

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

- 1) Understand that although they can change, their circumstances might not.
- 2) Understand the influence of generational sin in their lives.
- 3) Understand the influence of their cultures on their spiritual lives.
- 4) Understand how ungodly attitudes can be passed from one generation to the next.
- 5) Learn how patterns of generational sin can be broken.
- 6) Give thanks for generational and cultural blessings.
- 7) Consider how to interact in godly ways with children and be a Christian influence in their lives.
- 8) Assess how they have been re-building their lives and what further re-building they need.

**1. How does Exodus 20:5-6 apply to your family?****Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Very few were raised in Christian homes.
- 3) Some were raised in families that were Christian in name only, church attendance was occasional, and faith had little influence on daily life.
- 4) Some were raised in very legalistic churches and had not heard of salvation as a free gift of God's mercy through Jesus' Atonement on the cross.
- 5) Some describe ways in which ungodly habits and beliefs were passed from one generation to the next.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any insights.
- 2) Unbelievers sometimes say that this text shows that God is unfair. But this text is only being realistic.
- 3) Verse 5 only applies to those generations that hate the Lord.

- 4) Verse 6 promises that God blesses those who obey His will.
- 5) Overcomers can break patterns of generational sin and pass along a godly influence to any children with whom they interact, including their nieces, nephews, or their own children.
- 6) While we should not blame previous generations for our own sins, we need to acknowledge that family and cultural influences can powerfully reinforce our temptations.
- 7) Our family may have passed along to us lies of the devil, which he now can use to tempt us.
- 8) We break those patterns by rigorous and thorough self-examination and confession, relying on God's mercy to save us and renew our minds (Romans 12:2 & II Corinthians 10:5).

## 2. How does Ezekiel 18 apply to your family?

### **Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some identify with the godly son of the ungodly father.
- 3) Some had a godly influence from a relative outside of their immediate family.
- 4) Most recognize that we are each responsible for our own sins in spite of our families' influence.

### **Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any insights.
- 2) The overcomer may be the one who brings the Gospel to his/her family.
- 3) To grow spiritually, the overcomer may have to become aware of ungodly habits and lies of the devil that were learned from previous generations.
- 4) Encourage thanks and praise to God for any Christian relatives who were a godly influence.
- 5) This chapter can be a source of hope to anyone who comes from a family of generational sin.

3. What does Proverbs 22:6 say to you? In what ways do you think you might parent differently from how you were brought up? How do you intend to treat any children with whom you interact?

**Common responses:**

- 1) For some, this verse triggers their wish that they would have grown up in families where there was more love and where they could have been taught about Jesus.
- 2) Some are parents, and they wish that they had taught their children about Jesus and been better role models.
- 3) They would give encouragement, be approachable if the children need to discuss a problem or question, be godly role models, and teach them about Jesus.
- 4) They would be protective, patient, loving, and respectful toward nieces, nephews, or neighborhood children.
- 5) Those called to be spiritual mentors to other adults are indirectly influencing those people's children.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) The most important thing to teach the children is that God's mercy in Christ is a free gift that cannot be earned.
- 2) Too many children were raised in churches or families where they were taught that the Christian walk is only a set of rules to be obeyed. Many of these children eventually rebelled.
- 3) If the children see the parents admitting when they are wrong and confessing their sins, the children are more likely to do so.
- 4) Encourage them to live and speak a good witness to the younger generation in their kinship group.
- 5) If contact with children is forbidden because they have committed crimes against children, they can still mentor younger adults.
- 6) Refer to Psalm 68:5, in which God promises to be a Father to the fatherless.

4. Looking at your family heritage, do you see any generational sins that have influenced you? Do you also see generational blessings for which you can appreciate your ancestors? Please share.

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Chemical abuse, physical and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, weak sexual boundaries, disrespect toward women, adultery, marital discord, anger, and prejudice are among the generational sins mentioned.
- 3) Some were taught about God in Sunday school or by other relatives, and they consider this a generational blessing.
- 4) In spite of the family dysfunctions, some were blessed by family loyalty.
- 5) Some saw no blessings, just generational sin.
- 6) Generational blessings, if listed, will vary.
- 7) Some acknowledge that their parents tried to do better than the overcomers' grandparents did.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any insights.
- 2) Encourage them to pray for the salvation of their families.
- 3) Never try to tell them that there were generational blessings if they did not see any. If there were generational blessings, they may still be too hurt to see them.
- 4) Affirm that they are breaking the patterns of generational sin. They may be the only ones living and speaking a good witness to their families. Sometimes when a family turns to Jesus, it begins with just one person.
- 5) Sometimes the weakest and least respected member of a family can become the spiritual leader if he/she lives a life surrendered to the Lord.
- 6) In families with weak sexual boundaries, sexual abuse can go on for generations. Sexually abused children might grow up to be same-sex attracted, sexually abused boys might grow up to be minor-attracted, and sexually abused girls might grow up to marry minor-attracted men, who then molest their children.
- 7) Where boundaries are weak in one area, they often become weak in other areas.

- 8) Some minor-attracted men in prison have male relatives also in prison for sexual crimes against children.
- 9) If at least one person really cared for and loved the overcomer when he/she was a child, the extra attention made a big difference in his/her life.
- 10) Besides living and speaking a good witness to other adults in the family, they might try to get the children in the kinship group to Sunday school, if possible.

5. Looking at your ethnic heritage, do you see any sins that seem to cluster in your people group? Do you also see blessings for which you can appreciate your ethnic heritage? Please share.

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some have fond memories of traditional holidays, traditional foods, traditional music, etc.
- 3) Some have no particular ethnic identity. They identify with their country.
- 4) Some are members of historically oppressed groups.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) To avoid racism, be willing to share both sins and blessings that seem to cluster in the group with which you identify.
- 2) Be aware that some groups seem more drawn to chemical abuse, some groups have different attitudes about ssa/ma/tx behaviors, and some seem to make self-destructive choices.
- 3) Some people are more aware of the sins and blessings in their ethnic group, others less so. Affirm whatever they share.
- 4) Some groups have a history of powerful revivals.
- 5) Some groups are still feeling the effects of historical events that occurred generations ago. Affirm whatever they share.
- 6) Some groups are still struggling with the effects of oppression. Empathize with the oppression, while affirming their strengths.
- 7) A history of oppression is not an excuse to sin. Members of oppressed groups likely sin against each other more than against the dominant group.

- 8) Emphasize whatever contributions their ethnic group has made to the larger society.

6. In what ways have you re-built your life since you began the program?

**Common responses:**

- 1) By trusting in Jesus, some became able to trust people.
- 2) Some report being spiritually stable and no longer slipping in and out of habitual sins.
- 3) Some no longer condemn themselves for having ssa/ma/tx temptations.
- 4) Some report more self-esteem.
- 5) Some report feeling more peace and freedom and less shame.
- 6) Some are more loving and forgiving toward others, get along better with others, and are no longer focused on using others for sexual purposes.
- 7) Some report being more honest, accountable, transparent, and responsible.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm their progress. None of it was easy.

7. In what ways does your secret life reflect your faith?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most have almost no secrets and have learned to live transparently.
- 2) God's mercy in Christ made it possible for them to be free of shame.
- 3) Those who committed crimes against children are more secretive and ashamed. They may be open with people about everything else, but not that issue.
- 4) Some are still struggling.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) When people have a secret life that is very different from their public life, they have to exert much energy to impress other people.
- 2) When we receive God's mercy in Christ and no longer feel shame, we no longer have to exert energy to impress other people.
- 3) Our energy is freed up for worthwhile activities.
- 4) Often other people are more impressed with our honesty, sincerity, and transparency.

- 5) If one has committed crimes against children, it is wise to keep it secret.
- 6) Some still struggle because the Spirit and the flesh are at war (Galatians 5:16-17). Refer to Romans 6-8.
- 7) If one is living in I John 1:9, Hebrews 2:17-18, and Hebrews 4:15-16, then Romans 8:1 and II Corinthians 5:21 apply.
- 8) Refer also to Romans 3:20-24, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Philippians 3:9.

[The author's goal is for the Keys program to be available to anyone in the world who wants to overcome ssa/ma/tx. Minor-attracted adults especially should have the opportunity to get help *before* they harm children, go to prison, and live with shameful memories and secrets.]

#### 8. How do you use your free time, and what does it say about your spiritual growth?

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

- 1) Most focus on improving themselves spiritually.
- 2) Some also read, study, exercise, pursue hobbies, and spend time with friends.
- 3) Some mention that they use their time much more constructively than they used to.
- 4) Some feel a need to keep their time structured. Un-structured time empowers temptations.

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

- 1) Affirm their progress.
- 2) God will always have a job for us if we surrender our time to Him.
- 3) God will also structure in recreation when we need it.

#### 9. What promises encourage us to re-build?

##### Proverbs 12:14

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

- 1) If we do God's will, we will be blessed.
- 2) We will be happy if we do and say what is right.
- 3) Any good deed we do for the Lord will come back to bless us.

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

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.

- 2) This verse teaches us how to build a beautiful life.
- 3) Revelations 14:13 tells us that our good deeds will follow us into Heaven. They do not get us into Heaven, but they will follow us in.

Ecclesiastes 11:1

**Common responses:**

- 1) God will bless our generosity and kind deeds.
- 2) When we share what we have, the blessings we receive will be even better.
- 3) Our rewards are not necessarily material; there are spiritual rewards that are better.
- 4) We grow when we are kind to others.
- 5) God will reward us in His way and in His time.
- 6) If we obey God's will for our lives, our needs will be met.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response:
- 2) If we obey God's will, He will go before us.
- 3) Refer to Galatians 6:7-8.
- 4) What we sow, we shall reap.
- 5) Our spiritual investments will bring blessings.
- 6) Some scholars interpret the "bread" as Jesus being the Bread of Life (John 6:51). The "waters" are the sea of humanity.

10. What does Ecclesiastes 12:1 say to you and any children you might know?

**Common responses:**

- 1) We must teach the young people about Jesus.
- 2) Young people can avoid many problems in life if they follow Jesus and avoid sin.
- 3) If they sin, and it results in problems, they will know what is causing the problems.
- 4) They need to know that they can repent and accept His mercy.
- 5) The best time to come to faith in Jesus is when one is still young.

**Points to emphasize:**



- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) A young person who comes to faith in Jesus can build a beautiful life.
- 3) People who come to faith later in life may have caused problems that need to be cleaned up. They may have unbelieving spouses, unbelieving adult children, addictions to overcome, financial problems caused by sinful lifestyles, broken relationships to try to mend, etc.
- 4) Affirm the younger overcomers, who may be avoiding a lot of unnecessary problems by coming to faith in Jesus while young and healthy.
- 5) Encourage the older overcomers, who are cleaning up their problems under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Who knows the best way to re-build their lives. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 5:31-32 & 19:10).
- 6) If teenagers or young adults see their parents confessing their sins and committing themselves to live godly lives, that can make a powerful impression even if the parents used to live sinful lives.

11. Do you think you have leadership qualities? Please explain.

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Some see themselves being led into leadership roles one step at a time.
- 3) Some are leaders only in certain circumstances.
- 4) Some do not think they are leaders.
- 5) Some have noticed that other people seek their advice or look to them to lead.
- 6) Some lead by example, and their environments change as a result.
- 7) Those who see leadership qualities in themselves often acknowledge their need to rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance and to remain humble.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any good insights.
- 2) Refer to Ephesians 3:20.
- 3) Encourage them to continue handling their gifts responsibly and humbly.

- 4) If they do not see leadership qualities in themselves, remind them that we all have different gifts.
- 5) Good leaders need to remain under godly authority themselves.
- 6) God will raise up those whom He wants to be leaders. Anyone who pushes to become a leader perhaps should not be one.
- 7) Encourage thanks and praise to God, Who put them into service (I Timothy 1:12).
- 8) We should not care who gets the credit as long as the job gets done.
- 9) To be a good leader, one must first be a good servant. No one should lead without serving first. Refer to Luke 22:25-27.

12. What verses are encouraging you to re-build?

**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.

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

**Common responses:**

- 1) Most have seen positive results.
- 2) By this time, going to Scripture and prayer has become an automatic reflex.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Affirm the power of the Word to block temptation.
- 2) Counsel based on your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.

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) Most report that things are going well.

- 2) Some are going through personal struggles or seeing problems at church.
- 3) Sometimes they see problems at church because they have become more discerning of bad doctrines.

**Points to emphasize:**

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for whatever is going well.
- 2) Never criticize any difficulties that they confess.
- 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) Counsel based on your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.
- 3) Give lots of encouragement for any valid ideas on how to make changes.
- 4) Encourage confessing sin and receiving forgiveness where they identify a need to make changes.

**Additional Points:**

- 1) In order to forgive those who wronged us, we need to revisit our painful experiences under the wise guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) To heal, we need to face the hurt, helplessness, and humiliation we felt during experiences of pain, fear, and trauma.
- 3) We need to do all that while renouncing every thought and fantasy of revenge.
- 4) We need to take all our pain to Jesus and grieve in His presence, knowing that He felt all of our pain when He was on the cross.
- 5) We need to ask the Holy Spirit to shed His light into the dark corners of our minds and expose the lies that were injected into our minds.
- 6) We need to confront the lies of the devil with the truth from the Word.
- 7) We need to repent of any part we played in the wrongs that were done.
- 8) However, we can never blame ourselves for the sins of someone else.

- 9) If we accept responsibility for the sins of others, we will only feel angry and frustrated.
- 10) So when we have done all of this work on ourselves, which may take years if we have had much trauma in our lives, when is it enough?
- 11) When do we need to stop re-visiting painful memories?
- 12) Eventually the overcomer needs to stop re-visiting the past. When every lie they have believed has been exposed to the light of God's truth, it is time to stop.
- 13) Re-visiting one's past can become obsessive and unhealthy. The overcomer can go to God in prayer and ask if he/she needs to re-focus his/her mind.
- 14) One can begin to block painful memories the same way one has learned to block temptation: by memorized Scripture, the Emergency Prayer, or simply praising the Lord.
- 15) If the overcomer slips into a painful flashback, and there is no reason to focus on it, he/she can simply pray, *Jesus, in Your mercy, get me out of this memory. Unless there is a lie to be confronted and a truth spoken against it, just get me out of this.*
- 16) Praising the Lord is powerful. Praise re-focuses the mind.