

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM HANDBOOK**UNIT II****KEY 1 DESIRE****Purpose of this Key:**

- 1) Give reassurance that it is normal to have difficulty resisting temptation.
- 2) Learn that God can be trusted to lead us into something better even when the way is difficult.
- 3) Realize that everyone wants love, loyalty, and a sense of belonging, and the ssa/ma/tx lifestyles are a search for love, loyalty, and a sense of belonging.
- 4) Learn that when people give up the ssa/ma/tx lifestyle, they often feel lonely for a while until they have had time to make new friends.
- 5) Appreciate how solitude becomes an opportunity for one to get closer to Jesus, let the Holy Spirit search one's innermost being, become more transparent before God, and allow Him to renew one's mind (Romans 12:2).

Proverbs 24:16**Common responses:**

- 1) When one falls into sin, one should repent and get back up.
- 2) A righteous person knows when he/she has fallen.
- 3) A wicked person likes to fall and does not care about the consequences.
- 4) God in His mercy helps us get back up when we have fallen.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) The "righteous man" is not righteous because of his own virtue. We are all capable of falling many times.
- 2) His righteousness is the righteousness of God in Christ imputed to him (2 Corinthians 5:21). He points to Christ and says, "There is my Righteousness."
- 3) Faith in the mercy of God, not faith in his own virtue, enables him to repent and receive God's forgiveness.
- 4) The worst thing we can do when we have fallen is to stay in our sin.

- 5) God's forgiveness changes our self-will and makes us want to be like Jesus.
- 6) If we repent of our sins, we still belong to Jesus.
- 7) The "wicked man" may not have done anything outwardly bad. He may have done nothing worse than rely on his own virtue to save him rather than on the mercy of God in Christ for his salvation (Luke 18:9-14).
- 8) Such people put their faith in their own merits rather than in the merits of Christ imputed to the penitent sinner.
- 9) They increase their sin by denial, minimizing, rationalizing, making excuses, blaming others, committing more sin to cover up previous sins, doing good deeds to compensate for their sins, accusing others of sins they themselves have done, manipulating others into condoning their sins, continuing in their sin because stopping it would be admitting they had been wrong, surrounding themselves with people who will affirm or enable their sins, avoiding anyone who might confront their sins, fighting anyone who does not affirm their sins, and then manipulating others into feeling sorry for them when their sins catch up with them.
- 10) Such faith cannot stand up to temptation or adversity (Matthew 7:24-27).
- 11) Relying on one's own virtue for salvation makes an idol of one's own virtue.
- 12) Spiritual pride is a serious sin that can destroy a Christian's life.
- 13) Seven is the number in the Bible that symbolizes perfection. There is no limit to the mercy of God to the truly penitent.

Proverbs 19:22

Common responses:

- 1) It is better to be kind than rich.
- 2) We all want unfailing love; it is a basic human need.
- 3) If we really love God, we are loyal to His will.
- 4) It is better to be poor than to be a liar.
- 5) Loyal people have more friends.
- 6) We need to be honest with God and not lie to Him.
- 7) The honest person will be spiritually blessed even if he/she is poor.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) This verse describes the perfect love of Jesus, Who is always kind and truthful, and while on this earth was poor for our sakes.
- 2) Some people gain riches by lying. If they do not repent, God will judge them (Revelations 22:15).
- 3) Some people gain riches by believing the devil's lies (Luke 12:16-21).
- 4) If we do not confess our sins, we are liars (I John 1:7-9).
- 5) All our sins are based on lies (John 8:44).
- 6) Ssa/ma/tx people are searching for love, not sex.
- 7) Love should be available without sexual strings attached.
- 8) To be delivered from our habitual sins, we need to discern the lies.
- 9) We need to focus on loving others rightly (I Corinthians 13:4-7).
- 10) Kind people tend to get respect and friendship.
- 11) Affirm any Biblical response; this verse says different things to different people.

I John 5:1-6**Common responses:**

- 1) If we confess that Jesus came in the flesh, we are children of God.
- 2) If we believe in Jesus, we overcome the world and keep the commandments.
- 3) Jesus comes to us in water (Baptism) and blood (Holy Communion).
- 4) When we have real faith, we keep the commandments more easily.
- 5) Love for God motivates us to keep the commandments.
- 6) Ssa/ma/tx is of the world and therefore has no power over our lives.
- 7) Even in the midst of troubles, we know that we have overcome the world.
- 8) We cannot rely on the world; we can rely 100% on Christ.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Living God's way is the safest way to live.
- 2) God gives us joy when we do His will.
- 3) LOVE for God makes obedience easy (verse 3).
- 4) We cannot keep the commandments, but Jesus kept them perfectly on our behalf.

- 5) Affirm any Biblical response; these verses say different things to different people.
Verse 4 is a good one to memorize.

I John 3:10-24

Common responses:

- 1) We are to love like Jesus, Who loved us first.
- 2) We show love by our deeds.
- 3) If we hate, we are following Satan.
- 4) Hatred is like murder.
- 5) When we are willing to love others, our hearts do not condemn us.
- 6) Real love helps the poor.
- 7) Real love makes us come alive.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) We do not help the poor to earn salvation, but to show gratitude for what Jesus did on our behalf.
- 2) Only Jesus could love perfectly.
- 3) No limit is set on how much we can love others.
- 4) Only God can increase our love and make it real.
- 5) The more we receive God's love, the more we love others.
- 6) When we confess sin and receive His forgiveness, we receive His love.
- 7) Love leads to joyful and willing obedience.
- 8) Affirm any Biblical response; these verses say different things to different people.

Jonah 3

Common responses:

- 1) No matter how sinful we are, if we repent, God will forgive us.
- 2) We need to witness to the lost so that they will not be destroyed.
- 3) Repentance can prevent a calamity in one's life.
- 4) Our repentance should be as thorough and sincere as the Ninevites'.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) These people relied totally on God's mercy.
- 2) They were motivated to completely purge themselves of sin.
- 3) They did not try to bargain or compromise with sin.
- 4) We do not need to sit in sackcloth and ashes, because Jesus on the cross made full satisfaction for all of our sins.
- 5) God did not want to destroy Ninevah; He wanted to save them. He was glad to accept their plea for mercy.

Hosea 5:15, 6:1-3, & 6:6**Common responses:**

- 1) We need to acknowledge our sins and return to the Lord.
- 2) Everything God allows is to draw us closer to Him.
- 3) We need to witness to lost souls.
- 4) God will heal us if we turn to Him.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) God lets us get all torn up by our sins so that He can put our lives back together the way He wants to.
- 2) A life destroyed by sin can be redeemed and made abundant (John 10:10).
- 3) God wants us to be spiritually thriving, not just surviving.
- 4) Verse 6:2 foreshadows Jesus' resurrection. We have been crucified with Him and will therefore be resurrected with Him (Romans 6:4-6).
- 5) When we accept healing on His terms, we perk up and grow.
- 6) Sometimes we committed sins because they were the only way we felt alive; they energized us, and distracted us temporarily from our painful emotions.
- 7) God's mercy makes us truly alive.

Isaiah 25:6-9**Common responses:**

- 1) Someday we will feast in heaven with Jesus.

- 2) We will receive victory in Jesus.
- 3) We need to keep trusting Jesus and overcoming sin.
- 4) Jesus wants fellowship with us.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Hebrew texts can have double meanings.
- 2) This text can refer to the Second Coming (Revelations 21:4).
- 3) It can also refer to Jesus' death on Mt. Calvary, when He removed the veil over our understanding, conquered death, removed our reproach, and saved us (John 19:30 & Romans 8:1).
- 4) Our sins may feel so powerful, but they were actually destroyed 2000 years ago on Good Friday on a hill outside Jerusalem.

1. What do you learn from Hebrews 12:3-11?**Common responses:**

- 1) God disciplines us so that we can be of greater service.
- 2) We should strive to be more Christ-like every day.
- 3) God's goal is for us to share in His holiness.
- 4) We need to accept the Lord's discipline and trust Him.
- 5) Some relate this text to specific difficulties in their lives.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) We do not need to panic when we are tested.
- 2) Over time, we accumulate a solid record of God's deliverance.
- 3) If we run into problems, we should first ask if we have stepped out from under God's will.
- 4) If we are in God's will, we should then ask if the problem is actually a protection against something worse happening.
- 5) We can take the problem to God and ask Him what use He is going to make of the problem.

- 6) Jesus came to Lazarus' grave 4 days late, but He was still right on time (John 11:21, 40-45).
- 7) God only disciplines us for our benefit (Jeremiah 29:11). There will be a reward.
- 8) God allows us to suffer the earthly consequences of our sin so that we will repent and not have to suffer eternally.
- 9) God takes seriously His adoption of us as His children.
- 10) If people will not accept God's discipline, He sometimes sends worse problems into their lives.
- 11) Once we have repented of the sins that have caused messes in our lives, we can then ask God how He wants us to clean up those messes.
- 12) We should never lose sight of the fact that Jesus suffered first on our behalf.
- 13) Discipline purges us so that we are free to be of greater service (2 Timothy 2:21 & 15:2).
- 14) It makes us more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's voice.

2. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you trust God to discipline you in the right way?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary. The numbers are usually high, though some acknowledge that when the discipline actually comes, their trust is tested.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Give encouragement and reassurance.
- 2) Over time, if they keep trusting Jesus, they will accumulate a solid record of God coming through for them in unexpected ways (Romans 8:28).
- 3) Disappointments can turn out to be blessings in disguise.
- 4) Surrender keeps our focus where it should be (Philippians 3:12-14).
- 5) Discipline is not necessarily punishment. Athletes in training undergo discipline in order to improve their performance, but that is not punishment.
- 6) Never criticize a low number. Try to find out what they are afraid of. Encourage the use of Scripture to build up their faith (Romans 10:17).

3. On a scale of 1-10, how willing are you to let God do whatever He wants to in your life?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary. The numbers are usually high.
- 2) Anyone who has made it this far in the Keys program has usually seen God working in his/her life, and likes what he/she sees.
- 3) Some acknowledge fear.
- 4) Some express that while God can do whatever He wants to in their lives, they will not necessarily like it.
- 5) Some are in the midst of God's discipline as they work the Keys program. They are not just talking about surrendering; they are doing it.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Give encouragement and reassurance.
- 2) Never criticize a low number. Try to find out what they are afraid of. Encourage the use of Scripture to build up their faith (Romans 10:17).
- 3) Assure them that surrender is very freeing.
- 4) Never criticize those who state that they do not like God's discipline. Hebrews 12:11 acknowledges that it will be sorrowful. Refer to Psalm 30:5.
- 5) Assure them that God's discipline will make them fit for greater service. Hebrews 6:10 applies.
- 6) Never criticize acknowledgments of fear. The Old Nature fights back in all of us (Romans 7:21-25).

4. So far, which Key did you get the most out of? What was the most important thing you got out of it?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some recognize that they all fit together.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm whatever they have learned. Encourage thanks and praise to God.
- 2) Remind them that as they apply the Word of God to their lives, the neurons of the brain are continually being re-organized around the Word.

5. So far, which Key seems to be the most difficult? What seems to be making it difficult?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary. Forgiveness is frequently the most difficult.
- 2) Some mention other problems.
- 3) Some want to reconcile with loved ones, but their loved ones do not want to.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Give encouragement and reassurance.
- 2) Never criticize any difficulties, especially difficulties with forgiveness. Some of these people come from very difficult backgrounds, and live in challenging environments.
- 3) Suggest they re-read the material on forgiveness, and remind them that they will be exploring forgiveness more thoroughly in the following Units.
- 4) Remind them that forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation, nor does it mean trusting the other person.
- 5) Remind them that forgiveness is often a process, not an event.
- 6) Encourage them to pray for the ones who wronged them.
- 7) Their responsibility is to forgive and love others, whether or not their loved ones respond with reconciliation. However, that disappointment needs to be grieved in the presence of Jesus, Who felt that pain when He was on the cross (Isaiah 53:4-5).
- 8) Counsel based on your education and experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.

6. Which Keys have you been able to put into practice?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary. Many say “all” or “most”.
- 2) Some focus on one Key that brought the most change. Scripture, Forgiveness, Love, and Surrender are commonly cited.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm whatever they have put into practice. Encourage thanks and praise to God.
- 2) The Keys were designed to work together.

7. What are some thoughts you get from Proverbs 26? You may want to read the chapter over several times and think about it before you answer.

Common responses:

- 1) We should not be lazy.
- 2) Many realize that they used to be like the fool until they repented.
- 3) Some say that this chapter made them humble and convicted them of sin.
- 4) Many cite specific verses that speak to their situations and habits.
- 5) Some people see an apparent contradiction between verses 4 and 5.
- 6) Some ssa/ma/tx overcomers see themselves in verse 11.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm whatever they got out of it. This chapter says different things to different people.
- 2) Notice how helpless a fool is (Ephesians 2:1). Only God’s mercy can rescue him/her.
- 3) We were all like the fool until we repented and received forgiveness.
- 4) Encourage more reading in Proverbs, which has much to say about making wise choices, thinking godly thoughts, and getting along with others.
- 5) Sometimes it is better to respond to a fool according to verse 4, and other times according to verse 5.
- 6) Confession of sin and transparency before God breaks the pattern in verse 11.

8. Is loneliness a problem for you? If so, what steps have you taken to deal with it?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Many say 'yes'. They have cut their ties with people from the old life, but new friendships have not yet had time to develop.
- 3) Some have been able to fill their lives and spare time with positive and helpful people.
- 4) Some are using this time of increased solitude to get closer to God and let the Holy Spirit search them for sins of the mind.
- 5) Some prefer solitude.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Their church should be a place where they can get the right kind of love and make friends who will build them up.
- 2) Unfortunately, even in church ssa/ma/tx overcomers are sometimes shunned until they have proven their sincerity.
- 3) If the church has a men's accountability group, the ssa/ma/tx men should be just as welcome as the straight men with sexual sins. The straight men may have to be taught how to help the ssa/ma/tx men.
- 4) Sometimes the ssa/ma/tx overcomers are the ones who start the accountability group, and later the heterosexual men ask if they can join.
- 5) Loneliness is the #1 reason that overcomers give up and go back to the ssa/ma/tx lifestyle.
- 6) Give assurance. The desire for friends and wanting a sense of belonging is normal, and the time of loneliness is temporary.
- 7) They can ask God to point them to the right people with whom they can make friends.
- 8) It may be God's will for them to experience a time of solitude while they make inner changes (Psalm 139:23-24); if they accept it, they can become stronger.
- 9) We need to first focus on our identity in Christ as penitent and forgiven sinners, and later focus on our relationships with others (Jeremiah 18:1-4).

- 10) Those who prefer solitude may have a unique gift. Ask them if they have a calling to be intercessors and have a prayer ministry (Ephesians 2:10).
- 11) Many ssa/ma/tx temptations are driven by emotional needs. Many overcomers have found it helpful to shut themselves up alone with God for a season and let Him renew their thinking (Romans 12:2 & 2 Corinthians 10:5).
- 12) Encourage praise and thanks to God for the people in their lives who are a blessing to them.
- 13) Ssa/ma/tx overcomers who are musically gifted and willing to share that gift may find that music builds bridges with other people.
- 14) Learning to relate to others of the same sex in a godly way takes time, and they need to be patient with themselves as they learn to reach out.

9. What steps are you taking to relate to others of the same sex in a non-sexual, friendly manner?

Common responses:

- 1) Some get to know people so they do not feel tempted to treat them like sexual objects.
- 2) Some try to look at people like God sees them and love them like Jesus does.
- 3) Many realize they need to avoid people who try to pull them back into the old habits.
- 4) Some realize they need to avoid ungodly sexual talk and gossip.
- 5) Some are learning to engage in Christian conversation with their fellowship group, which might be a new experience for new believers.
- 6) Some minor-attracted adults will say they never had a problem relating to other adults of the same sex. They need to learn to relate to children the right way.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) The Keys program can only provide tools to help withstand temptation, teach forgiveness, encourage greater surrender of self-will, and identify ungodly thinking.

- 3) Much healing involves learning to relate to others of the same sex in the right way. The church should be the best place for opportunities to do so.
- 4) Older people can be father and mother substitutes, people one's own age can be brother and sister substitutes, younger people are to be mentored in godly ways, and children are to be protected.
- 5) When we learn to relate well to others of the same sex, they can fill in our "missing pieces". We usually relate better to the opposite sex when we have learned to relate well to the same sex.
- 6) Be aware the many ssa/ma/tx overcomers grew up in situations where others of the same sex failed to treat them well. Attempting to relate to others of the same sex in a non-sexual manner may be frightening.
- 7) They can ask God to show them how **He** sees the others of the same sex, and guide them as they attempt to reach out.
- 8) Even if one is feeling some opposite sex attractions, one should maintain focus on relating well to the same sex. The more of our "missing pieces" get filled in, the stronger our armor against temptation will be.
- 9) Minor-attracted adults still need to learn to relate better to adults of the same sex so that they will be less tempted to get their emotional needs met from children.

10. What thoughts do you get out of I John 2:15-17?

Common responses:

- 1) Some view the world system as a reflection of man's sinful nature.
- 2) Some focus on the fact that we have eternal life in Christ.
- 3) Some recognize that we cannot serve two masters. We either love the world system, or we love Jesus.
- 4) Ssa/ma/tx sins are worldly, and we need to put God first.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm our need to reject any worldview that goes against the Gospel.
- 2) This is a good passage to memorize when one feels tempted to visual lusts.
- 3) Any thrill we get from our sins will quickly evaporate (Hebrews 11:25-26).

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

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for any victory gained.
- 2) More tests will likely be put in their way, but future test should not spoil their enjoyment of the victories they have had so far.
- 3) If they sin less frequently than before, assure them that God has been working in their lives. Emphasize progress, not perfection.
- 4) If they have slipped, encourage them to confess it, accept God's forgiveness, and get back on track.
- 5) Encourage them to retrace their steps and ask the Holy Spirit to give them insight into what weaknesses led to the fall.
- 6) Encourage confession of sins of thoughts (Romans 12:2), which makes it easier to avoid sins of words and deeds.
- 7) Continue to encourage them to use memorized Scripture to block tempting and negative thoughts. Encourage use of the Emergency Prayer.
- 8) 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.

12. 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 #11.
- 2) By how, most people are memorizing Scripture and seeing benefits.
- 3) Even if they are not actively memorizing, verses may be staying in their minds from their Bible-reading.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) If the number correlates to the number in #11, 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. Verses that give the consolation of the Gospel to the penitent sinner are the ones that are powerful and bring change.
- 4) If they are having trouble memorizing, they can write down meaningful verses on paper and read them several times throughout the day.

13. Did you use any memorized Scripture to battle temptation 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.
- 2) If they have had no significant temptation lately, they need to memorize in order to be prepared.
- 3) If they have not been using Scripture to battle temptation, encourage them to confess their sins and start using their sword (Ephesians 6:17).

14. 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 pinpoint what might be holding them back.
- 3) Give encouragement and be patient. These people are often getting many new thoughts and ideas in a short period of time.

Plan of Action:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) Be alert for any hidden legalism.
- 3) Give lots of encouragement.
- 4) By this time, many are learning to be Spirit-led and are less dependent upon the written Plans of Action.

Additional points:

- 1) By this time, many are aware that their sins have caused a lot of problems in their lives, which will not be easily corrected.
- 2) Encourage them to go before God and pray something like this: *I realize that my sins have made a complete mess of my life. The thief of my soul killed, stole, and destroyed. I have asked Your forgiveness, and You have given it to me. I am ready to re-build my life and clean up my messes under Your direction. What are Your orders? What is Your will for this day (or the next hour or next 5 minutes) of my life?* Then they should listen.
- 3) By this time, many of the minor-attracted adults are feeling great remorse over their sins against children.
- 4) Assure them that this remorse is a sign that the Holy Spirit has been working on their hearts through the Word.
- 5) However, they should not be beating themselves up over their sins. Society often believes that they cannot suffer enough for what they have done. However, no one can afford to remain permanently in a state of remorse.
- 6) Unless they accept that they are sinners pardoned by God's mercy in Christ, the devil will create despair and hopelessness, and rob them of peace and joy (Galatians 5:22).
- 7) They should be encouraged to pray frequently for their former victims. Intercessory prayer may be the greatest gift they can give. If their former victims turn to Christ to be healed, they will receive it.

- 8) While they may never be able to communicate in this life with former victims, they can hope for the right kinds of relationships to develop in heaven.
- 9) If there is contact with former victims, the penitent minor-attracted adult should take full responsibility for his/her part in the abuse, make it clear to the children that nothing they did in any way caused or allowed the abuse, and express sincere remorse for what he/she did.
- 10) He/she should commit him/herself to protecting children in any way possible. Some former sex offenders have become advocates on behalf of victims of sexual crimes and human trafficking.