

Helping Students with Life-Controlling Issues

Someone confessed to you a major issue that is addictive or perpetual in their life. Now what?

This resource is meant to be a guide to help walk with someone into the freedom Jesus offers (John 8:31-36). It is suggested that you look over this resource before your meeting, and become familiar with it so that you do not need to bring the papers with you. Be prepared so that the Spirit can remind you of things in your meeting!

In no way must you go through all this material in four sessions, nor does every person need all of the information. Pray, and listen to the Holy Spirit before your meeting. Perhaps you should focus on one or two things for each meeting. Less can be more - so the student doesn't walk away overwhelmed.

If at any time you feel inadequate or over your head, please talk to someone on staff.

INTRODUCTION:

Theme verse: “For the GRACE of God that brings salvation has appears to all men. It teaches us to say “no” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age” Titus 2:11-12

Obviously, the order of these meetings can be adjusted to suit the individual's greatest need at the time. But ultimately all of these sessions are helpful in seeing people walk in freedom.

Usual structure

- 1) Interview - ask questions, help them process their experiences and their past.
- 2) Truth - remember sometimes less is more and bite-sized; timely truth is what we need.
- 3) Response and plan for this time
- 4) Pray - don't underestimate times of prayer.

Three sides of battling sin or life controlling issues:

1. Flesh—we are told to crucify it/flee (2 Tim 2:22, Galatians 5:16, Romans 6)
2. Demonic—Resist and he will flee (1 Peter 5:9, James 4:7)
3. World—Renew your mind (Romans 12:2)

FIRST MEETING:

1. They confess.
2. I affirm them for getting their sin out of darkness and into the light. (1 John 1:7-9)
3. I ask questions.
 - a. When did it start?
 - i. Look at Genesis 4:7—when was the door opened to sin? Also at some point talk to them about the danger of opening doors. How does someone go from a faithful and free believer to bound in habitual sin? Small compromises in their walk with God and then they opened the door to this sin.
 - b. When does this sin happen? Where?

- i. Luke 4:13—I am looking to identify opportune times. The devil knows them so should we.
 - c. I am looking for patterns that need to be broken
 - d. I am looking for what it may be a symptom of and what the root is. (fear, pain, loneliness, control, etc.)
- 4. I talk about how Jesus taught us to **take radical steps** to get rid of sin from our lives. Mark 9:43-49, Matthew 5:29-30. For them to get free it is going to take some dramatic steps on their part! How committed are they to freedom? What are they willing to do to see it happens? (i.e. for porn—where they will put their computer, covenanteyes.com, etc.)
- 5. Talk about concrete steps they can take to be victorious this week! Fail to plan, plan to fail.
 - a. Crucial pieces of a good plan:
 - i. Accountability
 - ii. Spiritual disciplines: See John 15
 - iii. A radical step
 - iv. Plan for alternative response—they have beaten down a path and weeds have grown on the other one. They have to let weeds grow on the old path and beat down a new one.
 - v. What will the ramifications be if they don't walk out the plan.
- 6. I pray for them to be cleansed, for the door to this sin in their life to be closed and for God to deliver them and empower them to be victorious. I will also agree with them in prayer as they pray.

SECOND MEETING:

1. Ask them how they have been doing. Celebrate victories and talk about any defeats and see what you can learn from them.
2. I talk about the difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow over sin. (2 Corinthians 7:10) The examples I use are Saul (1 Samuel 15:30) and David (Psalm 51)—how they responded differently when they had sinned.
 - a. **Worldly sorrow**—is that sense of sadness because you got caught or because you were forced to give up what you really wanted to do. Such **sorrow is self centered** and does not call an evil thing evil. Worldly sorrow is reluctant to change—you change because you have to but not because you really want to. They don't understand just how ugly their sin is.
 - b. **Godly sorrow**—this sorrow leads to life. It causes us to see vividly our need for a savior and for forgiving grace. Our guilt actually functions as a blessed grace because it wakes us up to our need for Christ and leads us to salvation. Basically we see our sin for how evil it truly is and how it offends God and **God is the focus of our sorrow** and the effects that our sin has.
3. For them to get freedom it is imperative that they enter into true repentance, which comes from Godly sorrow.

4. Use the Jacob stew illustration from Genesis—I talk to them about the deception of sin. How it leaves us feeling empty and doesn't really satisfy but leaves us feeling regret.
5. Talk about the consequences of sin.—
 - a. It's effect on their walk with God—sin doesn't end our relationship but it definitely hinders our fellowship with God. We lose the joy of our salvation (Ps 51) (Eph 4:30)
 - b. Talk about how God views the sin—"to fear the Lord is to hate evil". (Eph 2:1-3, Romans 6:11-23, 2 Tim 2:26)
 - c. Talk about the ramifications of the sin in the rest of their relationships. (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - d. When we intentionally resist the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in our lives we lose sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, which is the key to the Christian life.
 - e. This helps them to have the courage to walk in holiness. When the Cause > Circumstances you will have courage
 - f. Circumstances > Cause you will not have courage
6. Pray with them for the next week.
7. Homework for next time—I have them write down how God sees the sin/issue and its impact on all circles of relationships and people—both present and future, etc.

THIRD MEETING:

1. Ask them how they have been doing. Celebrate victories and talk about any defeats and see what you can learn from them.
2. Review homework that they did and talk it out. Encourage them to read it often to renew their mind—perhaps daily for 40 days?
3. Talk about the importance of both the **Power and the Process** to walk in freedom.
 - a. Acts 19:8-12 Paul was a person of the process (purposeful and persistent) and He saw God's power. It was the combination that brought a revival to Ephesus.
 - b. Matthew 12:43-45 The person was freed from the demonic (experienced God's power) but it was not followed up by a walk with God and the house was unoccupied.
 - c. The process puts us in position to receive God's power and then the process helps us walk out what God has done!
 - d. The process is like the bread that holds the meat of the power to make a life-changing sandwich.
4. Encourage them to memorize and immerse themselves in Scripture. (Psalms 119:9,11; Psalm 1)—The power of Scripture memory can't be underestimated! After all Jesus used Scripture to overcome Temptation.
5. Talk about how we must detox/starve the flesh and its sinful cravings!
6. They must come to terms with the fact that the choices they make will help them walk in freedom or stay in bondage. They can't make bad choices and then blame God for not delivering them.
 - a. **Principle of the Path**—your destination is determined by your direction not your intentions. (Andy Stanley)

7. Pray with them.

FOURTH MEETING:

1. Ask them how they have been doing. Celebrate victories and talk about any defeats and see what you can learn from them.
2. The focus on this week is forgiving yourself and **experiencing Christ's forgiveness** in your life.
 - a. 1 Kings 15:5 This is a powerful verse that God considered David's failure "the exception not the rule". We tend to be people who define ourselves by the exceptions in our lives.
 - b. Often our own inability to forgive ourselves is our own pride that wants to pay the price for our own sin. If we do this. We are saying the price that Jesus paid on the cross was not enough. Jesus paid it all! We must take grace seriously.
 - c. Isaiah 1:18—Talk about how God forgives us and washes us white as snow and not white as a peach!
 - d. John 1:9 talks about how we are not just forgiven but we are also purified!
 - e. The red screen in heaven—good visual of true forgiveness.
3. Pray with them.

CONTINUAL MEETINGS:

For the rest of the time you meet up you will keep them accountable to the "process". You will remind them of truth you may have already covered or other passages from Scripture.

Sometimes it takes a while for truth to go the longest 12 inches in the world—from the person's head to their heart!

Remember Titus 2:11-12 **It is only by the grace of God we can live godly lives!**