

# PHASE TWO: TAKING ACTION TO GET FREE

## LESSON FIVE:

Our belief systems about life need to change and we begin to take an honest look at what we use to prop up these systems. We ask God for His perspective and accept that we need to move in a new direction and repent of the old choices. Prov. 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don’t lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.” Rom. 12:2, 1 Cor. 13:11-12, 2 Cor. 5:7

### NEW LIFE FREEDOM LESSON 5

We have admitted we’re getting nowhere with the way we manage our lives. Now it’s time to actually find out why we started choosing these strategies by looking at the sources of our beliefs. Remember that you aren’t doing this alone. You’re now part of a group that’s also committed to the same process and you’ll be getting tools and support all the way.

We start by looking at where our real security is: who or what do we trust and why? This isn’t just the usual trust it takes to leave the house and start interacting with people in your daily life. This is the real foundation of your life that will give you courage to dig into difficult or painful experiences and find the roots of the problems. It’s also a process that will take some time but is totally worth every minute.

Our life experiences have shaped our trust. When people have hurt or disappointed us, we may have decided that it’s too risky to put much faith in others. Making new relationships and keeping existing ones can be frustrating, so isolation and keeping things shallow look like the best bets. We can start to assume that we know what others are thinking. Have you ever imagined what an upcoming conversation with someone would look like and rehearsed what you were going to say? How accurate were your predictions? Where do those ideas even come from? It’s so much easier to turn to something else to take our minds off conflicts and frustrations than to look any deeper. And where does God fit into all of this?

Our views of God have an effect on how willing we are to turn to Him first. If we see Him as harsh, stern and impossible to please, He’s the last one we turn to when we’ve messed up. If we see Him as remote and uninvolved, we won’t think He’s listening or even cares about our problems. If we see Him as some divine Santa Claus, we won’t understand why His answer isn’t what we wanted and think He’s unreliable. Satan is happy to contribute his lies to distort how God wants to relate with us. Just like Eve in Genesis 3, he wants us to think God is holding out on us and His word shouldn’t be trusted. Add in any negative opinions other people have contributed and we end up determined to cope on our own strength.

But we can't deny that our security system isn't making our lives better. It's time to take our views about God to the best source of information there is – His own word, the bible. Here we can find many testimonies of people who tried things their own way and turned to God. David shows his absolute trust in God in Psalm 62:7-8. "My salvation and my honor depend on God, He is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge." David uses the words rock and refuge throughout the Psalms when He describes God. He had many experiences hiding out in rocky caves when King Saul was hunting him, so he understood how to look for a secure retreat. Notice that he also tells us to pour out our hearts to God. He does this often in the Psalms, holding nothing back when he cries out for rescue. This is the kind of honesty God is looking for from us when we are ready to turn control of our lives over to Him.

When we're really ready to make this change, we'll finally examine where we got these beliefs about God. This process can stir up pain and confusion, but Proverbs 3:5-6 gives us a starting point: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." Trusting in our own understanding has kept us from moving forward. Making the decision to trust God gives us the courage to change. We stop trying to fix or protect ourselves. We trust God's word to be true and that Jesus has paid for our sins, as Paul says in Romans 10:9: "If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Now we have the power to face the things we've avoided.

It's time to change the way we think about a lot of things. 1 Corinthians 13:11 describes the old way as childish: "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things." How many of us would want to put kids in charge of running our lives? Their understanding is based on limited information and experience and mostly based on doing what they want, without thinking about any consequences. Can we see this kind of thinking reflected in our own choices? This is how one small decision made in a moment of stress can blow up into a pattern of choosing something other than God as our security. There are also lots of voices in our culture encouraging this kind of thinking, telling us we deserve whatever we want. Don't think about the consequences to you or anyone else, just take care of yourself.

Paul tells us in Romans 12:2 to stop listening to this advice. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will." Did we ever test our old ways before putting our trust in them? Probably not. God is willing to have His plans put to the test because they are perfectly designed for us. He's the one who really knows us best.

Repentance is part of this transformation. It isn't just telling God we're sorry for choosing other things instead of Him. It involves a deliberate turning from the old ways and moving in the new direction He gives. We stop making excuses for our actions and start acting on our trust in Him. We hear Jesus say in Mark 1:15, "The time has come," He said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news." This good news isn't just for everyone else. You may have given up hope that life could ever be different, but it's time to see that this verse is for you.

Living with the consequences of our old choices has told us not to hope for the freedom we see in these verses. God looks past these results and offers lasting relief. 2 Corinthians 1:3 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort." Notice that Paul says all comfort – not just for some circumstances, but for every one. His comfort goes beyond the surface and goes right to the source, removing the roots and giving complete deliverance. Not only that, but Paul gives us another benefit in verse 4: "so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." We'll be able to help others see God as their solution too, just as some are doing with us tonight.

Getting a transformed mind is essential for getting a new life. Have you heard that when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail? God wants us to trade in our hammers for new tools we can find in His word. We can start to see different results in ourselves and our relationships. We can believe 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, new things have come." We can see the old things as they really are and stop pretending that this is as good as it gets. Instead of being afraid to hope for good things, we can look forward to them because we're not just using our own strength to reach them. Jesus promises to be at work in us and has given us the Holy Spirit as a guide into new understanding. If you've never accepted Jesus as your savior, you can do that tonight. If you've already accepted Him but find you've been putting your own way instead of His, you can recommit to follow Him. There are people here who will be happy to pray with you.

#### Scripture references

Psalm 62:7-8, Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 13:11, Romans 12:2, Mark 1:15, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and 5:17