

COPING:

A BIBLICAL APPROACH

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WORKSHEETS

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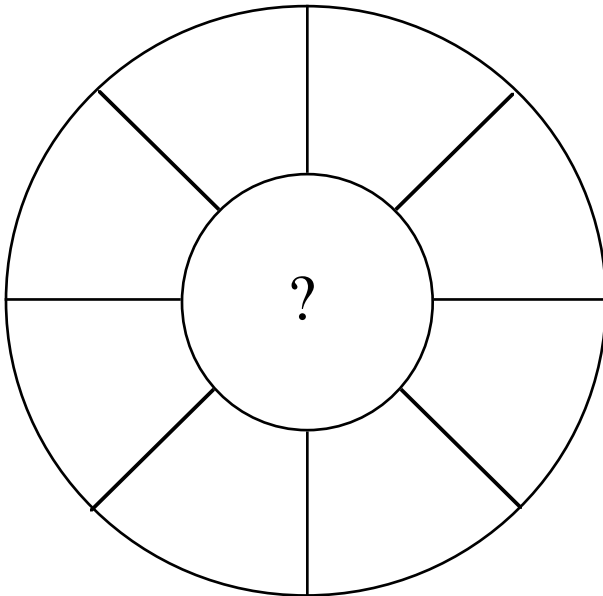
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Chapter One
PURPOSE WORKSHEET

The inner circle with the question mark below represents the primary end and purpose around which people plan their lives. From the list of goals provided below, which would accurately represent what you have placed in the center of your life?



- Pleasure
- Money
- Health
- Honor, Fame, Glory
- Power
- Peace, Contentment
- Helping Others
- Virtue
- Wisdom
- God

Notice that each of the above items is not inherently evil, but, in fact, could even be considered as good. But the one we place in the center could drastically alter how effectively we cope with problems.

Solomon, the wise king of old, went in search of what was truly worthwhile in life (Ecclesiastes 2:3), and after giving the first nine in the list above a try he concluded that they were vain and like striving after the wind. Here is what he said:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
 Fear God and keep His commandments,
 For this is the whole duty of man.
 For God will bring every work into judgment,
 Including every secret thing,
 Whether it is good or whether it is evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Far too often, we get so wrapped up in our own problems, and in trying to meet our own perceived needs and wants, that we forget it is God we are to serve. As a result, God is shoved into the back seat or is left out of the picture altogether.

Consider these passages:

1. Matthew 5:16
2. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
3. 1 Corinthians 10:31

THINK ABOUT IT

1. What is the primary goal in your life?

2. What does it mean to glorify God?

3. Identify the conflict(s) or issue(s) in your life.

4. Remembering that glorifying God is the primary purpose in life, what would you do differently?

5. How would glorifying God alter your decision-making process?

6. How have you been adversely affected by not seeking to glorify God—by not making it your primary purpose in life?

7. What attitudes or purposes might stand in the way of the purpose for which God created us?

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

1. Read 1 Samuel 17

- a. What was David's purpose in fighting Goliath?

- b. What was it that gave David the courage to fight the giant?

2. Read Daniel 4

- a. What was Nebuchadnezzar's primary purpose in life?

- b. How did God humble him?

3. How did Jesus glorify God?
 - a. John 8:29 _____
 - b. John 17:4 _____
4. How did the Gentiles fail to glorify God? Romans 1:18-23

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 24
2. Psalm 29

Chapter Two

PROBLEM WORKSHEET

In order to face a problem that has made life unmanageable, we must acknowledge that we have sinned (Romans 3:23). Some modern-day psychologists may want to relegate sinful behavior to what is natural, and being natural they seek to excuse it. How does the Bible define sin?

1. Romans 14:23
2. James 4:17
3. 1 John 3:4
4. 1 John 5:17; Romans 1:18

And the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

Sin truly is at the root of many of man's problems (if not somehow related to all of them). And until we are ready to acknowledge this point, we are not ready to begin coping with the ravages of wickedness. It may be that we were victims of someone else's wickedness and that we have pointed an accusing finger at them in order to excuse the wickedness we practice. (i.e., It is not uncommon for those who were victims of sexual crimes as children, to be caught up, and perhaps addicted to, sexual crimes themselves.)

If we believe that the problem lies outside ourselves, we will never take the necessary step(s) required to bring about healthy living and we will forever be frustrated believing that the problem lies with someone else's behavior, whom we are powerless to change.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. In what way is sin related to your problem? Or how has sin created a problem for you?

2. In what way(s) have you been an accomplice in advancing the problem?

3. In what ways have you sought to excuse your behavior by assigning the blame to someone else?

EXAMPLES FROM THE SCRIPTURES

1. Read Genesis 3

- a. Identify the sin of Adam and of Eve.

- b. When confronted with their sin, what did Adam say?
What did Eve say?

- c. How was their response typical of how people today respond when confronted with their sins?

2. Read 2 Samuel 11-12

- a. Identify the sin(s) of David.

- b. How did he try to “cover up” his transgression?

- c. What did Nathan, the prophet, do to get David to pass judgment on himself?

- d. How did David respond? (2 Samuel 12:13)

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 32
2. Psalm 51 (Take note of the historical reference given just before vs 1)
3. How did David describe the effects of hiding his sin?
4. What benefits or blessings belong to the one who acknowledges his sin before God?
5. List what you learn about God and His nature or character from these two Psalms.

Chapter Three

FAITH WORKSHEET

It is amazing how many people hinder God by believing that He deals only with those things they believe relate to their initial salvation and “spiritual” matters, but that He is not concerned with the practical issues of life. Friend, all of our problems and the issues of life are spiritual problems. And yet we either do not believe or do not know that God’s Word addresses even the practical matters of life (i.e., friendships, marriage, family matters, finances, addiction, unbelief, communication problems, etc.).

Solomon asked the question, “For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?” (Ecclesiastes 6:12).

God is infinite in His wisdom and knowledge. He created man and desires what is best for him. Does it not stand to reason that He knows and understands what man’s problems are and that He knows, and would make known, the solutions to those who wanted to know?

The issue here is really one of faith. The degree of confidence you have in God’s Word will dictate the degree or intensity with which you search His Word for answers and solutions.

The late Gus Nichols, a wise mature preacher, used to ask three questions of anyone who came to him for counsel.

- Are you willing to do what is right?
- Are you willing to do what is right, right now?
- Are you willing to let the Bible determine what is right?

THINK ABOUT IT

1. In what direction do some people turn seeking solutions to their problems? (i.e., drugs, alcohol, sex, music, secular counseling).

2. In what direction have you turned seeking solutions to your problem(s)?

3. In what way has the direction you have turned helped you? hindered you? not provided you with the direction you needed?

4. What efforts have you made to seek God's solution to the issues with which you struggle?

5. What is it that has hindered you from seeking the wise counsel that comes from God through His Word?

6. Richard Ganz asks: "What has brought us to the place where we Christians feel we cannot deal with our problems without the help of popular psychology?" (*Psycho Babble*, Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway Books, 1993, p. 61).

EXAMPLES FROM THE SCRIPTURES

1. Read Isaiah 30:1-5
 - a. How had Israel added sin to sin?

 - b. What would result from Israel turning to Egypt for their help?

- c. How did Israel's turning to Egypt for help manifest their lack of faith?

2. Read Jeremiah 2:9-13

- a. What were the two evils God's people had committed?

- b. What evidence is there that Christians today exchange their God for those who are no gods?

Chapter Four

SOLUTIONS WORKSHEET

Charles Colson visited a prison near Oslo Norway:

I was greeted by the warden, a psychiatrist with a clinically detached attitude. As she showed me through the sterile surroundings, which seemed more like a laboratory than a prison, she touted the number of counselors and the types of therapies given to inmates. In fact, we met so many other psychiatrists that I asked the warden how many of the inmates were mental cases.

“All of them, of course,” she replied quickly, raising her eyebrows in surprise.

“What do you mean, ‘all of them’?”

“Well, anyone who commits a violent crime is obviously mentally unbalanced.”

Ah, yes. People are basically good, so anyone who could do something so terrible must be mentally ill. And the solution is therapy. I was seeing the therapeutic model fully realized.

Some tell us that in order for a person to understand the nature of their problem that lengthy and intense treatment by a psychiatrist or psychological professional is required. “Only psychology,” we are told, “can divine our secret motives and reveal the elusive ‘why’ of the strange human animal” (Gross 1978, p. 14).

Compare this notion with Hebrews 4:12-13:

For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

The Scriptures reveal the truth about the history it tells, and they reveal the hidden motives and attitudes of the characters it presents. Those character sketches the Bible provides may make us uncomfortable because we so closely resemble them.

The characters in the Gospel accounts “...are sketched with sure strokes, but not so fully as to preclude our identifying ourselves with them. Their faces are never so completely drawn that we cannot place our own heads on their shoulders: we could be blind, man, neighbor, parent, or Pharisee, and it can be instructive for us to assume each role in turn as we read” —**Roland Frye**

What do the Scriptures claim for themselves?

1. Psalm 12:6 _____
2. Romans 1:16 _____
3. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 _____
4. Galatians 1:11-12 _____
5. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 _____
6. 2 Peter 1:3 _____
7. 2 Peter 1:20-21 _____
8. Revelation 19:9 _____

Consider the following passages as they relate the Scriptures to the issues of life:

1. Romans 15:4

2. 1 Corinthians 10:11

3. Hebrews 11:1ff

4. James 1:23-24

THINK ABOUT IT

Christians are a people of the Book. But can we be a people of the Book if the credibility, reliability, and relevance of that Book are in question?

Although theology is taken from two words that, together, mean “the study of God,” many brothers and sisters prefer shortcuts to “relevance.” To say that theology is boring is really to say that God is boring. And yet, part of the problem is that the average person in the pew is not likely to get a steady diet of theology that is proclaimed with excitement and relevance. How can we think about God’s character and actions in history and yawn? Who would dare say that the God of the Bible is irrelevant for the modern world? The Creator of heaven and earth, the One who has all of history in His hand, the Lord of history, is relevant to everything we do. —**R. C. Sproul**

1. Why are the credibility, reliability, and relevance of the Scriptures brought into question today?

2. Why is it important for us to have complete confidence in the Bible as the Word of God and for us to recognize it as our primary textbook for all of life?

Examples from the Scriptures

1. Read Matt. 4:1-11
 - a. How did Jesus confront Satan in each phase of His temptation?

- b. What connection is there between the temptation we face and the Scriptures?

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2. Read 2 Kings 22-23
- a. How did the finding of the Book of the Law affect Josiah?

- b. What resulted?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 119: list all of the characteristics of the Word of God that you can find, along with the benefits that can be derived from it.

Chapter Five
SUCCESS WORKSHEET

According to the passages that follow, what is the key to all successful living?

1. Joshua 1:8
2. Psalm 1:1-3
3. Psalm 119:97-104
4. Isaiah 26:3
5. Philippians 4:8
6. 1 Timothy 4:15

Now look back at each one of these passages and list some of the benefits that are derived from meditating on God's Word.

To ensure lasting results when facing the issues of life we must meditate continually on the Word of God. Meditating on His Word will change the way we think; and a change in the way we think will produce a change in the way we behave. The Psalmist draws this same connection for us when he writes:

Your word have I hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11)

Other passages affirm that the wonderful transformation that takes place occurs by means of a renewing of our mind. Note carefully how this truth is expressed in the following passages:

1. Romans 12:1-2
2. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
3. Ephesians 4:17-24
4. Colossians 3:1-2, 10

The purpose of being transformed by the renewing of our mind to prove that God's will is good and acceptable (pleasing) and perfect.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. If meditating on the Scriptures is so critical to the health and well being of the soul, what should we expect when such is not practiced?

2. What is the connection between Philippians 2:12-13 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13?

3. In order to change our behavior, what must occur?

Meditation is nothing more than thinking long about something. The object of thought, in the meditation encouraged in the Bible, is the Word of God. And our thinking on the ideas and truths of Scripture is to be continuous—day and night.

In order for us to consider the Scriptures all day long, we must familiarize ourselves with them enough to store them up in our hearts. Whatever this requires of us is worth the price. Here I would also recommend that you work with paragraphs of Scripture - not just a verse here and a verse there. Keep a note pad handy to jot down questions that may arise, and to record the things you learn. This will help you engage in an active reading of Scripture.

I dare say that the degree of success we enjoy in doing this will determine whether we make it out of this life sane or otherwise.

A word to the wise: Samuel Thompson, in his book *A Modern Philosophy of Religion*, argues:

I could be guilty of no greater presumption than to make my knowledge and what I happen to understand the measure of reason itself; it would be to assume that I myself am the source of reason and of the intelligibility which belongs to things. ‘The worst snob in the world,’ Sydney Harris points out, ‘is the uncultivated man who smugly believes that whatever he does not understand is meaningless, or else he could understand it’ (Thompson 1956, p. 5).

Please do not underestimate the effectiveness of what has been presented in this chapter if you have not tested it for yourself. In fact, I would venture to say that a failure to practice the things mentioned in this chapter is the very reason most people never learn to cope as effectively as they could with the issue of their life.

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 1

Chapter Six
ATTITUDE WORKSHEET

When Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” (Matthew 5:3) He used a word for poor that is equivalent to our word destitute.

The man Jesus described is not in tolerably bad circumstances. He is a beggar...A beggar is desperate...If there is no mercy he knows he must die. —**Hugo McCord**

Notice how the word “poor” is used and with reference to whom:

1. Luke 16:20-21 _____
2. James 2:2-3 _____
3. 2 Corinthians 8:9 _____

Notice the concept of poverty in spirit as it is expressed in the following:

1. Psalm 51:17 _____
2. Isaiah 57:15 _____
3. Romans 12:3 _____
4. 2 Corinthians 3:5ff _____
5. Philippians 3:1-16 _____
6. James 4:6 _____

Now consider the contrasting attitude as expressed in the following:

1. 2 Corinthians 10:12 _____
2. Luke 14:7-11 _____
3. Luke 18:9-14 _____
4. Revelation 3:14-22 _____

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Why is humility such a critical quality in the management of the issues we face?

2. What obstacles are in the way of being poor in spirit?

3. How is one made humble?

4. Can a person be proud of their humility? (See Psalm 131)

EXAMPLES FROM THE SCRIPTURES

1. READ Daniel 4:28-37

- a. What fatal character flaw caused the downfall of the King?

- b. When was he restored to his right mind?

2. READ Obadiah 1-4

- a. What was the fatal flaw that caused the destruction of Edom?

3. READ Luke 18:9-14

a. To whom does Jesus address this parable?

b. Which character in the parable is identified with those who trusted in themselves?

c. How did he demonstrate his relationship with the self-righteous?

d. What lesson does Jesus want us to learn from this parable?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 32

2. Psalm 51

3. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Chapter Seven
ACCOUNTABILITY WORKSHEET

One of the easiest things for us to do is to point the finger of blame at someone else where our behavior is concerned. And the excuses we offer to justify some wrong we have committed can be awfully pitiful.

Consider how the following characters illustrate man's tendency to either cover up the wrong he has done or to shift the finger of blame to someone, or something, other than himself.

1. Genesis 3:1-21
 - a. Who did Adam blame?

 - b. Who did Eve blame?

 - c. How effective was Adam and Eve's attempt to shift the responsibility of their action to another?

2. Exodus 32:1-24
 - a. Who made the request for gods to be made?

 - b. What role did Aaron play?

 - c. When Moses returned from the mount and saw the golden calves what did he do with them?

 - d. How did Aaron excuse himself and distance himself from the "evil" people? (Exodus 32:21-24).

- e. How convincing was Aaron's response with you?

3. 1 Samuel 15

- a. When Samuel confronted Saul concerning his disobedience, what excuse did Saul offer? (1 Samuel 15:15ff)

- b. Did Saul take part with the people in disobeying God? (1 Samuel 15:9).

- c. How effective was Saul's seemingly pious excuse in justifying his disobedience to God?

Consider this positive example:

1. 2 Samuel 11-12

- a. How did King David initially try to hide his sin?

- b. When Nathan the prophet confronted David with his "hypothetical" case and then said, "You are the man," what did David say? (2 Samuel 12:13).

THINK ABOUT IT

1. What evil influences have there been in your life?

2. In what way have you been an accomplice with those influences?

3. How effective do you think shifting the responsibility for your actions to someone else has been in helping you to cope effectively with your problem(s)?

4. Why do we try to excuse ourselves of wrongdoing and unacceptable behavior?

- a. Pride
- b. Denial
- c. Embarrassment
- d. Shame
- e. Discomfort

5. What excuse have you offered to God and to others, perhaps even to yourself, for your behavior?

Perhaps you have been hurt, offended or sinned against, only to have the perpetrator shift the responsibility for his misconduct on someone or something else, and then offer some lame excuse for his action. Did that not add insult to injury? Did it not make you feel worse than the initial crime committed against you?

We have all heard some pretty sorry excuses, and have been upset or disturbed by them. Just imagine how much our excuses must grieve God!

What can you do to better manage your life in the area of responsibility?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 139

Chapter Eight
HONESTY WORKSHEET

The Fourth Step of the famous Twelve Step Program calls on its practitioners to make a searching and fearless moral inventory of oneself. According to those who have attended such workshops this inventory is made up strictly of things that bother the individual personally. I would like to take this exercise one step further. If we saturate our minds with God's Word, and couple that with an honest heart, God can then perform the inventory with His Word and identify the areas of our life we need to change - which will not only include areas that bother us, but areas that bother God also.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. How do you react knowing that there is nothing you can hide from God?

2. Why do you suppose you have that reaction(s)?

3. What is it that permitted King David to invite God so openly to try him and to know his thoughts? (Psalm 139)

4. Are there areas of your life that you do not believe you have been honest about—if so, what are they?

- a. What has hindered you from being honest with yourself in these areas?

- b. What would it take for you to invite God to search your private thought-life?

5. Read Matthew 6:5-15.

- a. What does Matthew 6:1 say?

- b. How did the Pharisees pray, and for what purpose did they pray in that way?

- c. In contrast, how are we instructed to pray?

- d. Look back at Robert Milligan's statement concerning "closet prayers" and identify some of the benefits of such a prayer.

- e. Is there anything that stands in the way of your desire to be with God?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 139
2. Matthew 6:5-15

Chapter Nine

CHANGE WORKSHEET

Effective change will involve one or more of the following:

- effort
- temporary discomfort
- trust in God

Because we have settled into a behavior—even harmful behavior—it will require effort to change. Changing from one kind of behavior to another may involve temporary discomfort. That’s because it requires effort. We must think about what we are doing. (One man said, “There is no expedient to which a man will not go to avoid the real labor of thinking.) We must believe that God knows what is best for us, and forsake the unprofitable path we have been traveling.

Sometimes we can get so used to a bad thing that we get comfortable, even in the most undesirable of circumstances, and do not want to go to the trouble involved in changing our lives for the better.

Consider the Israelites as they were delivered from Egyptian bondage. After deliverance from the oppressive hand of the Egyptian Empire, Israel asked Moses, “Why have you brought us out?” Back in Egypt they were crying out to God for deliverance. God saw their “misery.” He heard their “crying.” He was concerned about their “suffering.” So he delivered them. Compare Exodus 14:11 with Exodus 3:7ff.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. What do you need to change in your life?

2. Do you feel intimidated by the thought of changing in any of these areas? What would change involve?

3. How have you dealt with these issues in the past?

4. How effective was your way of handling these issues?

5. What does the Bible say concerning the issues you confront?

6. Some people do not believe that change is possible. Consider the following passages:

- a. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- b. 2 Peter 2:20
- c. Colossians 3:1-17
- d. Ephesians 4:17-32

7. What is the difference between self-pity and mourning over sin?

The dynamics involved in change are directly connected to what we covered under the principles of success. The relationship between meditating on God's Word and change was brought out in chapter 5.

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 119 (look back at the notes you made on this Psalm in Chapter 5.)
2. Romans 12:1-2
3. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Chapter Ten

FORGIVENESS WORKSHEET

In this chapter I said that how we relate to God is of critical importance. Another critical element of coping effectively is how we relate to one another. All sin is against God, but it may also involve others. When we have sinned against one another we need to learn how to respond properly.

If I have sinned against you, it does not do merely to say, “I’m sorry.” While this is an important thing to confess, I do not believe the offense has been absolved until we say to the party we have offended, “Will you forgive me?” These are four of the most important words we could utter to the one we have offended. If you don’t believe me, think about the last time you were offended. If the offender came to you and said, ‘Listen, if you have a problem with what I did, I’m sorry.’ How satisfied would you be? The offender has just offended you again by suggesting that you are still the one with the problem. Consider how much more satisfying it would be if that same individual were to have said, “I know what I did the other day was offensive to you. I am very sorry I offended you. Would you please forgive me?” Do you see the difference between the first and second statements?

If you are the offender, then you must approach the one you offended and ask for their forgiveness. But what if the offender refuses to forgive you when forgiveness is sought? Then the one offended is the one with the problem. His problem is then with God, Who will not forgive the unforgiving.

Consider the message expressed by the following passages:

1. Luke 15:11-32 (Read)
 - a. What two reactions were there to the son who was dead and alive again, and was lost and found?

- b. Comparing these two reactions with the two categories of people referred to in Luke 15:1-2, how does this parable relate to the audience?

- c. Which character in the story ought we to be like?

2. Matthew 18:21-35 (Read)

- a. How much money did the servant of this story owe the king? What is that equivalent to today? (vs 24)

- b. How much did one of his fellow servants owe him? What is that equivalent to today? (vs 28)

- c. What happened to the forgiven servant who did not, in turn, forgive others?

- d. What is the lesson Jesus wants us to learn? (vs 35)

THINK ABOUT IT

If an individual has sinned against us and they do not seek forgiveness, we are powerless to forgive. Many people think that we ought to forgive even those who do not seek it. Not even God forgives those who have not repented. Why should we hold ourselves accountable to forgive those God Himself has not forgiven?

Even though we are powerless to forgive until the offender repents, we are to stand ready to forgive like the father in the story of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32). Bitterness and malice in our hearts only hurts us.

1. Against whom have you committed an offense that you have not asked forgiveness?

2. Have you withheld your forgiveness from anyone who has repented of their actions toward you?

3. Why is asking for forgiveness and forgiving difficult?

4. What are some of the causes of doubt about being forgiven by God?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. 1 John 1:7-10
2. Psalm 32
3. Psalm 51
4. Psalm 103:12
5. Mark 16:15-16
6. Acts 2:37-42
7. Ephesians 2:1-10

Chapter Eleven

ABSTINENCE WORKSHEET

There are obviously many things in this life that are morally neutral that call for moderation. But there are other things in life that are not morally neutral. These are the things from which God calls for us to abstain.

- Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (1 Peter. 2:11).
- But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:14).

Also consider how nonsensical the above cheer is in light of such teachings found in Matthew 5:29-30: “And if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

What we all need to learn is how to hate what we love - that we ought to hate. In other words, there may be some aspect of sin we like that we ought to hate. How do I learn to hate it? Much of this goes back to the practice of meditating on God’s Word for the renewing of our mind, but more specifically, let me suggest two things. First of all, we need to commit ourselves to walk after the Spirit, and secondly, we need to crucify the flesh.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Read Galatians 5:16-24
 - a. What things does Paul associate with the flesh?

b. What things listed here trouble you?

c. List the various characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit.

d. What other phrases are used that mean the same as walk by the Spirit? (See 5:18, 25).

e. Fill in the following statements:

“Walk by the Spirit, and _____” (5:16)

“If ye are led by the Spirit, _____” (5:18)

“If we live by the Spirit, _____” (5:25)

f. All of which means that we are to live according to the instructions and the truth of the Spirit of God. These instructions are made known to us in the Word; which all points to our involvement with the Word of God.

2. Galatians 5:24 reads, “And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.”

a. What does it mean to crucify the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof?

b. Consider these passages:

- Galatians 2:20
- Colossians 3:5
- Romans 6:1-6
- Romans 13:14

2. If the fruit of the Spirit is not exemplified in your life, it is probably the case that you are not walking by the Spirit, or you have not yet crucified the flesh, or both.

The only way you will ever alter your desire for what is evil is to meditate on God's Word. Because the Psalmist learned to delight in God's Word, he wrote:

- I have restrained my feet from every evil way (Psalm 119:101)
- I hate every false way (Psalm 119:104).

READ & MEDITATE

1. Romans 12:1-2
2. Ephesians 4:17-32
3. Philippians 2:12-13
4. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Chapter Twelve

FELLOWSHIP WORKSHEET

People who are uninformed of the basic principles of Christianity often ask the question, “Do I have to go to church to go to heaven?” As kindly as I know how, I tell them that for the Christian the emphasis is not on their obligation to attend, but rather the great need to come together.

The one who loves God is compelled by that love to express their adoration to God for all the favors He bestows on their life. But there is another dimension to fellowship that I would like for us to focus on in this chapter.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. What ideas come to mind when you think of the word “fellowship?”

2. What purposes do you see fellowship fulfilling? (Read Hebrews 10:19-26)

3. What is the basis for fellowship?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 1:10 _____
 - b. 1 John 1:1-10 _____
 - c. 1 John 4:7-21 _____
 - d. Ephesians 4:1-6 _____

4. The saints of the first century met daily (Acts 2:46, 27).

a. Why do you suppose they met so often?

b. Did they need more in the way of fellowship than we do today? Explain your answer.

5. Why don't Christians go to other Christians with problems that are spiritual in nature? Why do some trust those outside the fellowship of Christ with the same?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Psalm 133

Chapter Thirteen
REMAINING CURRENT WORKSHEET

Many of us foolishly avoid confronting the problems of life, thinking they will just go away. Some actually ignore them by pretending they do not exist. Others refuse to address the issues they repeatedly face, claiming that they have put them all on the back burner until they settle a problem they had years ago. Many times this is nothing more than an excuse not to deal with anything at all. Oh, what a mess this can make of life. Disaster lurks at every turn if this is the strategy we have adopted in coping with life's challenges.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Why do we put off until tomorrow what we could address today?

2. Why are we so reluctant to approach one another concerning matters of offense?
 - a. pride
 - b. misplaced priorities
 - c. ignorance
 - d. fear of:
 - i. rejection
 - ii. anger
 - iii. being misunderstood
 - iv. we do not think our feelings are valid
3. How is remaining current related to fellowship? (2 Corinthians 6:14ff)

4. How ought we to deal with the following scenarios:

a. secret sin

b. brother against brother

c. public sin

d. a sinner outside of Christ

5. Do any of the preceding scenarios above describe a situation in which you find yourself? How ought you to handle it?

All of us have needs. When those needs are not met, and we do not confront the issue at hand, it can quickly arouse our anger. If our anger is not confronted, bitterness is right around the corner. Perhaps you have let some problem escalate to the extent of bitterness. What is God's remedy for bitterness? See Ephesians 4:31-32 and Colossians 3:12-15.

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Matthew 5:21-26
2. Romans 12:17-21

Chapter Fourteen
LONELINESS WORKSHEET

Loneliness and aloneness are very close in meaning, but they are not identical. A person may live alone and yet not be lonely because they have friends to visit and family to care for them. But loneliness that is brought on by alienating ourselves from others due to sin can not only make us lonely, it can result in aloneness.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Read Ecclesiastes 4:8-12
 - a. Why does this depict not only someone who is alone, but someone who is also lonely?

 - b. What would make a difference for this person?
 (Remember to consider the context of the Book of Ecclesiastes as a whole.)

2. Do any of the scenarios below describe your situation?
 - a. live alone, but not lonely
 - b. live alone, and lonely
 - c. lonely
 - d. The Lord strengthens you
 - Why, do you suppose, you are in the condition you chose from the list above?

- Has sin, in any way, alienated you from others?
How?

3. How would you have responded to the radio counselor if he had asked you the question, “If you are lonely, who’s missing?”

4. What must you do to address the issue of sin in order to alleviate the alienation you feel from God and others? (You may want to refer back to the preceding chapter on remaining current.)

5. What relationship exists between loneliness and fear?

6. Review the section titled “The Shadow of Death” in this chapter and describe it in your own words describe.

- a. Does the shadow of death relate to what you may be experiencing? If so, how?

- b. What would it take to get you to say with David, “Yea, though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil?”

7. What did the writer, E. A. Hoffman, mean when he spoke of “leaning on the everlasting arms, safe and secure from all alarm”?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. Deuteronomy 31:6
2. Joshua 1:9
3. Psalm 23
4. Jeremiah 1:4-10

Chapter Fifteen
MEANING WORKSHEET

Some in the psychological society have trivialized real spiritual problems by reducing them to mere diseases. In so doing, they rob our everyday struggles of any dignity or value.

The existence of God is crucial to our understanding of the value of difficulty. With God in the picture there is a reason to live, to struggle, and even to die. Without God in the picture we may as well eat and drink for tomorrow we die (1 Corinthians 15:32). Mortimer Adler has rightly concluded, “More consequences for thought and action follow from the affirmation or denial of God than from answering any other basic question.”

1. What does Mr. Adler mean by this?
2. How is our thinking and behavior affected by a denial of God’s existence?
3. How is our thinking and behavior affected by an affirmation of God’s existence?
4. Can man’s intellect go unscathed when he denies God’s existence?
 - a. Romans 1:21-23
 - b. Isaiah 45:16-17

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Read James 1:2-4
 - a. How do trials test our faith?

- b. What benefits can be derived from the trials of life? (i.e. character, endurance)

- c. How does the reality of death relate to meaning in life?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; Romans 8:18

- a. How can we learn to view the trials of life as light and momentary?

3. What dangers can you see in treating spiritual problems as pathologies (diseases): (i.e., loss of accountability)

- a. What examples can you list where this has occurred in our society (that is, spiritual problems have been reduced to a disease)?

4. Why should the philosophy of despair be rejected?

5. What problems do you face and what ultimate good can you envision coming from them?

READ AND MEDITATE

1. The Book of Ecclesiastes