

TWELVE ANCHORS FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE

SWWWIM
Survivors Of Weather War & Wounds
International Ministry

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These are the words of a survivor:

"Our sea anchor definitely saved the boat and I'm sure it saved our lives during the cyclone."

Worldwide Disasters are Increasing

Our world is being subjected to more deadly disasters than ever before - both natural and man-made. We have been hit by floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and fire storms. In the period 2000 to 2019, there were 7,348 major recorded disaster events claiming 1.23 million lives, affecting 4.2 billion people resulting in approximately \$2.97 trillion US in global economic losses. The last twenty years has seen the number of major floods more than double, from 1,389 to 3,254, while the incidence of storms grew from 1,457 to 2,034. Major increases in other categories include drought, wildfires and extreme temperature events. There has also been a rise in geo-physical events including earthquakes and tsunamis which have killed more people than any of the other natural hazards under review. Of the top 10 disasters, the hazards that led to the largest human losses during the period have been droughts (650 000 deaths), storms (577 232 deaths), floods (58 700 deaths) and extreme temperatures – both hot and cold (55 736 deaths). With regard to economic losses, the top 10 events include storms (\$ 521 billion) and floods (\$ 115 billion). According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration the estimated the cost of damages from Katrina was approximately \$170 billion while over 1300 people killed, and thousands were unable to rebuild lost homes and businesses. Three costly 10 disasters occurred in 2017: Hurricanes Harvey (\$ 96.9 billion), Maria (\$ 69.4 billion) and Irma (\$ 58.2 billion).

My personal encounters with natural disasters are minimal but there have been a few.

The 1951 Tornado in Hutchinson, Minnesota

I remember when a major EF-5 tornado came through my boyhood town of Hutchinson, Minnesota in 1951 when I was fifteen years old. It sounded like a locomotive heading toward our home but it turned away from us and struck the school yard about a mile away. My father was very aware of the tornado's impact because it took out all of the trees from the schoolyard where he was a teacher. That turned out to be a godsend because the loss of hundreds of trees created new space around the school. After all of the broken limbs and fallen trees were removed they built a tennis court, practice field, and track for the high school athletic teams. But the twister also created a lot of damage within and around the city. It destroyed a number of houses, damaged 50 major buildings and cost the city and its residents an estimated \$57 million. I recall hearing about a number of unusual experiences that were reported. The most unusual affected the chief of police as he was driving his car down a city street. He suddenly found himself being lifted high into the air by the twister but then his car was brought safely down again in a nearby yard.

The 1966 Tornado in Topeka, Kansas

When I moved to Topeka Kansas in 1969 I learned about a major tornado that had come through the city three years before I arrived. My wife Jackie, who I didn't know at the time, was in the hospital when the tornado came through on June 8, 1966. She had just given birth to her son Derek four days earlier and suffered a cardiac arrest at the time she was giving birth. After we were married in 1983, she told me about her near death experience. She saw herself as she looked down at her body from the ceiling and heard the doctor say 'I think we are losing her and also the baby'. Then she went through a long tunnel and met the Creator in heaven. After their conversation God said she needed to return because she needed to care for her three year old daughter and woke up in a hospital bed a half hour later. Four days later, while she was still in

the hospital, an F-5 tornado entered the southwest corner of Topeka and cut a diagonal swath of destruction from S.W. 29th street and Gage through Washburn University and downtown to Oakland and Philip Billard Airport. The tornado was on the ground for 34 minutes, and left a path of destruction 21 miles long and one-half mile wide. As it crossed downtown Topeka the powerful twister punched a hole in the Kansas State Capitol dome, destroyed the multistory National Reserve Building, and damaged a number of public and private office buildings. It killed 17 people, injured over 500, destroyed many homes, and caused over \$200 million in damage. Power and utilities in many parts of the city were out for weeks and hundreds were left homeless. At the time this tornado was the costliest natural disaster in American history.

Many Topeka citizens believed it was significant that the tornado had first touched down on Burnett's Mound the highest point in Topeka, named for Potawatomi Indian Chief Abram Burnett, who operated a horse and oxen business near the hilltop. Burnett was thought to have been buried on the mound after his death in 1870 and there was a longstanding Indian legend that the Mound would deflect any tornadoes and spare the city. Five years earlier, a water tank had been built on the mound in spite of being warned by that legend that the Mound should remain free of any buildings in order to preserve its protective value. After the tornado struck some old timers believed the tornado was retribution for the water tank's construction. The actual site of Burnett's burial was later discovered to be two miles west of the mound, disproving the myth that the mound was Burnett's burial location site.

The Deadly Georgia Floods in 1994

I was a member of the faculty at Mercer University school of medicine in Macon, Georgia when the flood of July, 1994, caused by Tropical Storm Alberto, produced extensive flooding over portions of the southeast, primarily affecting South and Middle Georgia. After days of rainfall, nearly 28 inches of rain flooded the state, with Americus and Albany being the worst hit. The steady downpour over several days flooded creeks and the Flint River. It caused a dam breach at Lake Blakeshea, flooded all the bridges in Albany, and forced the closure of approximately 1,000 bridges. It caused flooding of 471,000 acres of Georgia croplands, \$1.03 billion in damages to 18,000 businesses, 3,000 people to flee their homes, and 32 people to lose their lives. I was asked to lead several meetings two weeks after the disaster so that individuals impacted by the flooding could talk about how it affected them, their families, and their communities.

The Volcanic Eruption of Mount St Helens, in 1980

The Mount St Helens Volcanic Eruption was a major disaster in the northwest that startled the entire country. I had a conversation with a professional colleague two weeks later who told me that he had flown a light plane from San Francisco over the crater of the volcano a few days after it exploded on Sunday May 18, 1980. The eruption had been preceded by a two-month series of moderate earthquakes and steam-venting episodes that created a large bulge on the mountain's north slope. A larger earthquake on May 18 caused the entire weakened north face to slide away. Molten rock and high-pressure gas and steam suddenly exploded northward toward Spirit Lake in a hot mix of lava and pulverized rock. An eruption column rose 80,000 feet into the atmosphere and deposited ash in eleven U.S. states^[5] and several Canadian provinces. At the same time, snow, ice, and several entire glaciers on the volcano melted, causing volcanic mudslides to reach as far as the Columbia River, nearly 50 miles to the southwest. About 57 people were killed, including the innkeeper and World War I veteran Harry R. Truman, two photographers and geologist David A. Johnston.^[8] Hundreds of square miles were reduced to wasteland, causing over \$1 billion in damage. Thousands of animals were killed, and Mount St. Helens was left with a crater on its north side. The volcanic eruption was declared the most disastrous in U.S. history. Geologists predict there will be more destructive eruptions in the future as a new lava domes form.

Have Americans Looked to their Faith after Facing Disasters?

Three thousand Americans were killed in the World Trade Center bombings on 9-11. The new reality of terrorism on American soil unified the American populace and also propelled American military action to fight terrorist strongholds in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9-11, the churches overflowed as millions of

Americans who normally did not attend church, began going to religious services in a desperate attempt to seek something that would restore stability and a sense of meaning to the lives. Church attendance at first swelled but soon dwindled away in the weeks and months following the national crisis. At first, people looked to God as a source of stability and comfort during those obviously difficult times of distress but as the threat of terrorism abated they found less spiritual ways to avoid stress.

Yet, during recent times, there has been a renewed interest in religion. Scientists have been interested in studying religion's impact on the healing process. At least 250 research studies during the past few years have shown that individuals who believe in God have better health and live longer. People who are religious or attend weekly religious services have healthier immune systems than nonreligious patients. Those who have undergone heart surgery have a 20% shorter post-operative hospital stay if they are religious. Heart patients who are prayed for, even without their knowledge, need less medication, have fewer cardiac arrests, and are less likely to need a respirator than those not prayed for. These findings are impressive and should inspire individuals to pray to God, pray for others, and ask others to pray for them during times of adversity. In fact, sometimes adversity brings about a new openness to prayer and God's intervention.

The Bible provides a number of examples of the significance of faith during times of adversity. In the New Testament, we can find an account of a furious windstorm which caught the disciples by surprise on the Sea of Galilee while Jesus was sleeping in the stern of their boat. As the storm progressed they became terrified by the high winds that dangerously threatened their vessel. Believing they would be drowned, the disciples frantically cried out to the Lord for help. Jesus responded to their cries in a way the disciples did not expect. They awoke Him and said, *"Master do you not care that we are perishing?" And He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Hush now! Be still!" And the wind ceased and there was an immediate calm. He said to them, "Why are you so timid and fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said one to another, "Who then is this that even wind and sea obey him?" (Mark 4:37-41).*

Jesus demonstrated through His life and teachings that He is a source of strength and stability upon whom people can depend during disastrous times. In fact, He uses the metaphor of a flood to illustrate that point: *"Whoever comes to Me and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you who he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock (Luke 6:47-48).*

An Anchor has been defined as a central cohesive source of support and stability. A survivor of a major hurricane said that the sea anchor in their boat saved their lives.

Twelve Spiritual Anchors: A well known organization that has effectively integrated belief, spirituality, and recovery is Alcoholics Anonymous(AA). AA's 12 spiritual steps are followed to the letter by those who hope to gain and maintain sobriety in people who otherwise are prone to relapsing. AA has also become well known for its use of the Serenity Prayer, written by Reinhold Niebuhr in 1926.

Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace, Taking, as He did, this world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will; That I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him in the next.

A number of years ago, as a psychiatrist who helped Vietnam veterans suffering from Post- traumatic Stress Disorder, I found that traditional psychiatric treatment was often ineffective for these men and women. I was prompted, with the help of a VA hospital chaplain, to develop a program for survivors of war, using similar but somewhat different steps than those developed for AA. Originally designed for combat veterans, these 12 steps have also been made applicable for people from all walks of life who struggle with the after-effects of trauma and loss. The recovery program in this book is a distant relative to the initial 12 step program for

trauma survivors. It is entitled *Twelve Anchors for the Storms of Life* and utilizes 12 Biblical personalities to illustrate 12 different themes that can be anchoring points in a person's life:

TWELVE ANCHORS

Seeking Empowerment
Seeking Meaning
Seeking To Trust
Seeking Truth
Coping with Anger
Coping with Fear
Resolving Guilt
Coping with Grief
Life vs Death
Commitment to Justice
Finding a Purpose
Commitment to Love

TWELVE BIBLICAL PERSONALITIES

Noah
Jonah
Abraham
Esther
Moses
Elijah
David
Job
Jesus
Joseph
Paul
John

ANCHOR ONE: SEEKING EMPOWERMENT - NOAH

Within the Old Testament are stories of times when God supernaturally intervened in human history in order to affect people's lives and warn them if they were going down a destructive road. The book of Proverbs and the prophetic books Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Hosea, and Ezekiel contain counsel about how wrong choices will result in destructive eventualities. The Old Testament describes how these prophets made it clear that there was a better direction to follow and God would protect His people if they would turn back to Him. The world-wide flood of Noah's time is the first example of this because, as the Old Testament reports, the inhabitants of the world at that time refused to change their evil ways. ***Now God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. Behold, I myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die.*** (Genesis 6;11-12).

Empowering Noah: God gave a forewarning that he would curtail the expansion of human depravity and gave a plan of rescue- believe His words and be saved. Noah must have felt confused, skeptical, and helpless when, according to the Bible, God directed him to prepare for a world-wide flood. But he was living during a time in history when the world had become so violent and depraved that the inhabitants were given a choice to either follow Noah's survival plan and live or refuse to follow it and die. The Bible describes a man who, in spite of his initial disbelief, decided to follow God's clear direction to prepare for the unprecedented but predicted natural disaster from which only he and his family would survive (Genesis Chapters 6-7, 11-22). ***Now God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. Behold, I myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark- you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And you will bring every living thing of all flesh. "***

In order to prepare for the flood the Bible indicates that for a period of 120 years Noah was empowered with directions to construct an ark of Gopherwood with dimensions of 450 feet x 75 feet x 45 feet. He should build three decks, make a top window and a side door and cover the ark with pitch inside and outside. After completion Noah and his family brought animal species aboard the ark and waited. No doubt disturbed by

the inevitable consequences upon the lives of those left behind never the less they focused on taking care of themselves and their animals within the safety of the ark. The timeline for events taking place is as follows:

The rain began after seven days and continued for 40 days and nights. After 90 days the ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat. Noah waited 90 days more to allow the water to receded further. Then after 40 days he released a raven which returned to him. He waited seven more days and released a dove which also returned. He repeated this seven days later but this time the dove did not return. Then Noah waited 29 more days and opened the ark to look around. After 56 more days Noah and his family and animals finally left the ark. The total time they spent in the ark was 366 days.

- * Why did God choose Noah and his family to empower rather than those who became victims?
- * What was the nature of the covenant or 'partnership' between Noah and God?
- * What was God's part?
- * Consider the sustaining power of Noah's faith? (Hebrews 11:7 ***It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith.***

* What implications does this story have for your life?

* Bible students believe we are in the last times. How can you be prepared for a future that will contain difficult times, as Jesus predicted. ***Matt 24-25 "When you see all these things happening you may know that he is near, at your very door! Believe me, this generation will not disappear until all this has taken place. Earth and sky will pass away, but my words will never pass away! But about that actual day and time no one knows—not even the angels of Heaven, nor the Son, only the Father. For just as life went on in the days of Noah so will it be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood people were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage until the very day that Noah went into the ark, and knew nothing about the flood until it came and destroyed them all. So will it be at the coming of the Son of Man"***

Empowering us when we feel powerless: It is a common experience to feel powerless to control frightening memories and worries about an unknown future.

* How does this apply to you?

* Read Psalm 25: 15 and discuss how this scripture can help you: ***"My eyes are ever looking to the Lord for help for He alone can rescue me. Come Lord and show me your mercy for I am helpless, overwhelmed, in deep distress - Save Me!"***

Read and discuss Mark 4:37-41. ***As evening fell, Jesus and His disciples were crossing the lake and a terrible storm arose. High waves began to break into the boat until it was nearly full of water and about to sink. Jesus was asleep at the back of the boat. Frantically they wakened him, shouting, "Teacher, don't you even care that we are all about to drown?" Then He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be still!" and the wind fell, and there was a great calm. And He asked them, "Why were you so fearful? Don't you even yet have confidence in me?"***

* What lesson did the disciples learn about Jesus' power during that violent storm that we can apply to our own lives?

Empowering us for the future. Noah was a very patient and trusting man and spent nearly a lifetime in preparation for the flood.

* What are ways in which we can best prepare ourselves for the future, including the adversities we will face in life?

* What is the role of our education, vocation, health, relationships, organizations, and God as we prepare for the future?

Empowering us to be prepared for Jesus' return:

Although the Bible records God's promise that He will never again destroy the earth's population by a massive flood (Genesis 8:21; 9:11), it does predict that there will come a time like that of Noah's, when a disaster or disasters will come suddenly and unexpectedly to those not expecting nor prepared –government, organizations and individuals engaging in during normal activities. As during Noah's times, only those who are prepared will survive (Luke 17:21-22, 24, 26-27).

*What did Jesus want us to know about the time when He will return again?

Assignment:

* Write down your thoughts about finding a source of power to combat past disturbing memories and future potential disasters.

* Pray that God will transform your powerlessness by His presence in your life.

*What does the Bible say about how you should prepare for Christ's second coming?

Scripture: Read the following within your group meeting and meditate on it daily:

He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might, He increases strength. But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:29-31).

Prayer: Read the following prayer together at the close of the group meeting and meditate on it each day when you are alone: *Lord, we ask for Your comfort and protection during times when we feel powerless and Your power to cope with adversities in the future.*

ANCHOR TWO: SEEKING MEANING FROM ADVERSITY - JONAH

Jonah's Meaningful Disaster Experience: Read Jonah, chapters one and two. Jonah's traumatic experience began after he refused to follow the Lord's leading and climbed aboard a ship going the opposite direction: *But the Lord sent out a great wind upon the sea, and there was a violent tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken (Jonah 1:4).*

* Have you ever found yourself going in a direction away from God's leading that ended up disastrously?

Determining Responsibility: * Why did the terrified crew members cast lots?

So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. (Jonah 1:5-7). Then Jonah said to them, "Take me up and cast me into the sea; so shall the sea become calm for you, for I know that it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you. So they took up Jonah and cast him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men reverently and worshipfully feared the Lord and made a sacrifice and vows to Him.

Now the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (Jonah 1:12-17).

* What was Jonah's experience in the 'belly of the whale'?

Deliverance: Read Jonah 2: 1-10. *"I cried out of my distress to the Lord, and He heard me. I am cast out of Your presence and Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to [the extinction of] life; the abyss surrounded me, the sea-weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms and the very roots of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever. Yet You have brought up my life from the pit and corruption, Oh Lord my God. When my soul fainted upon me I earnestly and seriously remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to You, into Your holy temple I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that which I have vowed. Salvation and deliverance belong to the Lord." And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.*

* What was the significance of Jonah's ride beneath the sea, his prayer, and his deliverance.

* How did Jonah discover meaning from his close call with death in relationship to what the Lord wanted him to do?

* Do you recall having an experience of being delivered from a catastrophic situation?

Turning adversity into opportunity: Jonah's experience must have been terrifying, yet with God's help, he turned adversity into an opportunity.

* Do you know of anyone whose adversity became an opportunity or springboard for a new movement or organization?

* Have you ever turned adversity into an opportunity?

* Has God ever given you a second chance like he did for Jonah?

Seeking meaning from adversity and suffering: When survivors discover meaning from their adversities they become stronger, more empathic, more understanding, and more fulfilled.

* Discuss whether you would like to discover similar results from an adversity in your life.

Assignment:

* Keep a daily record of thoughts, readings, and other materials related to this subject.

* Write down a disturbing experience that caused confusion about your purpose in life.

* Write down any disturbing experiences which eventually resulted in something positive happening in your life.

* Pray that God will transform confusion or meaninglessness you may feel into a sense of meaning and purpose.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following each day:

*"I went down to the bottoms and the very roots of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever. Yet You have brought up my life from the pit and corruption, Oh Lord my God" (Jonah 2:7).
"Show me the path where I should go, Oh Lord. Point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me. Teach me. For you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you" (Psalm 25:4-5).*

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting: *Feeling confused and disturbed about adversities that have profoundly affected us, we ask for your help, God, to find clarity and meaning.*

ANCHOR THREE: SEEKING TO TRUST – ABRAHAM

Abraham is considered by adherents of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity to be their spiritual father. He defined the meaning of *trust* through his willingness to obey God's request that he offer his son as a blood sacrifice. We read in the book of Genesis that an angel intervened at the last moment to provide a ram as a substitute sacrifice (Genesis 22:2-12). We may wonder what events in Abraham's life helped him to develop such a deep trust in God.

In Genesis, chapters 12-22, we read about Abraham's relationship with God which matured during his lifetime as a result of experiencing many hardships, disappointments, and adversities.

Consider the following:

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah:

* How was Abraham affected by God's threat to destroy these cities, knowing that Lot and his wife and two daughters might become victims (Genesis 18:20-33).

* How do you understand why Lot wanted to appease the Sodomites by giving them his daughters in hopes they would refrain from sexually abusing the angels of God?

* Discuss Lot and his family's level of trust when the angels ordered them to leave and they began to escape the city before the disaster. (Genesis 19:1-26).

* Why did the daughters' fiances refuse to leave the city? Why did Lot's wife disobediently look back?

The post-traumatic symptoms: * Do you think that Abraham experienced emotional distress (anger, fear, guilt, or grief) when he observed the deadly explosions and smoking fires in the distance (Genesis 19:27-29)? *Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. And looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace. So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham.*

* What was the impact of the death of Lot's wife on he and his daughters? *Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. ²⁵ And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.*

* Discuss the possible relationship between the family's post-traumatic symptoms, Lot's drinking, and the incest that occurred. (Genesis 19:30-38). *The next day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also. Then you go in and lie with him, that*

we may preserve offspring from our father.” So they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father.

* Do you think that Abraham and Sarah's move to the southern desert was related to the disaster? (Genesis 20: 1). *Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur*

* Have you ever moved after a traumatic event?

* Was Abraham's lack of trust and his deception of King Abimelech an example of a post-traumatic symptom? (Genesis 20:1-13). . *For a while he stayed in Gerar, ² and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” Then Abimelek king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her. But God came to Abimelek in a dream one night and said to him, “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman.” Now Abimelek had not gone near her, so he said, “Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? ⁵ Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and didn’t she also say, ‘He is my brother’? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands.*

* Do you know any disaster victims who later developed problems with distrust and deceit?

Building trust from adversity and suffering:

Struggling through difficulties probably helped Abraham and Sarah to gain increased faith that God would protect them and answer their prayers, even though it took many years for that to happen and for their son Isaac to be born.

* Discuss their level of trust before and after Isaac was born.

* Discuss when adversity caused your level of trust to change, either for better or for worse.

* Have you ever found that a long wait for an answer to prayer enhanced your trust in God?

Trust in the face of adversity: If you were to face adversity in the future, could you trust that something positive will come out of it? Discuss your thoughts about this subject in your group.

Assignment: Write down a disturbing experience which caused you to distrust.

* Pray that God will improve your capacity to trust.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting: *We seek your help, God, for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions that we may become free of doubt and distrust.*

ANCHOR FOUR: SEEKING TRUTH - ESTHER

Esther, whose name means 'hidden,' lived during a time of Jewish captivity under the rule of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) during the years 485-464 B.C. The Old Testament says that Ahasuerus decided to depose Queen Vashti, after which time he chose the beautiful virgin, Esther to be Queen of Persia. When she was a young girl, Esther's uncle Mordecai, with whom she grew up, advised her to keep her Jewish heritage secret to protect her from prejudice and rejection. Thus, when Ahasuerus decided to make Esther the queen he was not aware she was Jewish. Nor did he realize the consequences to his new queen when Haman, his newly appointed chief adviser, planned to kill all of the Jews because the Jew, Mordecai, refused to bow to him, an act forbidden by Mordecai's deeply held religious beliefs.

"And letters [with the King's seal of approval] were sent by special messengers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to slay, and to do away with all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their belongings as spoil." (Esther 3:13).

When Mordecai read this decree he became exceedingly distraught and sent word to Esther that she should no longer keep her true identity secret and must plead to the king on behalf of her people.

"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

Thus Esther realized she must risk approaching the King, even though doing so without an invitation could lead to her death. Before doing so she sent this message to Mordecai: ***"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4: 16)***

The King did permit Esther entrance to his court and she told him the truth although he did not expect to hear the words she said. So he was appalled when Esther told him that Haman had sent out a decree that instructed authorities to massacre all her people. The King's response was to turn the tables on Mordecai and hang him on the gallows erected in the central square that had been planned for the execution of Mordecai. This was followed by his issuance of a new decree meant to save the Jewish nation in which he granted the Jews permission to defend themselves and to destroy, to slay, and to wipe out any armed force that might attack them, their little ones and women; and they should take the enemies' goods for spoil. (Esther 8:11).

Building truth and honesty from adversity:

- * Does a person who is prepared to die or expects that his or her family will face death become more or less open and honest?
- * If victims feel ashamed because of being victimized when might they tend to become secretive and less truthful?
- * Esther and her uncle were models of truth and integrity although living in an atmosphere of adversity during the Jewish captivity. What was the relationship between the adversity they faced and their integrity?
- * What special abilities enabled them to survive?
- * What was God's role in their survival?
- * Discuss whether adversity in your life has led you to become more open or become more secretive.
- * Do you have any disturbing memories that you have kept secret but would like to reveal in a setting of confidentiality?

Being truthful in the face of adversity: Esther risked possible death yet she did not hesitate and began to pray and fast that God could protect her and her people. It's the unusual person in our society who would insist on being truthful about his or her belief in God in the face of adversity, persecution, or death.

* Discuss the difficulty of maintaining a belief in God in the face of trying conditions, particularly if you are threatened with adversity or even death because of what you believe. This is not an uncommon situation at this time in history for Christians and Jews who speak openly about the truth of their beliefs. Those who believe in abiding by the ten commandments, oppose the taking of human life and unbiblical sexual behavior, and claim that Jesus is the only gateway to heaven are denounced in the current culture and may risk eventual incarceration or death.

Being truthful without abandoning one's convictions: Mordecai exposed himself to extreme consequences because he adhered to his religious beliefs and refused to bow down to Haman. Esther also took an extreme risk when she expressed the truth to the King. These two outspoken individuals didn't hesitate to be truthful because they believed God had directed them to be so, even though knowing it might cost them their lives.

* Discuss the wisdom or pitfalls of confronting someone with the truth.

* Discuss how a person can be confrontive without being offensive.

Assignment: Make it a point to have honest and open communication with a friend or spouse without being unfairly critical or offensive. You should also make it a point to be open to constructive criticism and 'feedback' about your own behavior.

* Write down or draw a disturbing or shameful experience which caused you to be unduly secretive.

* Pray that God will give you the necessary courage and wisdom to be open and honest.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day: *Whoever has no rule over his own spirit and has lost self-control is like a city broken down without walls (Proverbs 25:28). Create in me a clean heart Oh God and renew a right spirit within me (Psalms 51:10).*

Prayer: Say the following prayer together at the close of this group meeting and meditate on it each day: *We seek Your help, God, for self-understanding, openness to truth, willingness to change behaviors which hurt ourselves or others, and your strength to maintain our convictions.*

ANCHOR FIVE: COPING WITH ANGER - MOSES

After the death of Joseph (Genesis 50:26), the Israelites continued to live in Egypt for 400 years. They eventually lost favor with the Egyptian leadership and suffered because of years of slavery, mistreatment, injury, and murder by Egyptian guards. When the Pharaoh, fearing the increasing growth of the Israeli population, ordered the deaths of Jewish babies, the newly born Moses was hidden by his mother in the weeds along the bank of a river. The baby was discovered by the Pharaoh's daughter, saved from certain death, and raised with the help of Moses' real mother who had been hired as a nursemaid (Exodus 2:1-10).

Identification with the victim: As a young man Moses became aware of his true Jewish identity and developed strong empathic responses to the victimization of his people. This phenomenon is called

identification with the victim. One day, enraged by the persecution he observed, he killed an Egyptian guard and was forced to flee the country (Exodus 2: 11-15).

* Can you recall a time you identified with a victim and felt like retaliating?

* Do you recall a time when you became enraged at the reprehensible injury or death of a friend or family member and retaliated ferociously.

Anger turned toward the rescuer: Moses remained in exile for 40 years until God directed him to return to Egypt to fulfill his purpose - to lead the Israelites out of their confinement in Egypt (Exodus 2: 1-15). In spite of becoming a 'freed' nation, the Israeli people found it difficult to savor their freedom and live each day as a nomad in the desert wilderness. The Bible describes the Jewish people as depressed, home-sick, and angry about their current lifestyle. They had grown accustomed to their former way of life in Egypt and clamored to return even though they had been harshly treated as slaves (Exodus 16:3).

* Can you recall a situation in which the victim became angry with the rescuer?

* Can you recall a time when you were a victim and became angry with God?

Anger toward the thankless: Moses received the Lord's commandments which were written on the tablet. When he descended from the mountain Moses found the people worshipping a calf and dancing. Their idolatrous behavior triggered explosive rage: *"Moses' anger grew hot. He flung the tablets from his hands and broke them at the base of the mountain. He took the calf they had made, committed it to flames, ground it to powder, scattered the powder on the water, and made the Israelites drink it."* (Exodus 32: 19-20).

* Can you recall a time you became angry after you tried to help someone in need but he or she refused your help?

* Can you recall a time when you were infuriated by displays of godless perversions?

Feeling angry with leaders: The Israelites often became angry with Moses and rebelled when he insisted it was time to conquer Jericho and enter the promised land. When God told Moses and Aaron to send spies to Jericho to determine a way to breach the walls and overthrow the city they returned to report that the city's walls were unbreachable and the soldiers appeared to be giants. The people reacted and started a movement to replace Moses with a leader who would take them back to Egypt. But Joshua and Caleb, the leaders of the Israelite forces, believed they could overcome the giants in Jericho. Yet, the majority of the people resisted and sought to have them stoned so they could choose new leaders and return to Egypt. (*Numbers 14:1-4*). *That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. They grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! ³ Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."*

* Can you think of a time you became angry with a leader or fought with a loved one because of frustration with a situation?

Managing anger that's out of control:

* How can you express anger so it can serve a useful purpose?

*What is the first step for you to take if you lose control of your anger?

*Would you apologize for losing your temper and at what point can you do that?

Recognizing and managing unexpressed anger: Some people bottle up their angry feelings and experience physical symptoms like headaches or high blood pressure; or they may explode at a later time; or they may continue to harbor anger and become emotionally hard and bitter.

* What happens to your body, mind, and emotions when you bottle up your anger?

Assignment:

* Write down a disturbing experience pertaining to destructive anger.

*Think about how you can 'own' your angry feelings.

*Practice expressing anger in constructive ways.

*Practice becoming assertive in constructive ways.

*Take some time to role play during your group meeting. Or you may want to practice by pairing up.

* Pray that God will help you learn to control destructive rage and to express anger in constructive ways.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day: *Listen much, speak little, and guard against becoming angry (James 1:19); Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath (Ephesians 4:26); For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from His wrath (Romans 3:25).*

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting: *Seeking better understanding of our angry feelings, we ask for your help, Lord, to control rage when it might become destructive and Your help to express anger in constructive ways.*

ANCHOR SIX: COPING WITH FEAR - ELIJAH

In the Old Testament Book of I Kings, read chapters 17, 18, and 19 about Elijah, the prophet whom the Lord used to unseat the pagan king Ahab and his queen, Jezebel. In spite of the eventual success of this mission, Elijah expected Queen Jezebel to kill him. The events that led to his terrifying flight from Jezebel were as follows:

Elijah foretold a warning to King Ahab that a major drought would occur that would last three years. When the drought took place Elijah was blamed for the crop failure (I Kings 17:1). Elijah then waged war with the prophets of Baal by courageously pronouncing that his God was more powerful than their pagan god. The prophets' magic failed to match God's miracle and Elijah took the next step of asking God to kill all of the 450 prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:10-40). When Elijah foretold this slaughter would take place Queen Jezebel's reacted with rage and announced that Elijah would be a dead man within 24 hours. The terrified Elijah fled for his life into the wilderness where he felt completely defeated, ashamed, suicidal, and immobilized by fear (I Kings 19:1-3). He was ministered to by an angel who brought food, drink, and instructions to travel to Mount Horeb. Elijah walked for 40 days and nights to the mountain of God and found the shelter of a cave where he remained alone until the Lord spoke to him. Elijah took that opportunity to complain: *"I have worked very hard for the Lord God of the heavens; but the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you and torn down your altars and killed your prophets, and only I am left; and now they are trying to kill me too. "*

In order to break through Elijah's paralyzing anxiety, God asked Elijah to leave his cave and stand before Him on the mountain. Then He sent a series of terrifying natural disasters which scared Elijah back to the safety of his cave: First, a mighty windstorm struck with such a terrible blast that rocks were torn loose. Second, a powerful earthquake shook the earth beneath Elijah. Finally a flash fire broke out around him. Elijah was jarred by these 'Acts of God' and was finally able to hear God speak to him in a gentle voice with a plan to safely return into the midst of those who threatened to kill him (I Kings 19:15-19). Elijah was told to anoint Hazael to become the new King of Syria, anoint Jehu to become the new King of Israel, anoint Elisha to replace himself as prophet, and then announce that his enemies would all be killed (I Kings 19:15-19).

Taking risks: Elijah took the risk of invoking the wrath of the king and his wife, Jezebel.

* Was he blind to the possibility his life would be in danger?

* Can you think of a time when you took a dangerous risk without thinking of the consequences?

Feeling fear and depression: When Jezebel told Elijah she would kill him he became terrified and fled for his life.

* Was his fear justified?

* Can you understand why he felt despondent?

* Can you think of a time you were afraid for your life?

Coping with frightening situations: Elijah ran away in terror and then hid out to escape Jezebel.

* Have you ever been in a situation that threatened your life? If so, how did you cope with your fear?

Managing persistent fears: Elijah's very realistic fear of being killed did not diminish because he knew his enemy had enormous power and might possibly find and kill him. This is an example of how a man's fear can be traced to a very specific reason in contrast to someone who may suffer from non-specific anxiety.

* Do you have any specific things you are afraid of?

* Do you have anxiety, panic attacks, or phobias? If so, what are they and how do you manage them?

The Lord at work: Elijah encountered the Lord and His angel in several different ways.

* What were the Lord's actions and how did they help Elijah?

* What are the ways the Lord has helped you cope with fear?

* Have your encounters with natural disasters or any other terrifying events made you aware that they are within the Lord's control?

Assignment: Make a list of your worst fears or anxieties and ways you cope.

* Describe your most terrifying experience.

* Pray that you can learn to trust Him to provide safety for you when you are afraid and will help you resolve problematic symptoms of fear and anxiety.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day: *God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, waters roar, and the mountains shake with its swelling (Psalm 46: 1- 3). "I will pray to the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).*

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting: *We seek Your protective presence during moments of terror and helplessness, Your caution when we are tempted to take unnecessary risks, and Your Bold Presence when faced with change and challenges.*

ANCHOR SEVEN: RESOLVING GUILT - DAVID

Read II Samuel, chapters 11-13, wherein is described David's sin and misuse of the power God gave him. Perhaps David's behavior could partially be blamed on post-war traumatic changes in his personality. Consider the fact that he was exposed to the violence of war over a period of many years and lost his spiritual and emotional sensitivity which led to murder, adultery with Bathsheba, and deception. His irresponsible behavior seriously harmed not only his family but the entire Israeli nation. God finally intervened and exposed David's guilty secrets through Nathan's confrontation (II Samuel 12:1-12). He sought the Lord's forgiveness although his shame, guilt, and alienation from the Lord did not quickly pass.

"I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now Lord, I pray Thee, take away the wrong of Thy servant, for I have indeed played the fool." (II Samuel 24:10).

God forgave David but told him there would still be consequences: *The Lord has taken away your sin; you will not die. Nevertheless, because this action has provided such an opportunity for the enemies of the Lord to ridicule, the son born to you must surely die (II Samuel 12:14).*

The scriptures reveal that David sought for and eventually rediscovered God's forgiving presence: *As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice. He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle, which was against me, for there were many against me (Psalm 55:16-18).*

Post-traumatic emotional and spiritual alienation: David survived the trauma of many battles, saw thousands of Israelis die, experienced spiritual and emotional 'numbing', and suffered the consequences.

* What are the parallels in David's life and post war symptoms to our war veterans?

* What happens to the consciences and the behavior of young people growing up in homes or on the streets where there is repeated violence?

* Have you had any personal experiences that help you understand this phenomenon?

God confronts His children who have lost their consciences and sensitivities:

*Do you think that David's shameless behavior was related to his war experiences?

*Discuss how God intervened to expose David's guilt.

*Why is it important to feel guilt?

- * How can a person lose his ability to feel appropriate guilt?
- *How can a person's conscience become numb? Has that happened to you?
- *When does someone become more guilt-ridden? Has that happened to you?
- * Why is it important to not only be forgiven but also to feel forgiven?

God forgives but there are still consequences: David suffered the consequences of his destructive behavior even though he asked for forgiveness and was forgiven. **II Samuel 24:10. *David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.”***

- * When is it important for a destructive or irresponsible individual to experience the consequences of his behavior even though he or she asked for forgiveness and was forgiven?

The Lord at work: Discuss the phenomenon of asking for, claiming forgiveness, and living a changed life?

Are you experiencing this?

Assignment: Make a list of situations or persons you have harmed about which you feel guilty. Turn each one of these over to the Lord and ask for forgiveness.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day: *But Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest who understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptations we do. So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need (Hebrews 4:15-16). If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9).*

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting: *Lord, we seek Your loving presence when recalling guilt-ridden memories, Your complete forgiveness of our wrongdoings, and the capacity to forgive ourselves.*

ANCHOR EIGHT: COPING WITH GRIEF - JOB

The Old Testament contains stories of times when God permitted disasters for specific reasons: to carry out His specific plans during the course of world history; to save those who were alienated from Him; to punish those who were truly evil; to display His power, and to bring people closer to Him.

Consider the account of how disastrous events afflicted Job and his family after God gave Satan permission to test his faith. Almost overnight, Job lost his ten children, all of his herds of cattle, and his servants to violent death from raiding tribes and natural disasters then was smitten with the loss of his health (Job 1:13-19). His grief was heavy and it overwhelmed him to the point he wanted to die (Job 6: 1-3).

Job's emotional pain was worthy of the support and empathy of his friends. But instead of commiserating they tormented him with harsh and uncaring words. Thus Job's trauma was worsened by accusations of

wrong-doing, similar to the plight of those victims in our world today who are accused of bringing adversities on themselves. However, Job responded by asserting himself against the accusers. *"What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. Surely I wish to speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue and reason my case with God. But you are forgers of lies [you defame my character most untruthfully]; you are all physicians of no value and have no remedy to offer. Oh, that you would altogether hold your peace!" (Job 13:2-5b).*

It would seem to most people that a loving God would never allow disastrous events to inflict pain on one of His stalwart believers. Yet, this happened to Job and his family. Fortunately, the story ends on a positive note. Job's trust in God's sovereign power was strengthened (Job 42: 1-6) and he gained a greater understanding of the fact that God did indeed love him. His emotional pain eventually led to his seeking a deeper knowledge of God (Job 42: 1-6) and he not only experienced restoration of his health but also an increase in his personal property. Job and his wife had ten more children and many additional years of fruitful living (Job 42:10-16).

Loss is part of life: Job and his wife suffered enormous losses, more than anyone would deserve.

* Have you or anyone close to you suffered painful losses beyond what you think of as a normal part of life?

* Have you suffered from the death of a family member or close friend.

*Have you suffered any painful losses beyond what you think of as a normal part of life?

Feeling grief-stricken: Job described his grief as the experience of being heavily weighed down.

* Has there been a time (or times) when you have felt burdened with grief like Job?

Empathic friends: Job did not receive the empathic support he should have received and they tended to blame him for what happened to him.

*Can you think of a situation similar to Job's when you lacked understanding and felt blamed for what happened to you?

Grief resolution: Job suffered a long time before his relationship with God deepened and before he felt healed from his grief.

* Recall a time when you asked for and experienced resolution of your grief?

How long did it take?

* What are typical stages of grieving?

Assignment: Make a list of losses that still trouble you. Turn each one of these over to the Lord and ask for His help to resolve your grief.

Scriptures: Meditate on one or more of the following scriptures each day:

Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted (Matthew 5:4). Blessed be God, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulation (2 Corinthians 1:3). And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever (Revelations 21 :4). If one member suffers, all the parts share the suffering (I Corinthians 12:26).

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting: *Seeking resolution of unresolved grief, we face our painful memories, grieve whomever or whatever we have lost, and in Jesus' loving presence, let our tears heal our sorrows.*

ANCHOR NINE: LIFE vs DEATH THE SECOND ADAM - JESUS

Jesus has been called the second Adam. The first Adam brought death into the world but the second Adam finally conquered it. After Adam and Eve succumbed to the serpent's temptation and rebelled, God barred them from the Garden of Eden. Suffering and death entered human experience for the first time and continued into the lives of their children (Genesis 3:1-4,8;13-15).

Throughout history, human nature has continued this self-destructive pattern. Even God's chosen people repeatedly suffered from self-destructiveness. The prophets of Israel prayed that God would deliver His people and Isaiah prophesied 400 years before it happened that God would provide a way for people to escape everlasting death by sending His son to be born in human flesh and provide redemption through his suffering and death (Isaiah 53:3-8). Finally the promised Messiah arrived on earth - **Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born to Mary.**

He escaped many close calls with death during his lifetime beginning as an infant when King Herod ordered all male children in Bethlehem under age two to be killed (Matthew 2: 16-18).

As an adult, Jesus came to be hated by the Jewish religious leaders in spite of his miracles, healings, raising of the dead, and bringing joy into the lives of the many thousands who listened to his teachings and were the recipients of his miracles and physical healings. Even though the common people believed He was the promised Messiah, the religious leaders plotted to falsely accuse Him of treason and bribe one of his disciples (Judas Iscariot) to betray him. They pressured the Roman authorities to charge, condemn, ridicule, whip, torture, and nail Jesus to a cross until he died. When the centurion and those who were with him to the end observed the earthquake, darkening of the heavens, and tearing of the temple curtain at the moment of his death, their fear was tempered by feelings of awe, and they said, *"Truly this was God's Son!" (Matthew 27:54).*

After being crucified, His body was placed in a tomb but three days later an earthquake announced His resurrection: *And behold there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from Heaven and came and rolled the boulder back and sat upon it (Matthew 28:2)*

He provided the way for believers to become fully acceptable in the eyes of God. Having proved his power over death, He remains alive in the spiritual realm to this day and promises those who believe in Him that they too will be given eternal life. *For Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit (I Peter 3:18).*

Believers are not only promised a similar resurrection after death, but they are assured that when they face adversity during their lifetimes the living Lord will be with them to share their pain, provide a way of escape on earth or find new life in heaven.

The apostle Paul was an educated Jew who had opposed anyone who believed in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. He sought out Christian believers to kill or imprison them but that changed when Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus. After his conversion God instructed him about the truth of Jesus's life, death and resurrection and sent him into heathen areas to proclaim the truth about it. During his ministry

of nearly thirty years he endured and survived unbelievable numbers of traumatic circumstances. He was often destitute, imprisoned, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, cold, and hungry (2 Corinthians 11:23–28). But in spite of this he kept his faith and died with dignity in a Roman prison. Paul knew he would be killed in prison but he knew of the joy he would soon have with his Lord in heaven (2 Timothy 4:6-7).

Death has been conquered: Jesus' death and resurrection has enabled believers to realize that death has been conquered, as we read in the scriptures: *Jesus Christ has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospels (2 Timothy 1:10).*

Facing death and helping those who are dying: Jesus knew He would eventually be crucified and prepared for it by praying in the Garden of Gethsamane with His disciples before He was arrested.

- * Have you or anyone close to you suffered from a terminal illness?
- * Have you or anyone else felt like you would prefer death to life?
- * How can you help someone through a depressing or painful time of life?

Resolving a fear of death:

- * Those who truly believe in Jesus' death and resurrection are freed from the fear of death.
- * Are you a believer?
- * Discuss your feelings about death and why you can expect life after death.
- * How can a person resolve a fear of death yet prepare for its inevitability?

Assignment: Write a letter to the Lord about what you feel about His death and resurrection. Include in this letter your questions, hopes, and fears about death and eternal life and your request for His help to make a full commitment to life.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day:

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25). "I am crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting:

We acknowledge any self-destructive feelings or behaviors we might have. We surrender these to you, Jesus, and make a commitment to live in the way You have shown us to live.

ANCHOR TEN: COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE & FORGIVENESS -JOSEPH

Read the Old Testament book of Exodus (chapters 37, 39-47). It is the story of how Jacob's youngest and favorite son Joseph was secretly sold into slavery by his own jealous brothers. They kept this secret from his father who was profoundly grief-stricken when deceitfully told that Joseph had been killed by wild animals (Genesis 37: 18-35). Upon arriving in Egypt, Joseph was again sold as a slave to an Egyptian official who eventually gave him the responsibility to manage his household. His good fortune ended after being victimized by his employer's wife who falsely accused him of rape and had him imprisoned. In spite of this

injustice, Joseph harbored no bitterness or desires for revenge. During his time in prison, Joseph's good fortunes began again when it was discovered he could interpret dreams correctly. Joseph gave God all of the credit for interpreting the Pharaoh's dream and predicting a world-wide famine. He impressed the Pharaoh as a man of integrity with an access to divine knowledge and was promptly promoted. He became the second most powerful man in Egypt and carried out a plan to store grain during the next seven years of plentiful crops in order to have food during the following seven years of famine. Egypt became the source of grain for its citizens and those of surrounding countries. Joseph was eventually brought face to face with his brothers when they came to buy grain, although they did not recognize him. Joseph interrogated them and tested their attitudes and appropriate guilt feelings about the past. Once convinced they were remorseful, he reconciled with them and saved his brothers and father from the drought (Genesis 39-45). The story illustrates how adversity can lead to the fulfillment of a greater plan.

Bitterness as a post-traumatic symptom: The Bible does not reveal any bitterness within Joseph after being sold into slavery and imprisoned.

* Discuss this subject and how difficult it can be to avoid feeling bitter after being victimized or betrayed.

* How does this apply to any experiences you might have had?

Forgiveness, a difficult but important response: Joseph was not ready to forgive his brothers until he tested out their sincerity and love for his youngest brother. When he realized their change of heart he told them the truth and reconciled with them. As a result the family expressed their mutual feelings and expressions of joy.

* Can you think of a situation where you were made to suffer and you became bitter?

*Can you forgive the perpetrator(s) in order to resolve your bitterness and discover your joy?

Justice is the Lord's work: Was justice achieved after Joseph's brothers sold their brother into slavery?

When Joseph (whom his brothers did not recognize) interrogated his brothers and sent them home with their grain, they were later stopped and accused of stealing. Did they receive the justice they deserved at that time? At a later time?

* Was there ever a situation in your life where justice was not achieved until many years later?

*Has there been or is there now an unresolved injustice affecting you, your friends, or your family ?

* Can you allow justice to be accomplished according to God's timetable rather than yours?

The Lord at work: Joseph was able to forgive because he recognized that the injustices he experienced served a greater purpose.

* Describe a time when you suffered an injustice that made you angry, yet later realized that your experience was transformed into something positive for your life?

Assignment: Make a list of persons in your life that have caused you anger and unresolved bitterness.

* Describe an event or events in your life that caused you an injustice.

*Did you or would you like to achieve resolution? How can you do that?

* Pray that God will help you forgive those who have abused, harmed, or treated you unjustly.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day:

Let God remove all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil malice from you. May you be kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgiving, just as God in Christ also forgave you {Ephesians 4:31-32}.

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting:

We surrender all thoughts of bitterness, hatred, or revenge to You Lord, and ask for Your justice to be accomplished, and Your love to be a source of divine forgiveness.

ANCHOR ELEVEN: FINDING A PURPOSE – PAUL

Paul is known as a writer, orator, and missionary whose impact as a Christian evangelist and teacher began when he was converted on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: J-9). Those who have read his many Christian letters to the early churches recognize him as a man of God without peer, whose work spanned many years and ended when he died by beheading in a Roman prison. Although his life on earth ended about 62 AD, his influence has lived on through his writings in the New Testament. One of Paul's more unique qualities was his belief that God had a purpose for everything that happened to him, even the most disastrous events in his life. Although Paul was the perpetrator of Stephen's death by stoning his miraculous conversion not long after transformed him. As a man devoted to Jesus, his Lord and savior, Paul eventually survived multiple traumatic events (Acts 7:57-60) which included being struck down by blindness on the road to Damascus, scourged with 39 stripes on five separate occasions, beaten with rods three times, stoned and imprisoned more than once. He survived three shipwrecks, a hurricane, and numerous other hardships (Acts 16:22-23; 27; 18-44). On one occasion, Paul and Silas were brutally beaten at Philippi and put in jail under maximum security with their feet chained in stocks. About midnight, an earthquake rocked the city of Philippi and shook the foundation of the prison, breaking open the gates and wrenching the chains from the walls. The jailer and his entire household became believers because of this miracle and when morning dawned the city authorities withdrew all charges and sent Paul and Silas on their way (Acts 16:16-40). Paul never complained about this or any of his adversities. In fact, the opposite was true. He was always a joyful survivor who thanked God for his trials and tribulations, as he described in a letter written from prison in Rome: *“We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character, hope.” (Romans 5:2-4)*

Turning adversity into an opportunity for God: The Bible makes it clear that regardless of the uncertainties Paul faced, he believed that things would turn out as God directed. When he was caught in a hurricane that nearly capsized the boat on which he and the crew were sailing, God used this disaster to demonstrate His power and ability to save Paul and the other crewmen from drowning or other fatal outcomes. *“Not one of us will lose our lives [in this storm] even though the ship will go down. For last night an angel of the Lord to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will arrive in Rome safely and what's more, God has granted your request and will save the lives of all those sailing with you. So take courage.' Then Paul assured them, 'Friends, I believe God will make that happen as He said it would - we will be shipwrecked on an island but none of us will lose our lives.”*

Seeking a greater purpose from adversity and suffering:

* Have you suffered from any adversities which became opportunities to demonstrate God's power in your life?

* Has the experience of adversity or suffering directed you into an occupation, a special calling, or made you more empathic and understanding of others?

The Lord at work: When Paul was first smitten with blindness on the Damascus Road as described in the book of Acts Jesus Christ appeared to him and gave him a new purpose for living.

* Has God ever touched you in a way that gave you a new or renewed purpose for living through unusual or calamitous circumstances?

Assignment: Make a list of adversities in your life which led you to a finding or renewing your purpose.

What are your current hopes about how God might lead you in the direction He has planned for you.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day:

"As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with Thanksgiving. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him who is the head of all principalities and powers." (Colossians 2:6-9)

Prayer: Pray this prayer with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting and meditate on it each day: *Realizing our shared sufferings together with you Lord, we rejoice that we can ask You to live within us so that we might daily discover renewed purposes for our lives.*

ANCHOR TWELVE: COMMITMENT TO LOVE – JOHN

John is best known as the writer of five New Testament books: The Gospel of John, John's three letters to Christian churches, and Revelation. He was the only disciple who did not die as a martyr and was eventually exiled to the small Greek island of Patmos. While being held on that island he was inspired by God to write the book of Revelation which contains prophetic information about severe disasters during end times:

"When He (the Lamb) broke open the sixth seal, I looked, and there was a great earthquake; the sun became dark like black cloth, and the moon became red like blood. (Revelation 6:12). Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven" (Revelation 11:13). "Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake" (Revelation 16:18).

John was also especially noted for becoming the disciple whom Jesus most loved. It is no surprise then that love became a major theme in John's writings, beginning in his Gospel where he writes that God loves each of us so much that He gave up His son so that anyone believing in Him shall not perish but shall live forever (John 3: 16). John's description of love in his letters includes a number of important themes that are revealed in the Bible verses below. Read each and discuss them.

Love is sacrificial and helpful to others: The greatest way to show love for friends is to lay down your life for them just as Jesus laid down his life for us (I John 3:16-17). When we experience the presence of Him within us His love will enable us to love our brother and help him when he is in need.

Love brings light into our lives: *As we love one another, the darkness in our lives disappears and the new light of life in Christ shines in us (I John 2:8); But whoever loves his fellow man is 'walking in the light' and can see his way without stumbling around in darkness and sin (I John 2:10).*

God's love is unconditional like a parent loves a child: *See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for He allows us to be called His children - think of it - and we really are (I John 3: 1).*

The capacity to love is progressive and comes from our relationship with Christ: *As we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete; so we will not be ashamed and embarrassed at the day of judgment, but can face him with confidence and joy because He loves us and we love Him too (I John 4: 17). Dear friends, let us practice loving each other for love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God and that they are getting to know him better (/ John 4:7).*

Love in action is a sign of knowing God and having eternal life: *If we love other Christians, it proves that we have been delivered from hell and given eternal life(/ John 3:14). Those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God, and that they are getting to know him better. But if a person isn't loving and kind, it shows that he doesn't know God/or God is love (John 4:7-8).*

We need not fear God who loves us: *"We need have no fear of God who loves us perfectly; His perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what he might do to us" (I John 4:18).*

* Is your love unconditional? If so, describe the qualities of your love and to whom you express it.

* How do you describe sacrificial love?

* Has your relationship with Christ resulted in a progressive deepening of your capacity to love?

Assignment: Make three lists:

1) Those persons to whom you easily express your love.

2) Those people in your life you take for granted; but wish to love them more.

3) Those people you find very difficult to love.

Turn these over to the Lord and ask that He will love them through you.

Scriptures: Meditate on the following scriptures each day:

"Since God loved us so much that He sent His only Son into this world to bring us eternal life we surely ought to love each other too. For God lives in us, and His love within us grows ever stronger" (I John 4: 1-12). "Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:13-15).

Prayer: Meditate on the following prayer each day and say it together with the rest of your group members at the close of this group meeting: *With Your love within us, we seek to renew our commitments to those whose love we have taken for granted, help those who suffer as we have suffered, and love those we have not been able to love.*

APPENDIX

SURVIVORS OF WEATHER, WAR, & WOUNDS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY

SWWWIM is a Christian recovery program for survivors of natural or human-inflicted disasters who are seeking emotional and spiritual support. Participants in this program will benefit from participating with others who have gone through adversities and will have the opportunity to share and to help one another discover a richer perspective about their lives and about God - in spite of, or because of, their traumatic experiences.

SWWWIM groups are not designed to provide the only source of help for individuals struggling with significant emotional turmoil and definitely are not recommended for individuals who are potentially suicidal, using drugs or alcohol, or are self-destructive in other ways. Those experiencing significant emotional distress are encouraged to receive additional therapy from individual counselors or therapists if they are to remain in the program.

Participants in the SWWWIM program will be encouraged to attend meetings wherein they will be provided leaders who are trained to use the format of the *Twelve Anchors for the Storms of Life* as a means of learning Biblical truths related to traumatic events. These groups are also sharing groups wherein participants can talk about personal issues within a supportive environment. The group structure should support positive values, build hope, encourage meaningful relationships, and discuss productive activities.

SWWWIM TEAMS: The Christian church has a unique opportunity to reach out and help individuals who seek stability and healing in a stressful world. In order to meet the need, interested and qualified Christians can be trained to supplement existing spiritual and emotional health care and work together.

Who comprises a SWWWIM TEAM? Each team would ideally be comprised of volunteers to provide the nucleus of support for those individuals needing help.

* **TEAM LEADER:** A spiritual leader or Christian minister to provide organizational support, lead or organize regular meetings, provide spiritual leadership, and garner prayer support for the program.

* **MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANT:** One or more licensed mental health professionals to provide mental health consultation to volunteers.

* **BASIC LIVING NEEDS CONSULTANT:** One or more trained individuals to provide telephone contact and information to participants who request help for specific needs.

* **CRISIS COUNSELOR:** One or more mental health/ grief counselors who can provide individual crisis intervention if needed and who can refer to selected professional counselors for ongoing counseling, if necessary

* **GROUP FACILITATOR:** Two or more group facilitators in each Anchor Group.

Who should sponsor SWWWIM TEAMS? A participating church should make a core commitment to back the program with leadership and prayer support, select those who will be trained, and develop a structure to include a program director, professional consultant, and trained volunteers, preferably those with prior training in counseling and small group leadership.

The pastor of the church must provide a leadership role either as program director or counseling supervisor if he has counseling experience. Funds should be made available to purchase the workbooks and possibly other reading materials.

Is this a professional counseling service? No, it is not. There are no barriers for individuals who wish to attend a

An individual with significant medical or psychological problems such as addictive behavior, suffering from an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia, is seriously depressed and suicidal or violent, suffers from serious anxiety or panic attacks, are unable to sleep, or have illnesses that require medical treatment, should be referred for professional consultation or medical treatment in the community. If an individual already participating in the program develops any of these symptoms he or she must be encouraged to receive additional therapy from available professional counselors or therapists while participating in the program.

Although **SWWWIM** not a professional service we live in a litigious age and individual churches sponsoring **SWWWIM TEAM** volunteer counselors should have an umbrella liability insurance policy.

Professional volunteer supervisors and consultants are advised to have their own liability coverage.

What is the role of the professionals in this program? Professional leadership and supervision is essential. Volunteer trained professionals will be asked to provide ongoing consultation and supervision on a scheduled and as-needed basis to volunteers who have received training in grief counseling and support group leadership.

What is the role of the counselors? **SWWWIM TEAMS** will work most effectively if there are both professionally trained counselors and lay counselors have already received training in basic mental health principles and counseling such as is provided in the Stephens Ministry or other similar programs. These counselors will be asked to maintain high ethical standards and appropriate boundaries pertaining to finances, sex, and confidentiality. They should allow participants freedom of choice pertaining to their involvement in the program.

What is the role of the group facilitators? Two group facilitators are preferred for each group using the Twelve **ANCHORS** format. One or both should have training in group process. They will work as teachers, modelers of openness (without burdening the group with their own problems), boundary keepers, care-takers, and listeners so that participants can be comfortable sharing their feelings, asking questions, and supporting one another in the group.

What are the preferable beliefs and personal qualities for those who would like to be counselors?

- * **Prayer** - Awareness of the need for a loving and prayerful support system and belief in the importance and power of prayer.
- * **Commitment** - to God's leadership, to learning, and to helping others.
- * **Empathy** - The capacity to listen, 'feel', and understand the pain of others without being overwhelmed.
- * **Growth** - Desire to 'grow' through God's leadership to enhance leadership skills, knowledge, wisdom, and emotional depth.
- * **Integrity** - Emotional integrity, firm boundaries, and strong ethical principles.
- * **Limitations** - Willingness to be aware of personal shortcomings and limitations in personal training, knowledge, or other capacities; and a desire to seek and receive help.
- * **Learning from criticism** - Capacity to accept and learn from criticism.
- * **Personal fulfillment** - Enjoying a rewarding and gratifying personal life and a fulfilling relationship with one's spouse, if married.

How can a SWWWIM Team be organized?

- * Interested churches and church staff who would like to participate in training.
- * Encourage a single large church or several smaller churches to work together and support a cooperative **SWWWIM** program.
- * Provide prayer support for the program.
- * Select individuals to comprise at least one or more **SWWWIM TEAMS**.

Each team would ideally be comprised of the following individuals:

1. One or more spiritual leaders or Christian ministers to provide organizational support, provide spiritual leadership, and garner prayer group support for the program.
2. One or more licensed mental health professional to provide mental health consultation to volunteers.
3. One or more trained volunteers to provide telephone contact and information to participants who request help for specific needs.
4. One or more mental health/ grief counselors who can provide individual counseling or crisis intervention if needed and who can refer to selected professional counselors for ongoing therapy or counseling, if necessary
5. Two group facilitators per ANCHOR Group

What kind of training is preferable for members of a SWWWIM TEAM? Introductory training workshops should be provided for interested volunteers, both professional and laypersons. Individuals with previous training may find that an introductory workshop is adequate for facilitation of psycho- educational ANCHOR groups. If there are not enough individuals to form a team in a single church, several churches may work together to support a cooperative SWWWIM program.

An ongoing training program can also be developed as new volunteers become involved and are selected to join SWWWIM TEAMS. Initial training will preferably include teams from several churches working cooperatively. Ideally there should be an initial 13-hours of training which could be split into two or more separate sessions.

What might be suitable content for a training session?

- * Becoming aware of the nature of the disasters occurring in our world, particularly in the United States. Also becoming aware of the potential reality of future disasters that might involve such things as major natural disasters, suicide bombings, chemical/ biological / nuclear attacks, EMP strikes with complete loss of electricity for days or weeks or longer.
- * Understanding normal and destructive or symptomatic responses to traumatic events.
- * Learning psychological first-aid techniques for survivors of acute traumatic events.
- * Learning principles of emotional recovery, crisis counseling, referral, and group psycho- educational techniques.
- * Understanding trauma and its consequences in the Bible - both O.T. and N.T.
- * Participating as learners and leaders in recovery groups.

How might you determine who could benefit from participating in anchor recovery groups? Those who will benefit are victims of first hand or second hand stress (friends or relatives have been affected or those who have been adversely affected by news reports). The types of stress include natural disasters, personal traumas, war, the threat of war, or terrorist attacks. Participants should be receptive to the Biblically-based principles described in the program.

Should participants be screened? 'Screening' for appropriateness in this program can be accomplished in several ways including telephone inquiries, individual interviews, or via an introductory meeting in order to meet individuals who have expressed an interest in participating. Clarify that there is a spiritual component to the program, determine motivation, and decide if it might be beneficial. It is helpful to know if prospective participants in the group have had prior psychiatric treatment or may be receiving professional help for psychiatric problems. The prospective participant should be provided information about what may or may not be accomplished by participating in the Twelve Anchors and encouraged to continue during the

designated time period (most commonly 12 to 13 weeks) since dropping out prematurely is detrimental to the integrity of the group.

Is grief counseling part of the program? Grief counseling can be provided by trained volunteers for individuals but should be limited in most cases to one or two counseling sessions. If further grief counseling seems necessary, the bereaved person might best be referred to a professional counselor, a grief support group process, or both.

How does a church begin SWWWIM? Establish the leadership and structure and the personnel involved. Be sure and develop referral sources for physicians and mental health professionals in case participants need professional help. When advertising the program, have a telephone number for interested persons to contact for informational purposes. Those who are likely to benefit can also be invited individually, by letter, phone call, or informal personal contact. Decide on a time and place for meetings. In most cases they are best held within participating churches. There can be an introductory meeting and then a series of 12 or more meetings for Twelve Anchors.

What is the format of ongoing ANCHOR meetings? During the first meeting, the leaders should clarify the purpose of the program and provide participants with basic information about the duration (usually 12 sessions although the group may choose to have more sessions if desired).

It's important that the leaders assure participants that the program is structured. Group meetings must be safe, supportive, positive, and goal oriented. It is important that participants be given ample time to share basic facts about their traumatic experience, yet to also have the freedom to remain silent and talk only when comfortable. The group process should support positive values, build hope, encourage meaningful relationships, productive activities, and end every meeting on a positive note.

ANCHOR Meeting format:

- 1) A welcome to attendees and an opportunity for participants to identify themselves, preferably by first name.
- 2) An opening prayer by a group leader. *Lord, we ask for Your guidance for those who are here for this meeting, Your healing touch in our lives, Your strength to empower us, Your direction in our lives, and Your love to sustain us as we help one another.*
- 3) A clarification by the leader(s) about the purpose and structure of this and subsequent meetings.
- 4) Discussion of one of the 12 Anchors and Biblical personalities. A portion of each meeting will be educational so that participants can become familiar with a Biblical account provided for each personality
- 5) Meetings are best closed with a joint reading of the appropriate spiritual step together.

What about support for participants outside of the group meetings? It is also important to make sure that participants have a support system of family members and friends with whom they can call or talk to. In addition, the leaders may choose to offer group members the option of calling one another and develop a 'buddy' program whereby a group member may provide support and listen to questions or concerns. Group members can also decide if it is appropriate for participants to help one another with realistic post-disaster issues pertaining to clean-up and other matters of that type.

Will participants have reading materials? Participants should be encouraged to study between meetings and apply the anchors and spiritual steps to their lives. Homework should be completed before meetings and the material discussed in some depth during the meeting.

Followup Twelve Spiritual Step groups

Interested participants can meet regularly, preferably with a volunteer leader. Non-Christians may prefer to follow the format - Twelve Spiritual Steps for Trauma Survivors. Those who choose may prefer to utilize the 12 Christian steps with accompanying scripture.

Twelve Spiritual Steps for Trauma Survivors

- Step 1. Feeling powerless to cope with our traumatic experiences, we seek the help of a power greater than ourselves - God, as individually understood - during this time of distress.
- Step 2. Feeling confused by what has happened to us, we seek God's help to find meaning from our traumatic experiences.
- Step 3. Feeling a despair and distrust, we seek God's help to carry our burdens and renew our trust.
- Step 4. Feeling discontent about ourselves, we seek God's help to look within and perceive both positive and negative traits, to augment those which are positive, and to change those which are negative.
- Step 5. Feeling discontent about angry feelings, we seek God's help to relinquish the 'wall' around our emotions, understand our anger, control its destructiveness, and assert ourselves appropriately.
- Step 6. Feeling unpleasantly anxious, we seek God's help to understand our fear, control its paralyzing quality, and rely on His presence whenever we are afraid.
- Step 7. Having a conscience that is either too harsh or too weak, we seek God's help to take responsibility, face our guilt, make amends when appropriate, accept His forgiveness and forgive ourselves.
- Step 8. Feeling burdened by persistent grief, we seek God's help to grieve those we have lost, face our painful memories and emotions, and allow our tears to heal our sorrows.
- Step 9. Feeling burdened by self-destructive thoughts or behaviors, we relinquish them into God's hands and make a commitment to life.
- Step 10. Feeling burdened by bitterness, we seek God's help to pursue the cause of justice, gain freedom from revengeful wishes, and be channels of God's forgiveness to those we have hated, whenever possible.
- Step 11. Feeling confused about our sense of purpose we seek God's help to surrender ourselves fully to Him in order to discover a renewed purpose for our lives.
- Step 12. Feeling discontent about our inability to love more fully we seek God's help to renew our commitment to friends and family, love those we have found difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as we once were.

TWELVE CHRISTIAN STEPS WITH ACCOMPANYING SCRIPTURE

The following scriptures are organized according to the twelve themes and Christian steps:

ONE: SEEKING POSITIVE POWER I acknowledge to You, Lord Jesus Christ, that I am powerless to gain control over my symptoms and I seek Your help as a source of positive power.

"My eyes are ever looking to the Lord for help for He alone can rescue me. Come Lord and slww me your mercy for I am helpless, overwhelmed, in deep distress - Save Me!" (Psalm 25:15) "He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might, He increases strength ... But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:29-31).

TWO: SEEKING MEANING. I seek to find meaning in my traumatic experience and survival and open my mind to You, Lord Jesus Christ, for help.

"Show me the path where I should go, Oh Lord. Point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me. Teach me. For you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you" (Psalm 25:4); "Lord,/ lift my hands to heaven and implore your help. Oh, listen to my cry" (Psalm 28:2); "Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the father but by me" (John 14:6); "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9).

THREE: SEEKING TO TRUST. I seek Your presence, Lord Jesus Christ, for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions that I may become free of distrust, shame, and doubt.

"Trust the Lord completely. Don't trust yourself. In everything you do, put God first. He will direct you and crown your efforts with success" (Proverbs 3:56); "You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You [God] because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever. For the Lord is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:3-4).

FOUR: SEEKING TRUTH. I will make a searching self-inventory of both negative and positive traits, acknowledge them to You, Lord Jesus Christ, and someone I trust. I seek Your help to accept those which are positive and change those which are negative.

"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit and has lost self-control is like a city broken down without walls (Proverbs 25:28); "Create in me a clean heart Oh God and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 5:10); "Cross examine me Oh Lord and see that I have kept your laws. Test my motives and affections" (Psalm 26:2); "Cleanse me from these hidden faults, and keep me from deliberate wrongs"

(Psalm 19:/2-13); "Therefore each one speak truth with his neighbor. (Ephesians 4:25) "For though once your heart was full of darkness, now it is full of light from the Lord. Walk as children of ligh.t" (Ephesians 5:8).

FIVE: ANGER I acknowledge my rage toward those I feel abandoned or betrayed me. I seek Your Power Lord to help me understand the sources of my continuing anger, to control its destructive effects, and to learn to express it constructively.

"Listen much, speak little, and don't become angry" (James 1:19); "Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath (Ephesians 4:26); "For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment/or our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving usfrom His wrath" (Romans 3:25).

SIX: FEAR I seek Your help, Lord Jesus Christ, to relinquish 'the wall' around my feelings, to withstand moments of terror, and courage to take risks in constructive ways.

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23 :4); "God is our refuge and strength. He is a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, mountains be carried into the midst

of the sea, waters roar and the mountains shake with its swelling" (Psalm 46: 1- 3). "I will pray to the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

SEVEN: GUILT I face my guilty secrets and am willing to reveal them to someone I trust. I ask and accept forgiveness from You Lord Jesus Christ, and ask Your help to forgive myself.

"But Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest who ...understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptations we do... So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16); "I/we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9); "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

EIGHT: GRIEF I seek Your help, Lord Jesus Christ, to grieve those I have lost, face my painful memories and emotions, and let my tears heal my sorrows.

"Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, 'See how He loved him?'" (John 11:35-36); "Blessed are they that mourn/or they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4); "Blessed be God, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulation ... " (2 Corinthians 1:3); "And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever" (Revelations 21:4).

NINE: LIFE vs DEATH I reveal to You, Lord Jesus Christ, and someone I trust all remaining self-destructive wishes and make a commitment to life.

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive in Christ." (Col. 2: 13) "Through Jesus' death, the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with Him by baptism when He died, and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought Him back to life again, you were given His wonderful new life to enjoy. For you have become a part of Him, and so you died with Him, so to speak, when He died and now you share His new life and shall rise as He did." (Romans 6:3-5); "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John 11:25); "I am crucified with Christ. it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

TEN: JUSTICE vs REVENGE I seek Your help, Lord Jesus Christ, to pursue the cause of justice, to gain freedom from my revengeful wishes and plans, and to be a channel of forgiveness to those I once hated.

"The nations fall into the pitfalls they have dug for others; the trap they set has snapped on them. The Lord ... punishes the wicked in their own snares" (Psalm 9:15-16); "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32); "Love your enemies. Do good to them which hate you" (Luke 6:27); "Be gentle and ready to forgive, never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others" (Colossians 3;13).

ELEVEN: FINDING A PURPOSE I seek knowledge and direction from You, Lord Jesus Christ, and seek Your leadership in order to find a renewed purpose for my life.

"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with Thanksgiving ... For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him who is the head of all principalities and powers" (Colossians 2:6-9).

TWELVE: LOVE I seek Your help, Lord Jesus Christ, to renew my commitment to my friends and family, love those I find difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as I once was.

"Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:13-15); "Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud ... Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges. and rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. There are three things that remain -faith, hope, and love - and the greatest of these is Love" (I Corinthians 13:4-7, 13).