



This devotional journal is private and belongs to:

Life's Healing Choices

I admire artists that are able to create something unique and beautiful. Kintsugi is a Japanese art form of repairing broken pottery, where the pottery becomes more valuable than it was before it was broken. As the artist repairs the broken item, they use a mixture of gold and epoxy. The golden glue makes it more beautiful and valuable than before. Instead of hiding the broken pieces, the attention is now drawn to the golden healing of the item. God, in a similar way takes our lives and brings healing into the broken pieces if we allow Him. Our lives become more beautiful and significant as God brings healing into our broken lives.

In Isaiah 53, God tells us that it will be His son who brings healing because He takes our punishment for our sins. **Isaiah 53:3-5 (NLT2)** reads, “He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.
⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!
⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.” Jesus is the answer! Jesus took our worst and suffered the worst so that we could be healed.

If we want healing, we must seek God's answer in a relationship with Jesus. In one of the most famous sermons taught by Jesus, The Beatitudes, we can discover eight healing choices that can bring us healing to our souls.

It is my desire that through this devotional guide you will experience God's life changing power and freedom from your hurts, hang-ups and habits as you study and journal your response to God's Word.

This devotional has wide margins and plenty of room for you to highlight and make your own notes for personal application. Let me give you a warning as you work through the Eight Healing Choices in this devotional. Seek to always apply to your heart first before you look for applications for your family or friends. Let God begin to work on your life and then let it overflow to your family and friends. My hope is that you will use this as a personal devotional as well as a family discussion guide, perhaps the “Talk it Over” portion found in your weekly church program, to choose God's healing power in your life.

Helping people find and follow Jesus,

Pastor Ed Turley

Cornerstone Church of Poway

Life's Healing Choices

I want to thank Pastor John Baker, Founder of Celebrate Recovery and Pastor Rick Warren, founder of Saddleback Church, for their spiritual insights and commitment to helping people find spiritual healing through God's Word. Here are the eight principles, based on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, that they use in Celebrate Recovery that have helped thousands of people.

1. **R**ealize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable. (Step 1)
"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor." **Matthew 5:3**
2. **E**arnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover. (Step 2)
"Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." **Matthew 5:4**
3. **C**onsciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. (Step 3) "Happy are the meek." **Matthew 5:5**
4. **O**penly examine and confess my faults to God, to myself, and to someone I trust. (Steps 4 & 5)
"Happy are the pure in heart." **Matthew 5:8**
5. **V**oluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. (Steps 6 & 7)
"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires." **Matthew 5:6**
6. **E**valuate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others. (Steps 8 & 9)
"Happy are the merciful." "Happy are the peacemakers" **Matthew 5:7, 9**
7. **R**eserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will. (Steps 10 & 11)
8. **Y**ield myself to God to be used to bring this good news to others, both by my example and my words. (Step 12)
"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires."
Matthew 5:10

Life's Healing Choices

Matthew 5:1-12 (NLT2)

“One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ² and he began to teach them.

³ “God blesses those who are **poor** and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ⁴ God blesses those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.

⁵ God blesses those who are **humble**, for they will inherit the whole earth.

⁶ God blesses those who **hunger and thirst** for justice, for they will be satisfied.

⁷ God blesses those who are **merciful**, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ God blesses those whose **hearts are pure**, for they will see God.

⁹ God blesses those who work for **peace**, for they will be called the children of God.

¹⁰ God blesses those who are **persecuted** for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ¹¹ “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you

and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.”

The MacArthur Study Bible. Matthew 5

5:3 poor in spirit. The opposite of self-sufficiency. This speaks of deep humility of recognizing one's utter spiritual bankruptcy apart from God.

5:4 those who mourn. This speaks of mourning over sin, the godly sorrow that produces repentance leading to salvation without regret (2Co 7:10). The "comfort" is the comfort of forgiveness and salvation (cf. Isa 40:1, 2).

5:5 the gentle. Gentleness or meekness is the opposite of being out of control. It is not weakness, but supreme self-control empowered by the Spirit (cf. Gal 5:23). The statement that the meek "shall inherit the earth" is quoted from Ps 37:11.

5:6 hunger and thirst for righteousness. This is the opposite of the self-righteousness of the Pharisees. It speaks of those who seek God's righteousness rather than attempting to establish a righteousness of their own (Ro 10:3; Php 3:9). What they seek will fill them, i.e., it will satisfy their hunger and thirst for a right relationship with God.

5:7 they shall receive mercy. The converse is also true. Cf. Jas 2:13.

5:8 see God. Not only with the perception of faith, but in the glory of heaven. Cf. Heb 12:14; Rev 22:3, 4.

5:9 peacemakers. See vv. 44, 45 for more on this quality.

5:10 persecuted. Cf. Jas 5:10, 11; 1Pe 4:12-14. See Lk 6:22 [note].

Life's Healing Choices: The Reality Choice

There is often a big difference between what we want to do and what we end up doing. Many of us seek to do the right thing, but one thing or another comes up and sometimes we choose to do the very thing we said we wouldn't do. You can see this in our diet and exercise plans, our personal commitments and even our moral commitments. We are good at making exceptions that have hurt us and others.

The Apostle, Paul, described our sin problem this way in Romans 7:15 & 18b (NIV): "I don't understand what I do. For what I want to do I don't do, but what I hate to do, I do!... I know that nothing good lives in my sinful nature. I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." Can you relate? We need to be honest with ourselves and honest with God. The first step of healing is the Reality Choice. "I Realize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable." 1 John 1:8 (NLT) says, "If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth." Jesus said that we need to come to the place of truth and admit we are spiritually bankrupt. In Matthew 5:3 (NIV), Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Have you come to the place of being honest with God and yourself? The truth about God is that He desires to be your Savior and not your judge. In John 3:16 (NIV) we read, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." How do you receive this eternal life? Romans 10:9 (NLT) tells us how, "For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Here is a sample prayer that you can pray with an honest heart:

"Dear Jesus, Thank you for dying on the cross and paying for all of my sins. I believe that you have risen from the grave and have the power to give me eternal life and a right relationship with God. Right now, I receive you as my Savior. Help me to live for you and your kingdom. Amen."

John 1:12 (NLT) tells us, "But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God."

Life's Healing Choices: The Reality Choice

The Reality Choice

"I realize I'm not God; I admit I'm powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3 (NIV) Remember Verse

What does it mean to recognize that you are spiritually poor?

Read 1 John 1:8 (NIV)

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Do I find it easy or hard to admit my sin to the Lord? Why?

Read Luke 18:18-23

How well do you measure up in keeping the Ten Commandments?

Would you be able to say you've kept them all?

Which ones have you struggled with the most?

To Begin Healing I Must:

1. Admit I Am Spiritually Bankrupt

Take the test and see how well you do.

Heaven's entrance exam (Exodus 20:2-17): Pass / Fail

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
[] Trust God only | 2. You shall not make idols.
[] Worship God only |
| 3. Never take the name of the LORD in vain.
[] Do not misuse God's name | 4. Remember to keep the Sabbath holy
[] Rest & worship on the Sabbath |
| 5. Honor your father and your mother.
[] Respect & obey your parents | 6. You shall not murder.
[] Protect & respect human life |
| 7. Never commit adultery.
[] Be true to your spouse | 8. You shall not steal.
[] Do not steal |
| 9. You shall not bear false witness
against your neighbor.
[] Do not lie about others | 10. You shall not covet.
[] Be satisfied with what you have |

How well did you do?

Life's Healing Choices: The Reality Choice

Read Romans 3:19-20 (NIV)

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."

What do you learn about our spiritual state with God?

What excuses do people give for their poor behavior?

2. Admit I Am Powerless

Read Matthew 9:10-13 (NIV)

"While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and 'sinners' came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" ¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

What was the religious leader's complaint about Jesus?

What do you think about Jesus' response?

Do you compare yourself with others or can you admit your need for Jesus?

Read Romans 7:15-18 (NIV)

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do... ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."

What is Paul saying? Can you relate?

3. Humble Myself And Accept God's Answer Is Jesus

Read James 4:6 (NIV)

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

How can you humble yourself before the Lord?

Life's Healing Choices: The Reality Choice

Read Romans 7:24-25a (NIV)

"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

²⁵ Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

What conclusion does Paul come to?

Read Romans 8:1-2 (NIV)

"Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus,

² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

What life changing truth do you learn about Jesus?

Read Romans 3:25-26 (NIV)

"God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."

What did God do to take care of our sin problem?

How does this demonstrate God's righteousness being just and fair?

Read Romans 10:9 (NIV)

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

What does it mean for you to confess Jesus is Lord?

Have you done this? If so, when?

Read The Reality Choice

"I Realize I'm not God; I admit I'm powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable."

Are you in agreement with the reality choice? Why or why not?

Life's Healing Choices: The Hope Choice

Do you ever get tired of struggling with the same sin over and over again? Do you live with regret, guilt, or failure? Do you wish there was a secret -- some kind of key to unlock the victory over sin? What if I told you that Jesus gave us a key and it really works? I know that in my life one of the biggest keys to having success over my sin is to come to the place where I stop making excuses and let my heart be broken over my sin. In Matthew 5:4 (NIV) Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Mourning over our sin is not a popular teaching today. Most preachers would rather talk about blessings than mourning over sin.

Too often we come to God and say, "I'm sorry. I've made a mistake. Well, I'm only human;" as if there is an allowable degree of disobedience before God. We need to call sin what it is: rebellion, entitlement, anger, abuse, lust, gossip -- whatever it is; it is wrong! Jesus took these same sins upon His body and died on the cross to bring us salvation and a new life in Christ. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 28:13 (NIV), "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever **confesses** and **renounces** them finds mercy."

Are you ready for a change? Do you want God's blessings, as well as His mercy? In James 4:8-10 (TEV), we learn how God wants us to respond when we sin. James 4:8a first tells us, "Come near to God, and He will come near to you." Do you know that God wants to have a close relationship with you? If you feel that there is distance between you and God, guess who moved? Come to Him with an honest and broken heart. James 4:8b goes on to tell us, "Wash your hands, you sinners!" "Purify your hearts, you hypocrites!" That may seem harsh, but we can't hold on to God if we are holding on to our sin. It comes down to a heart issue. God cares more about our hearts than anything else. He knows when we are playing games and when we are truly broken over our sin. "Hypocrite" is such a harsh word, but how many times have we said we are sorry, but we are still making plans to do it again? That's not being broken over our sins! Then James 4:9-10 says, "Be sorrowful, cry, and weep; change your laughter into crying, your joy into gloom! Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up." If we want a close relationship with God, then we need to stop minimizing and excusing our wrongful behavior. If we want God's power in our lives, then we need to be honest and broken over our sin. As we draw close to God, He promises to draw close to us.

Psalm 34:18 (NIV) teaches us, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Life's Healing Choices: The Hope Choice

The Hope Choice

"Getting Help. Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to God, and He has the power to help me recover."

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." **Matthew 5:4 (NIV)**

Remember Verse

We have two choices with grief & pain:

- A) Turn to God for His power to help us
- B) Turn to stuff to numb the pain

To Get Help I Must:

1. Stop Living In Denial

Read Luke 18:9-12 (NIV)

"To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'"

What is the point of this parable?

Do you ever compare your sins with someone worse than you?

Why is this a wrong way to look at your sin?

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT2)

"For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death."

What are the two kinds of sorrow?

Where is your sorrow leading you?

Life's Healing Choices: The Hope Choice

Read Proverbs 28:13 (NIV)

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

What are the two things required to find mercy?

Why are both important?

2. Seek The Truth About God

Read Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)

"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God **exists** and that He **rewards** those who **sincerely seek Him**."

What two elements are described in faith?

Which of these does your faith need to grow in?

Read Acts 17:24-27, 30-31 (NIV)

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵ And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From **one man** He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the **times** set for them and the exact **places** where they should live. ²⁷ God did this so that men would **seek Him** and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us... ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now He commands **all people** everywhere to **repent**. ³¹ For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed. He has given **proof** of this to all men by **raising Him from the dead**."

What do you learn about how God placed you here on earth?

What is God's desire for you?

Life's Healing Choices: The Hope Choice

Read Titus 2:11-13 (NIV)

"For the **grace** of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "**No**" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live **self-controlled**, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

What do you learn about God's grace?

How should you respond to God's grace?

3. Believe God Has The Power And Desire To Help Me

Read Luke 18:13-14 (NIV)

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have **mercy** on me, a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home **justified** before God. For everyone who **exalts** himself will be humbled, and he who **humbles** himself will be exalted."

How does the tax collector respond to God?

Between the religious leader and the tax collector, which one do you relate to the most?

What is Jesus trying to teach us through this parable?

Read James 4:8-10 (NLT2)

"Come **close** to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your **hands**, you sinners; purify your **hearts**, for your loyalty is **divided** between God and the world.

⁹ Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. ¹⁰ **Humble** yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up in honor."

How should we come to God when we have sinned?

What hope do you find in this passage?

Life's Healing Choices: The Hope Choice

Read The Hope Choice

"I earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to God, and He has the power to help me recover."

Are you in agreement with the Hope Choice? Why or why not?

Write out your response to the Hope Choice.

Life's Healing Choices: The Commitment Choice

Have you ever played the game called "Uncle"? My brother Doug and I used to play, but he was seven years older than me and outweighed me by 100 pounds. We would wrestle each other until someone cried, "uncle"; which meant, "I surrender." Of course, I was the one who always cried uncle, but not until I was fully exhausted, in complete pain and anguish. You see, my pride wouldn't let me give in until I was convinced that I could not win. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV), "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

If you truly want healing in your life then you need to finally cry, "Uncle" or "I surrender", and commit all your life to God and what He wants for you. This is where we say, "God, I can't do this on my own. I give up. I surrender everything to You. I am choosing to go Your way because I want Your help. I want You to bless my life and that won't happen until I give You my whole life! Only You have the power to clean out my sin and give me a new heart and mind. I give you complete ownership over me."

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NLT) tells us, "The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him." Our part is to fully commit to Him. His part is to strengthen us and bring healing and power into our lives.

Have you come to the place in your spiritual journey where you have committed your whole life over to God? If not, why not today?

Life's Healing Choices: The Commitment Choice

The Commitment Choice:

"I Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control."

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

Matthew 5:5 (NIV) Remember Verse

Meekness is not weakness. Being meek is strength under control. When we accept Jesus to be our Savior and Lord, we do not become powerless. Jesus doesn't force us to obey. We still have our will and we make choices daily. When we choose to be meek, we are surrendering our will daily to Jesus. It is through meekness that we acknowledge we are broken and need Jesus.

To Let Go Of My Control Over To God I Must:

1. Invite Jesus Into Every Area Of My Life

Read Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

"Come to me, all you who are **weary** and **burdened**, and I will give you **rest**. Take my yoke upon you and **learn** from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find **rest** for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

Read Luke 9:23-26 (NIV)

"Then he said to them all: 'If anyone would come after me, he must **deny** himself and take up his cross daily and **follow** me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? ²⁶ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.'"

What is the cross a symbol of?

What is Jesus asking us to do?

Life's Healing Choices: The Commitment Choice

2. Accept God's Word As My Standard And Purpose

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

"**All Scripture** is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly **equipped** for every good work."

What do you learn about God's Word?

Where do you want to be equipped? Where do you need God's help?

Read Psalm 119:1-8 (NLT2)

"Joyful are people of integrity, who **follow** the instructions of the LORD.

² Joyful are those who **obey** his laws and **search** for him with all their hearts.

³ They do not compromise with evil, and they **walk** only in his paths. ⁴ You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully. ⁵ Oh, that my **actions** would consistently **reflect** your decrees! ⁶ Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with your commands. ⁷ As I **learn** your righteous regulations, I will thank you by living as I should! ⁸ I will obey your decrees. Please don't give up on me!"

What action steps does this passage teach you?

Which ones do you need to apply this week?

3. Accept God's Power As My Strength

Read Romans 6:1-4 (NLT2)

"Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ² Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? ³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives."

How should we respond to God's grace?

Where does God's power come from to live a new life?

Life's Healing Choices: The Commitment Choice

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come!”

What promise does this verse give you?

Read Isaiah 40:29 (NLT2)

He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

What does this verse promise?

Read 2 Chronicles 16:9 (NLT)

“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to **strengthen** those whose hearts are fully **committed** to Him.”

To whom will God give strength?

Read 2 Peter 1:1-4 (NLT2)

“By His divine power, God has given us **everything** we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to **know him**, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous **glory** and **excellence**.⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and **precious promises**. These are the promises that enable you to **share** his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.”

What practical steps can you take to be strengthened by God's power?

Read The Commitment Choice:

“I Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.”

Are you willing to give God control over your life?

Write out your response to the Commitment Choice.

Life's Healing Choices: The Housecleaning Choice

I don't know if anyone truly enjoys housework, but all of us appreciate a clean house. If you truly want real healing with lasting benefits, then you need to make a choice to clean your spiritual house. The Housecleaning Choice is where you openly examine and confess your faults to yourself, to God, and to someone you trust. If you are serious about change, then you know you need someone to walk beside you and help you practice doing the right thing. Too often we look for friends who will support our excuses or bail us out of trouble. But if you want real change then you need a trusted friend to keep you honest and moving forward. James 5:16 (NIV) reads, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." There is power when you and your close friends desire to walk honestly before God.

Here is a sample prayer you might want to work with.

*"Dear merciful Heavenly Father,
I have been sowing seeds of irresponsibility in my: _____
[finances, children, parents, my spouse...] and I refuse to excuse it any longer.*

I have been rebellious in my thoughts and actions, and I am tired of deceiving myself, thinking that I can escape my responsibilities. Jesus, I understand that this is why you went to the cross for me, and I ask you to forgive me. Help me to find a trusted friend to help me begin walking in integrity with You and others. Amen."

Life's Healing Choices: The Housecleaning Choice

The Housecleaning Choice

"I openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust."

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." **Matthew 5:8 (NIV)**

Read John 8:31-32 (NIV)

"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you **hold to my teaching**, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free."

The cost of freedom is honesty. Is there a truth I need to apply to my life?

To Let God, Clean Up My Life I Need To:

1. Take A Personal Moral Inventory

Read 1 Peter 4:1-3 (TEV)

"Since Christ suffered physically, you too must **strengthen** yourselves with the same way of **thinking** that he had; because whoever suffers physically is no longer **involved** with sin. From now on, then, you must **live** the rest of your earthly lives **controlled by God's will** and not by **human desires**. You have spent enough **time** in the past doing what the heathen like to do. Your lives were spent in indecency, lust, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and the disgusting worship of idols."

What is my tendency? _____

Why? _____

➤ *Person: (resentment, or fear) =* _____

➤ *Cause: (specific action) =* _____

➤ *Effect: (how that specific action affected your life) =* _____

➤ *Damage: (social, security, sexual) =* _____

➤ *My Part: (any sin or injury you are responsible for) =* _____

Life's Healing Choices: The Housecleaning Choice

2. Accept Responsibility For My Faults

➤ With myself

Read Galatians 6:5 (NLT)

“For we are each **responsible** for our own conduct.”

What personal conduct do you need to be honest about?

➤ With God

Read Galatians 6:7-8 (NLT2)

“Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. ⁸ Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.”

What behavior are you mocking God?

Are there any seeds of rebellion that you think you are getting away with?

➤ With someone I trust

Read James 5:16 (NIV)

“Therefore **confess** your sins to each other and **pray** for each other so that you may be **healed**.”

What are some of the benefits of confessing your sins to a trusted friend?

Who is a trustworthy friend that will keep you honest and moving forward in you faith?

Read Galatians 6:1-2 (NLT)

“Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should **gently and humbly** help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.”

What should our approach be when a friend falls into sin?

Life's Healing Choices: The Housecleaning Choice

3. Ask God For Forgiveness And Forgive Myself

Read Psalm 51:1-4a (NLT)

“Have mercy on me, O God, **because of your unfailing love**. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. **Purify me** from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight.”

The basis for a pure heart is not how good we are, but how good God is.
How does David describe God?

What does he ask God to do?

Read Psalm 32:5 (NLT)

“Finally, I **confessed** all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, ‘I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.’ And you forgave me! **All my guilt is gone.**”

What did David do? What was the result?

Read 1 John 1:9 (NLT2)

“But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.”

What is your responsibility when you sin?

What is God's promise?

Read The Housecleaning Choice

“I openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.”

Are you ready to be honest with yourself, God and a trusted friend?

Write out your response to the Housecleaning Choice.

Life's Healing Choices: The Transformation Choice

God has made each of us unique with different personalities. It is what makes things lively and exciting; but there is a difference between our personality and what is morally right and wrong. Many of us have given excuses for our wrongful behavior. Rude is rude. Lying is lying. Being deceitful is still being deceitful. I find it ironic that we pray for God's blessings while we refuse to follow His instructions.

In the book of Genesis, we find a man named Jacob who wrestled with God all night long. What strikes me about this story isn't Jacob's strength, but his refusal to let go of God. Jacob was a deceiver his whole life, and he reaped the consequences of that lifestyle. He deceived his brother Esau, which caused a family feud. He lied to his father, which damaged their relationship.

Transformation is where we make a switch – a transfer of ownership where we voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in our lives. This is where we stop making excuses for our wrongful behavior and ask God to help remove our character defects. Please do not get confused on thinking you or I can make these changes by our own will power. We covered that in the Reality Choice, where we realize that we are not God and that we are powerless to control our tendency to do the wrong thing. The Transformation Choice is where we get a new identity from God, and we receive His power to change.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT) tells us, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" What a wonderful promise from God's Word. I get a new identity. You get a new identity. In Genesis Jacob grew up with his name meaning "heal catcher" or deceiver," but God gave him a new identity. Genesis 32:29-30 (NIV) we read about Jacob wrestling with God and then it reads, "Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.'" Jacob's name given by his parents meant "heal catcher" or "deceiver" and now his new name means "God's fighter," or "he who strives with God."

Can you imagine? God no longer sees you in your old ways; He now sees you as a new creation. You are part of His royal family! 1 Peter 2:10 (NLT) reads, "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy."

Life's Healing Choices: The Transformation Choice

Transformation Choice:

"I voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life, and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects."

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."
Matthew 5:6 (NIV)

Why does it take so long to get rid of bad habits?

- Invested time
- Confuse defects with identity
- Defects have payoffs
- Satan

- **Transformation is not passive; transformation is deliberately active.**

Read Philippians 2:12b-13 (NIV)

"Continue to **work out** your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who **works in you to will and to act** according to His good purpose."

As a believer, we are to work out what God has already worked in us. God has saved us through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and now motivates our desires and actions. What do you need to work out that God has done for you?

I Choose Transformation By Deliberately:

1. Focusing On Changing One Defect At A Time

Read Proverbs 17:24 (TEV)

"An intelligent person aims at **wise action**, but a fool starts off in many directions."

Although there may be several defects to work on, which should you focus on this month?

Read Matthew 6:34 (NIV)

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. **Each day** has enough trouble of its own."

What do you learn from this passage?

Life's Healing Choices: The Transformation Choice

2. Focusing On Using God's Power, Not Your Power

Read Philippians 4:12-13 (NLT2)

"I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. ¹³ For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."

Where do you need God's power?

Read Romans 13:14 (NLT2)

"Instead, **clothe** yourself with the **presence of the Lord Jesus Christ**. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires."

How can you change your thoughts to be more about Jesus than your desires?

Read Galatians 5:16, 24, 25 (NLT)

"So I say, let the Holy Spirit **guide** your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have **nailed** the **passions** and **desires** of their sinful nature to His cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us **follow** the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

How can you nail your passions to the cross?

What helps you to listen better to the Holy Spirit?

3. Focusing On People Who Can Help, Not Hinder You

Read 1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)

"Do not be **misled**: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'"

Which friends help you walk closer with God?

Which friends are leading you away from the Lord?

Read Proverbs 27:17 (NLT)

"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend **sharpens** a friend."

Life's Healing Choices: The Transformation

Read Psalm 1:1 (NLT)

“Oh, the joys of those who **do not follow** the **advice** of the wicked, or **stand** around with sinners, or **join** in with mockers.”

What does this verse teach you about your associations?

4. Deliberately Focus On Progress, Not Perfection

Read Philippians 1:6 (NLT2)

“And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”

When will you reach perfection?

Read Philippians 3:13-14 (NLT)

“No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I **focus** on this one thing: **Forgetting the past** and **looking forward** to what lies ahead, **I press on** to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”

What is Paul's secret for momentum?

What do you need to forget about?

Read The Transformation Choice:

“I voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life, and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.”

What change is God asking you to do next?

Journal: *“Today is going to be a better day than yesterday, because God is helping me get stronger.”*

Yesterday I was worried about....

Today, I'm not afraid because God loves me, so I will take action by...”

Life's Healing Choices: The Relationship Choice

Forgiveness –everyone wants it, but few are willing to give it. In our series, “Life’s Healing Choices,” we have arrived at the *Relationship Choice*. The Relationship Choice is where I evaluate all my relationships, offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me, and make amends for harm I’ve done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others. Many of us may want to sidestep the whole forgiving others or making amends, but Jesus tells us it is crucial in our relationship with our heavenly Father. In Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT) Jesus said, “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Wow! Jesus doesn’t beat around the bush, does He? Why is forgiveness such a key to our relationship with God? Maybe if we truly understand that without forgiveness, we will not have a relationship with God.

So, the question in each of our minds may be, “So, how forgiving do I need to be?”. Peter asked the same question in Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT), “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?” “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!” In other words, forgiveness is limitless. We are not the judge of anyone. This isn’t about letting someone off the hook; it’s about releasing those who have hurt us over to the hands of God. This doesn’t mean that we become someone’s punching bag either. This is where we place our faith in God’s mercy and His justice. Romans 12:18-19 (NLT) reads, “Do your part to live in peace with everyone, *as much as possible*. Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, ‘I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it,’ says the Lord.” God knows, and He doesn’t overlook anybody’s sin. Psalm 56:8 (NLT) teaches us that God knows what is going on. It reads, “You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.” Holding on to hurt and becoming bitter is only going to hurt you more. Release them into the hands of a holy and righteous and merciful God. As you forgive and release them, you might discover the prisoner that you set free is you.

Ultimately, forgiveness becomes a choice. I can forgive others because God has forgiven me. In Matthew 5:7(NIV) Jesus tells us, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Has God shown you mercy for your sins? Have you received what you deserved or better than what you deserve? Will you need to continue to receive mercy in your life? Then choose to forgive.

Life's Healing Choices: The Relationship Choice

The Relationship Choice:

"I evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others." (Steps 8 & 9)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." **Matthew 5:7&9 (NIV)**

Remember Verse

Read Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)

Jesus said, "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Is there someone you need to forgive?

We Are Forgiven A Debt That We Could Never Repay

Read Matthew 18:21-27 (NKJV) "Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to **settle accounts** with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with **compassion**, released him, and forgave him the debt.'"

What do you learn about the attitude of the master?

Life's Healing Choices: The Relationship Choice

The Unforgiving Become The Un-Forgiven

Read Matthew 18:28-35 (NKJV)

“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

What happened when the servant was unforgiving?

Why was the master so harsh?

What did you learn from this passage about your relationship with God?

Read 1 John 4:10 (NKJV)

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us** and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.”

What do you learn about God's love for you?

What did God do in order to bring us forgiveness?

Life's Healing Choices: The Relationship Choice

How Do I Forgive?

1. Reveal My Hurt

Read Psalm 39:2-3 (TEV)

"I kept **quiet**, not saying a word, not even about anything good! But my suffering only grew **worse**, and I was overcome with anxiety. The more I thought, the more troubled I became..."

What usually happens when we hold bitterness and resentment inside?

2. Release Those Who Have Hurt Me

Read Romans 12:17-19 (NIV)

"Do not **repay** anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it **depends on you**, live at peace with everyone. Do not take **revenge**, my friends, but **leave room** for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord."

How should you treat people who have offended you?

What does this passage teach you about revenge?

How well do you leave room for God to work?

Read Hebrews 12:15 (NIV)

"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

Is there bitterness that you need to deal with?

Read Ephesians 4:32 (NLT)

"Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has **forgiven** you."

By what measure should you forgive someone?

Describe how much God has forgiven you.

Life's Healing Choices: The Relationship Choice

3. Make A list Of Those I've Harmed And Ask Their Forgiveness

Read Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."

Who do you need to ask for forgiveness?

Be Appropriate

Read Ecclesiastes 8:6 (NIV)

"For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him."

Why is timing important?

Read Proverbs 12:18 (NIV)

"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Give Restitution Where Needed

Read Luke 19:8-9 (NIV)

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will **pay back** four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house."

How did Zacchaeus respond to his salvation?

To whom do you owe restitution?

Life's Healing Choices: The Relationship Choice

The Relationship Choice:

“I evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.” (Steps 8 & 9)

Is there a broken relationship lying at the root of my pain?

What hurt do you need to reveal to God?

Who has hurt you that you need to release into the hands of God?

Who do you need to make amends to?

Life's Healing Choices: The Growth Choice

Have you ever relapsed? Welcome to the human race. When we become complacent, we stop moving forward - then it is easy to fall back. In our series, Healing Choices, step seven is The Growth Choice. This is where, "I reserve a daily time with God for Bible reading, self-examination, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will." Jesus said in John 15:4-5 (NIV), "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." Our role is to bear fruit, but we must remain connected to Jesus. How do we stay connected to Jesus? Many of us have experienced a mountaintop experience in our life; but God wants us to have an everyday relationship, not just once a week on Sunday. For us to truly grow into maturity, we need to make a daily routine of spending time together with Jesus.

For me, I find it best to set an appointment with God in the morning if I want to keep consistent. Psalm 5:1-3 (NLT) tells us, "O LORD, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you. Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly." Spending time with God daily helps us to mature and gives God an opportunity to reveal areas in our lives that He wants to work on. This will help us to examine our ways and confess areas that are not in line with His word.

The apostle Paul emphasized the importance of having support from other followers of Christ when he said in 2 Corinthians 1: 9-11 (NLT), "We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. And He did rescue us from mortal danger, and He will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in Him, and He will continue to rescue us. And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety."

I encourage you to be part of a small group, not only to receive support from others, but also to pray for others and to be a support to them. We need each other! We are not meant to go it alone. Check out a small group and get to know some people.

Life's Healing Choices: The Growth Choice

The Growth Choice

"I Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will."
(Steps 10 & 11)

"Continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
2 Peter 3:18 (TEV) Remember Verse

Complacency Leads to Relapse ← → Consistency Leads to Growth

How To Continue Growing:

1. Make A Daily Time With God A Routine

Read John 15:4-5 (NIV)

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, **he will bear much fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing.'"

What helps you remain connected with Jesus?

Read Luke 8:14-15 (NLT)

"The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity. And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who **hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.**"

What is your routine in staying connected to God's Word?

Read Colossians 4:2 (NLT)

"Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart."

What helps you to be consistent in your prayer life?

Life's Healing Choices: The Growth Choice

2. Face And Forsake My Failures Quickly

Read Lamentations 3:40 (NIV)

“Let us examine our ways and test them and return to the Lord.”

What sin do you need to turn away from?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12 (TEV)

“Someone will say, ‘I am allowed to do anything.’ Yes; but not everything is good for you. I could say that I am allowed to do anything, but I am not going to let anything **make me its slave.**”

Ask yourself, “is there anything controlling me?”

Read James 1:22-25 (TEV)

“Do not **deceive** yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, **put it into practice**. If you listen to the word, but do not **put it into practice** you are like people who look in a mirror and see themselves as they are.

They take a good look at themselves and then go away and at once forget what they look like. But if you look closely into the perfect law that **sets people free**, and keep on **paying attention** to it and do not simply listen and then forget it, but **put it into practice**—you will be **blessed by God** in what you do.”

What does God want to set you free from?

What area do you need to pay more attention to?

3. Join A Support Group For Consistency

Read Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)

“Every day they **continued** to meet **together** in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Do you have a group of friends that help you to keep moving forward in your faith? If not, check out one of Cornerstone's small groups.

Life's Healing Choices: The Growth Choice

Read Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

“So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time!”

Are you being complacent in your walk with God?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIV)

“**Two** are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can **help** him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

Who is someone who has helped you to move forward in your faith?

Read The Growth Choice

“I Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.”

What is your routine to help you to grow?

When will you set aside time to examine your life?

When will you spend time with God this week?

Life's Healing Choices: The Sharing Choice

In Acts 17:6b, (NJB) we read that the city counsel of Thessalonica accused Paul and Silas of – “turning the world upside down” because they kept talking about Jesus. Wow! What a statement. Paul and Silas were so dedicated to sharing their lives and the power of God’s Word that they rocked the norm wherever they went. I wonder how much of a difference our lives are making in our community. Do people around us take notice of the change that God is making in us?

Our purpose in life is to know Jesus personally and to help others find and follow Him. If we truly believe that Jesus rose from the dead and has the power to not only save us from our sins but to transform us, then we need to **SHARE** the Hope we have in Jesus. 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) reads, “But in your hearts set apart **Christ as Lord**. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the **reason for the hope** that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

The Sharing Choice is to: “choose to **yield** myself to God to be used to **bring** the Good News to others, by both my **example** & by my **words**.” Let us live the new life we have in Jesus so boldly that people would claim that we are in the process of turning the world upside down!

Life's Healing Choices: The Sharing Choice

The Sharing Choice

"I choose to **yield** myself to God to **be used** to bring the Good News to others, by both my **example &** by my **words**."

"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires."

Matthew 5:10 NIV Remember Verse

"**He comforts us** in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them **the same comfort** God has given us."

2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)

My Greatest Ministry Will Flow Out Of My Pain When:

1. I Share How Pain Got My Attention.

Read Luke 15:13-16 (NIV)

"He set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in **wild living**. After he had **spent** everything, there was a **severe famine** in that whole country, and he began to be **in need**. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything."

Share a time when you were rebellious to what God wanted for you.

Read Luke 15:17-20 (NIV)

"When he **came to his senses**, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, **I have sinned against heaven and against you**. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with **compassion** for him; he **ran to his son**, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

How did God get your attention?

How have you experienced God's grace and mercy?

Life's Healing Choices: The Sharing Choice

Read Romans 5:3-4 (NLT)

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance **develops strength of character**, and character strengthens our **confident hope** of salvation."

How have you grown stronger and closer to Jesus through a difficult situation?

2. I Share What I Have Learned In The Process.

Read Romans 7:18,19,24,25 (NIV)

"I know that **nothing good lives in me**, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing... **Who will rescue me** from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through **Jesus Christ our Lord!**"

Where can you be transparent about your struggles in your walk with Jesus?

➤ God can bring good out of bad

Read Romans 8:28 (NLT)

"And we know that God causes **everything** to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them."

Where has God brought good out of something that was bad?

➤ I need other people

Read James 5:16 (NLT)

"**Confess** your sins to each other and **pray** for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."

Who can you rely on to encourage your walk with Jesus?

Life's Healing Choices: The Sharing Choice

3. I Share How Jesus Gives Me Hope To Change.

Read 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

“But in your hearts **set apart** Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an **answer** to everyone who asks you to give the **reason** for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

How are you making Jesus your Lord?

How would you explain your hope in Jesus?

Read John 4:39-40 (NLT)

“Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me **everything** I ever did!” When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days.”

What was her testimony?

What is your testimony?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:1 (NIV)

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

How is Paul's statement encouraging to you?

Read The Sharing Choice

“I choose to **yield** myself to God to **be used** to bring the Good News to others, by both my **example &** by my **words.**”

What Healing Choice is God asking you to share?

Who will you share your story with?

Life's Healing Choices

Prayer for Serenity

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will;
so that I may be reasonable happy in this life
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

Service Times:

On Campus Sunday Worship Services: 9:15 & 11:00AM

Online Sunday Service: 9:15AM > <https://www.youtube.com/c/cornerstonepoway>

Weekly Sermon Notes> <https://www.cornerstonepoway.com/sermons>

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