

**JOURNEY TO FREEDOM HANDBOOK****UNIT I KEY 2****FAITH****Purpose of this Key:**

- 1) Recognize how faith impacts thoughts, emotions, and identity.
- 2) Recognize that faith focuses on Christ, not self.
- 3) Recognize that the Holy Spirit builds faith through the Word.
- 4) Learn how faith is used to resist temptation.
- 5) Recognize that faith assures us of our salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:17**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people comprehend that Jesus gives us new life.
- 2) New life in Christ means giving up old habits and developing new priorities.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) The first of Martin Luther's 95 Theses is helpful at this point.
- 2) "When our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'repent', He willed the entire life of the believer to be one of repentance."
- 3) This new life is characterized by on-going self-examination, transparency before God, and repentance (I John 1:7-9).
- 4) Everything about us is now open to scrutiny by the Holy Spirit, Who works through the Word of God.
- 5) Faith in God's forgiveness brings change. We cannot overcome sin by our own efforts.
- 6) God's forgiveness changes our self-will, so we become willing to obey His will.
- 7) Transparency before God means letting the Holy Spirit shine His light not only on our deeds and words but also on our thoughts, attitudes, secret agendas, hidden motivations, pride, and self-deceptions (Hebrews 2:17-18 & 4:15-16).
- 8) Change begins on the inside and works its way outward.

- 9) We will still sin, but we will no longer feel comfortable with our sins.
- 10) God is totally approachable, trustworthy, and gracious to penitent sinners.

Romans 10:17

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people comprehend that we need to fill up on the Word so our faith will grow.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) We cannot produce faith by our own efforts.
- 2) Faith is brought to us from outside of ourselves by the Holy Spirit, Who works through the Word of God.
- 3) God makes it easy for us; as we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit works on our hearts and minds.
- 4) The Word shows us the Law, which cannot save us, and the Gospel, which saves those who believe (John 1:17 & Romans 1:16).
- 5) The Word shows us that we can have faith in Christ, Who has made full satisfaction for all of our sins.
- 6) The Word shows us that we can approach God and confess our sins without fear.

Hebrews 11

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary. Different people relate to different characters.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Even though we do not know what we will become and the battle against temptations seems hopeless at times, by faith we entrust the process of change to God and let Him take us where He will.
- 2) Faith willingly lets God do whatever is necessary to conform us to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29 & 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- 3) Hebrews 11 is a good chapter to read when we need encouragement.

- 4) If they do not mention anyone, ask if they especially relate to any character.
- 5) Many overcomers identify with Moses, who gave up the pleasures of sin in order to meet God out in the desert.
- 6) No one will be perfectly free from sin in this life, but we look to a heavenly country (verse 16).
- 7) Faith points to Christ and says, “There is my Righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21)”.
- 8) Be alert for any sign of belief in prosperity theology, which tells people that their faith will cause them to get what they want. Sometimes God says “no”, or “wait”.
- 9) Even when the blessings of our obedience are not yet visible, true faith accepts God’s will.
- 10) True faith accepts hardship, suffering, and even martyrdom (Matthew 5:10-12).
- 11) Faith takes godly risks.
- 12) Our faith is measured by our willingness to obey God’s will.

### Matthew 8:5-13

#### **Common responses:**

- 1) Most realize that Jesus was able to heal because of the centurion’s faith.
- 2) Most realize that the servant was healed because Jesus spoke the word.

#### **Points to emphasize:**

- 1) The Romans were occupying Israel and causing the Jews high taxes and national humiliation. But Jesus received the centurion graciously.
- 2) The Roman centurion had power over Jewish males (Matthew 5:41). But he knew Who Jesus was, so he came in total humility and respect.
- 3) Jesus offered to do far more than He was asked (Ephesians 3:20), and He will do the same for us.
- 4) Acts 10:28 indicates that Jews did not enter Gentile homes. Jesus offered to violate that taboo.
- 5) When God does more for us than we even ask or think, we sense our own unworthiness.
- 6) Jesus heals from a distance just as well as face-to-face.

- 7) Three years later Jesus went to the cross for the centurion and us all, making Himself unclean so we would not be (Galatians 3:13 & Colossians 2:14).

1. What does God want us to believe (I John 3:23 & John 20:31)?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most realize that He wants us to believe in Jesus.
- 2) Most realize that faith in Jesus leads to eternal life.
- 3) Some realize that faith in Jesus leads to loving Him and each other.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Faith in Jesus has to be brought to us from outside of ourselves.
- 2) Faith realizes that His mercy is a free gift, which we cannot earn by keeping the Commandments (Romans 3:20-24).
- 3) Faith leads us to obedience because of our gratitude for His mercy.
- 4) When we witness to someone, we need to focus on God's mercy in Christ. The Holy Spirit produces the faith to believe it.

2. How do you get faith (Romans 10:17)?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people comprehend that faith comes through hearing and reading the Word of God.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) God makes faith easy for us. If we will just soak up the Word, the Holy Spirit uses it to plant and grow faith in us.
- 2) God's mercy is evident in every passage. Even in His judgments, He offers mercy.
- 3) We cannot produce faith by our own efforts; all of it has to be brought to us from outside of ourselves by the Holy Spirit, Who works through the Word.
- 4) For that reason, the Bible is the Keys textbook.

3. What important truths do you learn from Ephesians 2:8-9?**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people realize that salvation is a free gift.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage them to place total confidence in salvation as a free gift, with no reliance on any merits or works of their own.
- 2) We do good works out of gratitude, not to earn God's favor.
- 3) The Atonement of Jesus on the cross was perfect; no sin of ours can subtract from it, and no merit of ours can add to it. He left no other option by which we might be saved.
- 4) Be alert for any suggestion that our own works are even partially beneficial for our salvation.
- 5) No one overcomes any besetting sin by striving to keep the Law. Only Grace causes everything to fall into place.

4. Whose help do you need in order to believe in Jesus (I Corinthians 12:3)?**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people comprehend that the Holy Spirit helps us to believe.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm that without Holy Spirit, we are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1&5).
- 2) The Holy Spirit calls us through the Gospel and makes us alive in Christ.
- 3) When we witness to someone, we need to keep bringing the conversation back to God's mercy in Christ; only the Holy Spirit can bring them the faith to believe it.

5. What do you learn about faith from Matthew 14:28-31?**Common responses:**

- 1) Some realize that doubt, fear, and unbelief prevent answers to prayer.
- 2) Many notice that Peter only began to sink after he took his eyes off Jesus.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Peter started well. He stepped out of the boat only after a direct order from Jesus.
- 2) Peter took his eyes off Jesus and focused on his surroundings. He doubted that Jesus was powerful enough to handle the wind and waves.
- 3) “Lord, save me!” is a good prayer when we are suddenly and unexpectedly tempted (verse 30). Peter could examine himself later to figure out what he did wrong; at the moment, he needed immediate rescue.
- 4) Jesus “immediately” put out His hand to save Peter. That word was written for a reason. Jesus immediately puts out His hand to save us.
- 5) Jesus did not let Peter go under a few times to teach Peter a lesson.
- 6) He did not scold Peter for his failure. In verse 31, Jesus assured Peter that He was in control the whole time.
- 7) He did not throw Peter back into the water and tell him to do better this time.
- 8) He neither let Peter drown nor went in search of a more worthy disciple. He had begun with Peter and planned to continue with him (Philippians 1:6).
- 9) Jesus did not punish Peter for the mistake that almost resulted in his drowning. When a bad choice leads us into temptation and we recognize our need for rescue, we can call on Him for help even if we have gotten ourselves into the situation.
- 10) We are more apt to fall into sin when we take our attention off Jesus.
- 11) We are more apt to fall into sin when we doubt His power to save us.

**6. How long have you been a Christian?****Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Messianic Jews often prefer not to call themselves Christians, so ask how long they have had faith in Jesus/Yeshua.
- 3) Some Gentile Christians have become Messianic Jews. If they were not raised in the Church, young people who accept Christ are sometimes uncertain which denomination to join, so they decide to worship like the Apostles.
- 4) Some will confess to an inconsistent walk.

- 5) Some accepted Christ only because they were fearful of going to hell. They experienced neither conviction of sin nor an understanding of God's mercy in Christ.
- 6) Occasionally someone doing the Keys is not sure of their salvation.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise for however long they have been saved.
- 2) Encourage new believers to keep learning and growing, because we all had to start somewhere.
- 3) An inconsistent walk is often because one has been trying to earn God's favor by living a clean life and doing good works. Emphasize that we are saved only and entirely by the mercy of God as a free gift.
- 4) Explain that all they have to do is confess their sins, accept the offered forgiveness, and look for evidence of God's mercy in the Word.
- 5) You may have to define what it means to be a Christian. A Christian is a penitent sinner relying on God's forgiveness in Christ, not someone who has achieved perfection. Some who call themselves Christians do not meet this definition. Pray for wisdom to address the issue (2 Corinthians 13:5 & 2 Timothy 2:25).
- 6) If you feel Spirit-led, ask if they want to receive assurance of salvation. Refer to Revelations 3:20 and similar Scriptures and ask if they are ready to receive Christ. Do not press the point, however, if they do not feel ready. Let the Holy Spirit work on them.

7. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, how would you rank the strength of your faith? Please explain your answer.

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some are brand-new Christians, and everything is new to them.
- 3) Some have been Christians for years, but their own legalism prevented them from using their faith to overcome their sins.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise for whatever faith they report.
- 2) Assure them that the Holy Spirit will cause their faith to grow.
- 3) They need to be in the Word for faith to grow.
- 4) If our faith is weak, we can ask God to increase it (Luke 17:5).
- 5) Be certain that their faith is actually in Christ's Atonement on the cross and not in their own merits. Legalists have difficulties with faith because they either admire themselves for their good works or condemn themselves for their shortcomings.
- 6) Emphasize that penitent sinners are covered by Jesus' righteousness, our own righteousness is filthy rags, and only His mercy can save us.
- 7) Seeing answers to prayer also helps faith to grow. By sharing their experiences of answered prayer, more experienced Christians can help others' faith to grow.
- 8) If the numbers are very low or they are brand-new Christians, assure them that we all had to start somewhere.
- 9) New Christians sometimes feel embarrassed around more experienced Christians, who know so much more. Give assurance that we all have a lot to learn. Faith grows as we struggle with doubts.

8. Faith means focusing on what Christ has done on our behalf. How have you been using your faith in your battle against ssa/ma/tx?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Some describe a strong faith.
- 2) Some express weakness.
- 3) Some express concerns about repeatedly committing the same sins.
- 4) Some express that faith makes them willing to obey.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for any act of obedience.
- 2) Encourage using memorized Scripture to stop negative thoughts.
- 3) Encourage transparency before our merciful God (Hebrews 4:15-16).

- 4) Encourage them to place no confidence in their own merits, but to place all confidence in Christ, Who made full satisfaction for all of our sins.
- 5) The consolation of the Gospel is especially needed by those who are troubled because they repeatedly commit the same sins. Encourage them to consistently drown their sin in repentance (I John 1:7 – 2:2), place total confidence in the forgiveness offered by Christ, and focus on using Scripture to stop negative thoughts.
- 6) Explain that the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin. When someone feels troubled by his/her sins, He is awakening his/her conscience (Ephesians 2:1-5).
- 7) The Holy Spirit, through the Word, assures us of God's forgiveness.

9. What truth do you find hardest to believe?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some doubt that God has totally forgiven them for all of their sins.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Some Christians have lived in fear for years that God might not have forgiven them for one or more of their former sins. Such sins might include abortion, murder, abusing or molesting children, satanic worship, etc.
- 2) Assure them that however great our sin, Jesus is a greater Savior. His shed blood on the cross was sufficient to make full satisfaction for all of our sins.
- 3) Encourage them to contrast how the Apostle Paul describes himself in Acts 22:19-20 and 26:9-11 with how he describes himself in I Timothy 1:12-17 and I Corinthians 15:8-10.
- 4) Encourage them to read 2 Chronicles 33 and note the list of Manasseh's sins in verse 6. He sacrificed his own sons in hideous satanic rituals. Emphasize the mercy of God upon a great sinner.
- 5) Use whatever resources you have to answer any questions they raise about what they read in the Bible. Many have heard worldly philosophies that encourage doubt, undermine faith, and cause confusion.

- 6) If they express fear that they will never overcome ssa/ma/tx, encourage them to stay in the Word and focus on God's promises. Remind them that they have just begun. Encourage them to focus on Jesus rather than their sins and to let Him lead step by step.

10. Faith results in love for God. How do we show that we really love Jesus (John 14:15 & 23)?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people realize that love leads to obedience.
- 2) Most realize that we let Him live in us and change us.
- 3) Some people realize that the more we obey God, the closer we get to Him.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) We obey God when we answer His call to repentance and accept His forgiveness.
- 2) We are letting God love us when we answer His call to repentance.
- 3) Love leads to surrender of self-will.
- 4) The 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) show us how to love God and others.
- 5) Real love makes obedience easy (Romans 6:17 & 21m & I John 5:3).
- 6) We obey out of love, not slavish fear.
- 7) When God comes to live in us, He changes us to be more like Jesus.
- 8) Our obedience is not to earn God's favor; it is our grateful response to His favor, which He gives as a free gift.

11. What new things have you learned about faith?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some are just beginning to realize that salvation is a free gift.
- 3) Some are just beginning to realize that they have been forgiven from the cross for all of their sins.
- 4) Some are just beginning to realize that faith comes through the Word and not through their own efforts.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage anything that is Biblically sound.

**12. On a scale of 1-10, how victorious have you been lately? Please explain your answer.**

(Victory is measured by how much you have overcome temptation.)

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for any victory gained.
- 2) Commend even small victories, because even small victories may have been difficult.
- 3) Assure them that God is pleased even when we take baby steps in obedience to His will.
- 4) If someone has fallen into sin, do not criticize them. Nothing will be gained if they cannot be honest with you. Encourage them to re-trace their steps and ask the Holy Spirit to give them insight into what weaknesses led to the fall.
- 5) Emphasize progress rather than perfection.
- 6) If their numbers are low and they report very little victory, remind them that they are just beginning.
- 7) Encourage them to use memorized Scripture to block tempting and negative thoughts. Assure them that this will improve with practice.
- 8) If they slipped into sin, encourage them to confess it, accept God's forgiveness, and get back on track (I John 1:7-9). Falling is not the problem; the problem is staying down when one has fallen.
- 9) Encourage them to focus on the mercy of God in Christ rather than their sins. Beating up on themselves accomplishes nothing; Jesus took the beating on their behalf.

- 10) If their numbers are high, you might tell them that more tests are likely in the future, but such concerns should not prevent them from enjoying their present victories.

13. Have you begun to find verses to memorize in order to combat temptation? How is that going?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any efforts that they have made to memorize.
- 2) If they have not yet begun, encourage them to ask the Holy Spirit to point them to verses that will be helpful for them.

14. How is your spiritual life in general, how are your private devotion, and how are things at your church/fellowship group?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for whatever is going well.
- 2) Explore what is not going well and try to help them find out why.
- 3) Give encouragement and be patient as they sort out the many new ideas that they have received in such a short time.
- 4) New habits of thought and action take time to learn. They may already be progressing as fast as possible.

Plan of Action:

- 1) Affirm anything that is Biblical.
- 2) Be alert for any hidden legalism.

- 3) Counsel based on your knowledge and experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.

**Additional points:**

- 1) Many will express self-condemnation over former sins, especially if they did criminal acts. They need not allow the devil to torment them with accusations. Ask them to read what Saul/Paul says about himself in Acts 22:19-20 and 26:9-11. Then ask them to read I Timothy 1:12-17, I Corinthians 15:8-10, and I Corinthians 1:26-28.
- 2) If he/she expresses feeling sexually attracted to someone of the same sex, encourage him/her to talk with the other person and get acquainted. The other person will then likely seem less mysterious. As a result, the sexual attraction often diminishes.
- 3) According to Hebrews 2:17-18 and 4:15-16, Jesus must have had ssa/ma/tx temptations at least once during his earthy life. Some people are not comfortable thinking of Jesus as having such temptations, but the Bible says He was tempted as we are. Yet He never permitted even an impure thought to cross His mind.
- 4) Discourage any reliance on one's own power to overcome temptation. Encourage them to rely fully on Christ, on the Word of God, and on prayer.
- 5) An Emergency Prayer is helpful if one is caught off guard by sudden and unexpected temptation. "Jesus, stop me, get me out of this, stop me even if I do not want to be stopped!" or "Jesus, I do not want to be this kind of a person!" are prayers for the spiritually drowning (Matthew 14:30). Sometimes in a moment of spiritual crisis, one needs immediate rescue. Later, one can think of memorized verses and pray about what set up the temptation.
- 6) Many overcomers have low self-esteem. Social stigma encourages them to have low self-esteem, especially if they are minor-attracted. However, low self-esteem does not help anyone withstand temptation. Focus on what Christ has done on their behalf, not on their worth in the eyes of society.
- 7) Some begin the program motivated more by self-disgust over their sexuality than by a desire to live a godly life. However, they cannot work the program without

reading the Word and learning about God's mercy as a free gift. The Holy Spirit works through the Word, and some get saved as a result. Be prepared to lead them to Christ when they are ready, but do not push them too fast. They may ask many questions first and look to you for the answers.