

**JOURNEY TO FREEDOM HANDBOOK****UNIT I Key 7****RE-BUILDING****Purpose of this Key:**

- 1) Recognize that overcoming habitual sin involves changing how we use our time, energy, and resources.
- 2) Recognize that giving up a sin leaves a vacuum that must be filled in godly ways.
- 3) Recognize that overcoming habitual sin involves learning new habits and new skills, and making new friends.
- 4) Learn to pray “replacement prayers”.
- 5) Recognize that anything we give up, God will replace with something better.
- 6) Recognize that in spite of our former sins, God calls us to a life of service.

Jeremiah 18:1-4**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people comprehend that God is the Potter, we are the clay, and He is shaping us into useful servants.
- 2) Some realize that they have caused problems.
- 3) A few note that the clay cannot re-shape itself.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) The Potter loves the clay; He is never angry or impatient with it.
- 2) He keeps working on it until He can be delighted in it.
- 3) The clay cannot re-mold itself, nor does it resist what the Potter is doing to it.
- 4) When we disciple a new believer or answer an inquirer’s questions, we need to remember that we and the new believer are both works in progress.
- 5) Talents used in the pursuit of sin can be used in the pursuit of righteousness (a former drug dealer can use his business skills to become an honest businessman.)
- 6) God does not throw away anything that He can use.

2 Timothy 2:21

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people comprehend that the more sin they allow God to purge from their lives, the more God can use them.
- 2) Some express that this verse gives them hope.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) When we recognize that God has given us forgiveness, we want to give something back.
- 2) No matter how many problems we have caused, God will find a path of service for us.
- 3) We also need to be purged of legalism before God can entrust us with vulnerable souls.

Luke 11:14-26

**Common responses:**

- 1) Different people get different points from this text.
- 2) Some see God's power over demons.
- 3) If one has experienced an exorcism, the delivered person should not become spiritually careless. He/she needs to fill up his/her life with the Word, prayer, and Christian fellowship.
- 4) Some see the danger of compromising with their sinful nature.
- 5) Some interpret the demons as literal, while others see them as references to our habitual sins.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) When we repent of a sin, we should also pray "replacement prayers". We should pray for virtue to replace the sin (patience to replace impatience, generosity to replace selfishness, etc.).
- 2) The Holy Spirit needs to come in to replace demons.

- 3) Any person who is a kingdom divided cannot stand. If there is any part of one's life that is not surrendered to God, the devil will use it to try to get the total person back.
- 4) People who give up an addiction but do not replace it with something good, often find that they develop another addiction (alcohol replaces gambling, gambling replaces pornography, etc.).
- 5) The time, energy, or money spent pursuing sin or recovering from sin (such as hangovers), can be spent on God-pleasing activities and service to others.
- 6) The Holy Spirit can point us to activities and people who will be good for us.
- 7) People accustomed to ungodly conversations, such as sexual talk or malicious gossip, may need to practice discussing worthwhile topics. Church should be a good place to find people with whom to practice.
- 8) God seldom honors a prayer to just "take away the ssa/ma/tx", because He wants to change the total person. He wants us to desire the Giver, not just the gift.

Matthew 25:14-29

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people comprehend that when God gives us a talent, we are accountable for how we use it.
- 2) Some express remorse at how they have wasted their lives.
- 3) Some feel called to intercessory prayer for the salvation of others.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) God gives all believers gifts. If we are surrendered, we will find out what they are.
- 2) The call to service is an honor, and God will reward our faithfulness.
- 3) Most people find that they are led into their area of service one step at a time. Rarely does God show anyone His whole agenda all at once.
- 4) We should not ask God for more gifts unless we are fully utilizing those He has already given us.
- 5) If we are faithful in a little, we will be set over much.

- 6) The devil's trick is to get us to underestimate what God can do with our lives (2 Corinthians 3:5 & 9:8).

1. On a scale of 1-10, how much re-building have you done already?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary. Most report some progress.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Commend any efforts to re-build.
- 2) Encourage them to be Spirit-led and Scripture-based.

2. List the things you still need to do to rebuild.

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Many want to repair broken relationships.
- 3) Some are in debt because of their sins, but now want to get debt-free.
- 4) Some are interested in getting more education.
- 5) Occasionally someone has an estranged spouse, is feeling heterosexual attractions, and wants to reconcile.
- 6) Some just want to focus on their internal changes and character development, and read the Bible and good Christian books.
- 7) Some want to change personality traits and treat others better.
- 8) Some want to make new friends.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm anything that is Biblical.
- 2) Encourage them to take time alone with God and invite the Holy Spirit's guidance.
- 3) Encourage them to ask forgiveness of the people whom they have wronged.
- 4) They may need to learn better communication skills so they can avoid arguments with loved ones.

- 5) If they have gotten into legal troubles, they need to work with the secular authorities to make things right.
- 6) If they owe child support, they need to pay regularly even if the secular authorities are not requiring it.
- 7) New Christians need to get baptized if they have not been already.

3. Which ones do you think will give you the most trouble, and why?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Broken relationships are often difficult, because no one can control the reaction of others.
- 3) Some list the sins they are trying to overcome.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Counsel them based upon your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.
- 2) They may benefit from reviewing the material they have covered so far. Check if they are applying what they have learned.
- 3) Refer to 2 Kings 18-19. Hezekiah makes many mistakes when he relies on his own intellect.
- 4) In chapter 19:14-19, he comes to the end of his own ideas. He lays the letter from the enemy king on the altar before the Lord. He describes the situation and leaves the solution with the Lord.
- 5) God then solves the problem in a way that Hezekiah would not have expected (19:35-37).
- 6) Ask about their fantasies if they do not mention them. Fantasies can prevent our spiritual progress.

4. What are the things that help to make you clean on the inside (I Peter 1:2)?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people realize that the blood of Jesus covers our sins.

- 2) Some recognize the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, Who works through the Word of God.
- 3) Some recognize that they need to be obedient.
- 4) Some mention Bible-reading, praying, and meditating on the Word.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm anything that is Biblical.
- 2) We cannot make ourselves clean; God makes us clean.
- 3) This is a good verse to memorize.
- 4) It reminds us to Whom we belong.

**5. What always makes the battle so difficult (Ephesians 6:12)?****Common responses:**

- 1) Most people realize that we battle not against flesh and blood.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) The battle is not against our own bodies; it is against the world (society and the environment), the flesh (self-will and emotions), and the devil.
- 2) The devil will use whatever he can against us.
- 3) Other people are not the enemy. The devil just uses them to tempt us.
- 4) We cannot blame the devil. We must take full responsibility for our own sins.
- 5) The devil cannot tempt us except by using whatever weaknesses are already in us.
- 6) Because of our weaknesses, it is important to examine ourselves and confess sin frequently, especially sins of the mind.
- 7) When unbelievers tempt us, they are doing what they feel they must, because they are slaves of sin (John 8:34).
- 8) When another Christian tempts us, we need to practice Matthew 18:15-17. We may need to shun people who insist on tempting us (Jude 10-16).

**6. How do we know that we can overcome Satan (John 12:31 and Luke 22:31)?****Common responses:**

- 1) Most people realize that Jesus got the victory over Satan.
- 2) When Satan sifts us like wheat, we can overcome him because of what Jesus did.
- 3) Jesus' shed blood on the cross protects us from Satan.
- 4) Jesus made intercessory prayer on Peter's behalf.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) When the devil tempts us, it is only with God's permission (Job 1:8-12, 2:1-6).
- 2) Temptation is an opportunity to identify our weak points.
- 3) When we slip into sin, we need to examine ourselves diligently for what thoughts, attitudes, secret agendas, hidden motivations, pride, and self-deception led up to the sin.
- 4) If we sin suddenly and impulsively (Psalm 19:12-13), we can take this opportunity to ask the Holy Spirit what led up to the sin.
- 5) If we invite the Holy Spirit to show us what led up to sin, and we repent of what He shows us, the devil has gained nothing.

**7. What have you learned about Re-building?****Common responses:**

- 1) Most people recognize that they have a lot of work ahead of them.
- 2) Most people recognize that the Holy Spirit will need to lead and guide.
- 3) Some note that change begins on the inside.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) Encourage them to be Spirit-led.
- 3) God has a plan to re-build their lives, and His way is best.
- 4) Trying to push their own agenda will slow them down.
- 5) Some things will not be fixed in this life. One can be of greatest possible service and live a life of dignity and self-respect in spite of issues that cannot be changed (such as AIDS, a long prison sentence, a loved one who refuses to reconcile, etc.)

8. 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. After they have confessed it and accepted God's forgiveness (I John 1:7-9), encourage them to re-trace their steps and ask the Holy Spirit to give them insight into what weaknesses led to the fall.
- 5) Falling is not the problem; it is staying down when one has fallen. Slips into sin are usually not random; often something sets us up to fall.
- 6) If their numbers are low, and they report very little victory, remind them that they are just beginning.
- 7) Continue to encourage them to use memorized Scripture to block tempting and negative thoughts. Assure them that this will improve with practice.
- 8) If they sin less frequently than before, assure them that is a sign of God at work in their lives. Emphasize progress, not perfection.
- 9) If they view themselves as making very little progress, keep their focus on God's mercy rather than their own failures. Beating themselves up accomplishes nothing; Jesus took the beating on their behalf.
- 10) If their consciences bother them over a sin that did not used to bother them, assure them that is a sign that God is at work in their lives.
- 11) Sin includes not only actions and words, but also ungodly thoughts. Encourage confession of sins of thought (Romans 12:2), which makes it easier to avoid sins of words and deeds.

- 12) If temptation is causing them to lean harder on God, that is a victory in and of itself.
- 13) 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.
- 14) Assure them that God allows tests only when we are ready for them.

9. On a scale of 1-10, how much memory work have you done?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary. The number here often correlates with the number in #8.
- 2) By now, most people are memorizing and seeing benefits.
- 3) Even if they are not actively memorizing, verses from their Bible-reading may be in their minds.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) If the number corresponds to the number in #8, point out the correlation.
- 2) Encourage any memorization, especially verses that speak of God's mercy and promises.
- 3) Verses that only condemn sin are not helpful; the most powerful verses give the consolation of the Gospel to the penitent sinner.
- 4) If they are having trouble memorizing, they could write down meaningful verses on paper, and read them several times throughout the day. Some find making flashcards helpful.

10. Did you use any memorized Scripture to battle temptations lately? What was the result?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary. By this time, most people have a story to tell.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage using Scripture to battle all temptation, sexual or otherwise. The more they use memorized Scripture to block negative thoughts and attitudes, the more easily they can block other temptations.
- 2) Commend any use of Scripture to battle temptation, and encourage them to keep doing so.
- 3) They may have had no significant temptation lately. While they should thank God for that, more temptation will come sooner or later. They need to memorize in order to be prepared.
- 4) If they are not using Scripture to battle temptation, encourage them to confess their sin and to start using their sword (Ephesians 6:17).

11. How is your spiritual life in general, how are your private devotions, 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 so well, and try to help them find out why. If they are not memorizing, that could be part of the reason.
- 3) Give encouragement and be patient as they sort out the many new ideas they have received in such a short period of time.
- 4) They may need to be taught about prayer and how to read the Bible, and be encouraged to find a good church.
- 5) Make sure that when they read the Bible, they look for evidence of God's mercy in every passage.
- 6) New habits of thought and action take time to learn. They may already be progressing as fast as possible.

12. Is there anything special you would like to talk about?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.

**Points to emphasize:**

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

**Plan of Action (Read the description of Plans of Action and make your plans as specific as possible.)**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) Be alert for any hidden legalism.
- 3) Give lots of encouragement.

**Additional points:**

- 1) It is normal for a person to have a period of time during the program when he/she might want to withdraw from others, shut him/herself up alone with God, and let the Holy Spirit work internal changes.
- 2) Some overcomers refer to this season of solitude as being “in the desert”. Egypt has been left behind, their farm in the Promised Land is up ahead, and they are being tested.
- 3) Often this is only temporary; later, they may want to form friendships based on their renewed personality.
- 4) God often seems to provide a way for them to experience a time of solitude. One’s job description might change so that one is able work alone, a prisoner might be assigned a single-man cell, or one might find it necessary to be alone in one’s car more.
- 5) In the desert, God met this His people, revealed Himself to them, taught them to trust Him for everything, taught them to accept His will, and grew their faith. Times of solitude with God are to be embraced, not feared.
- 6) Help them understand what is happening to them and that it is normal.

- 7) Encourage them to read Exodus. In the desert, the Hebrew tribes were totally dependent on God for water and food and under attack by hostile tribes, while God re-made them.
- 8) They had gotten out of Egypt; God had to get the Egypt out of them. He was getting them ready for the Promised Land.

### **OBSTACLE PRAYER**

Sometimes people find themselves in circumstances where every avenue for making external changes has become impossible or has been removed. While they are changing on the inside, opportunities for changes in their circumstances are just not available.

Here is the author's best advice, based on 2 Kings 18 & 19, and 2 Chronicles 32.

- 1) Go before God and explain the present problem.
- 2) Confess every single sin that either led to the present problem or made it possible to happen. Confess any sins that made things worse. Confess any sins done in response to other people's sins in the situation.
- 3) Explain to God what you have done using your own best judgment to solve the problem.
- 4) Tell Him what the results have been and how nothing has been successful.
- 5) Repent of pursuing your own agenda.
- 6) Ask Him what His plan is, how you can cooperate with it.
- 7) Then listen and wait. Watch for the Holy Spirit to point you in a direction to go. You may be led step by step. You may be surprised in various ways. Expect the unexpected.
- 8) Do not try to manipulate God into blessing your agenda; submit unconditionally to His. What He wants may or may not be what you want, even if what you want is very good.

- 9) God will never cross the line of someone's free will. We humans frequently desire to bend others to our will, a line God Himself will never cross. God will not honor a prayer that involves trespassing on the free will of another.
- 10) He does promise to bless our obedience. The more we surrender self-will, the more He can do with us and through us.