GOD TO DEVELOP OUR LIFE MESSAGE: the unique message God gives each person to share with others, based on victories from previous defeats and low spots in his life; integrated with his present walk with the Lord and with insights gained from personal study of God's Word.

"For He gives us comfort in our trials so that we in turn may be able to give the same sort of strong sympathy to others in theirs . . ." II Cor. 1:3-8 (Phillips)

5. TO OVERCOME BITTERNESS TOWARD GOD. If a person is resentful for the way God has made him, it is very easy to doubt God's personal interest in his life. This root problem oftentimes causes resentment to be transferred to others, such as blaming parents for physical deformities, etc.

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Rom. 9:20,21

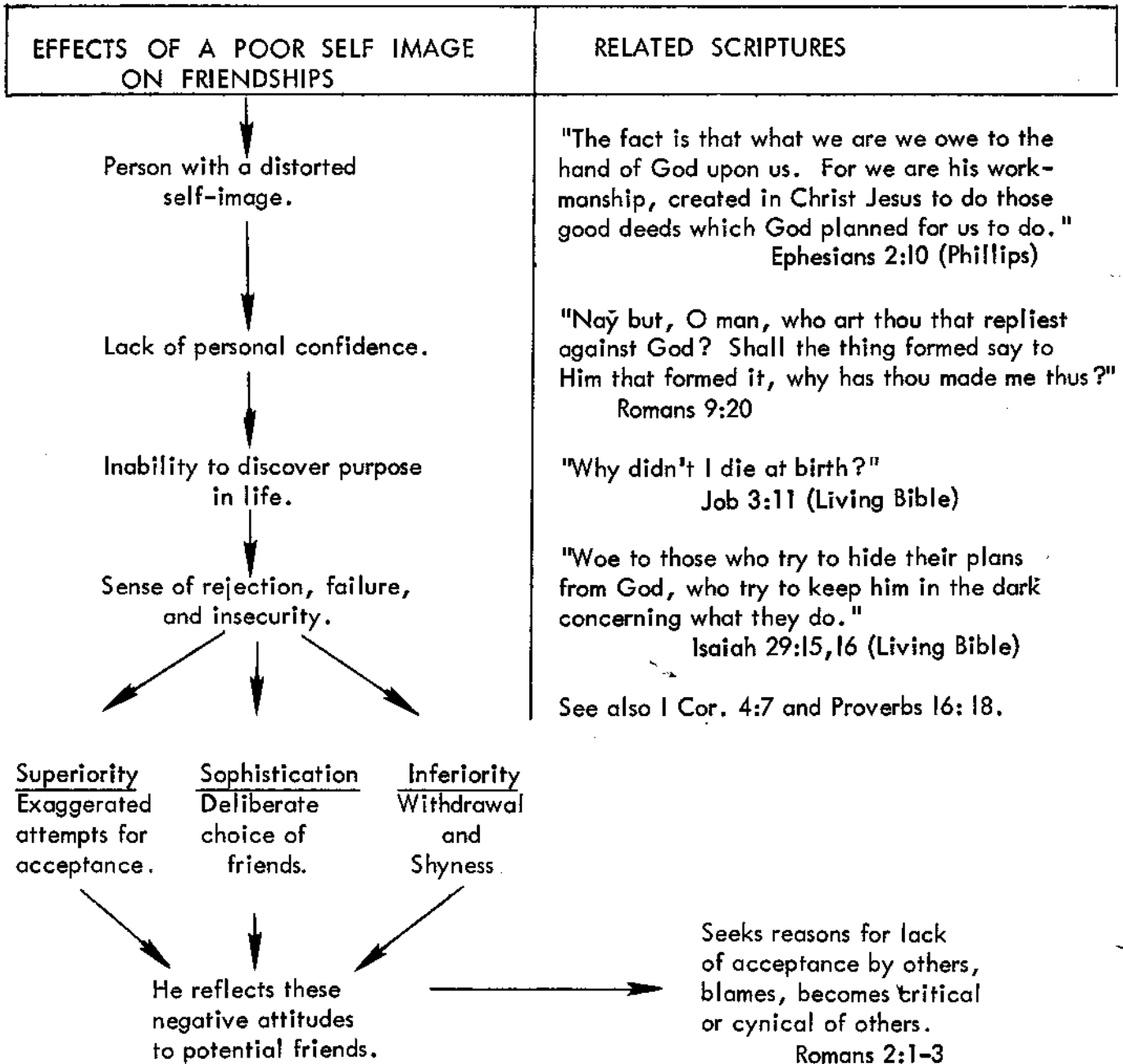
IF A NEGATIVE SELF IMAGE IS DEVELOPED - the following diagram illustrates the resulting conflicts in a person's life 

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

Matthew 19:19

● A person's inward image of his personal worth has a direct bearing on his attitude toward God, parents, environment, and other people in his life and his ability to make friends.

● AN INDIVIDUAL'S INABILITY TO MAKE FRIENDS IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD HIMSELF.



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VISIBLE SYMPTOMS OF**A NEGATIVE****SELF IMAGE**● CRITICISM OF PERSONAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

When a person is dissatisfied with unchangeable physical characteristics he will seek to compensate for his "deficiencies" by the clothes he wears. Jesus pointed this out when he asked his disciples, "Why take ye thought for raiment?" and "which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (They were dissatisfied with their height.) Matthew 6:27,28

● CRITICISM OF THE APPEARANCE OF OTHERS.

When a person is dissatisfied with his own appearance, he will tend to concentrate on the styles and appearance of others. His thoughts are preoccupied with how they look. He seeks to compensate for his appearance by criticizing the appearance of others and the way they dress. "Who art thou that judgest another man....?" Romans 2:1-3; 14:4

● INABILITY TO DEVELOP A LASTING TRUST IN GOD.

When a person declares that there are things about his appearance he would like to change, it reveals a basic distrust in God for making him the way he is. He thinks, "If God has already messed up my life to this degree, in the future he will also mess it up to the same degree." Ephesians 2:10

● SUPERIORITY ATTITUDE - SELF ESTEEM.

He may hold a high opinion of himself, sometimes higher than is held by others. But he dismisses others' attitudes toward him by carefully selecting associations in which he will appear to excel. Romans 12:3

● FLOATING REJECTION OF AUTHORITY.

Since God is responsible for the way I look and God is responsible for my parents, resentments toward them will be manifested in an attitude of resistance to other "authorities" that appear to tell me what to do.

● INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE.

Preoccupation with what others think of him will distract a person from concentrating on the work at hand. The antithesis is also true: an extreme desire for approval.

● OVERATTENTION TO DETAIL.

An extreme desire for approval may cause a person to overcompensate by excelling in a specific area to the detriment of other important areas.

● AN EXTREME SHYNESS AND LACK OF SELF CONFIDENCE.

A fear of what others think may cause a person to withdraw. The rejection by others because of his shyness only "confirms" in his mind that he really is inferior to others. This is illustrated in the life of Moses. Exodus 4: 10

A CASE STUDY :

A college age girl came into my office to discuss a problem. She was having difficulties with her parents and especially with her father. She explained how her parents weren't getting along; they were arguing and now talking about divorce.

One year ago she had committed her life to God but for some reason she kept having doubts and couldn't keep up a consistent time reading the Scriptures.

I began to ask her some basic questions to discern where God's principles were being violated in her life. I wanted to check out the six basic areas where a teen has difficulty. (These six areas are thoroughly discussed in the course Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts.)

	BASIC QUESTIONS & INSIGHTS	GIRL'S ANSWER
FRIENDS	<p>Who would you say are your close friends?</p> <p>Have there been any past friends who have really wronged you and never made it right?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Her problem with her parents definitely revealed resentments - but to whom. Were the parents the real problem? It was not friends.</p>	<p>Well, that's another problem I wanted to talk to you about. I can't say I really have one friend.</p> <p>No, not that I can think of.</p>
PURPOSE	<p>Now that you're out of school what are your plans for the future?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Her answer here only further motivated me to discern why she had no purpose in life.</p>	<p>I don't have any. I can't get interested in anything. I have a job but it's just temporary. I use the money to buy clothes and things I need.</p>
COMMITMENT	<p>Do you recall a specific time that you committed your life to Jesus Christ?</p> <p>What was your life like after you became a Christian?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Since I was aware of her commitment and had seen genuine interest and growth in spiritual things, I knew this wasn't the real problem.</p>	<p>Oh, yes! Last February at our winter retreat.</p> <p>For awhile it was the most exciting experience! My fellowship with God was wonderful. But gradually I slipped away.</p>

	BASIC QUESTIONS & INSIGHTS	GIRL'S ANSWER
D A T I N G	<p>Do you have a boyfriend?</p> <p>Would you say your behavior then was on a par with God's standards?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The absence of a dating relationship eliminated a critical problem here. Even though there could be a problem in her thought life. At the present, it was not a major factor in her real problem.</p>	<p>No, I used to date a fellow but it wasn't anything serious.</p> <p>Oh yes, we were just friends.</p>
F A M I L Y	<p>Since your dad seems to be a major factor here, can you think of any wrong he has done to you that he has never made right?</p> <p>Well, have you ever done anything that would cause him to lose confidence in you or to distrust you?</p> <p>What about your mother?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> This was very significant. Her parents were supposed to be the real problem, but the absence of guilt or basic resentments toward them meant that the parents weren't the real problem. They were merely the objects of her bitterness. So the real question was, what has caused the deep resentments.</p>	<p>(She thought for awhile and then answered) No, not that I can think of.</p> <p>(Another pause) No not really, unless it's the way I talk back to him. I've never been in trouble or anything like that.</p> <p>No, only the way we don't get along.</p>
S E L F	<p>If you could change anything about yourself, is there anything you would change?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> There were some obvious visible scars on her face, so I didn't ask the question, "If you were to look into a mirror and had the power to change anything about yourself, is there anything about yourself, is there anything you would change?"</p>	<p>Yes, I'd change the way I treat my parents. (Then a pause and she said) I would change myself!</p> <p>(Immediately her eyes dropped and she stared down at her lap.</p> <p>The silence continued for several seconds.)</p>

BASIC QUESTIONS & INSIGHTS

GIRL'S ANSWER

Note: With the visible symptoms of this area, I had asked questions about the other five areas first to get a total picture. Her response clearly indicated that the question struck at the "nerve."

S
E
L
F

Your face really bothers you doesn't it? I imagine you have asked God a thousand times, "Why did you make me this way?"

And the people who would like to become your friends or have tried, are eventually turned away by your negative attitudes. They were merely reflecting these back to you and you were blaming them for being snobbish.

There are several key insights God wants you to see that can transform your whole life if you will allow Him.

(She began to cry and said,) Yes. (She nodded her head and continued to look down.)

Well, what can I do?

KEY INSIGHTS

- David said in Psalm 139: 14 - 16 -
"I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

with wonder, awe?

to 2 lines

*So soul is preserved by creating
for ourselves, separate, self
interest with others.*

- 1 Samuel 16: 7 -
"But the Lord said unto Samuel, look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

we are all different

and that's good

❶ A UNIQUE DESIGN

What David is saying here is that you and I were made by God's unique design - even the parts of our body. He knew what we would look like before the worlds were ever made !

God has made you the way you are, and me the way I am, because He has a **UNIQUE PURPOSE** He wants to accomplish through each of us.

❷ WRONG VALUES

When we compare ourselves and place value on other people's opinions about us we will develop inferiority. This inferiority will manifest itself in the following ways: a **SUPERIORITY**, **SOPHISTICATED** or **INFERIORITY** attitude.

- A person with a superiority attitude is really one who has restricted his comparison to those over whom he excels.
- A sophisticated person is one who selects his associations to build up his own image yet never allows anyone to get next to him.
- A person who feels inferior is so pre-occupied with his deficiencies that he avoids people for fear of drawing further attention to his inadequacies.

● RIGHT VALUES

Therefore it is essential that we place our value on God's opinion of our worth. This is the **FIRST** step in achieving true self-acceptance.

● WE ARE REALLY GOD'S POEM !

We look at ourselves and say, "If my life is a beautiful poem, well my lines don't rhyme"! God says, "Wait until I get to the next line." It isn't fair to judge God's unfinished poem any more than it's fair to judge an artist by an unfinished picture. God is still writing - He isn't finished yet ! The verb here is in the present tense - it denotes a continuing action !

- Ephesians 2: 10 -
"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. "

- REACTION TO OUR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE INDICATES A FAILURE TO REALIZE THAT THE "REAL BEAUTY " OF A PERSON'S LIFE IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF EIGHT BASIC QUALITIES WITHIN HIS LIFE THROUGH WHICH THE LIFE AND LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST ARE RADIATED. THIS IS THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH WE'VE BEEN MADE !

We have all met many "attractive" people, that is, from a physical standpoint; but after we got to know them they weren't so attractive because of their attitudes. Thus when we fully "cooperate" with God and His purposes for our lives, our outward appearance will compliment our inward beauty and people will be drawn to us because of our real beauty rather than our physical appearance.

- GOD WANTS TO DEVELOP THE INWARD QUALITIES WITHOUT ANY SCARS INSIDE !

When we react to God's plan we develop a scar of bitterness which is the real problem that must be dealt with !

STEPS TO CORRECT:

When she understood these key insights, the girl took the following steps to correct her real problem and deal with the real cause:

1 She acknowledged to God her bitterness toward Him for the way He made her.

2 She sincerely asked God's forgiveness for her bitterness.

3 Based on the insights from the Word she sincerely thanked God for the way He made her.

4 She purposed to begin to become the person God wanted her to be and cooperate with Him in the "unfinished poem".

5 She purposed to begin to help others and share with them what God had done for her.

A NEW HOPE !

When she had prayed, she looked up and a broad smile radiated from her face. She left the office saying, "I can't wait to get home. And you know, there are so many girls with the problem of accepting themselves. Maybe since I have victory, I'll be able to help them !"


RADIANT RESULTS!

Three weeks later she stopped by to tell me that she had apologized to her parents for her attitude toward them. They want to come to a seminar next month !

"I've made four new friends since I talked to you." The qualities of Jesus Christ were already evident in her new-found relationship with HIM !

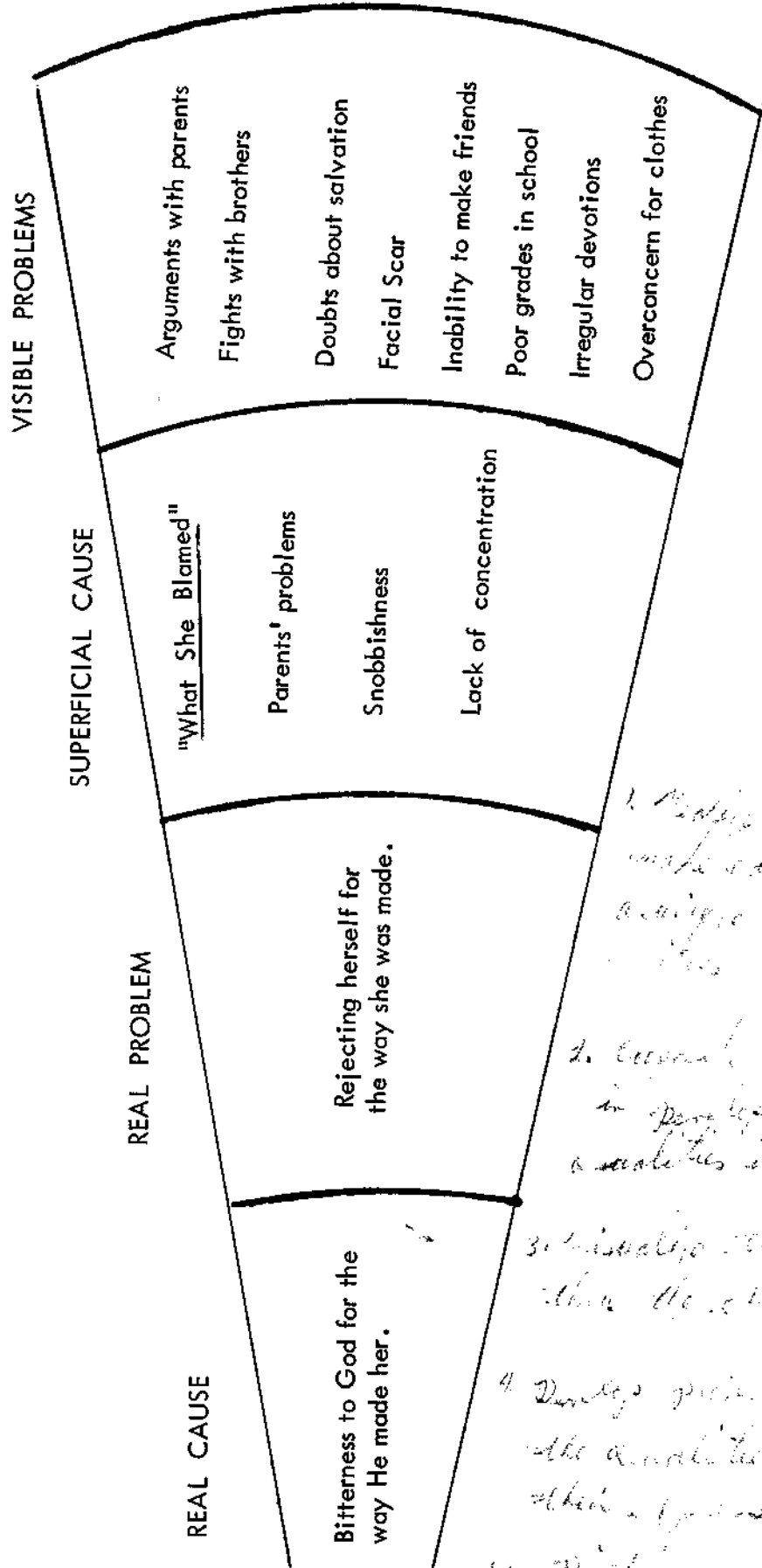
A NEW FAMILY!

Incidentally, her parents subsequently committed their lives to Christ !

The following diagram was drawn to illustrate that her resentment toward God was the "real cause" of her problems: 

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VISUALIZING THE REAL CAUSE



1. Making God pay
make each child with
a unique...
...this
2. Connect with God
in...
...abilities in your child
3. ...
...the...with...
4. Develop...
...the...with...
...which...
...to...
5. Distinctive...
...creativity & imagination
(...)

PERSONAL

A UNIQUE DESIGN

EVALUATION

FOR PARENTS

YES NO

- ___ ___ Do I speak my child's name with pleasure?
- ___ ___ Do I frequently yell for/at my child when it's bedtime, etc.?
- ___ ___ Do I establish eye-contact with my child as much as I can?
- ___ ___ Do I make promises to my child and then forget to keep them?
- ___ ___ Do I call my child by his real name, rather than by a nickname?
- ___ ___ Do I compare my child with other children, or with siblings?
- ___ ___ Do I frequently mention specific actions or qualities I appreciate about my child?
- ___ ___ Do I ever find myself slipping with words like 'slowpoke', 'stupid', 'messy', 'selfish', etc.?
- ___ ___ Do I talk about my child in only positive ways when he may be listening?
- ___ ___ Do I use my best manners when with my child?
- ___ ___ Do I compliment my child on his inner qualities rather than his outward appearance?
- ___ ___ Is there something unchangeable about my child I would change if I could?
- ___ ___ Does my child actually FEEL loved by me?
- ___ ___ Do I maintain an attitude of anticipation as to what my child may become rather than expecting a particular performance for my own satisfaction?
- ___ ___ Have I assigned responsibilities within our home to my child?
- ___ ___ Do I faithfully see that he follows through with his responsibility?
- ___ ___ Do I communicate facial expressions of, "How could you do a stupid thing like that?"
- ___ ___ Do I talk about my child being shy, showing off, being slow, bossy, etc. in his presence or within his hearing?
- ___ ___ Can I honestly say that I appreciate my child?
- ___ ___ Do I guide other family members to appreciate and respect each child in our family?
- ___ ___ Do I cause my child to feel that his work is "little kid stuff?"
- ___ ___ In a fun experience, do I think, speak, or conclude FOR my child, rather than let him discover on his own?

PERSONAL EVALUATION OF THE CHILD

YES NO

- _____ _____ My child talks a lot about his physical appearance (hair, etc.).
- _____ _____ My child frequently says negative things about God, people, situations, or himself.
- _____ _____ My child has difficulty in responding to his peers.
- _____ _____ My child complains a lot.
- _____ _____ My child is not readily willing to try new things.
- _____ _____ My child resists authority.
- _____ _____ My child is developing a sophisticated attitude.
- _____ _____ My child is not sensitive or aware of other children's needs.
- _____ _____ My child makes up stories or tells lies.
- _____ _____ My child feels it is important to have lots of toys and possessions....or the best and the most.
- _____ _____ My child withdraws from groups of children.
- _____ _____ My child becomes upset when unable to accomplish a new task.
- _____ _____ My child idolizes some TV character or experiences frequent fantasy as some person or animal.
- _____ _____ My child doesn't look me in the eye when I talk with him.
- _____ _____ My child plays a particular role quite consistently (such as a baby, a dog, etc.).
- _____ _____ My child doesn't seem to like himself.
- _____ _____ My child may comment, "See how strong I am," "Know what, I can run faster than _____."
- _____ _____ My child tattles frequently.
- _____ _____ My child talks incessantly.
- _____ _____ My child bosses others frequently.
- _____ _____ My child doesn't make friends easily.

YOUR MARK ON ME . . .

Myrtes Mathias is the poet laureate of the Christian community in Brazil, South America. She attended the Seminar in Rio de Janeiro in June 1974. She has published ten books which are widely read throughout the country. The following poem, YOUR MARK ON ME, was written as a result of her hearing the illustration given in this section of the material. Though it was written in Portuguese and some of the insight was lost in the translation, the requests for copies have been numerous as we have shared this with others.

YOUR MARK ON ME

How wonderful, Lord, to discover
that this scar is your mark on me.
After so many years of bitterness,
finally, I can thank you
for having made me exactly like I am.

Because I was formed
by a pattern not considered attractive by the world,
I had to open my own way with great effort:
like a plant that springs up a rocky soil
or a seed that falls among thorns.

As the oyster reacts to its wounds,
I will give to my life
a new significance:
Unable to transmit a message
to the eyes of my neighbor,
I will speak directly to his heart.

And this I will do as brother to brother,
saying to each one who is unhappy:
I understand your disillusion,
I, also, have my scar.
I too wandered along the road of life,
searching for a solution to my problem;
until I discovered that that which tormented me
was simply the mark of ownership
that God had placed on me.

So, I want you to say with me
that almost impossible prayer:
"Thank you, Lord, for my weaknesses,
for all that you permit me to suffer.
Transform my problem into a blessing,
from tragedy help me to make a poem:
give me the grace to recognize
that I am only a part of a plan
to which I must submit myself."

To Pastor Larry Coy,
with the gratitude of his students
Conflicts of Life Seminar
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**THE PRINCIPLE
OF
AUTHORITY**

authority

1. When a child leaves home, God wants him to leave physically and emotionally.
2. When he leaves in rebellion, he only leaves physically.
3. When he leaves home with an obedient.
4. could you have had different Parents?
5. Is God Bigger? Prov. 21:1
6. Would you be willing to cooperate with God by obeying, respecting + assuming your responsibilities.
7. If his decisions would destroy God's purpose - God can change his heart.

8. If his decision does not change -
Then it's more important to God that
you cooperate.

Insights on authority

1. Respect the authority in spite of personality differences.
2. God's purpose for authority
 - A. Increase your faith
 - B. Learn how to obey
 - C. Learn how to respect others.
 - D. To develop security
3. Rebuild relationship with parents before following God's leading elsewhere.
4. Develop deference - develop a cooperative spirit even though you disagree.
5. you will develop objectivity in a crisis to comprehend the leaders underlying motives.

6. Develop confidence in God so work
thru authority.

7. The exception when you are told to
violate scripture.

8. Distinguish between submission +
obedience.

1. Submission - an attitude + absolute

2. obedience - an action + relative.

9. Do not manipulate - authority by spiritualizing,
rationalizing or justifying ideas.

"steps to correct"

1. list their faults

2. List your wrongs toward them

3. Purpose to go back + ask forgiveness

4. Pray + sincerely forgive them for
their offenses toward you.

RESPONDING TO AUTHORITY

● An important key to a successful life is the ability to see the hand of God in the attitudes, actions and reactions of those in authority over one's life.

● PARENTS HAVE THE MOST SINGULAR IMPACT IN A PERSON'S LIFE.

The attitude of a child toward his parents' authority in his developing years and the attitude in which he leaves his parents will have a direct bearing on other authority figures in his future. The unique impact of the parents is clearly emphasized in the following passage.

● "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

For the commandment (father) is a lamp (source of light); and the law (mother) is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."
Proverbs 6: 20-23

● FAILURE TO SEE GOD'S HAND IN AUTHORITY WILL RESULT IN AN INABILITY TO SEE HOW TO LIVE.

To be able to lead and give proper direction, a person must know how to take orders. Young couples who have rebelled against the authority God placed in their lives are today experiencing tremendous frustrations and failures with one another and with their children. This deficit in insight is predicted in Proverbs 30: 17.

- "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Proverbs 30: 17

A KEY TO FREEDOM

There is a strong tendency today to think that the key to freedom is to get out from under authority. (especially the authority in a teen's life.) But God clearly emphasizes that the key to freedom is to learn how to relate and respond to the authority He has placed over one's life.

● RESISTING AUTHORITY IS RESISTING GOD.

The big mistake is in failing to recognize that God himself is behind the authority in a person's life. "The right thing for you to do is to obey your parents as those whom the Lord has set over you." Ephesians 6:1 (Phillips)

● A TEEN RESISTS HIS PARENTS:

Therefore, rebellion against a parent is not really rebellion against that parent but rebellion against God.

Ofentimes, I will ask a teenager,
"How would you like to solve 90%
of your family problems in two weeks?"
His reply is usually, "Ha! You don't
know my parents!"

- The teen who responds that way has lost sight of some very important insights for a successful life.

KEY INSIGHTS:

1. God was responsible for giving him his parents. It was within God's power for him to be born or raised in a different family.
2. God is bigger than his parents. He must come to the place where he is willing to trust God to direct his life through his parents' authority.
 - "The king's heart (the one in authority) is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will." Proverbs 21:1
3. He must realize the purpose for which God has placed his parents over him. God's purpose for the parent is to break the will of the child so he is obedient; this will produce mature attitudes in the child's life. (See insights on disciplining children.)
 - "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Colossians 3:20

- A person's freedom to submit to the Lord's authority when he is "on his own" or married is directly proportional to the degree to which his will is broken when he leaves home. The areas of authority he rebels against at home will be reflected in similar problems with those outside the home.

- 4. The hard-to-get-along-with characteristics of a parent represent an underlying purpose of God in the teen's life. God knew the parents were going to have certain personality traits that would be difficult to respond to. The issue, therefore, is not that they have these traits, but that the teen learns how to respond to these irritations and pressures. (See materials and related Scriptures on "Responding to Irritations and Offenses.")

- 5. But what if my parents are unfair or wrong in their decision? The teen who uses injustices on the parent's part to justify his disobedience has failed to distinguish between the parent's position in which God has placed him over the teen and the parent's personality traits. When a teen rationalizes his disobedient behavior on the grounds of his parent's personality traits, the parent will invariably assert himself in his God-given position and exert greater authority.

- 6. Only a broken will toward the parent will assure the parent that he "can trust" his teen to make his own decisions. This is true even if the parent is not a Christian. When a parent discerns the obedience, respect and responsibility he expects from his child, he has a sense of fulfillment: he has instilled the important traits that will guarantee the child's independent success when he leaves home.

- "Complete freedom" and a new chain of authority actually begin when a person gets married. Genesis 2: 24

- Nevertheless, many young people "earn" their freedom long before they marry because of their maturity in responding to their parents' authority.

AN ILLUSTRATION - A DYNAMIC CHRISTIAN TEEN

A teenage girl who had recently become a Christian came into my office one afternoon. She was captain of the cheerleaders and had an outstanding testimony for the Lord with her peers. Four of the six cheerleaders had already accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

HER PROBLEM WAS DAD.

Since she had become a Christian, she sensed God wanted her to attend a Christian college. She related the following account to me: "The first time I mentioned the idea of going to a Christian college to my father, he blew up! He told me that he had been raised in a strict religious background and he wanted no part of it! I tried to reason with him but he just wouldn't listen. Since that time, I've brought the subject up several times and now he's told me that I have to go to the same college he, Mom, my brother and sister attended. Furthermore, he said that if I didn't go there, he would not give me money for my education as he did for my brother and sister.

MY DAD'S NOT A CHRISTIAN!

I asked her what her response was when her dad told her she couldn't go to the Christian college. She replied, "Well, not very good. Besides, he's not even a Christian so what does he know about God's will for my life?"

DO YOU KNOW THAT GOD WILL SHOW YOU HIS WILL THROUGH YOUR DAD?

When I made that statement, she asked, "What do you mean?" I re-emphasized the statement by saying, "God wants to reveal some very important aspects of His will through your parents. If you want to really please God the first thing you must do as a Christian is learn to obey your parents. CO-OPERATION WITH GOD MEANS OBEYING YOUR PARENTS. So many young people make the mistake of thinking that since they've become Christians they will look to all other sources (Holy Spirit, Scripture, prayer, sermons, counsel of others, circumstances, and their own intuition, etc.) for direction, at the expense of obedience to their parents.

THE NON-CHRISTIAN PARENT FEELS GOD IS REBELLING AGAINST HIM.

Especially to the non-Christian parent, it seems that the child with whom he felt he had a reasonable relationship has, all of a sudden, become stubborn, self-righteous and rebellious in order to follow this new "religious kick."

Since the teen is now following God, the parent concludes that He's the one who is really rebelling against him. She replied, "That's exactly what I've done! What can I do?"

SHE WAS ANXIOUS TO TRY GOD'S SOLUTION!

After pointing out the six key insights (pages 3, 4) I asked her if she was willing to go back to her father and (1) ask his forgiveness for her failure to respond to his authority and (2) tell him that from now on, he could count on her cooperating with whatever he said?

She said she really believed God was bigger than her dad and able to work through him.

NOTE:

HOW TO GO BACK.

● BEFORE GOING BACK IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR AN INDIVIDUAL TO:

ASSUME HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE BEHAVIOR.

1. A teen can do this by listing the areas and situations where he knows he has wronged his parents.
2. Purpose to go back and ask forgiveness and state intentions for future behavior.

(See "Developing Transparency," pages 7-10.)

BE FREE FROM ANY RESENTMENTS.

1. Here it is important for the teen to specifically identify unforgiven wrongs or faults which he feels the parent has committed against him.
2. A sincere prayer to the Lord, forgiving his parents for these wrongs, will remove resentments and bitterness. (For further insights see "Responding to Irritations and Offenses," pages 15-17.)

HE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME !

She called me back the next day to tell me what had happened. "You won't believe what happened!" She exclaimed. "I asked his forgiveness and told him I would obey him. He replied by saying, "Oh, yeh! Well, you don't go to the basketball game tonight."

I KNEW THIS WAS A TEST.

"As soon as he said that, I knew God wanted to see if I would really trust Him as well as prove to my dad I meant what I said. After supper I helped Mom with the dishes. I hadn't said a word about the game. In the past, I would have started arguing and reasoning to get my way as soon as he told me I couldn't go."

IT WOULD BE FUN TO SEE WHAT GOD WANTED TO DO!

"At 7:00 I went upstairs to my room. Dad was reading the newspaper, I told the folks I was going up to study. Well, of course, I couldn't study so I started to pray.

Lord, you're bigger than my dad. If my not going to the game would in any way jeopardize your testimony, then you'll have to change dad's heart. But if it's more important to you that I demonstrate my obedience to him, then I'll be willing to stay at home and know more will be gained this way.

At 7:40 Dad called up and said, "If you're going to the game, you'd better get your clothes changed fast!"

Several months later she told me how her dad had changed his mind and given his permission for her to attend the Christian college; he would even give her the same financial help he had given her brother and sister!

● A COLLEGE GIRL'S TESTIMONY

In October 1970 I was having real spiritual struggles. I couldn't get close and communicate with God. When I came to my youth director for help, I was so uptight and had so little freedom in my life that I could hardly even talk to him about my problem. I had violated and was violating a basic principle in my life and then finally the results were coming to a head. The basic principle was submitting to my parents' authority.

My parents and I had had a running conflict for several years. I considered it "normal" for a teenager because most of my friends had similar conflicts with their parents. The conflict involved my appearance. I wanted to wear short skirts, make-up and jewelry, all of which they heartily disapproved.

The process in which I got my own way was gradual. I slowly started wearing more make-up and jewelry, and gradually kept shortening my hems. The conflict finally came to a head when I accepted a beautiful ring from my boyfriend and my hems went up three inches more.

When I first started college, I decided I was going to dress the way I wanted to - at least while I was at college. When I went home I would dress much more modestly. Somehow, I didn't completely fake out my parents.

So, here I was with this beautiful ring, very short skirts and a guilty conscience.

Then I heard that the only way I could get real peace of mind was to conform to my parents' standards of dress - not only at home, but also at school. This was a hard pill for me to swallow, but I really wanted peace of mind and freedom. I gave my right to dress the way I wanted to God and asked Him to forgive me for disobeying and dishonoring His authority through my parents.

Then I started the long process of letting down all the hems I had just shortened. The next time I went home, I talked to my parents about my decision and asked for their forgiveness. My dad almost cried and my mom was really astounded.

Since that time, my parents have given me permission to wear the beautiful ring that my boyfriend gave me and I have been able to communicate with my parents more than ever before in my life. I can tell that they really respect me for submitting to them. I love to be home because there are no guilt feelings and I really enjoy any time I can spend with my family. We don't fight any more either.

Soon after I lengthened my skirts, another very interesting thing happened: my boyfriend confided to me that he had really been bothered and upset when I had shortened my hems, but he didn't feel that he had any right to say anything. That, most of all, made me so glad I had submitted to my parents authority. God not only gave me a peaceful relationship with my parents, but with my boyfriend, too!

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

IN DEVELOPING A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD AUTHORITY:

● Important as it is to go back and correct past disobedience and irresponsibility, it is even more important to know how to deal with new confrontations in the days ahead.

- The following insights are "handles" to help a person keep his perspective in what God is doing through the authority He has placed over him.

1. SHOW DEFERENCE.

Anticipate and look for opportunities to cooperate and even take the initiative in seeking to please your parents (or other authorities).

Deference is giving in to the wishes of another. When this is done with a cheerful spirit, it has great impact in communicating obedience.

2. DON'T REACT TO WHAT A PERSON SAYS - DISCERN WHAT HE MEANS.

When commands appear to contradict your wishes or convictions, before you react, discern the purpose for the command. The underlying purpose is usually for your benefit.

- This is illustrated in Daniel 1. The king commanded Daniel and the other Jewish boys to eat the king's meat and drink the king's wine. Daniel discerned that the purpose of the king was not to destroy their religious convictions, but rather to make them healthy.

Because Daniel had developed a rapport with the prince of the eunuchs (shown deference), he was able to suggest a possible alternative which would accomplish the same results, but not at the expense of his convictions.

3 REALIZE THIS IS GOD'S WAY.

Have confidence in God's ability to change decisions in any area of life, whether it be parents, employer, teacher or government.

4 KEEP ACCOUNTS SHORT.

Whenever mistakes are made in the future, don't procrastinate in asking forgiveness. Go immediately to the one in authority and ask his forgiveness. This will emphasize the sincerity of your intentions to be obedient.

☛ Scripture emphasizes the application of this principle in every relationship. For example:

● HUSBAND TO GOD

"But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ."
I Corinthians 11:3a

● WIFE TO HUSBAND

"and the head of the woman is the man."
I Corinthians 11:3b
(See also I Peter 3: 1-5)

● CHILD TO PARENT

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."
Exodus 20: 12

● EMPLOYER TO GOD

"And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."
Ephesians 6: 9

● EMPLOYEE TO EMPLOYER

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ." Ephesians 6: 5

● CITIZENS TO GOVERNMENT

- Even the civil governments whose laws regulate man's relationship to man - God says obey. He can work His plan and purpose in spite of their inequities.
- The Roman government was vile and corrupt, yet Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Matthew 22:21
- Jesus never lost sight of the fact that a person's objective must be to change men's hearts if society is to change.

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also the froward."

1 Peter 2:13-18 (See also Romans 13:1-7.)

**DEVELOPING
MEEKNESS**

THE KEY TO OVERCOMING ANGER AND WORRY:

YIELDING ALL PERSONAL RIGHTS TO GOD

"Try to be like Jesus Christ who, though He was God, did not demand and cling to His rights as God, but laid aside His mighty power and glory . . . it was because of this that God raised Him up to the heights of heaven . . ."

Philippians 2:5-9 (Living Bible)

Yielding all personal rights is not an optional principle to a successful Christian life. Supernatural involvement by the Lord on the person's behalf is directly related to this principle! The Lord acts "with equity for the MEEK of the earth."

Isaiah 11:4

((Jesus Christ said, "Blessed are the MEEK
(He didn't say "weak") they shall inherit
the earth." Matthew 5:5))

Definition of Meekness: A MEEK person is one who claims no rights of his own -- one who is willing to yield all possessions and personal rights to God and thereafter look upon what he has as loaned to him by God for His work and glory.

The individual who maintains this principle of yielding his personal rights to God will radiate qualities that are essential to his effectiveness in other areas of life.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND BENEFITS
OF YIELDING ALL PERSONAL RIGHTS TO GOD INCLUDE:



● INWARD SATISFACTION

Ps. 22:26 "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live forever."

● AN ESSENTIAL FOR OVERCOMING ANGER

Ps. 37:8-11 "Cease from anger and forsake all wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth... but the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

● RESTFULNESS

Matt. 11:28-30 "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

● AUTHORITY TO SPEAK

11 Cor. 10:1 "Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...."

● THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

Phil. 2:5-9 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name..."

● KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL

Ps. 25:9 "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way."

● GENUINE BEAUTY

Ps. 149:4 "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation."

● INCREASED JOY

Is. 29:19 "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord..."

● FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Gal. 5:23 "Meekness, temperance against such there is no law."

● WEAKER CHRISTIANS RESTORED

Gal. 6:1 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

● RIGHT ATTITUDES IN EMPLOYMENT

Eph. 4:1-2 "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation to which ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love..."

● WORRY OVERCOME

Phil. 4:6-7 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

- A QUALITY TO CONSCIOUSLY DEVELOP
Col. 3:12 "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"
- AN ESSENTIAL FOR TEACHING OTHERS WHO DISAGREE WITH YOU
II Tim. 2:23-25 "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they breed strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose him, if God, perhaps, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,"
- A CHARACTERISTIC OF A WISE AND INTELLIGENT MAN
James 3:13 "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good life his works with meekness of wisdom."
- A NECESSARY ATTITUDE IN WITNESSING
I Peter 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."
- A KEY TO CHRISTLIKENESS
I Tim. 6:11 "But thou O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."
- A RESPONSIBILITY TO ALL MEN
Titus 3:2 "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."
- A PREREQUISITE FOR RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD
James 1:21 "Wherefore, put away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
- A QUALITY OF A BEAUTIFUL WIFE
I Peter 3:4 "But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

WARNINGS AND RESULTS OF ANGER

The consequences of anger cannot be underestimated. There are those who defend it as a good emotion to vent one's feelings but the effects it has on those upon whom the anger is vented only verifies the words of Scripture that warn:

- AN ANGRY PERSON IS A FOOL.
 "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Ecclesiastes 7:9
- ASSOCIATION WITH AN ANGRY MAN WILL CAUSE YOU TO BECOME LIKE HIM.
 "Make no friendship with an angry man and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul." Proverbs 22:24,25
- AN ANGRY FATHER WILL PRODUCE DISILLUSIONMENT IN THE CHILDREN.
 "Fathers, don't overcorrect (by indignation, vengeful attitude) your children or they will grow up feeling inferior and frustrated." Colossians 3:21 (Phillips)
- ANGER EQUALS MURDER IN GOD'S SIGHT.
 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." Matthew 5:21,22a
- ANGER CAUSES STRIFE WITH OTHERS.
 "A man of wrath stirs up strife and a man given to anger commits and causes much transgression[sin]." Proverbs 29:22 (Amplified Bible)
- A QUICK TEMPER WILL RESULT IN FOOLISH ACTIONS AND MISTAKES.
 "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly and a man of wicked devices is soon hated." Proverbs 14:17
- ANGER IS A SIN THAT GRIEVES THE SPIRIT OF GOD.
 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Ephesians 4:31

DEVELOPING MEEKNESS

God has given us many responsibilities. When we get angry or worry, we're trying to control or change something God never intended for us to change or control. When we react and resist, we deny Him His right to do what He would do; we also temporarily set aside the purpose He wanted to achieve in our lives.

The anger or anxiety is the key that a right God wants me to yield is involved. When these reactions are absent God wants me to assume full responsibilities for the rights He has given back to me.

BASIC STEPS:

1 DISCERN THE DENIED RIGHTS

Below is a list of areas in which we tend to get angry or to worry. Allow the Holy Spirit freedom to identify any right that you have not given to Jesus Christ by prayerfully checking those areas in which you are having conflict.

WHAT PEOPLE GET ANGRY OR WORRY ABOUT:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | Ps. 127:3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule | Matt. 21:26,27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation | Ps. 23:3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage | 1 Cor. 7:3,4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Future | Matt. 6:31-34 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | 11 Cor. 12:7-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothes | 1 Peter 3:4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music | Eph. 5:19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends | Matt. 10:40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions | Job 1:21 |

- Money Col. 3:1
- Your Life Luke 9:23
- Business Eph. 4:1
- Sex 1 Cor. 7

2 COMMIT EACH RIGHT TO JESUS CHRIST

When this is done through prayer, the right becomes God's property; therefore He is responsible for that area and we can claim Romans 8:28,29 in confidence that His purposes will be fulfilled.

3 REALIZE THAT GOD WILL TEST "HIS RIGHTS"

Once each right is yielded, God will allow situations to occur which will deny us these rights. These are opportunities to test us to see if the right was really yielded. If anger reoccurs, it indicates that I took the right back. It will be necessary to once again yield that right to Jesus Christ.

If I respond to the test, the quality of meekness will be developed and God will be given the freedom to work supernaturally.

A clear illustration is Abraham yielding his rights to Isaac. Abraham knew Isaac was God's property and could visualize that God would work supernaturally. And He did! He provided a lamb in Isaac's place. Genesis 22:1-10; Hebrews 11:17-19

4 RESPOND TO THE "LOSS" OF RIGHTS WITH A GODLY ATTITUDE

When a right is yielded, many times a person will experience a personal "loss." It is important that he acknowledge God's purposes at work in his life such as Job responded when he lost all his possessions. Job replied, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21(b)

OVERCOMING WORRY

- Don't worry over anything whatsoever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6,7 (Phillips)

THE PROBLEM:

Worry and anxiety are a direct result of concluding, "God is not bigger than my immediate problem."

The frustration results because THE INDIVIDUAL WANTS TO ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SITUATION OVER WHICH HE HAS NO IMMEDIATE CONTROL.

ILLUSTRATION:

A mother came to me in despair over her teenage son who had rebelled, and left home. She stayed awake nights worrying about him. When he did stop in from time to time, she felt compelled to point out his problems in a desperate attempt to get him to change. "I've tried everything and nothing works," she replied!

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED AND CORRESPONDING RESPONSES MADE:

KEY QUESTIONS AND INSIGHTS	MOTHER'S RESPONSE
<p>Do you believe God is bigger than your circumstances?</p> <p>Do you know God wants us to commit all our property, possessions, and personal rights to Him.</p> <p>Have you ever done that?</p>	<p>Well, yes, of course!</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Well, I thought I had.</p>
<p>[Note: When a person worries or is anxious about something, it is a clear indication of an unyielded personal right.</p>	
<p>Do you consider your son your property or God's?</p> <p>Do you know that when we yield our rights to "His property," God is then free to take care of "His property" the way He wants to.</p> <p>Would you be willing right now by a sincere prayer to give your son back to God?</p>	<p>It is important to discern specifically what he is anxious about and discern the specific needs to be yielded to God.]</p> <p>I guess I've thought of him as my property.</p> <p>I never thought of it that way before.</p> <p>I certainly will!</p>

THE FOLLOWING STEPS WERE TAKEN TO OVERCOME HER WORRY 

BASIC STEPS:

HER PRAYER EXPRESSED
HER NEW COMMITMENT

1 She developed a new relationship with the Lord in which all she possessed belongs to Him. Therefore the Lord was primarily responsible for her son.



2 A new awareness that God takes very good care of "His own property" and therefore will only allow situations to occur which will produce greater future benefits than present losses.



3 An agreement ahead of time to thank God whenever circumstances result with her son which are beyond her control.



Dear heavenly Father, I acknowledge my lack of trust in you and my failure to commit John to you as your property. I ask your forgiveness and right now I give him back to you. You know how much I love him and want your best for his life.

Now that He's your property, I know you will take care of Him when he's in situations over which I have no control. I thank you in advance for what you will do and the way you'll bring him back. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

(Note: This third insight is the key because often the next events to take place from our point of view may appear to be unfortunate. God knows the only means to "get through" to His property. The immediate circumstances are the Lord's hands at work!)

A NEW FREEDOM!

A new peace filled her heart and mind as she committed John to the Lord. In the meantime, she went back to John and asked his forgiveness for areas of her life which the Holy Spirit had brought to mind where she had failed or wronged him as a mother.

It was but two weeks when the mother received a call from the police department that her son had been arrested.

Aware that this was God working in her son's life, she went to the police station. When she entered, her son came to her in tears and said, "Mom, I made such a mess of my life! What can I do?"

THE RESULT!

This "unfortunate" experience was a tool in God's hand that resulted in her son returning home, finding a new relationship with the Lord and bringing joy to that mother's heart!

A CLARIFICATION

AVOID UNNECESSARY IRRITATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING OF PERSONAL RIGHTS BY ASSUMING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

When an individual fails to share his convictions or express his own opinions in a matter, he may inappropriately be forced to yield his personal rights to avoid the anger and frustrations that will occur.

A person may be involved in a decision to employ a staff member whom he knows will not be the most efficient person for the job. But because others are more opinionated and want the individual, he chooses to keep quiet and "respond". When employed the frustrations and anxiety over the new employee's inefficiency will be a constant irritation and require the yielding of personal rights that could have been avoided if he would have assumed his responsibilities in the beginning.

A PERSON CAN DISCERN THAT GOD WANTS HIM TO YIELD HIS PERSONAL RIGHTS WHEN:

- *He has done all he knows to do about the situation.
- *The temptation to get angry or to worry still occurs.

Then he can be quite confident that it is more important to the Lord that he yield his right to Him than to be preoccupied with the "situation" which God used to bring out these negative traits.

D E V E L O P I N G

A F O R G I V I N G

S P I R I T

TRANSFORMING IRRITATIONS INTO

SPIRITUAL MOTIVATION

- God's ultimate purpose for allowing irritations and offenses to occur in our lives is to give us opportunity to become more like His Son Jesus Christ. This is clearly defined in the following passage:

• *"For we know that ALL THINGS (that includes irritations and offenses from others) work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose... that we might be conformed to the image of His Son."*
Romans 8:28,29

CAUSES OF WOUNDS AND OFFENSES

- Each wound or offense in my life represents an underlying objective of God in my life. The irritations I can control indicate a corresponding responsibility I am to assume (i.e., if a door squeaks, oil it). The irritations over which I have no control indicate God's way of opening avenues of communication with others, increasing my sensitivity to the needs of others and developing certain inward qualities of Jesus Christ in my life.

WOUNDS AND OFFENSES

The wounds and offenses over which we have no control comes from many sources.

A person is most easily offended by the attitudes and behavior of others toward him. Their thoughtless comments about a person's abilities (or lack of them); unfaithfulness of a mate, betrayal of a friend, are just a few of the means through which offenses come.

A P R E R E Q U I S I T E :

To what degree is God involved in these wounds and offenses? The first requirement for transforming these irritations is a personal relationship with God and a commitment to allow Him to accomplish His purpose in my life.

(Note: The number, intensity and duration of offenses in a growing Christian's life indicates the amount of unfinished work God has to do in that Christian's life in perfecting His own image.)

In spite of the fact that God says He is intricately involved in each detail of our lives, there are many who still picture God as a misty triangle, disinterested and uninvolved. Yet, God relates himself to each person and circumstance around us. These are God's tools in perfecting the inward qualities in our lives.

God likens us to His "jewels" (Mal. 3:17). In the rough, a gem is relatively inexpensive. When the jewel cutter is finished cutting, sanding and polishing, it is of great value!

WHAT ARE GOD'S TOOLS?

God, like the jewel cutter, needs to work on us. What does He use as tools?

The irritations and reproofs (conflicts, rebukes letting us know we're violating His principles) comes from the people and circumstances around us:

● PHYSICAL DEFORMITY - HIS TOOL:

The Apostle Paul acknowledged that his thorn in the flesh was permanent. It was not allowed by God to tear him down but to keep Paul dependent on the Lord ! When Paul realized this then he exclaimed:

" . . . in order to prevent my becoming absurdly conceited, I was given a physical handicap - one of Satan's angels - to harass me and effectually stop any conceit. Three times I begged the Lord for it to leave me, but his reply has been, "My grace is enough for you: for where there is weakness, my power is shown the more completely." Therefore, I have cheerfully made up my mind to be proud of my weaknesses, (NOTE: Paul's new response to his irritation !) because they mean a deeper experience of the power of Christ. I can even enjoy weaknesses, suffering, privations, persecutions and difficulties for Christ's sake. For my very weakness makes me strong in Him. " II Cor. 12: 7-10 (Phillips)

● NATURAL ELEMENTS - GOD'S ARMY:

"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you." Joel 2:25

● GOVERNMENTAL LAWS AND AUTHORITIES - OF GOD'S APPOINTMENT:

" . . . all legitimate authority is derived from God's authority, and the existing authority is appointed under God. To oppose authority (even the traffic laws!) then is to oppose God, . . ." Romans 13:1,2 (Phillips)

● PARENTS - THEIR REPROOFS ARE THE WAY OF LIFE:

" . . . for the commandment (father) is a lamp; and the law (mother) is light; and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Proverbs 6:20-23

● PEOPLE - IMPOSSIBLE TO HATE PEOPLE AND LOVE GOD:

"If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." I John 4:20

● THE WICKED - GOD'S SWORD:

" . . . deliver my soul from the wicked which is thy sword." Psalms 17: 13 b

● MEN OF THE WORLD - GOD'S HAND:

"From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world . . ." Psalms 17:4

When we react wrongly to His tools we destroy their potential benefit. If we continue to react, God must raise up additional irritations to draw our attention to the negative traits these irritations are intended to reflect so we can correct them in our lives.

● DEALING WITH PERMANENT IRRITATIONS:

God will permit permanent irritations which will have more ultimate benefit in our lives than any present "losses" we may experience. This may be the cross that a Christian is to bear as he follows the Lord.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:2

- ☛ GOD IS NOT SO CONCERNED ABOUT WHERE WE ARE OR WHAT IS HAPPENING, AS WHAT WE ARE LEARNING AND HOW WE ARE RESPONDING IN HIS WORKSHOP OF LIFE!

God is here, His hands are on His tools. If a person slaps or curses the people who irritate him - he is actually slapping the hand of God.

MOST IRRITATIONS ARE TEMPORARY:

When we allow God to accomplish the specific purpose for which he allowed the irritation, then he removes that irritation. Our focus should be on the development of the quality rather than the circumstances God used to develop that quality.

"When all kinds of trials and testings crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends. Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance (quality) is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence."

James 1:3,4 (Phillips)

RESPONDING TO AN IRRITATION

- ☛ This is how one man transformed his biggest irritation into a motivation of love for his family.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH WANTING TO BE ON TIME?"

A successful businessman came into my office one morning angry and fed up with himself and his family over an experience that had occurred the night before. He felt the problem was that his wife was never on time. "What's wrong with wanting to be on time?" he asked. "The Lord says to do all things decently and in order, doesn't He?"

HIS WIFE WASN'T READY.

It all began with plans for a family dinner engagement at another couple's home. The husband had reminded his wife that they would have to leave by 6:00 p.m., if they were to make it on time. He arrived home at 5:45, and quickly realized that his wife hadn't even started to bathe the two children! He knew she'd never be ready on time, but he didn't say anything. He sat down and browsed the evening paper until 6:00.

EVERY MINUTE AFTER SIX HE BECAME MORE ANGRY AND IRRITATED!

At 6:00 p.m., he began to ask, "How soon will you be ready?" When they were finally ready to leave the house at 6:25, he was so mad he couldn't talk.

He had never before been to this couple's home on a farm outside of town. He drove for several miles and came to a dirt road. Two miles further - it was a dead end! Hurriedly he turned the car around and started back. About a mile down the road, he passed a pickup truck which threw two stones on his car, cracking the windshield.

"THEN I WAS REALLY MAD!"

He told me, "I was so mad I felt like going back home! In the midst of all this, my six-year-old boy leaned over from the back seat and said, 'What did Mommy do wrong, Daddy?'"

He turned to me and said, "When we finally arrived, I was so upset I didn't even feel like talking about spiritual things. I'm sure they noticed my attitude, but I couldn't help it! I can't even remember what we had to eat for supper. What can I do? I really need help with this one!"

APPLICATION OF THE FOLLOWING STEPS TRANSFORMED HIS IRRITATION INTO LOVE FOR HIS WIFE:

"Don't you know how God wants you to respond to these irritations?"
He answered, "No, I don't. Show me, and I hope this works!"

THERE ARE

THREE WRONG RESPONSES:



☛ Your wife could accuse you and you

1. DEFEND YOURSELF.
This will result in a conflict between each other.

OR

☛ Your wife will defend herself because you

2. ACCUSE HER.
This will also result in a conflict between each other.

OR

☛ Your wife accuses you and you

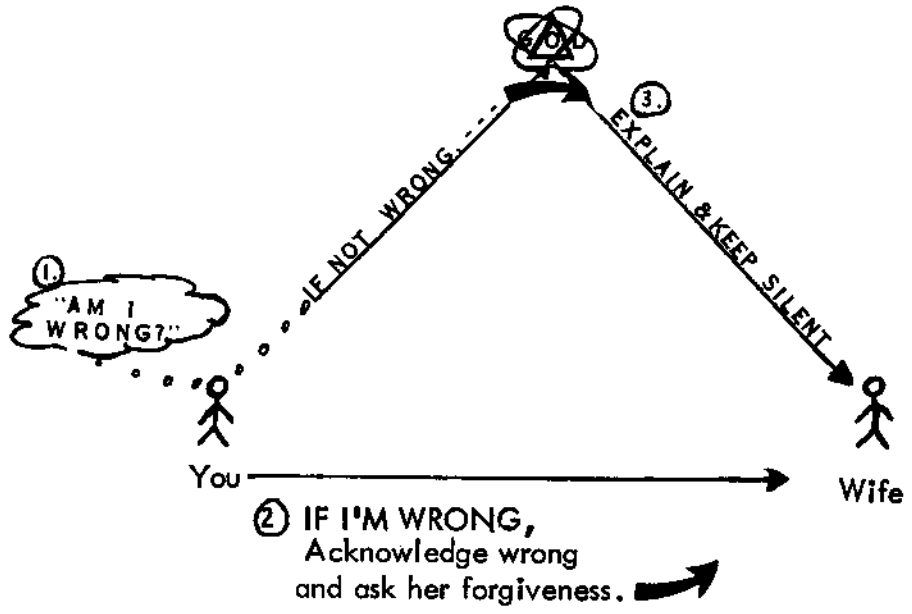
3. HOLD YOUR ANGER IN.
This will cause tension which will ultimately come out when the pressure has built up. It is amazing how many "small" things are remembered when a situation explodes!

GOD'S RESPONSE:

● God wants a person to be free from the wrong attitudes and responses so he can be involved with Him in the situation.

● STEP ONE: BE HONEST WITH MYSELF.

When accused, take my thoughts to God and ask, "Am I wrong?"



● STEP TWO: BE WILLING TO ADMIT WHEN I'M WRONG.

If I was wrong in any way, sincerely ask my partner's forgiveness.

But, what if I'm not wrong when accused?

● STEP THREE: If I'm not wrong, BRIEFLY EXPLAIN MY SITUATION AS I SAW IT AND THEN KEEP SILENT.

(Note: It is suggested that the supplementary insights in Chain of Command in Marriage, "Developing Genuine Love," be studied with this material.)

AMPLIFICATION

- In essence, there is a response of our heart and a corresponding action that takes place when

RESPONSE TO GOD

1. Recognize that God has allowed this source of irritation for my benefit.
3. Use this irritation to identify the negative traits this irritation caused me to express (anger, impatience, jealousy, insensitiveness, etc.) This is exciting because I can become fully aware of the areas God is concerned about in conforming me to the image of His Son!
5. When I'm not wrong, then I can consciously cooperate with God in being sensitive to the needs of others. "What godly quality does God want me to express to the other person?"

RESULTING ACTION

2. Therefore, I can thank God for this irritation.
4. Gain a clear conscience by asking forgiveness for the wrong I committed against the other person.
6. I will communicate the fruit of the Holy Spirit to the other person regardless of his offense against me. Galatians 5:22,23

"NOW I SEE WHAT GOD HAS BEEN TRYING TO SAY!!"

After I had explained the above insights he said, "Now I see what God has been trying to say to me all these times! I never thought of the negative traits I've been demonstrating to everyone. I felt so self-righteous about wanting to be on time."

That afternoon he gathered his family together and first of all addressed his two children. Looking his six-year-old in the eyes he said, "Son, I want you to know that Mommy didn't do anything wrong last night. It was your Dad who was wrong for the way I acted toward Mommy and you." Then he looked to his wife and asked her forgiveness.

VISUALIZING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE

PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES

- Have you ever met someone and drawn a snap conclusion that you didn't like him, even though that person never wronged you and you had no occasion to offend him?

This type of situation usually reflects the fact that something about his personality subconsciously reminds me of certain personality traits to which I have reacted in the past.

How I related to each significant person in my developing years is directly related to my present degree of success in EFFECTIVELY RELATING to those God now has in my life. A person will never be able to have everyone like him. In fact, this is warned against in Luke 6:26. Nevertheless, it is important that we know how to respond to each individual in the same way Jesus Christ responded, whether he be an enemy or a friend. Luke 6:27-33.

"ONE TYPE OF PERSON I CAN'T STAND!"

While sitting at a luncheon one day, a minister sitting beside me said, "There's one type of person I can't stand!" I asked him who that person might be. He replied, "My boss - he's always bugging me about details! He has forms to fill out for everything I do and they're really a waste of time.

"WHICH OF YOUR PARENTS WAS LIKE THAT?"

As he elaborated, I asked him which of his parents was like that. He answered in surprise, "My mother! She was always bugging me about keeping my room clean, hanging up my clothes, etc."

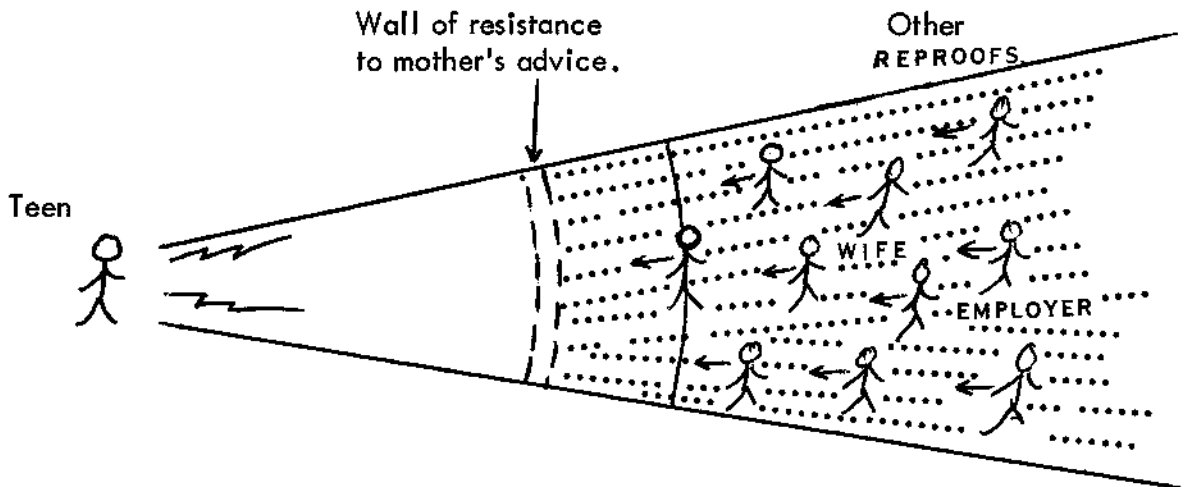
"I WOULD GUESS YOU MARRIED SOMEONE LIKE THAT!"

After a pause, I said, "I would imagine you married someone like that." He replied, "I did!"

● EACH PERSON REPRESENTS AN UNDERLYING OBJECTIVE OF GOD'S PURPOSE IN MY LIFE.

- "God knew who your employer would be, as well as your life partner. He wanted you to have a successful life. Because he did, he gave you a mother who paid special attention to details."

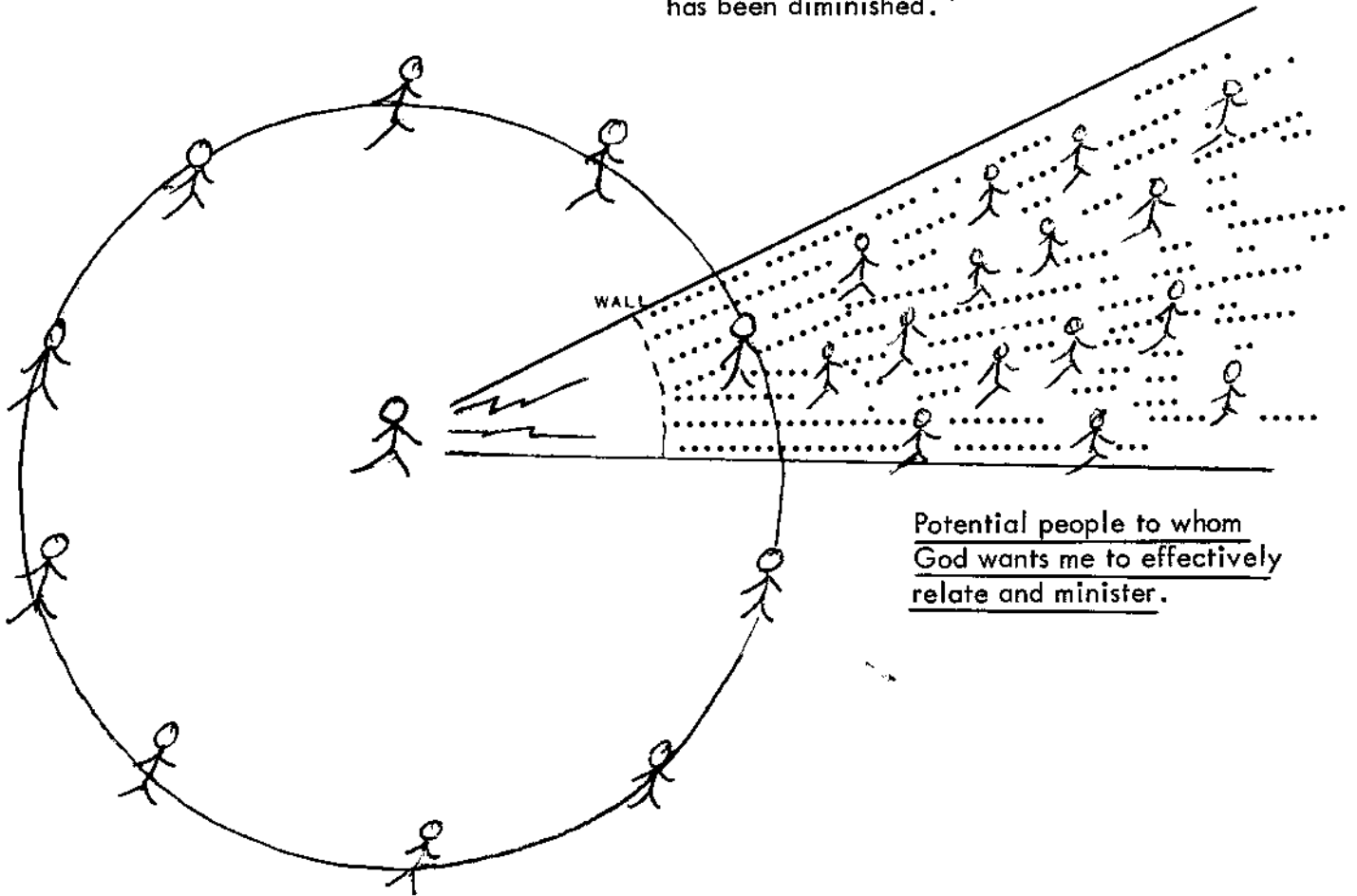
WHEN I REACT:



"When you reacted to your mother's instruction, that did not change God's goals in this area of your life. He raised up others with similar characteristics, most of whom didn't have your best interests at heart as did your mother. You react to them on impulse. As a result - up to this point - the one God intended for you to love (your wife) is a constant irritation to you as are others whom you reject, because you never learned the lesson God was trying to teach you through your mother."

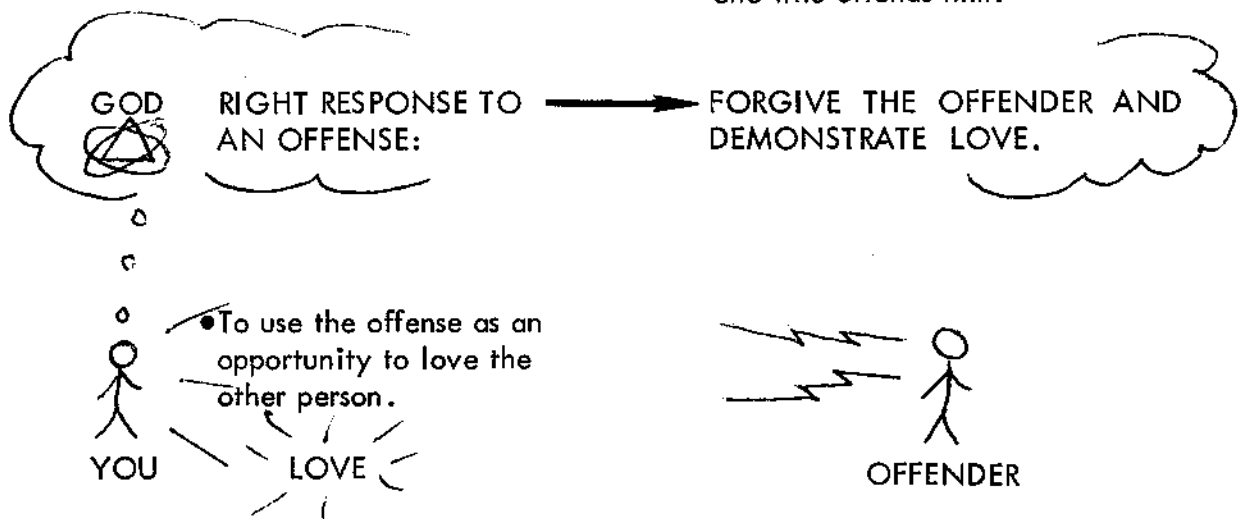
AN EFFECTIVE MINISTRY?

"Suppose there were ten significant people in your life in your developing years. If you failed to respond to one of those individuals, 10% of your potential ministry in relating to others has been diminished."

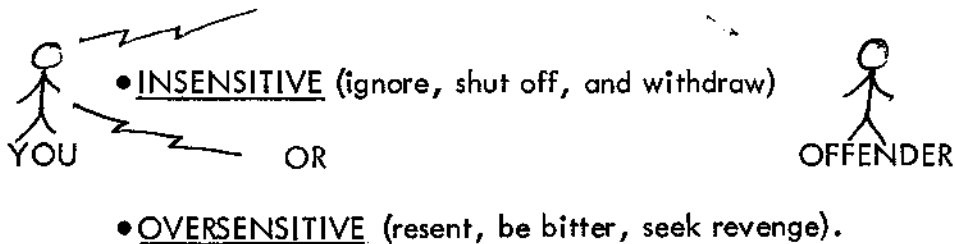


GOD'S PURPOSE FOR OFFENSES

- ☛ God's purpose in allowing a Christian to be wounded or offended by others is to provide an opportunity for him to be sensitive to the needs of the one who offends him.



☛ WHEN I FAIL TO COOPERATE WITH GOD'S PURPOSES, I WILL EITHER BECOME



One of the most difficult offenses to forgive is betrayal by a friend or unfaithfulness in a mate. Jesus Christ was betrayed by one with whom he had shared the active years of his life. David expressed the terrible hurt of betrayal by a friend in Psalm 55:12-14:

For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

In these days unfaithfulness in a mate is prevalent. Heartbroken and embittered, a man or a woman will share what he or she has just discovered or has known for a long time and now can't take any more. Though the offender is wrong for his sin and unfaithfulness, it is important for the offended individual to realize that GOD will deal with the offender's sin.

Now the focus must be turned to the responsibility of the one offended - how he or she will cooperate with God's purposes for his or her life through this great offense.

We have stressed that, when wounded, God requires forgiveness and love. Jesus Christ was our example. He could still say, "Father, forgive them."

Invariably, careful questioning will reveal that the offended mate has been very insensitive in the past to real needs of the offending mate. The offending mate can readily identify areas of insensitivity! God has tried to get the offended mate to be sensitive but to no avail. Now the real shocker has occurred and the Christian must decide: Will I follow the Lord, or use this as an excuse to quit?

A bitter and wounded person must look at the situation from God's point of view. Otherwise, the many consequences of bitterness will eat away at his whole being and affect others as well. Hebrews 12:15-17

Freedom from bitterness comes through forgiveness. But forgiveness is often difficult until we see God's purposes for the offense.

INSIGHTS INTO FORGIVENESS

- The following insights are designed to help a person deal with bitterness in his life:

1. LEARN TO DISTINGUISH BITTERNESS FROM WOUNDS.

When a person is offended and becomes bitter, his emotional response toward the offender is to get even and hurt him. Scripture says that forgiveness is the only means to freedom.

The deep hurt that results from a deep wound oftentimes produces frustration in an individual. He may claim to have forgiven the other and then pretend that everything is fine, when it really isn't.

- THE WOUND: When the offended has forgiven the offender by relinquishing his rights to get even and has given love in return, he can be confident that the "hurt" will diminish as his sensitivity toward the offender increases. It will disappear when the wound has been "healed". Healing occurs as the person sees how that experience was used of God in his life and therefore he can thank God for the experience. As one husband said, "What I thought was so devastating that I would never recover was God's tool to get me to wake up to the needs of my wife and family! Since I have gotten my priorities straightened out, we have a love toward one another that will match any happy family."

• THE HEALING MUST BE FROM THE INSIDE OUT!

If a person is stabbed with a knife, the pain from the wound remains long after the knife has been withdrawn. Whether or not the wound heals properly will depend on the treatment it receives; the presence of harmful germs may cause infection. For a person to try and forgive before he can visualize God's purposes for the offense would be similar to putting a bandage on the surface without dealing with the real problem. A deep wound must heal from the inside out, and that is only possible when the infectious germs have been destroyed.

2. DISTINGUISH FORGIVENESS FROM PARDON

- PARDON deals with the consequences of his offense. Unless we have the authority we cannot pardon an offense, but we can always forgive.

- FORGIVENESS:
 - a. Deals with our emotional response toward an offender.
 - b. Means "clearing his record" with us and transferring to God the responsibility for any punishment.
 - c. Will enable us to have the same openness toward him after he offends us as we had before he offended us.

- 3. FORGIVENESS INVOLVES FOCUSING ON THE OFFENSE COMMITTED INSTEAD OF THE OFFENDER. The key is to realize that my response to what has happened to me is far more important to God than the offense itself or the person through whom the offense came.

- 4. FORGIVENESS IDENTIFIES THE OFFENDER WITH AN UNDERLYING PURPOSE OF GOD IN MY LIFE. David in the Psalms viewed the wicked as God's sword and men of the world as His hand. God's hand is not shortened that he cannot take the greater (apparent) catastrophe and transform it for His glory:
 - "...beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." Isaiah 61:3

- 5. FORGIVENESS LOOKS AT THE WOUNDS OF THE OFFENSE AS GOD'S WAY OF GETTING THE OFFENDED TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE OFFENDER.
 - "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; If he thirst, give him to drink. For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Don't allow yourself to be overpowered by evil. Take the offensive - overpower evil with good." Romans 12:20, 21 (Phillips)

- 6. TO FORGIVE YIELDS TO GOD THE RIGHT TO DEAL WITH THE OFFENDER'S OFFENSES.
 - "As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone. Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends: stand back and let God punish if he will. For it is written: Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense." Romans 12:18, 19 (Phillips)

- 7. FORGIVENESS REALIZES THAT THE OFFENDER HAS ALREADY BEGUN RECEIVING THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS OFFENSE. A person cannot offend another without suffering guilt. The very fact that he offends another illustrates that his life is not in harmony with God's principles. Jesus clearly emphasized that the offenses will be dealt with:
 - "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Matthew 18:7

- "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Matthew 18:6

8. FORGIVENESS INVOLVES COOPERATING WITH GOD IN THE OFFENDER'S LIFE.
Many an individual has been meant to be ushered into the kingdom of God by the forgiveness of a Christian. Many individuals are in deep despair because they feel they have committed too great a sin for God to forgive. When a human being is willing to forgive them and accept them as they are, it is easy for them to visualize that God would also forgive them.

On the other hand, when a Christian won't forgive another, the offender's ability to conceive of God forgiving him is diminished.

**RENEWING
YOUR
MIND**

Spirit → melody
Soul → Harmony
Body → Rhythm

Satan was the chief musician
of Heaven before the fall.
Ezek. 28:13

Sensual music

Body → Rhythm
Soul → Harmony
Spirit → melody

the part of the brain that
receives music is a separate
circuit from the part of the
brain that thinks.

any music that doesn't produce legitimate
christian emotions will destroy a person's spiritual
life.

WHAT IS

MEDITATION?

❶ Meditation is the spiritual and mental process of digesting Scripture so that it becomes a living part of a person's life.

I COULDN'T MAKE GOD'S WORD "LIVE."

For years I tried to make God's Word real to me and relevant to practical living. I studied Scripture by many methods; most of them seemed to have some value, but none had quite what I was looking for. I had also heard about the value of "meditation", so one afternoon I went for a drive to a secluded spot to try what I thought was "meditation."

My idea was to get alone and think about God. But, since God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere around me, I ran out of thoughts very quickly and set aside the project.

MEDITATION CAN BE COMPARED TO A COW CHEWING HER CUD.

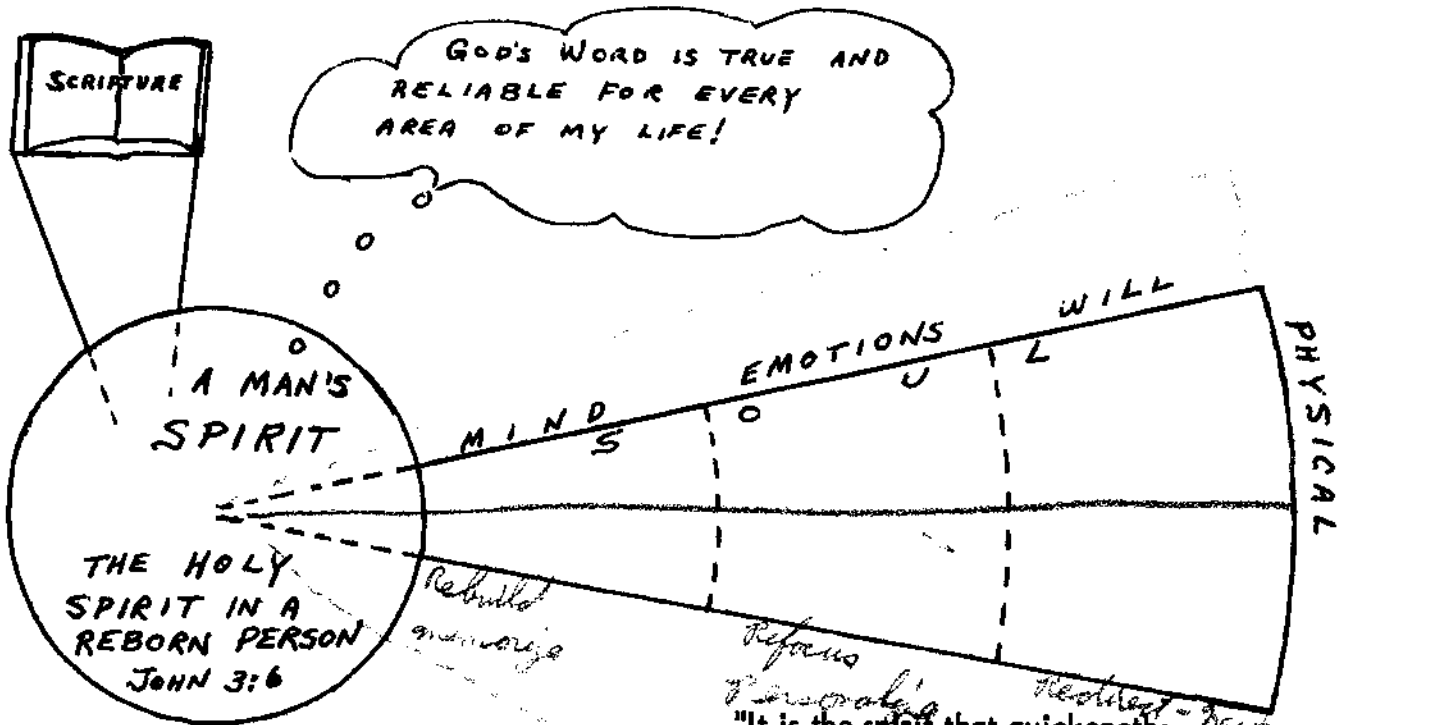
One day a friend pointed out that meditation is not thinking my thoughts about God, but rather taking God's thoughts and thinking about them. It is very much like a cow chewing her cud. She has to take in food before she has anything to digest. In the digestion process she ruminates her food over and over until it is completely digested. God has stated, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Deuteronomy 8:3 and Luke 4:4.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

● The intake of God's Word is accomplished, not through the physical or mental faculties of a man, but through his spirit.

A PERSON IS SENSITIVE TO THREE WORLDS - HIS SPIRITUAL, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL SYSTEMS.

THE FUNCTION OF **THE SPIRIT**



● THE WORD OF GOD IS THE WEAPON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

John 6: 63

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Ephesians 6 : 17

● THE SPIRIT OF A MAN IS THE FACULTY THAT CONFIRMS THAT SCRIPTURE IS GOD'S WORD.

This is only possible if an individual has received the Holy Spirit of God into his spirit.

● A REBORN PERSON "KNOWS" GOD'S WORD IS TRUE!

He received God's Word into his spirit.

Related Scriptures

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard (physical), neither have entered into the heart of man (rational and emotional elements), the things which God has prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 1 Cor. 2: 9, 10, 12

● HOW FAR BEYOND MY SPIRIT HAS GOD'S WORD PENETRATED INTO MY LIFE?

God wants His light to penetrate from our spirit through our whole being.

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul (mental) and spirit (spiritual), and of the joints and marrow (physical), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Hebrews 4: 12

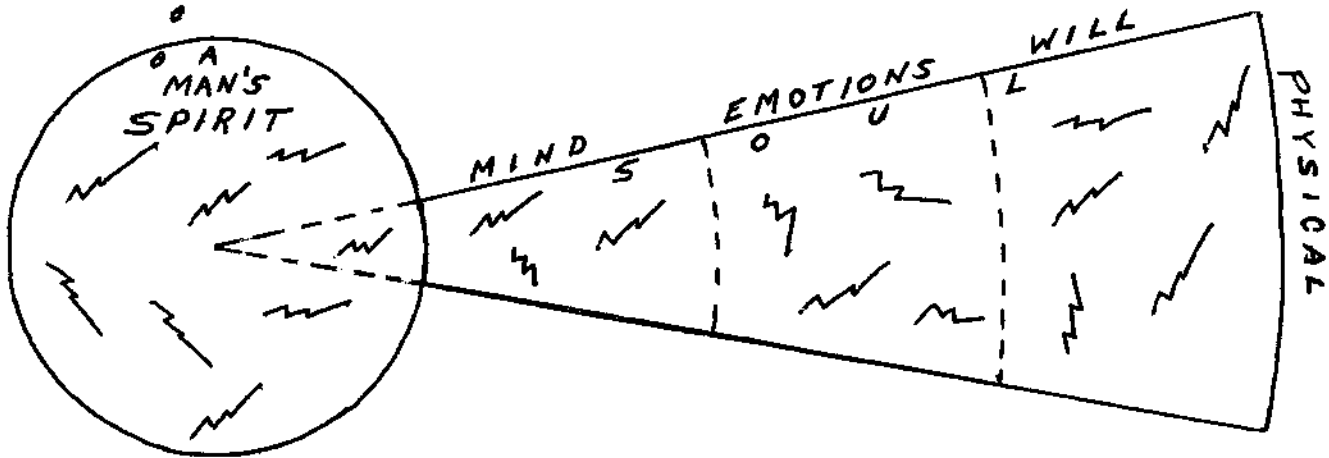
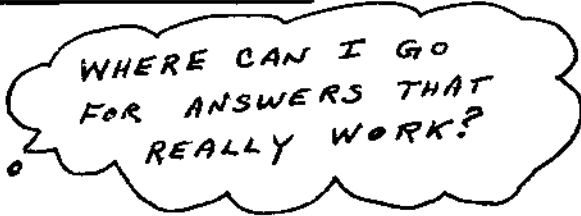
● A PERSON HAS FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IN HIS SPIRIT.

"God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24

THE SOUL:

● BEFORE CONVERSION:

A PERSON HAS NO RESOURCE THAT WILL PROVIDE PERMANENT SOLUTIONS FOR HIS PROBLEMS.



● A MAN WILL TRY TO SOLVE HIS OWN PROBLEMS, WHILE REJECTING GOD'S PRINCIPLES FOR HIS LIFE.

● IT IS FUTILE TO TRY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS ON THE BASIS OF MAN'S WISDOM.

"The preaching of the cross is, I know, nonsense to those who are involved in this dying world, . . . It is written:

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the prudence of the prudent will I reject.

"For who could really understand a man's inmost thoughts except the spirit of the man himself? How much less could any one understand the thoughts of God except the very Spirit of God?"

For consider, what have the philosopher, the writer, and the critic of this world to show for all their wisdom? For it was after the world in its wisdom had failed to know God, that he (God) in his wisdom chose to save all who would believe by the 'simplemindedness' of the gospel message."

1 Corinthians 1:18-21(Phillips)

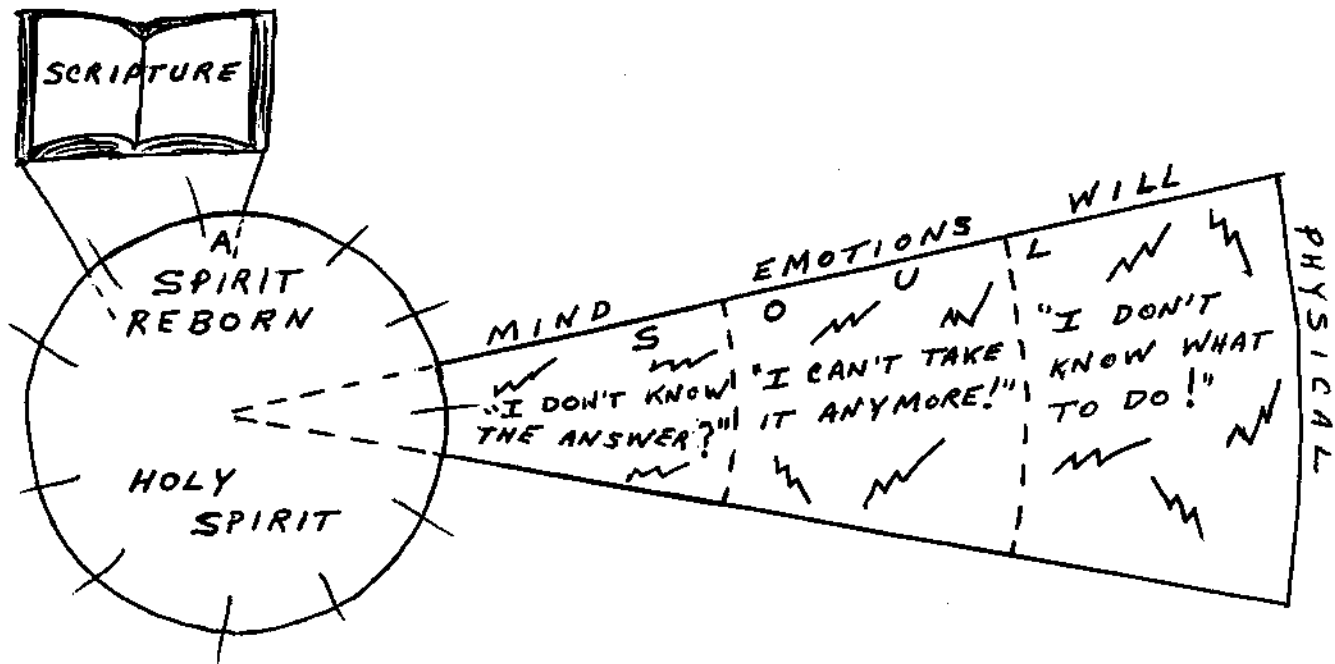
But the unspiritual man simply cannot accept the matters which the Spirit deals with - they just don't make sense to him, for, after all, you must be spiritual to see spiritual things. "

1 Corinthians 2:11, 14

See also James 3: 13-17.

● AFTER CONVERSION:

THERE ARE STILL CONFLICTING THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS, AND DECISIONS:



● THE PROCESS OF MEDITATION IS LIKE LEARNING A LANGUAGE

There are three steps to learning a language. A person does not really know the language until he has reached the third step.

Suppose a person is learning French:

- FIRST: The person hears someone else speaking French. To understand at this level he must take the words he hears and find the English equivalent.
- SECOND: The person wants to express himself in French. In order to do that he must translate the English into French and repeat the words in French. At this level the person still sees an "English picture."
- THIRD: By familiarization, the individual begins to actually think French thoughts; subsequently he will express French thoughts without the first two steps.

If a person reads a passage of Scripture and certain verses don't seem to make sense, this usually indicates that he is not thinking God's thoughts on that subject. If he were, those verses would be the next thoughts in his mind.

HOW TO MEDITATE:

1. REBUILD MY THOUGHT STRUCTURE by taking a whole section of Scripture from my spirit into my mind and memorizing the passage word-perfect.

The passage that is chosen should be related to a specific personal need. (See suggested selections, page 19.) Continue to work on this passage until it becomes a natural expression of my life.

2. STABILIZE MY EMOTIONS by taking the same Scripture into my emotions. Personalize it by expressing the same thoughts in the first person singular.

3. DRAW NEW CONCLUSIONS AND MAKE NEW DECISIONS by taking the same Scripture into my will and basing my actions upon it.

● WHEN TO MEDITATE? FOUR TIMES A DAY.

There are four significant occasions in the course of a day when a person is to turn his thoughts back to the Lord. These times are

- WHEN I SIT IN MY HOUSE
- WHEN I WALK IN THE WAY
- WHEN I GO TO BED
- WHEN I GET UP IN THE MORNING

Deuteronomy 6:7

Spiritual & mental process of allegorizing scripture so that it actually becomes a living part of a person's life.
When is this?
your thought time.

● MOTIVATION FOR

GETTING

STARTED:

● CONSIDER MAKING A VOW TO MEDITATE IN GOD'S WORD DAILY.

☛ "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?"

Ecclesiastes 5: 4-6

A person may think, "If I don't make a vow, then I can't break it." But when a person realizes the seriousness of a vow to God; and once he makes it, the vow becomes a motivation to continue at any cost.

A person is to meditate in his "spare thought time", when his mind is free from responsibility and more susceptible to temptations and defeat.

A distinct indication of a maturing Christian life is to naturally turn thoughts back to the Lord, rather than letting the time idly pass by.

● A NATURAL WAY TO BEGIN MEDITATION IS TO SING HYMNS.

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Ephesians 5: 19

This is especially effective when a person is facing a testing or temptation and finds himself unmotivated to turn his thoughts back to Scripture.

● SELECT KEY HYMNS AND CHORUSES THAT REALLY ENABLE YOU TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS TO GOD; MEMORIZE THEM.

A PROJECT FOR BEGINNING:

1. SELECT A SPECIFIC TIME (ONCE A WEEK) TO MEMORIZE (preferably with another person). Half an hour would be sufficient as you begin.
2. SELECT THE APPROPRIATE PORTION OF SCRIPTURE. Memorize all you can in that half hour. Don't spend time looking for insights. See how much you can memorize.
3. WRITE THE VERSES MEMORIZED ON A CARD. Suppose you memorized the first four verses - write them out and carry them with you wherever you go.
4. FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS: In each of the four spare thought times during the day, say the same four verses to yourself. Refer to your copy if you forget a phrase or two.
5. BEGIN TO PERSONALIZE THE VERSES. Now you know the verses backwards and forwards. The next four days are the exciting part! Make the verses a personal expression of your heart to the Lord:

INSTEAD OF :

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;
and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and
he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3: 5,6

NOW :

Lord, I am trusting in you with
all my heart. I will not rely on
my own ways; I will acknowledge
you and let you direct my steps.

6. NOW YOU'RE READY TO MEDITATE! For the remainder of the week, as you make God's thoughts your thoughts, begin to re-evaluate your life and to gain new insights into what God wants you to do, based on this portion of His Word. Note anything Scripture points out that is not true in your life and purpose with the Lord to make it a part of your life.

7. THE NEXT WEEK, spend another half hour memorizing as much as possible, beginning where you left off the previous week. In other words, if you memorized four verses last week, begin at verse 5 and go on. Continue this each week until the block passage is memorized. At the end of the half hour, many people find it meaningful to share the insights gleaned during the previous week with the others who are memorizing together.

☐ "If you live your life in me, and my words
live in your hearts, you can ask for whatever
you like and it will come true for you."
John 15:7 (Phillips)

Be sure you don't substitute meditation for studying God's Word daily. Scripture emphasizes over and over the need for personal prayer and study of the Word on a regular basis. Proverbs 8:34; Psalms 5:3; II Timothy 2:15; 3:16, 17

● AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT:

THOUGHT LIFE

● Passage - James 1:2-8(Phillips)

An illustration of how a young man was reacting to testings and temptations until he began meditating and saw his situation from God's point of view.

HIS THOUGHTS	GOD'S THOUGHTS	HIS REBUILT THOUGHT STRUCTURES
<p>I was always reacting to temptations in my thought life:</p> <p>"Why am I still tempted God, when I've given my life to you?"</p> <p>"If I didn't have these temptations, I could be a really victorious Christian."</p> <p>"These temptations are always pulling me down."</p> <p>"What's the use? There aren't any answers for this problem."</p>	<p>When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends !</p> <p>Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence.</p> <p>And if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem he has only to ask God - who gives generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty - and he may be quite sure that the necessary wisdom will be given him.</p>	<p>God says to welcome temptations - they're there for a purpose.</p> <p>They're in my life to test my faith and to produce a quality in me !</p> <p>God says that when I respond the right way they'll build me up!</p> <p>I'm looking forward to each situation as an opportunity to turn my mind back to the Lord.</p>

HIS THOUGHTS	GOD'S THOUGHTS	HIS REBUILT THOUGHT STRUCTURES
<p>"I have given the Lord every area of my life but this one. "</p>	<p>But he must ask in sincere faith without secret doubts as to whether he really wants God's help or not.</p> <p>The man who trusts God but with inward reservations is like a wave of the sea, carried forward by the wind one moment and driven back the next. That sort of man cannot hope to receive anything from the Lord, and the life of a man of divided loyalty will reveal instability at every turn.</p>	<p>No wonder I haven't felt the Lord was helping me. I'm going to trust him without any reservation !</p> <p>I have a new stability !</p>

Passage _____

● AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT: _____

MY THOUGHTS	GOD'S THOUGHTS	REBUILT THOUGHT STRUCTURES

THE RESULTS OF MEDITATION:

● A SUCCESSFUL AND PROSPEROUS LIFE

☞ "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Joshua 1:8

☞ "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Psalm 1: 2,3

● MORE INSIGHT THAN SECULAR TEACHERS

☞ "O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day . . . I understand more than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation." Psalm 119: 97, 100

● A POWER TO REFRAIN FROM SINNING

☞ "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word . . . Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." Psalms 119: 9, 11

● INSIGHT INTO HOW TO LIVE

"He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live." Proverbs 4:4

● A SUCCESSFUL LIFE THAT OTHERS WILL SEE

- "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."
1 Timothy 4: 15

● A CONFIDENCE TO ASK GOD FOR SOMETHING AND KNOW HE WILL DO IT

- "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7

● A FULL, RICH AND PEACEFUL LIFE

- "My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments; . . . For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."
Proverbs 3: 1,2

● ABILITY TO KNOW GOD'S THOUGHTS

- "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee . . . then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Proverbs 2: 1, 5

● PURITY IN THE THOUGHT LIFE AND POWER TO RESIST TEMPTATION

- "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments, . . . that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger who flattereth with her words." Proverbs 7: 15

SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

IN WHICH A PERSON SHOULD MEDITATE:

- Many conditions of mental illness, frustration, discouragement and defeat are a direct result of failing to identify situations in which God wanted the individual to turn his whole attention to Him.

God will use conflicting thought patterns to draw a person into His Word.

- Conflicts in his mind - to search for knowledge
- emotions - to turn heartaches over to Him
- will - to make the right decisions

● DURING DISTRESS OR CRISIS - A KEY TO MENTAL STABILITY

- "Princes also did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." Psalms 119:23
- "My eyes anticipate the night watches and I am awake before the cry of the watchman, that I might meditate on your Word. Hear my voice according to your steadfast love. O Lord, quicken me and give me life, according to your (righteous) decree." Psalm 119:148,149 (Amplified)

● DURING PERIODS OF DEPRESSION - SPIRITUAL VICTORY

"In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.
My sore ran in the night, and ceased not;
my soul refused to be comforted.

I will remember the works of the Lord; surely
I will remember thy wonders of old. I will
meditate also of all thy work, and talk of
thy doings." Psalms 77: 2,11, 12

• WHEN OPPRESSED BY THOSE WHO HATE YOU

☐ "Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause; but I will meditate in thy precepts." Psalm 119:78

• WHEN OTHERS OPPOSE YOU - KNOWING HOW TO ANSWER

☐ "So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me; for I trust in thy word... My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved: and I will meditate in thy statutes." Psalm 119:42,48

☐ "My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding."
Psalm 49:3

☐ "Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me." Psalm 119:97, 98

• WHEN YOU SEEK TO DISCERN GOD'S WILL

☐ "With my whole heart have I sought thee; oh let me not wander from thy commandments . . . I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways." Psalm 119:10, 15

• WHEN YOU NEED CONFIDENCE - GOD IS BIGGER THAN YOUR SITUATION

"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore, in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me. But those who seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes. But the king shall rejoice in God; everyone that sweareth by him shall glory, but the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped."

Psalms 63: 5-11

● BEFORE MARRIAGE - FOR RIGHT THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES

While Rebekah was traveling from her homeland to become the wife of Isaac, the Scripture records the following:

- "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel." Genesis 24:63, 64

Shortly thereafter they were married.

● WHEN YOU LONG TO PLEASE THE LORD

- "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." Psalms 19:14
- "My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." Psalms 104:34

SUGGESTED PORTIONS FOR MEMORIZATION AND MEDITATION ACCORDING TO PERSONAL NEEDS.
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<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>
● Discerning God's Will	Romans 12
● Relating to Chastening	Hebrews 12: 1 - 17
● Responding to Sources of Irritation	I Peter 2: 18 - 27
● Getting along with Other People	James 4
● Dating Standards	I Thessalonians 4 (Phillips)
● Conflict of the Old and the New Natures	Galatians 5 Romans 6, 7, 8
● Temptation	James 1 (Phillips)
● Genuine Love	I Corinthians 13
● Christ's Own Words	Matthew 5, 6, 7
● Values	Colossians 3
● Insight into Everyday Problems	Entire Book of Proverbs
● Faith	Hebrews 11
● Overcoming Worry	Philippians 4
● Suffering	I Peter 3: 14 - 4: 19
● Following the Lord	Ephesians 5: 1 - 20
● Giving	II Corinthians 9
● Qualities for Development	II Peter 1:4 - 9 (Phillips)
● Empathizing with Others	II Corinthians 1: 3 - 7 (Phillips)
● Man's Wisdom vs God's Wisdom	I Corinthians 2

THE IMPORTANCE OF

THE PSALMS

- GOD wants each person to be sensitive to the emotions and needs of other people. Most people are sensitive to only a small number of people. The average Christian needs to increase his sensitivity to others.

● HOW DOES GOD INCREASE THE SPECTRUM OF SENSITIVITY IN A PERSON'S LIFE AND MAKE HIM MORE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS?

- GOD BREAKS A PERSON'S HEART
He will allow a person to experience the same emotions that others around him feel - not necessarily to the same degree, but the same kind of emotions.

David was "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22). The Psalms express the very heart of God; they should also express the individual's heart. If a person were to evaluate all the psalms and line them up from the highest emotion to the lowest depression, he would find they express the total spectrum of human emotions.

God often allows situations to develop that will expose a person to new areas of this spectrum; thus he may gain a broader sensitivity and insight into the feelings of others, if he is open to the opportunity. If he shuts it out, he will become insensitive to others and simultaneously oversensitive about their reactions to him. From God's point of view, the Psalms give insight concerning how He wants the individual to respond in each kind of situation.

PROJECT:

- "Lord, I want to be sensitive to those around me, therefore, break me and allow me to express my thoughts through your words."

God is saying that there is something very valuable to learn when He says :

- ☐ "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in PSALMS and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Ephesians 5: 18, 19

LISTED BELOW ARE SOME PSALMS which express specific personal needs or expressions of the heart to the Lord. As the Lord allows you to experience new situations, you are encouraged to add to the list.

<u>SITUATION:</u>	<u>PSALM:</u>
• Meditation	1
• Lying In Bed	4, 63
• Before Falling Asleep	5
• Worship	19
• Confidence in God's Ability to Lead	23
• Crying unto the Lord	25
• Responding to False Accusations	35
• Depression	42, 43
• Feeling the Lord Has Forgotten You	44
• Security in Trouble	46

<u>SITUATION:</u>	<u>PSALM:</u>
● God's Power	47
● False Values	49
● Confessing Sin	51
● Feeling Offended by a Close Friend	55
● Envyng the Wicked	73
● Courage	91
● Praise	100
● Praising the Lord for His Goodness	107
● Development of a Godly Man	119
● Family	127, 128
● God's Omniscience and Self Acceptance	139
● Praising the Lord with Music	150

evil produces a negative, critical, condemning spirit.

CONSEQUENCES OF A WOUNDED SPIRIT

PARENT'S RESPONSE	VISIBLE ATTITUDES	INWARD RESPONSES
Inconsistent to Problem Prov. 18:12	superficial communication	refuses to forgive Heb. 12:15
anxiety over attitude	Indifferent (lazy)	Loses respect II Tim. 3:2
Becomes Legalistic eph. 6:4	Stubborn	Resists authority I Sam. 15:23
Intensifies demands	initiates conflicts	Rebellious Justifies guilt Prov. 29:22
verifies suspicions	wrong associations	compensation for void P. Lil. 3:19
attacks value system	Defensive	frustration over double life Prov. 19:3
justifies own actions	Openly condemns	guilt intensifies Rom. 2:1
outwardly gives up/ inwardly sneers Prov. 10:1,5	Physical Emotional Problems	total irresponsibility escape prov. 13:13

**DEVELOPING
TRANSPARENCY**

Transparency

Definition -

An inner joy + peace of spirit which results from having made all personal wrongs right with those whom a person has offended.

1. When we apply God's solution

1. all men have consciences, sensitive to universal truths. Rom. 2: 14, 15"
2. Sensitive to God's nature. Rom. 1: 18-20
3. Disobedience produces guilt
4. Man seeks to hide guilt
5. A man can see his conscience. 1 Tim. 4: 2

dealing with guilt

1. List in order of importance, the things which I wished had not happened.

note:

any apology which reflects pride or blame toward the other person will result in additional "walls"

steps to correct"

1.

- A. Things I wish had never happened
- B. People who dislike me
- C. Times my life has failed to be the

example of a Christian to others.
D. Dishonesty or disobedience

3. Go back to each one with an attitude of contrition

4. Avoid wrong approaches

5. Take total responsibility for the wrongs

THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

- There are two weapons essential for spiritual battle, our faith and a clear conscience! Paul warns that neglect of these will result in personal defeat.

☐ *"I . . . SENT YOU OUT TO BATTLE FOR THE RIGHT ARMED ONLY WITH YOUR FAITH AND A CLEAR CONSCIENCE. Some alas have laid these simple weapons contemptuously aside, and as far as their faith is concerned, have run their ships on the rocks."
I Timothy 1:18,19(Phillips)*

MY CHRISTIAN LIFE DIDN'T WORK!

I had been in the ministry for several years, really trying to help people and get them to commit their lives to Jesus Christ. In spite of the fact that there were some positive responses, my own life seemed to be decaying on the inside. My attitude was always critical toward others and quite condemning toward my wife. The more I spoke, the less convinced I was that Jesus Christ had the answers to my problems.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A PHONEY.

Disillusioned with the hypocrisy, I entertained ideas of quitting the ministry. "Sooner or later," I thought, "others are going to discover it isn't working for me, so why not be honest with myself and get out now?"

THERE WERE ANSWERS MISSING IN SOME VITAL AREAS.

In personal conferences with teens I became acutely aware of my inability to help them in certain areas, especially the areas of morals, stealing, and resentments toward certain types of people. I prayed earnestly to the Lord for help and wisdom, but never felt I was getting the answers.

I REACTED VIOLENTLY INSIDE WHEN I HEARD THE WORD
CONSCIENCE!

I attended the first seminar Bill Gothard conducted at Wheaton College. Bill and I had shared many insights together in the previous years and I had brought several friends to the seminar. I thought I knew everything he was going to talk about, so I was looking forward to two easy hours of Graduate credit. Then Bill began speaking on the importance of a clear conscience! My previous schooling had given me the subconscious idea that the conscience was a dangerous subject, not to be tampered with!

HE'S WRONG!

Inwardly I reacted, "If he thinks he's going to get on the inside of me and dig up my past, he's crazy!" It seemed like there were hundreds of people I had wronged. I would have to spend my lifetime apologizing. Then he began to share illustrations of the freedom gained each time he had made a wrong right. By the end of the lecture I was excited! I could visualize the freedom I would have if I would go back and ask forgiveness of those I had wronged!

WHAT I THOUGHT WAS PERMANENT DEFEAT WAS TURNED INTO
SPONTANEOUS JOY!

As I drove away from the seminar, I decided I should make a list of those whom I had wronged, starting with the most important things that bothered me. It was not hard to begin because a couple of situations were constantly on my mind. When I finished, there were only eight things. "That can't be right," I thought. There must be more!" I carefully thought back but couldn't add to the list. I realized that these few areas of guilt had been crisscrossing my mind in so many ways that I thought there were hundreds. were hundreds.

EACH OFFENSE MADE RIGHT RESULTED IN A NEW INWARD FREEDOM!

I went back to those I had offended. Soon new avenues of ministry were opening to me. I could help the fellow with his stealing; there were new insights to share in clearing up the thought life and a new beginning in my marriage!

• *"And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you
free. If the Son therefore
shall make you free, ye shall
be free indeed."*

John 8: 32,36

SCRIPTURES RELATED TO

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE:

- OUR MINISTRY CAN BE STRAIGHT FORWARD.

● "HAVING RENOUNCED THE HIDDEN THINGS OF DISHONESTY, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully" "This is the ministry God has given us and nothing can daunt us. We use no hocus-pocus, no clever tricks, no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God. We speak the plain truth and so commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
II Cor. 4:1,2 (K.J. & Phillips)

- IT IS A KEY TO CONFIDENCE IN APPROACHING GOD WITH OUR PETITIONS.

● "So by virtue of the blood of Jesus you may now have confidence to enter into the Holy of Holies by a fresh and living way!...Let us draw near with TRUE HEARTS AND FULLEST CONFIDENCE KNOWING THAT OUR CONSCIENCE HAS BEEN PURIFIED by the sprinkling of His Blood." Heb. 10:19,22 (Phillips)

- THE CONSCIENCE CAN BE CLEANSED FROM DEAD WORKS.

● "How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, PURGE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS to serve the living God?"
Hebrews 9:14

- IT IS REQUISITE FOR SERVICE FOR GOD.

● "I thank God, the God of my forefathers whom I SERVE WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE, . . ."
II Tim. 1:3 (Phillips)

- IT IS A MEANS TO PRODUCING GENUINE LOVE.

● "The ultimate aim of the Christian ministry, after all, is to produce the LOVE which springs from A PURE HEART, A GOOD CONSCIENCE, and a GENUINE FAITH. Some seem to have forgotten this and have lost themselves in endless words." I Tim. 1:5,6a (Phillips)

- IT IS A PREREQUISITE FOR EFFECTIVELY SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS.

● "Be ready at any time to give a quiet and reverent answer to any man who wants a reason for the hope that you have within you. MAKE SURE YOUR CONSCIENCE IS PERFECTLY CLEAR, so that if men should speak slanderously of you as rogues they may come to feel ashamed of themselves for libeling your good Christian behavior." I Peter 3:15,16 (Phillips)

WHAT IS THE CONSCIENCE?

The conscience is the faculty within the spirit of a man which is sensitive to innate truth. This is clearly emphasized in Scripture. The basic qualities of God's nature are innate truth. Below are related Scriptures:

- ALL MEN HAVE CONSCIENCES SENSITIVE TO UNIVERSAL TRUTHS.

● "When the Gentiles who have no knowledge of the law (basic principles of God) act in accordance with it by the LIGHT OF NATURE, they show that they have a law IN THEMSELVES, for they demonstrate the effect of a law operating in their own hearts. THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES endorse the existence of such a law, for there is something which condemns or excuses their actions."
Romans 2:14,15 (Phillips)

- SENSITIVITY TO GOD'S NATURE IS UNIVERSAL.

● "For the wrath of God is REVEALED from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who HOLD THE TRUTH in unrighteousness; because that WHICH MAY BE KNOWN OF GOD IS MANIFEST IN THEM: for God hath showed it unto them. . . . even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" Rom. 1:18-20

● JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIGHT IN A PERSON.

● "That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9

● FAITH IS THE PRINCIPLE UPON WHICH THE SPIRIT OF A MAN OPERATES. The psycholological sphere operates on the principle of logic and the physical upon the principle of the senses.

● DISOBEDIENCE PRODUCES GUILT.

A spiritual problem can only be solved as an individual assumes his personal responsibility to God. The One who made us has set forth specific principles that were never intended to be violated. When these principles are violated, guilt results in the person's conscience. Even if he has rationalized or justified his actions in his mind, guilt will be produced in his conscience.

● A MAN CAN SEAR HIS CONSCIENCE.

A person who persists in his disobedience and refuses to heed his conscience will instinctively seek to "deaden" his conscience, to silence it, so he will not be continually distressed and annoyed by it. He resents its warnings before a deed is committed and its annoying restlessness afterwards. Scripture calls this "searing" the conscience.

● "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." I Tim. 4:2

● A PERSON MAY "SEAR" HIS CONSCIENCE IN VARIOUS WAYS:

1. ESCAPE - attempting to overthrow God's standards and hide from reality through drinking, sex perversion, drugs and sleep, etc.
2. COMPENSATION - seeking to balance his guilt with an overconcern for social or religious activity.
3. PREOCCUPATION - concentrating on his work to such an extent that he really feels successful, especially if his work is interesting and fascinating. He gives his mind no rest. He's afraid to allow his mind to be idle lest his guilt cause further conviction and unrest.
4. SELF DECEPTION - retionalizing and justifying his behavior. A person cannot live with guilt. Once the guilt has been "justified" he will condemn and blame others for his failures. He will convince himself that his way of reasoning is "right." He will give much attention to minor details and neglect the weightier matters of honesty, righteousness and judgment.

● A PERSON MUST DEAL WITH GUILT.

A person cannot ignore guilt. Either he will come to God, acknowledge his wrong and gain forgiveness; or he will seek to hide or rationalize his behavior.

When a man purposes to follow God's ways in dealing with guilt, rationalizations and fears that it won't turn out right will be hurled at him by Satan to keep him from victory and a meaningful relationship with God. II Tim. 2:21-26; II Cor 2:10-11

A STEP OF FAITH

(^u In spite of the rationalizations, it is important to realize that WHEN WE APPLY GOD'S SOLUTIONS WE WILL ALWAYS GET GOD'S RESPONSE!)

● WHEN A PERSON HAS SINNED AGAINST GOD, HE CONFESSES HIS SIN TO GOD.

● "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
I John 1:9

● WHEN A PERSON OFFENDS ANOTHER PERSON HE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THE WRONG TO THE PERSON HE OFFENDED AND ASK HIS FORGIVENESS.

● "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; (Why? because you have wronged him.) Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."
Matt. 5:23,24

The Apostle Paul emphasized this when he said,

● "And herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offense, toward GOD AND TOWARD MEN." Acts 24:16

DEFINITION:

A clear conscience is the inner joy and peace of spirit which results from having made all personal wrongs right with those whom a person has offended.

STEPS TO

GAINING A CLEAR CONSCIENCE:

1. PURPOSE TO CLEAR UP ALL OFFENSES AT ANY COST.

Satan will do everything in his power to hinder you from gaining a clear conscience. You must recognize any rationalizations as an attempt of Satan to keep you from gaining a clear conscience.

2. LIST OFFENSES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE.

The following questions will help in recalling the memory:

LIST:

☐ ARE THERE SOME THINGS WHICH HAVE HAPPENED IN MY PAST WHICH, EVERY TIME I RECALL, I WISH HAD NEVER HAPPENED?

☐ ARE THERE PEOPLE I KNOW WHO DISLIKE ME? IS IT BECAUSE OF SOME OFFENSE I HAVE COMMITTED AGAINST THEM?

☐ ARE THERE THOSE TOWARD WHOM MY LIFE HAS FAILED TO BE THE EXAMPLE OF A CHRISTIAN? (ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF MORALS)

☐ ARE THERE THOSE TO WHOSE AUTHORITY I HAVE FAILED TO RESPOND?

3. PURPOSE TO GO BACK TO EACH ONE WITH AN ATTITUDE OF CONTRITENESS.

It is essential, when you ask for forgiveness, that you reflect an attitude which assumes full responsibility for your wrongs! You may be 10% wrong and the other person 90% wrong; in gaining a clear conscience you are only concerned with your 10% of the wrong.

James expresses the attitude of brokenness one needs to sense and express in order to assume full responsibility for his own offenses toward another.

● "Be humble then before God. But resist the devil and you'll find he'll run away from you. Come close to God and he will come close to you. Realize that you have sinned and get your hands clean again. Realize that you have been disloyal and get your hearts made true once more. As you come close to God you should be deeply sorry, you should be grieved, you should even be in tears. Your laughter will have to become mourning, your high spirits will have to become heartfelt dejection. You will have to feel very small in the sight of God before he will set you on your feet once more."

James 4:7-10 (Phillips)

(This same attitude of humility toward the one you offended will assure him of your sincerity.)

- ANY FORMS OF APOLOGY WHICH REFLECT PRIDE OR BLAME TOWARD THE OTHER PERSON WILL RESULT IN ADDITIONAL "WALLS" BETWEEN ONE ANOTHER.

Such wrong approaches as "I was wrong but you were too," "I'm sorry," or "If I've been wrong, please forgive me" will reflect pride or blame and not be accepted by the one to whom they are spoken.

RIGHT APPROACH:

The two hardest sentences in the English language are:

I WAS WRONG IN _____ (Name the basic offense).
WILL YOU PLEASE FORGIVE ME?

● THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES AND CAUTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BEFORE ASKING FORGIVENESS:

1. SELECT A PROPER TIME AND PLACE.

Privacy should be available; the time, convenient for the other person.

2. EVALUATE:

(a) Do I first need to forgive the other person of any offenses toward me so my attitude toward him will be one of love, regardless of how he responds to me?

NOTE: Oftentimes a person thinks he should go back to an individual toward whom he has felt resentment or bitterness. THIS IS WRONG! Resentments and bitterness are overcome by sincerely forgiving the person for his offense (See "Insights into Forgiveness" in Responding to Irritations and Offenses.), not by going back. A person only asks forgiveness for actual (external) offenses he has committed against the other person.

(b) In order to realize and visualize how my wrongs offended the other person, have I relived my offenses toward him as though they were committed toward me?

(c) Have I identified the basic offense rather than the details of the offense?

NOTE: Scripture warns not to speak about personal or intimate details of sins.

• "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Eph. 5:12

(d) Do I have an ulterior motive such as trying to get him to change or getting rid of some of the blame against myself?

3. CONFESSION SHOULD BE EXPRESSED ONLY TO THOSE YOU HAVE OFFENDED.

For example, if a person has gossiped about another person and the person about whom he gossiped does not know about the gossip, he should not go to that person. He should go to the ones with whom he was gossiping. On the other hand, if the person being gossiped about should learn of the gossip, then confession should be made to him as well.

4. THE OTHER PERSON MAY NOT FORGIVE YOU.

When this happens, it is important to remember that you have dealt with your guilt but the other has not dealt with his. It will be essential to respond in love regardless of the other person's response. (See Responding to Irritations and Offenses; also Chain of Command in Marriage.)

5. IF IT IS A SITUATION OF IMMORALITY, avoid a personal confrontation or writing letters whenever possible. A brief and to the point phone call will be more effective. It reduces the temptation of rekindling old emotions and also protects you. A letter could get into the hands of someone who might not understand or who might misuse it.

6. WHEN THERE ARE SPECIAL SITUATIONS AND YOU DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW TO GO BACK AND MAKE THE OFFENSE RIGHT, DON'T TRY TO DO IT UNTIL YOU HAVE HAD ADEQUATE COUNSEL AND ADVICE.

But beware of those who refute or belittle the necessity of gaining a clear conscience!

D E V E L O P I N G

A P U R E

H E A R T

To receive by false reasoning

Passion

a strong moving of conscious & physical desires.

concupiscence

To maintain an extended interest on a person with a view to possess it:

Refracting

to cheat, take that to which you have no right, by calculated plans and manipulation

fornication

an intimate physical relationship with another not allowed by God.

Reprobation

spiritually & morally abolishing God's accepted standard.

Lasciviousness

To allow sinful desires to expand to their full limit without restraint.

Perversion

having desires twisted from natural inclinations

Beguilement

Definition

To deceive by false reasoning.

II Cor. 11:3

1. Hears a partial fact - builds thoughts on wrong ideas.
2. Imagines the motives toward Him/Her are negative.
3. Draws false conclusions + speculates.
4. emotions control reasoning.

"How to correct"

1. Recognize beguilement is a direct attack of satan.
2. reject the temptation to imagine or speculate
3. when tempted, turn mind + emotions to God thru music
4. meditate on key scriptures.

"isolating God's Order"

Defrauding

1 Thess. 4: 3-8

arousing the sex drives in another which can't righteously be satisfied!

Physical intimacy before
spiritual intimacy.

The degree to which defrauding occurs before marriage is directly related to the lack of intimacy after marriage.

INSIGHTS INTO MORAL PURITY

• The average person does not believe God has answers to his problems with sex and with his thought life. This disbelief is one of the major hindrances to totally committing his life to Jesus Christ.

When I ask teenagers what the scriptural terms defrauding, beguiling, lasciviousness, concupiscence and reprobation mean, the answer is invariably, "I don't know." When I ask how many know the difference between the facts of sex and the values of sex, the answer is the same. This indicates a lack of understanding into the basic insights of Scripture. Unless we visualize what God means by the words He uses, we will never "see things from His point of view" and thus gain insight into our own lives.

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• "God's plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect, and never regarding it as an instrument for self-gratification, as do pagans with no knowledge of God. You cannot break this rule without in some way cheating your fellow men. And you must remember that God will punish all who do offend in this matter, and we have warned you how we have seen this work out in our experiences of life. The calling of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity, and anyone who makes light of the matter is not making light of a man's ruling but of God's command. It is not for nothing that the Spirit God gives us is called the Holy Spirit."

1 Thess. 4:3-8 (Phillips)

The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of purity in a person's life. To violate God's principles will result in severe consequences. Many fail to realize that some of the most severe consequences are manifested in a devastating communication breakdown after marriage.

DEFAUD NOT ONE ANOTHER

Definition: to cheat, to deprive of a right or property to which you have no right.

In the context of the passage: defrauding is AROUSING IN ANOTHER, SEX DRIVES WHICH CANNOT RIGHTEOUSLY BE SATISFIED.

VIOLATING GOD'S ORDER

- Scripture points out that to develop a physical intimacy first is "cheating" the other person of the love that is rightfully theirs. The consequences are far more devastating than any "temporary pleasures" or justifications which at the time seem all right as long as the feelings are mutual.

☐ SATAN HAS A UNIQUE WAY OF REVERSING GOD'S ORDER:



BODY: underlying motive for fulfillment of personal physical desires.

MENTAL: justification and rationalization for physical violations, mistaking common interests and goals for a spiritual oneness.

SPIRIT: absence of a spiritual oneness, figuring this can come at a later time.

"There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12; 16:25

"A man can always 'prove' he is right, but is the Lord convinced." Proverbs 16:2

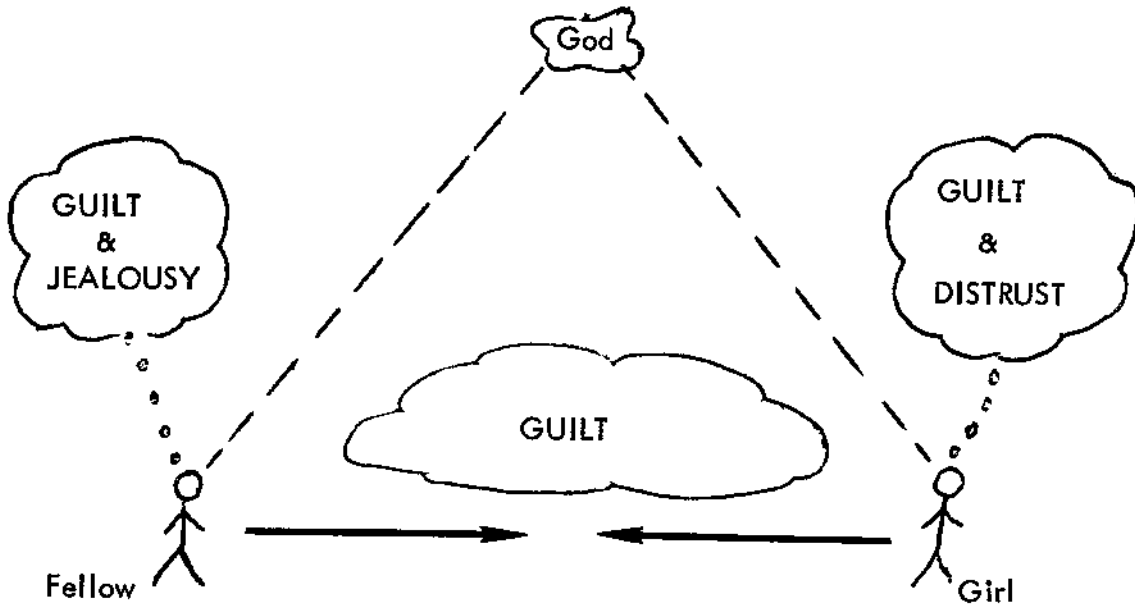
- ☐ The degree to which two people have defrauded one another before marriage is directly related to their inability to share their common faith and innermost feelings after marriage.

The very potential of a deepening love relationship is destroyed before marriage. This is usually not realized until after the marriage when they discover they're really like strangers to each other.

DEVELOPING


PHYSICAL INTIMACY

BEFORE SPIRITUAL INTIMACY



The tendency in dating is to develop a relationship on a physical plane. The more the two people become involved toward pre-marital sex, the greater will be the guilt, jealousy and seeds of distrust which are bred toward one another.

They each become keenly aware that their desires are not the same as the Lord's desires for them.

THE following illustration and diagram point out the effects that violated dating principles have before and after a marriage : 

PLANTING SEEDS OF DISTRUST

Here is an actual experience of how seeds of distrust were sown in a marriage through faulty dating standards:

- I WAS SURE I HAD MARRIED THE WRONG GIRL

After four years of marriage, I had come to the very strong conclusion that I had missed the Lord's will for my life partner. The crisis internally was getting so bad that I wanted to be out of the situation before it exploded externally.

Just the night before, my wife and I had had another big argument. The final blow in the argument came as she said in disgust, "Well, I've never won an argument yet. You're the one that's always right."

When she said that, my inward response was, "Look, you've seen a lot of improvement in my life since we've been married. There might be a little pride left, but I've come a long way."

- I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD LOVE HER

If someone had told me at that time that I would ever love my wife again, I would have told him he was crazy.

Soon after this, however, we visited my mother's home. She really surprised me one day by saying, "I can sure see why the Lord gave you the wife He did."

I distinctly remember saying to myself, "I'm glad you can because I sure can't!"

In those four years of marriage, there were many petty arguments. I soon learned that trying to solve them wasn't getting to the bottom because later on, we'd have another blow up, often over the same problem which I thought we had solved in an earlier argument. I couldn't figure out why this was happening to me. I was really frustrated.

- I SOON LEARNED WHAT THE REAL PROBLEM WAS

Soon I learned that the cause of our arguments lay in a problem way beneath the surface. In fact, the problem began even before we were married. It went back to my pattern of dating as a teen-ager.

In high school I had dated several girls. As a senior, I was engaged. But then I went to college. There I totally dedicated my life to Jesus Christ. When I came home from college, I tried to share this with my fiancée. I thought she would be overjoyed, but she said, "Does this mean you might be a minister?" "Yes." "A missionary?" "Yes."

It wasn't long before she was telling me she wouldn't like a family and cooking and housework, etc. - all the things we had discussed during our dating. I could see then that we didn't really even know one another. Soon the engagement was over.

With that experience, my dating life ended for awhile. During that time, the Lord was able to change my value system as far as what I was looking for in a wife. By the time I met my present wife, my value structure was toward the Lord and the things which would please Him. Hers was too. Soon we became engaged.

- I HAD PLANTED SEEDS OF DISTRUST DURING MY DATING

During this engagement, our relationship began developing on the physical level - beyond what I knew was appropriate at that time. I felt some guilt about this but justified myself by comparing what we were doing with what others were doing.

After marriage and more schooling, I entered the ministry. Soon I found myself doing quite a bit of counseling. Somehow, my wife didn't respect my counseling. In our discussions, I would try to teach her spiritual insights, and up would come her defense mechanisms. I couldn't understand why she was so resentful.

One day she revealed the cause of her resentment by saying, "You know, you went with a lot of girls before you met me, and we didn't go together long, but I know how you behaved in our dating. I'm just wondering what your behavior was with all those other girls."

- I WONDERED HOW SHE HAD LEARNED ABOUT MY PAST

This was two months after we were married. I wondered how she knew about these other girls since I had been careful not to mention them. I discovered that the very day I asked her to marry me, my little sister had told her all about the girls I had dated. Now, after two months of marriage, she was throwing this up to me. I could see that this was eating away at her confidence in me and in the things I had been saying.

I became angry and defensive. "Why are you bringing this up?" I snapped. "It happened before I dedicated my life to Christ!"

The argument continued, and everything she brought up, I lied about. That night I couldn't sleep. The problem wasn't solved then. It was only identified.

- I SAW HOW MY PRESENT WAS AFFECTED BY MY PAST

I began seeing how my present relationship with my wife was affected by my past dating. I saw that my lack of a clear conscience in this area forced me to compensate and pretend by maintaining a facade of religion and intellect. This facade only built up walls in our marriage.

I began to see that my inappropriate actions toward my wife before marriage broke down our ability to communicate with each other after marriage. I thought I was proving my love by my actions in dating, but I was only breeding seeds of distrust for our marriage.

- I TRIED TO CORRECT THE PROBLEM WITHOUT CORRECTING MY PAST

In my first attempts to solve this problem, I "turned over a new leaf in my own mind" and attempted to prove by my actions that I had changed. I felt I was making real progress in my Christian life but it seemed that every time I tried to bring this progress home, I blew it because we would get into another argument.

After these arguments, I would say to her, "If you read the Bible more, you could help me counsel more."

When this approach failed, I tried to solve the problem by buying her things. In spite of this, her whole attitude was, "He doesn't love me for anything but what I can do for him." She had this attitude because she had never seen any change in that one basic aspect of my life.

The effects that my problems had on her were overwhelming. She began to lose all her self-confidence and didn't feel that her opinion was worth anything. My reaction to her only made things worse. If she would give her opinion, I would tell her how she could have said it in a better way. She often said, "I just can never please you!"

- THE REAL SOLUTION BEGAN WHEN I HONESTLY FACED MY PAST

The solution began when the question was put to me, "Is it possible that there are things in your past that you wish had never happened?"

Immediately several things flashed across my mind. The first was, "I wish I had never married my wife!" The second was money I had stolen as a teen-ager. The third was my behavior with several girls whom I had dated. The fourth was a big argument with a deacon in the church where I had previously served.

When I heard the verse in 1 Timothy 1:19, I saw that it was a perfect picture of me:

"I...sent you out to battle for the right armed only with your faith and a clear conscience. Some, alas, have laid these simple weapons contemptuously aside and, as far as their faith is concerned, have run their ships on the rocks." (Phillips)

This is exactly what happened to my faith and my marriage. One of the indications that my faith was heading for the rocks was the fact that I had lost personal conviction over things which I once knew were wrong. As far as my marriage went, I was always able to blame my wife for the conflicts which arose.

As I reviewed my past and began to concentrate on the things that I had done wrong, with the prospect of making them right whatever the cost, I began to see for the first time how I was to blame for the problems we were having in our marriage.

I drove to a deserted picnic grove and made a list of the ones I knew I had to contact. Until now, I thought that there were hundreds I had wronged and that it would be impossible to ever make things right. But as I actually wrote out the list, there were primarily seven whom I knew were standing between me and a clear conscience.

• SHE NEVER SAW ME CRY BEFORE *

I thought over exactly how I had wronged each one, especially how I had deeply wronged my wife. By the time I reached home, I was in tears. (I don't believe my wife had ever seen me cry. In fact, I don't remember ever crying.) I began telling her how I had clearly seen that I was the cause of the problems in our marriage, and I proceeded to explain what I meant.

First, I told her that I had been deceptive and dishonest with her. When she saw my sincerity, it wasn't long before tears came to her eyes too. Then I suggested that she sit down because I had some other things to share with her that should also be taken care of.

"I hate to involve you in this, but since we're married, I guess you're involved anyway. I stole some money from my boss when I was in high school and you know we don't have the money to pay it back. In addition to this, there are several girls in my past that I need to ask forgiveness of. As you know, I wasn't the example of a Christian to them that I should have been."

When I said that, I could sense by her silent response an attitude of great release.

In spite of our tears, my joy was overwhelming, especially after clearing up the guilt with my former employer. My wife guided me with insight as to what was and what was not important to say to the girls I had wronged.

A new freedom and peace and confidence began to be present when we were together. As I continued to demonstrate consistency and honesty to my wife, I was surprised at the insight she had as we discussed other areas in our marriage relationship. A genuine love between us began to develop. Today I can truthfully say that I am more in love with her than I ever thought possible.

A ROOT CAUSE TO

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

IN A MARRIAGE *

	HIS INNER CONFLICTS	VISIBLE SYMPTOMS	HER INNER CONFLICTS
D A T I N G	Lasciviousness: He becomes interested in her through physical attraction.	They come together on a <u>physical level and disregard</u> the need for spiritual oneness.	<u>Defrauding</u> : She seeks to attract him through dress and actions.
	Faulty moral system: He feels the need to <u>prove his love and fears</u> losing her affection.	Each <u>rationalizes his behavior</u> . They withdraw from the group, desiring to be alone more.	She is more <u>concerned with his evaluation</u> of her than with her own moral standards; guilt is suppressed.
	He equates only sex with love. Expresses his <u>love only when physically or emotionally</u> involved.	Each is unable to discover the real self of the other. This results in <u>arguments, frequent breaking up, and re-defining</u> moral standards.	She breeds seeds of <u>distrust</u> in her response toward him.
M A R R I A G E	Views <u>marriage as an acceptable way to meet his physical drives</u> . Each tries to change the other.	Tells of his love for her only when they are physically involved or when he desires to be.	Develops frigidity. Communication break-down. Hurt when he forgets "important dates."
	Becomes angry as her coolness threatens the fulfillment of his physical drives.	Becomes more argumentative and demanding.	Withdraws. Worries. Loses self-confidence. Or becomes dominant, contentious.
	Becomes concerned about the need to regain her affection.	Buys material things. Attempts to appear happy. Financial problems result and increase conflicts.	Begins to substitute love of children, friends, possessions for husband's love.
	Entertains thoughts that he <u>married the wrong one</u> . Begins to breed seeds of <u>unfaithfulness</u> .	Goes his own way. Attempts to find fulfillment in his work or in others.	Becomes insensitive to others. Condemning, critical, suspicious of others, gossipy.
			Begins to internally question her husband's love, "The only reason he loves me is for what he can get out of me." Each feels like a stranger to the other.
			Senses inner guilt which comes from her inward concern that she has been unable to fulfill her role as a wife.
			Accepts the situation as it is. Feels God is punishing her because she isn't submissive, etc.
			<u>"Doesn't care."</u> Gives up.

* CAUSED BY MORAL IMPURITY

THE FOUNDATION FOR

INTIMACY AND SECURITY

IN MARRIAGE

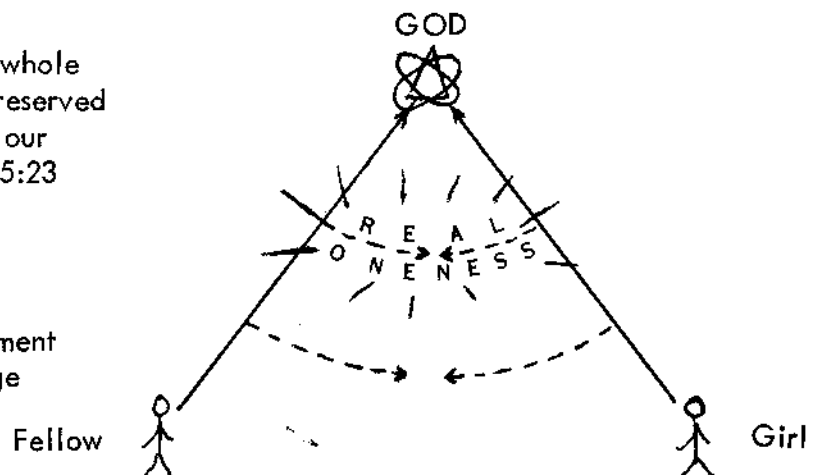
IS DEVELOPED DURING THE DATING AND ENGAGEMENT PERIODS.

- The basic purpose for a fellow and girl in dating is to develop a real intimacy of spirit (to discover the real self of the other).

When a fellow and girl date, his primary objective is to discover the girl who has as deep a commitment to Jesus Christ as he does; she seeks a fellow who has as great, if not a greater, love and commitment to Jesus Christ as she does. This must first be established before a more serious relationship, such as engagement, is entered.

" . . . and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23

- Oneness of Spirit - Dating
- Oneness of Mind - Engagement
- Oneness of Body - Marriage



THE CLOSER EACH INDIVIDUAL GETS TO THE LORD, the more each assumes his personal responsibilities in becoming the individual God wants him or her to be, the greater the freedom to develop a deepening friendship and fellowship between them.

NOTE: The word "friend" comes from the Germanic word which means "to love." A genuine relationship is based on what one has to give to the other rather than on what one "gets." Love can wait to give but lust can never wait to get.

STEPS TO CORRECT:

- 1.** ACKNOWLEDGE TO GOD YOUR SIN OF DEFRAUDING ANOTHER OR YOURSELF (we defraud ourselves when we feed the thought life with impure thoughts).

- 2.** ASK GOD'S FORGIVENESS. 1 John 1:9
(Note: If the problem has only been one of thoughts and secret sins, you don't go to any one. This is a problem between yourself and the Lord.)

- 3.** PURPOSE TO GO BACK TO THE ONE WHOM YOU DEFRAUDED.

- 4.** ASK FOR FORGIVENESS for failing to be the example of a Christian fellow or girl you should have been. (Note: If you weren't a Christian at the time when your standards were "below" God's standards, then it is important that you contact the individual and say something like the following: "Since you knew me last, I've given my life to Jesus Christ and I've come to realize how wrong I was in my behavior toward you. I have come to ask, 'Will you please forgive me?')"

(Also, if this problem is between husband and wife, too often confession and asking forgiveness has never been made because the two have felt that "since they married each other, let bygones be bygones." Here there is a need to face one another and to acknowledge that they were wrong in their behavior toward each other and to get on their knees together and follow steps #1 and #2 together.)

A PERSONAL EVALUATION

FOR MOTIVES TOWARD THE OPPOSITE SEX:

● Paul summarizes the responsibilities and qualities that are to adorn a young man and woman by saying, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Titus 2:12

FELLOW:

"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. (well balanced and self controlled, "behave carefully," Living Bible) Titus 2:6

Do my motives, words, actions and attitudes project respect and self control or a desire to fulfill my self directed drives?

☐ INWARD MOTIVATION:

1. Have I given the Lord my affections so that I have a deeper love for Him than for any girl?
2. Do I have intentions to cause a girl to lower her high standards?
3. Whenever my motives turn to lust, do I stop what I'm doing or terminate that relationship?

GIRL:

MODESTY

"That they may teach the young women to be sober..." ("live quietly," Living Bible) Titus 2:4a

Do my words, attitudes and actions draw attention to me as a person or do I defraud others by my behavior?

☐ OUTWARD ACTIONS:

1. Do I project suggestiveness through conversation: jokes or words with double meanings, or talking about what others have done in secret?
Eph. 5:12
2. Appearance: Does my makeup make me look "natural"?
3. Dress: Does the way I dress cause me to feel self-conscious?

FELLOW:

4. Have I destroyed all records, magazines, paperback books, and stopped listening to music that feeds my thought life with lustful thoughts?
5. Do I turn my mind to Scripture and spiritual songs and conversation with the Lord when I am tempted?
Ephesians 5:19,20
6. Do I concentrate on appreciating a girl as a person rather than as an object of lust? Do my eyes meet with hers or do they look at her body?
7. Am I willing to be sensitive not to defraud a girl and ask forgiveness for past offenses?
8. Do I avoid conversation with others that is suggestive concerning the subject of sex?
9. Do I avoid touching and putting my hands on girls? 1 Cor. 7:1 advises that "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

GIRL:

4. Do I have to keep pulling my dress down when sitting? Does the way I wear my clothes draw attention to some part of my body rather than to the inner beauty of my personality?
5. Am I ready to ask forgiveness of the fellow when I knowingly defraud or discover later that I defrauded him?
6. Do I have a specific set of dating standards worked out from Scripture?
7. Am I willing to turn down any date that would cause me to lower God's standards?

PERSONAL GOALS IN DATING

The following decisions are suggested as a personal set of goals in dating. These can be expressed to the Lord by a sincere commitment.

LORD, I PURPOSE:

1. TO DATE ONLY A CHRISTIAN. II Cor. 6:14 The potential of two people achieving a oneness of spirit is destroyed if both individuals have not received God's Spirit into their spirit. Rom. 8:16
2. THAT GOD'S GOALS FOR MY LIFE WILL BE COMPATIBLE WITH GOD'S GOALS FOR HIS/HER LIFE, and I will help the other develop in his/her maturity in Christ. Col. 1:28,29
3. THAT MY BEHAVIOR WITH THE OTHER WILL BE ON A PAR WITH GOD'S ACCEPTED STANDARDS. 1 Thess. 4:3-8
4. THAT OUR ACTIVITIES WILL BE CENTERED UPON THOSE THINGS WHICH WILL HONOR AND GLORIFY THE LORD.
Col. 3:17 and 1 Cor. 10:31
5. TO REALIZE THAT MY DATE IS GOD'S PROPERTY and that He has the right to do with His property what He wants. Therefore, if this relationship doesn't progress, I'll thank God for His purposes in this "temporary" relationship. Luke 9:23,24
6. TO CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING THE QUALITIES GOD WANTS TO BE A NATURAL PART OF MY LIFE so I can assume the responsibilities of a husband/wife and father/mother, when God feels I can no longer afford not to be married. (When these qualities are evident there is no difficulty in God introducing His choice to you.) Psalm 37:4
7. TO BE WILLING TO REMAIN UNMARRIED AS LONG AS THE LORD DESIRES. Luke 22: 42

WHEN OUR CONVERSATION BECOMES SERIOUS ABOUT ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE, TO DISCUSS OUR INTENDED PLANS WITH EACH OTHER'S PARENTS.

8. NOT TO MARRY MY LIFE PARTNER WITHOUT THE FULL CONSENT OF BOTH OF OUR PARENTS. Eph. 6:1-3

If the parents have not given their full approval of the partner or permission for marriage, it does not necessarily mean I should not marry this person. Many times certain attitudes of immaturity have been sensed by the parents and when these areas have been cared for or developed, their approval will be given. Proverbs 21:1

Note: Marriage is more than the uniting of two individuals. In a real sense it is the uniting of two families. The importance of establishing respect for the parents' opinions and advice cannot be overstated. Its effects have a direct bearing on your children and even your grandchildren!

9. TO BE SENSITIVE TO GOD'S TIMING FOR OUR MARRIAGE; FINANCIAL STABILITY.

There should be a basic degree of financial stability so that the husband is able to assume the responsibility for supporting the wife (Eph. 5:28,29, Phillips) and the wife has confidence in God's ability to provide through her husband (Phil. 4:19).

THE BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING GOD'S ORDER:

- ❑ **SPIRITUAL INTIMACY.** It becomes possible for both to share with one another what God is doing in their lives. Their motivation will be stimulated to further develop their walk with the Lord.

- ❑ **A FREEDOM FROM GUILT AND SELF CONDEMNATION THAT COMMUNICATES A TRANSPARENCY TO THE OTHER.** A real sensitivity toward each other develops in which each wants to assume personal responsibility for words, actions and attitudes.

- ❑ **A FREEDOM TO BECOME INVOLVED IN CHRISTIAN WORK AND THE NEEDS OF OTHERS WITHOUT THE FEAR OF LOSING THE PARTNER.** When the motives for a relationship are pure and the partner is "God's property," each can concentrate on meeting the needs of others rather than a jealousy or worry about the other's attitude toward other people.

- ❑ **FREEDOM TO DISCUSS AND DEVELOP COMMON GOALS IN ANTICIPATION OF A MORE PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP.** An intimacy of mind, emotions and will is achieved as each is free to share likes and dislikes and respond to the other in the emotional ups and downs of everyday living.

- ❑ **A DEEPENING TRUST BETWEEN THE TWO.** When the physical behavior in private is as Christ-honoring as when the two are with others, confidence in the real character of the other is deepened. One does not suspect or doubt the other's integrity when they are apart from each other.

**PREREQUISITES
FOR A
SUCCESSFUL
PARTNER**

THE SUCCESSFUL PARTNER:

LOOKING AT LIFE FROM YOUR MATE'S POINT OF VIEW

A UNIQUE DESIGN	UNDERSTANDING PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY	DEVELOPING MEAKNESS	DEVELOPING A FORGIVING SPIRIT	RENEWING YOUR MIND	DEVELOPING TRANSPARENCY	DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL APPETITE	STANDING ALONE
<p>Accept your partner as a significant design of God's workmanship.</p> <p>Communicate delight in your partner's inward qualities.</p> <p>Identify traits you dislike about your mate.</p> <p>Discern if they are changeable.</p> <p>If they are not, acknowledge your bitterness to God for His workmanship in your partner.</p> <p>Concentrate on your mate's strengths in order to cooperate with God's ability to change the mate's weaknesses.</p> <p>Place equal values on your partner's ideas and opinions.</p>	<p>Submit to one another in the framework of a right relationship to God.</p> <p>The husband is to love and lead his wife.</p> <p>Making the 10 insights to loving your wife a natural part of your life.</p> <p>The wife is to submit and reverence her husband.</p> <p>Learning to visualize God's ability to work through the husband's successes and failures.</p> <p>Cultivate a chain of counsel with in-laws and other mature Christians.</p>	<p>Dedicate all possessions as the Lord's property and anticipate illustrations of God's supernatural intervention on your behalf as a team.</p> <p>Develop an expectancy for giving to partner's needs rather than getting to satisfy personal needs.</p> <p>Developing a unique ministry as a team that could not otherwise be accomplished as individuals.</p> <p>Guard to not build life around material things.</p> <p>Achieve and maintain financial freedom by following God's principles of finance.</p>	<p>Anticipate future irritations from mate as an opportunity to show love to each other.</p> <p>Learn to turn problems into projects.</p> <p>Readily forgive when offended by mate.</p> <p>Detect needs to clarify misunderstandings through partner's irritation.</p> <p>Use unavoidable irritations from partner as an opportunity to know when to be more loving and sensitive.</p> <p>Detect potential positive qualities through partner's negative traits.</p> <p>Strengthen spirit of marriage in detecting your "blind spot" by your partner's responses to you.</p> <p>Be sensitive to what you do to cause the spirit of your mate to react to your spirit.</p>	<p>Memorize and meditate on key sections of Scripture prior to making important decisions.</p> <p>Demonstrate to your partner the achievement of God's standards of self discipline in thoughts, actions and eye contact.</p> <p>Use spare thought time wisely on common projects in Scripture to share insights with one another.</p> <p>Periodically spend a day in the Word with one another.</p>	<p>Remove all past resentments of your mate by asking for forgiveness for personal offenses.</p> <p>Keep accounts short.</p> <p>Assume full responsibility for words, actions and attitudes toward one another.</p> <p>Learn God's priorities for your life.</p> <p>Learn to discern the important from the urgent.</p> <p>Develop immediate goals by identifying responsibilities to existing titles.</p> <p>Develop a transparency that allows the sharing of our innermost thoughts with discretion.</p>	<p>Maintain a regular time for sharing of the Word and praying together as a team.</p> <p>Develop oddled tools for discovering principles.</p> <p>Develop a family library of Christian classics, reference books, hymns and records.</p> <p>Master the Book of Psalms and Proverbs.</p> <p>Develop the skills of sharing insights from the Word without "preaching" at one another.</p> <p>Discern the difference between actual interpretation and personal application of a passage.</p>	<p>To support and encourage one another in developing a testimony for standing together with one mind on the side of right.</p> <p>Develop a confidence together that the Christian way of life is a superior way of life.</p> <p>Accept the challenge to resist social pressures to become like everyone else.</p> <p>Avoid standing on the side of right without an attitude of love toward others.</p> <p>Set ultimate goals of "helping" those who are weak in areas where you are the strongest.</p>

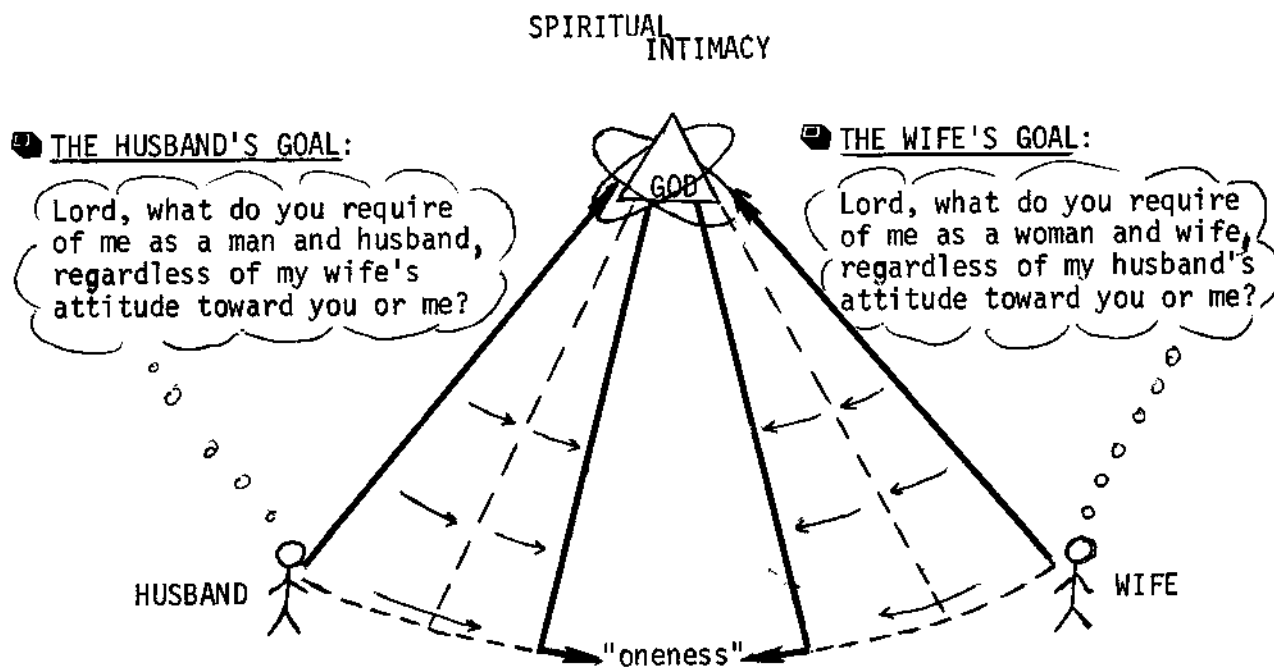
DEVELOPING
"ONENESS"
IN THE
MARRIAGE

DEVELOPING A "ONENESS" IN THE MARRIAGE

God is able to accomplish his ultimate purposes through a marriage when both husband and wife have purposed to become all that He wants them to be as individuals.

When each mate purposes to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, their intimacy and oneness of spirit can become a reality.

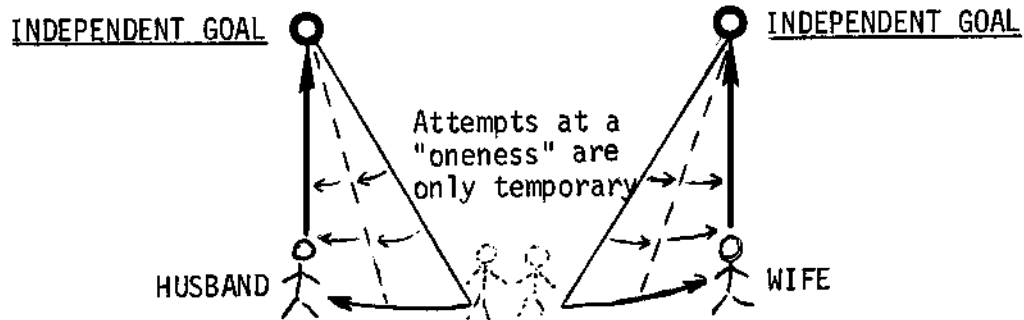
A marriage must be anchored on the focal point of God's will and purpose for their lives.



"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Ephesians 5:21

This attitude by both partners is God's way of bringing two lives into a oneness of spirit, soul and body.

☛ Too often the "oneness" of a marriage is remote. Two people live together but follow two independent courses of action.



Their union and communication are temporary; then the weight of their independence swings them back into an egocentric relationship.

When the spirit is wounded, the oneness of the marriage may be lost. Therefore, it is essential that both husband and wife become sensitive to what they do consciously or unconsciously to wound the spirit of one another.

Each partner should be prepared to correct those areas in which he or she is offending his or her mate, and to assume the proper attitude and response in situations when the other partner does offend.

The goals and objectives of "developing oneness" is already defined in the following verse:

☛ *"Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and spirit between you."*
| *Philippians 2:2 (Phillips)*

THE WIFE'S OBJECTIVES

The following are "objectives" that can help the wife evaluate areas she needs to develop in her relationship with her husband.

WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY	RELATED SCRIPTURE	NEGATIVE AFFECTS ON THE HUSBAND
<p>1. <u>DEVELOP A CONFIDENCE IN THE HUSBAND'S DECISIONS</u></p> <p>Learn to deal with the problem rather than questioning, showing anxiety, or expressing disapproval over the husband's decisions with a resentful attitude.</p>	<p>I Peter 3:5, "This was the secret of the beauty of the holy women of ancient times who trusted in God and were submissive to their husbands." (Phillips)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making decisions without consulting the wife • Fear of failure in the wife's eyes
<p>2. <u>KEEP THE MOTIVES PURE TOWARD THE HUSBAND</u></p> <p>Make sure the actions and attitudes of the wife are because of her love for Christ rather than an attempt to change or get something from the husband.</p>	<p>I Timothy 1:5, "The ultimate aim of the Christian ministry, after all, is to produce the love which springs from a pure heart, a good conscience and a genuine faith." (Phillips)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels pressured to do things he does not want to do • Resents her attempts to manipulate him

3. LEARN TO APPRECIATE THE HUSBAND'S POSITIVE QUALITIES

Concentrate on drawing attention to the husband's strengths by visualizing his unique characteristics as an evidence of God's specific design for his life.

Phil 4:8, "Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

- Feels rejected
- Inferiority complex to wife
- Competitive spirit with wife

4. DEVELOP LOYALTY IN THE CHILDREN TOWARDS THEIR FATHER

Build a sense of appreciation in the husband towards the wife by teaching the children to properly respond when wounded or disappointed by the Dad.

Eph. 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

- Lacks confidence in disciplining children
- Severs communication with wife
- Attempts to get even with the wife by showing favoritism towards the children in spite of the wife's decisions

5. FORGIVE THE PAST FAILURES OF THE HUSBAND

Be willing to completely forgive the wrongs done in the past.

Purpose ahead of time to forgive the future wounds and offenses.

Realize that failure to forgive reflects an attitude to "get even" and a preoccupation with self pity and pride.

Matt. 6:14, 15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

- Ignores her
- Becomes easily angered
- Justifies his own negative attitudes and offenses toward the wife
- Questions the sincerity of her love

6. LEARN TO RELATE SCHEDULES AROUND THE PRIORITIES OF THE HUSBAND

A husband can't lead if the wife won't follow; neither can there be "oneness" in the family if the wife's and children's schedules are not integrated with the husband's priorities.

→ Eph. 5:21, 22, "And 'fit in with' each other, because of your common reverence for Christ. You wives must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands..." (Phillips)

- Resents the independent attitude of the wife
- Tightens demands on the wife
- A tendency to get involved in "his world" in retaliation to the wife

7. SHOW AN APPRECIATION FOR THE ATTENTION THE HUSBAND MUST GIVE TO THE DETAILS OF HIS WORK

Learn the frame of reference from which the husband centers his time and actions.

→ Prov. 31:26, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

Appreciate the hard work he exerts to accomplish his responsibilities.

- Senses he is not appreciated
- Spends more time at work
- Gives attention and time to meet the needs of others who build his ego

8. ENCOURAGE THE HUSBAND THROUGH FAILURES

Realize this is one of God's tools in teaching the husband.

→ I Pet. 3:1, "In the same spirit you married women should adapt yourselves to your husbands, so that even if they do not obey the Word of God they may be won to God without any word being spoken." (Phillips)

Accept his failures without saying "I told you so."

- Makes a joke out of everything
- Becomes silent
- Tends to draw attention to the wife's failures
- Irritable and touchy

9. ALWAYS ASK FORGIVENESS
WHEN THE WIFE WRONGS THE
HUSBAND

Realize that honor and respect are a result of being willing to admit a wrong.

There is a tendency when the wife feels the husband is insensitive, to minimize the need of asking forgiveness for things she feels are not as important.



Heb. 13:18, "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly."

Prov. 18:12, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty; and before honor is humility."

- Wounded spirit
- Bitter attitude towards wife
- Lack of freedom in communication

10. VISUALIZE THROUGH THE
NEGATIVE TRAITS IN THE
HUSBAND, THE POTENTIAL
QUALITIES GOD IS SEEKING
TO DEVELOP IN HIM

Itemize the characteristics in the husband which upset you.

Realize that negative traits can be positive qualities misused.

Purpose to cooperate with God in the development of those positive qualities.



Romans 8:28, 29, "And we know that all things work together for good to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son (developing positive qualities like Christ)..."

- Becomes defensive
- Feeling of rejection or inferiority
- Dwells on the wife's weaknesses
- Feels inadequate

11. DEVELOP A CONTENTMENT TO LIVE WITHIN THE HUSBAND'S INCOME

Realize that food and clothing are the basic needs for which the husband is responsible and God will provide.

Develop an appreciation for all God has supplied through the husband beyond basic needs rather than complaining or showing disappointment for what he has not supplied.



Phil. 4:11, 12, "I have learned to be content whatever my circumstances may be. I know how to live when things are prosperous. In general, and in particular, I have learned the secret of facing either plenty or poverty." (Phillips)

I Tim. 6:8 "And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

- Gives up in trying to please the wife
- Attempts to pacify the wife's discontentment by buying material things

THE HUSBAND'S OBJECTIVES

The following are "objectives" that will benefit the husband in evaluating areas he needs to develop and to strengthen.

HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITIES	RELATED SCRIPTURE	NEGATIVE AFFECTS ON THE WIFE
<p>1. <u>REALIZE THAT ONE OF THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE WIFE IS TO SENSE THAT SHE IS IMPORTANT TO HER HUSBAND</u></p> <p>Provide time in his priorities to adequately meet his wife's basic needs.</p>	<p>Eph. 5:25, "Husbands, love (a selfless love based on what he has to give to her, rather than his motive of what he can get) your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Insecurity (feels she is not important) ● Loneliness ● Incomplete without him-- yet she has real and felt needs. She gives her life to him, thinking he's the <u>one</u> who loves her and wants to make her happy, and starts to think that he doesn't love her <u>that</u> much. ● Unloved (as a result, she looks elsewhere for her needs to be met) ● Seeks attention from any male who communicates

VALUE THE OPINIONS OF THE WIFE AS MUCH AS HE DOES HIS OWN

2. The average man tends to think a woman's ideas are inferior. She is deeply hurt if her ideas are not considered or even heard. Even though her frame of reference is different from the man's, her opinions are just as valuable. Very often the wife is a better judge of character due to sensitivity to the spirit of a person, whereas the husband tends to overlook character faults and concentrates on the logical nature of a person's ideas.

I Peter 3:7, "You married men, in the same way, must live with your wives in an intelligent consideration of them." (Williams)

- Inwardly hurt
- Resentful
- Lacks confidence that God even cares
- Refusal to share ideas with him
- Feels she is not important to him
- Inferior
- Lack of communication (afraid to give further opinions)

3. CONCENTRATE ON THE WIFE'S STRENGTHS

Look for ways to encourage her and to build her inner spirit.

When the husband concentrates on her weaknesses and failures, he is communicating that he does not accept her as she is.

Js. 4:11, "Don't criticize and speak evil about each other, dear brothers. If you do, you will be fighting against God's law of loving one another, declaring it is wrong..." (L. B.)

- Feels like she's being counselled
- Doesn't feel accepted by the husband
- Loses all self respect
- Doesn't care what happens
- Her focus becomes materialistic

4. LEARN HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS RATHER THAN TRYING TO COUNSEL HER

Visualize through the negative traits in the wife, the potential qualities God is seeking to develop in her.

Learn to detect the real problems instead of attacking her character.

Purpose to cooperate with God in the development of those positive qualities.

Prov. 23:23, "Get the facts at any price, and hold tightly to all the good sense you can get." (L.B.)

Gal. 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

I Cor. 13:7, "Love bears up under anything and everything that comes and is ever ready to believe the best of every person..." (Amplified)

- Becomes Defensive
- Causes her to become angry, frustrated and threatened
- Causes her to feel inferior and depressed
- Feels that her husband is not concerned about her feelings
- Feels rejected in her role as a wife

5. GIVE THE WIFE ENOUGH TIME TO EXPRESS HER IDEAS

Often times it takes a woman more time to express her ideas. The husband's failure to provide time to listen or his impatience when listening, produces frustration and disillusionment.

I Cor. 13:4, "This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience -- it looks for a way of being constructive..." (Phillips)

- Envious husband (wants to be like him, be able to express ideas like him, etc.)
- Resentful
- Will not feel at ease when talking to him
- Everything builds within and then she tries to unload her heart at one long sitting
- Rather than being disappointed over and over again, she will not talk

6. PROJECT THE IDEA THAT AS A TOTAL PERSON THE WIFE IS THE PERFECT COMPLIMENT TO THE HUSBAND.

There is a tendency when the husband rejects his wife to compare her appearance and abilities with women who possess qualities she is lacking.

→ Prov. 31:28, "...He praises her with these words: 'There are many fine women in the world, but you are the best of them all'." (L.B.)

- Compares herself with other women
- Inwardly hurt because of husband's remarks about other women
- Feels husband compares her with other women
- Inward fear of the husband giving someone else the attention she needs
- Dresses to draw the attention of other men
- Feels inadequate

7. SPEND ENOUGH TIME WITH YOUR WIFE TO KNOW WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO HER. LEARN TO LOOK AT LIFE FROM HER POINT OF VIEW

Since a husband is often careless in seeing life from his wife's point of view, he will often overlook or be insensitive to her care for certain details and the little extras she does in expressing her love to him.

→ Phil 2:4, "None of you should think only of his own affairs, but should learn to see things from other people's point of view." (Phillips)

- Feels she is not important to him
- Feels lonely
- Feels that their goals are going in opposite directions
- Insecure in her duties as a wife

8. DEVELOP A CONFIDENCE TO SAY "NO" WHEN PEOPLE PRESSURE YOU INTO ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT TAKE AWAY FROM LEGITIMATE FAMILY TIME

When a husband's priorities are out of line, he will be pressured by secondary issues rather than the primary responsibilities God has given him for his wife and children.

Eph. 5:16, "Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days."

Psalms 90:12, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

- Will lose respect for the husband
- Resentment to her husband and the people who infringe upon her time
- Doubts her husband's true love for her
- Inner resentment for his vocation and outside activities
- Feels that she and the family are not first place in his thinking
- Feels he doesn't practice what he preaches

9. THE HUSBAND SHOULD DETERMINE THE GOALS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINING THE CHILDREN

The husband should also assume his responsibilities for disciplining the children. When he fails to do so, it puts added responsibilities on the wife. This will result in the children playing one parent against the other.

Eph. 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Mal. 4:5, 6, "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

- Feels rejected by the children
- Resentful to husband for not assuming his responsibilities
- Feels the husband degrades her in front of the children
- Lacks confidence in his authority and responsibility

10. PROVIDE ADEQUATE TIME TO DISCUSS WITH THE WIFE THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS FOR MAJOR CHANGES

The wife is able to make major adjustments if the husband has taken time to explain the reasons behind the move, and adequate time is allowed for the change. Inadequate time causes her to become insecure and apprehensive.

→ Prov. 20:13, "Don't go ahead with your plans without the advice of others..."

- Emotionally drained
- Apprehensive
- Feels husband is inconsiderate and indifferent toward others, especially the family
- Feels she is not important

11. BECOME DISCIPLINED IN YOUR INWARD ATTITUDES AND OUTWARD ACTIONS TOWARD THE WIFE

A wife is very sensitive about honesty and moral purity in the husband. Her admiration for him is greatly diminished when he exercises a lack of self control.

→ I Thess. 4:4, "Everyone of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect..." (Phillips)

- Loses admiration for husband
- Becomes cold and indifferent to his physical needs
- Develops an "I don't care" attitude

12. THERE SHOULD BE A CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP BY THE HUSBAND

The husband should provide Spiritual stability for the wife. When he fails to do this or shows disinterest, the long range results will be severe for the children and place unnecessary burdens on the wife.

→ Ex. 20:5, "... for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

- Resentment for the burden of Spiritual development of the family being placed on her
- Looks down on him as the leader of the home

13. THE HUSBAND SHOULD AVOID JOKING AND JESTING AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WIFE IN FRONT OF OTHERS

There is a tendency for the husband to joke or make cutting remarks about his wife in front of others. This is usually an attempt to get her to change some characteristic which he dislikes.



Eph. 5:4, "The keynote of your conversation should not be nastiness or silliness or flippancy, but a sense of all that we owe to God." (Phillips)

Titus 2:6, "Young men likewise, exhort to be sober minded."

- Injures her spirit
- Feels embarrassed around others
- Fear in expressing her opinions
- Becomes discouraged in developing further positive qualities and then have them "shot down".

14. FORGIVE THE PAST FAILURES OF THE WIFE

Be willing to completely forgive the wrongs done in the past.

Purpose ahead of time to forgive the future wounds and offenses of the wife.

Realize that failure to forgive reflects an attitude to "get even" and a preoccupation with self pity and pride.



Mark 11:25, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any, that your Father also, who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses."

- Questions the sincerity of his love
- Reacts to his attitude of superiority
- Justifies her own negative attitudes and offenses toward her husband

15. BE HONEST AND VERBALLY ADMIT WHEN YOU'RE WRONG

The husband must recognize that communication with his wife is his responsibility and that honor and respect are a result of being willing to admit a wrong and ask forgiveness.



Js. 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed..."

- Lacks humility toward the husband
- Her spirit becomes wounded
- Develops coolness toward the husband

16. DEFINE AND CLARIFY THE
BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES
WITH THE WIFE

It is essential that the husband communicate his frame of reference to the wife. This must be done by specifically identifying what he feels are his responsibilities. It is also necessary for him to clarify which areas he feels their responsibilities overlap.

I Tim. 3:5, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

- Feels lonesome
- Builds resentments toward husband
- Loses respect for his unwillingness to do hard, or "nitty-gritty" work at home
- Feels like he isn't proud of the family and the home

● Even though these objectives are ideals, it is important for the husband and the wife to identify them as areas that need constant work.

It is natural to expect the mate to measure up to the above ideals by a certain time; however, nothing should be expected but an attitude of appreciation for the progress made thus far.

**CHAIN OF
COMMAND IN
MARRIAGE**

DEVELOPING GENUINE LOVE

An important key to a successful marriage is the ability to see the hand of God in the attitudes, actions and reactions of the mate God has placed in one's life.

Failure on the husband's part to discern God's authority in his life and the responsibilities God has given him toward his wife and children increases the tensions and conflicts. Corresponding difficulties result when the wife fails to discern God's purposes in placing her husband over her.

1 THE KEY PASSAGE:

No other passage in Scripture is so rich and complete in dealing with this relationship between husband and wife as I Peter 2:19-3:9.

Peter emphasizes the fact that a union between two people can never be successful unless certain basic principles are a part of each individual's life.

INITIAL STEPS:

1 CLEARING PAST OFFENSES

*"For this is thankworthy if a man for conscience toward God suffers wrongfully."
I Peter 2:19*

In order to have effective communication between two people, it is necessary to clear all past offenses between one another. Many couples try to "turn over a new leaf" by trying to forget the past and go on from there. This is impossible. A lack of transparency toward the mate will be communicated by attitudes and "walls" between one another. (See materials on Gaining a Clear Conscience.)

2 A WILLINGNESS TO ACKNOWLEDGE WRONGS

*"What is it if you be buffeted for your faults and take it patiently?"
I Peter 2:20a*

Peter acknowledges there will be misunderstandings and offenses in the days ahead. Both partners must be ready to evaluate any criticisms and accusations (whether verbal or non-verbal) with total honesty, and acknowledge any personal wrongs toward the other.

☛ A NEW COMMITMENT

This step can be taken as both mates verbally commit themselves to stand by each other despite future offenses which are called to their attention by the mate, other people or the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

☛ TOTAL COOPERATION WITH GOD

*"But if when you do well and suffer for it you take it patiently, then you have God's approval."
I Peter 2:20b*

Responding to each false accusation by using it as an opportunity to show love to the one who offended is total cooperation with God.

JESUS CHRIST, OUR EXAMPLE

☛ EACH OFFENSE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
COMMUNICATING LOVE

*"Indeed this is your calling. For Christ suffered for you and left you a personal example, and wants you to follow in his steps. He was guilty of no sin nor of the slightest prevarication. Yet when he was insulted he offered no insult in return. When he suffered he made no threats of revenge. He simply committed his cause to the one who judges fairly."
I Peter 2:21-23(Phillips)*

No one was more falsely accused than Jesus Christ, the sinless one who had every right to react to his accusers. But He didn't - He forgave them. Instead of becoming over-sensitive and "bitter", or insensitive so that He "shut them out", He gave only sensitivity (love) in return.

This is our calling as followers of Christ - to our mates above everyone else! When you are falsely accused or wounded, this is God's way of letting you know that your mate needs another dose of His love.

☛ A LOVING ATTITUDE AS WELL AS ACTIONS

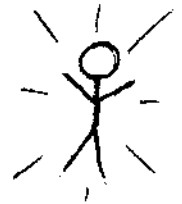
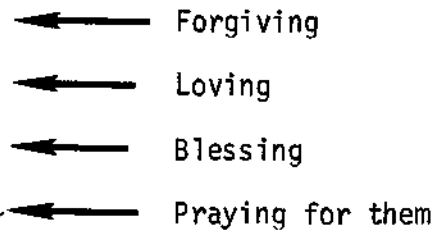
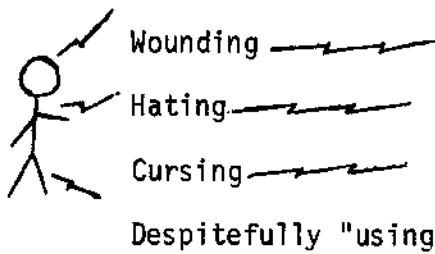
It is important that both your countenance and your words reflect the love of Christ to your mate in "rough" or "tense" situations. There are degrees of silence that communicate inward hostile feelings. Thus it is equally important that your lips and facial expressions communicate Christ's love.

CALLED TO SUFFER!

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE EXCHANGE OUR "NATURAL" RESPONSES FOR JESUS CHRIST'S RESPONSES:

Offender's Attitudes
or Actions:

Our Responsibility is to Show
Love without Exception by:



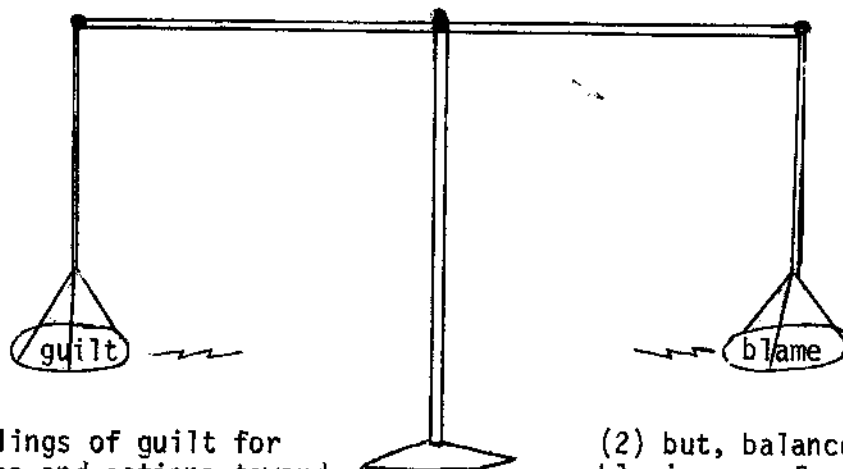
Offending
Mate

Suffering
Mate

This response is clearly taught by Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:43,44.

NOTE: WHEN YOU HAVE CLEARED YOUR CONSCIENCE REALIZE THE OFFENDER STILL HAS GUILT BECAUSE OF HIS ATTITUDES AND OFFENSES TOWARD YOU AND OTHERS.

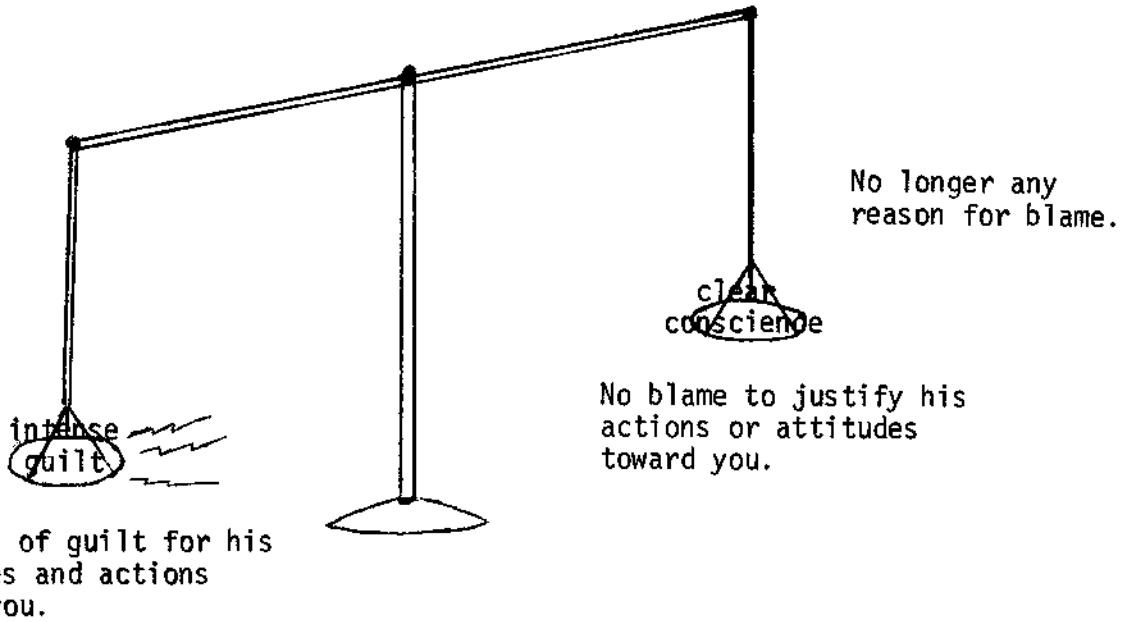
Before you clear your conscience the other person:



(1) has feelings of guilt for his attitudes and actions toward you;

(2) but, balances the scale by blaming you for legitimate offenses you've committed against him.

After you ask for forgiveness, if he does not ask forgiveness for his offenses toward you, you should expect his attitudes and actions to get worse:



When a person is living with guilt:

- He subconsciously seeks to get you to react negatively toward him so he can "balance" the scale again. This accounts for his frequent offenses to get you to go "beyond your breaking point."
- He may doubt your sincerity. If you have tried to "turn over a new leaf" many times before by some form of an apology, he will wonder how long this new change will last!
- Your godly response will allow God to put the right kind of pressure on the offender from other sources. This enables the Holy Spirit to bring real conviction for his past and present attitudes and actions.
John 16:8-11

BEARING ANOTHER'S SINS

- THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOUR LIFE WILL BE USED OF GOD TO HEAL THE OFFENDER IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOUR WILLINGNESS TO BEAR HIS SINS (NEGATIVE ATTITUDES, OFFENSES, CONDEMNATIONS) IN YOUR OWN BODY (AT YOUR EXPENSE).

☐ UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls."

*"And he personally bore our sins in his own body on the cross, so that we might be dead to sin and be alive to all that is good. It was the suffering that he bore which has healed you. You had wandered away like so many sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls."
I Peter 2:24-25 (Phillips)*

God is looking for Christians to unconditionally forgive all offenses others have committed toward them and toward others.

☐ DEVELOP REAL INSIGHT AND DISCERNMENT.

Regardless of how well one knows a person, he seldom knows the "real" problems in the other's inward life. Rather than reacting to negative attitudes and actions which he sees in a person's life, this should motivate him to discern what has caused this person to behave the way he does?

This will develop an attitude of discernment (using information as a means to seek a solution to the problem).

On the other hand, failure to discern in a Christ-like way will develop a critical and judgmental attitude (using information to condemn or lower the person's reputation in other people's eyes).

THE ROLE OF THE WIFE IN SUBMISSION

■ ■ All of the vast resources of God are at a woman's disposal when she visualizes and applies the principles of God's Word that allow God to work in the marriage and family in His way.

■ WHAT IS SUBMISSION?

"Wives, submit yourselves.."

☛ Submission is not an act of subordination in a difficult situation, but a deep confidence in the heart of a woman, in God's sovereignty over her husband's life. The result is an attitude as well as actions of obedience toward her husband; she realizes that the ultimate benefits of cooperating with God's chain of command will far outweigh any immediate or temporary losses.

- Submission does not mean that a wife has no right to her opinions nor the right to disagree with her husband. Nor is it necessary for her to change her convictions about an issue. But when a decision "has to be made" and there is a difference of opinion, she will respond with an attitude of cooperation. She is aware that if her husband is wrong, God will get through to him by failure. Her attempt to keep him from failing will only interfere and delay the lessons God wants to teach her husband. On the other hand, when the husband is right, the wife's confidence in God's ability to work through her husband also increases.
- God requires the man to LOVE and LEAD his wife and the woman to SUBMIT and REVERENCE her husband (Ephesians 5:25). To be loved and to be led are the most basic needs of a woman; submission and respect are the two most essential ingredients on the woman's part for a successful relationship between husband and wife.

■ GOD REQUIRES OF THE MAN:

- Lead your wife.
- Love your wife.

■ GOD REQUIRES OF THE WOMAN:

- Submit to your husband.
- Reverence your husband.

- The husband will by nature tend to be dominant in one of the two responsibilities. If he is strong as a leader he will be prone to be insensitive to the needs of his wife. If he is sensitive (loving) to his wife, more than likely he will fail to lead the household. This usually results in the wife justifying her failure to do what God

requires of her ~ in submission because "he doesn't lead"; or in respect because "he is indifferent and insensitive to my needs."

Conversely, a man will justify his failure to lead because "she won't follow" and to love because "she doesn't respect me."

The paradox is that when either mate gets his eyes off his circumstances and purposes to do what God requires of him as an individual, the respective responsibilities are able to be developed in the other mate.

● LEARN TO USE BAD ATTITUDES IN THE MATE AS MOTIVATION TO MEET HIS/HER BASIC NEEDS.

Note: Fortunately it is seldom that the husband and wife are both "down" emotionally at the same time. One usually has a bad attitude and the other reacts, thus causing a conflict. God has freedom to accomplish His purposes if the mate who is "not down" will love the other in the way God requires for the man or woman, thus ministering and meeting the needs of the other!

- When he LOVES → God is free to develop her respect for him.
- When he LEADS → God is free to bring to bear the various agents in key relationships for her to learn submission.

SIMILAR RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED:

- When she SUBMITS → It forces the man to assume his responsibilities and begin to develop the leadership ability he needs to lead his family.
- When she REVERENCES (RESPECTS) → It is God's means of creating an appreciation and sensitivity to her needs and the key to allowing God to bring His conviction with regard to the man's selfishness and insensitiveness.

There are many "ideas" and "theories" propounded today about the role of the woman. For the woman, the key question is not what she thinks a woman should be, but WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE?

☞ *"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;
But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a MEEK (submission, respect) and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."*

I Peter 3:3,4

☞ THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE WOMAN TO APPLY GOD'S CHAIN OF COMMAND IN HER LIFE:

☞ LEARN TO DIFFERENTIATE POSITION FROM PERSONALITY.

☞ REALIZE THAT GOD IS BIGGER THAN HER HUSBAND.

- Women often object to the idea of "submitting" to their husbands because "he just doesn't know how to lead," or "I can't respect him." This attitude clearly indicates a failure to distinguish the position God has given the husband as head of the wife from his personality inconsistencies.

☞ THE HUSBAND CAN'T LEAD IF THE WIFE WON'T FOLLOW!!

- The Two Major Passages of Scripture Deal with the Woman's Role in this Order:

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the

The natural tendency is for the woman to think that if she submits to her husband, he will take advantage of the situation and use her

church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
Ephesians 5:22-25

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands..."
I Peter 3:1

"This was the secret of the beauty of the holy women of ancient times who TRUSTED IN GOD and were submissive to their husbands. Sarah, you will remember, obeyed Abraham and called him her lord."
I Peter 3:5,6 (Phillips)

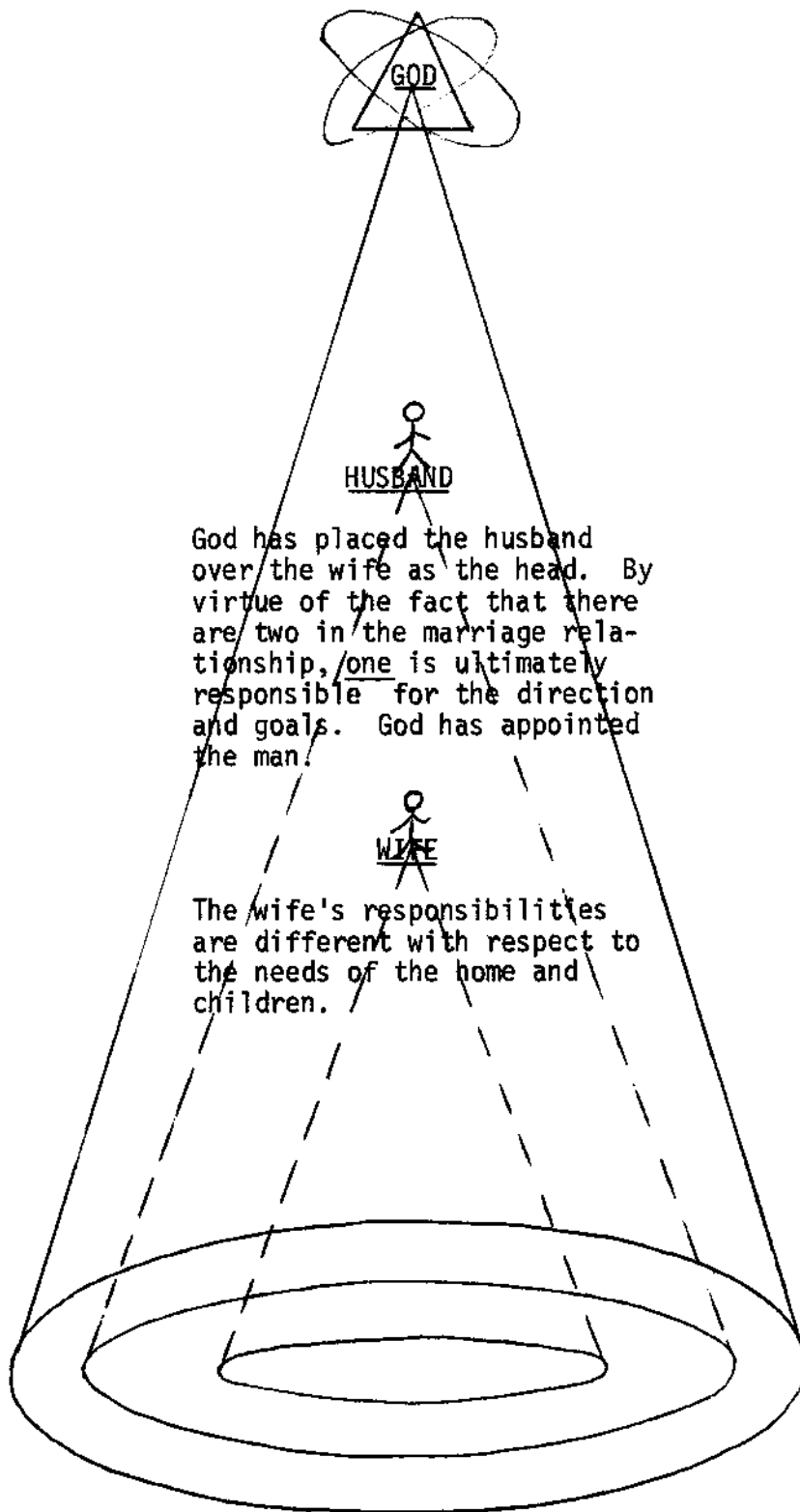
as a doormat. This attitude clearly indicates that her focus is on her circumstances, rather than her commitment to the Lord and His ability to work in her life.

When the woman is cooperating with the Lord, the Lord has the freedom to bring conviction on the husband through the wife's godly responses.

DISTINGUISHING POSITION FROM PERSONALITY

☞ God always operates within the sphere of delegated responsibility. It is important for the wife to distinguish her husband's authority over her from his personality traits and deficiencies.

ONLY GOD CAN SEE ALL
OF LIFE IN ITS TRUE PERSPECTIVE.



▪ **THE HEAD OF EVERY MAN IS CHRIST.**
I Corinthians 11:2

▪ **THE HEAD OF EVERY WOMAN IS THE MAN.**
I Corinthians 11:2

▪ This is clearly emphasized in Proverbs 6:20-23.
"The commandment (father is source of direction) is a lamp; and the law (mother) is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

▪ *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church..."*
Ephesians 5:23

▪ *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands..."*
Ephesians 5:22

▪ *"For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power (authority of husband) on her head..."*
I Corinthians 11:8-10

▪ *"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."*
Genesis 3:16

POSITION

● In learning to relate and respond to her husband's personality traits and deficiencies, it is important that the wife evaluate the following questions and apply the corresponding insights to her own life.

● WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVE FOR RESPONDING TO YOUR HUSBAND?

Too often a wife will make the statement, "I did what I was supposed to and my mate hasn't changed; in fact things have been worse!" or, "I've given up because it hasn't worked!"

● GOD HAS NOT PROMISED A PROBLEM-FREE OR TROUBLE-FREE LIFE, BUT THE POWER TO RESPOND TO EACH SITUATION.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

II Corinthians 4:8-11

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the

● This statement truly reflects the fact that her obedience to God was for an ulterior motive - to lighten the burden and have a better relationship in the marriage, rather than to please the Lord and demonstrate love for Him by obedience to His Word. That the mate changes, or when he changes, is an added blessing from the Lord. The purpose in responding God's way is for the wife's personal benefit - that she might have peace in the midst of turmoil, joy in difficulty, and hope in despair.

sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1,2

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:2-5

🔊 THE RIGHT MOTIVE AND EMOTIONAL FOCUS:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength and mind."
Luke 10:27

🔊 HAVE YOU PUT A TIME LIMIT ON GOD?

The husband's total spiritual needs are far greater than the disharmony experienced in his relationship with his wife. When her motive for his spiritual improvement is selfish she tends to focus on the situations and attitudes which upset her. However, these negative attitudes are only symptoms of the real problem, which is deeper.

▪ FOR EXAMPLE:

TRYING TO CHANGE ONE ANOTHER

A husband was very critical, accusing and condemning his wife during the early years of their marriage. The couple engaged in reacting to one another, each trying to change the other and "playing Holy Spirit" by pointing out attitudes and actions that needed to be changed.

REALIZING HIS PROBLEM

When the husband learned about the principle of gaining a clear conscience, he was surprised to discover that his subconscious guilt about money he had stolen as a teen, undesirable dating patterns and rejection of advice from those in authority had been the root cause of the critical attitudes toward his wife. ALL OF THESE THINGS SHE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT!

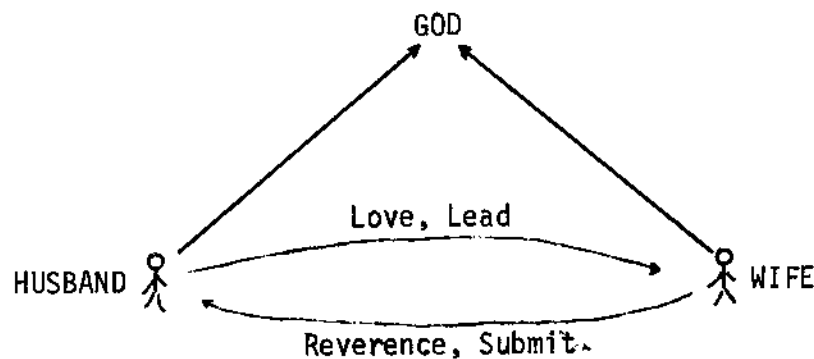
When the mate will cooperate with the Lord, then the Lord has the freedom, IN HIS OWN TIMING, to bring the right pressure and conviction to bear on the individual and get to the root of the real problem!

When we suffer we are privileged to share in the sufferings of Jesus Christ - we have an opportunity to be like him! •See I Peter 4:12-16

- You must be fully confident that God is working, and allow Him to take His time to produce permanent and lasting results.
- One lady shared a glorious testimony when she said, "After I committed myself wholly to the Lord and made things right with my husband, from a human point of view I went through hell for two years. But to have the changed husband I now have -it was worth it!"

PERSONALITY

☛ "SUBMITTING YOURSELVES ONE TO ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF GOD." Ephesians 5:21

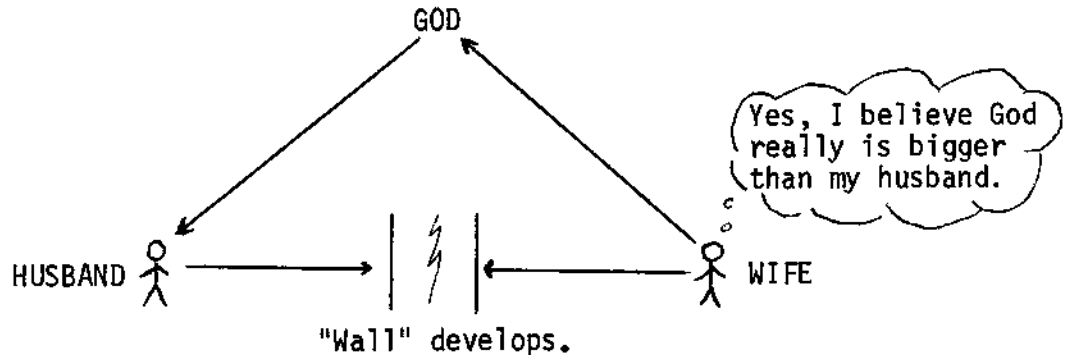


- Throughout the marriage, the wife will be faced with decisions to follow which instinctively appear wrong, imperfect attitudes, idiosyncrasies, misunderstandings, and wrongs to be made right.

Therefore, it is imperative that a couple's focus and goals be on the Lord. The closer they each get to the Lord, the closer they will be drawn to one another in spirit.

- When a "wall" or disagreement develops between husband and wife and the wife feels the husband is wrong, God wants the wife to settle in her mind, first of all, the basic questions:

1 IS GOD BIGGER THAN MY HUSBAND?



- A woman's intuition is often more accurate than a man's logic. Often she can't put her feelings into words on the spur of the moment, but this should not be the basis for her to disregard her own opinions.

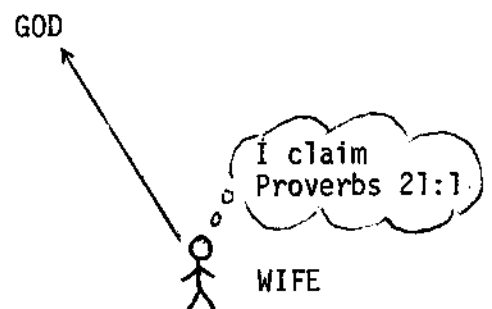
"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any OBEY NOT THE WORD, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives."

I Peter 3:1

2 DO I BELIEVE THAT IF MY HUSBAND IS ABOUT TO MAKE A DECISION THAT WOULD ULTIMATELY DESTROY GOD'S PURPOSES FOR OUR MARRIAGE OR FAMILY, GOD WILL CHANGE MY HUSBAND'S MIND?

"The king's heart (one in authority) is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Proverbs 21:1



❶ **A BASIC WAY GOD GETS THROUGH TO A MAN IS THROUGH FAILURE !!**

"After this manner the holy women of old who trusted in God adorned themselves being in subjection unto their own husbands." King James

"The women of old looked to God... and Sarah called her husband lord."

(See I Peter 3:5,6 Phillips)

☞ The average wife tries to keep her husband from failing when he is set in his ways and not open to advice.

The husband's pride and authority are threatened and he will do just the opposite to have "his way."

When He Doesn't Change His Mind and He's Wrong,

❷ **GOD WANTS THE WIFE TO BE WILLING TO GO WITH HIM THROUGH THE FAILURE WITHOUT SAYING, "I TOLD YOU SO."**

• A \$4000.00 SWIMMING POOL AND NO MONEY!

A wife came to my office on a Tuesday morning in grave concern stating, "My husband has his mind set on buying a \$4,000.00 swimming pool. Our home has been upset for three months over this issue!!"

• SHE WAS TRYING TO PREVENT A DISASTER!

"I've tried to tell him we can't afford it and if he buys it we'll be ruined financially! We're having a hard time paying our bills as it is." I asked her, "What has been your response?" Did you talk back?" She answered, "Well, yes, but he's not a Christian and somebody has to be responsible for our family."

• WOULD YOU TRY GOD'S WAY?

I shared the preceding insights with her and challenged her to try God's way. "Would you make things right with your husband and tell him that if he feels the family ought to have a pool that you're with him and will support whatever he decides?" She said she would.

• SHE ASKED HIS FORGIVENESS FOR FAILING TO ALLOW HIM TO LEAD THE FAMILY AS HE THOUGHT WAS BEST.

Saturday morning she called and exclaimed, "You'll never believe what happened! I did what you suggested. After I asked his forgiveness, I sensed he really didn't believe me. For the next two days he kept bringing the subject up, and I assured him of my willingness to do whatever he thought best."

• HE DECIDED.

He returned home from work on Friday and casually mentioned, "Honey, we're going to get the pool, but I've decided we don't need it right now. Maybe next summer."

THE RESULTING STABILITY!

- When the husband doesn't change and he's wrong, the wife → can understand that God is working through the husband's failures.
→ can visualize areas and issues that God must deal with in the husband's personal life first, before He can develop the marriage relationship.
- When the husband doesn't change and he's right, the wife → has a new confidence in the Lord's ability to lead through her husband.

WHEN DECISION ISN'T IMMINENT:

Unnecessary friction is caused in many marriage situations when the husband and wife fail to discern God's purpose in a lack of agreement between the two concerning issues that do not yet call for a final decision. Too often pride in a man, a threat to his position, or impetuosity destroys the potential of making decisions together. The following are guidelines to discern God's purpose in these situations.

WHEN BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE SEEKING TO PLEASE THE LORD AND THEY DISAGREE ON A MATTER:

If a decision isn't imminent and there are differences of opinion - don't act or decide ! The Lord may be postponing action for these reasons:

1. It isn't the Lord's time to act.
2. God wants to give further insight to the husband.
3. God wants to amplify the wife's insight.
4. Time will change things and you will drop the idea.
5. Time will change the situation and a better or different course of action will be taken.

- WHEN A DECISION IS IMMINENT AND THEY STILL DISAGREE, the wife must apply the principle of chain of command in marriage, and experience the joy of having her husband - if he is wrong and he discovers it - say, "Honey, I was wrong; you were right. Thanks for your love and patience in praying for me. I love you."

"CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER EXCEPT THEY BE AGREED?" Amos 3:3

"THE TWO SHALL BE ONE." Genesis 2:24

"LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY. LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE AS THOUGH YOU HAVE ONLY ONE MIND AND ONE SPIRIT BETWEEN YOU."

Philippians 2:2-4 (Phillips)

THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND IN COMMUNICATION

"Husbands, love your wives.."

- The betrothal of a man and woman in marriage is symbolized in God's relationship to Israel (Hosea 2:19,20) The burden of responsibility for a successful marriage rests on the man. Six responsibilities are imposed upon the husband; only one upon the wife. A woman by nature responds to sincere love. Peter re-emphasizes the responsibilities of the man after he defines the singular responsibility of the wife toward her husband in 1 Peter 3: 1 - 6.

"The Husband's Role"

I Peter 3: 7-8

1. Value wife's opinion + insight.
2. Show deference
3. Fellowship with God is affected
4. Clarify ideals, Goals, + objectives
5. Empathy with her.
6. Bear her burdens - Be a good Listener.
7. Be compassionate. (Gentle hearted)
8. Be courteous, use good manners.
9. Keep thoughts + facial expressions pure
10. Never use abusive language
11. your Life calling as a man is To Praise Her. Prov. 3

THE HUSBAND'S ROLE IN COMMUNICATION

It is essential that the husband realize that his wife is the complement of his life. Failure to comprehend the strategic role she plays in God's purpose for the husband will result in a breakdown in communication and intimacy.

After a man and woman marry, their personal responsibility to God increases as they each grow spiritually. As they grow in "oneness" and continually make their priorities God's priorities, they will repeatedly yield their personal rights to one another. This is emphasized by the words of Paul, "submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of the Lord." Ephesians 5:21 The husband's responsibility to build effective communication and intimacy is emphasized by the following insights from 1 Peter 3:7-12 (Williams):

1. THE WOMAN'S OPINION IS AS VALUABLE AS THE MAN'S.

"You married men, in the same way, must live with your wives in an intelligent consideration of them."

It is the husband's responsibility to build self worth in his wife and communicate his gratefulness for God's workmanship in her life thus far. Failure to believe that her opinions are as important as his will breed seeds of resentment.

A woman's intuitiveness is oftentimes more accurate than a man's logic. This is clearly emphasized by her greater emotional sensitivity to the needs of the children. Failure to take the time to help her express what she "feels" may produce frustration and feelings of inadequacy within her.

2. THE HUSBAND'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HER "EVERY DAY" DECISIONS HAS A DIRECT EFFECT ON HER ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS "MAJOR" DECISIONS.

"You must show them deference, too, as the weaker sex . . ."

- In situations where the husband doesn't "have" to have his way, if he is sensitive to his wife and willing to decide in "her favor," it will be easier for her to submit to him when he makes decisions in which she has a differing opinion. This is showing deference on his part. Deference means "respectful yielding, to revere, to grant the wishes of another."

3. PERSONAL FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE DEGREE OF INTIMACY BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE.

"as they share with you the gracious gift of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

- When "walls" rise between a husband and a wife, the feeling, "He doesn't have my best interests at heart," develops. This affects their oneness of purpose.- one of the first things to disintegrate is their prayer life together. (Some couples don't ever pray together.)

The husband's personal prayer life becomes superficial and ineffective as well. Since the husband's priority is to meet the needs of his wife, a lack of oneness constitutes a divided loyalty. James 1: 8 (Phillips translation) states that "A man of divided loyalty will reveal instability at every turn."

Prayer is sharing one's innermost feelings with the Lord. Since the woman is a responder by nature, the husband's complaints about his wife will only result in the Lord searching the husband's heart to reveal what he did to cause her not to want to respond to him.

4. UNITY IS NECESSARY IN SHORT AND LONG RANGE GOALS, PLANS AND DECISIONS.

"Finally you must all live in harmony (be of one mind)."

- A successful marriage involves learning to look at life from your mate's point of view. To achieve effective communication, it is necessary to allow the wife the necessary times to "talk" so she feels that her husband understands her point of view before he draws a conclusion in a matter involving both husband and wife.
- See material on the Spirit of a Marriage.
- IT'S HARD WORK ! The degree to which a man is able to live in harmony with others is directly related to his ability to spiritually discern keen insights in directing the course of his marriage. "Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall 'see'(comprehend something remarkable) the Lord." Hebrews 12:14
- Peace is "a harmonious relationship between one another." "Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you." Philippians 2:2 (Phillips)

5. KNOW HOW TO EMPATHIZE WITH HER.

"Be sympathetic." (having compassion one of another). "

- The husband is to be moved inwardly with the same feelings of distress when the wife is ill or "down" emotionally. The emphasis here is to be sensitive to her needs, communicating a love and reverence for her.

The woman's cycles are oftentimes much more pronounced than a man's. The wise husband will plan to be sensitive to her "lows" and seek to avoid such common phrases as, "What's the matter with you now?"

6. LEARN TO BEAR HER BURDENS.

"Loving as brothers," (Love as brethren).

- The husband owes his wife love as a human being before he ever imposes on her the additional responsibilities and expectations of a wife.

The idea of brethren denotes a warmth of relationship in which two people are free to share burdens and problems without rebuke or rejection.

- When the wife wants that listening ear, it is not the time to give her "solutions" to her frustrations. A husband and wife were never intended to counsel each other. To counsel, one has to concentrate on the negative traits of another. To do this communicates that the husband doesn't accept his wife as she is.

God's design is for the husband to draw attention to her strengths and qualities. Husbands and wives already know what their weaknesses are in their mate's eyes. When one compliments the strengths and achievements of the other, there is motivation to improve and please the other even more.

One project for developing this attitude is to practice visualizing the negative traits in one's mate as positive qualities misused. For example, the husband may become irritated when his wife is "too detailed" in her explanations. When the husband learns to appreciate her "thoroughness," it will motivate the wife to be more concise in what she says.

7. BE COMPASSIONATE.

"Tenderhearted." (pitiful)

- There is a tendency for many men to develop the idea that a "real man" is one who is dogmatic, authoritarian and headstrong. At best, these false ideas will get obedience, but they will fail to gain the wife's respect. There is no basis for a man to rationalize

that, because he is outgoing, he cannot develop a meek and sensitive spirit toward his wife. It is the husband's responsibility to both love and lead. To be willing to admit when he is wrong and to ask forgiveness are the first steps in gaining respect. "Before destruction, the heart of a man is haughty, and before honour is humility." Prov. 18:12

- It is imperative that the husband teach his lips to say what he means to say. "In the lips of him that hath understanding, wisdom is found." Prov. 10:13
- The husband needs to learn to deal with the "real" problem rather than verbally to attack his wife's character. If he reacts to what he "sees with his eyes or hears with his ears," he will invariably create a bigger problem. When his wife upsets him, his motivation should be to discern what caused her to do what she did, rather than to condemn her failures.

Example: The husband comes home from work and he observes the house in a mess. He blurts out, "Who have you been talking to on the phone today, honey?" The wife will immediately react to this kind of question, no matter how delicately the husband words it. He has, by the question, told her that she is undisciplined and could have better handled her time. He implies she is dumb because she'd old enough to know how much she has to do and can do when she really wants to. To confront the problem and communicate understanding, without producing a reaction to his words, he could say, "It looks like you've had a day like I've had, honey - full of interruptions."

The first response attacked her character and implied that she was irresponsible and purposely wasted time, while the latter gave her every benefit of the doubt that the situation was the result of circumstances beyond her immediate control.

8. LEARN TO USE GOOD MANNERS AT ALL TIMES.

"Humble" (courteous)

- The husband's manners toward his wife should have improved since his courting days. To be careless in this area communicates the idea that he takes her for granted and has a lower opinion of her.

A woman believes what she feels and experiences. If she cannot "feel" that special attention, she is not likely to believe her husband really "cares."

- The basic idea is to take on the attitude of a servant. The word means "lowly-minded, friendly with thoughtfulness."

9. KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS PURE. KEEP FACIAL EXPRESSIONS FROM COMMUNICATING DISGUST, CONTEMPT OR INTENT TO "GET EVEN."

"Never returning evil for evil."

- This is in direct reference to the husband's thoughts toward his wife as contrasted to some form of verbal or physical abuse.

We can communicate almost every thought through the facial expressions of our eyes and lips. There are varying "degrees of silence" that communicate the exact feelings of the husband toward his wife. This type of treatment is more destructive and brutal than words or physical abuse. This kind of wound is deep and hard to heal. As one wife expressed it, "My husband has never hit me. But if eyes could kill, I'd be dead."

10. NEVER USE ABUSIVE LANGUAGE.

"Nor abuse for abuse." (Blaspheme)

- This forbids the use of defamatory speech to strike back when the wife has "spouted off." Our responsibility is to return "good for evil."
- The words of Christ enforce these principles:

- When the husband feels he is treated like an enemy - LOVE her.
- If the wife curses her husband - PRAISE her.
- If she says she hates him - DO GOOD in return.
- When he feels he is being spitefully used - PRAY for HER.

Matthew 5: 44

II. YOUR LIFE CALLING AS A HUSBAND IS TO PRAISE HER ! !

"But contrariwise blessing, KNOWING THAT YE ARE THEREUNTO CALLED, that ye should inherit a blessing."

- The full impact of the word "blessing" means "to speak well of, to praise, to acknowledge her goodness with the motive to lift her up in the eyes of others."

The man who will allow the Holy Spirit to mold his spirit after the Lord will receive a blessing that is one of the very keys to "raising up the foundations of a new generation to pass the righteousness of the Lord to his great grandchildren." Ex. 20:5-6, Deut. 4:9-10

- It is imperative for the husband to realize that the above guidelines are not optional to the man who wants to have a truly successful marriage and receive all the benefits God desires to give him.

**PROJECTS FOR
CHARACTER
DEVELOPMENT**

PERSONAL EVALUATION FOR HUSBANDS

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you feel that the lines of communication are fully open between you and each one in your family? 1 Thess. 2:8-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Does each member of your family know what your specific personal and family goals are? James 1:22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Have you helped each member of your family set up clearly-defined goals? ^a |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Are you able to trace conflicts with your family to basic causes? 1 Cor. 2:15-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Are you satisfied with your family's response to your authority? ^b 1 Tim. 1:16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Are you respected by your family to the same degree that Jesus Christ is to be respected by the Church? Eph. 5:23-33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Are you actively interested in your children's activities-- church, school, interests, etc? Prov. 20: 5; 27:19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Do you pray with the children as well as with your wife? Ephesians 6: 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Do you plan outings for the children and create in them an interest for the really important things in life? Eph. 5:25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Do you have the freedom to share your deepest and fondest dreams with your wife? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Do you feel a freedom to share your areas of weakness with your wife? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. When your wife criticizes you, do you feel she has your best interests at heart? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Do you think your wife feels you have <u>her</u> best interest at heart? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Do you feel your wife appreciates you? Do you know why? |

^a Short-range and long-range goals for the development of inner qualities and outward achievement.

^b Your family's attitude toward your authority has become their subconscious attitude toward the Lord's authority.

YES NO

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- 15. Do you get angry with your wife when she disagrees with you?
- 16. Do you understand the questions your wife is "really" asking from her heart in addition to what her mouth is saying?
- 17. Do your wife's attitude, words, or actions ever embarrass you in public?
- 18. Do you discuss with your wife new purchases that you want?
- 19. Regardless of amount of income, does your wife feel secure in God's ability to supply the needs of the family through you?
- 20. Do you find it difficult to control your temper during family conflicts? Prov. 15:1, James 4:1, Prov. 13:10
- 21. Do you make it a practice to verbally acknowledge to your family when you have been wrong? ^c James 5:16, Matt. 5:24
- 22. Do you feel that you know how to apply basic scriptural principles in achieving lasting solutions for family conflicts? ^d Matt. 5:1-12
- 23. Are you fully aware of your role in the home? Eph. 5:25
- 24. Is your testimony in your home one that you would be willing to share with anyone? Prov. 22:17-22

^c Two of the most common complaints lodged against fathers are that they cannot control their temper and that, out of pride, they rarely admit that they have been wrong.

^d In overcoming pride, anger, worry, resentment, guilt, moral impurity, apathy, compromise, etc.

PERSONAL EVALUATION FOR WIVES

Yes No

1. Do you create an atmosphere where your family can freely share their experiences with you? (Proverbs 14:1)

2. Do you feel that you are taken for granted and too much is expected of you? (Proverbs 13:15, 18, 27)

3. Do you lose your temper quickly over what your family might call "minor things"? (Proverbs 17:1)

4. Do you verbally acknowledge to your family when you have been wrong? (James 5:16)

5. Do you have specific goals of character development for yourself and your family? (I Corinthians 3:9,10)

6. Does your family know what these goals are? (James 1:22)

7. Do you encourage and help your family in their goals rather than criticize them when they fall short? (I Corinthians 3:10)

8. Are you able to trace conflicts to basic causes? (I Corinthians 2:15,16)

9. Are you satisfied with the respect and feelings your family has for you? (Proverbs 31:28)

10. Is your testimony in the home pleasing to Christ and one that you would be willing to share with the people in the church? (I Peter 3:9)

11. Do you know how to apply scriptural principles to basic needs as they arise within your family? (II Timothy 2:14-17, James 1:5)

12. Has anyone ever shown you from the Word your basic responsibilities and the role you have in the home? (Proverbs 31:10-31; I Peter 3; Eph. 5; Titus 2)

13. Do you understand the headship of your husband? (Ephesians 5:22)

14. Do you permit your children to do things in your husband's absence that he objects to when he is home? (Proverbs 31:11)
15. Do you seek to carry out your husband's commands - even if they don't seem important to you? (1 Peter 3:5)
16. Do you consult with him before spending money? (Proverbs 31:11)
17. Do you contradict him in front of the children? (Proverbs 31:12)
18. Do you bring up his shortcomings in front of others? (Proverbs 31:23)
19. Do you compare him with other men? (Proverbs 19:13)
20. Are you content with the financial structure in which God has placed you? (Hebrews 13: 4, 5)
21. Do you pray for your husband daily and encourage him in his work, etc.? (Proverbs 12: 25)
22. Do you go out of your way to make yourself attractive to him? (Proverbs 31:22)
23. Do you plan appetizing meals? (Proverbs 31:27)
24. Do you take the responsibility of maintaining the home as seriously as you would an outside job? (Titus 2:5)

IDENTIFYING POSITIVE QUALITIES

LIST THE POSITIVE QUALITIES YOU SEE IN YOURSELF	LIST THE POSITIVE QUALITIES YOU SEE IN YOUR LIFE PARTNER

INITIATING
GOD'S
PRIORITIES

DISCERNING GOD'S PRIORITIES

Though there were many needs in the lives of those around Him, yet when Jesus Christ came to the cross of Calvary, he could say to his heavenly Father, "I have finished the work you gave me to do." This was because Jesus Christ operated on the basis of what was important rather than by the urgencies imposed on His life.

All too frequently parents wake up to the fact that their lives have not been given to what is important to God. They have allowed their own desires and ideas of what they wanted, or by pressures that seemed impossible to resist, to dictate their lives. The results - families broken, marriages dissolved, vital relationships disintegrated - clearly point out that the carrying out of their responsibilities was not based on God's priorities

Scripture clearly indicates that we are responsible for our lives and the days God has given us to live for Him. We have no basis for talking about priorities unless we can define our ultimate goal in life.

"The days of our years are three score and ten. . .so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto WISDOM. Ps. 90:10-12

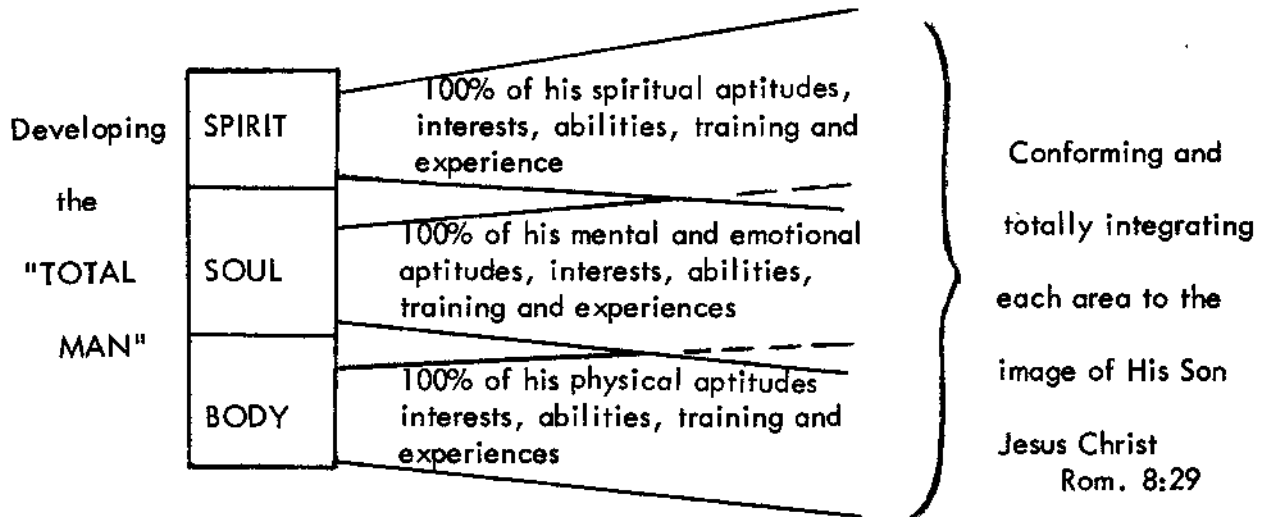
Wisdom is our goal - to see life from God's point of view.

To allow Jesus Christ to relive himself through my actions, words, motives and deeds and therefore affect all other key relationships in my life.

A BOREDOM / FRUSTRATION FACTOR

● WHEN OUR LIFE GOAL AND PRIORITIES ARE OUT OF ORDER, THERE IS A CORRESPONDING FRUSTRATION AND BOREDOM FACTOR IN OUR LIVES.

Our spiritual, psychological and physical aptitudes, interests and skills add up to 100% of our total capacities. God wants to develop and integrate 100% of these areas for his purposes. Failure to integrate the "total man" will result in frustrations and pressures.

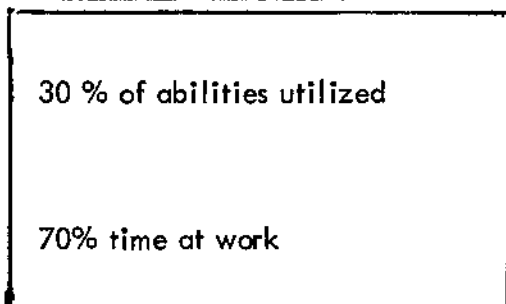


For example, if a man spends 70% of his time at his job and is only utilizing 30% of his abilities, skills, etc., then there is a subconscious attempt to integrate the remaining 70% of his aptitudes, interests, etc., into the remaining 30% of his time. This produces a 40% frustration factor.

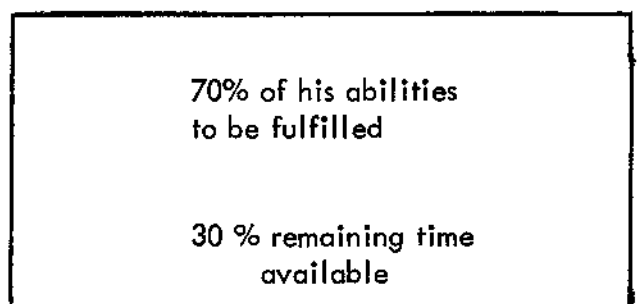
A 40% BOREDOM FACTOR

ABILITIES
APTITUDES
INTERESTS

TIME



A 40% FRUSTRATION FACTOR



DEFINITION:

Acting on a matter because of God's claim on my life which has precedence over all other human agencies.

DO I WANT MY PRIORITIES TO BE GOD'S PRIORITIES?

God wants to build a LIFE, MARRIAGE, FAMILY, VOCATION AND MINISTRY IN EACH MAN'S LIFE AND IN THAT ORDER! (Eph 5:18 - 6:7)

A LIFE:

• Ephesians 5: 18, 19 -
 "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; "

A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE.

• There is a distinction between my personal daily relationship with Jesus Christ and Christian activities. Many Christians think of these as one and the same thing. My ministry begins with personal responsibility to God in which my goal is to apply my heart to wisdom, conforming to the image of His Son.
 Romans 8:28, 29

A MARRIAGE:

• Ephesians 5: 21 - 33
 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the

AN INTIMACY AND SENSITIVITY OF SPIRIT TO THE NEEDS OF EACH OTHER.

• Scripture is clear that when a person marries, his primary ministry is his wife. "He that is married careth for the things that are of the world how he may please his wife."
 I Cor. 7 : 33

head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; . . . Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church; . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself . . ."

- It is essential that a married person recognize and assume his responsibilities to his wife and family along with other "outside the home" responsibilities, i.e., vocation, activities and ministries.

A FAMILY:

- Ephesians 6: 1, 4
"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

• SEEING LIFE FROM THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW WHILE WE TEACH HIM TO LOOK AT LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW.

- The responsibility for the children is the third priority. The urgencies all around us tempt us to focus on the job, outside activities, or ministry, but the priority of the family Paul emphasized in writing to Timothy, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

1 Timothy 3: 5

A VOCATION:

• Ephesians 6:5, 9

"Servants (employees), be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ.... And ye masters (employers), do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

• THE UTILIZATION OF SKILLS TO PROVIDE BASIC NEEDS FOR THE FAMILY.

• The vocation is the means to supply the physical needs of the family. In its proper perspective it is visualized as the means by which I support my family while I serve the Lord. "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Ephesians 4:1 and Romans 12:11

A MINISTRY:

• Ephesians 6: 10 - 12

"Finally, my brethern, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh..."

• REPRODUCING THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST IN OTHERS.

• The last priority is the expression of my life message in bringing others outside my family to their full maturity in Christ Jesus. (Col. 1:28-29 Phillips)

4 BENEFITS

OF APPLYING OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM (Psalm 90: 14 - 17)



- Psalm 90:14
"O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
and that we may rejoice and be glad
all our days."

- Psalm 90: 15
"Make us glad according to the
days wherein thou hast afflicted
us and the years wherein we have
seen evil."

- Psalm 90: 16
"Let thy work appear unto thy
servants and thy glory unto their
children."

- Psalm 90: 17
"And let the beauty of the Lord
our God be upon us: and establish
thou the work of our hands upon
us; yea the work of our hands
establish thou it."

1. EVERY DAY IS MEANINGFUL.
When priorities are in order, the pressures
on our lives are transformed into a
motivating tool for achievement.

2. THERE IS CONTINUOUS JOY
over past, present and future difficulty.
As we are able to visualize God's
purpose through trials and testings,
we are motivated to cooperate
with Him.

3. THERE WILL BE BLESSINGS -
FOR GENERATIONS to come. Just
as the sins of the fathers are visited unto
the 3rd and 4th generation of them who
hate Him, so righteousness is an
inheritance to the generations of those
who love Him. Exodus 20: 5,6

4. THERE WILL BE STABILITY AND
PERMANENT RESULTS. To observe to
do all that is written in the Word and
to make God's thoughts our thoughts will
guarantee prosperity and success.
Joshua 1:8

AN EXAMPLE OF

WISDOM APPLIED

REAL SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENT IN HIS PERSONAL LIFE :

An active layman was growing in his Christian life after making a new commitment to God and applying the biblical principles for success. However, he was continuing to have difficulty in communicating effectively with his wife and children.

DISHARMONY WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN

Despite this great personal development, "tremendous pressures from the job" made it impossible to give adequate time to his family! Discord with his wife was continuing and he sensed his children needed him desperately.

PHYSICAL ILLNESS AND LOSS OF WORK

He also suffered physical consequences which he attributed to his work load. He had missed work, been hospitalized and taken extensive leaves of absence because of his illness.

I had assumed that the responsibilities of his position demanded at least sixty or seventy hours a week.

A FORTY-HOUR WORK WEEK!

One day I asked him, "How many hours a week do you work?" He replied, "Forty " "Forty", I replied. "Don't you work a lot of overtime?" He responded, "very seldom." I suggested that assess his schedule and see how his present time was prohibiting him from spending time with his wife and children.

- The following outlines his schedule:

<u>- ACTIVITY</u>	<u>- HOURS</u>	
Sleep	49	
Work (including lunch and travel)	47	
Church services (includes preparation for Sunday School Class)	12	168 hours in a week
Personal time in Word	5	<u>-120 hours</u>
Routine chores and meals	<u>7</u>	48 unclaimed hours !
	120 hours each week	

48 HOURS WASTED EACH WEEK !

After we had totalled up his hours, we went back through his week to see if we had missed anything. He assured me this included everything.

THE REWARD FOR OBEDIENCE ! A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIFE AND FAMILY.

He exclaimed, "I have the time but, it is all spent thinking about my responsibilities at work!" He put his priorities in order and followed the steps below; in a few months his health improved. The relationship with his wife deepened. His teenage son told me two years later, "You know there was a time when I wouldn't talk to my dad. Now there isn't anything I can't discuss with him!"

TO BEGIN

ASSESS PRESENT SCHEDULE

Project #1

It is important to get a realistic picture of how I spend my time each day:

STEP ONE

Realistically total up the hours you spend in the following areas of your life each week. (Block in the time on the schedule form provided.)

<u>• ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>• HOURS</u>
Sleep	_____
Meals	_____
Work	_____
Church	_____
Ministry	_____
Chores	_____
Hobby	_____
Family	_____
Physical Fitness	_____
Recreation	_____
Leisure Time	_____

NOTE: Do not list times as you think they should be; list what they actually are. If you find it difficult to remember how you spend your time, your mate will easily help you to recall !

Total -

There are 168 hours in one week.

☐ STEP TWO

Subtract total hours in step one from 168 hours in one week. The difference represents either unclaimed or overextended hours.

☐ STEP THREE

SETTING UP MY SCHEDULE

**BASED ON GOD'S
PRIORITIES**

Project #2

On the second schedule sheet that is provided:

1. Block in the times of your schedule based on your necessary physical needs (such as sleep and meals) and responsibilities which you cannot control (such as 40-hour work week, church services, regularly scheduled meetings, etc.)
2. Choose a specific time each day to spend in personal fellowship with God for Bible study and prayer. Select a time when you are most alert and the possibility of interruptions is least.
3. Next block out specific time to spend with your wife. (If you have children it would be unwise to schedule time with your wife at a time when the children are seeking your attention, such as prior to or after meals, or when your wife is occupied with some of her basic responsibilities.
4. Provide adequate time for the children. Discuss with your wife what the needs of the children are and when they need you most. You will be surprised how well children can adapt to whenever you are available!

5. The schedule is filling up! Is there still time available? If so, block out the time for specific Christian responsibilities you have assumed (such as boards, committees, etc.) There may not be enough time now to be involved in all these secondary things (from God's point of view at the present); thus prayer and discernment are necessary to determine what is important.

6. Have confidence to say No based on what is important. Eliminate the urgencies. If, on the other hand, there is too much wasted time, you need to become responsible and more involved in important areas.

For example, if the hours at the end of step four total up to 160, then there are only 8 hours available for commitments in the fifth step category.

When our priorities are based on God's priorities, we gain a new confidence to say "No." Our nays can confidently be nay.

☛ "But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matthew 5 : 37

☛ "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work." Exodus 20:9

(IF WE HAVE MORE TO DO AT THE END OF SIX DAYS THAN WE CAN POSSIBLY DO -)
THEN WE'RE TRYING TO DO MORE THAN GOD EVER INTENDED US TO DO.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
11 pm - 12 am	← S	L	E	E	P	→	
12-1		This is how one man set up his initial schedule in order to get his priorities in order.					
1-2		After he had blocked out his basic necessities and committed responsibilities, he used the dotted areas to determine when he could schedule time for his wife and children, before taking on any other responsibilities.					
2-3							
3-4							
4-5	S	L	E	E	P		
5-6	↙	GET UP TRAVEL					↘
6-7		WORKSHOP					
7-8		G E T	U P	&	T R A V E L		
8-9	C	W	←	→	W	S	
9-10	H	O				O	T
10-11	U R	R				R	U
11-12	C H	K	←	→	K	D Y	
12-1	LUNCH	←	→	→	→	→	LUNCH
1-2	.....	W	←	→	W	.....	.....
2-3	.....	O				O	.....
3-4	.....	R				R	.....
4-5	.....	K	←	→	K	.....	.....
5-6	DINNER	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL
6-7	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER
7-8	C	C	C
8-9	H	H	H
9-10	U	U	U
10-11	R	R	R
11-12	C	C	C
12-1	H	H	H

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
11 pm - 12 am							
12-1							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							

meekness: claiming no rights for myself but yielding all rights, property, and possessions to God. It is realizing that what I have has been loaned to me by God.

worry: the result of trying to assume the responsibility for something over which I have no immediate control

1. acknowledge to God, all that I have belongs to him
2. Realize God is therefore primarily responsible
3. Recognize that God will not allow anything to happen to destroy his ultimate purpose
4. Thank him ahead of time for whatever occurs beyond your control

Overcoming anger

1. Identify the right denied you
2. yield each right to Jesus Christ
3. Expect God to test you
4. Learn God's response to the 'loss' of your rights.

ID Rights

your life	Luke 9:23
money	Gal 3:1
possessions	Joh 1:21
Friends	Math 10:40
Clothes	1 Peter 3:4
health	1 Cor 12:7-10
manage	1 Cor 7:3,4
reputation	Ps 23:3
schedule	Math 20:26,27
children	Ps 127:3

Develop a proper value system

1. purpose to handle the resources God has entrusted to you, from his point of view
2. Give your financial resources, schedule, assets, and liabilities to God
3. Indications of improper value system
 - A. If my objective in life is to make money
 - B. If I'm willing to sacrifice things more important than money, for money
 - C. If I try to buy with money, things money can't buy
 - D. If I neglect my responsibility to God.
 - E. If I'm not content in life with food, clothing and shelter.

4. God has given us money for three primary purposes

- A. to meet our needs
- B. to wisely invest
- C. to meet the needs of others.

5. Exercise 4 types of giving

- A. Give God - the tithe
- B. offerings
- C. sacrificial giving
- D. exercise our measure of faith

Rom: 12

6. establish Guide lines for giving

- A. (Guidelines in book) (Thessalonians)

7. Adjust your level of living to basic normal expenditures

- A. distinguish needs from wants
- B. be flexible to unexpected gain or loss
- C. be content in what state you're in

* this will enable me to:

- A. recognize God is my resource

- B. maintain a proper value system
- C. Be sensitive to needs of others

8. Utilize your earning power to the fullest within the limits of your priorities

9. Make wise investments.

fixed dollars



savings
bonds
insurance

equity dollars



speculation

10. Suggested values for investing

- A. integrity of individual or organization
- B. their philosophy of finances
- C. Revenue balance sheet
- D. track record
- E. Cash flow
- F. demand for product
- G. liquidity of investment

11. regularly review sounder insights on finances.

TO GET OUT OF DEBT

1. prepare to make any immediate sacrifice necessary in order to realize ultimate victory

finance freedom

2. Depending on financial condition, set goals to achieve the next objective
from insolvency to solvency
from solvency to freedom
from freedom to wise investment

3. check the impulse to buy:

A. assess what you have already

B. learn to use what you have

C. then determine real need MATT 14:13-2

4. develop resistance to sales pressure

5. before buying something

evaluate

A. will it benefit God's goal and purpose for my life

B. Is it absolutely necessary

C. Can I make

D. where can I get best price

R. Rent it or buy it used?

6. discontinue unnecessary service

7. begin to buy on cash basis

8. don't buy till necessary

first give God the opportunity to provide thru other sources

9. if a bill is due and God is testing your faith, the money will be supplied on time

10. understand the law of depreciation
it assumes a person pays cash for depreciating item and save an amount equal to the rate of depreciation.

11. Do not buy on credit because it:

A. violates scripture

Rom 13:8

B. produces bondage to others

Prov 22:7

C. produces pressures at home 1 Tim 5:8

D. keeps God from supplying
supernaturally 11 COR 9:11

E prevents God from withholding
harmful items ISA 55:8,9

12 do not use credit cards for credit hungry

13 use extreme caution in cosigning anything

14 exchange personal skills to build
interdependance among one another.

15. discern why lack of funds

A money supplied, & misused it

B. God wants to keep me from
unnecessary purchase

C. there is sin in my life

D a decrease in supply indicate
a change in direction

E God is testing the totality of my
commitment to him.

ideal goal

10% savings for investment

20% A. eliminating credit payments
B. savings for emergency
C. major purchases
D. afterings

70% living costs.

**BASIC
PRINCIPLES
OF FINANCE**

DEVELOPING **A P P R O P E R**

V A L U E **S Y S T E M**

☐ A proper value system will result
in the following:



1. ACKNOWLEDGING TO GOD THAT ALL I POSSESS (possessions, property, time, money and earning power) BELONGS TO HIM. This commitment makes God responsible for "His property." Therefore, whether He reduces my income and material goods, or increases them, I can thank Him. This was Job's response when God took his possessions. Job 1:21

2. MAKING WISDOM MY OBJECTIVE IN LIFE. Looking at life (including finances) from God's perspective will change concepts of what is really important in life. Instead of using money just to acquire more things, the chief goal becomes to communicate the love of God by meeting the needs of others, as God enables. 1 John 2:15; 3:23,24.

When a person has or is acquiring assets he may view them as a means to fulfill God's purposes in his life, as he discerns God's purpose in increasing the funds.

- If my primary goal is to make money or get the things money will buy, then I have a wrong value system. Symptoms of a wrong value system include:
 - Being willing to sacrifice things which are better than money for money, such as a clear conscience, a good name, etc.
 - Attempting to use money for things it can't buy, such as peace of mind, security, gaining friends, etc.
 - Forgetting about God or neglecting responsibility to Him.

3. GIVING GOD THE TITHE AS A REMINDER THAT ALL I HAVE BELONGS TO HIM. The tithe was established before the law began. Genesis 14:20

When a person doesn't give God what rightfully belongs to Him, the money is given to Satan. Scripture says that such a person is cursed with a curse. However, God will rebuke the devourer (Satan) when the tithe is given. Malachi 3:8-11.

4. REALIZING THAT FOOD AND CLOTHING ARE THE BASIC NEEDS WHICH GOD HAS PROMISED TO SUPPLY. ANYTHING MORE THAN THESE ONLY INDICATES GOD'S ABUNDANT BLESSING!

• "And having food and raiment let
| us be therewith content." | Timothy 6:8

- If our children feel they deserve more than food and clothing, then they are developing a wrong value system. Philippians 4:19

● **DISTINGUISHING NEEDS FROM WANTS.**

There are many physical things in addition to food, clothing and shelter which may make life more pleasant or productive.

Before acquiring these wants, a person must evaluate these wants in light of God's purposes for his life.

- A. How will acquiring these wants assist me in fulfilling God's purposes for my life?
- B. How will God's purposes for my life be hindered if these wants are not acquired?

(Also, see evaluation sheet at back of materials)

When these items are purchased in light of God's purposes, these "wants" will assist him in deepening his relationship with the Lord, the needs of others and helping him be more productive for God.

5. BEING FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ADJUST NATURALLY TO AN UNEXPECTED GAIN OR LOSS.

"I have learned to be content, whatever the circumstances may be. I know how to live when things are difficult and I know how to live when things are prosperous. In general, and in particular I have learned the secret of facing either plenty or poverty." Philippians 4:11 (Phillips)

- A key to financial ease is to adjust the basic level of living to the lowest point of income. This practice will permit wise giving and wise investments rather than having to pay up old debts.

6. INCREASING TO THE FULLEST THE MEANS GOD HAS GIVEN TO EARN IN ORDER TO GIVE AS GOD DIRECTS. All through Scripture a person is warned against laziness. He is expected to take what God has given him and use it to its fullest.

- "Be not slothful in business." Romans 12:11

- It is important, however, that a person be content with what he has at the present. Otherwise, when funds increase he will set his heart on them rather than on the purpose for which God is increasing them.

7. LEARNING HOW TO MAKE WISE INVESTMENTS. Jesus refuted this. Many Christians feel it is wrong to invest their money. Jesus refuted this attitude when he called the man who hid his talent (gold) a "wicked and slothful servant." "You ought to have put my money in the bank and when I came I should at any rate have received what belongs to me with interest." Matthew 24: 26,27. (Phillips)

8. DEVELOPING A SENSITIVITY TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS. A Christian should be involved in his world. He needs to become sensitive to the total needs of a person. Everyone has spiritual, psychological and physical needs. It is essential to determine which needs should be met first and which ones God is directing him to meet.

- WAYS TO DEVELOP SENSITIVITY to the needs of others:

- OBSERVATION - Look for an opportunity to meet the needs of others.
- ASSOCIATION - Become involved with people.

- CONVERSATION - Learn to ask questions and be a good listener to discern the needs of others.
- DISCERNMENT - Discover what God is seeking to accomplish in the people He brings into our lives. Discern how to cooperate with Him.
- PRAYER - Pray for these individuals.

9. ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING WHERE TO GIVE.

- The following points were shared by a Christian leader who had seen God bless and prosper him as he was a faithful steward of God's money.

- a. Is the message true to the Scriptures? I Thessalonians 1:6,8
- b. Are people responding positively to the message? I Thessalonians 2:13-14
- c. Is the leader's life an example of his own message? I Thessalonians 2:10-12
- d. Is there a standard of excellence? Freedom from waste? I Thessalonians 3:10-13
I Thessalonians 4:11-12 and 5:22
- e. Do they beg? Distinguish between persons or organizations who share various needs and those whose motive is to get money. Some are perpetually in debt. It is equally important to discern what God is trying to teach them by not supplying their needs.
I Thessalonians 2:9 and II Thessalonians 3:10-13
- f. Is there some assurance of continuance/reproduction within the organization? I Timothy 2:2

This would also be a valid basis for any Christian organization to use in self evaluation.

10. KEEPING FINANCES IN THEIR PROPER PERSPECTIVE.

- "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:20,21

● A PERSON'S ABILITY TO GIVE IS DETERMINED BY WHAT HE HAS ALREADY GIVEN:

- "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38

- "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." II Corinthians 9:6

- "God can give you everything that you need, so that you may always have sufficient both for yourselves and for giving away to other people. . . The more you are enriched by God, the more scope will there be for generous giving." II Corinthians 9:8, II (Phillips)

● A PERSON'S MOTIVE IN GIVING WILL DETERMINE HIS REWARD FOR GIVING.

- "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." II Corinthians 9:7

- "After all, the important thing is - be willing to give as much as we can, that is what God accepts." II Corinthians 8:12 (Phillips)

● A PERSON'S INVESTMENTS WILL BE AS ETERNAL AS THE THINGS HE INVESTS IN:

- ". . . be rich in kindly actions, be ready to give to others and to sympathize with those in distress. Your security should be invested in the life to come so that you may be sure of holding a share in the life which is permanent." I Timothy 6:19 (Phillips)

II. USING THE HOME AS A MEANS FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS
AND SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

HOW TO GET OUT OF DEBT

I. DEFINE FINANCIAL FREEDOM.

Financial freedom is;

- freedom from debt,
- dishonest financial dealings,
- from worry over lack of necessary funds
- and to give in response to God's direction.

2. VISUALIZE BENEFITS OF FINANCIAL FREEDOM.

- a. To be able to give to the needs of others as the Holy Spirit leads.
- b. To experience God's supernatural provision. Supernatural in the sense that God provides the precise amount needed, at the precise time which results in bringing glory to God.
- c. To develop wisdom and insight for using economy to meet financial responsibilities. This must be based upon contentment with the basics.
 - God doesn't waste things. He doesn't build anything into a persons life that has no purpose.
 - God wants to make the most of what He has given us. (Parable of the talents.)

3. DISTINGUISH EXPENDITURE FOR DEPRECIATING ITEMS FROM INVESTMENTS IN APPRECIATING ITEMS.

Stop borrowing money for depreciating items (appliances, furniture, automobiles, etc.) See

- Romans 13: 8 -

 - Proverbs 22:7 -

 - I Timothy 5:8 -

 - II Corinthians 9:11 -

 - Isaiah 55:8, 9 -
- LAW OF DEPRECIATION assumes a person pays cash for his initial investment and can thereafter save an amount of money equal to the depreciating rate of the item.

● ILLUSTRATION OF AUTO:

● LAW OF '72' :

- 1% on \$1.00 simple interest requires 100 years to double the money.
- 1% on \$1.00 compounded interest takes only 72 years to double the money.
- Divide the rate of interest earned into 100 or 72 years, whichever applies and determine how many years it takes to double the money.
- For example: 6% on \$1.00 simple interest will take 16.6 years to double the money. While 6% on \$1.00 compounded interest will take only 12 years to double the money.

4. REALIZE THAT GOD'S WORK AND REPUTATION ARE AFFECTED WHEN I AM IN DEBT. PURPOSE TO GET OUT OF DEBT BY WHATEVER SACRIFICES ARE NECESSARY.

5. COMPLETE FINANCIAL WORKSHEETS (pages 11 - 13). EVALUATE EVERY EXPENDITURE ON THE BASIS OF HOW IT WILL BENEFIT THE WORK AND REPUTATION OF GOD. DISCONTINUE UNNECESSARY SERVICES.

6. BEGIN TO BUY ON A CASH BASIS. God's supply of money will indicate the importance and timing of each purchase. Give Him a chance to provide the item before you buy it. Remember that God can supply by decreasing bills or increasing income. Discontinue use of credit cards for credit.

7. REALIZE THAT GOD IS ABLE TO SUPPLY FUNDS WHEN A BILL IS DUE. "God's work done in God's way will not lack financial support. God is able to provide funds just as well ahead of time as afterwards, and he much prefers to do so. He is too wise a God to frustrate His purposes for lack of funds." Hudson Taylor.' Therefore, if the bill is due and the money is not there, then God is not testing your faith. He has some other goal to accomplish.

8. USE GREAT CAUTION IN CO-SIGNING FOR ANYTHING.
See Proverbs 6:1, 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26; and 27:13.

9. NEVER LOAN FOR NON-ESSENTIALS, BUT GIVE TO BASIC NEEDS.

10. DEVELOP SALES RESISTANCE.

11. UTILIZE PERSONAL SKILLS FOR HOME MAINTENANCE.

12. DISCERN GOD'S REASON FOR INSUFFICIENT FUNDS:

- a. He is testing my faith. If however, the money is not supplied when the bill is due, God is not testing the person's faith.
- b. He doesn't need it. Is the individual prepared to be content **either** way.
- c. The money was supplied but it was misspent.
- d. There is sin in the camp.
- e. The decrease in funds is God's way of directing the person towards a major change.

- For further insight into getting out of debt, see the book, Here's How to Succeed with Your Money by George Bowman, Moody Press. 1960.

BUDGET WORK SHEET

I. GROSS INCOME \$ _____

II. TAXES and \$ _____
TITHE \$ _____

III. NET INCOME \$ _____
(100% of available funds)

NET INCOME
\$ _____

10% \$ <u>PERMANENT SAVINGS</u> (If in a savings account - be sure your money is drawing <u>compound interest.</u>)	70% \$ _____ USED FOR BASIC LIVING EXPENSES	20% \$ _____ SAVINGS: • Pay off Time payments • Emergency Fund • Accumulation for major purchases or projects • Freedom to give as the Lord directs
AMOUNT MONTHLY	AMOUNT MONTHLY	AMOUNT MONTHLY
ITEM	ITEM	ITEM
AMOUNT PER PAY PERIOD	AMOUNT PER PAY PERIOD	AMOUNT PER PAY PERIOD
_____ Life Ins. _____ _____ Savings _____ _____ _____	_____ House _____ _____ Electric _____ _____ Gas _____ _____ Phone _____ _____ Medical _____ _____ Car Ins. _____ _____ Union Dues _____ _____ Business _____ _____ Recreation _____ _____ 6% variable _____ _____ Groceries _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ Car Payment _____ _____ Camping Eqpt. _____ _____ Major Dept. Store _____ _____ Furniture _____ _____ Savings _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

FINANCIAL WORKSHEET

I. LIST ALL DEBTS

ITEMS PURCHASED	MONEY OWED TO	ANNUAL % INTEREST	TOTAL AM'T.	EVALUATION		SHOULD I SELL IT?
				Yes	No	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

EVALUATION OF EACH ITEM: (Allow one point for each statement.
Total score in evaluation boxes.

It does not increase my effectiveness in serving God.

It increases my effectiveness in serving God.

It is not absolutely essential.

It is absolutely essential.

It does not contribute directly to family unity and harmony.

It contributes directly to family unity and harmony.

It could be replaced by a less expensive item.

It could not be replaced by a less expensive item.

It does not provide more time with the family.

It provides more time with the family.

Its value is not increasing.

Its value is increasing more than interest and inflation costs.

It requires upkeep expense.

It does not require upkeep expense.

SHOULD I SELL IT?

YES



NO

FINANCIAL WORKSHEET

II. ITEMIZE ALL MONTHLY EXPENSES

ITEMS	EXPENSE	PURPOSE OF ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY		HOW CAN I REDUCE THIS EXPENSE?
			Husband	Wife	
Total monthly expenses		How does it make my service more effective for God?	Can I discontinue it? Can I make it? Can I rent it? Can I buy it for less? Can I buy it used?		

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**PREREQUISITES
FOR A
SUCCESSFUL
PARENT**

LOOKING AT LIFE FROM YOUR CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW WHILE TRAINING HIM TO LOOK AT LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW.

THE SUCCESSFUL PARENT!

A UNIQUE DESIGN	UNDERSTANDING PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY	DEVELOPING MEekNESS	DEVELOPING A FORGIVING SPIRIT	RENEWING YOUR MIND	DEVELOPING TRANSPARENCY	DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL APPETITE	STANDING ALONE
Teach your child personal worth through the realization of God's unique workmanship in his life.	Establish the awareness of the parent's role of authority through God's chain of command.	Teaching the child to respect the rights and property of others.	Teach the child to forgive others who offend or irritate them.	Teach and instill in the child a love and respect for God's Word.	Teach the child to verbally acknowledge to those he's wronged.	Expose child to right living in order to develop a sensitivity to evil.	Teach the child to stand alone on the side of right.
<p>ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES TO TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The parents understand and have applied each principle in their own life. Identify principles being violated when such responses are demonstrated or verbalized by the child such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "It's mine, you can't have it!" "I hate him." "I don't like to read the Bible." "It wasn't my fault." "Why can't I?" "Everybody else is doing it." "What's wrong with my friends?" When at an early age teach your child the right responses by genuine love with consistent instruction and correction. Prior to puberty(10-12 years) teach your child the principles in a family Bible study and on a one to one basis. Develop discernment in the child by suggesting projects that will enable him to apply the principles and be sensitive to the needs of others. 							
"I wish I were somebody else."	Teach the child the meaning of the word "NO". Be consistent in training and in discipline. "Let your years be years and your ways be ways." Communicate that real freedom is a product of co-operating with those God has placed over his life.	Praise and acknowledge, communicate the benefits of sharing with others. Build security by providing proper spiritual, psychological and physical provision. Illustrate and draw attention to God's ability to supply through unexpected sources.	Develop projects for returning good for evil. Express forgiveness to child when he has asked forgiveness. Demonstrate forgiveness as a parent toward those who have offended you.	Teach child basic truths from Scripture. Give special attention for achievement in Scripture memorization. Create curiosity to motivate the child to want to learn essential truths from Scripture. Reward for achievement communicates relationship of needs and problems to appropriate Scriptures.	In early years, motivate child to help in chores and assignments by making them fun and enjoyable. Teach child to be responsible for his words, actions and attitudes toward God and others. Be consistent in correcting child to develop responsibility.	Develop an abhorrence of evil rather than emphasizing the consequences. As a parent screen information viewed on TV, reading materials and music. Provide Christian reading materials and music in the home. Pray with the child. Teach child to reject the wrong of others but not reject them as a person.	Invite child's peers to your home so they may observe your response to other children's negative attitudes. Instill the assets of standing on the side of right. Develop a genuine friendship with your child's peers. Teach child to express his convictions and respond in love when his commitment is challenged. Teach child that right friendships are developed by being willing to have right enemies.
<p><i>It is essential that the parent realize that the natural inclinations in a child are to violate the basic principles of life. This is emphasized in the Scriptures: "Rebellion is bound up in the heart of a child and a rod will drive it away." Proverbs 22: 15</i></p>							

**INSIGHTS
INTO
DISCIPLINE**

GOD'S STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- When a child was born into a Jewish family, the parents looked upon the child as a holy responsibility. They focused their attention and directed all their energy on teaching the child how to live. The Hebrew language gives insight into the various stages a child goes through in his development toward maturity.

Scripture offers the deepest insight into successful family life. God's dealings with His people Israel provide the basis and model of the parental relationship. Basic are the responsibility of the father and the dignity of the mother (see Deuteronomy 6: 6-8; Proverbs 31:10-31). The parents' motivation was the good of their child; the child's motivation was his desire for a successful future.

AGE	NAMES OF CHILD*	SIGNIFICANT EMPHASIS
0-2 years	JELED JALDE JONEK OLEL GAMUL	NEW BORN PLEASING SELF BY PLAYING WITH HANDS SUCKLING A BABE ASKING BREAD WEANED ONE
2-5 years	TAPH	CLINGING TO ITS MOTHER Began memory work at age 2 or 3. Instructed by parent - small isolated passages. Learned to pray private and united prayers.

* Sketches of Jewish Social Life by Alfred Edersheim;
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan

AGE	NAMES OF CHILD	SIGNIFICANT EMPHASIS	
5-10 years	ELEM	<p>FIRM AND STRONG Commenced Bible reading. Learned the laws of God to engrave them in his mind. Received small parchments for his verses. Studied the Book of Leviticus to learn the ordinances of God. Repeated prayers out loud. Listened to men sing accompanied by instruments. Heard his Father tell and discuss what God had done for Israel.</p>	
10-13 years	NAAR	<p>YOUTH - SHAKING HIMSELF FREE Forbidden to learn for learning's sake. Studies the Mishnah. Learned criminal and civil law; laws of purification (sex education); laws of agriculture and skills of father's trade; sacrifices (forgiveness of sins).</p>	
13-15 years	BACHUR	<p>RIPENED ONE - YOUNG WARRIOR Barmizvah - at 13 = "son of the commandment". Fully responsible and accountable for all his actions. Studied in depth the law, commandments, judgments, testimonies, statutes, and precepts of Scripture.</p>	
15-18 years	<p>STUDY OF THE TALMUD Insight into history and background. Biographies of saints from Scripture and history.</p>		
18-20 years	MARRIAGE		
20	ACTIVE VOCATION	60	COMMENCEMENT OF AGEDNESS
30	FULL VIGOR	70	GRAY AGE
40	MATURITY OF REASON	80	ADVANCED OLD AGE
50	FOR COUNSEL	90	BOWED DOWN

INSTRUCTION, THE MAJOR EMPHASIS OF SCRIPTURE IN

TRANSFERRING TRUTH TO THE CHILD

• "A wise teacher
makes learning
a joy."
Proverbs 15:2

- There are two basic means of instructing a child. The first is by example and the second is by teaching specific information. To be an example assumes a parent has applied basic principles to his life. To instruct assumes the parent has specific content to communicate to the child.

- RAISING CHILDREN BY REACTION

When a parent does not know how to live a successful life, he has no life to demonstrate and little information to share. He usually attempts to guide his child by reacting to what the child does wrong. Since a child's natural inclination is to violate basic principles of life, it soon appears to the child that his parents are too strict or inconsistent. Instead of warmth and security in the home, he finds fear and disillusionment.

- WITHOUT INSTRUCTION - INSECURITY

Without basic principles to guide him as he grows, a child develops no stable frame of reference for making sound decisions. The parent who reacts whenever the child makes a mistake, communicates rejection of the child as a person. Consequently, a teen often says, "I don't do anything right! I can never please my parents, no matter how hard I try, so what's the use." The child grows up rebelling against rules and authority. Even when he comes to a point of desperate need and wants help, he has no truth from which to draw; this increases his despair.

STEPS FOR INTERNALIZING TRUTH

• "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Psalm 19:11

Psalms 19:7-10 gives significant insight into the underlying levels of instruction. The importance of these steps is emphasized by verse 11 above.

SIX ASPECTS OF INSTRUCTION	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC	RESULT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED
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LEVEL 1

• LAW OF LORD
(Basic principles)

• PERFECT
(Complete)

• CONVERTING THE SOUL
(Changing mind, emotions and will.)

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The law of the Lord represents the basic principles of life, the only FOUNDATION upon which the successful life may be built. Scripture indicates that the law is complete. Before a parent can effectively instruct his child, he must know these principles himself.

The first job of a parent is to help the child learn the right responses. Realizing that the child's natural responses are exactly the opposite of God's basic principles, he must seek to replace these natural inclinations with God's principles.

• "Give instruction to a wise man and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man and he will increase in learning." Proverbs 9:9

LEVEL 2

- TESTIMONY OF THE LORD
(Living illustrations)

- IS SURE
(Positive, firm and stable)

- MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE
(Showing how the principles work in daily life)

When the parent applies God's principles to his life, the child can see by example that what the parent teaches is also a natural part of his life.

LIVING ILLUSTRATION

The testimonies show how these principles actually work out in life. Here is an opportunity to give living illustrations from the lives of others who have or have not followed through with right responses. A study of the biographies of effective Christians is very valuable in helping the child become wise.

- *"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise."
Proverbs 15:31*

LEVEL 3

- STATUTES OF THE LORD
(Practical guides for action.)

- ARE RIGHT
(They work!)

- REJOICING THE HEART
(Internalizing the principles through personal application.)

When a parent is able to give the child practical direction for solving a problem, his inward response will be joy over the achievement he experiences. It becomes natural for the child to adopt willingly the discipline and rules by which he has succeeded.

PRACTICAL GUIDES FOR ACTION

The book of Proverbs is one of the most practical books of Scripture to study for guidelines and direction for everyday situations.

Once the basic principles have been learned and the value of using them in everyday living has been established, the desire for additional guides and rules will be natural. However, if a parent fails to demonstrate the first two levels, his advice at this third level will be rejected merely as rules that quench the spirit, rather than accepted as the door to inner joy.

- *"All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth and right to them that find knowledge."*

Proverbs 8: 8,9

LEVEL 4

• COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD
(Source of right emotional focus)

• IS PURE
(Clear)

• ENLIGHTENING THE EYES
(Giving insight into basic human nature)

INSIGHT INTO HUMAN NATURE

The commandments of God instruct concerning areas of prohibition which God does not want man to violate. Each time a commandment is violated, inward guilt is produced. When a person obeys a commandment of God, his conscience becomes more sensitive. The result is additional insight into life which is incomprehensible to the person without a relationship to God. He really knows how life works!

Stories and biographies, with morals which illustrate the principles, are the key. The child may identify the principles being applied or violated. The more insight he gains to see the consequences of violating God's principles in other lives, the greater stability and motivation he will have to stand alone on the side of right.

If a parent tries to implement instruction at this level but by-passes the previous levels, the child visualizes God as impersonal and unjust.

• "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding." Proverbs 15:32

LEVEL 5

• FEAR OF THE LORD
(Awesome respect)

• IS CLEAN
(Morally pure)

• ENDURING FOREVER
(Giving stability to the present and certainty to the future)

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Respect for the parent and God are an automatic by-product if the preceding levels are a natural part of the parent's life. Any person may realize God's presence in each detail of his life when he becomes personally responsible and accountable to God for all his actions. The purer his heart and the clearer his conscience, the more he can visualize God and bear an effective witness.

• "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge." Proverbs 14:26

LEVEL 6

- THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD
(Discernment between right and wrong)

- ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER
(Fully dependable)

- MORE TO BE DESIRED THAN GOLD
(Wisdom is our life goal)

WISE DECISIONS

The insight to make the right decisions in difficult situations is a promise of the Lord to those who follow His ways. Proverbs 2:1-11

- ". . . He keepeth the paths of judgment and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path." Proverbs 2:8,9

The real test of instruction comes when equity is needed in a person's life. Equity is the ability to make the right decision in a situation in which one has had no precedence. In a sense, each new experience he faces requires equity. All previous experiences and background provide the basis for his decision. The principles of Scripture, the living illustrations, guidelines, cautions and sense of the nature and character of God will enable him to make the right decision. Developing equity should be a parent's ultimate goal for his child during the short time he is growing up, before he must determine his life's course himself.

- "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

COMMUNICATING TO THE SPIRIT IN**WARNING THE CHILD**

- ☐ When the instruction given to a child is not followed, the second step in discipline is to properly warn the child. The basic purpose of warning is to clarify and re-emphasize the instruction.

- AVOID UNJUST PUNISHMENT.

Often a parent will make the mistake of immediately punishing a child who has not heeded his instruction. Many people can recall situations in which they were unjustly punished by a father or mother who acted on impulse before all the facts were known. To warn a child after instruction has been given will prevent these injustices.

*"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it (draws conclusions before knowing the facts), it is folly and shame to him."
Proverbs 18:13*

A parent who abruptly corrects a child is assuming that he always effectively communicates his instruction to his child. It is not unusual to discover upon later investigation, that the instructions were not clear or the child was not convinced the parent meant it, because of previous inconsistencies.

- DON'T MAKE IT HARD TO OBEY.

For example, a parent may tell his child, "Don't let me catch you doing that again!" He means to communicate to the child that he is to stop doing what he was doing. But to the child it means, "Don't get caught!" The call to a meal may go unheeded if Dad, when he is doing something he feels is important, does not come immediately. If he watches the last inning of the ball game on television before coming to the table, it is easy to see why a child may be baffled by the parent's instruction. Scripture clearly warns against this type of impulsive dealing with our children:

*"Fathers, don't over-correct your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment..."
Ephesians 6:4a(Phillips)*

● USE THE WARNING AS A MEANS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.

The parent who realizes that his goal is to communicate love to his child will not use the warning as a threat. One of the most valuable steps in the discipline process is to learn to see life from the child's point of view. The wise parent will not just give a warning. He uses the opportunity to correct himself and ask the child's forgiveness when he has failed to communicate the right instructions to the child.

● WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is not saying what I mean and understand, but STATING FACTS in such a way that the other person understands what I mean! This takes work!

● *"The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." Proverbs 16:23*

BASIC INSIGHTS

TO HELP THE CHILD OBEY THROUGH WARNING:

The intent of warning is not a prelude to punishment. It is the final step of instruction to determine whether the parent's instruction was clear of the child's disobedience was willful.

1. DOES THE CHILD UNDERSTAND THE THREE LEVELS OF DISCIPLINE?

Even at the age of 2 or 3 a child can understand that (1) you will tell him what to do; (2) if he doesn't obey, you will discuss his behavior with him; (3) if he continues to disobey you will punish him. If the child is older and these guidelines have not been followed, it will be important to acknowledge your past failure to be consistent and fair, and to explain the new policy of instruction, warning and correction.

2. IF DISOBEDIENCE IS REPEATED AFTER PUNISHMENT . . .

Do not go back to the instruction or warning level. Evaluation of the punishment may be needed but further punishment is necessary.

3. CONSISTENCY WILL MOTIVATE THE CHILD TO OBEY RATHER THAN DISOBEY WHEN WARNED.

When the child understands that you mean what you say and you will deal with disobedience as stated, it is amazing how the child is motivated to change his attitudes and behavior!

4. APPEALING TO HIS CONSCIENCE WILL HELP YOU EVALUATE WHETHER HIS DISOBEDIENCE WAS WILLFUL OR DUE TO A LACK OF COMMUNICATION ON THE PARENT'S PART.

The child who has been corrected in the past for misbehavior, will associate mental and physical pain with willful disobedience. This approval for right behavior consistent with the principles of God's Word, as well as the disapproval for the violation of them, has reinforced the child's conscience.

When you appeal to the child's conscience by asking, "What did you do?" "Did you disobey me?" or "Were you right in what you did?" his responses will enable you to discern if he was intentionally disobedient.

If you are convinced he was not aware of wrong-doing or disobedience, then you can conclude one or more of the following:

- **MY INSTRUCTION WAS NOT CLEAR.** This will require further instruction and clarification.
- **HE WAS BEING CHILDISH RATHER THAN REBELLIOUS.** It could be a result of childish forgetfulness.
- **I WAS EXPECTING MORE MATURITY FROM HIM THAN I SHOULD FOR HIS AGE.**
- **HE WAS REACTING TO ME PERSONALLY.** I have been inconsistent to him. He is reflecting my bad attitudes back to me. I may have violated his sense of fairness. Therefore, I need to ask his forgiveness and then repeat the instruction.

GUIDELINES FOR CORRECTION

• Scripture clearly emphasizes the importance of correcting a child when he has been disobedient. The following insights amplify the steps involved in properly correcting a child.

• "Discipline your son and he will give you happiness and peace of mind."
Proverbs 29:17

1. CORRECTION IS THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY BUT GOD IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY.

It is important for a child to realize that the parent is not the final authority in his life. This will be obvious to the child whose parent has applied the basic principles of instruction. If the child feels that the parent is the final authority and he is able to deceive the parent, he will anticipate escape from punishment.

It is essential for the child to internalize this concept and realize that God who sees and knows all is the One to whom he is ultimately responsible.

• Psalms 139:1-10

2. BEFORE CORRECTING THE CHILD, EVALUATE YOUR MOTIVE FOR CORRECTION CONSIDERING THE THREE BASIC OBJECTIVES WHICH GOD WANTS TO DEVELOP IN THE CHILD.

OBJECTIVES	UNDERLYING AND ULTIMATE BENEFIT
<p>1 <u>OBEDIENCE</u></p> <p>Is the child being disobedient to instruction from the parent? Is he being childish or rebellious? Colossians 3:20</p>	<p><u>FREEDOM</u></p> <p>→ A freedom develops in the child as he learns how to respond to authority.</p> <p>Break the child's will without breaking his spirit. This is a basic step in preparing the child to submit to God's authority as he gets older.</p>

<p>2</p> <p><u>RESPECT</u></p> <p>Is his behavior violating the rights of others? Does his attitude communicate an ingratitude or disregard for the worth of others? Exodus 20:12</p>	<p>➔</p> <p><u>SKILL IN RELATING TO PEOPLE</u></p> <p>His ability to get along with others and his success in future interpersonal relationships is directly related to his respect for others.</p>
<p>3</p> <p><u>RESPONSIBILITY</u></p> <p>Are the tasks and projects being followed through? Have I motivated the child to do the job by initially working with him (and making it enjoyable) and enabling him to sense achievement for having accomplished the task? Lamentations 3:27</p>	<p>➔</p> <p><u>SECURITY</u></p> <p>Irresponsibility produces insecurity. The child's future stability is dependent upon the development of basic skills and achievement related to practical every-day living. The parent will be able to visualize this achievement.</p>

3. DON'T EMBARRASS OR CORRECT THE CHILD IN FRONT OF OTHERS.

A child will become more concerned about what others are thinking than about his disobedience, if others are around.

"Public" correction will cause the child to become resentful and disillusioned. This will build "walls" between child and parent. He will feel the need to justify his behavior to those saw him being punished or blame the parents for their faults. This principle is emphasized in Matthew 18:15.

". . . if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother."

4. ESTABLISH HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OFFENSE.

This can be done by asking a direct question such as, "What should you have done?" or "What did you do?" If he can't tell you, it may be a clue that you didn't instruct and warn him properly.

It is important to ask in a non-accusatory manner. This will enable the child to sense a fairness in your attitude. There will be times when the child is not wrong.

If you ask, "Why did you do it?" he will tend to blame others or his circumstances.

If you ask, "Did you do it?" he will be prone to deny it. A child is ingenious at trying to avoid responsibility for his actions.

It is necessary to keep asking "What did you do?" if he avoids the question, until he answers it.

The problem of lying usually begins when the parent has allowed the child to avoid responsibility for misconduct.

5. VISUALIZE THE ULTIMATE BENEFITS OF CORRECTION.

When a child identifies his disobedience and pleadingly asks, "Are you going to spank me?" a parent is tempted not to follow through with the actual correction.

• *"If you refuse to discipline your son, it proves you don't love him; for if you love him you will be prompt to punish him." Proverbs 13:24
(Living Bible)*

If the parent loves the child, his primary concern is the development of the basic qualities and principles which are essential for his success. Correction must be communicated to the child as an essential means to develop these qualities.

For example:

When a child grabs a toy from another child and demands in anger, "Give it to me. It's mine!" the parent can conclude that the anger indicates unyielded personal rights as well as selfishness in being unwilling to share with other children. It is important that the child be made to give back the toy. He may refuse and not heed the parent's instruction. At that point it is important for the parent to re-state the instruction as a warning. If the child refuses, correction is necessary. The parent can visualize that through this correction the quality of meekness is being instilled in the child.

• AT WHAT AGE DO YOU BEGIN CORRECTION?

Correction begins when the child begins to resist the will of the parent. Generally, this is when the child begins to crawl around or reach for things that would be harmful to him or are valuable (such as lamps, cords, TV tuning knobs, china, etc.)

Pause before the pain.

6. COMMUNICATE SINCERE GRIEF FOR THE OFFENSE.

When the child has acknowledged the offense, a time of silence is effective in allowing the parent and child to reflect on what has been done. If he has been angry or upset, this pause will enable the parent to regain his composure and feel sincere grief for the disobedience. It also allows time to determine the most effective means of correction.

During this time the parent can inwardly pray that a broken will and genuine repentance will be the child's experience through this correction.

7. USE A NEUTRAL OBJECT FOR PHYSICAL CORRECTION.

Never give a child the idea that he is too old to be spanked. Scripture emphasizes the use of a rod rather than a hand to inflict the pain. The child will associate pain and punishment with the object used for correction. The hand that loves and cares should never be used to inflict pain.

● *"The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Proverbs 29:15*

Use Discipline until the will is broken.

8. THE LEAST AMOUNT OF CORRECTION NEEDED TO BREAK THE WILL.

Parents who fail to discipline their child instill the false idea that the child can have whatever he wants. Punishment causes a child to "come back to reality" and to develop a responsibility for his own behavior. Spanking a child is one way to cleanse a child's conscience.

● *"Punishment that hurts chases evil from the heart." Proverbs 20:30 (Living Bible)*
"Foolishness (rebellion) is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Proverbs 22:15

It is a sad situation if a child's will is not broken when he is punished. If it didn't hurt, the child may ignore the parent's correction. If the parent punishes in anger he communicates rejection of the child as an individual rather than correction for the offense. It is important that the spanking hurt!

The parent can discern when the child's will is broken by:

1. Being sensitive to the spirit of the child. When he stubbornly refuses to cry, or screams so loudly that others might think he is being beaten, he reveals an unbroken will. It will be necessary to spank the child until he cries, or until he cries softly.

2. Looking for an attitude of response and obedience to further instruction and guidance.

9. COMFORT THE CHILD AFTER CORRECTION.

When a parent has punished the child for his disobedience, it is important that the parent reassure the child of his love by being available to the child for conversation, affection, and attention.

A parent should not send a child away from his presence, since this can easily communicate rejection to the child. It is natural for a child to want attention, affection and reassurance.

The parent who administered the correction should be the first one to comfort the child!

10. ASSIST IN FURTHER RESTITUTION.

If others were offended in the situation, discuss the need to ask their forgiveness and make the necessary restitution. Correction involves not only the breaking of the will but getting the child to assume the responsibility for his actions. A child cannot get freedom from his guilt until he has cleared his conscience with all involved.

11. EVALUATE YOUR ATTITUDE AND YOUR CHILD'S RESPONSE TO THE CORRECTION.

A child is very sensitive to honesty, consistency and fairness. If the parent has wronged the child by a false accusation, anger, or rejection of him as a person rather than the wrong behavior, he should go to him at a later time when the emotions of the correction have subsided and ask his forgiveness.

● GENERAL **GUIDELINES:**

1. WHO SHOULD ADMINISTER CORRECTION?

When the father is home, he should normally administer the correction. If the disobedience is a violation of a family policy and the father was involved in establishing the guideline, he should handle the correction, even if he was not home at the time of the disobedience.

- The mother is delegated the responsibility of correction when the father is away from home. In addition, when the child's disobedience is directly related to instruction by the mother and the father is not related to the situation, the mother should normally administer the correction (even though the father is home.)

- The husband and wife should always support one another's correction. If there is disagreement, this should be discussed privately at a later time. This is important to prevent the child from playing one parent against the other.
- It is important that each parent help the child learn to respond rather than react to the other parent.

2. INTENTIONAL DISOBEDIENCE

Refute the false idea that intentional disobedience will go unpunished if the child apologizes. Many times a parent does not correct the child who has intentionally disobeyed because, when caught, the child apologizes. Apology becomes a means of manipulation and to avoid responsibility for disobedience. This practice is refuted in Hebrews 10:26 and II Samuel 24 where David willfully disobeyed God by numbering the children of Israel. Even though he repented, God punished him by three days of plague and the loss of 70,000 men.

3. A PERSON RELATES TO LIFE ON THE BASIS OF TWO MOTIVATIONS: WHAT WILL I GAIN? WHAT WILL I LOSE?

When the steps for correction fail to produce right responses from the child, there may be other basic needs than correction. The need for acceptance is more basic than the need for correction. If a child never receives his parent's full attention, except when he has misbehaved, he may subconsciously find acting up worth more than the risk of punishment. The solution is to demonstrate to the child that he is accepted by providing the personal interest and attention he needs.

AN EFFECTIVE WITNESS THROUGH

STANDING ALONE

- Victory in a Christian's life is threatened when he is tempted to compromise his convictions.
- A Christian can overcome these pressures by a personal identification with Jesus Christ and a willingness to stand alone on the side of that which is right.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STANDING ALONE

- Scripture encourages the father to teach his son to take a stand for that which is right. This is emphasized by Solomon's instruction, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Proverbs 1:10

Satan brings many pressures, both internal and external to bear on a person's life to weaken his standards and commitment to Jesus Christ.

THE FALLACY OF WITHDRAWING FROM SOCIETY

Many parents feel that the way to instill convictions in their child is to shield him from exposure to those who do not have a Christian commitment. When the child gets into Junior High and High School, however, he is unable to cope with the language and behavior he observes in others. Because he does not know how to respond, he may withdraw, feel inferior and/or communicate a condemning attitude toward those who disagree with him.

Jesus Christ condemned this attitude when He told His disciples:

- "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? . . . And if ye salute (greet) your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans (tax collectors) so? Be ye therefore perfect (mature), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5:44-48

See also John 17:15.

DEVELOPING A MATURE INDEPENDENCE

THE CHRISTIAN DYNAMIC: Becoming involved in the lives of others in order to introduce them to Jesus Christ and help each one to develop spiritual maturity.

Colossians 1:28,29 (Phillips)

- THE KEY to standing alone is being willing to identify verbally with Jesus Christ any time I am tempted to compromise my total commitment to Him or to violate His principles for my life.

When a person stands alone he is communicating to others that he has something worth standing for; he has found a superior way of life.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VERBAL IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST.

Jesus emphasized this when He said:

- "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's and of the holy angels."

Luke 9:26

(Also, see Matthew 10:33; Romans 1:16; 10:11.)

Many Christians think they can be a witness for Jesus Christ by "just living the life." This is possible only after a person has identified himself verbally with the Lord. Unless he shares his testimony with those who knew him before his commitment, they will suspect his new behavior as a gimmick to get something or to cover up old offenses. Therefore, he must share his testimony when he has an appropriate opportunity, or be ready to share it when put on the spot to compromise or violate God's principles. After that, he can remain silent and live the life before them.

● WHEN DO THE PARENTS BEGIN?

One important goal for parents while their children are young is to teach them how to relate and respond to other children in the neighborhood. Welcome the neighborhood children and encourage them to play in your yard. Then you as a parent will be available to help your child understand why other children do what they do and to control behavior which is unacceptable to your family goals and standards.

For example: If another child is using profane language, you can in a loving way say, "Johnny, let's not talk that way to another person."

or

If your child is demanding his rights and refusing to share his toys or take turns on a vehicle, you have an opportunity to teach your child a sense of fairness and to communicate love, impartiality and fairness to the neighbor child.

● DISCERNING REAL NEEDS IN OTHERS

This also enables the parent to discern some of the real needs of the neighbor children and seek ways of meeting these needs.

A three-year-old neighbor boy was constantly hitting the other children. I found myself inwardly reacting to him each time one of my children came in with a welt on the arm. Telling him not to hit seemed to have no effect on him. I became sensitive to the fact that he felt rejected by others, including his parents and me.

One day as I was coming out of the house, I saw him with a dirty face and a runny nose, alone in the backyard. I called him by name, knelt down and wiped his nose. Then I picked him up and put him on my lap. I hugged him and told him how much I liked him. I said I wanted to be his friend.

From that time on, whenever I was around he would come over to me. If I saw him starting to hit others and I spoke to him, he would immediately respond to my words.

● TURNING PROBLEMS INTO PROJECTS FOR COMMUNICATING LOVE:

Numerous situations can be turned into practical projects with your children to return good for evil. The child and family can learn to pray for the person whom they feel is "despitefully using" them, and to compliment a person who is cursing them.

When a child is "protected" and does not learn how to respond to evil and the pressure of his peers, he will be unprepared for Junior High. This new exposure to all types of foul language and evil may overwhelm him, causing inferiority. Instead of reaching out in his spirit to communicate the love of Christ, he will feel a "wall" towards others and express himself in a condemning or "preaching" attitude.

a condemning or "preaching" attitude.

WHEN STANDING ALONE

● A PERSON SHOULD:

1. VISUALIZE THAT GOD'S WAY IS A SUPERIOR WAY OF LIFE and that the ultimate benefits far outweigh any immediate compromise or pleasures. In addition, Scripture says there is a great reward reserved for us in heaven. Matthew 5:11,12; Luke 6:22,23

2. REALIZE HE IS COOPERATING WITH GOD.

a. Being the Salt of the Earth. Salt has two distinct qualities: as a preservative or healing agent, and symbolically as a sign of spiritual health and vigor. When a person stands on the side of right, he will often be an agent of the Lord to stop or reverse a disintegrating situation. Matthew 5:13

b. Being the Light of the World. The Christian's life is God's light in this dark world. (Matthew 5:14,16) God wants to use his life to point men to the Light of the World. (John 8:12) Since not all men will come to the Light, rejection must also be expected.

- ". . . and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light "

John 3:19b - 21a

3. RECOGNIZE THAT REPROACH FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS THAT GOD IS USING THE PERSON'S LIFE FOR HIS PURPOSES AND HE IS BEING GLORIFIED.

- "Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you . . . If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. "

I Peter 4:12,14 (4:16,19)

4. SENSE HE HAS A MISSION TO ACCOMPLISH.

Jesus Christ commanded every Christian to go into all the world.

Matthew 28:18-20

- "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry . . . if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. . . . For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "

II Corinthians 4:1-6

HINDRANCES

TO STANDING ALONE

A. FEAR OF WHAT OTHERS WILL THINK

- "The fear of man bringeth a snare:
but whoso putteth his trust in the
Lord shall be safe."

Proverbs 29: 25

Two of the common causes for this fear are (1) Knowing that the other person "has something on him" - when a person has secretly or openly sinned and never asked forgiveness for the offense, or when he is unwilling to deal with the offense he may back down.

(2) Trying to build his own reputation. There is a tendency to try to "please" everyone. (Luke 6:26) If the person has never yielded his rights to his reputation, he needs to make his reputation God's reputation. Once he is doing what God requires, his reputation becomes the Lord's. If God is not in any way embarrassed by his life, then he can have a real peace about God's reputation."

- "For do I now persuade men, or God? or
do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased
men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

Galatians 1:10

NOTE:

- A KEY TO OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF BEING HURT BY OTHER PEOPLE IS TO LEARN HOW TO REACH THEM.

One of the most effective ways to remove the fear of people is to discern the causes for their actions, and attitudes.

Without this insight, an unnatural fear is bound to develop, increasing indiscriminate conformity. When a person sees the real root causes of a person's surface problems he will be in a position to win the very person who made his stand necessary.

B. SECRET ENVY OF THE WICKED

When a person sees others enjoying the temporary pleasures of sin, he often thinks, "Too bad I'm a Christian." He may rebel or try to get as close to the world as possible. Scripture delivers a very effective message to the person who is envious of the wicked. It describes the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual disintegration within the one who follows a way of life contrary to God's principles.

It is important for a person to visualize the consequences of sin. (Insight into violations of the eight key qualities will be helpful in showing the inner conflicts which the wicked are suffering.)

A person cannot really enjoy sin in a lasting way. Hebrews 11:23-29 relates how God blessed Moses because he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

David tells how he envied the prosperity of the wicked until he went into the sanctuary of God and understood their end:

- "What a slippery path they are on - suddenly God will send them sliding over the edge of the cliff and down to their destruction: an instant end to all their happiness, an eternity of terror. Their present life is only a dream! They will awaken to the truth as one awakens from a dream of things that never really were!"
Psalm 73:3,17-20 (Living Bible)

C. FEAR OF LOSING FRIENDS

A person oftentimes feels he is going to lose his friends if he takes a stand for Jesus Christ.

Just the opposite happens! THOSE WHO ARE TRULY HIS FRIENDS WILL RESPECT HIM ALL THE MORE and be happy for his changed life.

A teenage girl had purposed to stand alone at the conclusion of a retreat. She was in tears because she knew this was what the Lord wanted her to do; but she had a very close girl friend and she was sure she would lose her when she told her of her new commitment. The following week I received a letter from her expressing her joy! She said, "I told my girl friend that I had decided to give my total life to Jesus Christ. And do you know what she said? 'Sandy, I'm really happy for you. I've always wanted to talk about God but I've never had anybody to talk to. Now you and I can talk about Him.' "

● THOSE WHO REJECT THE CHRISTIAN HAVE BEEN USING HIM WITH ULTERIOR MOTIVES.

A Christian girl felt she was in love with a Christian fellow. They had been going steady for two years. However, she wasn't ready to get married. She was concerned because their dating relationship was becoming more physical. He wasn't interested in just talking.

After talking over the problem with me, she purposed to ask his forgiveness and terminate the physical aspect of their relationship. But was afraid he would be angry with her. I told her that if his real motive for dating her was not physical, when she took her stand for the Lord in this area, he would ask her forgiveness and love her all the more.

She agreed that if after she took her stand, he kept trying to get her to lower her standards, she would terminate the relationship. Two weeks later she terminated the relationship.

Several months later she called and said, "You'll never guess what! My ex-boy friend has a girl pregnant here at school!"

VERBALLY

IDENTIFYING

WITH JESUS CHRIST

● Verbally identifying with Jesus Christ requires: (1) a previous commitment to Him, as well as (2) a right attitude toward the one who asks us to engage in activities which would violate Christ's principles.

● THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT PROVIDES MANY INSIGHTS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY VERBALLY WITH JESUS CHRIST.

A freshman in college secured a job helping a truck driver deliver newspapers. On one of the delivery routes the driver suggested that they stop at a certain place to engage in an activity which this student knew was wrong.

The student became somewhat embarrassed as he tried to explain that he didn't do this type of thing. Finally, however, he agreed to accompany the driver, but not engage in the activity.

Afterwards, the situation troubled his conscience, and he asked his church youth director if he had done right. In response the director explained how to identify verbally with Jesus Christ; he showed him how this would have been much more effective.

A week later another truck driver was assigned to his route. During deliveries he stopped at the same place and made the same suggestion as the first driver. This time the student cheerfully and respectfully requested, "Would it be all right with you if I just waited for you out here?"

When the driver urged him more he replied with a smile, "You see, just recently I committed my whole life to Jesus Christ, and I am just not able to do that. But don't let me interfere with what you want to do. I'll just wait for you here in the truck."

The basic intention of the driver was to have company and approval for something he wanted to do.

● A cheerful friendly attitude is a very essential prerequisite.

● Right wording involves stating personal conviction without projecting a judgmental attitude.

The driver left the truck but in just a few minutes he returned. As he started up the engine, he apologetically blurted out, "Boy, I'm sorry kid, I didn't realize you had that kind of dedication. I wouldn't have asked you if I had known."

"I go to church but I should be more dedicated. How did you commit your life to Jesus Christ?" The student replied that if he had a few minutes he could show him. The driver listened eagerly as the student showed him step by step how to become a Christian.

This opportunity came as a natural by-product of verbally identifying with Jesus Christ. Later that week the student enthusiastically reported to his youth director, "I had to identify with Christ seven times this week. Four of the seven times I was asked how I dedicated my life to Christ and I had the opportunity to share the plan of salvation again."

The driver begins to reveal personal conviction about his lack of a meaningful relationship with God.

The student had learned how to effectively share Christ through the "Four Spiritual Laws" designed by Campus Crusade for Christ.

- "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3: 15

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL FRIENDSHIPS

● TO HAVE THE RIGHT FRIENDS A PERSON MUST BE WILLING TO HAVE THE RIGHT ENEMIES.

- A person must ask himself: Did Jesus Christ have friends? Yes, of course He did. Did He have enemies? Yes, He did.

Who His friends would be was not determined by His own choosing. The right friends were determined on the basis of who would accept Him, His life and His verbal commitment to His heavenly Father. Those who would not accept Him separated Him from their company.

- Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when THEY SHALL SEPARATE YOU FROM THEIR COMPANY, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.
Luke 6:22

- NOTE: It is important to keep in mind that Jesus' enemies were not the common folk but rather "religious" people who didn't buy His dedication. The greatest opposition for some Christians will come from other Christians. This is the peculiar emphasis of being "persecuted for righteousness' sake" (because a person is living the life God requires!).

HOW TO VERBALLY IDENTIFY

WITH JESUS CHRIST

Not only what a person says, but how he says it is important. The following guidelines will be helpful in successfully sharing Jesus Christ with others and standing alone when necessary.

I. RELATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO A POINT IN TIME.

If a person has been a Christian for years but has not been living a dedicated life, he might refer to his recent decision of rededication when he is put on the spot to compromise his commitment.

On the other hand, if the person has not known the Christian prior to the conversation, he could share his salvation commitment.

<u>SOME SITUATIONS FOR IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST.</u>	<u>SOME SUGGESTED STATEMENTS</u>
<p><u>ACTIVITY</u></p> <p>Invitation to indulge in an activity or habit incompatible with a person's convictions (such as an invitation to buy an alcoholic beverage).</p>	<p>"No, thank you, I don't drink." (friendly relaxed attitude) Don't force an issue. If the person accepts this explanation, then you don't necessarily identify with the Lord.</p>

If the person is bold enough to ask why he doesn't drink then he has a responsibility to share Christ with Him.

Don't reject the person when you reject the activity. "Well, recently(or whenever it was) I committed my life to Jesus Christ and I don't feel it's something He would want me to do."

DATING

An invitation for a date with a non-Christian or a person with whom the girl is unfamiliar. He asks why she can't accept the invitation.

"Thank you for asking me. I really appreciate it, but I'm not able to accept. I'm not very well acquainted with you. I have committed my life to Jesus Christ and one of my goals for my life is to date fellows who have as deep a love for Christ as I do."

If he shows an interest in knowing more, accepting a date is not the answer. She should invite him to meet with some of her friends.

"Some friends of mine are getting together to share about our relationship with Jesus Christ. We would be happy to have you join us."

DRESS

An invitation to dress in a way that would not be conducive to a Christian's standards.

"I think it's important to be stylish, but since I've committed my life to Jesus Christ I've also purposed to be modest in my appearance." If this is another girl she might add, "I really want people to like me for who I am rather than drawing their attention to my physical appearance."

AUTHORITY

Encouragement to disobey authority.

"No, thank you. Since I've committed my life to Jesus Christ, I've discovered that I'm more successful by responding to those over me rather than always trying to avoid them."

SENSUAL READING MATERIAL

"No, thank you, I've had enough trouble polluting my thought life. Since I've committed my life to Jesus Christ, I've purposed to keep my mind free from any material that messes up my mind."

2. PROJECT THE ATTITUDE THAT YOU ARE "NOT YOUR OWN BOSS"

Since a person has made Jesus Christ "Lord" of his life (Romans 10:9) he can communicate the fact that he's not responsible for the decision; he's merely following the orders of his "boss."

3. DON'T APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT YOU KNOW IS A SUPERIOR WAY OF LIFE.

Take the offensive! For a year and a half after I left seminary, I worked in a factory. I was planning to leave the company in two weeks. Five fellows with whom I had been friends said, "You know, we think if you had worked here for five more years, we could have gotten you to swear." I replied in love, "Look guys, I've had my own share of problems and the kind of problems you say you have - the hangovers, messed up marriages, running out on your mates, etc. - there isn't one good reason why I should want to adopt that way of life!" Before I left the company, two of the fellows had come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

4. USE THE RIGHT WORDING - BE NATURAL.

Communicate the idea that this is what you want to do with your life. Learn to talk about the Lord with non-Christians the same way you would if you were talking to a Christian. Share the same information with anyone.

- A TESTIMONY is what a Christian shares with another Christian about what God has done for him.
- A WITNESS is what a Christian shares with a non-Christian about what God has done for him.

5. DON'T RESTRICT ANOTHER PERSON'S ACTIVITIES BY YOUR CONVICTIONS (if he is not a member of your immediate family for whom you are directly responsible).

Too often a person tries to be the Holy Spirit when he confronts a non-committed individual. Don't project Christian standards on another person who has not personally adopted the same standard for his own life. Reminder, it is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin. John 16:7-11

6. WHEN BELITTLED OR GIVEN A HARD TIME, COMMUNICATE THE IDEA THAT OTHERS HAVE AS PERFECT A RIGHT TO DO WHAT THEY WANT WITH THEIR LIVES AS YOU DO.

One fellow would say to his friends who were pressuring him to compromise his standards, "Look fellows, you have a perfect right to decide what you want to do and I have the same right to decide how I live. If you feel that is the best for you, fine; and I have purposed to follow Jesus Christ. If that's a risk or mistake, then that's what I've decided."

From that time on they remained friends; when the fellows were involved in "their activities," the Christian wasn't invited.

7. USE JESUS CHRIST'S NAME IN SHARING WHAT GOD IS DOING FOR YOU.

Other people are not ashamed to identify with the leader of their ideology. The Christian should be confident, loving and unflinching in following the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

8. REALIZE THAT THE KEY TO HAVING SUCCESSFUL FRIENDS IS BEING WILLING TO HAVE THE RIGHT ENEMIES. John 17:14 (See notes on page 13.)

9. REALIZE THAT THOSE WHO "ACCEPT" YOU WITH CHRIST'S LORDSHIP IN YOUR LIFE ARE LED TO YOU BY GOD.

As a Christian, be especially sensitive to those God brings into your life. Ask yourself:

- What does God want to accomplish in this person's life?
- How can I cooperate with God?
- What does the Lord want to accomplish in my life through this person?

Guard against assuming responsibility to "reach" everyone who comes into your life or to "solve" all the other person's problems.

Eliminate unnecessary frustration and anxiety: limit yourself to fulfilling only the purpose God wants you to fulfill in the person's life.

- "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."
I Corinthians 3: 6-8

10. REALIZE THAT THOSE WHO "SEPARATE" YOU FROM THEIR COMPANY HAVE ALSO REJECTED JESUS CHRIST AND WOULD REJECT HIM IF HE WERE HERE TODAY.

11. RECOGNIZE THAT THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO CHANGE YOU AFTER THEY HAVE ACCEPTED YOU WITH YOUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST ARE CONSCIOUSLY OR SUBCONSCIOUSLY TESTING TO SEE IF YOUR COMMITMENT IS GENUINE.

This can become a greater motivation to be faithful to the Lord at any cost. A wonderful life is at stake!

12. WHEN YOU SENSE HOSTILITY OR BITTERNESS, DEVELOP AN ATTITUDE OF TEACHABILITY RATHER THAN TRYING TO GET YOUR IDEAS ACROSS.

- "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves"
II Timothy 2:24,25
- "If you rebuke a mocker, you will only get a smart retort; yes, he will snarl at you. So don't bother with him; he will only hate you for trying to help him."
Proverbs 9:7,8 (Living Bible)

Also, see Proverbs 23:9; 26:8.

13. EXPECT THE GREATEST OPPOSITION FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS PEOPLE.

A Christian's goal is to allow Jesus Christ to relive His life all over again through his life. If opposition comes, it should come because men are jealous of an exemplary life, not as a reaction of contempt for inferior living or sin in the life.

- "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." I Peter 4:15,16

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR

MAKING

RIGHT DECISIONS

IN QUESTIONABLE SITUATIONS:

- When God has given a specific commandment, it is not difficult to know what He requires. But there are many areas in which there are no specific commands. Failure to be consistent in these questionable areas can easily undermine a person's commitment to God. The following insights can be used as a check list in making difficult decisions.

PREREQUISITES:

HAVE I COMMITTED EVERY AREA OF MY LIFE TO GOD?

A TOTAL COMMITMENT OF EVERY AREA OF LIFE IS ESSENTIAL TO FOLLOW THE LORD.

- "Trust in the Lord with ALL thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil." Proverbs 3:5-7

- Am I willing to sacrifice my desires for God's will?

SACRIFICE IS A BASIC CONDITION FOR DISCIPLESHIP.

Other people pay special attention when a person has the opportunity to choose between two activities of equal interest. Does he choose an activity that is a means of serving the Lord, or one that isn't?

- "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Luke 9:23, 24

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES:

1. Will God be praised?

WHATEVER I DO SHOULD BRING GLORY TO GOD.

The word glory means "an opinion, estimate." In application, honor to God should result from the good opinion of God our lives have given to Him because of our exemplary life.

- "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

2. Can I thank God for this activity?

2.

JESUS HIMSELF WOULD ENDORSE MY DECISION.

- "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Colossians 3:17

3. Can some spiritual worth come of this activity?

IT SHOULD BUILD CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IN MY LIFE.

- "I may do anything, but everything is not useful (profitable, advantageous). Yes, I may do anything, but everything is not constructive (promote spiritual character and growth)."

I Corinthians 10:23

4. Would it bother me if I didn't do it?

IT SHOULD NOT CONTROL ME.

- "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

I Corinthians 6:12

5. Will I cause a weaker Christian to sin?

I AM RESPONSIBLE TO GOD FOR WEAKER CHRISTIANS.

The Apostle Paul states that if my eating the kind of meat a new Christian used to offer to idols (before his conversion) would cause him to be offended, then my right to eat that meat should be yielded. Another person's spiritual life is far more important than my enjoyment of an activity which I can personally justify.

- "But take heed lest by ANY MEANS this liberty of your's becom a stumblingblock to them that are weak When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. WHEREFORE, IF MEAT MAKE MY brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." I Corinthians 8: 9-13

6. Am I in doubt? Don't do it!

I MUST HAVE CONFIDENCE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT IN WHAT I AM DOING.

- "Your personal convictions are a matter of faith between yourself and God, and you are happy if you have no qualms about what you allow yourself to eat. Yet if a man eats meat with an uneasy conscience about it, you may be sure he is wrong to do so. For his action does not spring from his faith, and when we act apart from our faith we sin."
Romans 14:22,23 (Phillips)

7. Will I get God's ultimate approval?

I MUST ACCOUNT TO GOD FOR ALL MY ACTIONS.

- "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
Romans 14:11, 12

- "We can always 'prove' that we are right, but is the Lord convinced?"
Proverbs 16:2 (Living Bible)

8. It is important what other people think.

MY BEHAVIOR SHOULD AVOID ALL APPEARANCES OF EVIL.

- "Abstain from all appearance of evil."
1 Thess. 5:22
- "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
Ephesians 5: 15,16

● AS YOU STUDY SCRIPTURE, CONTINUE TO ADD TO THIS LIST AS THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES YOU FURTHER INSIGHT INTO MAKING RIGHT DECISIONS.

9.

● Below are listed some areas in which Scripture is vague or does not deal with the subject in a thorough way. Which topics does Scripture not even mention? Can you think of some Scripture which does deal with some of the topics listed?

SCRIPTURES ?



- ABORTION
- BOWLING
- CARD GAMES
- DANCING
- DATING
- DRESS
- DRINKING (alcoholic)
- DRUGS
- FALSE RELIGIONS
- FOOD (eating certain kinds)

- FRIENDS
- GAMBLING
- HOROSCOPES
- INTER-RACIAL MARRIAGE
- MIXED SWIMMING
- POOL
- RADIO
- SMQKING
- SUNDAY ACTIVITIES
 - Shopping
 - Sports
- TELEVISION