

Life Controlling Issues

Goal for the Meeting: To equip the Servant Leaders to be able to start the conversation in dealing with life controlling issues in the Core Group members lives. This will not be a one size fits all but a beginning to the conversation.

Principles to walking people into the freedom of Jesus (John 8:31-36)

The goal today is to give you a bit of a framework when it comes to helping students deal with life controlling issues. We have seen many different types of issues surface here at the University, some of them you in this room have dealt with and some of them you know someone who has dealt with them. These could be many different issues, not the least of which is pornography and all that comes with it and body image issues and all that comes with that.

It's important to know that we believe in the power and in the process. We are going to talk about a lot of process today but we believe that God can do in two minutes what we try do to in a semester or a life time, it just doesn't always happen that way. So, how can we help people who want to be helped?

Theme verse: "For the GRACE of God that brings salvation has appears to all men. It teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" Titus 2:11-12

(Obviously, the order of these meetings can be adjusted to suit the individual's greatest need at the time. But ultimately all of these sessions are helpful in seeing people walk in freedom.)

Usual structure

- 1) Interview
- 2) Truth
- 3) Response and plan for this time
- 4) Pray

First time I meet with them:

1. They confess. This may seem obvious, but it's important. They have to want to get well (John 5:6) This will not be an easy process and they have to be on board.
2. I affirm them for getting their sin out of darkness and into the light. (1 John 1:7-9)
3. I ask questions.
 - a. When did it start?—Genesis 4:7—when was the door opened. Also at some point talk to them about the danger of opening doors. How does someone go from a faithful and free believer to bound in habitual sin? Small compromises in their walk with God and then they opened the door to this sin.
 - b. Luke 4:13—I am looking to identify opportune times. The devil knows them so should we.
 - c. I am looking for patterns that need to be broken
4. I talk about how Jesus taught us to take radical steps to get rid of sin from our lives. Mark 9:43-49, Matthew 5:29-30. For them to get free it is going to take some dramatic steps on their part! How committed are they to freedom? What are they willing to do to see it happens? (i.e. for porn—where they will put their computer, covenanteyes.com, do they need to take their door off their hinges, are their magazines they shouldn't look at, people they shouldn't be around, throw their computer away, give me their computer...)

5. Talk about concrete steps they can take to be victorious this week! Fail to plan, plan to fail.
 - a. Crucial pieces of a good plan:
 - i. Accountability
 - ii. Spiritual disciplines: John 15
 - iii. A radical step
 - iv. Plan for alternative response
 - v. What will the ramifications be if they don't walk out the plan.
6. I pray for them to be cleansed, for the door to this sin in their life to be closed and for God to deliver them and empower them to be victorious. I will also agree with them in prayer as they pray.

Second Meeting

1. Ask them how they have been doing. Celebrate victories and talk about any defeats and see what you can learn from them.
2. I talk about the difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow over sin. (2 Corinthians 7:10) The examples I use are Saul (1 Samuel 15:30) and David (Psalm 51)—how they responded differently when they had sinned.
 - a. Worldly sorrow—is that sense of sadness because you got caught or because you were forced to give up what you really wanted to do. Such sorrow is self centered and does not call and evil thing evil. Worldly sorrow is reluctant to change—you change because you have to but not because you really want to. They don't understand just how ugly their sin is.
 - b. Godly sorrow—this sorrow leads to life. It causes us to see vividly our need for a savior and for forgiving grace. Our guilt actually functions as a blessed grace because it wakes us up to our need for Christ and leads us to salvation. Basically we see our sin for how evil it truly is and how it offends God and God is the focus of our sorrow and the effects that our sin has.
3. For them to get freedom it is imperative that they enter into true repentance, which comes from Godly sorrow.
4. Use the Jacob stew illustration—I talk to them about the deception of sin. How it leaves us feeling empty and doesn't really satisfy but leaves us feeling regret. Esau sold his birthright and it wasn't even that good. He could have had something much better and he sold it out for nothing. This is a picture of what we do when we give into sin. When we give into to something that is not the best for us, it leaves us feeling empty and wanting and we don't get what we thought we were getting.
5. Talk about the consequences of sin.—
 - a. It's effect on their walk with God—sin doesn't end our relationship but it definitely hinders our fellowship with God. We lose the joy of our salvation (Ps 51)
 - b. Talk about how God views the sin—"to fear the Lord is to hate evil".
 - c. Talk about the ramifications of the sin in the rest of their relationships. (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - d. When we intentionally resist the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in our lives we loose sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, which is the key to the Christian life.
 - e. This helps them to have the courage to walk in holiness. When the Cause > Circumstances you will have courage
 - f. Circumstances > Cause you will not have courage
6. Pray with them for the next week.
http://www.veritas.org/3.0_media/talks/54 This is a great talk to help people think differently about porn specifically.

Third meeting

1. Ask them how they have been doing. Celebrate victories and talk about any defeats and see what you can learn from them.
2. Talk about the importance of both the Power and the Process to walk in freedom.

- a. Acts 19:8-12 Paul was a person of the process (purposeful and persistent) and He saw God's power. It was the combination that brought a revival to Ephesus.
 - b. Matthew 12:43-45 The person was freed from the demonic (experienced God's power) but it was not followed up by a walk with God and the house was unoccupied.
 - c. The process puts us in position to receive God's power and then the process helps us walk out what God has done!
 - d. The process is like the bread that holds the meat of the power to make a life-changing sandwich.
3. Encourage them to memorize and immerse themselves in Scripture. (Psalms 119:9,11; Psalm 1)—The power of Scripture memory can't be underestimated! After all Jesus used Scripture to overcome Temptation. This is how we feed our spirit!
 4. Talk about how every time they face temptation they will either give dominion over to their flesh or give more dominion to the Spirit's work in their lives.—People who have been addicted must detox/starve their flesh. Every time they say no to their flesh the monster gets weaker and weaker until it begins to wither and die!
 5. They must come to terms with the fact that the choices they make will help them walk in freedom or stay in bondage. They can't make bad choices and then blame God for not delivering them.
 6. Pray with them.

Fourth meeting

1. Ask them how they have been doing. Celebrate victories and talk about any defeats and see what you can learn from them.
2. The focus on this week is forgiving yourself and experiencing Christ's forgiveness in your life.
3. 1 Kings 15:5 This is a powerful verse that God considered David's failure "the exception not the rule". We tend to be people who define ourselves by the exceptions in our lives.
4. Often our own inability to forgive ourselves is our own pride that wants to pay the price for our own sin. If we do this. We are saying the price that Jesus paid on the cross was not enough.
5. Isaiah 1:18—Talk about how God forgives us and washes us white as snow and not white as a peach!
6. John 1:9 talks about how we are not just forgiven but we are also purified!
7. The red screen in heaven—good visual of true forgiveness.
8. Pray with them.

For the rest of the time you meet up you will keep them accountable to the "process". You will remind them of truth you may have already covered that you feel they may have already covered. Sometimes it takes a while for truth to go the longest 12 inches in the world—from the person's head to their heart!

Remember Titus 2:11-12 "For the GRACE of God that brings salvation has appears to all men. It teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age"

It is only by the grace of God we can live godly lives!