

**JOURNEY TO FREEDOM****UNIT II Key 5                      LOVE**

**SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLE:** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. I John 4:7

Ssa/ma/tx, like many other temptations, can be a great struggle to overcome. To find why overcoming is such a struggle for you personally, you may need to allow the Holy Spirit to do a rigorous and thorough examination of your heart and mind. We hesitate to allow this searching because we are fearful of what might be uncovered. Psalm 139:23-24 says “Search me O God, and know my heart . . . see if there be any hurtful way in me . . . .”

In Christ, we are forgiven! Therefore, we do not need to be afraid. We are being searched by God, Who came to save us rather than condemn us (John 3:17), Who shows us the truth that will make us free (John 8:32), Who does not deal with us according to our sins (Psalm 103:10), and Who has removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12). When we trust entirely in God’s forgiveness through Christ, we fearlessly open ourselves to the searching of the Holy Spirit.

Other people are often quick to point out our faults in order to feel better about their own faults, to build a case against us in order to justify their sins against us, or to criticize some trait in us that they find irritating. But God points out our faults so that He can deliver us from our sins and call us out of darkness and into His marvelous light (I Peter 2:9).

To overcome our sins, we need to love God, ourselves, and others. So, do you love God? How does one grow in one’s love for God? How do we know if we truly love Him?

Answering His call to repentance is the first way of letting Him love us. We come before Him as penitent sinners: honest, transparent, hiding nothing, and confessing everything.

Instead of hurling His wrath at us, He receives us with forgiveness. Because we trust ourselves to His forgiveness, we become willing to bring every sin before Him. We want no sin of ours to stand between us and His mercy.

We show our love for God when we openly confess our sins without denying, minimizing, excusing, blaming, or using any other defense mechanism. We show our love for God when we trust Him with our deepest selves and allow Him to search the darkest corners of our hearts. He already knows everything about our sins, and no secrets are hidden from His light.

We show our love for God when we willingly struggle against temptation rather than give in to it. Joseph would not commit adultery with Mrs. Potipher because of his love for God. She could have made his life very comfortable if he had given in, and she was in a position to punish him severely for his refusal (which she did); but Joseph's only concern was, "How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God? (Genesis 39:9)".

We show our love for God when, instead of seeking revenge, we redirect our will to love the ones who wronged us. We show our love for God when we pray with Jesus' words from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

We show our love for God when we surrender our self-will and daily ask Him to show us how we are to obey His will. Love leads to obedience.

Ssa/ma/tx people often have had experiences that taught them to be mistrustful of others. A relationship with God is a safe place to learn trust. We can trust God to forgive our sins when we honestly confess them, to war on our behalf when we seriously struggle against temptation, to heal our hurts caused by others' sins, and to bless us when we make hard choices in response to His will.

When the first priorities in our lives become receiving God's love and showing Him our love, sin/temptations become easier to overcome. When we do not give Him the right position in our lives, often other people gain a position in our lives that they were never meant to have. The chains of co-dependency can be broken as we become more dependent on God. He loves us, we love Him back, and we become increasingly willing to love others in the right way.

**SCRIPTURES:** Write out what each of these verses or passages mean to you and your situation.

I John 4:8

I John 3:16-20

I John 2:15-17

I John 3:6-7

### **STUDY GUIDE**

1. Do you think that God loves you? Why or why not?

2. How have you been showing God how much you love Him?

3. What is the difference between lust and love?

4. Do you have any straight same-sex friends whom you truly love? What is that relationship like?

5. Did you truly love your same-sex partners? How did that relationship(s) differ from your non-sexual friendships?

6. Do you love yourself? What are you doing to love yourself more?

7. What are you doing to love others more?

8. What have you learned about LOVE as you work through the Keys?

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

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

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

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

Plan of Action: