

**JOURNEY TO FREEDOM HANDBOOK****UNIT III Key 3****SCRIPTURE****Purpose of this Key:**

- 1) Recognize that the Word of God speaks truth against distorted thinking.
- 2) Recognize that the Word of God protects us from being deceived by the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- 3) Recognize that after we confess our sins and accept God's forgiveness, others cannot control us with guilt, false accusations, or other manipulations.
- 4) Recognize that because of God's forgiveness, we need not feel ashamed when others try to judge us.
- 5) Recognize that the Word of God shows us when we are sinning, and it also reassures us when we are doing right.
- 6) Recognize that we are not responsible for the sins of others, only our own.

Proverbs 18:10**Common responses:**

- 1) When we feel afraid, we can call on the Lord.
- 2) When we are unsure if someone is telling us the truth, we can ask the Lord for clarity.
- 3) We can ask for His help during temptation, trials, and tests.
- 4) We need to be in the Word and in prayer.
- 5) He will give us wisdom as we abide in Him.
- 6) He can show us how to overcome the negative stigma of a sinful past.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage them to continually follow the Spirit's leading as they work to fix problems that they have caused, and see if they gradually overcome the stigma of their past sins.
- 2) The devil hates the name of Jesus and will flee when we use it.

- 3) To use Jesus' name effectively, they need to confess their sins, forgive the ones who wronged them, seek forgiveness from others when necessary, live the surrendered life, and be in the Word and in prayer.
- 4) Assure them that if they sense an evil, invisible presence, it will leave if rebuked in the name of Jesus. They may need to be persistent, but it will have to leave eventually (Mark 16:17 & Acts 16:18).
- 5) One may come under demonic attack if one has a history of involvement in the occult or has an ancestor who was involved in the occult.
- 6) One may come under demonic attack if one lives in a house where there has been occult activity, a violent death, or suicide.
- 7) A Christian may come under demonic attack after overcoming a major sin pattern.
- 8) A Christian may come under demonic attack before undertaking a great work for God, even before becoming aware of his/her new calling.
- 9) One should never try to rebuke a demon that is oppressing another person unless that person gives permission and the Christian feels Spirit-led. Then they should bring along one or two other strong Christians for prayer support.

#### Colossians 3:15-17

##### **Common responses:**

- 1) Our every thought should be focused on God.
- 2) We should give God the glory for everything.
- 3) Our conduct should never cause someone to stumble.
- 4) If we let God's Word into us, we will have victory and peace.
- 5) Many hymns and praise songs are based on the Psalms, so we are being filled with the Word as we sing them.

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

- 1) As we fill our minds with God's thoughts, we receive joy and peace.
- 2) The more we think God's thoughts, the less room we have in our minds for sinful thoughts (Romans 12:2).

- 3) When we do not feel peace, we can ask the Holy Spirit if a lie is disturbing us, if we have any unconfessed sin, if we have not forgiven someone, or if we have not yet surrendered some self-will.
- 4) The Word of God confronts the lies and fills us with God's thoughts.
- 5) The more of God's Word is in our minds, the more we can help others.
- 6) We need to focus on giving God thanks.

Luke 6:46-49

**Common responses:**

- 1) We should believe the words of Christ and apply them to our lives.
- 2) We do not benefit from going through the motions.
- 3) Our faith in Christ's Atonement on the cross for our sins makes us strong in the storms of life.
- 4) We will be spiritually weak if we do not read the Bible or pray.
- 5) Nothing we do will be productive if not based on faith in Christ.
- 6) God's Word is a curb to stop us from sinning, a mirror that shows us our sins, and a guide for Christian living.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) We are motivated to live a Christ-like life when we rely only and entirely upon the mercy of God in Christ to save us (2 Corinthians 5:14-21).
- 2) The solid foundation of our lives is our faith that salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- 3) If we try to earn salvation by our works, our faith will be as unstable as sand.
- 4) Be alert for hidden legalism. Never use this passage to put someone under the Law. Legalism only produces outward conformity and hidden rebellion.
- 5) If we obey our self-will instead of God's will, our lives will be as unstable as sand.

Mark 4:14-20

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most emphasize that we need to act upon the words of Jesus.
- 2) Most recognize that the Word of God is the only way to peace and joy.
- 3) Some express wanting others to have that peace and joy.
- 4) We should allow nothing to take God's Word away from us.
- 5) We should not care about worldly things.
- 6) We are not helpless victims of thorny soil or stony ground; our upbringing or circumstances are not excuses for rejecting the Word of God.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) This passage sometimes triggers self-examination about what kind of soil they have been.
- 3) Some people accept the truth from God's Word, while others continue to believe lies.
- 4) We need to repent of how we have been thorny soil or stony ground.
- 5) God's mercy is passively received (John 15:1-16) by the Holy Spirit working through the Word in spite of our circumstances.

**1. What does 2 Timothy 2:15 say to you?****Common responses:**

- 1) We need to earnestly pursue God and teach His Word rightly.
- 2) If we surrender everything to God, we need not be ashamed.
- 3) If we diligently examine ourselves and confess our sins, we need not be ashamed before God.
- 4) If we have God's approval as a free gift of His mercy in Christ, we need not be ashamed before other people.
- 5) We should give God our best effort even though we are not perfect.
- 6) We are on a mission to spread the Gospel.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical responses.

- 2) The more of God's truth is in our minds, the more He can use us.
- 3) Psalm 139:23-24 leads to Matthew 25:21 & 23.

2. What does the Word say to you in the following verses?

John 8:7-11

**Common responses:**

- 1) We should never judge anyone just because their struggles are different than ours.
- 2) No one has the right to judge or condemn us.
- 3) God gives us the strength to not continue to sin.
- 4) Jesus does not condemn the penitent sinner.
- 5) As we confess our sins, we can gain insight into our weaknesses.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Most people understand that we are all like the woman who was caught in adultery.
- 2) Only Jesus had the right to throw the first stone (verse 7), and He would not do it (John 8:12).
- 3) He stood between the adulterous woman and the stones of her accusers; His forgiveness stands between us and Satan, whose name means "Accuser" (Zechariah 3:1 & Revelation 12:10).
- 4) When we feel shame over past sins, the words of Jesus, "Neither do I condemn you," can give us peace (Romans 8:1).
- 5) Godly sorrow for sin leads to repentance, but shame is based on the devil's lies and accusations, which lead to torment rather than peace (2 Corinthians 7:10).
- 6) Shame causes us to focus on our sins rather than on Jesus' Atonement on our behalf.
- 7) Shame tempts us to deny or justify our sins instead of accepting the offered forgiveness.

- 8) Jesus told the adulterous woman to “go and sin no more”, thereby putting an unrealistic expectation on her. Because we sin every day, we will need God’s forgiveness all of our lives.
- 9) Those who condemn others should examine themselves (Romans 2:1-4).
- 10) Be aware that many ssa/ma/tx overcomers have been criticized and condemned in very harsh terms, often by church people.
- 11) We often find that forgiving church people is unusually difficult, but it is necessary.
- 12) Pharisees also need to hear that salvation is only available to them as a free gift of mercy and cannot be earned by clean living and good works.
- 13) Romans 1:26-28 has often been used to condemn ssa/ma/tx people, but Paul immediately brings up a long list of sins in verses 29-32, which lead right into 2:1-4.

#### John 8:34-36

##### **Common responses:**

- 1) We cannot stop sinning without Jesus, Who delivers us.
- 2) When we follow Jesus, He breaks the grip of sin in our lives.
- 3) Jesus gives us eternal life.

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

- 1) When we witness to someone, we need to be aware that they are slaves to sin. They are like galley slaves in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, chained to their oars and forced to keep rowing (Ephesians 2:1).
- 2) Without Jesus, we feel that we have no choice except to keep sinning.
- 3) Without Jesus to set us free, no one is able to stop a habitual sin. If we try to give up a sin on our own, we will likely replace it with another.
- 4) Behind every temptation are lies (John 8:44).
- 5) Jesus sets us free by speaking His truth against the lies (John 8:32) that we have been told by the world (environment and culture), the flesh (our own self-will and

- emotions), and the devil, who is the author of lies and accuser of our souls (Zechariah 3:1 & Revelation 12:10).
- 6) Jesus' forgiveness frees us (Romans 6:22-23 & I John 3:8). Our self-will is free to pursue God's will (Romans 6:6 & 11).
  - 7) The closer we get to Jesus, the more He rids our minds of lies; the more our minds are rid of lies, the closer we get to Jesus.

#### Hebrews 11:24-27

##### **Common responses:**

- 1) Many ssa/ma/tx overcomers identify with Moses, because they gave up the pleasures of sin to follow Christ.
- 2) Nothing else mattered to Moses except following Christ, Who gives eternal life.
- 3) Sinful pleasures do not last long.
- 4) We give up something false to gain something real and eternal (Luke 9:23-25).
- 5) If we follow Christ, we will come under attack.
- 6) Jesus is bigger than our circumstances.
- 7) We release our faith when we act upon it.
- 8) The more we take God at His Word, the more the Word proves itself true.

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

- 1) Moses could have ignored God's call and lived a life of luxury.
- 2) As a prince of Egypt, he could have had any kind of sex he wanted with almost anyone he wanted, no matter what age or gender, willing or not.
- 3) He was given a choice between a life of self-indulgence in the palace or a life of holiness and communion with God in the desert.
- 4) When he came down from the mountain with the Law of God, he brought a list of sexual boundaries that made Jewish and Christian family life the basis for a civilization that would bless millions.
- 5) The Law made compromises with human nature (Matthew 19:3-10), but it protected the weak from the strong like never before. Even Jesus' disciples were

reluctant to accept a teaching that gave wives more protection and husbands less power.

### I John 3:7-8

#### **Common responses:**

- 1) We need to discern between righteousness and deceit.
- 2) If we practice sin, we are working for the devil.
- 3) We need to fellowship with true believers and seek good examples.
- 4) The devil is a defeated enemy and cannot make us sin unless we allow it.
- 5) We will be known by our actions.

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

- 1) People are not the work of the devil; the lies are the work of the devil.
- 2) Our battle is never with flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12).
- 3) Jesus came to destroy the devil's influence on our thoughts as well as our deeds.
- 4) The more we let Jesus influence our minds, the more He can influence our deeds and words.
- 5) We can fight temptation by quoting truth from the Word, guarding our thoughts, keeping focused on Christ, forgiving others, and surrendering self-will.
- 6) Some temptations will continue to torment us until the distorted thoughts behind them are exposed and the truth is spoken against them (John 8:32).
- 7) When we are tempted, we can ask the Holy Spirit to expose the lies behind the temptation and speak truth from the Word against it (2 Corinthians 10:5).

### I Peter 2:9-10

#### **Common responses:**

- 1) Ssa/ma/tx overcomers have reasons to proclaim the excellencies of Him Who called them out of darkness and into His marvelous light.
- 2) We belong to Jesus and need to show good testimonies.
- 3) Because we are called by God to holiness, we want to live according to His standards, not the culture's.

- 4) We are called to serve God and others.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) God's marvelous light exposes the darkness of distorted thinking.
- 2) When our minds are full of God's thoughts, we discern more clearly.
- 3) Every time one overcomes even a small temptation, one has reason to proclaim His excellencies.
- 4) Encourage thanks and praise to God for every temptation defeated, every sin overcome, and every lie exposed.

Romans 8:15-18**Common responses:**

- 1) We are saved from sin and its consequences.
- 2) The Spirit witnesses to our spirits and leads and guides us.
- 3) Jesus suffered so that we could become God's children.
- 4) If we follow Christ, we might have to suffer.
- 5) Heaven will make our suffering worthwhile.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) We suffer when we face painful memories.
- 2) We suffer when we face reality and give up our fantasies.
- 3) We might suffer during deliverance from a habitual sin, because we had indulged in the sin in order to avoid pain.
- 4) We might suffer as we fix the problems that were caused by our sin.
- 5) We might suffer as we let God change us, until we receive the deliverance He is trying to bring (Psalm 30:5 & 126:5-6).
- 6) Faith makes us able to face the pain.
- 7) Deliverance will make our suffering worthwhile, in this life and the next.
- 8) Verse 18 is a good verse to memorize for when we need encouragement.

3. What are some of the lies you have believed about God, and how has the Word of God shown you the truth?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Some thought that God did not care about them.
- 2) Some thought that they could live as they pleased.
- 3) Many thought that God only made rules and punished sinners, and was therefore unapproachable.
- 4) Many thought that people have to work their way to heaven.
- 5) Many thought that they had already sinned too much to be able to earn God's favor.
- 6) They now realize that God is merciful and gracious, and quickly forgives penitent sinners.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm their faith in the unlimited mercy of God (I John 2:1-2).
- 2) The devil tries to make us afraid to approach God for help, so he can control us (Hebrews 4:16).
- 3) One lie is that we have not done anything wrong and do not need forgiveness (Romans 3:23).
- 4) When we come under conviction of sin, the next lie is that we are too sinful to be forgiven (Romans 3:24 & 5:6-8).
- 5) Only the Holy Spirit can assure us that forgiveness is a free gift of God's mercy (Romans 6:23, I John 4:13, & 5:6-8).

4. What are some of the lies you have believed about yourself, and how has the Word of God shown you the truth?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Most no longer believe that they were born ssa/ma/tx.
- 3) Some no longer believe that unconditional love is impossible.
- 4) Some no longer believe that money and sex will make them happy.

- 5) Many no longer believe that they are unlovable or unworthy, are failures, were born evil, or were conceived by mistake.
- 6) They now know that they can love and forgive others.
- 7) They now know that God loves them, forgives them, and has redeemed them, and that their lives have value.
- 8) They now know that peace with God is more important than anything else.
- 9) They now know that God has a plan for them, and that they can help others.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical truths that they have spoken against the lies.
- 2) A major shift in their thinking occurred when they realized that they were not born ssa/ma/tx.
- 3) Another major shift in their thinking occurred when they realized that they are saved only and entirely by the mercy of God in Christ and not their clean living or good works.
- 4) Another major shift in their thinking occurred when they realized that Jesus is in the midst of their struggles, warring on their behalf rather than evaluating their performance so He can punish them.
- 5) Never underestimate the enormity of any of these changes.
- 6) Encourage thanks and praise to God.

5. What are some of the lies you have believed about others of the same sex, and how has the Word of God shown you the truth?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Some could not open up to others of the same sex.
- 2) Most expected rejection and hostility from others of the same sex.
- 3) Most could only relate to other men sexually, and objectify them.
- 4) Some believed that men should never express feelings.
- 5) Many felt inferior to other men and were intimidated by them.
- 6) Others were overly aggressive and competitive, and tried to dominate.
- 7) Some now realize that they are as masculine as other men.

- 8) Some now realize that having feelings is normal.
- 9) Most now realize that they can have fellowship with other men/women as brothers/sisters in Christ.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical truths that they have spoken against the lies.
- 2) Ssa/ma/tx men often feel inferior to heterosexual men and might need help to overcome that attitude.
- 3) Church should be a safe place to learn to relate to others of the same sex in the right way.
- 4) Many are helped in their recovery by having same-sex friendships without having to trade sex for friendship.
- 5) Ssa/ma/tx people are drawn into communities of similar people for love, friendship, approval, understanding, loyalty, belonging, and acceptance. Churches should be a place to get all this without sex.

6. What are some of the lies you have believed about the opposite sex, and how has the Word of God shown you the truth?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Some believed that they had nothing to offer the opposite sex and would never be able to relate to them.
- 2) Some neither respected nor trusted the opposite sex.
- 3) They now realize that according to God's plan, men and women are to relate to each other with respectful and godly attitudes.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical responses.
- 2) Some may be helped by reading about Biblical heroes who were examples of godly men and women. Deborah (Judges 4:4-14), Esther, Ruth, Rahab (Joshua 2:1-21 & Matthew 1:5), the midwives in Exodus 1, and the Virgin Mary (Luke

- 1:26-55) are all examples of women obeying God in various ways in desperate circumstances.
- 3) Unit IV will focus on several men in the Old Testament, both good and bad.
  - 4) They might need help to realize that both men and women are equally sinful, equally in need of a Savior, and equally redeemed in Christ (I Peter 3:7, Galatians 3:28,& I Timothy 5:1-2).
  - 5) Be aware that men with low self-esteem also tend to have a low esteem of women as well as other men.
  - 6) Be aware that many of ssa/ma/tx overcomers grew up in families where God was not in first place, and the parents battled for control (Ephesians 5:21).
  - 7) Godly women are drawn to godly men, and vice versa. Godly women are not afraid to accept the leadership of godly men (Ephesians 5:25-29).
  - 8) The author has noticed that younger men in the program are more likely to eventually become interested in marrying women.
  - 9) Older men seem more likely to prefer remaining single and celibate.
  - 10) Some women prefer to remain single, and some become interested in marrying men.
  - 11) I Corinthians 7 was written for some. Marriage should never be considered the benchmark of recovery from ssa/ma/tx. Never push or encourage marriage. Let God and the overcomer work it out on God's timetable if marriage is God's plan for him/her.
  - 12) Your responsibility in their lives is to help them get closer to Jesus and to pursue holiness.
  - 13) If your overcomer becomes serious about marriage, he/she should be completely honest about his/her past with the intended spouse.
  - 14) If he/she longs to marry someone of the opposite sex, they can pray for their future spouse even if they have not met the person.

7. Have you confronted any painful memories from your past and discerned the lies that you believed as a result?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Many grew up in families that had weak sexual boundaries.
- 3) Many were humiliated and then told to accept it as “joking”.
- 4) Most ssa/ma/tx overcomers experienced frequent rejection.
- 5) Some are now reaching out to estranged loved ones, who also may have been affected by the painful experiences.
- 6) Some describe how their lives have changed.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical responses.
- 2) Affirm any efforts to reconcile.
- 3) Be aware that verbally abusive families often claim to be “joking”, but are actually excusing their hidden hostility, for which they do not want to accept responsibility (Proverbs 26:18-19 & Ephesians 6:4).
- 4) Often we deal with rejection, hostility, and humiliation by developing a “false self”, wearing a “mask”, and hiding our real self. Church should be a safe place to be our real selves and take off our masks.
- 5) Sexual abuse victims, particularly male victims, may have had pleasurable responses to the abuse. These memories reinforce their low self-esteem and their belief that they are meant to be ssa/ma/tx.
- 6) The truth is that the nerve endings in their sexual organs were only responding the way they were designed to respond. Abuse victims do not need to condemn themselves or feel shame because of a biological response they could not control.
- 7) Counsel based on your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.

**8. If so, what are some verses that speak against the lies?****Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical responses.

9. 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) 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 have 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 are using their time, or if anything 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 thoughts (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. Encourage them to pray for rescue immediately when tempted.

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

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) By this time, most have learned to use the Word effectively against temptation.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.

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.
- 2) Most report that things are going well.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for whatever is going well.
- 2) If things are not going well, try to find out the reason.
- 3) 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) Give lots of encouragement and reassurance.
- 3) This Plan of Action, like the one in Unit III Key 2, comes with a note of caution. The ssa/ma/tx overcomers need to feel safe. They should not proceed too quickly. Never push them beyond their comfort point. You may just need to do a lot of listening. Pray with them. Keep the focus on Jesus' love. He is the Shepherd Who comes into their pain.

**Additional points:**

- 1) Some ssa/ma/tx overcomers admit they are judgmental toward other people.
- 2) This confession may come as a surprise, because ssa/ma/tx overcomers were so frequently judged by the Church, society, or the judicial system.
- 3) However, as they see themselves making progress, and they like the changes they are making, judging others becomes a greater temptation.
- 4) They might judge other ssa/ma/tx people who do not share their convictions and have no interest in overcoming. They need to remember that not long ago, they were the same way.
- 5) They might judge other categories of sinners, whose temptations they do not understand. They need to remember that many people do not understand their temptations.
- 6) They might judge the Church for having judged them and for having failed to give them the message of hope and redemption in Christ.
- 7) In any case, they can block judgmental thoughts with intercessory prayer for the ones whom they are tempted to judge.
- 8) Whenever we are tempted to judge someone, we should pray for that person instead.
- 9) Heterosexual Christians should deliberately pray an intercessory prayer whenever they see or hear anything about ssa/ma/tx issues in the media. Such prayer is far more effective than becoming angry over political issues (James 1:20 & 5:16b).