

# Sanctification and the Discipleship Process

**Lesson Objective:** To understand sanctification, the discipleship process and its hindrances so that Christians can be helped to overcome their past and be established alive and free in Christ.

**Sanctification:** Sanctification is the process of conforming to the image of God. In reference to the believer Scripture teaches that sanctification is past tense (we have been sanctified), present tense (we are being sanctified), and the future tense (we will someday be fully sanctified). Sanctification is God's will for our lives (1 Thessalonians 4:3), and is the core doctrine for all that we are attempting to do in discipleship counseling. As applied to the believer, salvation is also past, present and future tense. The true believer has been saved, is being saved, and some day will be completely saved (Eph. 1:12-14).

**A. The whole Gospel (Colossians 2: 13-15)**

1. Forgiven
  
2. New life
  
3. Victory over Satan

**B. Pauline theology of growth (Colossians 2: 6-10)**

1. Rooted in Christ: Positional Sanctification

a. Lack of knowledge

b. Lack of repentance (1 Corinthians 3:2,3)

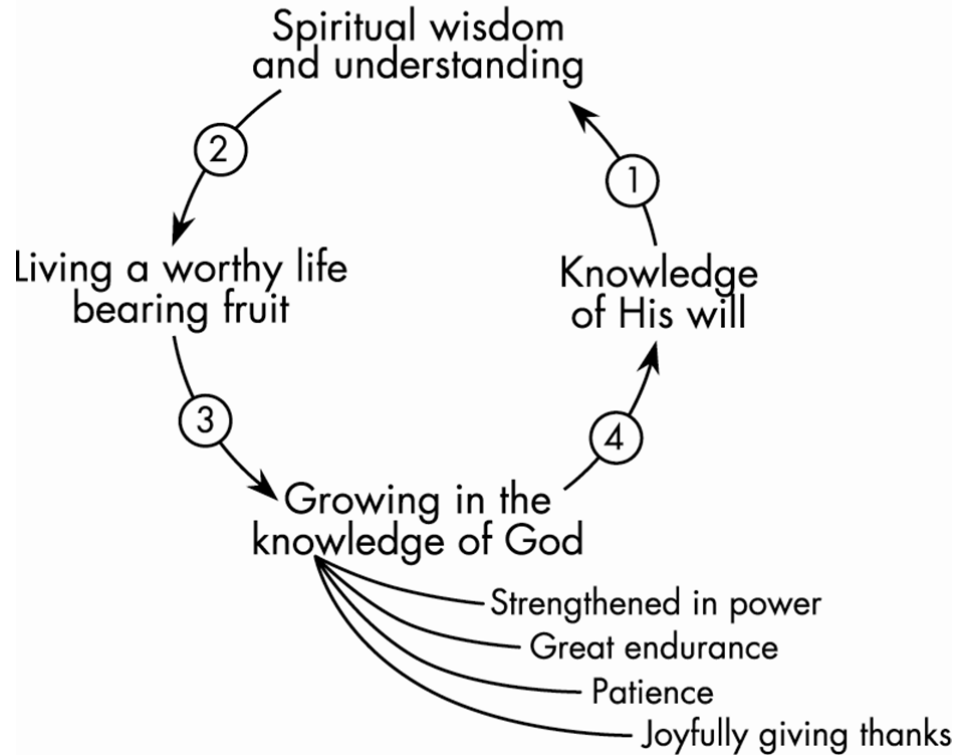
“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;  
repent and believe in the gospel”

Jesus (Mark 1:15)

2. Growing in Christ: Progressive Sanctification

a. The Colossian cycle (Colossians 1:9-12)

# The Cycle of Growth



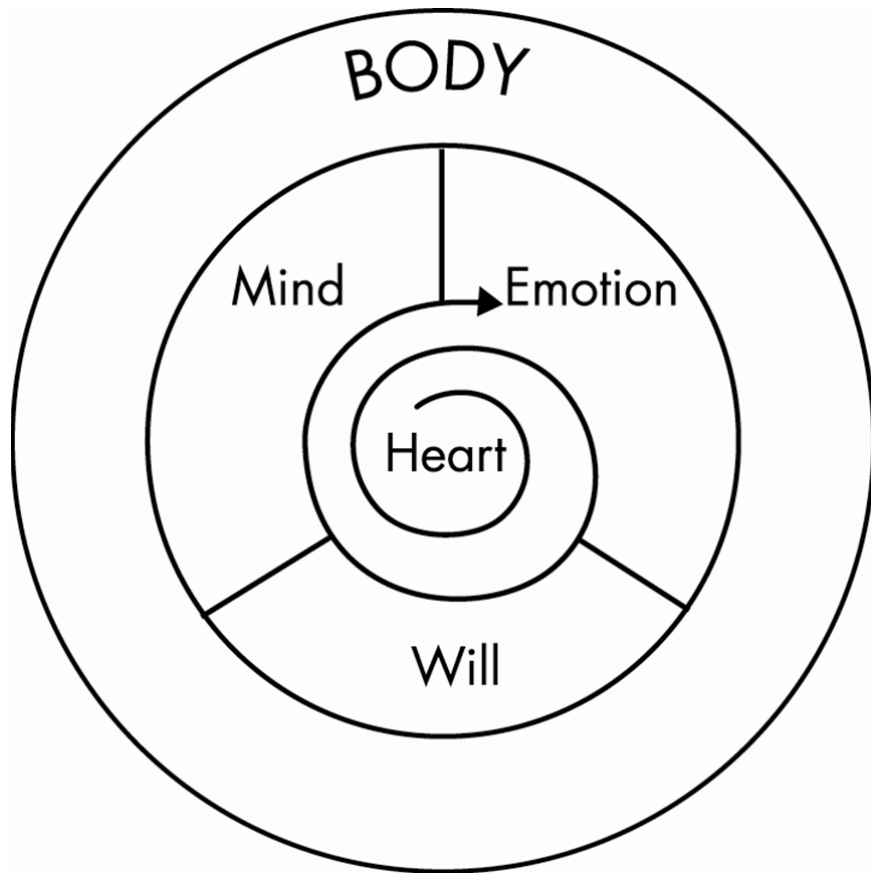
b. Growth can be stopped at any of the above four points

- Lack of knowledge of His will (Ephesians 5:17)
- Have the knowledge, but no spiritual connection (2 Timothy 3:7)
- Connected to the source of life, but not living it out (James 1:22)
- Failure to press on (Philippians 3:11-14)

## C. John's theology of growth (1 John 2:12-14)

1. Little children: Overcome the penalty of sin
2. Young men: Overcome the power of sin (Satan)
3. Old men: Intimate knowledge of God

## D. Enlarging the heart (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)



The heart of the natural person is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9), but we have been given a new heart (Ezekiel 11:19;36:26). The disposition of the heart of a true believer is oriented toward God. Although we still sin, this sin is related to a more surface level of our being. The flesh will act contrary to the real person of the heart. Even though we can live according to the flesh, doing so does not change the real nature of the heart nor our identity in Christ. H. Wheeler Robinson counted 822 uses of the word *heart* for some aspect of human personality. According to his categorization, 204 of the passages related to the mind, 195 to the will, and 166 to the emotion. Think of the heart as the center of our true self rather than the seat of our emotions. When the truth enters the heart, it immediately touches the affect and drives the will. We can intellectually acknowledge the truth in such a way that it never touches the heart.

**You can know theology and be arrogant, but you cannot know God and be arrogant!  
Knowledge makes arrogance, but love edifies (1 Cor. 8:1)**

# Mental Strongholds and the Renewing of Our Minds

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

**Learning Objective:** To understand how conforming to this world develops strongholds in our minds, resulting in something less than Christ-like temperaments, so that we can begin the process of renewing our minds.

## A. Stimulation (from our environment)

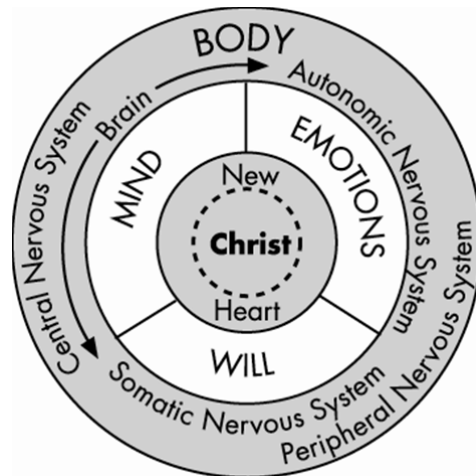
1. Prevailing experiences (family, friends, job, neighborhood, etc.)
2. Traumatic experiences (divorce, death, abuse, etc.)

Note: People are not in bondage to past traumas, they are in bondage to the lies they believed at the time of the trauma.

## B. Temptation (1 Cor. 10:13)

Temptation begins with a seed thought offering us something we want without consideration of the consequences. The purpose of temptation is to get us to live independently of God. When we fail to take a tempting thought captive to the obedience of Christ, we set off a chain of physiological reactions.

### The correlation of the outer and inner self



Note: The brain cannot function any way other than how it has been programmed.

1. Stress
2. Sex

We are not shaped by the environment alone, but by our perception of the environment. Life events do not determine our emotional response. How we mentally interpret life events determines our emotional response:

Activating event  
Mental evaluation  
Emotional response

**If what we believe does not reflect truth, then what we feel does not reflect reality.**

### **C. Consideration**

Consciously or subconsciously we have two plans in our minds. Plan A is God's way that we accept by faith. The strength of Plan A is dependent upon two things: (1) the person's conviction that God's way is right and (2) the person's level of commitment to obey God. Plan B is humanistic reasoning, i.e. humanity's tendency to rationalize. The strength of Plan B is enhanced when we entertain thoughts that are contrary to the Word of God. If we want to live a righteous life, we should think upon that which is true (Phil. 4:6-9). If you have plan B in your mind, you will always be tempted to take that path.

### **D. Strongholds**

Strongholds are mental habit patterns of thought that are burned into our minds over time or from the intensity of traumatic experiences. Ed Silvano said, "A stronghold is a mindset, impregnated with hopelessness that causes one to believe that something is unchangeable when it is known to be contrary to the will of God."

To illustrate:

1. Inferiority complex
2. Homosexuality
3. Adult child of an alcoholic

## The Battle for our Minds

**Learning Objective: To understand the spiritual battle that is going on for our minds so that we can take every thought captive in obedience to Christ.**

If the development of strongholds is just a question of conditioning, then we can be reconditioned through the process of education, counseling, or self-directed study of God's Word. Certainly that is the major process—but is there something else going on in the spiritual world as well? Notice the following verses:

### A. Satan, the Deceiver

“Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.”

1 Chronicles 21:1f.

“And supper being ended, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him. . . .” John 13:2

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep some of the price of the land?’” Acts 5:3

### B. Understanding our “Thoughts” (The Greek word is *noema*)

1. Unforgiveness—2 Cor. 2:10,11—“schemes” (*noema*).
2. Satan blinds the minds of the unbelieving—2 Cor. 4:3-4—“minds” (*noema*).
3. Keeping our focus on Christ—2 Cor. 11-3—“minds” (*noema*).

### C. Destroying Strongholds

1. Be transformed by renewing your mind (Rom. 12:2).
  - Study (2 Tim. 2:15).
  - Let the peace of Christ rule (Col. 3:15,16).
2. Prepare your minds for action (1 Pet. 1:13).
  - Keep your mind active and externally focused.
  - Sanctified” imagination.
3. Turn to God, choose the truth, and live accordingly (Phil. 4:6-8).

**Question?** Did you want to think that thought, or make a conscious choice to do so?

**We are not called to dispel the darkness, we are called to turn on the light!**

# Forgiving from the Heart

**Learning Objective: To understand what it means to forgive from the heart in order that we may do so.**

## **A. The Need to Forgive**

1. Required by God (Matt. 6:9-15)
2. Essential for our freedom (Matt. 18:21-35).
  - a. Know the extent of our debt (Luke 7:47).
  - b. Repayment is impossible.
  - c. Mercy is required.
  - d. So that no advantage be taken of us by Satan (2 Cor. 2:10, 11).
3. Must be extended to others (Eph. 4:31,32); however, the need to forgive others is primarily an issue between ourselves and God.
4. *Why should I forgive? You don't know how bad they hurt me!* They are still hurting you! This is how you stop the pain. Bitterness is like swallowing poison hoping the other person will die. Forgiveness is to set the captive free and then realize that you were the captive. You don't heal in order to forgive; you forgive in order to heal. What is to be gained is freedom from our past.

## **B. What is forgiveness?**

1. Not forgetting  
Forgetting is not a means to forgiveness, but it may be a long-term by-product.
2. Not tolerating sin  
Scriptural boundaries must be set in order to stop further abuse.
3. Not seeking resentment, revenge or repayment
4. Resolving to live with the consequences of another's sin
5. Not using the past against them
6. Where is the justice? **THE CROSS**

## **C. Steps to Forgiveness**

1. Make a list of all who have offended you.
2. Face the hurt and the hate.
3. Decide that you will bear the burden of their sin and not hold it against them.

# Discipleship Counseling

**Lesson Objective: To understand how the encourager can be an instrument in God's hand to bring about repentance and faith in God.**

**A. Defining terms from a biblical worldview perspective**

- Mental health: A true knowledge of God and who we are in Christ
- Mental illness: A distorted concept of God and who we are

**B. Determine who is responsible for what?**

1. God's responsibility (John 16:7-15)

We rest in the finished work of Christ and count on God to always be faithful and true to His word.

2. Inquirer's responsibility (James 5:13-16)

a. Inquirers must pray (vs. 13)

b. Inquirers must assume responsibility for their own lives (vs. 14)

c. Inquirers must walk honestly with God (vs. 16)

3. Encourager's responsibility (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

- The Lord bondservant is an instrument in God's hand, which means encouragers need to be dependent upon God themselves.
- Being not quarrelsome means encouragers don't argue with inquirers. They keep encouraging the inquirer toward resolution.
- Kindness is the essential character prerequisite. People do not share intimate issues with those who don't care for them, and they won't share everything just for the purpose of sharing. But they will share everything for the purpose of resolution when God is guiding them.
- The gentle encourager leads the inquirer to the truth that sets them free and Jesus is the Truth; the One who grants repentance.



# **Counseling In Christ**

**Lesson Objective: To understand general concepts of counseling in order to develop the skills necessary to help others resolve their personal and spiritual conflicts by using the Steps to Freedom in Christ.**

## **A. Identifying root issues (Hebrews 4:14-16)**

## **B. Learn their history (refer to the confidential Personal Inventory)**

### 1. Family history

- Religious history of parents and grandparents
- Home life from childhood through high school
- History of physical and emotional illness in the family
- Adoption, foster care, guardians

### 2. Personal history

- School history (positive and negative experiences)
- Eating habits (bulimia, anorexia, compulsive eating)
- Addictions (chemical, sexual, gambling, etc.)
- Sleeping patterns, dreams, nightmares
- Sexual, physical, or emotional abuse
- Thought life (obsessive, blasphemous, condemning, and distracting thoughts; suicidal thoughts; fearful; jealous; confused; guilt and shame)
- Mental interference during church, prayer or Bible study
- Emotional life (anger, anxiety, depression, bitterness, and fear)
- Spiritual journey (salvation experience: when, how, assurance)

## **C. Discern their beliefs about:**

### 1. God

### 2. Themselves

- Fear a mental breakdown or insanity
- Feel unloved, worthless and rejected
- Believe they are different than others

### 3. The struggle they are in

- The origin of their problem

- The nature of their problem
- Their spiritual perspective about God, Satan, and themselves

#### **D. Maintain control by working only with the person**

##### 1. Preliminary considerations

Gather the necessary history before you make any attempt at resolution. Deception is Satan's primary strategy, but if the demonic is confronted prematurely or irresponsibly, the inquirer may experience the following:

- Flight-leave the room
- Internal interference-dizziness, glassy eyed
- Able to receive, but not able to respond
- Catatonic

##### 2. Setting the guidelines

The goal is to avoid losing control. Since the inquirer's mind is their control center, they must share with you what is going on inside. Satan's deception and lies cannot work without the inquirer's cooperation, so they must choose not to believe the lies and maintain control of their thought life. They do this by bringing any thoughts contrary to what you are attempting to do into the light by sharing them. As soon as the lies are revealed, the power of the lie is broken. There are three reasons they may not share their thoughts with you:

- They are embarrassed because the opposing thoughts can be vulgar, blasphemous, condemning and accusing.
- They may not trust you or fear that you won't believe them.
- They're being intimidated.

Usually the thoughts are a threat that they will be thrashed when they get home or that some harm will happen to others if they cooperate. Exposing the problem to the light is what maintains control. Satan does everything in the dark. He is the prince of darkness. His demons are like cock roaches that scurry for the shadows when the lights are turned on. Jesus does everything in the light, because He is the Light of the World.

## Starting a Freedom Ministry in your Church

Freedom in Christ Ministries began with Dr. Anderson's books and expanded into a conference ministry with the Living Free in Christ conference, which also included training for Discipleship Counseling.

**The Living Free in Christ** conference is now available as a curriculum for Sunday Schools, small groups, home Bible studies, etc. The course is entitled, **Freedom In Christ**, and subtitled "Small group Bible Study." In the United Kingdom it is entitled **The Freedom in Christ Discipleship Course**. Both come with a DVD that includes 30 minute messages for each lesson, a teachers' guide that has all the messages written out so that leaders can choose to give the message themselves or play the DVD. Finally there is a Learner's Guide that includes the Steps to Freedom in Christ. Each participant should have a copy of the Learner's Guide.

This course is the entry point for churches, but it is not an end. For some it will be a new beginning on their journey to freedom and wholeness. If there are no additional issues to be resolved the *Daily Discipler* is written to give them a practical theology that can be digested five days a week for a year. There will be some who need additional help for sexual addiction, chemical addiction, anger, fear, anxiety, depression and reconciliation with others. Freedom in Christ Ministries has resources for all those issues.

- The next step is to help marriage partners become one in Christ. The book for that is *Experiencing Christ Together*, which has "Steps for Beginning Your Marriage Free" and "Steps for Setting Your Marriage Free." The book and the "Steps for Beginning Your Marriage Free" are intended for Pre-Marital counseling. *Experiencing Christ Together* and the "Steps for Setting Your Marriage Free" are for Sunday school classes, small and home group studies. There are modified Steps available when only one partner will try.
- These marriage steps follow the same reasoning as the individual Steps to Freedom, i.e. Christ must be included in the process. We recommend that the book be read and taught first and then a retreat scheduled in the church on a weekend or somewhere else. It takes a full day to work through the marriage steps. It is a powerful process that helps couples resolve their conflicts by the grace of God.
- The final step is for the official board of the church and the ministerial staff to resolve the church's conflicts and set the church or ministry free. The book for that is

*Extreme Church Makeover*, which explains servant leadership and lays the foundation for corporate conflict resolution. The “Steps to Setting Your Church Free” is a process that the board and staff work through, and that usually requires a day and an evening to process.

Note: Both the marriage and church steps cannot be processed without individual freedom being established first. That is why the Freedom in Christ course must be where a church begins for individuals, couples and leaders. If you have a church full of people in bondage to sex, alcohol, drugs, bitterness, gambling, legalism, etc., you have a church in bondage. If you have a church full of bad marriages, you have a bad church. The whole cannot be greater than the sum of its parts.

## **Discipleship Counseling Training**

The book entitled, *Restored*, is an expansion upon the Steps to Freedom in Christ. Most committed Christians can work through *Restored* on their own and facilitate their own repentance. That is possible since God is the one who grants repentance and the only one who can bind up the broken hearted and set the captives free.

We estimate that 85% of the participants attending the *Freedom in Christ* Course can work through the Steps to Freedom on their own. The book *Restored* may facilitate that process to a higher percentage. For those who can't work through the process on their own we offer comprehensive training through books, tapes and study guides. It is our prayer that churches that use our material offer this training on a continuous basis.

The material for training encouragers includes books, study guides (which greatly increases the learning process by helping people personalize and internalize the message) and several series of video and audiotapes (each series comes with a corresponding syllabus). Trainees receive the most thorough training when they watch the videos, read the books and complete the study guides. We recommend two hours per week for sixteen weeks. The material should be presented in the order listed:

### **Basic Training**

#### **Sessions 1-4**

Video/audio:

“Victory Over the Darkness”

Reading:

*Victory Over the Darkness* and Study Guide

### **Sessions 5-8**

Video/audio: “The Bondage Breaker”  
Reading: *The Bondage Breaker* and Study Guide

### **Sessions 9-16**

Video/audio: “Discipleship Counseling” and “Helping Others Find Freedom in Christ Video Training Program”  
Reading: *Discipleship Counseling*

### **Books for Advanced Training**

*Overcoming Addictive Behavior*  
*Overcoming Depression*  
*Winning the Battle Within*  
*Freedom From Fear*  
*Christ Centered Therapy* (For the professional counselor)  
*Getting Anger Under Control*  
*A Biblical Guide to Alternative Medicine*  
*Breaking the Bondage of Legalism*  
*Praying By the Power of the Spirit*  
*The Path To Reconciliation*

The book, *Discipleship Counseling*, has further instructions for how to set up a Discipleship Counseling Ministry in your church. We don't want to add to the work load of any pastoral staff, and we firmly believe that Discipleship Counseling has the potential to greatly reduce their load and equip the lay person to do the work of ministry.

### **Research Results**

There have been several exploratory studies that have shown promising results regarding the effectiveness of the Steps to Freedom in Christ. Judith King, a Christian therapist, did several pilot studies in 1996. All three of these studies were performed on participants who attended a *Living Free in Christ* conference and were led through the Steps to Freedom in Christ during the conference.

The first study involved 30 participants who took a 10-item questionnaire before completing the steps. The questionnaire was re-administered 3 months after their participation. The questionnaire assessed for levels of depression, anxiety, inner conflict, tormenting thoughts, and addictive behaviors. The second study involved 55 participants who took a 12-item questionnaire before completing the steps and was then re-administered 3 months later. The third pilot study involved 21 participants who also took a 12-item questionnaire before receiving the steps and then again 3 months afterwards. The following table illustrates the percentage of improvement for each category.

|               | <u>Depression</u> | <u>Anxiety</u> | <u>Inner<br/>Conflict</u> | <u>Tormenting<br/>Thoughts</u> | <u>Addictive<br/>Behavior</u> |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Pilot Study 1 | 64%               | 58%            | 63%                       | 82%                            | 52%                           |
| Pilot Study 2 | 47%               | 44%            | 51%                       | 58%                            | 43%                           |
| Pilot Study 3 | 52%               | 47%            | 48%                       | 57%                            | 39%                           |

Research was also conducted by the Board of the Ministry of Healing based in Tyler Texas. The study completed at Tyler, Texas was in cooperation with a doctoral student at Regent University under the supervision of Dr. Fernando Garzon (Doctor of Psychology). Most people attending a “Living free in Christ” conference can work through the repentance process on their own using the “Steps to Freedom In Christ.” In our experience about 15% can’t, because of difficulties they have experienced. A personal session was offered them with a trained encourager. They were given a pre-test before a Step session and a post-test three months later with the following results given in percentage of improvement:

|                     | Oklahoma City, OK | Tyler, TX |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Depression          | 44%               | 52%       |
| Anxiety             | 45%               | 44%       |
| Fear                | 48%               | 49%       |
| Anger               | 36%               | 55%       |
| Tormenting Thoughts | 51%               | 27%       |
| Negative Habits     | 48%               | 43%       |
| Sense of Self-Worth | 52%               | 40%       |

The Board of the Ministry and Healing is chaired by Dr. George Hurst, who previously directed the University of Texas Health Center at Tyler, Texas, [george.hurst@uthct.edu](mailto:george.hurst@uthct.edu). The Oklahoma and Texas data were combined together in a manuscript that was accepted by the Southern Medical Journal for publication.

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