

STEPS

GOSPEL-CENTERED RECOVERY Assessment Training

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STEPS Assessment Training

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Introduction to **STEPS** Discipleship

Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20, ESV

The mission of *Steps* fits into the church’s greater mission of bringing glory to God by making disciples through gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community, gospel-centered service, and gospel-centered multiplication. *Steps* is an intensive discipleship program that consists of daily Bible study and reflection, one-on-one mentoring, sharing in small groups, and a large-group teaching time. We should not view *Steps* as an attempt to climb a staircase to God through a religious system but rather as steps of obedience in faithful response to what the gospel has already accomplished and promised.

No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:11-13, ESV

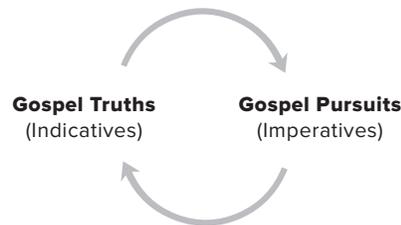
Steps begin by laying a foundation of all the gospel accomplishes for those who believe (gospel truths) and then bid people to live out the call to follow Christ (gospel pursuits). To clarify, we are not attempting to legitimize the 12 Steps as presented in traditional, nongospel recovery contexts. However, we will examine and deconstruct each step, claim whatever truth it may hold, reconstruct that truth within a biblical framework, and apply it within a gospel context. To this end we have developed Redeemed Truths.

This mentor guide is designed to help you proclaim the gospel to people who are hurting and broken. The following pages will equip you to take a participant through his or her assessment. It is recommended that you read the entire mentor guide all the way through to familiarize yourself with the process and the materials. You can then use it as a step-by-step guide while you listen to and process someone’s assessment.

Truth and Pursuit

The message of the gospel is both comfort and call. It presents the comforting truth that in Christ we have been forgiven and made righteous. We are now sons and daughters of God and accepted into His kingdom for eternity, not because of any worth or work of our own but because of the loving choice of the Father and the sacrifice of the Son.

The gospel also offers us, as citizens of the kingdom, a call—a call to come and die, to forsake everything for the expansion of the kingdom of God, and to push back what is dark in the world. This call bids us to throw off the old self and clothe ourselves with the new self.



The structure of *Steps* addresses both the comfort and the call of the gospel message. Weeks 1–4 proclaim gospel truths (comfort), while weeks 5–12 begin to incorporate the importance of gospel pursuits (call).

WEEKS 1–4: GOSPEL TRUTHS

- The nature and character of God
- The fall
- Redemption
- Grace
- Faith and justification
- Adoption
- Sanctification
- Future glory

WEEKS 5–12: GOSPEL PURSUITS

- Holiness
- Reconciliation
- Spiritual disciplines
- Making disciples
- Gospel-centered worship
- Gospel-centered community
- Gospel-centered service
- Gospel-centered multiplication

The Mentor Role, Expectations, and Accountability

Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20, ESV

Steps is a very structured process of discipleship and, due to its brevity, requires competence, character, consistency, and commitment.

CHARACTERISTICS

Qualified mentors should possess the following characteristics.

- *Competence.* They have completed *Steps* and have been recommended to be a mentor.
- *Character.* They love Jesus. They love, speak, and act toward others in a way that is consistent with His character. They operate under His authority.
- *Consistency.* They attend training to make sure all mentors follow a consistent process. Another aspect of consistency is meeting regularly with the mentee.
- *Commitment.* They are committed to finish the process even if it extends beyond the study and to disciple their mentee.

A nonqualified mentor is not necessarily unqualified, perhaps exhibiting many characteristics of being a mentor, but this person has not completed *Steps*. Enlisting a nonqualified mentor is permitted but not necessarily ideal. It allows for existing mentor relationships to move into the *Steps* process while putting responsibility on the mentor to become more qualified.

EXPECTATIONS

We have the following expectations for mentors.

- Attend the first week of *Steps* with mentees (if applicable).
- Meet small-group leaders and exchange information (if applicable).
- Meet weekly with their mentees.
- Attend training as needed and/or required.
- All mentors, regardless of their level of experience, are required to attend the first training, where they will receive their guides and any specific details for this semester.
- Follow the guide for reviewing the Going Deeper questions and completing the assessments.
- Be accountable to coaches and leaders for character and expectations.
- Help develop a next-steps or after-care plan that specifically presents the picture of a growing disciple by emphasizing gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community, gospel-centered service, and gospel-centered multiplication.

Meeting Schedule

WEEK	CONTENT	SUGGESTED HOURS
1	Share stories Weekly Going Deeper: Creation and Fall	2
2	Weekly Going Deeper: The Remedy	1
3	Weekly Going Deeper: The Response	1
4	Weekly Going Deeper: The Result	1
5	Assessment: Confess and Pray—Anger and Abuse	3
6	Assessment: Confess and Pray—Sex, Guilt, and Shame	3
7	Assessment: Confess and Pray: Fear, Anxiety, and Grief	3
8	Weekly Going Deeper: Getting to the Roots— Offering and Asking Assessment: Exposing Roots—Renounce and Pray	3
9	Weekly Going Deeper: Reconciling and Amending Assessment: Amends	2
10	Weekly Going Deeper: Confronting and Forgiving	1
11	Weekly Going Deeper: Persevering and Pursuing	1
12	Weekly Going Deeper: The Joy of Making Much of His Name	1
Next Steps	Faithful Action: Developing an After-Care Plan	1
TOTAL HOURS		23

TRAINING

An Overview of Biblical Counseling

The following overview seeks to differentiate biblical counseling from other forms of counsel that the world offers. Because we bear an influence on the lives that God has entrusted to us as shepherds, we must ensure that our counsel is biblical. Biblical counseling is distinct because it is rooted in the Scriptures, is aimed at the heart with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and exhorts Christ followers with the greatest command.

ROOTED IN THE SCRIPTURES

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1 CORINTHIANS 1:20, ESV

The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. My son, beware of anything beyond these.

ECCLESIASTES 12:11-12, ESV

THE WISDOM OF GOD VERSUS THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

Rightly understood, all wisdom can be categorized in one of two ways. The Bible defines these sources of wisdom as the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world (see 1 Cor 1:20-21). These two sources of wisdom are actually two different worldviews. One worldview exalts God and His glory as utmost; the other elevates man and his concerns. These two viewpoints regard the other as foolish and stand in opposition to each other. Even some Christians have tried to find a middle ground between these two worldviews. Biblical counseling begins from a perspective rooted in the wisdom of God and is oriented around His glory.

The wisdom of God is displayed most clearly in Jesus Christ. All creation exists to bring Him glory. The wisdom of the world reinterprets our experiences and desires in a way that leads us away from God as we orient our lives primarily around ourselves. The wisdom of the world is limited because it is based in speculation. The wisdom of God is based in revelation. As such, all counsel that mentors provide should be rooted in the wisdom God has revealed in His Word.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROOT AND FRUIT

Thus says the LORD:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,
whose heart turns away from the LORD.

He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.

He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.

He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

JEREMIAH 17:5-8, ESV

As can be seen in the previous passage, the two responses Jeremiah described lead to radically different lives. One is fruitful, and the other is fruitless. The fruit of a person's life will reveal their roots. Those who put their trust in God and His Word are nourished by the living waters of Jesus Christ. Their lives will be characterized by peace and good fruit amid difficult circumstances. Those who trust in man and the world will experience chaos and desolation. Those who seek to counsel biblically will encourage trust and faith in God with the understanding that faithful obedience to the Lord flows from a heart reconciled to Him by faith in Jesus.

AIMED AT THE HEART

The heart is deceitful above all things
and desperately sick;
who can understand it?

JEREMIAH 17:9, ESV

TARGETING SYMPTOMS OR ROOT CAUSES

The Bible describes the heart as the seat of a person, from which our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors originate (see Mark 7:21-22). The heart is the wellspring of our lives that drives our motivations and desires. Because of sin our hearts are corrupt. Outside the gospel we live with an incurable spiritual heart disease. By God's grace, faith in Jesus brings a new heart with new desires. However, sin and its effects remain, hindering our ability to see God, ourselves, and our lives rightly. Therefore, we need counsel that addresses the fundamental commitments in our lives with the hope of the gospel.

Secular approaches to counseling often treat only symptoms, focusing on behavior, thoughts, and emotions while failing to address the deeper issues of the heart. Treating symptoms has been described as giving aspirin to someone for a headache caused by a brain tumor. It may relieve the headache for a time, but it does nothing to fix the brain tumor.

Thankfully, we are not left without hope. God understands our hearts and has given us insights in His Word to explain the inner workings of man. God pursues the hearts of His people and will not rest until He wins them entirely. The biblical counsel that group leaders provide should address the root causes of our problems, not our symptoms alone.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

To those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,
Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:24, ESV

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the unfolding plan of God to redeem a people for His glory. God's Word reveals that the cause of all human suffering is sin. Therefore, the counsel that group leaders provide exalts the supremacy of the gospel of Jesus Christ as our ultimate hope amid our sin and suffering. To that end we seek to connect the truths of the gospel to our everyday struggles so that we can rejoice in the transformative grace of Jesus.

EXHORTING WITH THE GREATEST COMMAND

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.

MARK 12:29-31, ESV

God has hardwired us for worship. It is an expression of our humanness. We worship what is uppermost in our affections. The question is not whether we worship but what we worship.

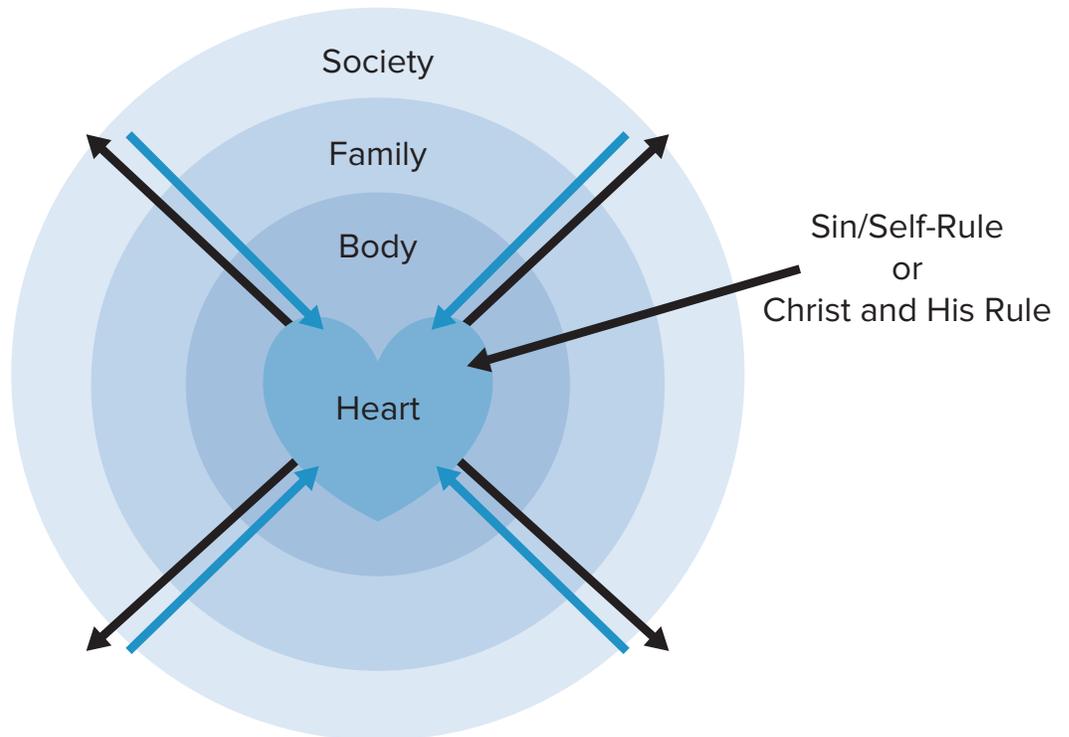
All sin stems from disordered desires. These desires lead to idolatry—the worship of anything other than God. When we sin, we declare that in that moment we love something more than we love God. We give worship that is rightly due Him to another.

Through the gospel we are given new hearts with the reordering of His creative design and the reorientation of our hearts in worship to Him. Gospel-centered worship is a response to the reality that in Christ we have been given all things—the greatest of these being God Himself. Biblical counsel exhorts Christians to pursue rightly ordered worship that spills over into faithful action. We are to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jas. 1:22, ESV).

BIBLICAL COUNSELING EXAMPLE: DEPRESSION

How can these elements of biblical counseling be applied to serious problems like depression? To think biblically about depression, we must first begin by developing a biblical anthropology, or a scriptural understanding of people and what influences them. From this we will see that while it is possible to be spiritually oppressed, physically defective, and pressed by the circumstances around us, we can respond by the Holy Spirit with trust and faith in Christ under God's sovereign rule.

A Biblical Anthropology of the Active and the Passive Heart



John Henderson, *Equipped to Counsel* (Bedford, TX: Association of Biblical Counselors, 2008).

From the diagram we see that there are physiological, social, and spiritual realities that can influence a person. Our physical bodies, the societies and cultures in which we live, and the unseen spiritual realm all influence our lives. Yet above it all God sits sovereignly enthroned, fully in control. He is sovereign over all things. Therefore, if we trust God in the midst of a chaotic situation, we will bear good fruit regardless of the source of the difficulty (see Jer. 17:7-8). If we place our trust elsewhere, we will be:

like a shrub in the desert
and shall not see any good come.

JEREMIAH 17:6, ESV

This truth hints at the greater reality present as we counsel those who are struggling with depression. Despite the influences that surround us, the Bible focuses on the heart as the center of emotion, intellect, will, and desire. It is at the heart level that God ministers His grace to sufferers of depression.

One of the common features of depression is hopelessness. As you listen to others' stories of depression, you often hear evidence of misplaced hope. Many who struggle with depression say they have nothing left to live for. Their desires and dreams have gone unsatisfied. They feel lifeless, plunged into darkness. They have lost hope, motivation, and purpose. What a place for the gospel to enter!

In the greatest commandment Jesus exhorts us not to place our hope in lesser loves (see Mark 12:30). This is both for His glory and our good. In contrast to Jesus' words, depression often results from putting our hope in something other than God and His promise of redemption through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because the world as we know it is passing away, finding our meaning in this world and the people of this world will leave us like Solomon, who, having it all, exclaimed, "Meaningless! Meaningless! ... Everything is meaningless! ... a chasing after the wind" (Eccl. 1:1-14, NIV).

We are told in Matthew 6:33:

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you.

MATTHEW 6:33, ESV

In our natural, sinful state we seek the things we love—what we treasure. Jesus warns us that to treasure the things of the earth is to grasp for temporary, fleeting things that can never deliver on the security they promise. Instead, we are called to treasure and seek the eternal things of the kingdom of heaven.

We seek with our eyes, so if our eye is bad (when we seek temporary hopes and treasures), our whole body will be full of darkness. How great is that darkness outside the hope of the gospel! But if our eye is full of light, it brings light to the whole body. Through the gospel we have been given the eternal riches of the Kingdom. If someone is depressed, we want to invite that person to know the only One who brings light to the darkness, life from the dead, and order from chaos.

Even if there is a true chemical imbalance caused by a physical problem in our bodies or if there is spiritual oppression or social anxiety, our ministry to depressed people remains the same. We compassionately minister to the heart with the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ amid all circumstances. There has never been a case of chemical imbalance (other than Jesus sweating blood in the garden of Gethsemane) that did not also expose heart issues that needed to be addressed.

This does not mean we discourage helpful symptomatic relief through medication or other means. It means we never want to lose sight that our real hope is not a chemical or a feeling. As Paul Tripp has said, "Hope is a person, and his name is Jesus Christ."¹ No matter how terrible a person feels, it is possible to look on our lives and situation with hope because of the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These truths do not minimize or discount the very real and deep darkness of depression. God sees, and He cares. Because God is sovereign, He takes us into difficult seasons and uses them for good. There is a purpose for our suffering. Often the heart is exposed in seemingly never-ending forms of pride and idolatry, but through the gospel there is unending grace as God rescues us from the bondage of lesser hopes.

1. Paul Tripp, "Advent: The Promise" [online], 12 December 2012 [cited 2 October 2015]. Available from the Internet: www.paultripp.com/wednesdays-word/posts/advent-the-promise.

The Assessment Process

The assessment process includes both the rooting out of sin and the replanting of biblical truth.

The goal in assessment is not for participants to identify every sin they have ever committed but to illuminate dysfunctional (sinful) patterns of relating to God and others. We want to be free of the things that rob our affections for Christ and hinder our ability to live for His kingdom purposes. Through this process we want to teach participants how to examine their hearts.

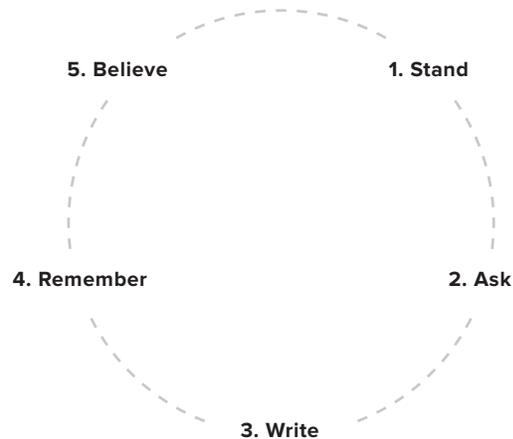
ASSESSMENT IS:

- Examining our hearts, guided by the Holy Spirit
- Being able to identify our sins and the sinful patterns behind them

ASSESSMENT IS NOT:

- An attempt to document every sin
- A one-time event

It is important to root ourselves in the gospel as we examine the darkness of our hearts. We begin by standing in the truths of the gospel—what Christ accomplished, what He is accomplishing, and what He promises to accomplish. We ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas that hinder us from properly relating to God and others as ambassadors to a lost and dying world. We spend time writing what He reveals in our assessment. We must continually remember the gospel, believe the gospel, and stand in the gospel so that the Enemy does not cause us to stumble.



An Overview of the Process



PHASE I: EXAMINE FRUIT (WEEKS 5-7)

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:20-23, ESV

Traditional step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral assessment of ourselves.

Redeemed truth from step 4: As children of God armed with the Holy Spirit and standing firm in the gospel, we engage in the spiritual battle over the reign and rule of our hearts. God set us apart for holiness, and we look to put to death the areas of our lives that keep us from reflecting Jesus Christ to a dark and dying world. We first examine the fruit in our lives (or moral symptoms). As we move through the assessment process, we will uncover the roots of any ungodly fruit (pride and idolatry) that drive our ungodly thoughts, actions, and emotions.

In phase 1 participants should fill out the lighter shaded areas of the assessment forms. The forms illuminate the fruit of a person's thoughts, actions, and beliefs. There are six forms (two for each week during weeks 5-7): Abuse, Resentment, Guilt & Shame, Sexual Immorality, Fear, and Grief. Participants should complete and share these forms with their mentors (phase 2) during these weeks.

PLEASE NOTE: Mentors should check that all sections are complete, except those in dark blue, which they will complete with the participant.

PHASE 2: CONFESS AND PRAY (WEEKS 5–7)

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness,
we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light,
as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 JOHN 1:6-7, ESV

After you check for completeness, the participant should begin reading their assessment to you. As they read, allow this to be their time for simple confession—both to you and to God. During this phase you should refrain from pointing out their faults or from giving advice. It is a time to listen and pray. There is power in the simple act of bringing things out of the dark and into the light.

Traditional step 5: We admitted before God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Redeemed truth from step 5: Under the covering of God’s grace, we step out in faith, leaving behind our old, self-protective ways of covering sin and hiding from God. We prayerfully come into the light, confessing our sins before God and to one another so that we may be healed.

As the participant confesses each item on the assessment, use the prayer prompts to help them pray about each issue or person. We have also provided two pages for taking notes. We recommend that you take notes to use during phases 3 and 4.

PHASE 3: EXPOSE ROOTS (WEEK 8)

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

LUKE 6:43-45, ESV

By examining the various columns on each assessment form, you will help the participant uncover roots of pride, idolatry, and spiritual adultery that are causing the sinful fruit of their lives.

PHASE 4: REPLANT TRUTH AND RENOUNCE LIES (WEEK 8)

This phase of assessment deals with the spiritual dynamics behind the character defects, lies, and vows we consciously or unconsciously believed, pronounced, or entered. We come out of agreement with the Enemy and prayerfully set our intentions on reflecting Jesus to the world.

... assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him,
as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to
your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

EPHESIANS 4:21-22, ESV

Traditional step 6: We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Traditional step 7: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Redeemed truth from steps 6 & 7: In attempting to live independent of God, we have developed dysfunctional (sinful) patterns of coping. After careful examination we have begun to see the demonic roots of our slavery to these sinful patterns. We desire freedom. We renounce our former ways; offer ourselves to God; and, under the waterfall of His grace, ask Him to deliver and heal us by the authority of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We also pray for blessing and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to live life according to His kingdom purposes.

Using the sample guide provided, you will help the participant identify these lies, vows, and sinful patterns and then pray with them.

PHASE 5: ENCOURAGE TO FAITHFUL ACTION

Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit
in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

COLOSSIANS 1:10, ESV

Through confession, prayer, counsel, and deliverance, the participant has worked to expel the sins, wounds, and oppressive powers that hinder their ability to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.” It is now time to encourage the participant toward reconciliation, community, and obedience. You will help them create a list of persons with whom they need to reconcile.

Traditional step 8: We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Traditional step 9: We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Redeemed truth from steps 8 & 9: Relationships break down because of sin. If there were no sin in the world, relationships would work harmoniously, evidenced by love and unity. Division among God's people provides opportunities to identify sin and purify the body. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings about justice in a way that the law cannot by inwardly reconciling the very heart of injustice to God. As those forgiven by God, we can humbly approach those affected by our sin and make amends. This change of heart brings glory to God by demonstrating the power of the gospel and reflecting His heart in bringing justice through His reconciled people.

Additional redeemed truth from steps 8 & 9: As ambassadors of Christ, we are to be instruments of grace as we confront those who sin against us. We hand our offenses over to God and extend eager forgiveness to those who ask for it. And in this way, fellowship with God and among His people is preserved.

Traditional step 10: We continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Traditional step 11: We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out.

Redeemed truth from steps 10 & 11: We continue in the fear of the Lord, putting to death those things that rob our affections for Christ while persevering in our loving and joyful obedience to Him. We return to the Lord quickly with an attitude of repentance, when out of step with the Spirit, as we're trained in godliness and grow spiritually. Since He is our ultimate treasure, we seek to know Him and fill ourselves with those things that stir our affections for Him. We practice spiritual disciplines so that our hearts, so prone to wander, might stay in rhythm with His.

Traditional step 12: Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Redeemed truth from step 12: Before the foundations of the earth, God chose us, the church, to live as messengers of reconciliation to a lost and dying world, bearing witness to His wisdom and power through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our joy-filled worship to make much of His name, empowered by the Holy Spirit in bringing a comprehensive gospel demonstrated by our deeds and proclaimed by our words, with the goal of making disciples for Jesus Christ. In this same way, we incarnate Christ, being His hands and feet on the earth.

TIME FRAME FOR COMPLETING ASSESSMENTS

The goal of this process is not to have an hour-long counseling session over each line of assessment. It should not take months to complete the process. The expectation is for mentors to meet weekly with their participants. We recommend one of the following options. (This time is in addition to the review of the Going Deeper questions in weeks 1–4 and 8–12.)

OPTION 1 (RECOMMENDED): Schedule three hours per week during weeks 5–7 (two assessments per week) to complete phase 2, then two hours for week 8 for phases 3–4, one hour to apply weeks 9–10, and one hour to develop an after-care plan for the participant.

OPTION 2: Schedule an entire day to work through phase 2 instead of three separate sessions during weeks 5–7, then two hours for week 8 for phases 3–4, one hour to apply weeks 9–10, and one hour to develop an after-care plan for the participant.

Choose the schedule that works best for you, the participant, and the ministry format. Each can be effective as long as you complete the entire process.

TRAINING

Confession and Prayer

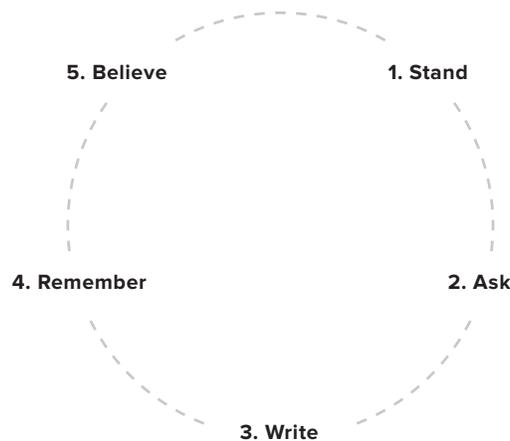
Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

JAMES 5:16, ESV

After a person has completed each section of the inventory, mentors have the blessing, as extensions of Christ's love, to pray with those who have confessed the most troubling aspects of their lives as they shared their hearts. With the compassion of Jesus, we bear witness to His faithfulness.

RECAP STAGE I: EXAMINE FRUIT

Participants have been asked to set aside dedicated time to complete their assessments. They have been asked to enlist others to pray for them during these times. The pattern of completing the inventory is as follows.



As a person completes their assessment, you may need to be a light to them, reminding them of gospel truths and gospel promises.

STAGE 2: CONFESS AND PRAY

From beginning to end, the Scriptures demonstrate the blessing that comes from confession and repentance:

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper,
but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

PROVERBS 28:13, ESV

The pattern is simple. Confess and pray. Confess and pray. Confess and pray. You will love and listen, taking notes and sharing encouragement as necessary. You will have the opportunity to address the deeper issues of the heart, leading the person you are walking with to identify any sinful patterns of relating to God and others in stage 4, Getting to the Roots.

CONFESSSION

In Genesis Adam and Eve ultimately confessed their sin and were covered by God grace, whereas Cain denied his sin.

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus rebuked the church in Ephesus for forsaking their first love and called the church to repent and do the works they did at first. In Acts we find that the early church in Ephesus practiced confession:

Many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices.

ACTS 19:18, ESV

PRAYER

We prayerfully bring each situation on the inventory before the Lord, repenting when appropriate and praying in faith that He is faithful to forgive and bring healing to those who are in Christ.

TRAINING

Exposing Roots: Renounce and Pray

CONNECTING FRUIT TO ROOTS

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

LUKE 6:43-45, ESV

This training is designed to connect the ungodly fruit of our lives to its roots and to establish a pattern of prayer that moves us toward the freedom Christ came to bring us.

PART 1: EXPOSING ROOTS

After a season of listening to our mentee bring to light the difficult and dark details of their lives and grieving with them, it is now time to revisit the assessment from a different vantage point. Although in many cases they have been deeply wronged by others, we must now help them see and accept responsibility for their part.

A thorough understanding of James 4:1-10 will give us the insight we need to see what is going on beneath the surface of ungodly fruit. James was addressing fighting and quarreling in the church. He said under the surface of our unrighteous anger are warring desires within. The problem is within us. He went on to explain this fighting and quarreling as not primarily a horizontal problem between people but as a vertical problem with God.

James shows us that we have desires within us (which at the most basic level are from God) that are competing for the reign and rule of our hearts (idolatry). We are attempting to satisfy our elevated desires through the world and the people of the world (spiritual adultery). We are told to resist the Devil. We must acknowledge the spiritual reality that personal evil exists to powerfully tempt our flesh away from God and to tempt us to have our desires met by planting our roots in the world.

TRADITIONAL STEP 5: We admitted before God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

As we review the assessment, we will see the exact nature of our wrongs and the reality that we were rooting our lives in an alternative kingdom, enticed by the demonic to satisfy our flesh through the world rather than the kingdom of God (see the diagram Renouncing and Replanting by Offering and Asking).

■ **PART 2: UPROOTING: IDENTIFYING AND RENOUNCING DEFECTS OF CHARACTER**

TRADITIONAL STEP 6: We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Character defects are dysfunctional or sinful patterns of relating to God, self, and others that are often passed generationally as sinners attempt to cope with living in a sinful world independent of God. These defects do not reflect the image of the character and nature of God. Because the Enemy is behind the whispers to seek preservation through self-generated means, we as God's children must come out of agreement with the Enemy and into agreement with God by renouncing these sinful patterns of trusting self and distrusting God:

This is not the wisdom that comes down from above,
but is earthly [worldly], unspiritual [flesh], demonic.

JAMES 3:15, ESV

It is important to be “entirely ready” for God to remove all our character defects because He seeks more than halfheartedness, partial obedience, and double mindedness. He wants us to be fully submitted to His lordship for His glory and our good. Otherwise, we will give the Enemy a foothold in our lives. In any areas of our lives where Jesus is not Lord, we will be enslaved.

■ **PART 3: REPLANTING: OFFERING, AND ASKING THROUGH PRAYER**

TRADITIONAL STEP 7: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Following the pattern of prayer Jesus taught us to pray (see Matt. 6:9-13), that He would cause His name to be glorified, we offer ourselves to Him and pray that He will provide what we need for His Kingdom purposes. This is not the type of prayer outlined in James 4:3-4, which is motivated by our own selfish desires but is instead praying for His kingdom to come and His will to be done. It is under His covering that we ask for provision, protection, and direction. We pray for His leading and for Him to deliver us daily.

REDEEMED TRUTH FROM STEPS 6 & 7: In attempting to live independent of God, we have developed dysfunctional (sinful) patterns of coping. After careful examination we have begun to see the demonic roots of our slavery to these sinful patterns. We desire freedom. We renounce our former ways; offer ourselves to God; and, under the waterfall of His grace, ask Him to deliver and heal us by the authority of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We also pray for blessing and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to live life according to His kingdom purposes.

BEFORE YOU MEET

As you consider your meeting with your mentee, what do you believe the Lord seeks for him or her? What areas need healing and deliverance? Are there significant patterns of thought and behavior from which you believe the Lord wants to bring freedom? In what ways does the Lord want to bring blessing and life? Are there vows (“I will never ...”) that need to be broken in order to fully submit to the Lord? What lies does the mentee believe?

You might review Definitions of Character Defects in the appendixes. Are there those you suspect your mentee is willing to renounce? Are there others that still seem to be working for them? Are they hesitant, or are they entirely ready?

Besides resuming your meetings and reviewing homework and Going Deeper questions for the rest of the study, you will also need to set a time to review all three parts of this stage of assessment following week 8’s group teaching to ensure that the mentee connects the message to the assessments.

WHEN YOU MEET

Start with the resentment assessment.

■ PART 1: EXPOSING ROOTS (30 MINUTES)

Connect the teaching from James 4 in week 8 to the Anger and Resentment Assessment Form. Helping your mentee see what is beneath the surface of their resentment will help them apply this process to the other assessments.

In approaching the assessment this time, we will fill in the dark-blue boxes. The last column of the assessment asks the question “Was my resentment selfish, self-seeking, fear-motivated, deceptive, and inconsiderate?” Use the following prompts to help your mentee answer this question.

SELFISH/SELF-CENTERED: Does my response stem from how something affected me (self-centered) or from a concern for another person’s relationship with the Lord (God-centered)?
Hint: What part of self was threatened or seeking satisfaction?

SELF-SEEKING: Am I more concerned with getting something I have set my sights on or with pleasing God? Does my response stem from not getting the esteem (respect, worth, love) I want, the relationships I want, the security I want, the sex I want, or the future I want? Hint: What part of self was threatened or seeking satisfaction?

FRIGHTENED: Is my response birthed from unbelief and distrust (fear) of God, leading me to attempt to meet my own needs, or is it birthed from faith working through love, leading to obedience toward God? Hint: What part of self was threatened or seeking satisfaction?

DISHONEST: Dishonesty is rooted in lies. Because we easily believe the lies of the Enemy, we are deceived into believing these desires should be filled by the world and sinful people rather than by our perfect, all-powerful, loving Creator. Am I believing a lie or walking in truth? How am I being deceived?

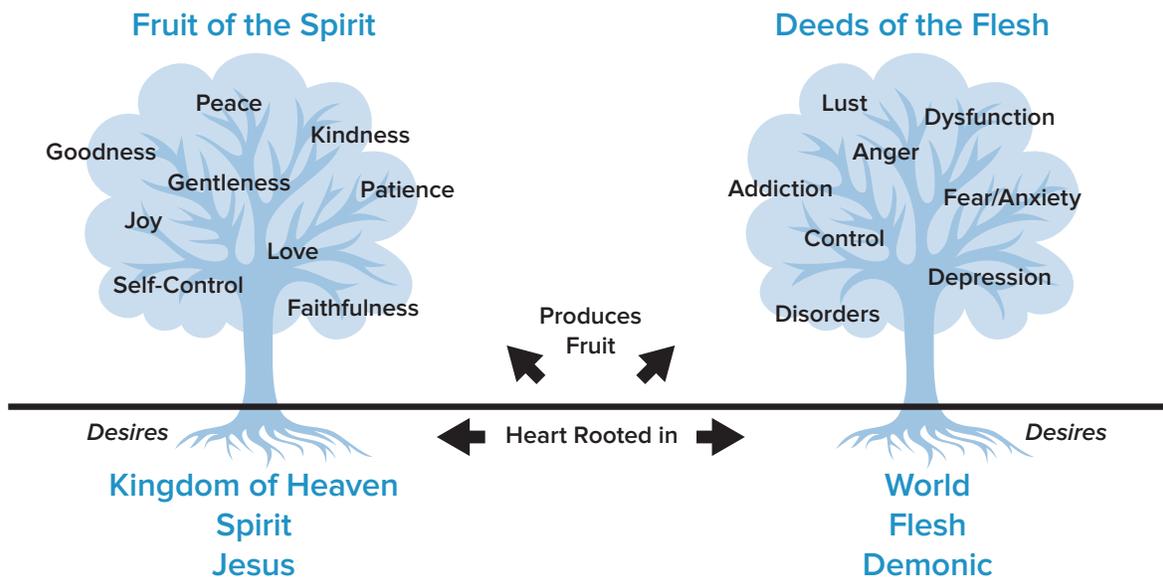
INCONSIDERATE: Have I considered only myself, or have I really sought to understand the other person and the reason, like me, they tend to act sinfully? Have I considered that they too need God's grace? Have I considered what God might be doing for His kingdom purposes?

If one of these is checked, they will all be checked because the flesh is selfish, self-centered, frightened, dishonest, and inconsiderate. We are often been so focused on ways others have wronged us that we fail to recognize that we have been operating from the same sinful nature ourselves, which does not reflect God's heart.

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

MATTHEW 7:3-5, ESV

Getting to the Roots of Ungodly Fruit and Character Defects



The problem is that we have sought to have our desires met through the world and the people of the world. Ultimately, Satan is deceiving us to believe that life is in the world rather than in Christ. We have committed spiritual adultery by looking to the world for what, ultimately, only God can provide. We have sought to have our desires for value, worth, identity, purpose, love, belonging, acceptance, security, stability, safety, peace, pleasure, hope met by the things we identified on our assessment forms. When that failed, we got angry and resentful. God is jealous for our hearts:

My people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of the living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water.

JEREMIAH 2:13, ESV

Let's look at how God meets our desires in His love through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The things that are so easily threatened in this world are secure in His kingdom, which will stand forever.

WHAT PART OF SELF WAS THREATENED?

Delight yourself in the LORD,
and He will give you the desires of your heart.

PSALM 37:4, ESV

SELF-ESTEEM: God has given us a good desire for dignity, worth, and value. However, because of sin we have fallen to a state of depravity. Rather than encouraging self-esteem, we need to be redeemed. Attempts to find worth and value apart from the cross of Jesus Christ are temporary, but God's plan for redeeming people to Himself is eternal. God's love is not conditional. His acceptance is not based on human works and worthiness but on faith in the work of His worthy Son. Our worth comes from God.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: God created us to live relationally with Him and others. We have a God-given desire to belong. In our fallen state we try to control and define our relationships. By faith we are never alone. God Himself is with us. He adopts us into His family.

MATERIAL SECURITY: When we read Matthew 6:19-34, we realize that God is good, He is in control, and He knows what we need materially. However, He warns us not to lay up treasures on earth because they are easily threatened and do not last. Instead of worrying about those things, we should seek first His eternal kingdom and righteousness. He will provide for us according to His kingdom purposes, in His timing and in His way, as He sees fit.

EMOTIONAL SECURITY: In the perfect garden paradise of Eden before the fall, there was shalom, or peace. We have a God-given desire for peace. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are given peace with God. We rest behind the mighty fortress of Jesus, where no person or

circumstance can rob us of our peace with Him. Even if waves of despair and destruction come crashing in, the Lord is our refuge. We will not be moved, because He cannot be shaken.

SEXUAL RELATIONS/SEXUALITY: We have a God-given desire for pleasure, including sex. God is a God of pleasure, and He gave us senses to enjoy His creation; however, we enjoy it within the boundaries of His instruction. God created sex to be celebrated and enjoyed between a husband and a wife within the covenant of marriage. Outside of that it becomes destructive.

AMBITIONS: Ambitions come from a God-given desire for hope. Apart from the mercy of Christ, we tend to put our hope in things other than God. But God has given us hope: He overcame the world, Satan, sin, and death. We will be raised with Christ and never experience spiritual death again. God demonstrated this miraculous, resurrecting power in Christ on the cross. Our future is secure in Christ, and we can place our hope in Him alone.

The first column on the Anger and Resentment Assessment Form represents those with whom we are committing spiritual adultery. The boxes checked under “What part of self was hurt or threatened?” show the elevated desires that are driving our sinful intentions. In pride we act from our flesh, holding judgment over those who themselves were acting from the flesh. This is our “log.” Their “speck” is column 2.

FINISH OTHER ASSESSMENTS

ABUSE ASSESSMENT: The dark-blue boxes on the Abuse Assessment Form are meant to reassign responsibilities. The first column of dark-blue boxes leads the mentee to renounce the lie that the abuse was their fault. The last column, labeled “Exact nature of my wrongs, faults, and mistakes,” helps the mentee see what they are responsible for.

GUILT AND SHAME ASSESSMENT: Similar to the Anger and Resentment Assessment form, the dark-blue boxes help identify what the mentee is responsible for. The other columns work similarly. For example, it might be lust or idolatry of money that causes the person to cheat on his taxes or falsify his expense report. In his pride he distrusts God and operates from the flesh, seeking satisfaction in the world.

SEXUAL-IMMORALITY ASSESSMENT: Similar to the Anger and Resentment Assessment form, the dark-blue boxes help identify what the mentee is responsible for. The other columns work similarly. For example, it might be lust or idolatry of love or security that causes the person to offer himself in a sexually immoral way. In his pride he distrusts God and operates from the flesh, seeking satisfaction in the world.

FEAR ASSESSMENT: Using Matthew 6:19-34, we see that our fears are connected to what we treasure in our hearts. Are we seeking security in earthly, temporal treasures or in heavenly treasures, which are secure? Column 3 is the specific treasure, and column 4 is the person or object in which we are seeking that security.

GRIEF ASSESSMENT: Similar to the Anger and Resentment Assessment form, the dark-blue boxes help identify what the mentee is responsible for. Has the person's grief been oriented around the Lord, or has it been self-focused? Though both are painful, one will lead to life and intimacy with the Lord, while one leads to being self-consumed and distrusting the Lord.

■ **PART 2: UPROOTING:**

IDENTIFYING AND RENOUNCING DEFECTS OF CHARACTER (30 MINUTES)

Ask your mentee to consider what the Lord has shown them about their sinful patterns of relating to God and others. Refer to Definitions of Character Defects in the appendixes.

TRADITIONAL STEP 6: We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

We want to be entirely ready to have God remove all character defects and not withhold them from the Lord. Though these patterns are defective, they are familiar. It requires a step of faith to let go of them and trust the Lord (for example: self-protection).

■ **PART 3: OFFERING AND ASKING (1 HOUR)**

TRADITIONAL STEP 7: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

In terms of what we should bring before the Lord, we are not looking for a comprehensive list; we all struggle at some level with most of these issues. We are looking, however, for those that the Lord seems to be lifting up. What needs to be healed? Where does the Lord want to bring freedom? What lies need to be renounced ("I am the only one who can be trusted" or "I am unlovable")? What truth needs to be believed ("God is the only One who can ultimately be trusted" or "God loves me")? What vows need to be broken ("I will never ...")? Pray and ask the Lord what He wants to do.

There are options as to the possible settings to pray through these issues. Some participants might want to gather with their mentors as a group to pray over individual group members. Some might have a night of worship and prayer, guided by a pastor. Some may do this one on one within the confines of the mentoring relationship.

PRAYERS OF DELIVERANCE, HEALING, AND BLESSING

This is a time to come before the Lord; lay our lives at His feet; and ask Him to bring freedom, healing, and blessing. We have the opportunity to bring all that has been unearthed through the assessment process before the Lord and ask Him to do what only He can do. This is not a magic bullet but a pattern of seeking, asking, and knocking. What we ask may seem like a mountain too big to overcome, but we have His promise to rely on:

Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, “Be taken up and thrown into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

MARK 11:23-24, ESV

We must start by offering our lives completely to Him, asking Him to make us useful to Him, according to His will and His kingdom purposes. We renounce lies; break vows; and pray that He will deliver us from sinful patterns of relating to Him, ourselves, the creation, and one another in the name of Christ and by His authority. This time of prayer should be devoted to mental, emotional, spiritual, relational, and physical healing.

The participant should share what God revealed through the assessments about significant patterns of sinful behavior, thoughts, and attitudes. They should identify generational patterns of sin and specific areas in which they desire deliverance from bondage and healing from past wounds.

As Jesus’ model prayer teaches us (see Matt. 6:9-13), we must first pray for God’s name to be lifted up, for His kingdom to come, and for His will to be done. Accordingly, we must lay down our name, our kingdom, and our will to His.

PRAYER PROMPTS

PRAYER TO COME UNDER HIS AUTHORITY (SEE EPH. 1:22): Heavenly Father, I have now seen how I have lived by the ways of the world and have lived for my kingdom, my name, and my will. I now renounce those ways and offer myself completely to You to be utilized for Your kingdom plan and purposes.

PRAYER FOR PROVISION, PROTECTION, AND DIRECTION (SEE JAS. 1:17): Heavenly Father, give us this day what we need to accomplish Your kingdom purposes. Protect us from any interference by the Enemy and his servants, works, and effects during our time of prayer. You are greater than he who is in the world.

PRAYER TO RENOUNCE SPECIFIC LIES (TO BE PRAYED OVER EACH LIE; SEE ROM. 1:25): Loving Father, please forgive me for believing the lie that _____. I renounce that lie and come into agreement with the truth that _____.

PRAYER TO BREAK VOWS (TO BE PRAYED OVER EACH VOW; SEE MATT. 5:33-37): Loving Father, in my distress I have vowed to/to never _____. In doing so, I have alienated myself from You and sought to keep myself from harm. I have placed myself under the Devil’s authority and have given him a foothold in my life. I now break that vow by Christ’s authority and come to You as my protector. I trust that You will give me grace to overcome all the Enemy’s influence.

PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE (SEE EPH. 6:16-18):

- The participant should understand the prayer and pray in agreement as he or she is prayed over.
- This time of prayer is to engage in spiritual battle at the level of personal entanglement and not beyond that.

Heavenly Father, for Your namesake and according to Your love and mercy, we ask that You will deliver _____ from any demonic influence that is tempting him/her to _____ so that he/she may freely serve You and Your kingdom. He/she has agreed with Your adversary and now renounces his ways. Spirit of _____, we command you by the authority of the Holy Spirit to release _____ at once. We command you to go directly without incident to the feet of Jesus, where He will deal with you according to His eternal purposes. We command you never to return to _____ or to any of his/her family, friends, or loved ones. In the name of Jesus, we bind you and all spirits that may be assigned with you, and we command you to go. Lord God, we ask You to fill the places previously occupied by the Enemy with the Holy Spirit and bless _____ in the name of Jesus Christ.

ELEMENTS OF THIS PRAYER

- Acknowledge by what power and authority we approach the throne of God.
- Request deliverance from a specific stronghold.
- Come with the purposes of using freedom to be utilized for God's kingdom.
- Command the spirit to release the individual by the authority of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Instruct the spirit to go to Jesus without incident.
- Bind all those assigned with this spirit together and command them to go and never return to the individual or his/her family, friends, or loved ones.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill this person.
- Pray for blessing.

Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?
Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil,
know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your
Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

MATTHEW 7:9-11, ESV

TRAINING

Seeking Reconciliation and Amends

The work of amends displays God as a just God who cares about His children and is intent on bringing justice to the oppressed. We arrive at this justice through the reconciliation of our hearts to His through the gospel of grace, which cures what the law cannot. The gospel alone transforms the heart of injustice.

TRADITIONAL STEP 8: We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

TRADITIONAL STEP 9: We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The light of Christ shines into our hearts. It exposes darkness while providing the hope of restoration through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. He Himself demonstrates the power and possibility of overcoming sin, suffering, and death. For those of us who are forgiven by God and are now living as His ambassadors, this process allows us to bring light and hope to a dark world. We are to use all of our energy and resources to glorify His name. Confessing our wrongs with a sincere desire to make things right is an opportunity to testify to the character of God as both just and merciful. Restitution is often a forgotten component of repentance; however, a repentant heart, in response to God's grace, is willing to forsake any worldly costs because of the promise of Christ for all eternity.

WILLINGNESS VERSUS WISDOM

With respect to making amends, step 8 speaks to willingness, and step 9 speaks to wisdom. We must be willing to make amends but use wisdom in making them. For example, it might not be wise to make direct amends in dangerous situations. It might not be wise to look up every person you have ever had a sexual experience with and invite them to coffee. It might not be wise to meet with a married person of the opposite sex without his or her spouse. You should use wisdom and sensitivity in the words you choose and consider your audience in acknowledging your wrongs. It might not be wise to confess sinful thoughts or attitudes to someone who is unaware that you thought of them that way. It might not be wise to force an amends before a person is willing to receive it. Remember, the Holy Spirit leads. He will impress on you whom to approach, direct you when to approach, and may even bring some unexpected opportunities to make peace.

The exception—"except when to do so would injure them or others"—is often used as a cover-up for unwillingness. For example, we should not use this exception as an excuse not to confess adultery, claiming it would hurt the other person too much. Confession allows true healing to occur rather than covering up the sin that disrupts fellowship. As long as secrets

remain, we cannot have true fellowship. If we do not confess adultery, a marriage is based on deceit. In confessing situations that include sexual sin, consider sparing the other person specific details that may make healing unnecessarily difficult.

A TEMPLATE FOR MAKING AMENDS

Peacemaker Ministries suggests the seven A's of confession, which we adapted for *Steps*:

1. Address those affected.
2. Avoid excusing your wrongs or being overly dramatic in an attempt to evoke pity.
3. Admit specific attitudes and actions.
4. Acknowledge the hurt and express regret for harm caused.
5. Accept the consequences and be willing to make restitution.
6. Accompany confession with altered attitudes and actions.
7. Ask for forgiveness.¹

Often we already know what we need to do to make things right. If we owe someone money, we may be prepared to pay them with interest. Sometimes we are not in a position to make full restitution at that point, but we can give something and make arrangements for future payments.

For those of us who have misused religion, the Bible, or God to justify a sinful attitude or behavior, it is wise to acknowledge ways we have been wrong.

EXAMPLE: “I am grateful that God has granted me this opportunity to speak with you today. The gospel of Jesus Christ has had a profound effect on my life. He has both provided me hope and exposed the depths of my sin. In light of His work in my life, I deeply regret how my sinful attitudes and actions have affected you. I am here to ask for your forgiveness. [Explain how you wronged this person.] I regret the harm I have caused you. I know I cannot heal the wounds I have caused, but I serve a God who can. Will you forgive me? What can I do to make this situation right?”

CAUTION

We can go only as far as God allows us. If making a situation right is contrary to the will of God in your life, you may not sin against Him to make amends to someone.

REDEEMED TRUTH FROM STEPS 8 & 9: Relationships break down because of sin. If there were no sin in the world, relationships would work harmoniously, evidenced by love and unity. Division among God's people provides opportunities to identify sin and purify the body. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings about justice in a way that the law cannot by inwardly reconciling the very heart of injustice to God. As those forgiven by God, we can humbly approach those affected by our sin and make amends. This change of heart brings glory to God by demonstrating the power of the gospel and reflecting His heart in bringing justice through His reconciled people.

TYPES OF RECONCILIATION

RELATIONAL: In rebellion against God's created order, we have lived for ourselves and have used people for our selfish desires. Now that we are reconciled to God, we desire to make amends for harm done through our selfish ambitions.

LEGAL: At times our self-seeking behavior has led us not only to rebel against God but also to break laws intended to uphold and safeguard society. Setting things right may mean making amends and possibly restitution for harm done.

PROFESSIONAL: We may not have been faithful to the responsibilities entrusted to us professionally.

FINANCIAL: Monetary compensation may be required to make things right.

RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL: We may need to confess and ask for forgiveness for misleading someone spiritually.

LIVING: A person may not be willing to hear from us, in which case we must demonstrate the transformative effects of the gospel in our lives by living faithfully and responsibly.

1. Adapted from "Seven A's of Confession," *Peacemaker Ministries* [online], 22 September 2014 [cited 5 October 2015]. Available from the Internet: <http://peacemaker.net/project/seven-as-of-confession/>.

NEXT STEPS

Developing an After-Care Plan

STONES OF REMEMBRANCE

God calls His people to remember, celebrate, and tell others about Him. One of these occasions is recorded in the Book of Joshua, when God instructed the Israelites to step into the raging waters of the Jordan River on their way into the promised land. In faith leading to obedience, they stepped in. In a remarkable display of His power, God held back the waters of the Jordan and delivered the whole of Israel safely to the other side. He then instructed them return to the riverbed to pick up stones to serve as a reminder of His deliverance. When their children asked about the stones, they would give the Israelites a reason to share their experience of God's faithfulness.

Similarly, we pick up stones to celebrate God's faithfulness. Many of us stepped out in faith and entered this process fearing that we might be swept away. But God has been faithful to deliver us to the other side. These stones may be personalized with a word, a meaningful Scripture, a date, or a similar reminder so that you can recall what God did during this experience.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Leaders should work with mentors to suggest next steps for participants. Growing disciples of Jesus Christ are involved in gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community, gospel-centered service, and gospel-centered multiplication. Whether here or at another church, seek to involve participants in each of these ministries. Here are some opportunities.

GOSPEL-CENTERED WORSHIP

We should all have a place we call our church home, where we belong and gather for worship. Gospel-centered worship is the fuel for discipleship. If you are not currently a part of a local church, we encourage you to pursue meaningful membership in a gospel-centered church.

GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY

We should all be involved relationally with those who live life together in a gospel-centered environment. Such a community provides the context for discipleship. If you are not currently a member of a small group, we encourage you to join a group for mutual encouragement and accountability.

GOSPEL-CENTERED SERVICE

Gospel-centered service is the overflow of discipleship. There are a number of ways to serve in the church. Consider the needs of your church and pursue an opportunity to faithfully serve the Lord and His people.

GOSPEL-CENTERED MULTIPLICATION

Gospel-centered multiplication is the result of discipleship. We encourage you to consider how the Lord is calling you to make disciples.

Consider the following suggestions and options for fulfilling the call to make disciples.

- Now that *Steps* is over, everyone needs to reconnect with the life of the church. Encourage participants who might be qualified to lead or mentor to consider leading a *Steps* group or mentoring a participant in the future. Encourage those who completed *Steps* to continue pursuing gospel-centered community and gospel-centered service.
- Each time your church offers *Steps*, plan to offer a training session that provides a general overview of both *Steps* and the concept of biblical counseling. This training will also allow everyone to learn from one another's experiences and will allow new members and leaders to ask questions and learn from those who have previously completed *Steps*
- The next time your church offers *Steps*, consider having a final extra week as a celebration service. Let this be an opportunity for participants, mentors, and leaders to testify about ways the Lord worked through this process.
- After your mentors have gained adequate training and experience, this *Steps* study can become the foundation for ongoing recovery groups that meet on a regular basis to minister to people who have specific needs.