

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

- 1) Assess how much change they have made in their personalities, relationships, and thought patterns.
- 2) Assess what work they still need to do and where God is leading them.
- 3) Learn to be alert to ungodly compromises.
- 4) Realize that faith needs to become action.
- 5) Realize that faith is often tested.
- 6) Realize the danger of fantasizing.
- 7) Realize the joy of obedience to God.

Proverbs 14:8**Common responses:**

- 1) We need to be continuously mindful of our thoughts and actions.
- 2) Self-examination needs to be on-going.
- 3) Some realize that holiness needs to be a goal, and that they should not live according to their carnal nature.
- 4) Some see their need for God's wisdom, not the World's.
- 5) Some note that the ssa/ma/tx lifestyle is full of deception and foolishness

Points to emphasize:

- 1) This verse is about the believer's personality being re-wired under God's direction.
- 2) When we accept the Holy Spirit's direction for us, we become more Christ-like.
- 3) Sometimes our families, society, or the environment will not approve of the ways in which God changes us; other times they will be delighted.
- 4) We need to focus on obeying God's will.

- 5) As we listen to the Holy Spirit, He might show us the purpose of the things that happen to us.
- 6) The World's influences will often try to deceive us, so we must learn to discern.
- 7) To learn God's wisdom, we must be transparent before Him.
- 8) Once we realize that God's ways are better, and that our sins are committed in response to lies, we like our sins less and less.
- 9) Wise people are not helpless; fools are helpless and blame their problems on others.
- 10) Wise people confess their sins; fools brag about how good they are.

James 1:21

Common responses:

- 1) We need to give up sexual sins.
- 2) We should give up our sins and focus on God's Word.
- 3) The Holy Spirit will use the Word to clean the filth out of our minds.
- 4) God's Word brings us eternal life, which matters more than the pleasures of sin.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) Note that the word "all" is used twice and leaves no room for compromise.
- 3) Affirm that we all need to examine ourselves thoroughly and confess our sins, every day or more often as needed.
- 4) Notice the process of replacement: the Holy Spirit uses the Word to push the filth out of our minds and fill us with the knowledge of God.
- 5) Remind them that the Word will reveal evidence of God's mercy if we look for it. For the sake of only 10 righteous, God would have spared even Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20-32).
- 6) Obeying this verse will mean giving up pride.

James 1:22

Common responses:

- 1) Most people understand that we should put our faith into action.
- 2) Some realize that works are a natural result of faith.
- 3) Many find that this verse convicts them.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) This verse describes a process: we all start by being hearers, the Word works on our self-will, and we become better doers as we grow in Christ.
- 3) People delude themselves in two ways.
- 4) One is by thinking that they can work their way to heaven.
- 5) The other is by believing that they are hopeless and beyond the reach of God's mercy.
- 6) Sometimes when we try to become doers, we find out just how sinful we really are.
- 7) To be doers, we need to ask God for help and direction. He does not leave us to become doers on our own.

I John 3:2**Common responses:**

- 1) If we focus on Christ, He will change us to be like Him.
- 2) Some realize that they are changing but do not know what they will eventually be like, so they are trusting God with the process.
- 3) Some express looking forward to finding out what they will be like.
- 4) Some focus on Jesus' return rather than the changes that they are making now.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm that they will like the person into whom God is changing them.
- 2) We need faith to trust God with the process of changing us.
- 3) If we continue to have faith in God, He will continue changing us for the rest of our lives.

- 4) Our final change will happen when we come before our Lord in heaven. Only then will we become perfect.
- 5) Some churches teach that entire sanctification is possible while yet in this life. While that may be theoretically possible, none should set unreasonable expectations for themselves. Encourage them to focus on Christ, not on their degree of “perfection”.
- 6) Ssa/ma/tx people often begin the Keys with some anxiety about what they will become as they overcome their temptations. This verse gives reassurance.

1. What changes in your life have you made since you started the program?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Many state that they spend more time in the Word and in prayer, and are more focused on God.
- 3) Some are more aware that God’s mercy is a free gift, so they are less legalistic.
- 4) Many have changed their attitude toward other people and become less selfish.
- 5) By this time, most have given up ssa/ma/tx sexual activity.
- 6) Many have given up fantasizing about it.
- 7) Many are learning to consult God’s will before making any decisions.
- 8) Some have made progress in forgiving the ones who wronged them.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for their changes.
- 2) Never criticize. Affirm the changes they see in themselves, the difficulties they have overcome, and the significance of their changes.
- 3) Because so many have low self-esteem, they may underestimate the degree of change they have made or de-value those changes.
- 4) Give encouragement. More changes will come as the Holy Spirit continues to work on them through the Word.

2. What changes in your life do you still need to make?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some still have ssa/ma/tx fantasies and negative thoughts.
- 3) Some still have forgiveness work to do.
- 4) Some identify self-will that they need to surrender.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage them to use memorized Scripture in order to block fantasies and negative thoughts.
- 2) Encourage them to look for the lies of the devil behind the negative thoughts.
- 3) Encourage them to look for the lies of the devil in their fantasies. In our fantasies we receive friendship, approval, understanding, loyalty, and power. They need to recognize that they use fantasies to compensate for what is missing in real life.
- 4) They need to give up these fantasies, gain genuine self-esteem based on God's esteem of them, and ask God how He wants them to get what has been missing from their lives.
- 5) Review what they have learned about forgiveness.
- 6) Assure them that in Unit III and beyond, they will learn more about forgiveness.
- 7) Encourage them to continue surrendering self-will. The more self-will we surrender, the more God can give us.
- 8) Otherwise, counsel based on your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person. Never criticize any difficulties they describe.

3. What changes do you find hardest to make? Do you know why?**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Forgiveness is often hardest.
- 3) Fantasies are often hard to stop.
- 4) Gaining self-esteem is often hard.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Many ssa/ma/tx overcomers were severely abused as children. Those memories will probably be in their minds for the rest of their lives.
- 2) When a child is abused, the devil uses the event as an opportunity to inject his lies into their minds. When the lies of the devil are exposed, and truth is spoken against them, we can more easily forgive the abuser. More will be said about this in Unit III.
- 3) Fantasies are often used to compensate for low self-esteem. Encourage them to build their self-esteem with the Holy Spirit's guidance.
- 4) Counsel based on your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person. Never criticize any difficulties they describe.

4. Have you found any straight same-sex friends? Are they helping you to overcome? If so, how are they helpful?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) By this time, many have found straight same-sex friends, often in church.
- 3) Some have revealed their struggles to their straight friends, and others are still keeping it a secret.
- 4) Those who have revealed their secrets and received support and fellowship, rather than judgment and rejection, found these experiences helped them to heal.
- 5) Those who have kept their secrets feel that straight same-sex friends are helping them anyway, by showing them how to relate to the same sex in non-sexual ways.
- 6) By this time, most are deliberately avoiding close relationships with ssa/ma/tx people, except those who are also seeking to overcome their temptations.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Older same-sex straight friends can meet emotional needs that were not met by the overcomers' same-sex parents.
- 2) Same-sex straight friends in the same age range can show them how to relate in non-sexual ways to others of the same sex.

- 3) Many ssa/ma/tx people never learned how to relate to others of the same sex except through sexual activity, so having same-sex friends is a new experience. Give encouragement.
- 4) Those who have not yet found any straight same-sex friends can ask the Holy Spirit to point them to the right people.
- 5) If they are keeping their sexuality secret, do not push them to reveal their struggles to their new friends until they feel comfortable doing so. Once they have overcome ssa/ma/tx, they may be glad that they had not said anything.
- 6) If their straight same-sex friends know about their struggles and are giving support and fellowship, God might send other ssa/ma/tx overcomers to those straight people to be mentored.
- 7) Someday, these overcomers might be mentoring other ssa/ma/tx overcomers. We learn how to mentor from our own mentors.
- 8) If God is going to bring a spiritual awakening among ssa/ma/tx people, He will want straight people who are willing to give support, fellowship, accountability, and friendship.
- 9) Straight same-sex Christians who have a history of addiction to chemicals or heterosexual sins, which they have overcome, often make the best straight same-sex mentors for ssa/ma/tx overcomers.

5. Below are several verses from Proverbs. What are the blessings that God promises to us when we re-build our lives His way?

Proverbs 10:22

Common responses:

- 1) Most people understand that when God sends blessings, nothing negative will spoil our enjoyment of them.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Those who have been influenced by prosperity theology might think this verse refers to material blessings. Explain that blessings can take many forms, and that God blesses us on His terms, not ours.
- 2) If we are confessing our sins, accepting forgiveness, working to forgive others, and surrendering our self-will, nothing negative will spoil our enjoyment of His blessings.
- 3) When we try to bless ourselves on our own terms, we might get our way; but we will also pay a price.

Proverbs 10:28

Common responses:

- 1) Most people understand that living under God's mercy brings joy. They have gotten this far in the program because they have experienced that joy.
- 2) Very few even comment on the second part of this verse. They have already experienced the joylessness of sin.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God.
- 2) Remind them that all we have to do is remain in God's will and trust Him to bring blessings.
- 3) Refer to John 10:10, in which Jesus promises us an abundant life.
- 4) People who persist in sin become frustrated because their sins bring them no joy; so they commit even more sins, hoping that if they sin in the just the right way or with the right person, they will finally get some joy. They often bitterly blame others for their lack of joy.

Proverbs 12:14

Common responses:

- 1) Most people understand that living God's way brings joy.
- 2) Some recognize that what we say or do will bring either blessings or trouble.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Remind them that obedience is not to earn favor with God but to show gratitude for His mercy.
- 2) A life of obedience to God will be blessed.
- 3) We will never regret showing kindness.
- 4) Refer to Galatians 6:7-10
- 5) Although prosperity theology is a false doctrine, people sometimes do prosper materially if they live God's way. When people no longer waste money on alcohol, drugs, gambling, the costs of extra-marital sex, etc., and use their money for education and health care, their financial situation often improves.

Proverbs 14:22**Common responses:**

- 1) Most people understand that we should plan to do good, not evil.
- 2) Some realize that doing good to others brings good upon ourselves.
- 3) Some emphasize the need to be truthful in order to bring good upon ourselves.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm that God will bless us as we surrender to His will.
- 2) Encourage them to step out in faith on these verses; and over time, they will accumulate a record of God blessing them for their faithfulness.

Proverbs 16:7**Common responses:**

- 1) Most recognize that if we live according to God's will, He will make our enemies be at peace with us.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage them to step out in faith on this verse, and see if God makes this come true for them in miraculous ways.

- 2) We are to love our enemies, forgive our enemies, and pray for their salvation.
God will bless us for that.
- 3) We need to ask God how He wants us to handle our enemies, and then follow His leading precisely (Isaiah 54:17).

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

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) By this time, the numbers are often at the high end of the scale.
- 3) Many have been able to overcome the sins of deeds. The sins of thought may still defeat them.
- 4) Some are getting victory over sins of thoughts and feeling much more free.
- 5) Many are learning to keep their focus on God and on memorized Scripture.
- 6) Some are gaining more insight into the lies that have fed their temptations.
- 7) Some are expressing disgust over the thoughts that used to arouse them.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for any victory gained.
- 2) If the number is high because they have had very little temptation lately, encourage thanks and praise to God.
- 3) If the number is high because they had to fight a lot of temptation and were successful, encourage thanks and praise to God.
- 4) More tests will likely be put in their way, but future tests should not spoil their enjoyment of the victories they have had so far.
- 5) Avoid criticizing a low number. Try to find out the reason for it. Ask about their thoughts, attitudes, stressful situations, how they have been using their time, or if something unexpected has happened.
- 6) If they sin less frequently than before, assure them that God has been working in their lives. Encourage progress, not perfection.
- 7) If they have slipped, encourage them to confess it, accept God's forgiveness, and get back on track.

- 8) Remind them that I John 1:9 and Romans 8:1 always apply.
- 9) Encourage them to retrace their steps and ask the Holy Spirit to give them insight into what weakness led to the fall.
- 10) Encourage them to confess sins of thought (Romans 12:2) in order to more easily avoid sins of words and deeds.
- 11) Continue to encourage them to use memorized Scripture to block tempting and negative thoughts. Encourage use of the Emergency Prayer.
- 12) If they view themselves as making very little progress, keep their focus on God's mercy rather than their own failures.
- 13) New Christians do not always understand the difference between temptation and actual sin. Some give themselves a low number, but while the temptation was great, they may not have fallen into sin. Explain the difference to them.
- 14) If they have not had temptation in a long while, they might need to be aware that the devil does not give up easily and may be preparing a major attack. This possibility should not prevent them from enjoying their progress now.
Overcomers commonly experience a major attack of temptation before getting the final victory over a besetting sin. If they withstand a big temptation, which can go on for days or weeks, they will usually find themselves that much stronger once it is over.

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

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) By now, 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 answer correlates with the number in #6, 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 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.

8. Did you use any memorized Scripture to battle temptation lately? What was the result?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Many have learned to use memorized Scripture immediately when tempted.
- 3) By this time, most of them realize that using memorized Scripture is powerful and effective.
- 4) Many express joy at the new strength they are finding to resist temptation. Their self-esteem is improving.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage using Scripture to battle all temptation, sexual and otherwise.
- 2) If they are less tempted to ssa/ma/tx sins, and other temptations are more obvious, they have likely had significant spiritual growth.
- 3) If the number is high, encourage them to continue, especially if they have had a lot of temptation lately (James 4:7).
- 4) If they have had no significant temptation lately, they need to memorize in order to be prepared.
- 5) If memorized Scripture does not seem to be effectively blocking temptation, they might have had a lot of temptation lately or are trying to break an old habit. Encourage persistence and consistency.
- 6) Avoid criticizing a low number. Encourage confession of sin and to start using their sword (Ephesians 6:17).
- 7) Remind them of God's promises.
- 8) Remind them that their minds are being re-wired as the Word builds their faith.

9. 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.
- 2) Most report that both are going well.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Be mindful that for many, their churches may have been hesitant to accept them at first because of their reputation when they were in the ssa/ma/tx lifestyle. Maa's especially might find it difficult to gain acceptance in a church.
- 2) By this time, if they have been consistent in church, the congregation has often accepted them, and they are making friends.
- 3) Explore what is not going so well and try to pinpoint what might be holding them back.
- 4) Encourage them to pray for their church and pastor, especially if there are problems.
- 5) Counsel based on your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.

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 less dependent upon the written Plans of Action.

Additional points:

- 1) By this time, many ssa/ma/tx overcomers have developed a deeper prayer life.
- 2) One reason is their growing faith in God's mercy, which makes Him approachable.

- 3) Another reason is the growth they have seen in their spiritual lives as they confess their sins, accept the offered forgiveness, and experience victory over sin.
- 4) Many are praying intercessory prayers for unsaved loved ones, former partners, former victims, people who wronged them, for revival, etc.
- 5) Many great prayer warriors/intercessors come from backgrounds of pain.
- 6) Encourage them to persist in prayer. They may have to pray for the same people or situations for decades before results become visible.
- 7) Results may not become visible in this life, but God will reward their faithfulness.