



re:generation
recovery in Christ when life is broken

GROUNDWORK
BOOK 2

WELCOME

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

(Galatians 6:9)

Don't stop now. Good things await those who continue doing good **(Galatians 6:9)**.

It's hard to wait. Yet God has plans for us in the waiting. He wastes nothing and He desires to use this extra time in Groundwork just as much as He plans to use your time in a step group.

I know firsthand how hard it is to wait. On my first night at *re:generation*, I wanted to fast-track my recovery. I had been living a life of deception for several years. I had caused significant damage to myself and others, and so I was looking for a fast path to restoration.

I was a Christian. But I had gone through a season of willful wandering; I chose my own path rather than God's path. I turned to gambling and the pursuit of riches. As I spiraled out of control, I looked for all types of shortcuts to get me out of my pain.

Instead of confessing my struggle with gambling, I chose to steal money from my company to make up for personal losses. It was a devastating shortcut that deeply wounded those closest to me. Ashamed, I kept looking for quick fixes to get out of the pit I was digging. Regrettably, that path led me to further sin, gambling, and stealing.

After 7 years of failed shortcuts, I had amassed 6 figures worth of stolen funds. As I stayed silent about my sin, my bones wasted away **(Psalm 32:3)**. Until I finally took the one tried and true route back to obedience: confession of my sin to others, my wife, and my employer **(Proverbs 28:13)**.

My journey to pursue Christ began anew. Yet, I was still desperate for shortcuts, even with my recovery. I wanted to get in and out of *re:generation* as quick as possible. Find healing, and then get on to living.

God, in His mercy, decided that a longer stretch of Groundwork was just the right cure for my faulty logic. He gave me an opportunity to slow down and to turn my focus to my relationship with Him, rather than focusing on a fix for my sin.

“For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.”

(Psalm 32:3)

“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”

(Proverbs 28:13)

So I waited. And as I waited, God faithfully showed up every week stirring my heart with new truths. I dug deep into the Bible, continued working through the Groundwork curriculum, and kept sharing vulnerably about my struggles with others. Through all of that, I formed a deep relationship with God and others in my Groundwork circles. Years later, I am still cultivating these friendships and I am deeply grateful for them.

Don't get me wrong, longing for a step group is a good thing. I encourage you to do it. Pray for the people who will one day join you in your group. Pray for the leaders God is preparing now to facilitate your time through *re:generation*. Pray for yourself—that you won't take any shortcuts and you will faithfully work the 12 steps which will soon be before you.

And while you wait, don't miss out on all that God has for you today. He doesn't need a *re:generation* closed group to transform your heart. He's got something for you right now if you will continue. Don't stop now, friend.

Press on,
Jeff Parker
Director of *re:generation* recovery
Watermark Community Church, Plano campus

THE 12 STEPS¹ OF *re:generation* AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

re:generation 12 Steps

Step 1, Admit: We admit we are powerless over our addictions, brokenness, and sinful patterns – that in our own power our lives are unmanageable.

Step 2, Believe: We come to believe that God is the one whose power can fully restore us.

Step 3, Trust: We decide to trust God with our lives and wills by accepting his grace through Jesus Christ.

Step 4, Inventory: We make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step 5, Confess: We confess to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our sins.

Step 6, Repent: We become entirely ready to turn away from our patterns of sin and turn to God.

Biblical Foundations

Foundation 1: “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.” (Romans 7:18)

Foundation 2: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:2-5)

Foundation 3: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.” (Ephesians 2:4-5)

Foundation 4: “Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.” (Psalm 51:6)

Foundation 5: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:7-9)

Foundation 6: “So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)

¹ See Appendix B for permissions

re:generation 12 Steps

Step 7, Follow: We humbly ask God's Spirit to change our hearts and minds in order to follow Christ fully.

Step 8, Forgive: We forgive those who have harmed us and become willing to make amends to those we have harmed.

Step 9, Amends: We make direct amends whenever possible, submitting to God, his Word, and biblical counsel.

Step 10, Continue: We continue to examine our lives and when we sin promptly confess and turn to walk with Christ.

Step 11, Intimacy: We seek to deepen our relationship with God daily and depend on his power to do his will.

Step 12, Regenerate: Because of our new lives in Christ, we carry God's message of reconciliation to others and practice these principles in every aspect of our lives.

Biblical Foundations

Foundation 7: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit." (Galatians 5:22-25)

Foundation 8: "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children." (Ephesians 4:32-5:1)

Foundation 9: "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (Romans 12:17-18)

Foundation 10: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Psalm 139:23-24)

Foundation 11: "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:3)

Foundation 12: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

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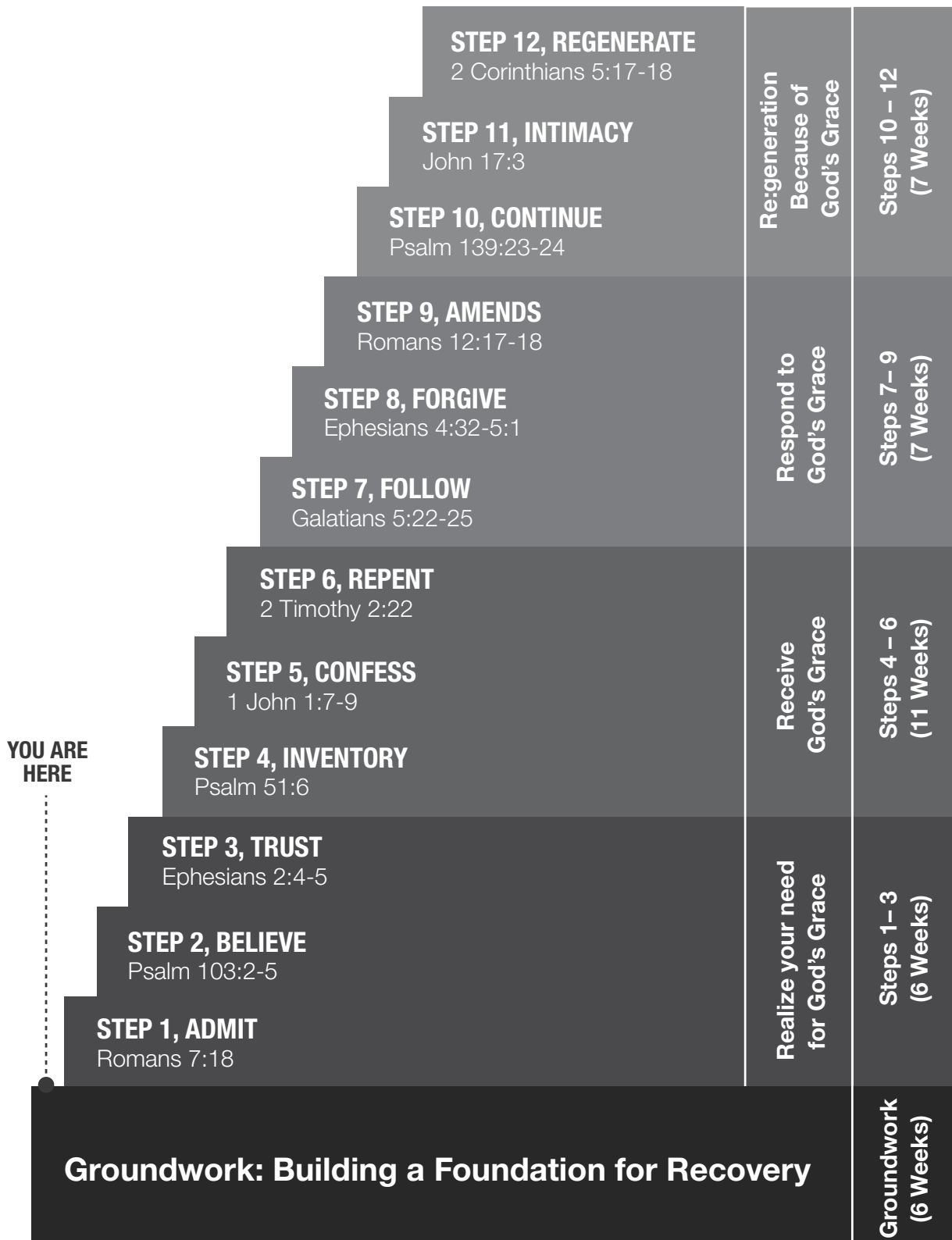
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TIMELINE

12 STEPS PROGRESSION



GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:13)

An authentic community that knows you well is a gracious gift of God meant for daily encouragement and spiritual health. Our desire is that *re:generation* communities are open, honest environments where people can share struggles, find healing and encouragement, and strengthen one another, as we follow God’s path together.

Trust is essential for community. To establish a foundation of trust between you and other participants at the start of recovery, we have created discussion guidelines. As you progress through *re:generation*, growing in your trust of one another, your understanding of God, and your knowledge of the Bible, these guidelines change, allowing you more opportunity to encourage one another. However, for now, during this season of trust building, we ask that you respect each other by following the guidelines below (remember: **A.B.C. + G.A.G.**).

1. **Keep it About self.** Share about your own thoughts and feelings while refraining from commenting on what someone else has shared. This allows you the freedom to discuss feelings without fearing someone else’s response, and it teaches you to listen to others.
2. **Keep it Brief.** Many people want to share, so please limit your sharing to less than three minutes. If everyone who wants to share has, and there is still time remaining, you may share again.
3. **Keep it Clean.** Honor God. Please avoid profanity and graphic details.
4. **Guard Against Gossip (**G.A.G.**).** Guarding against gossip creates a safe environment for sharing. Do not discuss the content of confidential group sharing time with people outside of the group unless directed by a *re:generation* leader. The leaders will determine what biblical steps are necessary if something shared requires attention from others outside of the group.

WEEK 7 DAY 1

MAIN POINT:

Continue to grow in faithfulness, prayer, patience, and encouragement as you prepare for your step group to launch.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

(1 Peter 1:13)

PREPARING FOR NEXT STEPS

PRAYER: Dear God, prepare me, my step group leaders, and fellow participants for the growth that you plan for us.

Congratulations! If you are starting this book, you have completed the first six weeks of Groundwork. This accomplishment, along with consistent Groundwork group participation, demonstrates that you are willing to do the necessary work to be a part of a *re:generation* step group. This is a big step in your recovery journey.

If you desire to move forward into a step group, please be sure that your Groundwork leaders or ministry leaders are aware. The leaders may ask to briefly skim through your previous Groundwork book to ensure that you completed the daily curriculum, but this will only be done for confirmation of completion. They will not read answers in depth. Once leaders have confirmed your readiness and your desire to move forward, you will be placed in line to launch into a step group when one becomes available—you do not need to complete anything else.

This second Groundwork book (weeks 7-12) provides continued daily opportunities for you to connect with God and work on key topics of recovery while you wait for your *re:generation* step group to launch. Unlike the first Groundwork book, this book does not need to be completed before you move into your step group. When your step group launches, you will all begin focusing on Steps 1-3, “Realize Your Need for God’s Grace.”

Depending on the size of the *re:generation* ministry you attend, it may be several weeks (even months) before the ministry has enough leaders or qualified participants to form your step group. However, God’s timing is perfect and recovery is still happening right now. He knows who should lead and be in your group. The best thing you can do is pray for your future leaders and fellow participants. Encourage the other Groundwork participants to keep working so they too can be ready to launch when leadership is available. Use this extra time in Groundwork as an opportunity to continue to grow in faithfulness, prayer, patience, and encouragement.

If you reach the end of Week 12 in Groundwork, and a step group has not yet formed, begin to work through the first Groundwork book again. You will be surprised by how much you have grown already. Your answers will likely be different.

God is preparing you for what lies ahead. He will not waste this time, but will continue to grow you as you submit to him.

APPLICATION: Commit to pray daily for your future step group leaders and fellow step group participants.

WEEK 7 DAY 2

MAIN POINT:

Your problem is not that you are hungry and thirsty. It's that you try to satisfy your hunger and thirst with the wrong things.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

(Matthew 5:6)

WHAT DO YOU THIRST FOR?

PRAYER: Dear God, help me see the deep needs of my soul. As I seek you, help me to know that you satisfy.

While everyone at some point in time has experienced physical hunger and thirst, did you know your soul is hungry and thirsty as well? God designed you with strong desires for things like love, affirmation, acceptance, significance, and security. Pain and trials of life can leave your soul feeling empty. Desperation, exhaustion, or tragedy can drive you to find new ways to fulfill your unmet desires. Pornography, anger, control, excessive work, substance abuse, over eating, anxiety, and many other "solutions" promise to quench the thirst of your soul. But, like salt water to parched lips, these kinds of solutions only provide temporary satisfaction. Soon they cause more damage, harming you and others. They may even lead to death.

In John 4, Jesus interacts with a woman at a well who was married five times prior and is now living with a man that is not her husband. Instead of focusing on her actions, he addresses what she really needs. He says to her in verse 13, *"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again."* Jesus points her to the spiritual water that will truly satisfy her soul. He offers a salvation that only he can provide. This is good news. While your deep longings are normal, they are intended to point you to Jesus. You don't have to hide them from God. He wants to satisfy your thirst through himself and his way of living.

In verse 14, Jesus continues, *"The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* Not only will Jesus satisfy your soul's thirst, he will provide abundantly so that you can also tell others. Your own coping methods pale in comparison to what Christ offers you—eternal satisfaction.

God knows you and loves you. He can use the very things that brought you to *re:generation* to direct you himself, the source of abundant life. Christ alone satisfies the eternal longings of your soul.

APPLICATION: What are you longing for? At your deepest level, what is it that you want? Write down a couple of the desires that come to mind. Also record how you have tried to meet these desires on your own.

WEEK 7 DAY 3

MAIN POINT:

Eternal life is more than just being saved from hell. Eternal life is about experiencing God's love, now and forever.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

(John 3:16)

ETERNAL LIFE STARTS TODAY

PRAYER: Dear God, thank you for loving me. Open my eyes to what eternal life is really like.

What do you picture when you think about heaven or the afterlife? Floating on clouds and singing hallelujahs? Reuniting with lost family members? Endless pleasure? Nothingness? Does your view of eternity fill you with excitement? Fear? Boredom?

Many people have false ideas about heaven. It is easy to think that eternal life only relates to what happens after death. However, the Bible paints a different picture. John 17:3 says, "*This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*" Eternal life is about knowing a loving God, and this doesn't start when you die; God wants to start restoration with you today. God sent His Son, Jesus, to bridge the gap between heaven and earth. God doesn't just want to restore broken things in some future kingdom, he wants to do it here and now. Understanding eternal life this way changes how you experience God's love today and in the future.

So what does experiencing eternal life today look like?

1. God wants you to know him through a deep, abiding relationship. As you spend time reading the Bible and praying, he reveals the truth about himself. Just like in any other relationship, you get to really know God by spending time with him.
2. God wants to set you free. You don't have to be controlled by addictions, brokenness, or sinful patterns. Walking with God leads to freedom (Galatians 5:16-23).
3. God wants you to live courageously as a son or daughter, knowing that you are an heir with access to his resources and are greatly valued by him (Romans 8:14-17).
4. God wants you to have an abundant life (John 10:10). Abundance in this life isn't without sorrow or pain. It is overwhelming peace, joy, and fulfillment found through a relationship with God regardless of your circumstances.
5. God wants you to experience the absolute fullness of his love (Ephesians 3:17-21).

Eternal life is not just something you receive after death. It is all that you can experience through a relationship with God now—a relationship that overcomes death, and brings you into the life he created you to experience with him.

APPLICATION: Spend time reflecting on and writing down your own thoughts and feelings about eternal life. In what ways are you experiencing or not experiencing that life today? Pray for a deeper understanding of eternal life.

WEEK 7 DAY 4

MAIN POINT:

If you go looking for healing or help in the wrong places, you end up hurt. The only place recovery, life, and peace can be found is in actively trusting Jesus.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Then [the crowds following Jesus] said to him, ‘What must we do, to be doing the works of God?’ Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’”

(John 6:28-29)

THE HARD WORK OF THE GOSPEL: BELIEF

PRAYER: Jesus, help me to see that you came to bring peace. Help me to believe and trust what is true about you.

“I *have* to do something. Things are out of control. Why can’t I just get it together?” There are so many moments in life that feel out of control. It’s easy to think that if you just had a better handle on your circumstances, that pain would go away, or you could avoid unpleasant experiences. Why doesn’t God just tell you what to do?

People in Jesus time wondered the same things. Crowds saw Jesus healing the sick. They saw him feed thousands with five loaves, two fish, and prayer. They thought, “This is the guy we’ve been waiting for! He is doing the work of God!” And, the crowds asked Jesus, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” They wanted to know how to take control of their circumstances, how they could heal their sicknesses, and fill their stomachs.

Jesus responded, “*this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.*” (John 6:29) Believe in Jesus? It is probably not what they wanted to hear; and if you are being honest, there are days you probably don’t want to hear it either.

Some people want something to *do* to get life together: just quit this, just start that, etc. Other people just want God to make problems go away regardless if they ever choose to trust and obey his word: why do this, or what is the point of doing that? Etc. They want control of a trouble-free life rather than trusting Christ and surrendering control of life to God regardless of circumstances.

Life is exhausting and unmanageable until you realize that the love, security, peace, and significance you desperately want is already available to you (not because of anything you do, or because you get it together). Jesus’ life of perfect obedience is enough. Believing and following him, on the good and bad days, is doing the hard work of the gospel. The peace that comes from trusting God is better than control, because it doesn’t depend on you, others, or a change in circumstances. Eternal peace comes from above.

APPLICATION: Think of one area of your life that you’ve been trying to control. Then, write out a prayer asking God to take control of that issue. Ask God for courage and faith to trust and obey his will as instructed by his word. Then pray that he would bless you with peace that surpasses understanding regardless of the outcome.

WEEK 7 DAY 5

MAIN POINT:

You are always being shaped by something. Allow God to influence you most.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

(Romans 12:2)

WHAT IS INFLUENCING YOU MOST?

PRAYER: Dear God, help me to see the ways you want to transform my life. Show me where I conform to what the world tells me.

Do you ever find yourself asking what God’s will (or desire) is for your life? Or do you wonder if your actions are in line with God’s plan for you? Part of how Scripture answers questions like these is by communicating what God’s will is not.

It is not God’s will for you to be controlled by your pain or coping mechanisms. It is not God’s will for you to live in fear or addiction. Romans 8:6 says, “*to set the mind on the flesh is death...*” This means that living according to your own sinful desires (or being “conformed to this world”) will lead to hurt and separation from God. This is not God’s will for you.

“Influence” has been defined as the capacity of something to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of an individual. So, what is influencing you? Alcohol? Drugs? Relationships? Fear and anxiety? Pleasure or comfort? Others’ opinions of you?

Alcohol, drugs, sex, and all other worldly pleasures are temporary. If you make fleeting pleasures your goal, they will ultimately fail you. Temporary things will never satisfy the eternal needs of your soul. Thankfully, God has something better for you. God, himself, wants to influence you. He desires to transform your heart and mind, so that your eternal needs can be satisfied. The second part of Romans 8:6 says, “*...but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*”

God transforms you as you spend time with him. James 4:8 says “*Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*” Transformation begins when you connect with God, meditate on the Bible, and let him become your main influence. When you allow God to influence your thoughts, he renews your mind to delight more in eternal pleasures and to desire less the empty promises of this broken world.

God’s will for you is far less about a particular series of decisions. It’s far less about what job you should pursue, or where you should live; It is about the state of your heart and mind. God’s wants you to know him, to think about and delight in the same things he does—eternal things that lead to life and satisfy your eternal needs.

APPLICATION: Write down one thing that consistently draws you closer to God and one thing that consistently distracts you from God. Tell these things to a friend and pray together that God would continue to transform your heart and mind to know and delight in his will.

WEEK 7 DAY 6

REVIEW AND CATCH UP

Catch up on any of the *re:generation* work from this week. Complete the **Week 7 Review** below:

Q1: Look over this week's work. What lesson was most meaningful to you? Why?

Q2: Do you believe that you can experience eternal life now despite your circumstances? Why or why not?

Q3: What is most influencing your daily life right now? God or something else? Explain.

Q4: Do you believe that God has plans to satisfy your needs or desires? Why or why not?

Q5: What do you hope will be the result of your time in *re:generation*?

Q6: Do you think your answer to Q5 aligns with God's desire for your time in *re:generation*? How would his answer be similar or different?

WEEK 8 DAY 1

MAIN POINT:

Falling down doesn't make you a failure. Get back up!

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

(Lamentations 3:22-23)

A NEW DAY CAN START RIGHT NOW

PRAYER: God, if I slip, help me set aside my embarrassment, run back to you, and open up to those you have placed in my life to help me recover.

Relapse can be a part of recovery. It is easy to let the cares of the day and temptations of the world grab our attention. We can be lulled into a false sense of security about our addictions or sin patterns. We think, "I've got this." We may even proclaim, "I don't struggle with *that* anymore. I doubt that I ever will again!"

When life's pressure mounts, our familiar coping mechanisms call to us. We can get careless and allow old patterns to overtake us, becoming complacent about the very reason(s) that brought us to *re:generation* in the first place. The slip may start as a drink at the end of a stressful day, losing our temper with loved ones, or looking too long at an online advertisement just a few clicks away from pornography. Then, a slip gives way to relapse. Relapse leaves us covered in shame as our thoughts condemn us:

"Oh no. Not again."

"I was doing so well! I hadn't binged in 45 days. Now I'm back at square one. What's the use in even trying?"

"Everyone will be so disappointed. I don't think I can face going back to group and telling people that I messed up . . . again."

Do these sound familiar? When slipping into sin gives rise to shame, we are tempted to give up on recovery, rather than once again receiving God's forgiveness and power. It can be easy to consider isolating and walking away from the very people who understand us most and who can offer help: those in recovery with us.

In moments of relapse, we must remember that falling down doesn't mean we fail. However, staying down often does. God graciously gives us second chances. And third, fourth, even hundredth chances. His mercies are new every morning. A new day can start right now. We can return to him and the people he has placed around us in recovery.

APPLICATION: List areas of life where you have slipped back into old patterns. Ask God for the courage to be honest with those in recovery alongside you. Pray that God would build a team around you committed to seeing you get well.

WEEK 8 DAY 2

MAIN POINT:

Healing occurs when you are able to confess your sins and pray for each other in your small group.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

(James 5:16)

CONFESSING SIN BRINGS HEALING

PRAYER: Lord, give me the courage to be real with a few people who I can trust, so that we can heal together.

Authentic relationships are forged through real life struggles. It is easy to spend so much time trying to be who you think you should be that you lose track of who you really are. Are you trying to project a certain image that no one gets a chance to know the real you? If so, your mask has become your worst enemy. Fear of being known will keep you from the authentic relationships that you were created to experience. True friendship will never be realized until you dare to be known and take off your mask.

James 5:16 instructs you to confess sin to one another and to pray for each other. Your confession to other trusted people isn't a pre-requisite for God's forgiveness—God's forgiveness is granted when you accept Christ's payment for sin as your own—rather, your confession to others brings healing. When you allow others into your struggles you risk rejection, but you also create an opportunity to be known, loved, and reminded of how God sees you. You have a chance to pray for one another and to encourage each other with scripture to take the necessary steps for recovery. In these authentic relationships healing occurs—for everyone.

In summary, confessing sin to others accomplishes three things:

- First, confession allows others to know the real you. This opens the door for intimate relationships and frees others to be authentic with you.
- Second, this confession reveals where forgiveness and amends are needed. It starts the reconciliation process for relationships hurt by sin.
- Third, confession allows others to shine the light of God's mercy and grace on your brokenness. When others pray, encourage, and urge you to follow God's recovery plan, it brings you healing and gives others courage to do the same.

God never wants you to be isolated by sin. You were created for an authentic relationship with him and authentic relationships with others. As you allow yourself to be known and loved by others, others will allow themselves to be known and loved by you. Together, you will remind each other that there is a good God who truly loves you just as you are, and he is ready to heal us all.

APPLICATION: Commitment to an authentic group is an important part of recovery. Share one concern and one hope with your group if you dared to be authentic.

WEEK 8 DAY 3

MAIN POINT:

Our minds lead us astray. Let's seek stability through scripture.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."

(2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

THE BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND

PRAYER: Dear God, give me the strength to fight the battle to renew my heart and mind, not with armor or swords, but with your power. Give me the faith to trust in your truth, not in my own thinking.

Our minds are the front line in the battle for recovery. What makes us do what we do? How do we decide which actions to take? It is our minds that direct our decisions. Our minds are also affected by our feelings, circumstances, and beliefs. They are constantly under attack from many directions, including doubts, fears, and the desires of our own impure hearts. This is *especially* true when we are in recovery.

Furthermore, the Bible tells us that human nature is sinful and easily deceived. We are hostile toward God and his ways (Romans 8:7-8). Our minds are tempted to entertain impure thoughts, justify sin, and shift blame for our actions.

So how do we combat temptation and ensure that we are ready to recover from hurt, pain, and sin? As always, we can look to the example of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus anticipated temptation and prepared his heart by praying. When Jesus faced temptation, he quoted scripture, reminding himself (and his tempter) of God's truth.

To fight temptation, the Bible tells us to be strengthened through prayer and knowing God's word.

Philippians 4:6-7 says, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Romans 12:2 says, *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

By praying continually, we rely upon God's strength to prepare us for battle. By understanding and memorizing God's word, our minds are informed, aligned, and reminded of God's truth so that we are not easily deceived. In doing so, God changes us to become more like Jesus—strong in the Lord to outlast the battle and equipped with God's word to fight the lies of temptation.

APPLICATION: The next time you are faced with temptation, pray. Consult scripture and seek the council of trusted friends who know where to find truth. Pray that your mind would be aligned with God's desire for you.

WEEK 8 DAY 4

MAIN POINT:

God is in the business of transformation; He can change you. Hang in there and work on knowing Him more.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

(2 Peter 3:9)

CAN I REALLY CHANGE?

PRAYER: God, change me.

Do you ever wonder if *re:generation* will work for you? Have you told yourself, “I’m too old to change, too broken, too far gone.” “God hasn’t fixed me yet, why would he now?” These are all common thoughts, but they are not taking into consideration the God of the Bible. God is in the business of transforming people, and he wants to change you too.

There are several examples in the Bible of God changing people who were once enemies of Christ. The apostle Paul is an excellent one. Before encountering Jesus face-to-face on the road to Damascus, Paul was a chief persecutor of Christians, even standing by as the first Christian martyr was stoned. But Paul’s encounter with Jesus transformed him. He became one of the world’s best-known advocates for Christ, spending 30 years evangelizing and suffering persecution himself. Even more surprising, much of the New Testament was written by this former enemy of Christ!

Another example of God changing people is Peter, one of Christ’s own disciples. Though Peter pledged his loyalty to Jesus, when Christ was arrested to be put on trial and killed, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. After rising from the grave, Jesus made it a point to restore Peter and even asked Peter to care for his people. Peter went on to become the head of the first church and eventually died as a martyr for his faith.

Finally, think of the *re:generation* stories you hear every week. These people are your contemporaries, all of whom have struggled and failed too. Yet, their lives have been radically changed by God and he is now using them in your life.

What do all of these examples have in common? These people all fall short of God’s standard and have struggled to maintain faithfulness to God. But when they failed, a perfectly faithful and powerful God drew them to himself and restored them for a purpose.

God wants to restore you too. He wants all of you, the good and the ugly. When you bring yourself to him and begin to trust him for change, healing can begin in all aspects of your life. A word of caution: Healing might not look how you would like it to look or happen on your time, but he can and will transform you, if you are willing.

APPLICATION: Listen to some *re:generation* testimonies this week at www.regenerationrecovery.org. Hear how God has transformed lives just like yours. Commit to keep attending and trust that God can and will change you.

WEEK 8 DAY 5

MAIN POINT:

God doesn't just fix problems, he makes things new.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

(2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

GOD MAKES ALL THINGS NEW

PRAYER: Dear God, help me to let go of my past. Help me to see myself and others as you do, not for the wrongs I have done.

When meeting someone new, often that person will say, "Tell me about yourself." Usually, the person is looking for job titles, a relationship status, or the city where you live. You may answer with things like, "I'm a Nurse," "I live in Dallas," "I'm a married father of two." In our society, you are often identified by what you do or where you live.

Though categorizing people this way is often harmless, sometimes people go a step further and identify individuals by their wrongs. If someone commits adultery, that person is labeled as an "adulterer." When co-workers do poor work, they are called "incompetent." People who talk about others behind their backs are noted as "gossips." It is easy for past failures to become identifiers that are not easily erased. Even when you take steps to make amends for your mistakes, labels can stick with you in the minds of others, and sometimes, in your own mind, too.

However, God sees you differently. He loves you. He fearfully and wonderfully created you in his own image. In fact, you are so valuable to him that even though he knew all the sins you were going to commit, he sent Jesus, his son, to die for you so that you could be reconciled to a right relationship with him. 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 says that if you are reconciled to God through Jesus, he doesn't just fix you, he makes you new. He gives you a new identity and purpose.

You may have come to *re:generation* to fix a struggle, but God wants to do much more than just help you modify your behavior. He wants you to be in a right relationship with him, to be healthy, to realize who he created you to be, and to see yourself as he sees you. He wants you to live out the purpose for which you were created, so that you can experience all that he has for you in every area of life. If you are willing to come to him on his terms, he will make everything new. What is stopping you?

APPLICATION: List the characteristics by which you most often identify yourself (to others, and when thinking about yourself). Also, list how you think God sees you. Consider the differences of these two lists. Ask someone you trust to see if your understanding of how God sees you lines up with what the Bible says about how he sees you.

WEEK 8 DAY 6

REVIEW AND CATCH UP

Catch up on any of the *re:generation* work from this week. Complete the **Week 8 Review** below:

Q1: Look over this week's work. What lesson was most meaningful to you? Why?

Q2: What is one concern and one hope that you can authentically share with your Groundwork group?

Q3: By what methods are you currently fighting temptation? How can you better employ the methods for battle outlined in the Bible?

Q4: Do you have doubts about whether God can/will change you? Why or why not?

Q5: Does the way you see yourself align with how God sees you? Explain.

APPLICATION: If you have not secured a mentor, search for one now. Look for a Christian who is in your life today, who will be in your life after *re:generation*. Read **Appendix C** to better understand mentorship. *How Do I Choose A Mentor?* and *Mentor Agreement* documents can be found on the www.regenerationrecovery.org/resources/forms-and-supplements page.

WEEK 9 DAY 1

MAIN POINT:

If you struggle to believe your life can be redeemed, there is hope; God loves you and is powerful to heal you.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

(Psalm 103:2-5)

DO YOU WANT OUT OF THE PIT?

PRAYER: Dear God, you say that you’ve not left me alone in my brokenness and that there is hope for healing. Help me to trust you and give me strength to take the next step of recovery.

It is so easy to focus on your troubles, sorrows, regrets, and mistakes. When you are broken and recognize the need for change, change can seem overwhelming, if not impossible. It can feel like you are stuck in a giant pit created by many poor choices—your own choices and the harmful choices of others. With every bad decision the pit became deeper and deeper, and now it feels as if there is no way out. You can’t fill the hole or undo all the wrong.

The apostle Paul in Romans 7:24 cried out, “*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*”

So, how is there hope? What will save you from your pit of brokenness and despair? Read Psalm 103:2-5 in the margin.

God is the answer. He is the one who can rescue you from your pit of brokenness and despair. Not only can He pull your life from the pit, but He promises redemption! He promises to forgive all your sin, heal you, and crown you with love and mercy—to satisfy you with good and renew your youth! This is an amazing promise of hope.

Trying to think or work your way out of the pit will not save you. Rather, it is a loving and powerful God who will heal you and redeem your life.

APPLICATION: List some ways you’ve dug the hole you are currently in. Also, list some ways you are trying dig your own way out of your pit. Then, ask God to help you put down your shovel and to start relying on his strength and direction for healing.

WEEK 9

DAY 2

MAIN POINT:

Without Christ, you will never fully recover. With Christ, all things are possible.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“For I know that nothing good dwells in me; that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.”

(Romans 7:18)

FREEDOM IN TOTAL DEPENDENCE

PRAYER: Dear God, help me to more fully understand my need for you. Show me that you love me even in my brokenness and want to help me live in freedom.

One of the biggest lies many of us believe is that, at our core, “we are good people.” A second lie that many of us believe is that we should be strong enough to manage our behavior and move past brokenness on our own. As a result, we have a false sense of security and refuse to admit when we are weak.

Often, it is not until we have lost total control of life or feel broken beyond repair, that we realize how desperate we are. Even when we want to do good, we fail. When God opens our eyes to our sinfulness, we begin to see the painful truth. Romans 7:18 tells us, “*For I know that nothing good dwells in me; that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.*” We are not good. We cannot do good on our own.

Thankfully, God loves us despite our sin. He sent Jesus, his Son, to help. Jesus demonstrated God’s love for us by dying for our sins while we were still sinners (Romans 5:6-8). Then, Jesus demonstrated his power over sin by rising from the grave and offered us a relationship with him so that we can rely on his strength to do good (Romans 7:4). On our own we will never be free, but when we rely on Christ we will flourish.

Jesus said, “*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*” (John 15:5)

Freedom comes when we fully surrender our lives and wills to Christ. Jesus is enough. When we decide to live in full dependence on him, everything begins to change. We no longer need to control every circumstance. We gain an eternal perspective that gives us hope. We can stop keeping score of our “good” and “bad” deeds, and instead rely upon Jesus. Some of the changes Christ makes in us come quick. Other changes take time. But, Jesus is always there offering us new life through his life.

APPLICATION: Write down one doubt that you have about Jesus or his ability to bring you freedom. Then, write down something about yourself that you would like Christ to change. Finally, ask him to change you (on his time) and to erase your doubt (by his methods).

WEEK 9

DAY 3

MAIN POINT:

There is something broken about all of us. Be willing to take an honest look at your sin and brokenness to discover what God may be doing in your life.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(1 John 1:8-9)

HUMBLY ADMIT YOUR BROKENNESS

PRAYER: Dear God, give me the courage to bravely face my sin and confess it to you. Help me to take this necessary step towards freedom and wholeness.

Let's face it. Everyone comes to recovery because something in life is not working. You may be struggling with addiction, a broken relationship, or a hurt caused by another's actions. Maybe you came because you have been too focused on pleasure, comfort, or reputation. There are all kinds of reasons why you came to fix something at *re:generation*, but ultimately, there is one reason you need recovery: you are affected by sin.

It may be difficult to admit that sin is what led you to recovery. You may not even consider your struggle to be sin. Or maybe your hang-ups have been such a part of life for so long that they feel normal to you. But make no mistake; sin is present in the lives of every man, woman, and child. Romans 3:23 says, “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*”

Sin begins in your heart and results in self-serving, self-protecting, harmful behaviors. These behaviors can hurt your mental, emotional, and spiritual health, along with your relationships.

It is easy for pride to keep you from admitting your brokenness, or acknowledging that there is something in your life that you are powerless to fix. Beware, your pride is a deceitful enemy of your recovery! 1 John 1:8 says, “*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*” However, humbly acknowledging sin and its effects helps you live authentically, draws you closer to God, and begins to move you along the path of healing.

1 John 1:9 says, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” Honestly acknowledging where you are at today is a crucial first step in recovery.

In spite of all your sin, regardless of your brokenness, God loves you. He desires an authentic relationship with you and invites you into a life of recovery with him. He is able to heal you from the things by which you are most hurt and ashamed.

APPLICATION: Resist the urge to deny or hide from your sin or brokenness. In prayer, ask God to help you honestly address your sin. Write down one way that your pride has affected you this week. If you are willing, practice transparency by being open about your sin and struggles with your Groundwork group.

WEEK 9 DAY 4

MAIN POINT:

Humbly owning your part in a conflict brings peace.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

(Romans 12:17-18)

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

PRAYER: Dear God, help me to see conflict as something that can draw me closer to you. Show me where I lack humility when engaging with others.

If you are in relationship with others, you will experience conflict. Wherever there are two people gathered together, there will be differences in opinion and practice. Differences can lead to conflict, but they can also lead to opportunities for growth. In *re:generation*, you will learn new ways to address conflict that can draw you closer to others and to God.

Past conflict in your life will often affect present day relationships. Maybe as a child you weren't taught how to disagree without erupting into anger. Perhaps, you weren't given permission to express your feelings, and now are fearful of voicing your concerns. If you learned to view conflict as a bad thing, you may try to avoid it all together, abandoning relationships along the way. These types of responses lead to relationships that are inauthentic and shallow.

Thankfully, the Bible says a lot about handling conflict in a way that both honors God and brings about restored relationships. It reminds you that your baggage influences the way you conflict with others. It commands you to address conflict directly rather than avoiding it. It guides you to speak gently, so as to not stir up anger. None of these things can be done without God's help. (James 4:1-2, Matthew 18:15, Proverbs 15:1, John 15:5)

How can you use these truths to help you during times of conflict?

- When conflict arises, evaluate yourself before engaging. What instances in your past may be informing your feelings in this conflict? Are you seeking understanding, or are you just wanting to be “right?” Are you only pointing out what the other person has done, yet refusing to own your part in the conflict?
- When you are hurt or offended, go directly to the person responsible. Don't fall into gossip or slander another's reputation; seek to resolve the issue. If he or she refuses to listen, bring someone else you trust who can help with resolution.
- When entering into conversations that may cause conflict, pray! Ask God to give you kind and gentle words. Remember entering conflict with a calm attitude is always better than immediately accusing or blaming others.

God calls you to be a peacemaker. Words and actions have the power to build others up or tear them down. So, during conflict, ask God to help you to be humble and, as far as it depends on you, remain peaceful.

APPLICATION: Think of an unresolved conflict in your past. Pray for God to reveal what your part is in the conflict and give you peace. Write down two ways you might better love this person in the future.

WEEK 9

DAY 5

MAIN POINT:

Recovery starts by receiving a free gift from God.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”

(Ephesians 2:4-5)

GOD’S MERCY AND GRACE

PRAYER: Dear God, give me a better understanding of your mercy and grace. Help me to respond in thankfulness and walk forward in recovery.

“If people really knew me, there is no way they’d stick around.” “If people really knew the things I’ve done, they would surely run away.” Have you ever felt this way? Have you ever thought the same things about God?

A common belief is that God only wants a relationship with people who are good enough—that he only accepts those who have it all together. Worldly relationships often reinforce this belief. For instance, if you hurt a friend’s feelings, that person may avoid or reject you until you make up for the harm you caused. If you don’t perform at work, you may get fired. Since many human relationships are based on performance, God must work this way too, right? Thankfully, the answer is no. God doesn’t operate like most earthly relationships. He tells us so in the Bible. Isaiah 55:8 says, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.*”

It is true that as in human relationships, sin harms your relationship with God and can even separate you from him. However, from the very beginning, God had a plan to pursue a relationship with you through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus took on himself the punishment for all of your failures—past, present, and future sin—when he died on the cross. He made up for your sins on your behalf (something you could never do yourself), so that a healthy relationship with God could be fully established. Instead of rejection for your failures, God offers mercy and grace. Mercy is withholding punishment that is deserved. Grace is the gift of a relationship that is not deserved.

When you accept Christ’s payment for sin as your own, your failures are no longer a barrier to a relationship with God. In fact, when you receive God’s grace, he adopts you as his child, accepting you as his own son or daughter. Your status as child of God will never change, no matter what you have done or will do. You are free to fully experience a loving relationship with him through grace.

Through Christ, God mercifully does not punish you for your sins and graciously offers you a relationship that is not earned by performance. He loves you and pursues a relationship with you as his beloved child!

APPLICATION: Have you ever been offered a gift you felt you didn’t deserve? What was your response? Reflect on the gift God offers you.

WEEK 9 DAY 6

REVIEW AND CATCH UP

Catch up on any of the *re:generation* work from this week. Complete the **Week 9 Review** below:

Q1: Look over this week's work. What lesson was most meaningful to you? Why?

Q2: How are you trying to manage recovery on your own? What about your recovery do you need to surrender to God?

Q3: What is one thing you would like Christ to change? Have you asked him to change it?

Q4: In what ways has your pride affected your recovery?

Q5: Is there anyone with whom you are in conflict? What is one step that you can take to make peace with this person?

Q6: How has your relationship with God in the past been one of performance vs. one of mercy and grace?

WEEK 10 DAY 1

MAIN POINT:

Honest self-reflection can help you realize the truth of God's love for you.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart."

(Psalm 51:6)

EMBRACE THE TRUTH ABOUT YOU

PRAYER: Dear God, help me to more fully understand your love for me. Show me the value of seeking wisdom and self-reflection.

Since first attending *re:generation*, it's likely that you've heard, "I have a new life in Christ." These six words are the perfect summary statement for anyone comparing the life they once lived apart from Christ to the life they are currently living by faith in Christ. Past choices, words, and behaviors reveal ugly truths about yourself when you live apart from God. You are not alone; We all desperately need God's grace and mercy to make us new.

Examining your past failures may seem counterproductive, because it often produces deep feelings of regret, shame, and guilt. These feelings can lead you to believe lies about yourself. It is tempting to believe that your past failures make you unworthy of love—that if all your mistakes were brought to the light, no one would accept you. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking change is impossible. However, because of what Jesus has done, these lies do not have to have power over you.

The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans, "*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). This changes everything. God thinks that you are worthy of sacrificial love even in your worst moments of sin and shame. Your sin does not make you unworthy of God's love (the love that matters most)! Your value is not determined by what you've done, but by what God has done for you. Regret, shame, and guilt don't have to define who you are. Instead, God's love can define you. Doesn't this inspire you to learn more about the one who made it possible?

Accepting that you are loved by God in spite of your sin, allows you to engage in honest self-reflection. Without denying your sin, try to understand who you really are and the incredible amount of grace offered to you by a loving God. God longs for more than a surface relationship with you. Share with him the good, the bad, and the ugly. Share with him all the experiences and choices that cause regret, shame, and guilt. Honest self-reflection helps you better appreciate God's love. You are fully known and still fully loved.

APPLICATION: What are some ugly truths you avoid facing about yourself? What emotions do these reminders stir in you (shame, guilt, remorse, self-hatred, self-pity, etc.)? Write a brief note to God sharing these things with him. Ask him for courage to be transparent in your relationship with him and for him to reveal more of his love for you.

WEEK 10 DAY 2

MAIN POINT:

It's not enough to stop doing the bad things. Pursue the good things with others.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

(2 Timothy 2:22)

RUN TO WHERE HOPE IS FOUND

PRAYER: Dear God, protect me from my destructive ways. Help me to pursue a relationship with you alongside other people who love you. I want to experience all that you have for me.

As an imperfect being, you have some passions, or lusts, which are neither healthy nor pleasing to God. If you give in to these passions, you will live in a way that is destructive to yourself and to others. The Bible warns you not to manage or comply with these urges, but rather to flee from them (2 Timothy 2:22).

In some cases, fleeing means running away and removing yourself physically from a temptation. It might mean cancelling a social media account if its images lead your mind to wander somewhere unhelpful. It might mean breaking off an unhealthy relationship or changing your group of friends.

But, the Bible says to do more than just flee from what is destructive. It tells you that you must also pursue what is constructive. You must redirect your attention and energy to good things designed by God that bring life. You don't have what it takes to make these changes on your own—no one does. Only God has the power to overcome the harmful passions that wage war in you and redirect you to what is good. He has created you to need him. All true life is found in him.

Thankfully, God loves you and wants you to experience true life because He is supremely good. He desires to give you more than changed habits or circumstances. He longs to free you from the guilt and shame of the past, and to give you power in resisting sin and pursuing life. He wants you to know true love. He wants to make you new. The God who created and sustains the world wants to meet your needs through a personal relationship.

God also wants you to grow in this relationship with him alongside others. You need a small group of trusted people who are seeking to follow God with their whole heart. In such a community, God demonstrates his love by working through each one of you. He calls you to live authentically with one another, encourage one another, care for and love one another, and help one another grow in the knowledge, strength, and love of God. A community of people pursuing God together is essential to recovery and a full life.

So, flee destructive temptations and turn to pursue God. Join with others and receive from God the abundant life that he wants for you.

APPLICATION: Make this commitment to God today: "Whenever an unhealthy thought or image enters my mind, I will immediately abandon that thought and turn my focus to you in prayer." Remember the words of Psalm 103:4-5 and pray, "Lord, I turn to you as the all-powerful God who loves me and wants to redeem my life from the pit. You crown me with love and mercy, you satisfy me with good things and renew my strength when I'm weak. I seek you now for that strength." Then, call someone in your group to let them know about your temptation, and ask for that person to pray for you and to help you pursue God.

WEEK 10 DAY 3

MAIN POINT:

Recovery is not the end of God's plan for you. God wants to take your mess and make it a message.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

(2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

FULFILLING YOUR GOD-GIVEN PURPOSE

PRAYER: Dear God, thank you for saving me from my destructive ways, and giving me a future where I can share your good news. Show me how my mess can be a message that glorifies you and comforts others.

In coming to *re:generation*, we are all admitting that we have, in one or more ways, made a mess of things. Our addictions, brokenness, and struggles with sin bring us to the point where we must acknowledge we are incapable of fixing things on our own. If we are not careful, we may be tempted to believe the lie that we are too far gone to ever be useful to God. Thankfully, this is not true!

In fact, the Bible tells us that God still has plans for us. He will use our stories for his glory and to help others. As we move through recovery, this reality can bring tremendous hope. To help us believe this truth, God gives us many examples. The Bible is filled with people that God used in spite of their brokenness.

King David was a great, God-appointed, ruler of Israel who was described as a man after God's own heart. But, David committed adultery. He used his power to sleep with another man's wife. He then tried to cover it up by killing her husband (2 Samuel 11-12). It would be easy to assume God was done with David, but he wasn't. God went on to use David and his story to create many of the most vulnerable and repentant Psalms in the Bible. David's mess became a message that now gives God's people comfort and direction.

In the New Testament, a man named Paul so hated the message of Jesus, that he hunted down, imprisoned, and persecuted Christians. Paul then encountered the risen Jesus, and everything changed. He finally saw Jesus for who he really is, the Son of God who died for the sins of the world. Once violent and angry, Paul then spent the rest of his life helping others see the truth about Jesus.

Here is a comforting truth: God has a plan to use those who turn from their sin to follow him. Christ came to free us from slavery to sin, and to give us a new purpose and mission. Though we might feel broken beyond repair, Christ can make us new. We still have opportunities to share God's truth with others. No matter where we are at, God can take our messes and make them his message.

APPLICATION: Do you know someone who needs hope? Share with that person what God is doing in your life today. Invite him or her to come with you to *re:generation* to see what you are learning about forgiveness, restoration, and peace.

WEEK 10 DAY 4

MAIN POINT:

Those who rely upon God will produce spiritual fruit.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”

(Galatians 5:22-25)

DO YOU HAVE ANY FRESH FRUIT?

PRAYER: God, help me to live connected to you so that the fruit of the Spirit are present in my daily life.

During this stage of recovery at *re:generation*, it is important to acknowledge small victories along the way. These victories indicate positive changes happening in your life. The qualities listed in Galatians 5:22-25, collectively called “the fruit of the Spirit,” are evidence of God working in your life.

There is a critical distinction between being saved eternally by God and having a healthy, daily faith in God. You receive the gift of eternal life when you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior and accept his death on the cross as payment for your sins. But, the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—are produced in you by the Holy Spirit as you live out your faith. When you pursue a relationship with God and rely on him, the Spirit produces these qualities in you. Now, because you are still imperfect, these qualities won’t necessarily be experienced or exhibited all at once. You won’t perfectly live them out, but as you grow in your relationship with God, these “fruits” will grow. As they grow they will affect you and your interactions with others.

As you progress in your relationship with Christ, look for evidence of these qualities in your thoughts, words, and actions. Pay attention to changes in other group members and leaders. Recognizing these changes honors God’s work in your life. It will encourage you to trust and rely even more upon God’s goodness and power. As you grow, others outside of recovery will notice these qualities blossoming in you as well.

The other side of the coin is also true. If you inspect your life and you don’t see evidence of these qualities (and others don’t see them either), take it as an indicator that your relationship with God might need to change. God promises that if you have a right relationship with him, you will bear spiritual fruit. The good news is that even if you don’t see a lot of fruit yet, just continue to move through *re:generation* and be willing to let God change you. In fact, ask him to do it. You are in the right place for growth.

APPLICATION: Write down any new spiritual fruit that you recognize in your life. If you don’t notice any, ask others if they see changes in you. Then, encourage someone in your group by telling that person of the fruit that you see in his or her life!

WEEK 10

DAY 5

MAIN POINT:

Life is found in Jesus.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

(John 17:3)

CREATOR AND RE-CREATOR

PRAYER: God, please give me an eternal perspective, and help me to find a new life in Christ.

Read what the Bible claims about Jesus Christ. “[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:15-17)

Amazing! Regardless of what you believe about Jesus, realize that the Bible asserts that Jesus is God in human form and the author of creation. It claims that he establishes everything that we see and know, as well as everything that we cannot see. Every authority, life, and molecule are held together by him.

This may be a new concept for you. You might even think it is crazy. But before you dismiss it, investigate it. It is important to discover Jesus for who he truly is, and not just rely upon what you’ve previously heard or known. Growing in knowledge of Jesus and the Bible’s claims, will teach you more about life and more about yourself.

For example, ask yourself the following questions: If Jesus is God and he created everything, why is the world so broken? Why do people experience so much pain? Why have I suffered so much? Is there hope for anything good in this world? You will grow as you honestly explore these questions moving through the *re:generation* curriculum.

Now ask yourself, “What if Jesus is the Creator who holds all things together?” then read John 17:3 in the margin. If the Bible is true, then Jesus’ words are true. Eternal life is available to you as you grow to know him for who he really is. Jesus can bring chaos into order, give light in the darkness, and make those who are dead inside to live again.

Jesus is not just the Creator of all things, but he is also the Re-creator. He offers new, eternal life to those who call upon him. He can give you a new heart, renew your mind, and satisfy your soul. He can make all things new, including you.

APPLICATION: List an area of your life that seems chaotic, broken, or out of place. Then, ask God to show you the real Jesus and to recreate this broken part of your life.

WEEK 10 DAY 6

REVIEW AND CATCH UP

Catch up on any of the *re:generation* work from this week. Complete the **Week 10 Review** below:

Q1: Look over this week's work. What lesson was most meaningful to you? Why?

Q2: Day 1 this week states, "God thinks that you are worthy of sacrificial love even in your worst moments of sin and shame." How does this statement affect your view of yourself?

Q3: How are you currently fleeing temptation and pursuing the good things designed by God to bring life?

Q4: Do you believe that God has a purpose and plan for your life today and after recovery? Why or why not?

Q5: What spiritual fruit do you see in your life recently? What growth do you notice in certain individuals in your group at *re:generation*?

Q6: The Bible claims that all things in heaven and earth were created by Jesus and for Jesus. If true, how does this claim affect your relationship with Jesus today?

WEEK 11

DAY 1

MAIN POINT:

Drawing near to God is essential for recovery.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

(James 4:7-8)

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

PRAYER: Dear God, show me what in my life competes for my relationship with you. Help me to instead focus on your power and presence in my life.

Although God is deeply committed to you, you may not always feel the same way about him. You may choose to live independent of God, disobeying him, and satisfying your own pleasures. When you choose to live life apart from him, he is deeply grieved.

“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is [hostility] with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

Thankfully the Bible does not leave you there. James 4:7-8 presents a solution for experiencing a restored relationship with God:

- **Humble Yourself.** Pride is at the core of your sinful behavior. It causes you to believe a life independent of God is possible. If you humble yourself to live under God’s authority, trust in Jesus, and obey his commands, your pride will begin to decrease.
- **Resist the Devil.** The devil is God’s enemy and he schemes to draw you away from God. Jesus calls the devil the “father of lies” and a “thief” who comes to kill, steal, and destroy. With God’s help, you can take a stand against the devil and resist temptation.
- **Draw Near to God.** Rather than retreat into worldly comforts, decide to move closer to God. The closer you move toward God, the closer He moves toward you. Moving toward God is essential for your recovery. Do this by spending time with God in prayer and meditating on his Word.
- **Cleanse Your Hands and Purify Your Heart.** If you have sinned against God, come clean with him. Wash your hands of past guilt and shame, ask for God’s forgiveness, and commit to live for him alone. Only Christ’s blood can wash away your sins.

APPLICATION: When is the last time you felt near to God? Why do you think that was? Think of ways to draw near to God in the coming week.

WEEK 11

DAY 2

MAIN POINT:

God doesn't want a half-hearted pursuit. He wants all of you.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

(Jeremiah 29:13)

PLAYING 'HIDE AND SEEK' WITH GOD

PRAYER: God, give me the desire and passion to seek you with all my heart.

Read Jeremiah 29:13 in the margin. God reveals himself to those who seek him. This promise has a condition: seeking God "with all your heart." It may feel like God is playing the game 'Hide & Seek' with you.

Once, when Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest of all, he replied, "...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). Jesus' reply shows that 'seeking' God is a condition of the heart. When you have heart-felt love for someone, seeking to know that person more is a natural response. When you seek to know God more, he reveals more of himself to you and you will grow in your love for him.

So how do you seek God with 'all of your heart'? Easy, ask God to help you love him. God designed you to only be fully satisfied by his eternal love. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "*He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into [mankind's] heart...*" God has the ability to change your heart and what you desire. He offers transformation to those who truly love him. He can replace a heart of stone with a heart of flesh.

God will not force you into a relationship with him. He gives you the choice to decide whether you desire to know him—true love must be freely given and received. God isn't hiding from you. In fact, he is pursuing a relationship with you. He is knocking on your door. God says, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...*" (Revelation 3:20)

So what do you choose? Are you going to play 'Hide and Seek' with God, or open the door to the one who is knocking?

APPLICATION: Examine the condition of your heart. Are you open or closed to God's love? Are you soft-hearted, hard-hearted, or half-hearted toward him? Write down your answers then ask God for help to make any necessary changes.

WEEK 11

DAY 3

MAIN POINT:

God deeply grieves over the pain and separation caused by sin. He wants you to grieve the damage of sin, too, for the purpose of leading you to repentance.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

(Psalm 139:23-24)

ACKNOWLEDGE THE COST

PRAYER: Dear God, break my heart for the sin that breaks yours. Let me understand the debt of my sin, but also acknowledge that I no longer need to carry its burden.

Sin causes pain and separation in all of your relationships: God, marriage, family, and friends. No relationship is immune to the effects of sin. This breaks the heart of God. He wants better things for you: a restored relationship with him, healed and healthier relationships with others. You have likely found yourself in recovery because something has gone wrong.

God, in his kindness, brought you to a point where you need him. He is revealing the hurts, habits, and hang ups in your life to show you the root of the struggle—your sin. Luke 12:2 says, *“Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.”* God is using the hurt in your life to call you to him, so he can set you free.

Your first step in recovery is to acknowledge that you have sin in your own life. Yes, people around you may have hurt you in grievous ways, but this is about you, first and foremost. You need to own that you are not without fault.

Next, you need to be fearless and identify the sin you are wrestling with—even sin you may have given up on fighting. Be specific. Don’t let sin hide behind vague terms or half-truths. Now is the time for courage, not passivity. Be brave. Pray Psalm 139:23-24 (in the margin). God will be faithful to expose sin.

Lastly, you must grieve the sin. You receive help and heal when you acknowledge and grieve your sin. Weep for the brokenness and mourn the losses caused by sin, but don’t stay there. 2 Corinthians 7:10 tells you that *“...godly grief produces repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.”* Grief over your sin should always push you closer to God and remind you of his goodness and grace. God does not want you to live in regret. He wants to set you free.

APPLICATION: Ask God to show you something in your life that has hurt others, yourself, or your relationship with God. Write it down so that you can see it on paper. Grieve the damage to your life and your relationships caused by this sin. Then, write a prayer asking God to heal the damage and to free you from this sin.

WEEK 11

DAY 4

MAIN POINT:

Be vulnerable to be truly known and loved by God and his people.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

(James 5:16)

VULNERABILITY BRINGS HEALING

PRAYER: Dear God, help me to confess my sin courageously. Thank you for the power of vulnerable prayer.

The dance of self-preservation is performed daily in our world. You know it: put the past behind you and put your best foot forward. It’s an exhausting dance that happens on all kinds of stages and can be especially tempting to perform at church. When you fear losing spiritual credibility with others, you are often tempted to sacrifice spiritual integrity with God. What if you give too many details about your broken past? Or worse, what if you are honest about current struggles? Unfortunately, these fears are rooted in pride rather than in truth.

The Bible does not applaud secrecy or avoidance. On the contrary, there are many biblical instructions to “*walk in the light*” (1 John 1:7), “*confess*” (James 5:16), and “*go...tell*” (Mark 5:19). There are countless examples of God healing broken people and still using them in his plan. Self-preservation, fear, and shame can cause you to isolate from God and from others. Christ came to free you from the shame of sin. Galatians 5:1 says, “*it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*”

James 5:16 starts with, “*therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed...*” Vulnerability and telling the truth are vital elements of your faith. When you admit your failure and need, you proclaim Christ as the leader, and yourself as the follower. Never pretend that you are too healthy to need healing. Jesus said, “*...It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*” (Mark 2:17)

The second half of James 5:16 is even more exciting! “*The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*” In *re:generation*, you might be sitting with people who are seen by God as righteous. This is not because they do everything right, but because anyone who accepts God’s free gift of salvation in Christ receives his righteousness as their own. God sees Christians through the righteousness of Christ. That means that Christians’ prayers are powerful.

Don’t undervalue or miss out on God’s power in your life. Honestly share with your group. Be vulnerable with your prayer requests. Pray boldly for the people around you and let them do the same for you. Vulnerability brings healing.

APPLICATION: Is there anything you can confess this week to start the healing process described in James 5:16? If so, write it down and ask God for courage to be vulnerable with your group.

WEEK 11

DAY 5

MAIN POINT:

Christ's kindness can change you, making you tender to show kindness to others.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."
(Ephesians 4:32-5:1)

KINDNESS AND FORGIVENESS

PRAYER: Dear God, help my life to be an imitation of your kindness toward me.

Many walk into *re:generation* with baggage. In the middle of your struggles, it is easy to say and do things which deeply hurt people. Often you are responding out of your own pain. Your baggage can hinder your ability to treat others with true kindness.

It is possible to act in a way that appears kind while you are actually hardened towards those around you. The idea behind "tenderhearted" in Ephesians 4:32 is that you are easily moved to emotion. When your skin is tender, it doesn't take much for you to feel pain. When your heart is tender, you will be sensitive to other's pain.

Do you truly mourn with those who mourn? Do you really rejoice with those who rejoice? Is it difficult for you mourn or rejoice with others because of a past hurt?

In order to be truly kind, you must understand God's kindness toward you. You must realize how much Christ has done for you. In order to be truly kind, you must believe Christ paid for all the sins you have ever committed and will ever commit. Although God could have shown vengeance, instead Christ died for your sin and offers you forgiveness. This should break your heart, and make it lowly, tender, and kind.

God's kindness and forgiveness to you should lead you to be kind and to forgive others. God is not flippant towards sin. He sees sin and then covers it with sacrificial love so that we can be reconciled to God. God's forgiveness was costly; It cost the Father his Son, and yet he offers it to you freely. In response, surrender your prideful superiority, grudges, and desire for revenge.

Follow God's pattern of forgiveness. Recall his kindness toward you and be willing to forgive others for the sake of reconciliation. Be tender rather than hardened in the cycle of pain and destruction.

APPLICATION: List two ways that you have recently been unkind to others or to yourself. Ask God to forgive you for these sins, and to show you who you need to forgive.

WEEK 11 DAY 6

REVIEW AND CATCH UP

Catch up on any of the *re:generation* work from this week. Complete the **Week 11 Review** below:

Q1: Look over this week's work. What lesson was most meaningful to you? Why?

Q2: How have you drawn near to God this week?

Q3: What areas of life are trying to surrender to God? Are there areas of life that you protecting from God?

Q4: This week, how have you grieved the damage of sin to your relationships? What damage have you grieved to your relationship with God?

Q5: Is there any sin for which you can be vulnerable to confess to your Groundwork group in order to have Christians pray for healing?

Q6: Since coming to *re:generation* in what ways has God "softened" your heart?

WEEK 12 DAY 1

MAIN POINT:

God knows how to fill your heart. Trust your desires to him and he will direct you.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

RESPONDING TO GAUGES

PRAYER: Dear God, please direct me to you so that I might be filled with lasting joy and peace.

A car’s gas gauge does a great job of telling you how much gas you have left but a terrible job of telling you where the gas station is. If your car is low on gas, you can try to figure out where to “fill up” on your own or you can ask for direction from others—especially when you are in unfamiliar territory.

There’s a similar relationship between your feelings and your heart. When the Bible talks about “the heart” it can mean several different things. Here, “heart” is directly related to what you desire. You can often feel full, drained, or even broken, but those feelings do not always give you accurate directions for how to respond. When feelings alert you to hurt or brokenness, do you “follow your heart,” trusting your desires to direct you? Do you create alternative solutions yourself? Or, do you ask others for direction?

Regardless, here is the problem: your heart is deceptive and human wisdom is limited. Attempts to satisfy your own desires or fix a broken heart will lead to problems.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

God made you with great care and attention to detail. He knows every part of your story. He understands your heart and wants to make your desires align with his. He knows how to best solve your problems and warns you not to be deceived by your own interests. Trusting anything (feelings, your own ideas, or others’ instruction) more than God leads to trouble. Finding the best solution to a heart condition always depends on receiving and responding to God’s help (read Proverbs 3:5-6 in the margin).

It can be hard at times to seek God’s help. You might assume God doesn’t understand your feelings or pain, or fear that he will respond to you with criticism or rules. His direction for you may not align with your desires. But God understands you better than you understand yourself. He is gracious and patient with you when your feelings are overwhelming.

Regardless of the condition of your heart today or what your desire, talk to God about it. Trust him with your brokenness, fears, and hopes. Each day, honestly seek his help through praying, reading the Bible, and talking with those who follow him. As you do these things, God will direct you to a healthier path, transform your desires, and “fill your tank.”

APPLICATION: Check your heart right now. What are you desiring? Tell God how you are feeling. Ask for help to know his will and trust his ways so that he can direct you.

WEEK 12

DAY 2

FORGIVENESS THAT BRINGS PEACE

PRAYER: Dear God, help me forgive others like you forgive me.

MAIN POINT:

Forgiving others as you have been forgiven by God brings peace.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

(Colossians 3:13)

It's hard to understand the fullness of God's forgiveness. If you accept Christ's payment for sin on the cross (with his death) as your own, then you are eternally saved. Every one of your sins—past, present, and future—has been paid for by Jesus' blood. For those who trust Christ, all is forgiven.

Have you received Christ's offer of forgiveness yet? If not, this can happen today. If you have already trusted Christ for eternal life, God wants you to demonstrate to others the peace that he gives in your relationship with him.

How do you handle forgiving others? Do you find it easy to forgive minor offenses against you, like getting cut-off in traffic or when someone speaks harshly to you? Or, do some of your relationships feel too far gone for real peace because of the hurt you've experienced?

When your heart is injured it is easy to hold on to the hurt. Wrapping yourself in a blanket of anger or resentment can feel like it protects you from those who harmed you. Dreaming of revenge or “settling the score” provides false hope for peace. Shouldn't “those people” pay for what they did to you? How can you forgive what seems unforgivable?

The truth is, God is perfectly just. You can be sure that there will be perfect justice for the sins committed against you. For those Christians who sin against you, Christ's death is a ransom for the harm you suffered. For those who injure you but never personally accept Christ's ransom for their sin, God's eternal wrath for their sins against you awaits. Forgiving a person does not absolve that person of the debt of sin committed against you; it fully transfers the debt of sin owed to you into God's hands for his righteous judgment. If Christ's death was sufficient justice for all your sin, is it also sufficient for sins committed against you by another Christian? Is God's eternal wrath sufficient justice for an offender who never accepts Christ? You can trust God for justice.

Forgiving someone means releasing to God the debts of sin owed to you. This process brings peace. Perfect justice will be served, and you will be free to love that person despite his or her sin against you. You will start to see his or her need for God's forgiveness. Before that person ever acknowledges his or her sin, you have the opportunity to love that person. This is how God loved you.

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Through Jesus, God offers you forgiveness and he tells you to forgive others the same way. Through forgiveness in Christ, you can know the peace of God's justice and experience the freedom to love others despite their sins against you.

APPLICATION: If you have not yet received Christ's forgiveness, do not wait! Go to www.regenerationrecovery.org/freedom to learn how. Then, consider two relationships where peace seems unlikely. Tell God about these relationships and your hurt. Ask him to show you how to extend forgiveness through the *re:generation* process.

WEEK 12 DAY 3

MAIN POINT:

Debts can enslave us, but love can transform us.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“Owe no one anything, except love to each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”
(Romans 13:8)

L-O-V-E: LIVE OUT VERSE EIGHT

PRAYER: Lord, help me to love others because you first loved me.

Most people are familiar with debt, but many may not truly realize what it is they owe. For example, financial debt is normal in America. Student loans, credit cards, and mortgages are commonplace. It is likely you owe someone money. Relational debt, while not as frequently discussed, is just as common. Modern society has forgotten the value of owing others respect and honor.

If we look in the Bible, God says that you have another debt: an obligation to love others. Read Romans 13:8 in the margin and the Bible passage below.

“[Jesus was asked] ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ And [Jesus] said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’”
(Matthew 22:36-40)

You may wonder, “Why should I do this? Why should I love others if they don’t do this for me?” Here is why you should love others as yourself:

“We love because he first loved us.” (John 4:19)

Other people may not put your needs before their own, but God did. He sent Jesus to suffer and die for your sin before you ever cared about him. Because God loved you first, eternal life is available to you right now. You are indebted to love others because of the way you are loved by God.

What if owing others love became a way of life for you? Your attention would be directed toward giving instead of getting. Your debt to others would result in sharing good things and meeting other’s needs before your own. You would reflect God’s love.

Work to free yourself from the debt that can enslave you. The only debt you should keep is to love one another. Free yourself to love others with the love you have been shown by God. Let your actions reflect the love of the One who loved you first.

APPLICATION: Write out one way that you can love another person by putting his or her needs before your own desires. Commit to do it this week.

WEEK 12

DAY 4

MAIN POINT:

The freedom offered by God is better than the freedom of living life on your own terms.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

(Galatians 5:1)

LASTING FREEDOM

PRAYER: Dear God, free me to experience all of the good things that you have planned for those who trust and obey you.

Freedom is precious. Throughout history, people have protested injustice, fought wars, challenged oppressors, and left their homes for a chance at freedom. Freedom is also an essential theme throughout the Bible. You see in verses like Galatians 5:1 (in the margin) that God wants you to walk in the freedom only he can provide.

It is important to note that worldly definitions of freedom do not often align with how God talks about freedom. Often, freedom is viewed as living life on your own terms, ignoring rules you don't like, or fulfilling your desires without regard for the consequences. The Bible says that these types of “freedom” will enslave you to sin and lead to death.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions... Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience [to God], which leads to righteousness?” (Romans 6:12,16)

You may have come to *re:generation* because you've learned that there are consequences to your choices. Obedience to your own desires and living life according to your own terms always leads to destruction.

God knows the path of life and his path is good. The Bible isn't a book of rules that keeps you from the good life. It is full of wise instruction for how to experience the best of life. Galatians Chapter 5 goes on to discuss what you will freely experience when you trust and obey God rather than your own desires: *“...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law”* (Galatians 5:22-23).

God's freedom offers joy in the midst of hardship, peace in the middle of chaos, comfort in a sea of pain, self-control that endures temptation, and eternal life in the face of death. By God's power, you can be free to experience the good life that comes by trusting and obeying the Author of Life.

You don't have to wait to experience God's freedom; it can start today. Go to www.regenerationrecovery.org/freedom to learn how.

APPLICATION: Is there a part of life that you are living on your own terms instead of trusting and obeying God? If so, write it down. Then, ask God to help you entrust this part of your life to him. Pray that as you read the Bible, God will help you obey his instruction.

WEEK 12

DAY 5

DAILY BREAD

PRAYER: God, help me to rely on you today to do your will.

MAIN POINT:

When you are weary, don't shrink back, but rely on Jesus to do the will of God today; the promise of a heavenly reward awaits you.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread."

(Matthew 6:10-11)

There will be times in recovery when you become weary. Things might not be progressing as you hoped, you may not be happy with your leaders, you may experience relapse, you might be discouraged by what you discover about yourself, or may be afraid of what lies ahead. These are normal battles of recovery and you should expect them.

One of the great things about recovery is that when times are difficult and you feel as if you are in a wilderness, God only asks you to be faithful today. You cannot change the past, control the future, or manage circumstances beyond yourself. However, regardless of your situation, God will provide you what you need to be faithful today. Jesus, when teaching his disciples, told them to pray, "*Your kingdom come, [Father,] your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.*" (Matthew 6:10-11)

The Jewish people have a unique understanding of "daily bread." Ancient Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years before God brought them into the land he promised them. During those years, God provided manna, a flakey, edible substance, found on the ground each morning with the dew. Manna was pounded and baked to become bread-like cakes. The catch? Manna wouldn't keep for more than one day. It needed to be collected anew every morning. During the forty years in the wilderness, manna was Israel's "daily bread."

Once, when discussing "manna from heaven" with the religious leaders and his disciples, Jesus claimed "*...I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall not thirst*" (John 6:35). Jesus claimed to be "the bread of life" sent from God to provide what is necessary to sustain us, even in difficult times.

On days of recovery that are long on hardship and short on hope, ask God to provide the "daily bread" you need today through Jesus. Hold him to his promise in John 6:35. Do this on the good days of recovery, too.

God doesn't change the past, and may not tell you the future, but through Jesus, he will provide what you need to get through today. Today is the day that God is most concerned about in your recovery. Today is the most important day that you can surrender to him. Relying on God's provision today to do God's will can lead you to a land of promise in the future.

APPLICATION: Regardless of your circumstances, ask God every day to provide what you need to do his will.

WEEK 12 DAY 6

REVIEW AND CATCH UP

Catch up on any of the *re:generation* work from this week. Complete the **Week 12 Review** below:

Q1: Look over this week's work. What lesson was most meaningful to you? Why?

Q2: Do you believe that God understands you better than you understand yourself and that he has your best interest in mind? Why or why not?

Q3: In what ways have you loved others this week by putting their needs before your own?

Q4: Is there someone you struggle to forgive? If you knew that God would perfectly avenge the harm caused by this person, what would keep you from forgiving him or her?

Q5: In what ways are you relying on God to get you through "today"?

TAKE ACTION: Congratulations, you have finished twelve weeks of Groundwork. If you have not yet been placed in a step group, tell your leaders that you've finished this book and are ready to move into a step group. Commit to pray daily that God would provide and prepare future leaders and fellow group members. Pray also that God would prepare you for what lies ahead. Continue daily work by going back through Weeks 1-6 of Groundwork and note how God has changed you since going through the first time. Do your best to remain faithful each day. Be open to what God is teaching you as you wait for step group to launch.

APPENDIX A

re:generation FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS

We believe embracing the following truths are the key to experiencing the only lasting joy in life. Every lesson that appears in this curriculum is based on and drawn from them. We know that not everyone who comes to *re:generation* will enter understanding or accepting these tenets as truth. *Re:generation* is a safe place to honestly process questions and doubts about these truths. Our prayer for you as you go through this material is that you would come to understand, accept, and learn to apply these truths in every area of your life and in all your relationships. Truth is essential and we believe these are essential truths.

The Bible: We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired word of God, without error in the original writings, as well as the supreme and final authority in doctrine and practice. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; John 17:17*)

The Trinity: We believe there is one God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are each God, and that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are each a distinct person. (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 2:9; Acts 5:3-4*)

Jesus Christ: We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that he might reveal God, fulfill prophecy, and redeem sinful man. We believe he accomplished our redemption through his substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, burial, and bodily resurrection. We believe our redemption and salvation are guaranteed by his literal, physical resurrection from the dead, and that he is the only means of salvation. (*John 1:1, 14, 18, 14:6; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24-26, 4:25; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 2:5*). We believe that Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, the creator and sustainer of heaven and earth, and the Head of the church. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted to the right hand of God where, as High Priest to his people, he serves as our Advocate and intercedes for us. (*Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 1:3, 3:1, 7:23-25; 1 John 2:1-2*).

The Holy Spirit: We believe God the Holy Spirit is a person who restrains evil in the world and convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He dwells in all who believe in Jesus. From the moment of belief in the Son, the Spirit baptizes believers into the body, seals them for salvation, regenerates them to new life, bestows spiritual gifts on each one, and is fully present to continually fill (control and guide) his own. (*John 16:7-11, 3:8, 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 13; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19*)

Man: We believe man was created innocent and in the image and likeness of God, but that man sinned, bringing both physical and spiritual death to himself and his posterity (*Genesis 1:27, 2:17, 3:19*), can do nothing to merit God's favor, and as such is in need of salvation (*Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23*). We believe that mankind's sinful nature is rebellious toward God and his good design for life and worship (*Romans 1:20-24; Ephesians 2:1-3*). Mankind's rebellion causes confusion about good and evil and harm to people ultimately ending in judgment, despair, and death (*Genesis 1:31; Galatians 5:16-21; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; James 1:13-15*). We believe God created mankind in his image, forming each person in the womb from conception (*Psalms 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2, 49:5; Jeremiah 1:4-5*) until the point of death when they breathe their last; (*Genesis 25:8; Luke 23:46*) and assigning gender to his people, male (man) and female (woman), as he created them sexually and biologically different, but with equal personal dignity and value. (*Genesis 1:26-28*)

We believe that God ordained marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman (*Genesis 2:18; Matthew 19:4-9; Ephesians 5:31-33*). Those who accept and live within God's design for sex, biological gender, and marriage experience the blessing of his good design (*Psalms 1:1-3, 128:1-4*); and decisions to change, alter, or modify God's will in marriage, sex, or gender are part of man's brokenness and lead to despair (*Romans 1:21-22; James 1:13-15*). We believe that God loves and pursues mankind despite our rebellion (*Romans 5:8*). He offers forgiveness, healing, and abundant life to anyone who turns to him in humility (*John 3:17, 10:10; Titus 3:3-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7*).

Salvation: We believe salvation is a sovereign gift of God and is received by man through personal faith in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for sin. We believe man is justified by grace through faith apart from works (*Acts 13:38-39; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:4-5, 2:8-10*). We believe that Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation, and that no one is saved apart from a conscious and personal decision to trust in Christ as his or her one and only Savior (*John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9-10*). We believe all true believers elect of God, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever. (*Romans 8:1, 29-30, 38-39; John 10:27-30*)

The Second Coming: We believe in the future, visible, and bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth, commonly called the Second Coming, to rule the nations and establish his kingdom on earth. (*Philippians 3:20; Matthew 24:15-31; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-21*)

APPENDIX B

FROM ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have been reprinted and adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (“AAWS”). Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that Alcoholics Anonymous is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only—use of A.A.’s Steps or an adapted version in

connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, or use in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise. Additionally, while A.A. is a spiritual program, A.A. is not a religious program. Thus, A.A. is not affiliated or allied with any sect, denomination, or specific religious belief.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

APPENDIX C

MENTORSHIP

A *re:generation* mentor is a **guide** outside of the *re:generation* group who is granted authority by a participant to speak into his or her life for the sake of spiritual growth and recovery. The only requirements for mentorship are that the candidate **must be a committed Christian** of the **same sex** who has a **biblical foundation** for life and a **clear understanding of the gospel**.

Other qualities (not required) that would make candidates ideal for mentorship include:

- An existing relationship with the participant prior to *re:generation* that could continue after recovery.
- Someone who is already committed to the participant's spiritual growth. *Note: If a group of Christians are already committed to the participant, he or she may ask multiple members of this group to provide mentorship together.*
- Someone who is local to the participant.
- Someone with recovery experience is helpful but not required.

When a relationship with an ideal candidate does not exist, the participant should first look for a mentor amongst his or her existing relationships with committed Christians of the same sex. If a participant does not have any relationships with committed Christians at the start of recovery, he or she may try to find a mentor at *re:generation*.

The expectations of a mentor include:

Modeling a Christ-Centered Life

- **An understanding of the gospel:** ability to communicate how to have a relationship with Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 6:23), and that a daily relationship with Jesus brings new life and freedom (John 15:1-5; Romans 8:13).
- **Discipleship:** model authentic Christ-following (1 Corinthians 11:1), including: confession of sin, biblical community, forgiveness, and amends (1 Timothy 4:12; Hebrews 13:7-8; James 5:16).
- **Praying** with and for the participant (Ephesians 3:14-21; Romans 1:11-12).

Establishing an Honest Healthy Relationship, while Pointing the Participant to Christ and Scripture

- **Knowing and supporting the participant** through struggles, providing encouragement and love in order to share burdens (Galatians 6:2). A mentor won't try to fix a participant but will direct him or her to God through Scripture (Hebrews 4:12).
- **Setting expectations/boundaries** about the frequency of mentor/participant communication and expectations for curriculum updates (daily, weekly, long term).
- **Loving with truth and grace** (Ephesians 4:15; Proverbs 28:23; 1 Corinthians 13:1).

Engaging in the Participant's Recovery Process – Step by Step

- **Providing accountability:** encouraging the participants to church participation, *re:generation* participation and homework, 24-hour sobriety, and plans of care (Hebrews 3:13).
- **Helping with inventory, repentance, and amends:** listening to the inventory and supporting the participants to thoroughly work through these steps (Romans 8:1; Hebrews 10:24-25).
- **Helping with conflict:** if needed, partnering with fellow participants or leadership of *re:generation* to help work through conflict in a biblical manner (Matthew 18:15-17; Proverbs 6:1-5).
- **Communicating with *re:generation* group leadership,** as needed, how to best love the participant through each stage of recovery (provide cell and email).

Resources

Resources for **How to Find a Mentor** and **Mentor Agreement** forms can be found at www.regenerationrecovery.org/resources/forms-and-supplements. Mentorship training is offered by *re:generation* leadership and encouraged for all mentors regardless of prior recovery experience. Talk to *re:generation* leadership for more information about training.

APPENDIX D

HOW FREEDOM CAN BEGIN TODAY

If you are reading this, it's because you know that you need freedom from something...some addiction, unhealthy habit, or pain. The truth is that these things are a result of people trying to fill God-given needs with worldly solutions. God created you to be in a relationship with him. Only God's eternal love can provide the satisfaction your soul needs. How do you begin the relationship with God that you were created to experience?

First, you must understand God's nature. God is perfectly good (holy); therefore, he must absolutely judge and punish every sin (our wrongs) perfectly. There is no amount of good works that will cancel, balance out or remove our sin because every sin is judged by a perfect standard. And, we have all sinned—no one is perfect. Just as our sin harms human relationships, sin separates us from a holy God. If we die separated from God because of sin, we will be separated from him and his goodness forever. (Isaiah 6:3; Romans 3:23, 6:23; Hebrews 9:27)

Thankfully, God loves you. He does not want anyone to die separated from him. To bridge the separation caused by sin, God did something great—he pursued you. The Father sent his only Son to become a man in order to remove the debt of your sin. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was crucified for the sins of the world, and then rose from the dead. Christ became human to die for you, in your place!! (2 Peter 3:9; Romans 5:8; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2)

Jesus offers his perfect payment for sins to you as a gift. You can receive this gift by trusting in Christ

alone for the forgiveness of your sins, confessing him as Lord, and believing in your heart that he rose from the dead. When you trust in Jesus, you will not only be saved from the penalty of your sins, you will be given a new life and begin the relationship with God that he intends. (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12-13; Romans 10:9-10, 8:1-4)

Here is how...when you trust in Christ, God gives you a new Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to live in you and transform you from the inside out. The Spirit changes your desires to align with God's desires. He gives strength to resist temptation and peace through hardship. He gives joy. He begins healing you from bitterness and pain. The Spirit is the new life in you who leads you in God's ways so that you can experience freedom. (John 14:16-17, 16:7; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 5:22, 5:16)

This new life in a relationship with God is available to you today. If you believe the good news of Jesus Christ—that he died for your sins and rose from the dead, you can pray this prayer to receive forgiveness and eternal life in Christ now:

“Lord Jesus Christ, I am a sinner in need of a savior. I believe that you died for MY sins and that you rose from the dead. Save me from my sins and make me new—to live for you. I receive your forgiveness and give you my life. Please be my Savior and Lord. Thank you for cleansing me from sin and adopting me as your child with the Holy Spirit. I am yours. Lead me today and forever.”

Sign and date here if you prayed this today, as a reminder of your decision. After you have signed and dated this page, proceed to the following page for next steps to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Date: _____

What Next?

If you prayed this prayer and gave your life to Jesus, you are now a Christian. You have crossed over from death to eternal life. Now, respond to Christ's gift of salvation by taking steps to grow in your relationship with God.

UPON RECEIVING JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOR, HERE ARE SOME FIRST STEPS TO GROW IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:

- 1 **Read the Bible daily.** It is God's letter to you. He will speak to you through his word. If you have never read the Bible, consider starting with the gospel of John. Continue in your recovery journey in *re:generation*.
- 2 **Pray.** Talk with God. He wants to hear from you. He wants you to tell him your hopes, desires, fears, and needs. He wants you to invite him into every day.
- 3 **Fellowship.** Begin to meet with other Christians regularly. Join a church that teaches the Bible and believes that people are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone and talk to them about being baptized.
- 4 **Rejoice!** Email us so that we can pray for you—we are now your brothers and sisters in Christ! regen@watermark.org
- 5 **Tell others about Jesus.** The invitation from Christ to be forgiven and adopted as a child of God is open to everyone in the world. God wants no one to die separated from him because of sin. People who do not receive Christ as Savior will not be saved from the penalty of their sins. (Matthew 28:18-20)
- 6 **Jesus saved you and will keep you safe.** Being free from the penalty of your sin does not mean that you will never sin again. It does mean, however, that you are no longer a slave to sin (Romans 6). Now, by God's power through the Holy Spirit, you can say no to sin and yes to God's ways. God will not allow you to be tempted to sin beyond what you can handle, and he will provide a way of escape when you are tempted (1 Corinthians 10:13). When you do sin, here are steps to take to get back on God's path:
 - Confess your sin to God. (1 John 1:9)
 - Confess your sin to other Christians. (1 John 1:7; James 5:16)
 - Repent (turn) from your sin and turn back to Christ. (2 Timothy 2:22)

Walk with God and his people daily, don't run or hide from him. Remember, God loves you! Because of Christ, you will never lose your salvation (Galatians 5:16; John 10:27-29). Go back to steps 1, 2, and 3 above to reconnect with him.