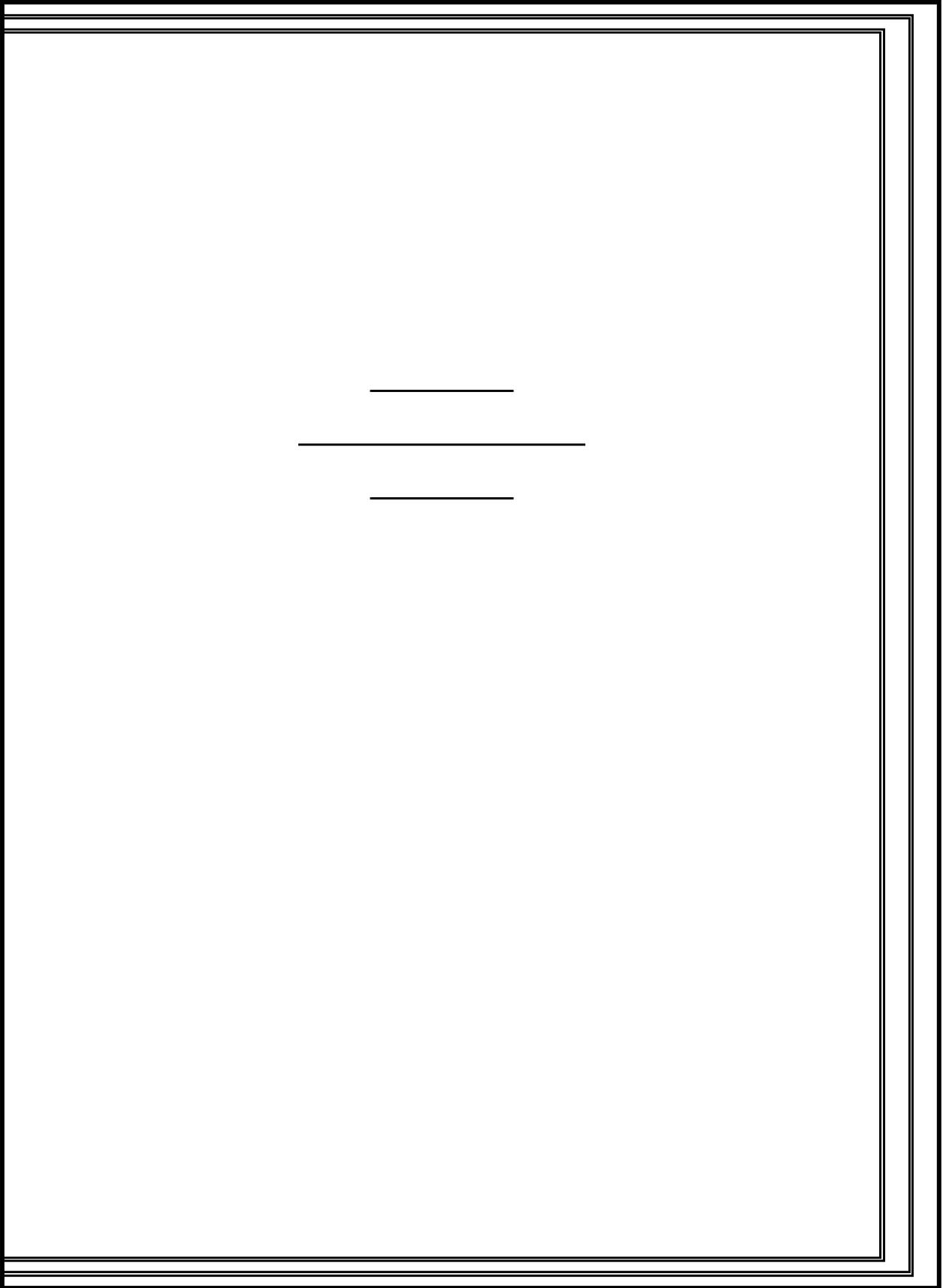


Orientation Workbook



**An Introduction to:
God's Regeneration
Process**



ORIENTATION WORKBOOK

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**GOD'S REGENERATION
PROCESS**

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Where Am I From?

Lesson One

We need to ask ourselves the following three questions:

1. Where am I from?
2. Why am I here?
3. Where am I going?

These three questions address the past, the present and the future.

Many of us have gotten out of bed in the morning, after a bad night, and proceeded to do the same thing that day as we did the night before. We knew that what we did harmed us and/or other people, but we did it anyway.

Many of us awoke in the morning and said to ourselves, "I'm not going to drink or drug today." But how many of us did it anyway?

First, we will look at , "Where am I from?" This question doesn't refer to a geographic location, it refers to our lifestyle.

We have two major problems. The first is obvious: we have a problem with drugs or alcohol, or we wouldn't be in a program to hopefully solve that problem.

CHEMICAL ADDICTION PROBLEM:

The chemically addicted person is powerless over chemicals. He repeats the same addictive habit over and over. He depends upon the chemical and allows it to interfere with his life.

Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous say an addict is anyone who lets drinking or drugging interfere with his normal way of life.

We all know we have a problem with chemicals. We reached the point that we couldn't function without chemicals. The only thing that keeps an alcoholic going when he isn't drinking is the realization that he can soon have a drink. Even when he is sober, his focus is upon drinking.

Chemical addiction affects every part of a person's life. The addict claims that his drinking or drugging

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doesn't hurt anyone but himself. That is a stupid statement. It is true that the chemical affects the addict in every area of his life, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, financially and relationally. It deteriorates every part of his life.

But it affects other areas as well. Many addicts believe in God and may claim to have a relationship with God. Obviously, drinking and drugging has an adverse effect upon that relationship. It is impossible to drink and drug ourselves into a stronger spiritual person.

Does drinking and drugging enhance our relationship with other members of our family? Of course not. And what about our job? When we alcoholics get drunk the night before, do we always produce more on the job the following day? Do we give it 100%? How many of us would hire ourselves if we were in charge of personnel?

Every time we alcoholics or drug addicts get high on chemicals, do we go to the bank and deposit a large sum of money? Does it improve us financially?

What about our mental ability, and our emotional stability? Does it also affect us physically? Eventually, the addiction wears away at our body until some organ breaks down. The older we get, the more we feel the effects of our addiction.

LIFESTYLE PROBLEM:

Along with the chemical addiction, because we have spent so much time under the influence of chemicals, we have another problem. We have a lifestyle problem. Many of us have stolen from others to support our habit. Many of us have lied for the same reason.

Chemical addiction has changed our entire life. Most of us used to be responsible, dependable workers. We were trustworthy. But chemical addiction has affected our work ethic.

Many of us were good husbands and good fathers before our chemical addiction. It becomes obvious that our chemical problem has generated a lifestyle problem.

Seventy-five to eighty per cent of the men incarcerated in prison are there because chemical addiction has affected their lifestyle. It has destroyed their lives completely. What they did under the influence of chemicals and the things they did to get chemicals has placed them in a 6x9 cell.

But if we were to ask those inmates if they have a problem with chemicals, they would say, "No, I don't have a problem with chemicals."

Many of us have been confronted by a loved one, or by a judge, or a law enforcement officer, and been told we have a problem with chemicals and we need to get help. But our response was probably, "I don't have a problem with chemicals. If I have a problem, it is you!"

Everybody around us can see we have a problem with chemical addiction and its effect on our lifestyle, but when someone comes to us and talks about it, we deny it. We continue to drink and drug, and we continue to deteriorate.

HOW OUR LIFESTYLE IS AFFECTED:

In the real world, we have: Commitments, obligations, responsibilities, accountability, and relationships.

When we begin to drink and drug, we learn two things:

1. Alcohol or drugs always work, they never let us down.
2. We can control how good we feel by the dosage of the chemical.

There is no problem nor pain that we can't deal with through chemical use. There is nothing from which we can't escape with chemicals. When we feel lonely or unworthy, we can take a few drinks and feel a lot better.

When we drink, we escape reality and enter a fantasy world. In this world, we see things as we want them to be instead of as they really are. Under the influence of chemicals, we move from reality to fantasy. We don't have to deal with the obligations of the real world.

While we are in our fantasy world people in the real world may tell us we have a problem, but we insist that everything is fine. We claim that the chemical is not the problem; people, places and things are the problem, if a problem actually exists.

When those who love us try to help us, we push them away.

Sooner or later, the chemicals run out and we sober up and get clean. As we do that, we return to the real world. But we don't know how to live or function, how to fulfill the commitments and obligations and responsibilities. We want to escape and get back to our fantasy world because we don't like to face reality.

In our chemically induced fantasy world, we don't mature, mentally, emotionally or relationally. This is because we never face the responsibilities of the real world. We don't place ourselves in positions of accountability, nor function in relationships.

Many of us drank and used drugs alone because we didn't want anyone to interfere with our fantasy world. Some of us rented a motel room for several days, to be alone to drink or drug.

Another thing we have to worry about when we return to the real world is how many messes we made while we were in our fantasy world. It is much easier just to ignore the real world and return to our fantasy world, even though it changes our whole lifestyle.

Our fantasy world is a product of our own creation, God is not part of it. We lose our ability to function as God designed us, and we lose our ability to relate to others, and live a normal life.

When we enter a rehabilitation program, we are faced with responsibilities and accountability, through dormitory duties and bathroom duties and work duties. This is because we have to learn to be responsible. As a drug addict or alcoholic we have never been responsible, so it is something we must learn.

In our fantasy world, we can change the rules every day. What was bad yesterday, may be good today. We actually lose contact with reality. We are like Rip Van Winkle who slept for twenty years. When he awakened, he didn't know what was going on around him. Like him, we don't know how to deal with the circumstances of life.

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We don't know how to be responsible, dependable, or committed. We have lived in fantasy so long that, not only do we have a chemical addiction problem, we have a lifestyle problem.

Even though things may be going well in our finances and relationships, something is still missing in our lives. We are not happy. We can have our finances, our family, our job, everything, but still go back to chemicals because we are not happy. This is because God is not in our lives. God is the missing element.

We go back to try to find the missing element, and temporarily find it in chemicals. That is why we keep going back, because we know chemicals make things better. We can always find temporary satisfaction, peace and serenity in chemicals.

What started out as a chemical addiction problem progresses beyond that. It is no longer a matter of going down to the local bar or crack house. Our lifestyle has changed, and we now have financial problems, legal problems and relational problems because of our altered lifestyle.

There are two aspects of this condition:

1. Physical addiction to the chemicals. Actually, the physical addiction is minor. Withdrawal is miserable, but it is the result of the body healing itself. It is part of breaking away from the physical addiction. The detox center helps our bodies break the physical addiction.

We can break the physical addiction thousands of times. It takes about two or three days. After that period, our bodies are no longer physically addicted. That being the case, why does a man come back from fantasy to reality, then turn right around and drink and drug again?

2. The reason is mental contamination. Alcoholics Anonymous calls it stinkin' thinkin'. We awake in the morning with a sick hangover and swear we will not drink or drug that day. We really mean it because we don't want to repeat the misery. But about 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, something changes. Our body begins to feel better, and our mind tells us we are all right.

Our mind tells us that we can drink or drug this time with different results. We know where we went wrong the night before, so we just won't repeat that mistake. We will eat something before drinking, then we won't drink as much, or whatever. But that is insanity. It is insanity to believe we can drink or drug again, but with different results.

So, our addiction problems are not so much physical as they are mental. We may have good intentions at 6:30 in the morning when we are sick with a hangover, but as the physical sickness leaves, we tell ourselves we can control how much we drink or drug.

We tell ourselves also that we don't really have a problem, and that we can quit any time we want. The problem is that we never reach the stage of wanting to.

DENIAL AND PROJECTION

As a result of mental contamination, two things keep us locked into addiction:

1. Denial; 2. Projection

Denial is the suppression of reality. When someone tells us we have a problem with drinking, we tell him he

is crazy. So we see that denial is a defense mechanism.

Projection is blaming other people, places and things for our problems.

In *Genesis 2 and 3*, we read that God created the garden of Eden. He then created Adam and Eve and put them in the garden. He told them they could eat of any of the fruit in the garden, except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When the serpent deceived them, they ate the forbidden fruit.

Before they did this, there was no sin. God walked in the garden and fellowshiped with them. But as soon as they sinned, they hid themselves from God. When God asked Adam what happened, he tried to deny his sin. He projected on Eve. He said it was the woman God gave him. And when God confronted Eve, she projected onto the serpent.

In that one incident in the garden, we see both denial and projection. And it has been passed down to all of us. The problem is that when we add denial and projection to drugs and alcohol, it is like pouring gasoline on fire, it intensifies it.

We do just as Adam and Eve, we try to protect ourselves. If there was no denial and projection inside us, we would have admitted a long time ago that we were addicted to chemicals. Everybody else knew, and without our defense mechanisms, we would have known also.

Denial and projection have been inherited from Adam and Eve. Little children don't have to be taught to deny or project. If two small children are playing together and one of their toys is broken, if we ask each of them if they were responsible, they will deny it. If we ask who is responsible, they will immediately project the blame on each other. Denial and projection is inbred in their genes from their greatest-great grandparents, Adam and Eve.

When people confront us about alcoholism and drug addiction, these defense mechanisms rise up to protect us. We look back at the loneliness and sadness and disappointment in our lives, and we remember that our chemical was the one thing that never let us down in our time of need.

The chemical has been our friend for years; therefore, when someone tries to tell us the chemical is actually our enemy, we won't accept it. We could depend upon the chemical when we couldn't depend upon people. It always helped us. So when people try to tell us it is our enemy, we refuse to accept that as the truth. Our answer is that the chemical is our friend, and the one trying to help us is our enemy.

We have actually developed a relationship with chemicals. We have depended upon chemicals to give us something inside that people could not or would not give us. That realization brings on denial and projection.

That mental contamination is the insanity of chemical addiction. When we are caught up in chemical addiction, we don't see everything as it actually is. We have been under the influence so long that we see things only as we want them to be, not as they really are.

Recovery from the physical part of chemical addiction is easy. Mental contamination is our real problem. God must renew our minds to erase our improper thought patterns. We have developed certain responses and reactions because of our chemical addiction. We can actually quit drinking and drugging, yet still think and act like an addict. This is true even though we have no chemicals in us. We have spent so much time under the influence, we still think like an addict.

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There is more to recovery from alcohol and drug addiction than just breaking our physical addiction. We have to deal with the mental contamination by allowing God to renew our minds. We struggle because we think we have the answers. But that is nothing more than stinking thinking from our fantasy world.

We find that adjusting to the structure of a program is difficult because in our fantasy world there is no structure, rules or regulations. If there are, we change them so we can do what we want to do. Everything in us wants to fight the structure of a program.

Every alcoholic or drug addict knows exactly what should be done to break the addiction. He sees no need for the structure and rules of making beds or cleaning bathrooms or work projects. The truth is that we have done whatever we wanted to do and it has almost destroyed us.

That part of our mental contamination leads us right back into chemical addiction. The key is to allow God to work in our lives and renew our minds and deal with our mental contamination. As this happens, our minds begin to clear and we see things from a different viewpoint.

We have pickled our brains with chemicals and that condition will not go away overnight. The structure and discipline of a program keeps us on line. As we progress through the program, each stage provides us with more freedom of thought and action. As we handle the new freedom, we are given more, until finally, we are ready to graduate.

We are like wild stallions that have to be roped and broken and ridden, so something profitable can happen to our lives. If we stay wild stallions, we will prefer the wide open plains. But that kind of attitude leads to no accomplishment in life, no relationships, no reliability. God has another thing in mind for us and He has brought us to this point to begin the process.

Being sober and drug free can be very painful, and it can be intimidating, because of the failures in our lives. We don't see any hope for ourselves. And it is true, we have no hope within ourselves. If getting sober and drug free depended upon us, we would soon be dead. Our hope lies in God and our relationship with Him. That is what changes us, that and nothing else.

Lesson One . . . Where Am I From?

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 91)

1. How can we identify someone who is addicted to chemicals?

2. List three ways in which the lifestyle of an addict is affected.

3. What are two main things the addict learns about chemicals?

4. What is the one element missing in the life of every addict?

5. Describe Denial and Projection.

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Lesson Two

"Who has woe, who has sorrow, who has contentions, who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause, who has redness of eyes?

"Those who linger over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, it stings like a viper.

"Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perverse things. And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, or like one who lies down on the top of a mast.

"They struck me, but I did not become ill; they beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink." (Proverbs 23:29-35)

What the writer of Proverbs wrote about alcoholism 3500 years ago, is still true today.

Denial and projection cause another problem for us: alienation from God. We can't drink or drug ourselves into a better relationship with God. We are our own gods when we drink or drug. We do what we want to, when we want to, how we want to, with no regard for anybody or anything.

This makes us our own higher power, our own number one boss, our own master. Obviously, we can't be our own god and still have a relationship with God. There can be only one master of our lives. It will be either God or ourselves.

The more we drink or drug, the more we alienate ourselves from God. We don't get drunk and have a quiet time and read the Bible. We don't have prayer meetings and praise and worship God. Instead we alienate ourselves from God and enter our fantasy world, a world of our own.

Our addiction also causes something we call isolation from our true self. We lose our ability to see reality about ourselves, so we violate our own value systems. We become ashamed to the point that we don't even like ourselves.

We do things we have been taught were wrong. As our drinking and drugging increases, there is a corresponding decrease in our moral values. The more we drink and drug, the more bizarre our behavior becomes, and the fewer moral values we have in our lives.

In our fantasy world, this doesn't bother us much, but when we come back to reality and we have to look at our true self and what we have been doing, we don't want any part of that person. So we drink and drug to

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take care of the shame and the guilt and the condemnation we feel.

Another characteristic is alienation from significant others in our lives. Just as we never drink or drug ourselves into better relationship with God, we also alienate from our family, our wives, our children, our parents, our brothers and sisters and those with whom we work.

We don't want others to get close to us, because we don't want to talk about our problem. We don't want to face it or hear about what we need to do, or about what we did while under the influence. We wrap ourselves in onion skins for protection. Everyone is outside our onion skin. We allow people to know only so much about us. We alienate and pull ourselves away.

When we are new in the program, we get a lot of Sociogram votes for not sharing with others. That is the way we have been living. We don't share with those who are significant in our lives. If a close friend or member of our family strips away an onion skin, we immediately place a couple more onion skins around us.

Many people try to find out what is wrong with us and how they can help us. They want us to share our problem with them, to put it out on the table so it can be dealt with. But the only time we come out from under our onion skins is when we want something. We step out from under our onion skin, get what we want, then step right back in. We become "takers."

We don't recover from alcoholism and drug addiction and we don't break this alienation and isolation from ourselves and others and from God by having people tear down our onion skins. That isn't the way it is done. Onion skins must come down from the inside.

When we get serious about changing our lives and God begins to work in us, the onion skins start to come down from inside. As a result, we move closer to those who are significant to us.

When a hen lays an egg and is sitting on it, if we tap that egg and crack it before the chick is ready to hatch, the chick dies. It must peck its way out from inside. It is the same with we alcoholics and drug addicts. People can't tear down our onion skins to get closer to us, that is co-dependency. Well meaning people try to help something happen in us which can only happen from the inside.

We have onion skins in our relationship with God also. We have to take the initiative and come out from behind our onion skins. People have ripped onion skins off us for years, trying to get close to us, but it doesn't work. We have to come out on our own.

God enables us to get closer to others. But first, we must get close to God. One way we can gauge another's relationship with God is how well he relates to significant others in his life. How open he is, how honest, how willing to share with others, indicates how close he is to God.

It is normal for a chemically addicted person to surround himself with onion skins. But they are our onion skins, so we are responsible for their removal. As we build a relationship with God, He enables us to remove our onion skins from the inside.

When we allow God to work in us and we move into closer relationship with others, we discover something about ourselves. Inside our onion skin, we have our own perception of how bad we are, how sorry we have

been. The onion skin has isolated us and we see no way out of our predicament, no way to change what has happened to our character.

We may play head games and ask ourselves, "If I were God, and the person I am came to me to be forgiven, would I forgive him?" Our answer is always, "No."

The problem with that kind of attitude is that we are not God, and God's ways are not our ways. We find that when we come closer in our relationships with others, God works in us and begins to speak to us and minister to us through those relationships.

The worst thing an alcoholic or drug addict can do is to be by himself, and it is possible to be by ourselves in a crowd of people. We can be in a room full of a thousand people, yet be in a world by ourselves. Our fantasy world.

Establishing relationships begins with God first. That changes our perception of our true self. From that point we can strengthen our relationship with others.

As addicts, we have a very low opinion of our self-worth because of all the bad things we have done. We play that tape over and over again in our minds. This is wrong because we are not looking at ourselves from God's point of view.

We may feel that we are the only ones who have experienced our kind of problems. But when we enter a rehabilitation program, we discover that many people have had the same experiences. The characteristics of alcoholism and drug addiction are similar for everyone: denial, projection, alienation from God, isolation from true self, and alienation from significant others.

STAGES OF ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ADDICTION

1. Social Stage. Nine out of ten people can drink socially. They can have a drink of alcohol with no adverse affect upon them physically. They go about their lives and function normally. The alcoholic is not part of those nine people, he is the tenth person. The alcoholic is the one who is adversely affected.

The same is true of the drug addict. An addict is addicted to a chemical, regardless of what the chemical consists of. The chemical is mood altering, and it changes the way we feel. Our brains don't know or care whether we drink the chemical, shoot it, snort it or smoke it. It simply reacts to the chemical regardless of how it is ingested into the system.

We may think that we are alcoholics but not drug addicts, or vice versa, but that is part of the fantasy. Most people who do drugs, first began to drink. Others may have used drugs first, then started drinking. It doesn't matter. Addiction is addiction. There is no difference in the addictions. There is not one addiction to drugs and another addiction to alcohol. We are not addicted to the chemical, we are addicted to the feeling induced by the chemical. We probably could never get addicted to whiskey because we like its taste, but we can certainly become addicted to the feeling the whiskey produces.

Every addict has his drug of choice, but if that drug of choice is not available, he will use whatever is available to give him the feeling he is after. We must understand that it is not the drug, so much as it is the feeling

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produced by the drug.

The social stage is also the experimental stage, or recreation stage. A person who drinks socially is in control of the chemical. Some chemicals cannot be used socially, for example, crack cocaine. Marijuana or powdered cocaine may be used for a brief period socially, but they always lead to chemical addiction.

Some people do not get addicted to alcohol because they don't consume enough. Some people drink one cup of coffee a day, some drink one bottle of beer a day. They are in charge of their consumption, and it doesn't bother them.

This is not so for the person prone to chemical addiction. As addicts, we can't take one drink or one hit or one snort, and stop. At one time, we were in the social stage, but we eventually discovered we were in the ten per cent who could not use chemicals socially. Even though we may have started in the social stage, continued use led us into addiction. We discovered that the more we drank, the more we wanted to drink.

2. Dependent Stage. This is the stage in which we begin to lose control. We begin to plan our activities around our chemical of choice. If we plan to attend a function in the evening, our drug of choice has to be at that function or we won't attend.

If our drug is alcohol, we will not let anything interfere with our drinking. If we plan to go to a party, but something comes up to interfere with that opportunity to drink, we won't let that situation interfere, we will go to the party, regardless of the consequences.

An example of dependence is when we begin to drink during lunch. As soon as there is a break in the work schedule, our first thought is to have a drink. Our lives begin to center around the chemical rather than around relationships.

If we're married, and we are supposed to go to a PTA meeting, but it interferes with our drinking, the PTA meeting will have to wait, because the drinking must take priority. This is an indication of dependence. Everything we do is centered around the chemical.

In this process, we begin to lose control, and the chemical begins to control us. It dictates what we do and what we don't do, where we go, and where we won't go, who we will be with, and who we will not be with.

At this stage, the chemical begins to take priority over our families and over God. It begins to be the most important thing in our lives.

3. Addictive Stage. In this stage, we are out of control, the chemical has control of us. In the addictive stage, we can determine when we are going to start drinking or drugging, but we cannot determine when we are going to stop.

It takes an alcoholic approximately ten years to go from the Social Stage to the Addictive Stage, but it takes about ten minutes for a user of crack cocaine to become an addict.

In the middle of this transition, we don't go to bed one night as a social user and wake up the next morning as a dependent user. We don't realize the transition is underway. Others see it, but we don't. Nor can we identify the exact time we move from dependence to addiction.

We can look back over our life with hindsight and remember when we could drink socially and hold down a job and get along with everyone. We can see where things gradually got worse, and eventually ended up as addiction. But when it is happening, we are unable to see it.

It is like going to the beach and climbing on an air raft five feet from the shore. We can close our eyes and discover a few minutes later that we are a long way from shore. We weren't conscious of the change in distance, but it happened, nevertheless.

Chemical addiction is always progressive. The fourth stage in chemical addiction is always death.

As an addict, we always try to get back to the social stage. There is a powerful force within us that supports this fantasy. It is called Euphoric Recall.

EUPHORIC RECALL.

The word, euphoric, indicates the "high" we get from chemical addiction. Euphoric recall is remembering the good times brought on by the chemical. We don't think about the times we should have been killed, or the times we became terribly sick, or the times we hurt people. We think only of the good times.

There are thousands of good times in our memories that we can attribute to our chemical use. Euphoric recall convinces us we can go back and drink or drug as we did in the past and recapture those good times.

Because we are addicted, once the chemical goes inside, we lose control. The chemical takes control as we continue to use it. We want to recapture the good times, but we can't.

What do the beer commercials on television show us? No ugly women, no drunks in the gutter. We see only good looking women, wonderful parties and good times. We never see broken homes, or men who have ruined their lives through alcohol. Obviously, that would not sell beer. The memories of good times and parties are what bring back euphoric recall.

This is not only present in alcoholism and drug addiction, it is in food as well, and in sex, and in everything "good." That is the only thing we look at, and we try to return to the good times.

It is an impossibility, because we can never return to the Social Stage. We may have periods of sobriety, but every time we use the chemical we always start exactly where we left off. Soon we are back to the addictive stage we were in when we quit. No matter how good our intentions, we cannot avoid returning to the same addictive stage. Chemical addiction is progressive in one direction only: downward.

We always find three things present in chemical addiction: drugs, sex and music. The three are intertwined. We are not talking about proper marital sex, we mean adultery and fornication. We are not talking about good, clean music, we mean hard rock and other music that goes with the drug culture. We always find these three woven together.

Consistent exposure to sex and music invariably leads us back to drugs. If we listen to the wrong music, euphoric recall begins to dominate our thoughts and eventually leads us back to drinking and drugging.

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Those who leave a rehabilitation program and fall back into addiction, don't fall immediately into drugs and alcohol. They allow themselves to be led back into the addiction through another path, usually the path of illicit sex or music, or both.

We can lead only two lifestyles. We can live a lifestyle in drugs and alcohol, or we can live a life with God. When we walk with God, if we sin, but don't repent, there is only one other place in which we can find peace and serenity: in our chemical. This means if we walk without God, we will return to our old lifestyle.

Satan uses sex and music to entice us back into our addiction. He tells us that lust is love. In our previous lifestyle, parties were our dominant motivation. These parties included drugs, sex and music. For this reason, a radical change in lifestyle becomes necessary. Just being off chemicals for six months during a rehabilitation program will not accomplish permanent change.

When we leave such a program, our problem will not be with drugs and alcohol, it will be with those areas of our lives we have not committed to the Lord. That is where Satan attacks us. He would be a fool to try to tempt us with drugs and alcohol. Using chemicals is the last thing we want to do. So instead of sticking a drink in our faces, he comes at us through a side door. He approaches us with the temptation of sex, and/or the influence of music.

One of the worst enemies we have when we leave a program is money. The addict has difficulty with prosperity. God will not take away our addiction from chemicals and let us go our merry way. He wants every part of us. He will not give us the freedom to have all the sex we want and to listen to whatever kind of music we want, and live according to the demands of our flesh.

We have to be either totally sold out and committed to God, or totally sold out and committed to drugs and alcohol. Either God will run our lives, or chemicals will run our lives. If we insist upon playing with the fire behind rock music, we will get burned.

Euphoric recall is part of mental contamination. It is thinking we can go back to something we can never go back to. We can give something to a dog that makes it sick, and the dog will not eat that food again. Unfortunately, we don't have the same good sense as a cur dog. We return to the same chemical that makes us sick. The dog doesn't have the mental contamination we have, and euphoric recall is part of that mental contamination.

God has to renew our minds to show us what is right and best for us. He shows us what is godly and what is ungodly, what leads us to death, and what leads us to life.

When we enter a convenience store on a hot day, the first thing we see is a big barrel full of ice and beer. This is put there to trigger our euphoric recall. They never show us the families destroyed through alcohol, they just tempt us with the invitation to good times. They could never sell the product if they didn't focus on the good times.

In every television commercial, we see all four facets of euphoric recall: money, music, sex and alcohol. The addict always thinks he is different, that he can return to the good times and avoid the negatives, but he is always wrong. As soon as he takes his first drink or drug, he immediately returns to the level he was at when he quit.

The problem with money is that we equate having money with being well. If we have a pocketful of money, we become our own god, we can do whatever we want. When we are broke, it is easy to be humble, but money erases our humility. We no longer have a sense of needing God. But when we move out from our relationship with God, we move into the world controlled by Satan, and it is only a matter of time until we are right back into our addiction.

Unless we reevaluate our lives and take a look at where we are from and what our problem is, we stand a very good chance of repeating the process of addiction.

HOMEWORK: List three areas of your life that have been affected by chemical addiction. Those areas can be your relationship with God, your family, your job, your finances, your legal standing in the community, your health, or any other area. Write half a page on each area, and how it has affected you.

Lesson Two . . . Where Am I From?

Personal And Group Exercise (see pages 92,93)

1. Describe isolation from true self.

2. Explain the concept of enclosing ourselves in onion skins.

3. Describe the Social Stage of addiction.

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4. Describe the Dependent Stage of addiction.

5. Describe the Addictive Stage of addiction.

6. Describe Euphoric Recall.

7. When we leave a rehabilitation program, what will cause us our biggest problem?

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Lesson One

Chemical addiction is measured, not by gallons and grams, but by what it does to relationships. Everyone addicted to chemicals must honestly declare that chemicals cause relational problems.

Regardless of how much or how little we drink or drug, it causes problems in the most important relationships in our lives.

The people we hurt the most through our chemical addiction are the people we love the most. Instead of just having a problem with chemical addiction, it has become a lifestyle problem. It is reflected in the way we relate to others and to ourselves.

Chemicals change our attitude. Instead of loving people and using things, we use people and love things. We use people with whom we are in relationship in order to get the things we love. That is true of all addicts and alcoholics.

Alcoholism and drug addiction breed self-centeredness and selfishness. Self becomes the most important thing. In the process, we become our own god. That means we become the most important thing in the universe. And we do whatever it takes to satisfy us, regardless of what it does to our relationship with God, our Creator, or with our family and our jobs.

Absolutely nothing gets in the way of drugs and alcohol. We become takers who take what we want, when we want it. We stop giving. And we take, first of all, from the people we love the most, those closest to us.

Why do we continue to use alcohol and drugs, considering all the problems they bring? What is the motivation? The answer lies in our mental contamination.

There are two reasons a man returns to drinking and drugging after he leaves a rehabilitation program:

1. Euphoric Recall, the memory of the good times. We deceive ourselves into thinking we can return to the chemical and everything will be different because we have learned how to control it. Music, money and sex draw us back to the same scene we left. This is the main reason we return to the use of chemicals.

We tend to fall to our old addiction around our first year of sobriety. We believe the time span has cured our addiction. After a length of sobriety, we think we have alcohol and drugs under control, and we can go back and drink and drug like we used to without the consequences.

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Spiritually, our focus is off the Lord and back on ourselves. We begin to focus upon what we desire. Euphoric Recall is very powerful. The advertising media uses it to the advantage of their clients. They always show the good times. They don't show the children who no longer have fathers because their fathers were killed while driving under the influence of chemicals.

God renews our minds and lets us see this clearly, so we will be able to discern Euphoric Recall when it surfaces. Music is instrumental in bringing euphoric recall to the surface, because all our previous good times while drinking and drugging were accompanied by music, parties and sex.

When we leave a program and go back to work, we eventually find ourselves with a pocket full of money and someone willing to satisfy our sexual desire. We are not interested in drinking and drugging, but we want the sexual relationship. That leads us to parties, with the music of the drug culture blaring in our ears. In a brief time, we find ourselves right back where we started.

We couldn't have been lured there by the availability of drugs because we had no desire to use drugs, so Satan used another method. He hit us in our most vulnerable area, sex and music.

When we have money in our pockets our attitude changes. During the 1929 stock market crash, the value of the dollar plummeted, and people jumped out of windows to commit suicide. We place a high value on money. People kill themselves because they can't accumulate enough. When the addict gets enough money, he thinks he is well and functioning normally.

Money makes us feel that we no longer have to depend upon anyone else. We are self-sufficient; therefore, we can take care of ourselves in all areas of our lifestyle. But this is deception.

An example is when an addict awakes in the morning after a night filled with drugs and alcohol. He feels terrible and is filled with remorse about what he is doing to his life. But if he opens a drawer and sees a twenty dollar bill, his attitude changes immediately. He can't wait to take that money and convert it to the chemical of his choice. He forgets all about his remorse.

Another example: An addict may lose relationship with his wife because of his abuse of the chemical. He swears that if he gets the relationship back, he will never drink or drug again. He gets it back, but returns to his chemical once more. Why? Because he thinks he has everything under control. Things are back to normal, so he can do what he used to do. Once again, he has his wife and his children and his job and some money. This means he can do a little drinking or drugging and not lose again. He knows where he made his mistake and he won't make that mistake again. Unfortunately, he starts out exactly where he left off.

2. The other reason we return to drinking and drugging is because of the emotional hurt and pain we do not allow the Lord to deal with. When we think we have gone beyond the point of no return, we give up. The pain we feel on the inside, brought on by what we have lost and what we have done to ourselves and others, brings condemnation and shame and guilt.

There are only two ways to deal with emotional hurt and pain. We can either bring them before the Lord and allow Him to heal us, or we can medicate them through chemicals.

Alcohol and drugs take care of shame and unworthiness and low self-esteem temporarily. Some of us have

done things for which we can't forgive ourselves. No matter what we do, there are things we have done that we are not able to get away from.

For example, we may be able to handle the death of a spouse easier than we can handle divorce from that spouse. This is because we have not caused the death, but we have caused the divorce. A guilt issue is present. Death is a part of life we cannot change. We may grieve for a period of time, but we feel no guilt or shame because of it. On the other hand, we may keep ourselves medicated with chemicals for years because of the guilt and shame of causing a divorce. We still love our spouse, but we can't stop drinking or drugging.

God can heal us of that problem. The Bible tells us if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The problem is not that God doesn't forgive us for the things we have done wrong. The problem is that we don't receive God's forgiveness and we can't forgive ourselves.

Alcoholics and drug addicts are selfish and self-centered, so we put ourselves above God in the area of forgiveness. God forgives us, but we refuse to forgive ourselves. We continue to beat ourselves over the head for the wrongs we have done.

The pain is real, because the offense was real. And the way we choose to deal with the pain is through medication. We deal with pain this way for years, until it becomes a lifestyle. It always works for us, so we are reluctant to try anything else.

We know that no matter how bad we feel we can feel better because drugs and alcohol always work. No matter what the emotional problem may be, we can deal with it through our use of chemicals. We may have to ingest more chemicals than normal to overcome a particularly trying situation, but any hurt or pain can be anesthetized through chemicals.

Shame and guilt and condemnation and unworthiness can always be temporarily anesthetized with chemicals. As addicts, we base our lives upon our feelings. But feelings can lead us down the wrong path.

If we want to overcome addiction, we must accomplish it by faith, not by feelings.

Our lives are dysfunctional because we have lived by our feelings. If we didn't feel good, we took something to make us feel good. Today's society is a feeling-oriented society. Look at the commercials on pain relievers. We have pain relievers for every pain imaginable. This is because we don't want to feel pain. We live in a self-centered, selfish society.

We also base what is right or wrong upon how we feel. But just because we feel a certain way about something, doesn't mean we are right. We have a very low tolerance level for pain, either physical or emotional. Any time we even anticipate pain, we immediately use our chemical to avoid it.

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Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson One

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 94)

1. How is the degree of chemical addiction really measured?

2. Who or what is the most important thing to an addict?

3. Name the two reasons someone returns to chemicals after leaving a program.

4. Explain Euphoric Recall.

5. What is the main reason the life of an addict is dysfunctional?

Why Am I Here?

Lesson Two

We have problems in almost every area of our lives, physical, mental, emotional, financial, spiritual, relational and vocational. Our addiction has affected every area.

We don't enter a rehabilitation program because things are going so good for us that we just can't stand it. We enter because our lives are messed up. We have reached the point that we are not able to function in society without chemicals. We need a program to help us escape this condition that has such a firm grip on our lives.

One of the first steps in recovery is sobriety. But there is more to recovery than being sober and drug free. Many of us have experienced sobriety, but we didn't like it. There was something missing inside, or perhaps a hurt or pain that persisted. Being sober can be painful, because we cannot escape the thing we try to avoid through our use of chemicals.

When sober, negative memories flood our minds about things we did while under the influence. Our custom has been to escape this misery through the use of mind-altering chemicals.

We may remember times, before reaching the chronic or fatal stages of alcoholism, when we were sober and everything appeared to go well financially, vocationally, and in other areas of our lives. But we were still not satisfied. No matter how well things were going there was no satisfaction.

If we take an honest look at that condition, we see that the one thing we still lack is a relationship with God. Nothing else can fill that void in our lives but a personal relationship with God. Money satisfies temporarily, chemicals satisfy temporarily, a close relationship satisfies temporarily. But these are temporal, and the void is eternal. Temporary things cannot fill the void that God fills.

God has His hand on us. We search for something to fill the void, but nothing can fill the void placed in us by God. That void has to be filled by the Spirit of God and nothing else.

If we visit the rescue mission in Miami, about two blocks before we get to the building we would see people lying on the streets, passed out. These are people who have never found a purpose for their lives. They have never been able to overcome the hurt and pain inside them.

All they live for is to anesthetize their pain. They no longer drink to get high, they drink to pass out. Temporal things have been unable to fill the void in their lives. No matter how good a job we have, or how beautiful a

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girl friend or wife we have, or how much money we have, there will still be something missing, and that something is God.

God is our Creator. He has placed a void within us that can be filled only with Himself. We search all our lives, trying to find something else to fill that special void.

People with compulsions other than alcohol and drugs, have the same problem. They look for something to fill their void. Some try to fill their void by work, some by food intake, some by sex, some by amusements. A big compulsion today is amusement through sports on television. We get excited about sports, but something is still missing in our lives.

Money may temporarily fill the void, but even with money, something is still missing. So the addict continually returns to chemicals in an attempt to fill the void.

Many addicts have everything they need, a good family, a good job, a nice home, but they are still not satisfied. Though they have everything, their life is empty because God is not in it.

Unfortunately, we search to fill that void in every way imaginable except through God.

With that in mind, we come to a point of entering a program. There are three different types of treatment programs. All three are valid and all three are needed.

1. Detox. This is a medical program that deals with our physical condition. Detoxification lasts about five to seven days. Delirium tremors are very serious for alcoholics. A detox program monitors the alcoholic as he comes off the chemical.

Many crack cocaine addicts are subject to heart attacks. They need the medical attention provided by a detox center. The center uses a lot of vitamin B-12, and bed rest, and in some cases, Valium or Librium to cover the time of detoxification.

The detox center serves a useful purpose, but does not cure us of our addiction. We can leave a detox center and head straight for our chemical. We feel good and healthy, and we're convinced we can do it right this next time. The detox program cannot heal our mental contamination.

2. Rehab. These programs run from 28 to 42 days. This is a psychological program that deals with our soul, which consists of our mind, our will and our emotions. The word 'psycho' means soul. The word 'logical' means study of. Therefore, psychological means study of our soul. In most rehab programs, we study our soul in an attempt to find out what makes us do the things we do.

This type program is important also. It can produce sobriety, but we need to go further than just the study of our soul. We can study our soul and never arrive at a solution to our problem. We need to understand why we do the things we do, but we need also to apply a solution to that problem.

One of the problems with a rehab program is the time limit. An addict or alcoholic takes from 30 to 42 days just to clear his head. After the chemical has been detoxed from the system, an additional 30 to 42 days is required to clear his thought process. It takes that long before he reaches the place

where he can look at some of the issues in his life that contributed to his addiction. We can't do much with ten years of addiction in 28 to 42 days. The program is good, it just isn't sufficient to do a complete job.

3. Regeneration Program. This program lasts as long as it takes, and it deals with our spirit. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, the Bible tells us that God created man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. He breathed into us our spirit, for our life is in our spirit. That is the eternal part of us. We are spirit beings whether we choose to believe it or not. When we die, our flesh returns to the dust, but our spirit goes on into eternity.

We need to look at the spiritual aspect first. A regeneration program studies the soul, also. We need to see what affected us in our lives to be the way we are, and we need to know what God has accomplished in our lives, in spite of ourselves.

Regeneration means to be made new. Rehabilitation means to return to our former state. We don't need to return to what we were before we began to drink and drug. That is what caused us to drink and drug in the first place. We need to be made new.

The Spirit of God regenerates us. The Holy Spirit of God is the only One who can make us new creatures. This is something we have been looking for, but really didn't believe possible.

The drug and alcohol part of our regeneration program lasts a minimum of six months, but our personal program lasts a lifetime. God's regeneration program is not confined to chemical abuse, it goes on forever. God changes our lifestyle, then keeps improving it year after year. He works in us on a daily basis to transform us into the person He wants us to be.

None of us will be perfect until we join Jesus in heaven. In the meantime, He works His regeneration program in us daily, constantly changing our lives and our lifestyles. Each of us has a place in heaven, but we're not ready for it yet. God has some things to work out in us first.

Picture heaven as a jigsaw puzzle. There is a place in that puzzle where we fit perfectly. At the present time, our form will not fit that place in God's jigsaw puzzle, so He has to mold us into the proper shape. This requires the removal of some of the rough areas of our personality. He replaces garbage with spiritual holiness. There is work to be done in us, and God uses our time on earth to accomplish that work.

We may enter a regeneration program and spend six months undergoing drastic changes, but that doesn't mean God is finished with us. The program is just a starting point, not a finishing point.

One of the problems with rehabilitation programs and support groups is that we lose track of our goal and purpose. Most programs tell us our goal is sobriety. This is incorrect. Sobriety is a part of recovery, but if we make being sober and drug free our goal, when we become sober and drug free we feel we have arrived.

Our focus is on the wrong thing. We were born sober and drug free, but we have attained nothing. Being sober and drug free doesn't necessarily get us anywhere. We do not cross a finish line when we get sober and drug free, we just begin our race. We have just reached the stage of being ready to start.

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Upon graduating from a regeneration program, we are ready to start a life of normalcy. We are equipped to function as a normal husband and father, but we haven't begun to function yet, we're only ready to start. To this point, we have attained nothing, everything lies ahead of us.

If our goal is to become sober and drug free, and that is all we have in life, we don't have a lot to live for. God has something for us, and He is trying to get us sober and drug free so He can work in us to make us ready for what He has in mind. He has a plan for each of us here on earth, as well as in heaven. It is certainly more than being sober and drug free.

Don't forget, we were born sober and drug free. God has simply brought us back to the starting line, and we are ready to begin the race He has set before us.

When we enter a regeneration program, our focus is upon becoming sober and drug free. We concentrate entirely upon the chemical that brought us to the program. We have thoughts, such as, "How will I stay away from the chemical when I get out of here?" "How will I stay sober?" We have hundreds of questions and uncertainties racing through our minds. That is normal.

But there will come a time when we will no longer think about alcohol and drugs, and we will instead begin to think about the Lord. The Lord will change our focus.

Our focus on alcohol and drugs is not because we want to drink or drug, it is because we do not want to drink or drug. Regardless of our motive, our focus is still on the chemical, and that has to change. When we focus on the chemical, whether negative or positive, it consumes us.

And as long as we are focused on the chemical, we are not focused upon God.

It is like driving our car down the road and looking only in the rear view mirror. All we see is what is behind us. It won't be long before we have an accident. It is the same with chemicals. If we concentrate upon our past behavior in regard to alcohol and drugs, if we constantly try to make certain our old habit doesn't catch up with us, it won't be long before we hit something head-on, and the chemical will overtake us.

But as we grow in our relationship with the Lord, chemicals become a thing of the past. They no longer totally occupy our focus. Our personal relationship with God begins to dominate our focus, and our domination by chemicals diminishes. The only reason to refer to chemicals in the future will be to teach others the way to freedom.

It is good to have a healthy respect for the power of alcohol and drugs. That means we will not place ourselves in a position to be tempted because we know what they can do to us. We also know that we no longer need the chemicals to help us get through life. We now have another, more powerful way to deal with the situations and circumstances we face.

As we go through a regeneration program, if we continue to make chemicals our focus instead of focusing upon God, we may as well stay out of the program. If our focus is solely upon staying sober and drug free, that means we are still focused upon drugs and alcohol, and it will be only a matter of time until we fall back into the same condition of addiction.

A regeneration program carries us beyond chemical addiction. God has more for us than to get us sober and

drug free.

The flaw in many support groups and self-help groups, is that they never get away from the subject of addiction. Some people have been members of support groups for 15 or 20 years and all they talk about is their addiction. That means they are still focused upon the chemicals.

Our need is to deal with the problem while we are in the regeneration program, and let the Lord carry us on to another dimension. We should let Him carry us into a ministry where the addiction and recovery of others become our focus.

A regeneration program deals with our inner man. A rehabilitation program deals mainly with behavior modification, which is outside of man. There is a great deal of difference.

We need the correct concept in one particular area before we can make a program successful for us. The very best program in the world will not keep us drug free and sober if we don't work it. On the other hand, the worst program will probably keep us sober if we do work it.

We have a misconception about programs. We think the solution lies in attending a program. We say, "I attended this other program and they didn't help me." We are really saying that we looked for someone to fix us. Attending a program will not change us, but working a program will. That is the difference.

We can attend a program and get a lot of information, but we can also go to the library and get a lot of information about chemical addiction. Information will not heal nor cure us, nor will it enable us to overcome our chemical addiction. If information would accomplish that we could simply take a book, go home, read it and get cured.

When we enter a program, most of us look for information to apply to our problems. We look for a quick solution. The truth is, we can sit for 30 days or for six months and soak up information, but it will never change our lives.

However, when we work a program, we open ourselves to life-formation. Life-formation and information are as different as night and day. Life-formation allows God to take information and change our lives with it. God works it out within us and changes take place.

We must understand that the very best program in the world will not change us. Attending a program does not change an alcoholic or drug addict. Only working a program makes the change. The change has to occur from within, and this cannot take place by pouring information in our ears. The Spirit of God within us must make the change.

God gave us life to start with, and He is the One who will help us overcome our addiction through life-formation. It takes the sovereign work of God in a man's life to overcome alcoholism and drug addiction. No amount of information has that kind of power.

When we attend a program we may feel that it is the responsibility of the staff to cure us from our addiction. When we attended school, we probably felt that it was the responsibility of the teachers to give us an education. When we attend church, we feel it is the responsibility of the preacher to mature us spiritually.

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When we marry, we feel it is the responsibility of our spouse to produce a good marriage. We always feel that the responsibility is outside ourselves. We look for other people to fix us and to make things right in our lives.

But the bottom line is that we have not worked the program of life, we have looked for someone else to make a change in us, or to give us a better job, or to pay us more than we are worth.

The time has come for us to change that attitude. It is time to stop attending programs and to begin to work them.

To have a relationship with God we must do more than attend a program and church services. We have to work on our relationship with God by spending time with Him. We have to sit with God and listen to Him speak to us. To have a relationship, we must communicate. We can't sit down with someone and not say anything to each other and build a relationship. It requires time and energy. The attitude that everybody owes us something has to be thrown out. The responsibility lies with us and no one else.

HOMEWORK: List all the types of programs attended previously. Include school, rehabilitation programs, marriage, jobs. Write whether you attended these programs or worked them, and why. We want to see how much responsibility for our lives we have put on other people.

Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson Two

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 95)

1. What is the one thing that every addict lacks in his life?

2. Explain a Detox Program.

3. Explain a Rehab Program.

4. Explain a Regeneration Program.

5. How long does a Regeneration Program last? Explain.

6. Explain the difference between information and life-formation.

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Lesson Three

There is a difference between working a program and attending a program. There are also different stages in a program.

First, we must understand that we can't place upon other people the responsibility for our recovery from chemical addiction. That sort of projection has been a part of our personality up to now, but it doesn't work in the area of recovery.

THERE ARE SIX STAGES TO WORKING OUT OUR RECOVERY IN A PROGRAM:

The sixth stage is rebellion. An expression of rebellion is being out on the streets doing our own thing with no regard for God, for loved ones, for legal authorities or anyone but ourselves.

As we read in the Bible, the fall of Lucifer was caused by rebellion. Most of us have lived in a state of rebellion for a long time. Alcoholism and drug addiction didn't cause our rebellion. Rebellion may have been the root cause for our addiction.

Rebellion says, "I am my own god. I do what I want to do, regardless of God, my parents, my spouse, or anybody else." People try to talk to us when we are in this state of rebellion. They try to show us that we have a problem but we reply that our only problem is those who tell us we have a problem.

As time passes, we move into the fifth stage, which is the recognition stage. Eventually, we begin to recognize that we do have a problem. We spend more time inside jail than we spend outside. We are broke all the time. All our relationships deteriorate. We develop health problems. We finally recognize that things are not as they used to be.

We identify the rebellion and recognition stages as our "street program." They occur outside a rehabilitation center. They take place on the streets in the area in which we live. Circumstances and situations and events develop until we can't avoid admitting that we have a problem.

These two stages have no time limit. The transition from rebellion to recognition may take twenty years. Usually, it takes a crisis in our lives to open our eyes.

When we recognize we have a problem and its effect upon us, the next stage, the fourth stage, is the

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admission stage. After we run into a concrete wall often enough, we eventually recognize that the wall is there, and we admit that it is an obstacle.

It is the same in our addiction. After beating up on ourselves and spending so much time in jail, or losing so many relationships, we finally recognize we have a problem and we admit that chemicals cause the frustration in our lives.

When we reach the admission stage, we are ready to enter a rehabilitation program. At this point, we leave the "street program," and enter a "regeneration program." The admission stage is necessary before we can bring ourselves to consider rehabilitation.

Admission is the first step in recovery. After admission, the next, or third stage, is compliance. In a rehabilitation program, we do exactly as we are told. To comply means to act as ordered.

If we attended other programs, we usually got no further than the compliance stage. We did only what we had to do to get by. This is probably how we approached elementary and high school. We did only the basics that would get us through school. We cut as many classes as permitted without failing the class. We missed as many days of school as possible without being kicked out. We complied with the rules and the standards, but nothing more. We may have felt that we were beating the system at the time. But as we look back, we see that we were the losers.

If we take the same approach in a regeneration program and do just what we have to do to get by, that attitude will be responsible for our death when we get back on the street. Acting as ordered in a program will not heal us from alcoholism and drug addiction. Rules and regulations and what the staff says is right or wrong will not prepare us to walk it out when we leave.

Compliance is doing the bare minimum to complete the program. It is important to complete the program, but we must also want God to make a permanent change in us so we will no longer be in bondage to chemicals. We can comply, but not change. We can sit in class and repeat all the proper words without anything happening inside.

We can look religious or spiritual, or put on a big facade; we can do all our dormitory duties and our homework assignments; we can work hard in the job part of the program, but unless God works in us, we just meet the basics of the program and nothing more.

A structured program will not work on the streets. The only program that works on the streets is our own personal program. We can use some of the tools from the structured program, but we will be successful on the streets only if we have a relationship with God.

In the structured program, we have to do only thirty minutes of quiet time every day. When we leave the program, thirty minutes may not be enough. We may need to do an hour of quiet time each day. If we take the attitude that we need nothing more on the outside than we need in a structured program, we will probably fall. We must go beyond the compliance stage, because when the restraints which force us to comply are removed, we will revert to our old behavior.

A man in compliance does exactly what he needs to do. If the staff pushes him, he moves only as far as they push him. If staff doesn't push him, he stays where he is. Because no change takes place within the man, compliance does not heal him nor keep him sober and drug free.

Example: An alcoholic or drug addict can be incarcerated in a 6x9 cell in a correctional institution for a year or more. He stays sober and drug free for that period. All his decisions are made for him. He is told when to get up each morning, what to eat for breakfast, what clothes to wear, what to do each day, what to eat for lunch, what to eat for supper, when to go to bed.

He complies to those instructions one by one, stays in his cell and continues to remain sober and drug free. But when the prison gates open and he walks away from those restraints, he goes right back to his old lifestyle of drugs and alcohol. He can be a model prisoner, but he is only complying. No change takes place in his life.

The same is true in a rehabilitation program. Compliance can occur with no change taking place. When the program is over, we walk out and fall. We spend six months sober and drug free and do everything required by the program, then walk out and go head first into the same lifestyle.

This is because we depend upon the structured program to keep us sober and drug free. But the program keeps us sober and drug free only so long as we are within the confines of the program. When we step outside the program, the structure is gone; therefore, it loses control over us.

We must arrive at the acceptance stage. We accept responsibility for our addiction, responsibility for our recovery, and responsibility for our own personal relationship with God.

Our personal relationship with God cannot depend upon another human being. Problems caused by our past behavior and our addiction are something we have to own as our responsibility, not the responsibility of anyone else. Responsibility does not lie in a rehab program or its staff.

When we reach this point, we are ready to begin our own program. At first, when we look at the depth of our responsibility, it is overwhelming. We can't understand how healing can take place. We ask ourselves, "How can I get out of this mess I'm in?" "How can I change?" "How can I be different from what I used to be?"

That brings us to the surrender stage. We call this the first stage because it is number one in importance. This is the stage at which we willingly surrender to God. We have arrived at the opposite end from where we began. Surrender is the complete opposite of rebellion.

When we develop our own program, we fashion something that works on the outside. In the structured program, it is necessary for us to move from the rebellious stage to the surrender stage. In the process, we move from the structured program to our own personal program.

If we work our own program, the rules and restrictions of a structured program are not a problem to us. This is because we spend time with the Lord, and He takes us above and beyond the structured program, even while we are in it. Rules bother us because rebellion is still in us. But when we establish our own program,

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rules don't bother us at all.

Compliance is legitimate when we first enter a program, but a time comes when we have to move on and work the program into our lives. We have to take the responsibility. For instance, if thirty minutes of quiet time is not enough for us in the morning, if we need an hour, it is up to us to get out of bed earlier and spend the extra thirty minutes with the Lord.

As we do this, we begin to develop our own program, and it becomes something we can take out with us. We need to do what we need to do, not just what is required of us. We must move beyond compliance.

When the staff asks us for one page of homework, do we write just one page, or do we continue to express ourselves until we write a page and a half or two pages? If we write only one page and nothing more, we do just what we have been ordered to do and nothing else.

Personal programs work on the outside. We can take the tools we learn in the structured program, such as the quiet time and the daily moral inventory and the lessons and the teachings, and incorporate them into something personal for us.

The structured program is designed to move us off center. We either work our way up to surrender, or we work our way down to rebellion. Some of us may say, "Well, I don't want this program, I can't handle this, it isn't right. It's too much like an army camp."

The program is designed to make us choose, to force us to decide who will be god of our life: ourself, or God. On a daily basis, depending upon the events of the day, we may move either way. We may move from acceptance to rebellion in one day. It depends upon our attitude.

A good way to gauge our spiritual growth is to see how long it takes us between relapse and recovery. That indicates how long it takes us to repent and get back into a relationship with God. If a situation occurs that we don't like and don't want to accept, how long does it take us to get from the rebellion stage back to God? How long does it take us to surrender?

If it takes two days the first time, and one day the second time, that means we have improved. If it takes us one day the first time, but two days the second time, we obviously have a problem. We bounce back and forth to some degree, but as we progress, we bounce less. What we have to look at is how long we stay down before we get back up.

We can relapse without taking a drink or a drug. We relapse in our attitude and in our relationship with God. The key is in our ability to bounce back.

These are the six stages in our road to recovery all of us must go through. Some of us spend more time at one stage than at another. In the final analysis, everything functions according to our ability to work our own program and develop our relationship with God. That sets us free from addiction and allows us to maintain sobriety. It also gives us peace and serenity.

Our personal program works within a structured program, but a structured program does not work out in the

world. The structured program is designed so we can take the tools and everything we learn and develop our own program that will work out in the world.

We should understand that moving from one stage to another brings an inner struggle. We don't go from rebellion to admission without struggling through the recognition issues of our lives.

We should ask ourselves why God has brought us to this particular regeneration program. The answer is that He wants us to learn how to have a relationship with Him. He wants to establish a relationship so He can work in our lives.

It is important to understand that we are not in this program because we have nowhere else to go. For some reason known only to Himself, God chose us to be in this program at this time.

SALVATION.

The first step in developing a relationship with God is to receive our salvation. That means we accept God into our lives. Salvation occurs inside us. We have all tried to change our outer man, but we have been successful only in changing our lifestyle to one of chemical addiction.

We have moved from one geographical location to another, we may even have changed spouses with the hope that things would get better. But that doesn't change us. Our inner man must change, and that change is made only by God. Unless we experience salvation, unless the Spirit of God comes into our lives, we do not change. Unless we allow God to do a work in us, we are destined to die from our addiction.

We must surrender to God on a daily basis by making Jesus Christ Lord of our lives every day. That is part of the salvation process. Another part is that we receive eternal life. When we die, we go to heaven. But before we die, God wants to do a work in us. Not only does God prepare a place for us after we die, He also changes the way we live while we are still on earth.

When we make Him Lord, God saves us every day from the sin that would dominate our lives. That is a continual event. The foundation of recovery from our addiction and from our old lifestyle comes through the event of salvation.

God wants to save us from our sinful life. He wants to express Himself through us on a daily basis. The more intimate our relationship, the more He ministers to us and through us.

Receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord is the single most important event that ever takes place in our lives. No other decision nor commitment affects us like salvation.

When we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord and commit ourselves to God, we place ourselves in His hands and allow Him to mold us into the vessels He wants us to be.

In alcohol and drug addiction, we have to surrender in order to win. Jesus tells us if we want to gain our lives, we must be willing to lose them. That means we surrender our lives to Him, then He gives us new life, far greater than the life we surrender to Him.

“ Why Am I Here? ”

We don't surrender to a program or to an institution or to chemicals. We surrender to God. Salvation is an event in which God's Spirit comes into us. Surrender is a process that goes on every day of our lives.

Eternally, we are saved, but much has to be worked out in us before we arrive at heaven. But before the process can start, salvation must be experienced.

We begin our foundation on our personal relationship with Jesus Christ, then we build on that foundation for the rest of our lives. The most important part of a building is its foundation. Unless the foundation is right, it will not stand under storms and stress.

It is the same with us. When the storms and stress of life come against us, unless we are firmly established on the foundation of Jesus Christ, we crumble. That is why salvation is so important. Without it, we can do nothing. There is no other way to overcome alcoholism and drug addiction.

We may be able to overcome addiction to some degree, but we will still be miserable, for we cannot fill the void in our lives with anything other than God.

Only one thing stops God from being able to fulfill His purpose for bringing us to this program, and that one thing is ourselves. We must be certain of our salvation. If we feel that it happened a long time ago, it is sometimes better to start off as if it hadn't happened, rather than try to build our recovery upon something that is uncertain.

We start by asking Jesus Christ to come into our heart and confessing Him as our Savior and Lord. This doesn't require a special setting, we can accomplish it while working, or while eating, or while studying, or any time at all. But the bottom line is that it must happen. If not, we will try to build our recovery on a faulty foundation and sooner or later, it will fall.

Once the event takes place, we then work out our salvation with fear and trembling, as we release control to God and allow Him to work in us.

If we accepted salvation five or ten years ago, but we haven't been living a Christian lifestyle, we need to recommit our lives. We need to start over with Jesus in charge. This gives us a clean slate with which to work.

Remember, we are in this program because God brought us here. He may have used other people to accomplish it, but He was the One behind it. We didn't just go to bed in one location and wake up in another location. God brought us here through circumstances He engineered.

Unless we accept that as reality, we won't receive what He has for us. We have to know in our hearts that God has a plan and a purpose for our lives. If God didn't have a plan and purpose for our lives we would all be dead. We have certainly put ourselves in situations that could have killed us. Our luck and coincidence ran out years ago. God assigned angels to protect us.

He did this for a reason. Physically, we are here to receive the program offered, but spiritually, we are here for another reason. He brought us here, not because He thought it would be nice to change the scenery

around us. He wants to do something in our lives.

In *John, Chapter 3*, we are introduced to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews. In today's society, Nicodemus would be a lawyer or government official, such as a congressman or senator. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, which means that he knew the law. He was, therefore, well educated. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night because he didn't want to be seen. This would threaten his status in the community.

When Jesus told Nicodemus he had to be born again, he responded a lot like our society responds today to the gospel. Nicodemus related the word of Jesus to physical possibilities. Today, when we talk about spiritual rebirth, many people think the concept is ridiculous.

But Jesus spoke of a spiritual event, not a physical event. Jesus used an analogy of the wind in relation to the Spirit of God. We can't see wind, but we can see the results of the wind. It is the same in a man born of the Spirit. We do not see the Spirit entering us, but we see the results.

Jesus said we must be born again to see the kingdom of God. It is possible to experience the kingdom of God on earth, because it is possible for us to experience God on earth. But we will not experience God or His kingdom here on earth or later in heaven, unless we are born again.

We have the concept that being born again means we will go to heaven instead of hell. That is part of the package, but to approach salvation only as an escape from hell, is to miss the full concept of salvation. Salvation is more than fire insurance to keep us from burning in hell.

We don't have to wait until we reach heaven before experiencing God. We can experience God right now because His Spirit is available to us on earth. If we receive God's Holy Spirit into our heart, and we die, our spirit goes to heaven, its point of origin.

Until we die, what happens to our spirit? Did God just send His Spirit to come into our heart, so we could go to heaven when we die? If that is the case, we could wait until we were ready to die, and God wouldn't have to distribute so much of His Spirit. He could just send His Spirit to us right before we die, then take us to heaven. Obviously, that is not the purpose.

God sends His Spirit to us because He wants to establish a relationship with us and accomplish something in us and through us before He takes us to heaven.

If we just wanted to get addicts to heaven, we could get them saved, then shoot them. But that is not God's plan. Nicodemus tried to use his mind to figure out what Jesus was telling him, but he missed Jesus' message completely. He missed the message because he approached it through his own logical reasoning.

Rebirth of the spirit is a simple process. In *Genesis 2:7*, we see that God made Adam and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, His spirit. In verse 9, God created every tree, and every tree was pleasing to look at and good for food. There were no thorn bushes.

God put man into the garden to cultivate it and keep it. He told Adam he could eat of everything but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if he ate of that tree, he would die. But Adam ate of the forbidden tree.

“ Why Am I Here? ”

He didn't die physically, for he lived 930 years, but he died spiritually. God originally breathed His spirit into Adam, but Adam's sin caused him to die spiritually. He lost his relationship with God. Man, as he was created, changed because of his disobedience. When Adam ate of that tree, we were all affected. It is as if we ate of it also, because we are his descendants, and we inherited his sinful nature.

God was not taken by surprise by Adam's sin. Because of His love for us He fashioned a plan for our salvation. God's plan of salvation was established before Adam ate of the tree. Man doesn't change God's plans. God knew it would happen and he developed a plan to offset the problem caused by Adam's disobedience.

Everybody is born spiritually dead because of Adam's sin. God's plan to return us to relationship with Him was through the cross. Jesus paid the price for our sin. This opened the way for God's Spirit to dwell in us once more. This is what Jesus called being born again.

There is a place inside all of us for God's Spirit to dwell. When we review our lives we see that something has always been missing. No matter how much money we had, or how many relationships we experienced or what kind of jobs we held, something was not right. We didn't have peace and serenity and contentment.

To fulfill that need, we turned to drugs or alcohol or gambling or food or sex or work, in an attempt to fulfill the significance factor that was missing. But what is really missing is God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who brings significance and contentment into our hearts.

God provided a way for that to come about, through Jesus Christ. He provided a way for man to retrieve the relationship with Him that was severed in the garden of Eden.

If Adam had never sinned, we would be in the garden of Eden. But after Adam sinned, God forced him out of the garden. The tree of life was in the garden also. If Adam had eaten of that tree, he would never have died. God drove him out for his own protection, so he wouldn't be eternally separated from God. Imagine what this world would be like if some of the tyrants in history had never died. The tree of life is not mentioned anymore until the book of Revelation.

It is possible for us to believe in God long before we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. We can't receive Him if we don't believe. Believing is the first step, but we can believe in Jesus without receiving Him as our Savior and Lord. The Bible says that even the demons believe in Jesus, and shudder. They believe in Jesus because they know He exists, but they have not accepted Him, they rebel against Him.

The second step after believing is to receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord. When we do this, the void within us is filled. We say, "Lord Jesus, I receive You. I accept You as my Savior and Lord, and I commit my life to You. I ask You to come dwell in me by Your Spirit." That is the way we receive the Spirit of Christ into our hearts.

Salvation is an event, believing is a process. When we receive Him, we are born spiritually, born again, as Jesus told Nicodemus. God's Spirit entering a man is the beginning event that starts a process of change.

When an infant is born, it is not ready to function as a mature person. A process of maturing has to take place. The process starts with the event of birth. It is the same spiritually. We must be birthed first, and that occurs when we receive Jesus and commit our lives to Him. The growth process occurs through the release

of the Spirit within all areas of our lives: our minds our wills, our emotions and our relationships. Growth occurs as we give God access to every part of us.

If we refuse to give God access to every part of our lives, we do not grow spiritually. The event of salvation does not automatically take away all our negative characteristics. But as we release the Spirit into the negative areas of our lives, He changes those areas. If He doesn't have access to us, He can't do anything with us.

HOMEWORK: Write a page on where you think you are within the six stages and what it will take to move you to the next stage.

If you have received your salvation, write the circumstances surrounding that event, when it happened, how it happened, and what happened.

Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson Three

Personal And Group Exercise (see pages 96,97)

1. List the six stages we go through as we work out our recovery program.

2. Describe the Compliance Stage and explain why it is so dangerous.

3. What stage is the opposite of Rebellion, and why is it Number One in importance?

“ Why Am I Here? ”

4. What is a good way to gauge our spiritual growth? Explain.

5. What is the first step in developing a relationship with God, and how does it occur?

6. Upon what do we build our foundation for recovery, and why is it essential?

7. What is the difference between believing in Jesus Christ and receiving Jesus Christ?

Why Am I Here?

Lesson Four

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Scripture tells us how and why we were saved. Salvation is a work of God, we do nothing to earn it. God uses faith as the channel for salvation. Grace means unmerited favor, something we do not deserve. Salvation is a gift. If God gave us what we deserved, we would be dead. But God, in His love for us, gave us the gift of salvation. He saved us from alienation from Him. He brought us into personal relationship with Himself.

Hell is eternal separation from God. We don't have to die to experience hell, we can live right here on earth and be in hell. Hell is not a place, it is a condition. Salvation rescued us from that condition. It is not something about which we can boast, because we did nothing to deserve it.

We have difficulty with salvation because we are not comfortable receiving something we don't deserve. It is difficult to believe somebody loves us enough to give us something we haven't earned. Society has programmed us to believe we must earn what we receive, or steal it, or do something to obtain it. But that is not the case with salvation. Salvation is an outright gift.

That is how much God loves us. No matter what we have done during our lifetime, God still makes this gift available to us. Regardless of what we may have said, or how we may have acted, the gift of salvation is ours if we want it.

When we ask Him, He sends His Spirit to live within us. To receive it, we have only to ask. Faith means believing that God is who He says He is, and that He does what He says He will do.

Hebrews 11 tells us that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. It also says that without faith it is impossible to please God. If we don't believe what God says and that God is who He says He is, we won't have a relationship with Him.

In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of our becoming as little children, having child-like faith. Think about the faith of little boys and girls. They believe whatever they are told by their parents, no matter how far-fetched the story may be. They have child-like faith to believe the ones most significant in their lives. Jesus tells us to be like that when we read the word of God.

“ Why Am I Here? ”

Sometimes it is easier for us to believe for others than for ourselves. It is difficult to believe that God loves us so much. Why would He send Christ to die for us? It doesn't make sense to our logical minds. But we don't understand His love for us. God's ways are not our ways. We don't have to understand, we only have to believe.

Many things in the Bible are difficult for us to believe because we don't understand. But God insists that we take Him at His word. It is impossible to please Him otherwise. And we must believe it for ourselves, not just for somebody else. The Scriptures are for all of us, not just those who are super-spiritual.

God is not as interested in our past as He is in our present and our future. As we respond properly in the present, He shapes our future according to His will. That's the good news.

When the Spirit of God enters us certain things happen that we are unaware of. In *John 3:3*, Jesus said we must be born again. When God's Spirit enters, we experience a new spiritual birth. We are born again spiritually, not physically.

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

When we received the Spirit of God, we became His new creation. Nothing physical changed, but we changed on the inside. Spiritually, we are new creatures of God, and He sees us as different than before our new birth. We had no knowledge of the change, but God recognized it. The old person we were in Adam passed away, and a new person in Christ took up residence.

We don't immediately change our habits and beliefs, but changes take place as God works in us. At salvation, everything doesn't simply fall off us. Our old pattern of thinking and behavior doesn't disappear. We don't immediately lose our old habits and desires. But the new creature inside us battles our old nature, and as we pray and study the Word, changes take place.

God already has us seated in heavenly places, He just needs to work out the process of bringing forth His nature in us to replace our old nature. Before we can train a child to live a good life, the child has to be born. It is the same with us. After we are born again, the new creation within us begins to take over. Like growing physically, it is a process.

God sees us different than we see ourselves, because so far as He is concerned, it is a completed transaction. It is worked out in heaven, and it needs only to be walked out on earth.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24)

Before Christ came into us, we thought we were alive, but in reality, we were dead in our trespasses and sins. When God came into our lives, we passed from death into life. This was not something we were conscious of. How do we know it happened? Because God said it did, and we believe what God says is true. We will not die spiritually, we will live eternally with Him.

We were dead because we were separated from God, but when we received God's Spirit, He brought eternal life with Him. We weren't aware that we passed from death into life, but we did. We are no longer separated

from God. These are benefits of salvation we don't know exist when we first accept Jesus into our hearts.

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:4-6)

The Spirit of God has come into our hearts. We have entered into a new personal relationship with God that gives us spiritual vitality. The new life is a gift that never dies.

"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

The Bible tells us that another important thing happens:

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13,14)

First, we see that there are two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness, Satan's kingdom, and the kingdom of light, God's kingdom. He has delivered us from the power of darkness. Salvation moves us from one kingdom to another. We are not conscious of this move; nevertheless, it happens. God accomplishes something for us that we do not realize.

Living in the kingdom of darkness is like working in a field picking cotton. It is very hard work. And the master of that cotton field is Satan. We have been working hard in that field for him. He gets us up early in the morning, works us hard all day and pays us nothing.

When God saved us, He took us out of Satan's cotton field, brought us over to His kingdom, and placed us in His rose garden. He transferred us from one kingdom to another.

We have difficulty believing this happened because we hear Satan talking to us all day, telling us we need to do certain things. He tells us we don't have to be subject to the rules of a rehabilitation program, that we can go home and live a normal life on our own.

Satan can't enter God's kingdom, but he can yell at us from his kingdom and tell us lies to try to get us to leave the program. However, he can't touch us in God's kingdom. It is important for us to know for sure that we are in God's rose garden, not in Satan's cotton field.

We know what kingdom we are in because the Bible has told us, and we know how we got here because the Bible told us that also. Satan tries to get us to pick cotton, and if we listen to him, we will try to pick cotton in God's rose garden. But there is no cotton there.

We may try to continue our old job, because we have picked cotton for years. When we enter God's rose garden, the first thing we do is look around for the cotton. Satan tries to convince us we are still in his field, but we are no longer in his field. Satan is not only a liar, the Bible tells us he is the father of lies. The cotton field has become a lifestyle to us, but we have to abandon that old lifestyle and receive the new lifestyle God has for us.

“ Why Am I Here? ”

We must know where we are, or we will believe the lies of Satan. We have to understand our new relationship with God. We are no longer picking cotton, we are in God's kingdom. When Satan yells at us and tells us to do something, if we do what he tells us, he will continue to yell. And we will continue to believe Satan is our master instead of God.

We didn't leave Satan's kingdom, walk across the road on our own, and enter God's kingdom. We didn't cut a hole in the fence that surrounds Satan's kingdom, one dark night and slip away. Instead, God reached down and transferred us out of Satan's kingdom into His own. It was a gift from God, not something we did on our own.

That is the essence of salvation, our transfer from one kingdom into the other kingdom by the grace of God. In the process, we become His sons, adopted into His family. God did something completely beyond our power.

Satan stands at his fence and yells across the road at us because he doesn't want to lose us. He lies to us and deceives us and tempts us and tries to manipulate and trick us. He does everything in his power to control us. But just as we couldn't come out of his kingdom on our own, he can't either. He has no legal right in God's kingdom.

He shoots his fiery darts (*Ephesians 6:16*), but our shield of faith protects us if we use it. We are secure in God's kingdom. God knows where we are and Satan knows where we are. The problem is that we don't know where we are. We don't understand our eternal security in God.

We don't have to pick cotton anymore. We are in a new kingdom, with a new Master who has a new purpose and a new plan for our lives. This new life is not our design, nor a design the program has made available to us, it is God's design for us.

It takes a while to get adjusted to the rose garden. This is because we have spent many years in the cotton field. But if we focus upon God and His word, we make the adjustment. God shows us how to function in His kingdom. He shows us the plan and purpose He has for us.

We must make up our mind to believe what God has done. We have to believe we are in the new location He said we are. If we don't believe, we may be in God's kingdom, but live as if we are still in Satan's kingdom.

Accepting where we are is a process. We may find ourselves trying to pick a few rows of cotton, even though we know we are in a rose garden. When we see ourselves do that, we know we have been temporarily deceived by our enemy. All we have to do is remember where we are, take our focus off the situation and place it upon God.

God will not tolerate cotton picking in His rose garden. He will not allow us to do that. He brings us back to our starting place in His garden and starts us all over again. He wants us to learn how to live this different lifestyle, the lifestyle He has designed for us.

SALVATION. There are three facets to salvation:

1. Salvation covers our past sin. *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)* If we received the wages of our sins, we would be separated eternally from God, which is death. We would die, for we have committed enough sin to cause our death. It saves us from the penalty of our sins. We are unable to pay the penalty, but the penalty has been paid for us.

2. It covers our present sin. *But He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:24,25)*

Jesus constantly makes intercession for us to the Father. He does this because we are sinners. His intercession deals with the power of sin in our daily lives. This is our present situation: salvation saves us daily from the power of sin in our lives.

We see that salvation saves us from the penalty of our past sin and the power of our present sin. The only power to keep us from sin is the power of Jesus Christ, who intercedes for us daily.

3. Eventually, we will go to heaven, where there is no sin; therefore, salvation saves us from the presence of sin. Salvation assures us that we will go to heaven. Christ has a place prepared for us in heaven where sin does not exist.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Our inheritance is eternal life in heaven. There will be no more sin in our lives when we reach heaven, for there is no presence of sin in heaven. We should understand that earth is not our real home. It is just a temporary place for us on our way to home, our real home, heaven.

All of this is a gift from God to us. We are saved from the penalty of our past sins, the power of sin in our present lives, and the presence of sin in our eternal future. God has covered every area of our lives. This is a personal gift for everyone who accepts Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

The plan of salvation is God's plan, not something man conceived. We have plans for our children, and God has plans for us. Our plans for our children are not their plans. They are unable to understand what lies before them. In like manner, God's plans cover more than we can understand. We need to accept His kingship in our lives and allow Him to fulfill His plans for us.

HOMEWORK: Memorize Ephesians 2:8-10.

“ Why Am I Here? ”

Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson Four

Personal And Group Exercise (see pages 98,99)

1. What is hell? Give an example.

2. What is one reason we have difficulty with the concept of salvation?

3. Explain what happened when we received the Spirit of God.

4. Are we dead, or alive? Explain.

5. If someone asked you to define being born-again, what would you tell them?

6. How many spiritual kingdoms exist? Explain.

7. Why is it important for us to understand our new relationship with God?

8. What is the difference between picking cotton and tending roses?

9. Explain the three facets of salvation.

Daily Moral Inventory

Lesson One

We have discussed the two aspects of chemical addiction: physical addiction and mental contamination.

Chemical addiction is physical addiction with mental compulsion. Mental compulsion means we are compelled to think a certain way. Throughout our years of addiction we repeated the same pattern of behavior even though we said we would never behave that way again. Our thought patterns and attitudes became so ingrained that we followed those behavior patterns habitually.

Other people could see this characteristic in us, but we couldn't see it in ourselves. If someone asked us what our problem was, we would have told them we didn't have a problem. The only problem is their asking us about our problem.

In reality, we had a big problem. We were told if we didn't quit drinking and drugging it would kill us, but we paid no attention. We were like Mr. Jay Walker.

Jay Walker entered a rehabilitation program. He didn't have a chemical problem, but he liked to run in front of moving vehicles. That is the way he got his thrills. He started on this behavior pattern when he was a young bicycle rider. He would leave home on his bicycle, go down town and pick a place on the sidewalk. When a car came along, he would jump on his bicycle and cross the street in front of the car.

One day he jumped on his bicycle and started across the road, but he was hit by the car. He suffered a broken leg and stayed in the hospital about a week. He recuperated at home for another week, during which time he could not continue his dangerous habit. Then he got a pair of crutches and hobbled down to the street and began the same behavior pattern. It wasn't long before he was hit by another car. This accident broke his other leg.

After another recuperation period in the hospital, he was sent home. They put him in a bed with rollers, so he got his wife to push him down the street. They would stand at the corner and he would say, "Go!" and she would push him across the street.

We may call Jay Walker crazy, but his behavior is no crazier than our behavior while we are under the influence of chemicals. Everybody could see that he had a problem, but Jay couldn't see it. Others could see the results of his problem when they looked at his body. When he would not show up for work, they knew he would be down the street trying to dodge traffic.

When people saw Jay Walker coming down the street, they knew what he would do. They would ask themselves, "Why does this man do such a thing?" If they tried to talk to Jay about his problem, he would deny having a problem. It was the same with us, except our problem wasn't jay walking, our problem was chemical addiction. It was destroying everything and everyone around us, but we couldn't see it.

When he broke his leg on the bicycle, Jay thought to himself, "Well, I'll do it differently next time. I'll cross the street in a different way and I'll have different results." Obviously, his mind wasn't thinking properly. When people tried to help, he would say, "My jay walking doesn't hurt anybody but myself." Actually, he had children at home, he was laid up from work, he was unable to function as a normal husband and father. But his whole focus was to get back on that sidewalk and cross the street in front of another moving vehicle.

We can easily see the insanity in Jay Walker. It is unbelievable that a man could be that stupid or crazy. But our behavior has been just as stupid and crazy.

Is Jay Walker's attitude toward life correct? Obviously something is missing. We are no different when it comes to our addiction. A process is at work within us because of our attitude. We stay in our fantasy so long that we don't know the truth about ourselves or about anything else.

We lean on our own understanding. We defend what we do, what we say and how we act. We deny and project and rationalize and justify. We don't behave like this for a week or two, we continue for years. We have practiced this behavior pattern long enough to be very good at it.

We can tell someone a lie, then get angry because they don't believe it. Our attitude is so distorted, we even deceive ourselves.

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. (Proverbs 23:7)

The heart this Scripture speaks of is not the organ that pumps blood, it is our inner soul, the heart of our thought process. We are the result of how we think. Our attitude determines our behavior. This means in order to change what we have become, our thinking has to change.

That is impossible if we try to accomplish it ourselves. Over a period of years, we have developed certain attitudes that have brought about certain actions. After acting out the same behavior over and over, it has become habit. Our actions and attitudes and habits have been wrong, not only for ourselves, but for everyone significant to us.

Our bad actions, bad attitudes and bad habits generated character defects, such as lying, stealing, manipulating and swindling. This behavior pattern has become our lifestyle.

If not corrected, our character defects can become satanic strongholds. This doesn't mean that Satan has possession of us, but in certain areas of our lives, we have no control. A stronghold exists that we cannot break. Once an addict puts the chemical into his body, he loses the power to stop. That produces the opportunity for a satanic stronghold to be established. When a satanic stronghold is in place, it also affects the way we think.

The reverse side of the coin is that godly attitudes bring about godly actions, which develop godly habits. This generates godly character, and godly strongholds.

Our problem is not our circumstances or our family or our job or our wife or our boss. Our problem sits right on top of our neck. Our problem is in our head.

It is possible to break a habit temporarily, but unless we handle the root issue of the problem, the habit returns. The root issue lies within our hearts and is expressed in our attitudes. What we think in our hearts, determines our character and our behavior.

If we think long enough about doing something, we eventually do it. We act on what we think. Drinking and drugging always begins with a thought. Sometimes we can think about it so much, we can taste it. If that is our focus, eventually it becomes a reality, we use the alcohol or drug.

Our thought process has caused all our problems. This is true in every area of our lives. We have denied and projected to sustain our own behavior. We have said that everyone has a problem but us. We have also excused our behavior, by rationalizing and justifying it.

We see ourselves as victims, but we are really victimizers, we are the ones causing the problem. We must turn our attitude around so we see ourselves as the cause of our problem, not victims.

A spiritual battle is underway. Satan will not come to us, pick us up and carry us off to his kingdom. Also, he will not dwell in us unless we give him a place to dwell.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Our battle is not a battle of flesh against flesh, it is spiritual. For us to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, we must turn to the Spirit of God. We can't accomplish it in the flesh.

Consider this example of the battle being fought in the spirit, not in the flesh. When we try not to think about something, we automatically think about it. That is all the mind, by itself, can accomplish. Pornography, for another example, will consume us totally, until our entire lives center around it. The harder we fight, the more powerful it becomes. We try to fight it with our willpower, but willpower is a product of the flesh, and when flesh fights flesh, flesh wins.

That is why we must fight flesh with something other than flesh. We walk in the flesh, but we must fight with a power greater than flesh. That power is the divine power of the Holy Spirit. We destroy the fortresses or strongholds of the enemy in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

We all have this problem. We must destroy speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God. We must take every thought to the obedience of Christ. This change must take place in our minds. We can't do ourselves, God does it as we turn to Him. Every attitude or thought is either edifying to God or it opens the door for Satan.

When we see a dead carcass on the road, we usually see five or six vultures, or buzzards, around it. As we get closer, those birds stay with that carcass until the last moment, then suddenly they fly away. If we look in our rear view mirror, we see them return to the carcass immediately.

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We don't see buzzards in a rose garden, because there is nothing to attract them. The rotten, stinking carcass attracts them. It is the same with our stinking attitudes. They attract Satan. We may try to chase the buzzards out of our minds and thoughts, but we can't do it when our attitudes are still rotten. The only way to get rid of the buzzards is to get rid of the carcass.

Satan is not attracted to anything godly, but he is quick to join anything ungodly. Our ungodly thoughts and attitudes appeal to Satan. Our minds are like landing strips. Bad attitudes and ungodly thoughts offer landing strips to Satan. We give him the right to land in our minds. With no landing strips in our minds, there is no place for Satan to land. He can fly around us, but he can't land. Aircraft fly over us but they don't affect us because they have no place to land.

As a buzzard flies to a carcass, Satan is attracted to our ungodly landing strip. We avoid this by doing away with the landing strip of our stinking attitudes and thoughts. That leaves no place for Satan to land and grab for his own use. We must destroy those landing strips every day.

Scripture tells us we are to demolish, to destroy the fortresses, the strongholds, the landing strips. When we repent of our ungodly thoughts and pray for God to renew our minds, we demolish the strongholds. We are not in charge of the demolition, we simply submit the landing strip to God and He does the rest. We tell Him we don't want it in our lives and we release it to Him. If we don't submit it to God, we make it available for Satan to use.

When we give God access to our thoughts, He gets rid of our character defects and our ungodly behavior. None of this occurs until we give God access. Then, when God takes over, we bury the carcasses and get rid of the buzzards.

A buzzard never gets close to a cow while the cow is alive, for buzzards are frightened of cows. But as soon as a cow goes down and begins to die, the buzzards start circling. It is the same with us. When we pray and submit ourselves to God on a daily basis, we don't have to worry about Satan. But when we don't give God access to our minds, Satan starts circling because he smells death in the wind. Satan doesn't have to wait for us to die, he sees the imminent spiritual death which is certain to come when we stop communicating with God.

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1,2)

God has had mercy on us. We should have been dead because of our sins, but we are still alive. We are called to present our bodies to Him as living sacrifices. We are to present ourselves to Him. This is our reasonable service, the least we can do in return for what He has done for us.

God wants to change us. He tells us not to be conformed to the patterns of the world. Those of the world don't present themselves to God, they don't come before Him and make themselves available to Him. They do whatever they want to do, when they want to do it, with no regard for God and His will for them. This is the pattern to which we have been conformed.

The purpose of our quiet time is to present ourselves to God in the morning as living sacrifices. People of the

world don't have quiet times every morning to seek God's will for their lives. They are conformed to a different pattern of behavior. They are not dependent upon the Lord.

We break our conformance to the patterns of the world as we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. The Spirit of God renews our minds as we seek Him every morning, and He transforms, or changes us. We discover the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. If this transformation is not allowed to take place, we never know the will of God for our lives.

We have to let God renew our minds to discover His plan for us. We can only be transformed by God, so we have to present ourselves to Him as living sacrifices.

In the quiet part of the Daily Moral Inventory we present ourselves to God and He brings things to the surface of our minds to be released to Him, so transformation can take place.

God's Spirit comes into us and we release Him to work in our minds and our emotions. As He changes our thoughts, our hearts change. As our hearts change, our behavior changes. We become different people than we were before we allowed Him into our hearts.

"Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

Why does God want us to be still? He wants us to present ourselves to Him and be still, so we can hear Him speak to us. Only then will He be able to change us.

One of the patterns of the world is busyness. When we are busy, running around all over the place, there is no way we can hear from God. We must be still, and we accomplish this through our quiet time. How can we experience God if we can't hear Him?

We can sit in a chair with our Bibles, intent upon having a quiet time with the Lord, open the Bible, then be bombarded with thoughts of the day or of certain conditions that exist in our lives. This is because we are not still before the Lord, we allow our minds to be active.

It is the same with church. If everyone dresses pretty much alike, we can't tell from what walk of life anyone has come. But God knows the difference. He knows who has a relationship with Him and who doesn't. He knows who disciplines himself to be still, and who doesn't.

If we allow our minds to race off in another direction, it is impossible for the Lord to get our attention. He wants to communicate with us, but our minds are not still and centered upon Him. We are not doing what we are told to do in *Romans 12:1,2*. We have not presented ourselves as living sacrifices, because our minds are not present to Him.

Our bodies are present, but they are dead sacrifices. We walk in the flesh, but we do not go to war in our flesh. He wants our minds, so He can put life into our bodies. That requires disciplined focus on our part. If He has our minds, He has our bodies. If He has our attention, He has all of us.

When alcohol or drugs had our attention, it had all of us. It is the same in our relationship with the Lord. He wants us to be still, to present ourselves as living sacrifices, so He can transform us through the renewing of our minds. The change must come first in our minds, in our thought process. Then the rest of us changes. This can be accomplished only by His Spirit, as we appropriate His word and as we pray and fellowship with

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others who are like-minded.

Transformation is a process that continues the rest of our lives. Our minds are continually renewed, and we continually mature spiritually until we become what He wants us to be.

To learn anything in school, we had to pay attention to the teaching, we had to focus. The more attention we paid, the more we learned. The less attention we paid, the less we learned. It is the same with God. The more attention we give Him, the more He changes and matures us.

He wants to change our thought process. He uses several methods, one of which is His word. One reason for Scripture memorization is to help the process of mind renewal. Our mind is like the airstrip. If we want to change the airstrip into a watermelon patch, we have to dig it up and fertilize and cultivate it. We have to prepare it to grow watermelons. That is what Scripture does to our minds. It prepares us to receive the heart of God.

Our minds have grown to be as hard and crusty as a well-used air strip. They have been packed down by repeated landings of Satan's aircraft. Sometimes he used big transport planes, like the ones the Air Force uses to haul armored tanks. Our minds had to be hard to receive that much oppression. God has to plow up that hardness, and one of the ways He does it is with His word.

When we plow the field and the rains come, the field becomes soaked and soft. While it was hard, the rain just ran off, but now it can receive the nourishment of the rain. As God renews our minds and plows them and softens them to receive His word, our minds begin to soak up His wisdom and His truth. Once He starts to prepare our minds, we don't want any more air craft landing and packing them down.

Our recovery and our walk with God starts in our minds, in our thought process. God created our minds to be occupied by the Spirit of God.

HOMEWORK: Memorize *Proverbs 23:7*; *Psalms 46:10*; *Romans 12:1,2*

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson One

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 100)

1. In what way have I been like Mr. Jay Walker?

2. If our character defects are not corrected, what can they become? Explain.

3. What is the only way we can destroy the strongholds of the enemy in our lives?

4. Why is a Daily Moral Inventory so important?

5. List three landing strips in your life that Satan has been using.

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Lesson Two

In this lesson, we will look at our attitudes, our actions, our habits, our character defects and the resulting satanic strongholds. These faulty characteristics have brought us to this program.

One of the most important things we can learn in our relationship with God is how to discern the voice of God speaking to us. That comes as our mind is renewed. We learn to judge what is holy and what is unholy, what is right and wrong, what is good or evil. We can already discern these things in many areas because God gave us enough sense to know some differences.

As God's Spirit moves in us and begins to work changes in us, the unholy spirit presents himself also. He tries to destroy what God is doing. We call this the principle of blessing and blasting.

When Jesus went to the river to be baptized by John, a blessing took place. The Holy Spirit manifested, and God, the Father, spoke from heaven. He said, *"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased."* (Matthew 3:17)

Immediately afterward, Jesus was blasted by Satan. Satan tried to destroy what the Father had just done. He tried to nullify the blessing Jesus received. The blessing took place at the river, and the blasting took place in the wilderness.

If Satan attacked Jesus that way, there is little doubt that he attacks us also. Any time the Spirit of God moves, the unholy spirit moves also, to try to blast away what the Spirit has done. His first attack usually is to lie to us and tell us the blessing was not real, it did not come from God.

One problem we face coming out of addiction, is our tendency to believe the lie from Satan, instead of what God says about us. God blesses us, but we believe Satan's lie and nullify God's blessing. We walk away from the blessing, because we believe Satan rather than God.

We look at our past and all our wrong behavior, and the little voice in our ear tells us we can't possibly be a Christian because of our past sins. We hear words, such as, "God won't have anything to do with you, look at all the things you have done! How can you call yourself a Christian!" "You're no good! You'll never amount to anything because of your past!"

To offset this attack, it is important to learn about the character of God and how the Holy Spirit deals with us. When we work our Daily Moral Inventory, and we look at the previous days, we must know that even though

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we made mistakes, God made provision for them.

The problem is that we don't accept His provision, we believe the lie the enemy tells us. We ask forgiveness for the same sins over and over. That indicates we don't believe in the forgiveness of God. For example, suppose we received a bill for \$200 from the Power Company for electricity we used during the month of December. We wrote a check to the Power Company for \$200, put it in an envelope and mailed it.

Two weeks later, we receive another notice from the Power Company that we have to pay our December bill for \$200. Would we pay that bill again? Of course not, because it has already been paid. When we continually ask forgiveness for the same sin, it is like paying the December bill over and over. The bill for our sins has been paid, it doesn't have to be paid again. We don't have to ask God over and over to cancel that debt. It is paid in full.

But we don't understand what the word of God says concerning us, so we believe the opposite, which is a lie.

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

We have to believe, to live out and to stand on that Scripture. When we look at our past and the things we have done, and we hear the voice tell us, "Who are you trying to fool?", we tend to believe the lie rather than the truth stated in the Scripture. But the truth is that God has forgiven us and cleansed us. That Scripture has to become reality to us. Unless we believe that particular Scripture, we will have a difficult time staying sober and drug free.

If we believe the lie rather than the truth, we live under false guilt. There are two kinds of guilt: true guilt and false guilt. True guilt is something to be dealt with. False guilt is from the enemy. It is like feeling guilty about the Power Company bill that has already been paid.

We generate a problem when we don't accept the provision God made to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The provision was made at the cross, when Jesus paid the debt for our sins.

The Bible tells us we need to confess. This means we must agree with God about our sins. We don't confess our sins to God because He doesn't know about them. He already knows everything about us. We don't shock God when we confess our sins to Him. We simply agree with Him that our actions have really been sinful. Confession brings us into line with God. When we tell God we agree with Him that our act was sin, He forgives us and cleanses us.

The two key words in the Scripture are forgive and cleanse. God forgives completely what we have done, then He cleanses it from our record. If we raise the hood on our car and tamper with something around the engine, then come back with grease on our hands, others can tell what we have been doing. But when we wash our hands, the grease disappears. That is our condition when God cleanses us. Our sins are no longer obvious.

Another word we see in the Bible is repentance. If we break the law and find ourselves in jail, we may tell the Lord, "Lord, if You will get me out of this jail cell, I will do anything You want me to do. I'll never drink again, I won't curse, I'll go to church, You just get me out of here!" But as soon as we are released from jail, we

forget everything we told the Lord. That is not repentance.

Let the peace of God rule in your heart, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

The word, rule, in that Scripture means referee, or umpire. In a basketball game, when the referee blows his whistle that means something is wrong and all play must stop. God's Spirit does the same thing in our hearts. His Spirit convicts us when we are about to do something wrong.

A function of the Holy Spirit is to bring about conviction. If a man goes to court and is found guilty, he is convicted of the crime. In like manner, God's Spirit convicts our hearts of sin.

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when he comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment." (John 16:7,8)

The Helper is the Holy Spirit who has taken up residence inside us. He is the Spirit of truth.

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him, because He abides with you, and will be in you." (John 14:15-17)

God's Spirit is in us to help us. He brings about conviction of true guilt. If we are truly guilty, God wants to convict us so we will confess our guilt, repent from it, be forgiven and cleansed.

Conviction always comes in specifics. God never convicts us of more than one thing at a time because He knows that is all we can handle with confession and repentance.

On the other hand, Satan's job is to steal, kill and destroy. Instead of convicting us, he condemns us. He tells us we're no good, that we will never amount to anything. He tells us we have gone too far to be restored. He deals in generalities, not specifics.

On Sunday mornings, we wake up and think, "I should go to church today." But a little voice inside says, "Why go to church? You don't need to join those hypocrites." So we stay home. Then about noon, the voice says, "You're a poor excuse for a Christian, you didn't even go to church today." He puts us in a no-win situation. At one time he tells us we are hypocrites if we go to church, and the next time he tells us we're poor Christians because we don't go to church.

Satan uses condemnation to take from us the life that God gives us. His key is to deal in generalities rather than specifics. He tells us to look at our past and all the things we have done wrong. God doesn't work that way. God shows us a specific problem and tells us to deal with it. Satan lumps our sins together and tells us we will never amount to anything.

God convicts us of a specific sin, Satan condemns in generalities. Example: When we discipline a daughter, we don't discipline in generalities, we discipline for specifically wrong behavior or attitude. We may tell her

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not to bring a glass of water into the living room because she might spill it. She brings the water into the living room and deliberately spills it on the carpet. We tell her to take the glass into the kitchen, but instead she spills more water on the carpet. So we tell her we are going to spank her because we told her not to bring the water into the living room and she didn't do as she was told.

That is specific discipline. We don't pick her up and tell her we are going to spank her because she will never amount to anything. Because of all the wrong she has done, because she is no good, we are going to spank her. That is condemnation, it deals in generalities.

God puts His finger on what He wants us to look at. Satan tries to blow us away by using condemnation based upon generalities. Satan tells us we can never change all the mess we have made, but the truth is, we will change one issue at a time, as God deals with us.

God brings up specifics to lead us to repentance. The word, repentance, means to change our minds, which leads to a change of action. When we sin, we walk away from God. When we repent, we turn around and come back to God. If we feel sorry but we continue to sin, there is no true repentance, there is only remorse.

We can be very sorry, very remorseful for our sin, especially if we are caught. Actually, we are sorry for being caught, but we're not really sorry for our sin. We can be put in jail and feel remorseful. We are really sorry we are in jail, but we are not sorry enough to repent and not repeat the act that put us in jail.

Godly sorrow is repentance, worldly sorrow is remorse. We are sorry for the consequences we suffer, but we're not sorry for the sin we commit. If we believe the lies of Satan, we will only be remorseful. "Oh, look at what I have done!" "Look at the condition of my life!" "Oh, poor me, nobody loves me, this is the kind of life I have to look forward to."

That is not repentance, it is not conviction by the Holy Spirit, it is general condemnation from Satan expressed in remorse. Remorse brings death. Repentance brings life.

There is no way out of condemnation, because Satan shows us only a general picture, but nothing specific to do anything about. Conviction is different. The reason God convicts is to have us deal with a specific issue and get rid of it. When we turn it over to Him, we become free of its bondage, and we gain life in that area of our lives.

We run in circles when we are filled with remorse. We can't think straight, we become confused and devastated. If we don't turn to God, we run from the plan and purpose He has for our lives. Remorse is being sorry for the consequences of what happened. Repentance is being sorry we sinned against God. Repentance is godly sorrow.

Satan is not a creator, he is an exploiter. His two tools are deception and temptation. Condemnation is deception. He tells us we are no good, we will never change, we will never amount to anything. That is deception, it is nothing more than a lie.

God's word tells us if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. We have to make a decision who we believe. Do we believe God, or do we believe the voice that tells us we've gone too far?

Our problem is how to discern which voice belongs to God and which to Satan. We must be able to tell the difference between the two.

For example, consider a knife. If we put a knife in the hands of a thug on the street, he can cut a person to pieces. He can use the knife to kill and destroy a person's life. But if we put the same knife in the hands of a skilled surgeon, he can use it to save a person's life. The same tool can be used either to kill or to give life.

We have to discern between the Great Surgeon and the thug. The pain of surgery can be just as intense as the pain of being mutilated, but the reason for the surgery is to heal, while the reason for the mutilation is to kill.

When we hear the voice speaking to us, we have to discern who holds the knife. Is it God or Satan? If God has the knife, we should let Him do His healing surgery. It is the Holy Spirit convicting us of sin. If it is Satan condemning, we should have no part of it.

We discern by asking God to show us who holds the knife. That is the key. We look at the situation honestly, and ask ourselves, "Is it true, or is it false?" "Is it specific, or is it general?" If we confess our sin to God, He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We don't have to listen to a voice that tells us we have more to do about that issue to make it right. The bill has been paid. The condemning voice is false.

If we have a sin problem in our lives, we know we are wrong. Conviction from the Holy Spirit pierces our heart. He convicts so we will repent. When we repent, we confess with our mouths that that characteristic is sin, we agree with what God has laid upon our hearts. We make a decision to turn away from that characteristic, to give it to Him, and do it no more. When we do this, we gain life in that area of our lives.

When God convicts, the Holy Spirit, as referee, blows the whistle in our hearts. The Bible uses two words concerning the Holy Spirit. One of the words is grieve, and the other is quench. When we sin, we grieve or quench the Holy Spirit.

Example: We pour a cup of hot coffee. We can easily see steam rising from the cup. But if we cover the cup, the steam cannot escape, we quench it. When we refuse to repent, it is like putting a cover on the Holy Spirit. But when we confess and repent, we take the cover off the cup and allow the steam to come forth.

When the Holy Spirit convicts us, our responsibility is to stop right where we are, make it right with God, then go on with our lives. Satan would have us concentrate upon sin for which we have already been forgiven. He came to steal our peace, to steal the truth of the word of God from our hearts. We have to decide who we believe.

We stay in a state of confusion until we allow God to renew our minds, so we can discern who holds the knife. We do this through prayer, through study of the Bible and through fellowship with other Christians. As God renews our minds, our discernment improves.

We know the difference between true guilt and false guilt. We are either guilty or not. Condemnation always deals in false guilt, while conviction always deals in true guilt. If Jesus Christ died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, but we don't accept that forgiveness, we wallow in false guilt. It also means we place ourselves higher than God. We tell God that Jesus' death on the cross was not sufficient for our forgiveness.

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Many times we believe the word of God for others, but not for ourselves. This is because we move on our feelings, which is where Satan attacks us. Satan attacks as soon as we look toward God instead of the temptations of the world. He knows he is about to lose another victim, so he tries to fill our minds with lies, especially the lies concerning our forgiveness. If he can convince us we still have to do something to earn our forgiveness, we will concentrate upon that thing we feel we must do. That takes our eyes off God and His grace.

The Bible plainly states that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God sent Jesus for all, not for just a select few. We either believe that, or we don't. We either believe God is trying to accomplish something in us, or we don't. It requires a decision on our part.

Satan tried to blast Jesus in the wilderness; he certainly will try to blast us when we turn to Jesus. But as we allow God to renew our minds, we can discern who has the knife in his hand.

God created us with memory so we could remember, he didn't give us memory so we could forget. Our personal ministry will come out of our personal past. If God uses us to help others, it will be because we remember where we were and where He has brought us.

If the memory of a past event hurts, we need to ask ourselves if we brought that event to the Lord to receive His forgiveness. If we brought it before the Lord and confessed it, the Bible says we have been forgiven of that event. If we still feel guilty about it, we harbor false guilt. If we haven't brought it before the Lord, we experience true guilt.

Our feelings don't matter, what matters is God's Word. We may never feel good about some things we have done in the past. If we could turn back the hands of time, we would go back and change them. But we can't afford to entertain that guilt. We have brought it before the Lord and confessed it and asked Him to forgive us. We have done all we can about the matter. So far as we are concerned it is over and out of our hands, regardless of how we feel about it.

We were chemically addicted because chemicals made us feel good. We lived on our feelings. We have to change that characteristic and begin to live by faith. We have to make a decision to believe the word of God and begin to live that, instead of living according to our feelings.

If God brings to our minds, for instance, that we owe someone money, that is specific conviction of true guilt. He brings it to our attention so we can do something about it. Perhaps we cannot repay the money at the present time, but we can at least admit that we really do owe the money, and we can make a commitment to repay it as soon as possible. Once we have repaid the money, if the debt is brought to our minds again, that is false guilt, for the debt has been repaid.

God is the Spirit of truth, He always deals in truth; therefore He always convicts in truth. Guilt has nothing to do with what we feel, it has to do with truth. Are we doing what God has shown us specifically to do, regardless of how we feel about it?

Repentance starts with our attitude. Do we want to make things right? To follow God, we must. That is the way we come into line with the will of God. God wants us to clean up our act. He doesn't want our messes to remain, so they must be cleaned up. This is because we carry those messes around with us and they

interfere with our relationship with Him and with others.

The key to walking with the Lord is whether we do what God wants us to do, or what Satan tempts us to do, which is contrary to God's leading. The issue is our heart-condition. God looks at our hearts in the midst of every situation, for our hearts dictate our behavior.

HOMEWORK: Memorize *1 John 1:9*.

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson Two

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 101)

1. What is one of the most important things we can learn in our relationship with God?

2. What is one of the main problems we face when coming out of a life of addiction?

3. If we believe Satan's lie rather than God's truth, we live under condemnation. Explain.

4. How would you describe repentance?

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5. What is the difference between conviction and condemnation?

6. What is the difference between remorse and repentance?

7. Explain the difference between true guilt and false guilt.

Daily Moral Inventory

Lesson Three

We set aside thirty minutes each day for our Daily Moral Inventory, but there is more to that thirty minutes than just doing our DMI.

It is good to reflect upon the previous days and ask the Lord to show us the attitudes and actions He wants to change. Most important, however, is that we develop the habit of setting aside a certain time of the day for the Lord. Focusing upon the Lord is what quiet time is all about. That is why we need to be by ourselves. It helps us get away from the distractions around us.

If we need a private conversation with someone, we go to a quiet, private place where we can communicate without interruption. That is what we try to accomplish with the Lord.

Scriptures shows us that while Jesus was on earth, He did the same thing. He withdrew by Himself to communicate with the Father. Jesus was as busy as any of us could ever be, but He took time to get away.

And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there. (Mark 1:35)

And after bidding them farewell, He departed to the mountain to pray. (Mark 6:46)

But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray. (Luke 5:16)

And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. (Luke 6:12)

The night Jesus was in the garden at Gethsemane with His disciples, the night He was betrayed, He went to the garden to pray.

Jesus moved away from all distraction. People demanded His time and His attention, so he left them so He could commune with God. That is the purpose for our quiet time. In this program, we establish our quiet time in the morning. We start every day by pulling away from the busyness of the world to get alone with God.

When we leave a structured program, we can't take the structure with us, we have to establish a program of our own. We may not be able to spend the exact same time every day as we did in the structured program. We may have to move our time with God to another part of the day.

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"Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

We have to get away to be still. We must cut out all distractions so we can focus upon God and hear His voice speak to us.

In *Luke 10:38-42*, there is a story about two sisters, Mary and Martha:

Now as they were travelling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet.

Can you imagine the Lord Himself coming to your home? That was the situation with these two sisters. One sister, Mary, sat at His feet and listened to Him.

But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The difference between the two sisters was that one sat and listened to Jesus while the other ran around, busy making preparations. How many of us sit down at our quiet time and open our Bible, but our minds are busy thinking about what the day holds in store for us, or about a certain situation or problem we face?

We are a lot like Martha. We call it the Martha syndrome. We don't sit at the Lord's feet and listen. Notice that Mary wasn't talking, she was listening. That is why Scripture tells us to be still and know that He is God. When we do our DMI, God speaks to us. God spoke in Mary and Martha's house, but only one set of ears listened. The other set was too busy with preparations. And because she was busy, Martha missed the most important part.

When we sit down in the morning to do a quiet time, the most important part is to hear from God, not to do all the talking. We can sit with Bibles and note pads open, looking as if we are caught up in heaven, but our minds can be so busy with the cares of the world that we are not close to communicating with God. Our outward appearance is good, but inside we're empty.

Our intention may be good, but if we are not present before the Lord, we are not in a position to record any insight He may wish to give us. We give priority to preparation over communion.

The quiet time is the most important part of the day. It is more important than the classroom, than work, than anything in our lives. It is our personal time with God. That has to be the time we focus upon Him and allow Him to speak to us, to guide and direct us.

In our quiet time, we don't need to pray for our family members, it is a time of personal relationship with the Creator of the universe. God wants to speak to us about us. We are called to intercede for our loved ones, for those in authority and for those God puts upon our hearts, but our quiet time is not our time for intercession.

When Jesus left the multitudes, many sick people still needed His healing touch. But He pulled away from those obvious needs and went off alone to talk to the Father. We have to do the same. We have to leave everything behind, talk to the Lord, and allow Him to talk to us.

I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1)

In our quiet time we present ourselves to Him to listen to Him. The heart of this entire structured program is the quiet time. A program does not change us, God changes us. But we have to give Him access. We have to let Him speak to us and work in us. He is the One who makes the changes. No amount of printed information will do anything for chemical addiction. We can memorize all the words in all the workbooks, but if the Holy Spirit isn't within us, and if we are not focusing upon God, that information will only make us more of an addict.

It is like going to a doctor with a major problem. The doctor diagnoses our problem as a ruptured appendix. That is good to know, but the information will do us no good without surgery. Unless surgery is performed, we will die. Recognizing the problem is one thing, and it is important. But unless the Great Physician does a work in us, it is useless.

If we discovered our appendix was ruptured, but we were told they could do nothing for us, that information would worry us to death. It would make the situation worse. That is our position if we don't bring in the Spirit of God to perform the spiritual operation we need. It is important for us to recognize our problem, but the second step is to pray and allow the Lord to come into that problem, that attitude, that heart condition, and work His healing.

When we do our DMI, it usually isn't difficult to recognize our bad attitudes of the previous day. Most of them were obvious. But unless we allow the Lord to come into those bad areas, unless we release them to the Lord and let His Spirit do His work, our attitudes will not change.

We can go to bed with a bad attitude at night and wake up the next morning with the same bad attitude. Sleep doesn't cure a bad attitude, sometimes it makes it worse. To release the Holy Spirit into those areas of our lives that God wants to change, we focus upon Him.

Remember, in *1 John 1:9*, we were told if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In our DMI, we take one specific bad attitude we had the previous day and do with it what *1 John 1:9* says. God then forgives and cleanses us.

We need only to release the Spirit of God into that attitude and He cleanses it from us. But first, we must confess, we must agree with God that it is sin. Perhaps we harbor resentment for a brother and it makes us miserable all day. When we ask the Lord to forgive us and cleanse us of that sin, He does it. That is a DMI in action.

This lets us start every day clean, no matter how dirty we were in our minds and thoughts and actions the previous day. When we apply our DMI properly, we begin every day fresh and clean. We have only to give the Lord access in those areas of our lives.

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We have to make an effort, we have to decide to focus, to discipline our thoughts and center them on Jesus Christ instead of on the activities of the world around us. God not only cleanses us, He heals us and changes our personality. Our requirement is to present ourselves to God.

If we had a medical problem that needed the care of a physician, we would have to present ourselves to the physician. It is exactly the same in our relationship with the Lord, we have to present ourselves to Him. He can then heal and restore us.

We may have been conditioned to think that presenting ourselves means to sit down somewhere, perhaps in a church, to hear the word of God. That is not what the Bible means. When Jesus ministered, thousands sat at His feet. But very few actually heard what He said. Most were looking for a free ride, a healing, a meal, a thrill of watching Him deliver demons.

In like manner, we can enter a regeneration program and present ourselves physically. We think because we are physically in the program, we will automatically be healed of our addiction. But our bodies can be in the program and our minds somewhere else. In this condition, it is absurd to think that God can speak to us. How much attention are we giving to God?

We may feel that we are doing good because we are physically in the program. We don't realize that our heads are still outside the program; therefore, God is unable to work any kind of change in our lives. We're really not present in the program at all.

Quiet time is not sitting down somewhere with the Bible and a notebook and expecting something good to happen. Unless we present ourselves to the Lord, unless we still ourselves before Him, He will not be able to speak to us nor make any changes in us. Our minds have to be focused upon Him. This is the only way to give Him access to our wills and our emotions.

If we don't make this effort, no change takes place. We can't receive healing from the Lord if we're not in His presence. The hardest thing to do in a relationship with God is to pay attention to Him. The easiest thing to do is to focus upon everything else, just as Martha did.

Martha focused on the needs presented by the situation, and she got angry because her sister wasn't focused where she was focused. As we present ourselves to Him and are still before Him, He speaks to us and works in us.

Sometimes we think the Lord is deaf because we ask Him and we don't get an answer. But God isn't deaf, we are. We refuse to be still and present ourselves to Him to hear what He has to say to us. We don't focus long enough to allow His Spirit to work in us.

That is the key to staying sober and drug free. The thing we take out of this structured program to sustain us, will not be the teaching nor the workbooks, it will be our relationship with God. If we don't learn how to come into the presence of the Lord, we will not make it on the outside.

We meet the God who heals while we are in the structured program, and we take Him out of the program with us when we leave. We know how to communicate with Him and maintain a relationship with Him

outside the program. It is easy to stay sober and drug free while in a program, and it is easy to stay spiritual. But when we leave the program, it is another matter.

We must have our own program in place, and it must include a close relationship with God, centered in our quiet time with Him.

If we expect to have a relationship with someone we have never known, we will have to get to know that person. We do this by:

1. Spending time with him.
2. Listening to him.
3. Communicating with him on a personal level.

Most of us pray to God, tell Him what we want, say, "Amen," and go on. We never listen to what God has to say to us, or what He wants to show us. We do all the talking. It is a one-sided conversation. What kind of relationship would that develop with another human being? What if we never gave that person an opportunity to communicate with us? Instead, we said what we wanted to say, then walked off.

What if that person had a million dollars he wanted to give us, but we turned around and walked off and never gave him a chance to tell us? God has something to give us worth more than a mere million dollars. But we don't let Him give it to us because we are too busy with the demands put upon us by the world. There are too many preparations taking our time.

Think about this. There is nothing we can pray that God doesn't already know. We can't surprise God, or tell Him something that will shake Him. What we need to do is to learn to listen.

Example: Our daughter is playing with a toy that is broken. We can see that it is broken. When she brings us the toy and tells us it is broken, it doesn't surprise us, because we already know it is broken. We didn't move in and fix it for her when we saw it was broken, but when she brings it to us she waits while we fix it. If she hands it to us, tells us it is broken, then walks off, we won't fix it, because it obviously isn't important to her.

It is like that in our relationship with the Lord. He already knows. But when we come to Him to seek His guidance and direction, we tell Him what we want and we walk off. We don't have the patience to wait for Him to give us a word concerning the situation. We never give God an opportunity to do what we ask Him to do. Like Martha, we're too busy.

We also have a tendency to think that after a period of repeated quiet times and praying and reading the Bible and walking with the Lord, that we don't have to continue the practice. We feel that we have arrived. We feel that we can have our quiet time on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Then on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday we will do whatever we want to do. That can become a fatal flaw in our thinking.

Relationship with the Lord is not once or twice a week, it is daily. It is the desire of an earthly father to be with and speak to his child every day. God feels the same way about us. He wants to see us and to talk to us every single day. His heart's desire is to heal and change us, but He can't do it unless we give Him access.

The quiet time and the DMI are a useless waste of time without the Lord. We will beat ourselves to death in

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our DMI if we attempt it without the Lord. There is no way to get out from under our bad attitudes and actions and behavior except by the Spirit of God. If we are not serious about developing a relationship with the Lord, the DMI will cut us to pieces.

The DMI is not made to condemn. Only Satan condemns. The DMI is a tool to be used by the Spirit of God to convict us of certain characteristics God wants to change. Once we identify our defects in character, we ask the Lord to come into those areas, cleanse us and set us free. He is the solution to the problem. First, we recognize the problem, then we invite Jesus to come in.

It frustrates us to recognize our problem but have no solution. If it is a painful problem, we will apply our own solution. We have learned how to medicate our problems.

The DMI is an emotional mirror of yesterday.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23,24)

This should be our prayer at the beginning of our quiet time. The Psalmist asks God to search him. He gives God access to his innermost self. He wants God to know his heart. He wants God to bring to his attention anything he is anxious about, for this reveals his lack of trust. He asks God to see if he has done anything to hurt Him or other people. Finally, he asks God to lead him according to His eternal purpose.

In our DMI, we look at our attitudes of yesterday. We ask God to search us and show us what He wants to change. Some things are obvious, we already know what they are. But God shows us things we may have overlooked.

No matter how we mark our DMI sheet, the sheet will not change us. We only change through God's influence in our lives. But the DMI allows us to do one thing we have never done before. It lets us look at ourselves and ask God to show us the problems within us that He wants to change. In the past, we looked at other people, places and things. But when we go before God in our quiet time, He wants to talk about us.

This does not mean that He wants only to show us something wrong, He also affirms us and loves us and gives us words of encouragement. As we progress in the program, the DMI shows us things God has already begun to change. We see positive results in our changes of attitude and behavior. The DMI, coupled with the Holy Spirit, changes our lives.

The Creator of this world uses our quiet time to speak to us personally. He has tried to communicate with us before. The problem is not that He couldn't speak, the problem is that we couldn't hear. But things are changing.

God brought us to this program for a purpose. He put us in a position where He can get our attention. Now He wants to speak to us. The DMI is a tool He uses.

A farmer can have the finest tools in the world, but if he doesn't have seed, the tools will be of no use to him. We can have all the tools of a regeneration program, but without the Holy Spirit, the tools are useless.

Number Four on the DMI list is being a taker. If we confess to having been a taker all our lives, and if we tell God we don't want to be a taker anymore, and we release that characteristic to Him. He forgives us and cleanses us. He works it out of us, and works in the opposite. He makes givers of us instead of takers.

But before we can become givers, we must first recognize and confess that we have been takers. All we have to do is recognize our problem and do what *1 John 1:9* says to do. When we do, God changes us.

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson Three

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 102)

1. What is the most important accomplishment established with a quiet time?

2. When we leave a structured program, what do we have to do?

3. What is the most important part of a quiet time?

4. Why is our quiet time more important than the classroom or work?

5. No amount of printed information will do anything for our chemical addiction. Explain.

6. What is the only way to give God access to our wills and our emotions?

7. If we don't learn how to come into the presence of the Lord, we will not make it on the outside. Explain.

8. The quiet time and the DMI is a waste of time without the Lord. Explain.

Daily Moral Inventory

Lesson Four

We know that God brought us into a structured program to work in us through His Holy Spirit. The first step of that work is salvation.

From the point of salvation, the Holy Spirit begins to renew our minds. Our problem is mental, we don't see things as they really are. We have been in our fantasy world so long that we can't recognize reality. Exposing us to reality, God brings us into truth. The Holy Spirit is known as the Spirit of truth. God brings us truth, not to condemn us, but to convict and change us.

On the negative list of attitudes in our DMI, we find one in which we qualify. Not something we express occasionally, but something we have become. "I have become what I have thought." Our thoughts control our lives. We then look on the opposite side of the page and we see what we will become when Christ finishes His work in us.

If our nature is impatience, that is, if impatience dominates our lifestyle, we can expect to become the opposite, because Christ develops patience in us. First, we recognize our problem, then we invite the Lord to work the problem out of us. That is why He brought us here. We are in the program to become positive. He has the "Asset" column in mind for us, not the "Liability" column.

For the majority of us, our attitude has been negative for so long that we habitually walk around feeding ourselves with self-talk, such as, "Poor me, I'm locked into this program for six months." "I don't have a job." "I don't have a wife anymore." "I don't have a car." "Poor little old me!" "Nobody loves me." "I have nothing to look forward to."

We waste time swimming around in a puddle of self-pity. God wants to replace that self-pity with serenity. He wants to give us His peace which passes all understanding. In the midst of serenity, He shows us there is a plan and purpose for our lives, and He is in the process of working it out.

Some of us have a problem with complaining. God fills us with gratitude to replace it. We can always find something to complain about, but when we look at reality, we see that we have family and a home and a job, and everything else we really need. God opens our eyes to see what we really have. He gives us a grateful spirit to replace our complaining spirit.

We can recognize these negative characteristics, but we can't change them. We need to say, "Lord, I

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confess my complaining attitude. I am wrong, I'm ungrateful. I ask You to come in and change me." When we put it before Him, He makes the change.

One of the negative categories on the DMI is vulgar, immoral thoughts. When we confess and ask God to cleanse us, he replaces those thoughts with clean, spiritual thinking. He breaks down the strongholds of lust and sexual perversion.

During our quiet time, we are to find out specifically, what God wants to change. He brings it to the surface as we work our DMI, and that is what we release to Him.

God will not ask us to do anything He will not help us with. When He requires a change in our behavior, He empowers us to make that change. He walks side by side with us and continually gives us strength, so long as we continue to call upon Him.

For instance, if God tells us to quit smoking, he gives us the strength to quit, and He continues to strengthen us as we continually release the desire of the flesh to Him. He never puts something on us that we can't handle, with Him alongside us.

The quiet time and Daily Moral Inventory is a personal time with the Lord. It is a time when He strengthens us. We don't discuss world problems or family problems or anything else during our quiet time. We discuss only those things in our character that God wants to change. Quiet time is a time between God and ourselves.

Example: We arrive at work and the boss assigns us to do certain tasks. This is so we know what to do that day. It is like that when we go before the Lord every morning. The Lord gives us instructions for the day.

Some of us may say, "Well, I can't hear from God." That is true to a certain extent. We rarely hear God speak to us in an audible voice. We hear from God in different ways, but He always speaks to us in a way that we understand. God doesn't talk to us in a high theological manner. When He speaks, we understand completely. We hear from God in four different ways:

1. Through His Holy Spirit within us. The Bible tells us that His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God. The Holy Spirit works within our human spirit to change us. The Holy Spirit speaks to us to convict, rebuke, correct, and to give us peace. He gives us discernment to recognize the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, holy and unholy. Guidance, direction and wisdom come from the Holy Spirit within us. We may find ourselves speaking wisdom to someone in trouble, then wondering where we got the wisdom for that moment. It came from the Holy Spirit within us.
2. Through the word of God. When we go to God in trouble or fear, or seeking guidance, sometimes He brings a Scripture to mind. This is one way God speaks to us. God's Word is for today, not just for ancient times. It is always current, and always for us. Not a problem exists today that isn't addressed in some way in the Word of God. He speaks to us also as we read His Word. In the midst of reading, a phrase may jump out at us and strike our heart. That is God speaking to us through His Word.

3. Through circumstances and situations. God opens and closes doors in our lives to get us where He wants us. He used that method to bring us to this program. We should remain sensitive to the circumstances around us, and constantly seek God for revelation of what He wants to reveal to us in the midst of the situation in which we find ourselves.
4. Through the body of Christ. He speaks to us through other men in the program, as well as through the staff. We may hear what God wants us to do as other people speak. They may speak directly to us, or they may be speaking to someone else, but we discern that God has spoken to our heart.

Example: Suppose, through our quiet time an attitude of resentment surfaces. We let it go, we don't listen to the Holy Spirit, we don't heed what the word of God says we should do about releasing it. We don't heed the circumstances and situations He put us in to deal with that attitude. Because of our disobedience, we can expect to hear about our attitude of resentment in the Sociogram, as the body of Christ speaks to us. God raises up people to speak to us about it. He does this because He loves us and wants us to change that specific attitude.

God gets our attention one way or another. He brings us the easiest way we are willing to come. The only way to avoid the work of God in our lives is to completely rebel and turn away.

If we are still and we listen for God to speak, we will hear what He has to say. In the past, He tried to speak to us many times, but we didn't listen. So we had to experience His wrath, as He allowed us to go our own way when we turned our backs toward Him.

We can talk and reason with our child, but there comes a time, if that child does not listen and obey, that we have to punish him. This is not to condemn nor hurt the child, it is to bring about a positive change in its life. God uses the same method on us. He allows us to feel the pain of the world because He loves us and wants us to change.

But we don't have to go that route. He has an easier road. That is why He sent His Spirit. Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Helper. And as God's Spirit works in us and shows us our attitudes and the changes He wants to bring about, we confess those attitudes to the Lord and ask Him to change us. We begin to pray specifically, and God heals specifically.

If God tells us we have a problem with worry, we don't need to pray about a situation in the Far East. We need to pray about our tendency to worry, and the lack of trust that causes it. We bring before the Lord the specific problem He puts His finger on.

After God gives us insight about our problem, and we pray, the next step is to record God's message in our journal. Our journal is very important. Satan tries to steal the blessing God gives us by causing us to doubt that He speaks to us. But if we write it down and reflect upon it we see that it is from God, because we would not express it in the way God gives it to us.

The God who created the whole world speaks to us personally about ourselves. That is certainly worth writing down. As we journal, we begin to hear God more clearly. We see, as we look at our journal, how God speaks, and our relationship with him grows stronger and closer.

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The quiet time and the DMI are our keys to recovery. Unless we commit ourselves to the Lord and allow God to work in us to cleanse us of our stinking thinking, of our wrong motives and our bad attitudes, we won't change. We may clip off some habits, but the attitudes stay the same.

When we trim a hedge, it always grows back. To get rid of it, we have to pull it out by the roots. It is the same with attitudes. They are our root problems. But sometimes we don't see those roots. That is why we need the Spirit of God to show them to us.

The DMI also helps us to be honest. The influence of chemical addiction has kept us from being honest with ourselves or with anyone else. We have deceived even ourselves in what is reality, what is truth. God brought us to this point to open our eyes and set us free.

He wants to teach us how to live sober and drug free, and how to commune with Him on a relational basis. He wants us to experience His peace and not to worry about drinking and drugging. He wants us to be the fathers and husbands we're supposed to be.

We wouldn't be in a Christian regeneration program if God hadn't chosen us. We must let that sink in. He reached down and picked us out of a lifetime of sin, then He placed us in His kingdom to clean us up and send us out as His representatives.

It is incorrect to say that we have chosen God. God chose us, we didn't choose Him. Also, we didn't find God. God wasn't lost, nor was He hiding. For reasons known only to Himself, He picked us to have a relationship with Him. He chose us to bless us, not to condemn us. He wants us to join His family.

He has given us the opportunity to hear His voice and to experience His presence on a daily basis. The purpose of our quiet time and DMI is to experience God as He speaks to us, guiding and directing us to His end, His purpose for our lives.

That is why we need to be off by ourselves, and that is why we need to be focused. The key to our quiet time is to be still, so we can present ourselves to God and hear Him speak to us. Then we journal what God tells us each day.

If we miss our quiet time, we can expect to miss God's peace and serenity throughout the day. But when we make our quiet time, His peace lifts us up above the situations and circumstances of the day and gives us serenity.

If My people, who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

That is what happens during our quiet time. We humble ourselves, we pray, and we seek His face. We have to do that every day. In the process, He turns us from our wicked ways. He hears our prayers and forgives us.

Our tendency is always to look at other people. When we look at others, we can justify our behavior. All mankind does this, but especially those addicted to chemicals. We compare ourselves with those who are in

worse condition than we are. That kind of behavior really shows our self-righteousness. As we do our quiet time, God reveals the truth to us.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people; swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

"But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

(Luke 18:10-14)

When we come into the presence of our Lord our attitude should be one of humility, aware of the fact that we are sinners, ready to put ourselves at the mercy of God. We do not enter our quiet time with a judgmental attitude toward our fellow-men. Only if our attitude is right will our Lord be able to work His will in our lives.

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson Four

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 103)

1. Why does God bring us into truth?

2. What does God have in mind for us as we work our DMI?

3. What is God's goal for us?

“ Daily Moral Inventory ”

4. Explain the four different ways we can expect to hear from God.

5. After God gives us insight about our problem, and after we pray, what is our next step?

6. Why is it incorrect to say that we have chosen God?

7. What should be our attitude when we come into the presence of our Lord?

Introduction To The Contract

Lesson One

The contract is extremely important. It opens our eyes to areas of our lives that need to be adjusted, healed and restored. This serious step enables us to get our lives right with the Lord.

The contract may appear to be a mechanical exercise, but as we become acquainted with it, we see why it is an important instrument. Some of us have been in rehabilitation programs before this one. Most of us approach such programs with a "help me" attitude. Obviously, we didn't receive the help we thought we needed, or we would not have ended up in another program.

It may be the same in our marriage experience. We may have been married more than once, and we probably asked our spouse to help us, but the help we really received was divorce. We may have asked our parents for help, but though they tried to help us, we didn't experience any inner change. It was probably the same with employers. Perhaps they stuck with us, but they couldn't make a significant change in us.

It was no different with the police and with judges. They may have been lenient with us when we promised not to use drugs again, but they could not change our lives. We get angry with the "system" when we are put in jail because the "system" won't help us. The truth is that it is impossible for anyone to make internal changes in us.

As part of the contract, we look at our previous and present relationships. We examine these people who reached out to help us. Often, we bit the hand that fed us. We may have cried out from the confines of a 6x9 cell for someone to help us, but when help came, we couldn't fulfill the promise not to use again.

We must understand that something is wrong within us, not within those who try to help us. People reached out to help, but we have an inner flaw that causes us to repeat our dysfunctional behavior. In our intake interview, one of the questions asked was, "Why should we work with you? What is going to be different this time?" There are plenty of programs available, most of which are shorter and easier than this one.

The missing element is the proper mentality. We want people to help us continue in our addiction without suffering the consequences. We have a "taker" mentality. We take, but we're unwilling to give up something. We are unwilling to help ourselves. Before anything changes in us, we must learn to be "givers" instead of "takers." This program gives us a chance to become givers.

“ Introduction To The Contract ”

In the past, our cry of "help me" actually said, "Enable me to continue my current lifestyle without causing me to surrender my thought and habit patterns. Enable me to go through life without any commitment to myself or to anyone else." It is easy to see that there is no surrender in that mentality, no willingness to give up our right to use drugs.

The truth is, there can be no change in life unless we become givers. That includes partial commitment as well. We may be willing to give up one portion of our lifestyle, but not another. We want to establish our own rules, but we can't play such games with life. When we try to play games, we always return to the sewer we came out of.

Some people return to this program because they didn't deal with things they should have. The Lord brings them back in His grace and mercy, so they can receive total healing.

Those of us who attended secular programs had to pay exorbitant fees to attend. The fees may have been paid by insurance, which gave us the opportunity to be "takers" again, but we still didn't give up anything; therefore, we weren't healed.

The contract we are about to study is our contract between ourselves and God, ourselves and others, and ourselves and ourselves. In Hebrews, Chapter Eight, we read about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The people in the Old Testament broke their part of the covenant and missed the blessings of God. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ was the only One who fulfilled His contract, His commitment. He established a New Covenant between man and God.

Our contract is not a rehab contract. Rehab means to return to our former state. As soon as we entered this program, we stopped using drugs and alcohol, so we returned to our former state. We need more than a rehab contract. This is a Regeneration Contract, a contract in which we agree to put all our marbles in one basket and surrender the whole thing to God. We agree to allow God to make us new creatures, through the power of Jesus Christ within us.

Some of us are thinking more clearly now that we have returned to our former state. We may feel that we have a grip on ourselves and that we can make it this time. But this is deception. We need to be regenerated, or there will be no lasting change in our lives. We need to allow the Lord to work out what needs to be worked out within us.

Now that our minds are clear, the Lord wants us to commit. His plan isn't just sobriety. He will put people in our lives to help us become regenerated. But this requires us to commit to be willing to face past issues in our lives. He wants us to stop running from the reality of our past. To do this, part of the contract involves taking a hard look at our past. We won't wallow in self-pity, we will simply look at it and see how our reaction to it has affected our lives.

When we look at our past, we see that things are not all roses and sunshine. At this point, we have to learn how to trust Jesus Christ, even though we can't see Him. That isn't easy. In the natural, it doesn't make sense. Our mindset up to this point is, "seeing is believing." We will have to get beyond our logic and our senses and become open to the spiritual power of our Lord.

Eventually we will "see," because there will be results. God's plan for us is not just sobriety. He brought us here to learn how to live a life free from the bondage of the world. He doesn't want us just to survive, He wants us to live.

Our contract begins to set us free. If we don't fulfill it, it will be just as it is in the world, we will receive no benefits nor pay. However, we will receive eternal benefits as we actuate the contract.

We will be asked to determine if Jesus Christ really rules our hearts. When we enter into a contract with Him we have to be sure we want to. It is something to which we commit. Our prayer should be, "Lord, help me be committed. Help me get honest. Help me get real."

Some of us may be excited at the thought of what will happen. Others may not be very thrilled at the prospect of trusting God with our lives. However, we are here at this point because God brought us here, and He will work out our feelings as we embark upon this program with Him.

The contract is divided into three parts: our past; our present; our future. We are currently in the present. All we have at the moment is today. When we do our DMI every day, there are two major attitudes to consider, attitudes to which we have been in bondage a long time.

When we look at the past, the first thing to flare up is denial. Denial builds thick walls. We don't see beyond the walls, and we say, "Everything is fine." But now we are in a program with others who come from the same background of chemical addiction, and those others will help us out of our state of denial. They will speak the truth to us, in love.

God surrounds us with people who help us tear down walls and get free of our bondage. Everyone in the program is cut from the same cookie dough of addiction, swindling and hustling. They know all the games, and they will call us on any false acting they discern in us. They will say, "Hey, I don't think you need to be doing that, or talking like that. You need to look at that."

Denial is suppression of truth. We lie to ourselves to cover the shame and guilt and misery we feel. In chemical addiction, that is like pouring gasoline on a fire. Denial is responsible for destroying many significant relationships in our lives. We are in denial about a lot of issues. We know that we are in denial, but we have a difficult time getting honest.

It is easier to put up walls of denial than to face reality. But when we go that route, we destroy relationships. Our Regeneration Contract will break us of our refusal to get honest. One form of denial is, "I'll stop drinking whiskey, I'll just drink beer instead." It is crazy for us to think that we can drink or drug and have a normal life. That is an impossibility. One beer starts a chain of events that lead us back to the gutter again.

Our walls of denial are very thick. What they finally do is put us in a fantasy world, especially about the future. We can believe that life isn't so bad, and that we are not hurting anyone, except maybe ourselves, and we can handle that. But actually, life is a nightmare. We really don't want to use, but we can't deal with what our life has become, so we medicate reality.

When we take a sober look at our past, our future looks bleak. To avoid looking at our future, we drift into our self-induced fantasy world. We always think it will be different, but that is fantasy. People eventually get

“ Introduction To The Contract ”

tired hearing the same fantasy from us, and they leave us. In our moments of reality, we see that we drag others into our pits of hell. We may not do it intentionally, but we do it, nevertheless. We always hurt the ones closest to us.

Denial and projection are deeply ingrained in us when we first enter the program. Those in the program will see it easily and bring it to our attention so it can be faced and dealt with. We don't want to see the truth about ourselves, so we project our self-hate upon other people. When we get mired into denial and projection, there is very little hope in our lives.

The only reality we have is this very moment, but that is where God lives with us. We sometimes struggle with that, but as we allow the Lord to work in us, we can look at our past and learn to make realistic short-term goals that will help us. In this way, our past and our future will no longer be the same, we will have hope for our future. The contract is designed for that purpose.

When we get honest, the walls we have hid behind begin to come down. We must understand, however, that we put up our walls, so we have to take them down. The Lord will help us accomplish this. He boxes us in, the heat gets hotter, and our flesh squirms, but the Lord continues the pressure until the truth begins to surface. He puts us through this process so He can get to the truth and heal us.

The more honest we become, the more we realize that we have no one to blame for our condition but ourselves. As Christ helps us see that, He works in us and begins to change us. If used correctly, this contract helps us get honest so we can break through our walls.

The best we can do in our own energy and will power is to rehab ourselves, get ourselves back to our former state. That isn't enough, because our former state is what brought us into our addiction. But with Christ in us, we can be set free.

We must recognize that our previous commitments have fallen short because we have never been able to stand behind our words. God shows us that we don't have what it takes to fulfill a commitment. Our track record should convince us of this. We are like the Jews of the Old Testament who didn't keep the covenant. But He blessed those who repented, those who changed their minds and decided to follow Him.

The Holy Spirit within us enables us to keep our commitment for the first time in our lives, and for the first time in our lives be set free. Denial and projection has worked like a boomerang. Our judgment of others has come right back and hit us in the face. Only the Lord can free us of the judgment we have brought upon ourselves.

Prayer is the key to our contract. Prayer helps us face reality. The teaching helps us see reality, but prayer helps us face reality, and opens us for the Lord to deal with it. The only requirement is a sincere desire to make our lives right with the Lord. If that desire is not evident, we can expect someone to come to us and address that issue with us out of care and concern for us.

This program is an organized opportunity for us to get our lives right with the Lord. It gives us all the material we need to help ourselves. No one can impose healing in our lives, it must originate from within as we relate to a living Lord.

The first step is to establish our relationship with God. It is saying, "God, I need help!" There must be a sincere commitment to want help from the One who can give it. The staff is committed, but the program consists of more than just staff, it includes everyone in the program. The program aims to help those who come for help, and each person plays a significant part.

People and organizations outside the program are committed also. They believe in the program and they lend support in the form of money and prayer and other contributions. The church groups and alumni don't know us personally, but they are committed just as strongly as if they knew us. Obviously, God is committed to us also or He wouldn't have kept us alive this long.

We are not in this program because of our good behavior, we are here because God is involved in our lives. God can use this opportunity to change our "want to," so we want to do His will. Our motives and our values will change. God's "wants" will become our "wants." At first we may feel that we don't want to be in this kind of program, but God will work in us to change our attitude. That is part of what regeneration is all about, God regenerates our thinking.

In the intake interview we were told that the program would not be easy. It is not impossible, but it is tough. It is difficult for us to face the very things we have been running from. But that is the beginning. The contract is where we start.

We will build houses during this phase of the program. Building our houses is designed to grab us by the heart and turn us inside out, exposed for all to see. We must bring all our hidden issues into the light to be healed. We learn how to be honest about our feelings and our damaged relationships. We bring them into the light so the Lord can cleanse us and forgive us.

Knowing that we will be putting up our houses, we should pray, "Lord, I want to get as much honesty and as much truth as possible. I want to get all I can get out of this."

Each of us wants to be set free from chemical addiction. But more important, we need to be set free from the sin that has controlled our lives. Sin has separated us from God, from ourselves and from others. To be set free from that sin is more important than just getting sober and drug free. God has something more important in mind for us.

There is a big difference between a man who sins and a man who lets sin control his life. The chemically addicted knows no other way than to let sin control his life. The flesh knows only how to sin. It is the first thought in the morning and the last thought at night. Flesh is incapable of performing spiritual works. The flesh lives for the world, and the world fills the flesh.

God puts His finger on our sinful issues. He makes us look at where we are in our relationship with Him and with others He puts in our path. We can't play games with God. This is a matter of life and death. If we don't get honest while we are in the structured program, we certainly will not get honest when we return to the outside.

In this controlled, structured environment, people genuinely care for us. It is all right to make mistakes. If we don't take advantage of this opportunity, we may never have another chance at recovery. We can't deal with one thing without dealing with everything. We can't make our own rules. God plays according to His rules

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only, we have no choice about that.

We may look at the contract and its mechanics and say, "Yeah, I'll do the contract. I'll go through the motions. I'll write down what staff wants to hear to make them happy and keep them off my back." That is the wrong attitude. It does no good to work the program to make the staff happy. That will bring no change in our lives. We must work the contract for ourselves. The staff doesn't know our hearts, but God does, we can't fool Him.

We need to pray and commit ourselves to be committed. The contract is our contract, it doesn't belong to anyone else. It is the responsibility of the staff to hold us accountable to be as honest as we can. When we turn in our contract homework we shouldn't be surprised when staff comes to us and asks us some specific questions about what we have written. Staff is our friend, not our enemy. This is not a condition of "us" versus "them." Everyone has the same goal: complete regeneration.

If we don't get honest, we will short-change ourselves. That means the same issues that put us in chemical addiction will continue to flare up and cause us to repeat the process.

HOMEWORK: On pages 4 and 5, we look at our past. This is what we have been running from. This is relational, in that it deals with relationships. We have trashed a lot of people and hurt a lot of relationships. Page 5 calls for us to record a brief history. We are not to write in the actual Contract Workbook. We are to write on separate notebook paper. Like all homework, we are to fold it lengthwise, label it page 5, exercise 1-A, and put our name on it. It is better to use pencil and keep it neat.

Exercise 1-A is a simple, basic exercise. This will get the ball rolling. We are to write a paragraph on each relationship of family, job, health and God. We are to write about reality, not hypothetical situations. Initially, we may struggle with this contract, that is normal, but the Lord will help us work through it. We have to learn to deal with the things that are deep inside. Otherwise, our feelings will continue to control our lives, and that will get us in trouble.

Introduction To The Contract

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 104)

1. Why is it impossible for others to make internal changes in us?

2. Explain why we need a Regeneration Contract, rather than a rehab contract.

3. Why do we resort to denial and projection?

4. Why must we understand that we don't have what it takes to fulfill a commitment?

5. What is even more important than being set free of chemical addiction? Explain.

Our Onion Skins

Lesson One

Relationship is the key word as we continue to work on our contract. Jesus always talked about relationships in the Gospels.

Identifying significant relationships, on page 6 of our contract, is relatively simple. We are to list the six most significant people in our lives and their relationship to us. This can include one or two people who have passed away, if our relationship with them still affects us significantly. We are interested primarily in those who have had a profound influence on us.

Parents, for example, impacted our lives. A particular teacher, or a friend may have influenced us deeply. These are people we believed in; therefore, they had a significant influence upon us.

We call this exercise "onion skin" because when we cut an onion in half we see that it is layered. As we peel back the layers, it begins to affect our eyes and we get tearful. As we approach the third or fourth layer, the onion becomes more difficult to peel, because its middle is tough. It resists being torn apart.

We are similar to an onion. We're tough in the middle and we have a strong smell on the outside that pushes people away. With the Lord's help, this exercise helps us see how far we have pushed people away during our chemical addiction. It may not have been intentional, but we did it, nevertheless. This exercise opens our eyes to that reality.

Like the onion skin, we put up layers of protection, walls of facades, to protect our inner part. When we first come into a program, we feel worthless. We're filled with shame and guilt. The reality of where our lives have taken us has driven us to a program such as this.

Most of us grew up in dysfunctional homes. We learned at an early age not to talk, not to trust and not to feel. That has become part of our personality today. This is the first protective layer we develop, and it comes at a very early age.

It has been proved that if infants aren't nurtured and loved and given affection, they will die. In a dysfunctional home, love and attention and correction are either absent or insufficient. This means we did not get nurtured emotionally. Adult children of alcoholics are good examples.

No home is perfect; everyone grows up in some degree of dysfunction. In a dysfunctional home no one talks about the issues, such as Dad's drinking, so we learn not to talk. Because Dad or Mom tells us one thing but

“ Our Onion Skins ”

doesn't follow through, we learn that we can't trust anybody. Lack of trust becomes normal to us. When we are physically punished, we are told not to cry, so we learn not to feel. Society tells us if we cry, we're not men, we're wimps or sissies. That isn't true.

This program is designed to help us learn how to talk and how to trust and how to feel. These dysfunctions are so deeply ingrained in us that they have become part of our personality. Even though the dysfunction may have been imposed upon us when we were three years old, we still have it as part of our personality.

The second layer of our onion skin is comprised of rejection. We are easily rejected. We take correction as rejection. As children we are given a lot of negatives, "Don't do this, don't do that!" We may want to help around the house, but we are told that we are too little, that we are not to touch certain things. If there is no follow-up, no explanation, just the negative command, we are inclined to feel rejection.

We carry this attitude into a program such as this and we get defensive when we are corrected. We may even want to run, to get away from what we identify as rejection. We have to understand that God has His finger on that characteristic of our personality. He has brought it to the surface so it can be healed and we can be free from that negative bondage.

If we can't learn to trust the others in the program, all of whom God brought here, we will not learn how to trust God. One way to gauge our relationship with God is how open and honest we are with the people God puts in our path.

If someone speaks to us in the Sociogram, our first inclination may be to defend ourselves. We may challenge that person's right to speak into our lives. But we need to receive what he says and allow the Lord to help us clear up that area of our personality.

To change us, God has to correct us, but if we receive His correction as rejection, we are not open to change. Remember, our stinking thinking brought us to this point of need.

Another layer of our onion skin is fear, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of man. We want to hide from the issues in our lives because we don't want to be exposed to the gaze of others. This is one reason we tend to associate with like-minded people. This helps us avoid the issues in our lives so we don't have to get real.

We also manipulate others and find our significance in things such as work and sports and women and money, instead of facing our problems. All these things permit us to hide from the issues. Everyone coming out of addiction has these same issues, these same underlying problems, and they are deeply ingrained.

Fear generates bad attitudes, which is another layer of our onion skin. The two main bad attitudes are denial and projection. We are prone to suppress reality and blame everyone else for our problem. Part of who we are, is our reluctance to get real, avoiding all correction.

We feel we are invincible. We are young and strong and resilient, so we can bounce back without being harmed by the drugs and alcohol we pour into our systems. We convince ourselves we will not be arrested and put behind bars because we are not common criminals. This becomes a "me against the world" mentality. That is definitely a bad attitude. It is denial at its worst.

When we are confronted by someone, we deny that we have a problem, or we quickly project all blame onto the person confronting us. We may tell them we hate them because they cause us so much trouble. This is especially true if we have an alcoholic parent. We hate that parent because of his behavior while under the influence. But through our judgmentalism, we end up being the same way, we end up alcoholics.

Out of our bad attitude comes another onion skin which we call sinful actions. Sinful actions lead us into sex, drugs, and the wrong kind of music. We feel that we are cool characters, lined up with the "in" crowd. Our fantasy world is filled with toys to please our lusts. We're king of the hill in our fantasy world. We get involved in adultery, in lying and swindling and hustling, and maybe even dealing in drugs.

From our sinful actions, the next onion skin appears in the form of defenses. Through our defense mechanisms we justify our bizarre behavior. We make excuses, such as, "Pot should be legalized! Why did they bust me!" We think the police are out to get us. But law enforcement is for the people, not against us. Police arrest guilty parties. We are arrested because we are guilty.

Our problem is our reaction, how we defend ourselves. We're against the system because the system tries to maintain law and order. This stage is usually the beginning of the end for us.

Out of our defense mechanism, our next onion skin is our belief in our own deception. We deceive ourselves because we believe the lie that we are not wrong. We're convinced that we're O.K., that nothing will happen to us, that we will live forever. We may admit that we have a drinking problem, but we resent anyone who confronts us with the truth. Our root of deception is very deep. We may admit to smoking a bit of dope, but we really believe it is not a problem.

To cover our deception, we have layers of false fronts and facades of every description, piled on top of one another to protect us. We can hang out with bikers one day, hang out with surfers the next day, hang out with Christians the day after, and hang out with hippies the following day. We become so confused, we no longer know who we are.

Our facades are so convincing, we actually believe, "This is who I am today." It makes no difference whether we hang out with Christians or with sinners, they are all the same to us. The Bible calls that being double-minded. People see us in church on Sunday morning, full of smiles and handshakes. They don't know that ten minutes earlier we put Visine in our eyes to cover up the effects of the other facade we utilized the night before.

We can go through life in that condition. We like to look good, or we like to look religious sometimes, or we like to laugh about our condition and brush it off. We play games with ourselves, believing our facades. We howl with the wolves on Saturday night and bleat with the sheep on Sunday morning.

We feel that we have it all together, when we actually are more phony than a three dollar bill. We really don't know who we are. We need to see how far away we have pushed people because of these many false layers of facade.

“ Our Onion Skins ”

As we work our onion skin work sheet, we want to identify where our six significant people are in our layers of onion skins. We may find that we haven't let our friends get beyond layer #4, our layer of bad attitudes. At that point, we push them out, we don't let them come closer.

HOMEWORK: Trace the onion skin diagram in the book on a separate piece of paper. Put the names of the six significant people in the appropriate layer. The appropriate layer is the layer in which we pushed them out and let them come no closer.

Under the diagram, in the circles to the right, list the relationships, starting with the closest and ending with the furthest. It is all right if some people share the same layer.

We may think that our wife knows us better than anyone, so we want to place her in the #1 layer, but we need to examine our motive in such a case. How well did she really know us? Did we cry out to her for help when we really needed it? As we consider the layers, we may decide she doesn't belong in a close layer. When we asked our wife for help and got what we wanted, did we push her back out again?

We need to check our motives in all our relationships. When we are in denial, we don't recognize motives, so how close can anyone get to us? On the average, we may place the people somewhere between #4 and #10, because we haven't told them much about ourselves.

If we find ourselves putting the people in the really close layers, we probably should examine our honesty. Coming from chemical addiction, most of us don't even know ourselves, so it is not unusual that no one else knows us either.

We were asked in the intake interview, "How old is that kid inside you? How old do you act?" We are asked those questions to discover if there is a child inside who would like to express how he really feels. The questions are designed to penetrate our comfort zone and get past some of our facades.

As we do our DMI every day, with the Spirit of Christ within us, we begin to give these attitudes to God. We begin to face the truth as the Holy Spirit pierces through our layers of onion skins. We have already broken through some of our sinful actions just by being in a structured program. Now we need to see honestly where we have left people in our lives, and where we are now.

As we get real with God, our onion skins come down, one by one. We are the ones who put them up, so they must come down from the inside as we express our willingness to give them to God. Nobody can take them down but ourselves.

We are in the process of identifying our problem. That means we are half way to the solution.

Our Onion Skins

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 105)

1. In what ways are we similar to an onion?

2. What happens when we take correction as rejection?

3. Why are the two main bad attitudes denial and projection?

4. What is our real problem, the real reason we are the way we are?

5. What is wrong with going through life, believing our facades are real?

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Where Am I From? . . . Lesson One

Points For Discussion (see page 6,7)

1. Someone who is addicted to chemicals is powerless over the chemical's ability to interfere with what should be his normal lifestyle. He becomes dependent upon the chemical and he repeats the same addictive habits over and over. Even when the addict is sober, his focus is upon the chemical.
2.
 - His relationship with God. It is impossible for an addict to drink or drug himself into a stronger relationship with God. Every day of his addiction he becomes spiritually weaker, until his relationship with God disintegrates completely.
 - His relationship with his family and others significant to him. The addict will steal, cheat and lie, if necessary, to get the chemical his body craves. He loses his ability to be a good husband, a good father, and a good employee. He is no longer responsible, dependable or trustworthy.
 - His relationship with himself. He loses his ability to think straight and to make responsible decisions. He becomes emotionally erratic and unstable. His physical body begins to break down and lose its ability to return to normal after so much abuse. The longer the addiction persists, the more he feels the effects of addiction.
3.
 - Alcohol or drugs always work, they never let him down. They always allow him to escape reality and enter his fantasy world. He can then see things as he wants them to be, not as they really are.
 - He can control how good he feels by the dosage of the chemical. He can change the rules to fit his feelings. He can escape the need to commit to anything or to be accountable to anyone.
4. The element that is missing is the only element capable of freeing him from his addiction. He may continue to function in his job and in his family, but he will always feel incomplete and insecure and insignificant without a relationship with God. He needs the spiritual power of his Creator to release him from the shackles of addiction, it is impossible for him to accomplish this on his own. If the spiritual dimension is missing in the addict's life, he is destined to a life of failure and continued addiction.
5. Denial is the oppression of reality. When an addict is under the influence of chemicals, he can easily deny that there is anything wrong. When he is temporarily sober, he can refer to his present sobriety as evidence that he is not addicted. He overlooks the fact that he is unable to avoid returning to the chemical.

Projection is blaming other people, places and things for his problems. The addict rarely blames himself for his addiction. He knows that if he takes the blame, he is responsible for his recovery, and that is something he doesn't want to face. It is much simpler to blame someone or something else. That takes the pressure of responsibility for recovery off the addict.

Where Am I From? . . . Lesson Two

Points For Discussion (see pages 15,16)

1. Isolation from true self is the addict's inability to see reality about himself. To stay with the chemicals, he must violate his own value systems. This brings about a destructive state of mind, in which the addict begins to hate himself and all he stands for. His moral values are lost and his behavior becomes bizarre. When he is sober, and the reality of his degradation hits him, he wants no part of himself. The shame and guilt drives him back into his escape from reality. His only recourse is to return to the chemical.
2. Onion skins are protective barriers we build around ourselves to keep us from having to face our problems. If people try to take away our onion skins by confronting us with the truth, we immediately build more onion skins to replace the ones torn down. We may come out from under our onion skins temporarily to get something for ourselves, but we immediately retreat to safety as soon as we accomplish our project. Onion skins cannot be torn down from the outside, they come down from the inside as we allow God to gently change our lives and restore us to Himself and to others.
3. Ninety per cent of the people can drink socially and function normally. The alcoholic belongs to the remaining ten per cent. To a degree, this is true of drugs, also. However, continued use of any chemical eventually results in addiction. Most people who do drugs begin with alcohol. We are dealing with chemicals, and all chemicals are mood-altering. Although we may have a drug of choice, our systems don't care what drug we use, so long as the feeling is accomplished. Actually, we are not addicted to the chemical, so much as we are addicted to the feeling produced by the chemical.
4. In the dependent stage, we begin to plan our activities around the use of a chemical. In this respect, we lose control of our lives and relinquish it to the chemical. Although we are unaware of it, the chemical slowly commands more of our time and attention. For example, we may start using the chemical at lunchtime, or during a break at work. As this habit develops, the chemical begins to dictate where we go and what we do. It takes priority over our lives and over our relationship with our family and with God.
5. At the addictive stage, we are out of control. We can determine when we will start taking the chemical, but we cannot determine when we will stop. It takes about ten years for an alcoholic to go from the social stage to the addictive stage, but a drug user can become an addict immediately, with his first use of the drug. We are not aware of the transition while it occurs, but we can see when it happened as we look back over our lives. Chemical addiction is always progressive.
6. Another word for euphoria is "high." Euphoric recall is our tendency to recall only the "highs" without recalling the "lows" that inevitably followed every "high." We forget the sicknesses and the destruction of relationships and the times we should have been killed. We remember only the good times. It is like the television commercials that show only the happy young people, socially enjoying beer during an exciting outing.

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The commercials never show the drunks in the gutters and doorways, or the broken families. Obviously, that would not sell beer or wine. That is how euphoric recall works within us. It shows us only the good times and ignores the bad results of our indulgence.

7. Our biggest problem will be our temptation not to walk with God. If we decide not to walk with God, we will inevitably return to our old lifestyle. We may not immediately return to the chemical, after all, that would be foolish. But Satan knows our weaknesses and he attacks us where we are most vulnerable. Usually, he makes his first attack in the areas of sex and music. If we yield to him there, it is only a matter of time before he has us back in his clutches completely, and hooks us once more on chemicals. As soon as we get some money in our pockets, our first impulse is to spend it in some way to satisfy our flesh. Instead, we must seek God's direction and submit our lives to Him. When we do that, He blesses us out of His abundance, and we never lack for anything.

Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson One

Points For Discussion (see page 20)

1. The real measurement of chemical addiction is the degree it affects relationships. The amount consumed is not relevant to our problem because our problem exists regardless of the amount consumed. And since the relationships in which the chemicals cause the problem are the most important relationships in our lives, the smallest amount of the chemical is deadly.
2. Self is the most important thing to the addict. In effect, as an addict, we become our own god. We do whatever it takes to satisfy us, regardless of the effect upon others. We use people selfishly, in that we become takers only, we never give. We take what we want, when we want it. We may say we love someone, but our actions reveal the truth that we love ourselves only.
3.
 1. Euphoric recall. We think things will be different this time because we have some answers. We know what to avoid, we are in control now, so we indulge just a little. What we do not take into consideration is that in chemical addiction, we start back up right where we left off. We do not go back to our original starting point, when the chemicals had little effect upon us, we must start where we were at the height of our addiction, before entering a program.
 2. We have not allowed the Lord to deal with our emotional hurt and pain. We cannot continue to suppress our damaged emotions and expect to be healed. Healing comes only when we allow those emotional pains to surface and submit them to our Lord. We have been medicating those pains and we will continue to do so until we experience the spiritual healing only our Lord can provide. Addiction is overcome by faith, not by wrestling with our problem.
4. Euphoric recall, the memory of good times, is triggered most often by music, money and/or sex. These three elements have the strongest influence to draw us back into the same scene we left. After a year or so of sobriety, we think we have everything under control. Memories of the "good times" stalk us. We forget about the damage chemicals caused in our lives. As we focus on those tempting memories, our focus is taken off the Lord and put back on ourselves. When we allow this to happen, it is only a matter of time before we are once more deeply into our addiction.
5. Any life lived solely on feelings, becomes dysfunctional. Such extreme self-centeredness destroys harmony in relationships. We base right and wrong upon how we feel about a situation, not upon ethics or morals. If everyone in the world behaved in that way, we would soon destroy ourselves. Anarchy brings lawless confusion and disorder. The addict is a prime example of anarchy at work.

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Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson Two

Points For Discussion (see pages 26,27)

1. If an addict takes an honest look at his life, he must conclude that nothing he accomplishes on his own brings him complete satisfaction. It makes no difference how much he achieves financially or vocationally, he does not sense satisfaction. That is because God has put a void in every man that can be filled only by Himself. Money can satisfy us temporarily, and so can chemicals. But the void within us is eternal; therefore, nothing temporal can fill it, it can be filled only by God.
2. A Detox program deals with our physical need to get the chemical out of our system. This usually takes from five to seven days. During this time, we are monitored because our heart and other parts of our body undergo tremendous trauma. This program does not cure us of our addiction. We can leave the program feeling healthier than we have for a long time, and return immediately to our addiction.
3. A Rehab program deals with our soul, which is our mind, our will and our emotions. It is a psychological program, aimed at discovering why we behave the way we do. We may discover the answer to this question, yet not receive healing. Most rehab programs run for 28 to 42 days. It usually takes an addict that long to clear his ability to think logically.
4. Rehabilitation means to return to our former state of mind. Regeneration means to be made new. Our former state of mind is what caused us to turn to drugs in the first place, so that is not where we need to be. Only God can regenerate a life. He can work miracles during a regeneration program, but He doesn't quit when the program is over. He continues to give us new life for the rest of our lives.
5. A Regeneration program lasts as long as necessary to implement the healing. As we submit to His Lordship, He renews our minds and strengthens our spiritual relationship with Him. In the process, He changes our lives and our lifestyle, until He transforms us into the persons He wants us to be.
6. When we attend a program, we receive a lot of information, but we can accomplish the same thing in a library. Information doesn't heal, that should be obvious. Also, information does not change our lives. We may become smarter, but our basic behavior, controlled by our faulty belief system, will not change. Life-formation allows God to use information to change our lives. God gives us information, but He insists that we apply the information to our lives. As He works it out in us, changes take place. It does us no good simply to attend a program, we must allow the program to work within us. As we apply ourselves to this task, the Holy Spirit makes changes in our lives.

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Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson Three

Points For Discussion (see pages 37,38)

1. The first stage is the most important stage because it is the stage we are aiming for. Because of this, we approach the stages inversely, beginning with the sixth stage:
The sixth stage is a stage of rebellion, the stage in which we do whatever we want to do when we want to do it, regardless of the consequences to ourselves or to others.
The fifth stage is the recognition stage, in which we recognize that we have a problem, and that the problem is greater than our ability to handle it on our own.
The fourth stage is the admission stage, in which we admit that the chemicals are ruining our lives, and that we need professional help.
The third stage is the compliance stage, in which we comply to the rules of a structured program so we can experience the self-improvement we seek.
The second stage is the acceptance stage, in which we accept responsibility for both our addiction and our recovery. We accept also our responsibility for a personal relationship with our Lord.
The first stage is the surrender stage, the one we truly seek. This is the stage at which we surrender to God, the only One who can heal us permanently. At this stage, rebellion is no longer part of our character.
2. Compliance is doing the bare minimum to complete the program. Compliance does not generate change. We can comply with the rules of the program, yet go right back to where we were before the program because no inner change has taken place. The danger in compliance is that we can learn the program well enough to teach it, but if no inner change has taken place, when we step back onto the street, the protection of the structured program is no longer there, and we lose control once more to the chemicals.
3. Surrender is the opposite of rebellion. It is number one because it is the only means to permanent recovery from addiction. At the surrender stage, we take responsibility for working the program into our lives. We can't accomplish this on our own, we need the help of the Holy Spirit. With God's help, we develop our own personal program, which we take with us when we leave the structured program and return to the world.
4. We can gauge our spiritual growth by the length of time it takes us to recover after a relapse. When we relapse, it is because we have fallen out of relationship with God. The length of time it takes us to repent and come back into relationship with God measures our spiritual growth. When we truly understand that our successful recovery depends entirely upon our relationship with God, our recovery time shortens dramatically.
5. The first step is salvation. This is an inner event, in which we turn to God and allow His Spirit to come into our lives. At first, it is difficult to deliberately make Jesus Lord of our lives every minute of every day. But eventually, it becomes easier, especially when we see Him strengthen us and work

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sovereignly in our lives. No other decision affects us like salvation. Salvation sets us on a new course, as we surrender our lives to God.

6. Our foundation for recovery can be built upon one thing only: Our relationship with Jesus Christ. Once that foundation is established, we can continue to build upon it as He directs. With Christ as our foundation, we can weather the storms without collapsing under the onslaught. Life is filled with storms; we can't escape them, but they will not destroy us and our relationship with others if our foundation is Jesus. Instead of medicating to escape the storms, Jesus wants us to call upon Him. He alone has the ability to calm the storms in our lives.

7. There is a vast difference between believing and receiving. Jesus existed historically, even the Jewish historians admit that. The demons also believe in Jesus because they know He exists. But neither the Jews nor the demons have received Jesus into their hearts as Savior and Lord. It takes no effort to believe in Jesus as the Chinese and the East Indians believe. They accept Him as another of their multitude of gods, just to be on the safe side. But the void that has been placed within every man can be filled only by Jesus Christ as He takes the throne of our hearts. We must submit to His kingship and open ourselves to the life-changing process of becoming His disciples.

Why Am I Here? . . . Lesson Four

Points For Discussion (see pages 44,45)

1. Hell is eternal separation from God. We can begin to experience hell right here on earth. It is not a place to which we go as much as it is a condition in which we find ourselves. The fruit of the Spirit of God is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Although every person wants to experience this fruit, none of it is available apart from our relationship with God. When we depart from God, we experience immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, and jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing and other ways of the flesh. All these are subject to control by Satan and lead to eternal death. (*Galatians 5: 19-23*)
2. Because we are so performance oriented, it is difficult to accept the grace of God. Salvation is the greatest expression of God's grace because it is a gift, not something we can earn by our good performance. It is difficult to believe that Someone loves us enough to give us something we don't deserve. We are accustomed to earning or stealing something if we want it or need it. The gift of salvation doesn't fit into our logical pattern of thought; therefore, it is difficult for us to receive.
3. When we received the Spirit of God, He did a spiritual transplant in us. He nailed our old Adamic spirit to the cross of Jesus Christ and gave us His Spirit to take its place. We were reborn spiritually; therefore, we became new creatures, new creations. There was no physical change, but a drastic inner change took place. From that point, the process of working out our salvation began.
4. Walking without God, we have no concept of life and death. Without God, we are dead in our sin, that is, we are destined to spend eternity away from the presence of God. God will not accept us so long as we continue in our sin; we must come to a point of repentance and accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. When that occurs, we pass from eternal death into eternal life. This is not something we can earn; we simply accept what God has done to make a way for us into heaven. This is God's grace.
5. Our new birth is spiritual, not physical. Jesus told Nicodemus we must be born again, born of the Spirit (*John 3:3*). Until that occurs, we continue to grope our way through life, reacting to the best of our ability to whatever life offers us. Once we are born of the Spirit, we allow Him to guide, direct and protect us. As we continue in this process, we fulfill His purpose for our lives, which means we live a fulfilled life.
6. Two kingdoms exist, the kingdom of light, God's kingdom, and the kingdom of darkness, Satan's kingdom. When we were saved, God moved us from one kingdom into the other. He accomplished for us something we could not do ourselves. Satan cannot enter the kingdom of God, he can only yell at us and tempt us and try to deceive us. Our key to being able to stay in God's kingdom is to train ourselves not to listen to the voice of the enemy, but to listen instead only to the voice of God.

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7. In our new relationship with God, we have the Spirit of God within us. This means we have authority over all the power of Satan (*Luke 10:19*). We know that the enemy wants only to steal, kill and destroy, but we don't have to be subject to his manipulations anymore. In Christ, we are more than conquerors. Jesus has already defeated Satan, and we have His Spirit within us. We need only to exercise our authority.
8. The difference between the two kingdoms is like the difference between a rose garden and a cotton field. Picking cotton is back-breaking work, with very little reward. The enemy has tricked us into believing that is the only lifestyle available to us. He has made us his slaves. We have spent our lives serving him. We are so accustomed to the hardship that when we enter God's rose garden, we automatically look around for some cotton to pick. It is difficult for us to abandon our old lifestyle of slavery and accept God's lifestyle of grace, but there is no cotton in God's rose garden, there are only roses. In God's rose garden, we have a new Master with a new plan and purpose for our lives.
9. Salvation covers our past sin. This is essential. If our past sin wasn't covered, we would be condemned to death, for the wages of sin is death. Salvation also covers our present sin. The intercession of Jesus covers our daily sin. This is essential also, because the Adamic nature in our flesh is prone to sin. In addition, salvation saves us from the presence of sin. Our destiny is heaven, where we will spend eternity with our Lord. It is a place where there is no presence of sin.

“ Why Am I Here? ”

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson One

Points For Discussion (see page 52,53)

1. Every chemically addicted person is like Jay Walker. We have what is called obsessive compulsion, that is, we are unable to control a compulsive habit pattern. Everyone else can see our problem, but we cannot. Even though our chemical addiction reaches destructive dimensions, we continue to deny that we have a problem.
2. When not corrected, our character defects can become satanic strongholds. Strongholds are character defects that give Satan an opportunity to steal, kill and destroy. The chemical prevents the addict from exercising control over that area of his life. Because of this stronghold, we are subject to satanic influence.
3. We walk in the flesh, but we must fight fleshly strongholds with something greater and more powerful than flesh. We may be able to control a fleshly characteristic temporarily, but because we are temporal beings, we cannot accomplish the eternal; therefore, we cannot bring about permanent change. Because every action begins with a thought, we must bring every thought into captivity to Christ. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to destroy the strongholds in our lives.
4. When we work our Daily Moral Inventory, we present ourselves before God and allow Him to bring an awareness of our present attitudes to the surface. In the quietness, we can hear Him speak to us and let us know what He wants us to release to Him. We release Him to work in our minds and our emotions. As He changes our thoughts, our hearts change. Unless we take time from the busyness of our days, this cannot happen.
5. This is a personal question that should be answered by each individual personally.

“ Daily Moral Inventory ”

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson Two

Points For Discussion (see pages 61,62)

1. One of the most important things is to learn how to discern the voice of God when he speaks to us. Usually, when we seek an answer from God, the first voice we hear is His. But this is almost always followed by a questioning voice, such as, "What that really God, or was it my own desire?" Another question we hear often is, "But what if such and such happens?" The second voice always brings doubt and fear into the situation. God does not operate in doubt, He operates in faith. And He does not give us a spirit of fear. As we continue to walk with God, our discernment about His voice improves and we spend less time in uncertainty.
2. In our life of addiction, we have listened only to the lies of Satan. When we come out of addiction, Satan will continue to lie to us, and we may have a tendency to believe him rather than believe what God has done for us. If we allow ourselves to believe Satan's lies, we can nullify the blessings of God. God has not taken away our free will, so we can walk away from the blessing if we yield to the temptations and deceptions of our enemy.
3. Self-condemnation is false guilt. The Holy Spirit will convict us of true guilt so we can deal with it, but Satan lies to us and tells us we are condemned because of our sin. The penalty for our sin was paid at the cross. Our sinful past was wiped away. If we live in self-condemnation, it means we do not believe that Jesus paid the price.
4. Repentance stops repetition. If we say we repent, but we continue to commit the sin, we have not really repented. Repentance means we have turned 180 degrees away from the darkness that has enveloped our lives, and have turned toward the light. When we repent, we turn our heart over to God and let Him lead us through the rest of our life.
5. Conviction is specific, God always deals in specifics. Condemnation is general. Satan tells us we are sinners; therefore, we are condemned. God tells us we have committed a specific sin and we must make it right. If we lie, God tells us we have told a specific lie and we should correct it. Satan says we are a liar; he identifies us with the sin, and tells us we are condemned to hell because of it.
6. Remorse is feeling sorry for the consequences of our act. Repentance is recognizing that all sin is against God. Remorse does not require a heart-change, repentance does.
7. Conviction deals in true guilt, condemnation deals in false guilt. Satan continually tries to convince us we have to do something to earn our forgiveness. He knows this will keep us concentrating upon "good works" rather than the grace of God.

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson Three

Points For Discussion (see pages 69,70)

1. The most important accomplishment is the establishment of a personal program that will include a scheduled quiet time with the Lord. It may not be the same time we used in the structured program, but we must schedule it. This is the time we have set aside to strengthen our relationship with the Lord. If we ignore this necessity, we will sooner or later return to our old habits. Eventually, this will again lead us to chemical addiction.
2. In a structured program, we don't have to make decisions, they are made for us. The reality of that luxury will hit us when we leave the program. In the meantime, different demands will be put upon our time, and it may be difficult to establish a fixed schedule for our quiet time. This is where we often break down. Instead of being determined to give God priority over our time, we may be inclined to give Him the leftovers. If we do this, it won't be long before we begin to skip a few days, then a week, then a month, until finally we no longer have a quiet time. This is almost always the first step to a fall.
3. The most important part is to listen and to record what we hear from the Lord. We can busy ourselves with talking to Him, or we can allow our minds to stray from our purpose. The cares of the world have a way of infiltrating our thoughts when we try to stop for a quiet moment, but we can't allow that to happen. It is all right to talk to God, but we should never talk without listening. A message from God can be the most beautiful thing that will happen to us that day, and it can affect us for the rest of the day.
4. Personal time with God is more important than anything else. We may learn necessary information in the classroom, but the key to a fulfilled life rests in our relationship with God, and that is best established in our quiet time.
5. We can know all the words, and even be able to teach the program, but if we have not allowed the Holy Spirit access to our hearts, no inner change will take place. Our focus has to be upon God, not upon how much we know.
6. The only way to give God access is to give Him our attention. When He has our attention, He can speak to us and make changes in us. We must initiate the action, He will not.
7. We cannot make it on the outside on our own. We have already tried that and have failed. That is why a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is essential. All our success will come out of that relationship; all our failures will come because the relationship has not really been established and maintained.
8. There is no way to escape our negative attitude and behavior on our own, without the Lord. The DMI, itself, can cut us to pieces if it does no more than show us our faults. When our faults become apparent, we have to be able to do something about them. That is where the Lord comes in and regenerates us.

“ Daily Moral Inventory ”

Daily Moral Inventory . . . Lesson Four

Points For Discussion (see pages 75,76)

1. Unless we face the truth, we will never change. We have suppressed the truth by denying it or projecting blame on others, but God convicts us of the truth, so we will "own" it. Until this happens, we refuse to take responsibility for our addiction, our actions and our recovery. We must come out of our fantasy world and face reality. This is a painful process, but it is essential to victory over our problems and our lifestyle.
2. As we work our DMI, God has the "Asset" column in mind for us. But before we can make that transition, we must recognize the "Liability" column. We have been operating from a negative state of mind for so long that it will take some effort to allow God to turn us around and make us positive human beings.
3. God's goal is for us to take on a positive attitude and spread that around to others. We can tell others about God, but unless we experience the benefit of walking with Him, we will not affect others positively. Negativity can't accomplish anything worthwhile. It has almost destroyed us and everyone around us. But a positive attitude is constructive and contagious. When we are positive, we will find those around us to be positive also.
4.
 - The Holy Spirit works in our spirit to give us discernment and wisdom. When we listen to Him, He guides, directs and protects us, daily.
 - The Word of God is alive and active. Often when we read the Word, it seems to jump off the page at us. This is God showing us something special through His Word.
 - When we are sensitive to the circumstances around us we can see God working in us and others involved in the circumstances. He will give us revelation at such times.
 - He often speaks through people when He wants to convey or affirm something in our lives. The people may not know they are being used, but they are likely to tell us something to verify what God has been telling us in our quiet time.
5. We should always record in our journal what God says to us. After we write down what He tells us, we can reflect upon it and pray about it. This is the Creator speaking to us. It is certainly worth the effort to record His words.
6. God has chosen us for reasons known only to Himself. He wants us to become members of His family and to do His will while we are on earth. This is an extraordinary opportunity we should not miss. It has eternal importance.
7. We should be humble. The Creator has chosen to be our King, and we are His subjects. We should not be entangled in the useless, petty struggles of life when we come into the throne room. We should give God our full attention, record what He has to say to us, and respond positively to His directions. He wants to work everything together for good in our lives, but He will not be able to if our attention is on things less important.

Introduction To The Contract . . . Lesson One

Points For Discussion (see pages 82,83)

1. Our problems are rooted in our reactions to the situations, circumstances and people in our lives. Certain things have been said and done to us over which we have had no control. To that extent, we have been victims. But we cannot escape responsibility for our behavior in those situations, just as we cannot escape responsibility for our internal changes. Internal changes cannot be superimposed by others, they must originate within.
2. A rehab contract simply obligates us to return to our former state of mind, the state we were in when we began to use chemicals. Obviously, we need more than that. We need to make a commitment to the only One who can lead us to complete renewal. This begins with renewal of our mind, which brings renewal of attitude, which results in renewal of action. When this renewal process takes place, we have regeneration, not rehabilitation.
3. We resort to denial and projection to avoid the necessity of facing the truth. The truth usually brings on shame and guilt, and none of us likes to face that kind of reality. The alternative is to live in fantasy, and to be completely undependable. This eventually ruins all our relationships and we find ourselves isolated from the world. It is not our nature to live in isolation; therefore, we are miserable. All of this is caused by denial and projection.
4. If we had what it takes to fulfill a commitment, we wouldn't be addicted to chemicals. If we could stand behind our promises to others and to ourselves, we would never use drugs or alcohol. But our track record reveals our inability to keep our word; therefore, we must rely upon something or someone other than ourselves to give us the strength to fulfill our commitment to stop chemical abuse. Jesus Christ stands ready to give us that strength.
5. Chemical abuse is the effect, not the cause of our problem. We turned to chemicals because we couldn't handle the reality of what was happening in our lives. Somewhere along the line we bought the lie that we were unworthy or incapable as human beings, that we were less than others, not really equipped for what the world had to offer. Chemicals allowed us to escape from what we thought was the truth, but which was actually a lie. We turned from God (or perhaps never knew Him) and turned to a life of sin. We must face the truth and be set free. We do this as we build a relationship with Jesus Christ.

“ Introduction To The Contract ”

Our Onion Skins . . . Lesson One

Points For Discussion (see page 89)

1. We build layers of protection around us, just like an onion. Also, we develop a tough interior that is difficult to penetrate. Our layers are the product of our stinking thinking, and the strong smell of our attitudes pushes people away. As our layers are peeled off, it may cause tears to fall, just as when we peel an onion.
2. When we conceive correction as rejection, we really don't receive it. We already have experienced more rejection in our lives than we can handle, so when we hear correction, it pushes our "rejection button" and turns us off. Unfortunately, if we bring such a defensive attitude into a regeneration program, we will be unable to receive the healing we so desperately need.
3. The two main bad attitudes of projection and denial are motivated by fear. Fear causes us to repress the truth. Until the truth is brought to the surface, we can't receive healing. Denial and projection hurt us because they delay our progress. When we believe the lie and shelter it by denial and projection, we resist correction and ministry and freedom.
4. The real reason we are the way we are is that we are in rebellion against God. We may not be in deliberate rebellion, we may even be ignorant of the fact, but sin is rebellion against God, whether we realize it or not. When we turn away from the light and life of God, we have no choice but to turn toward darkness, which is the domain of Satan. We don't want to be subject to Satan, but we have no alternative, we follow either God or Satan. As soon as we submit to God, healing begins and life takes on a new meaning. This requires a complete change, which we call repentance. As we decide to follow God, He works repentance and change into our lives.
5. Although we don't consciously realize it, so long as we live in fantasy instead of reality, we will never experience a fulfilled life. Our facades are like Hollywood sets, there is no substance behind them. We need substance in our lives to experience fulfillment. God has put a vacancy in our lives that can be filled only by Him. Before that can happen, we have to lay down our facades and get real with God.