SPONSOR (Lesson #8, Monday, November 5th, 2012)

1. Tonight’s Lesson based on Principle 4 & Step 4
   a. “Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.” (princ. 4)
   b. “Make a searching & fearless moral inventory of ourselves” (step 4)

2. Tonight we will see that the Road To Recovery is NOT meant to be travelled alone.
   a. You’ve heard me say that the Bible is all about Relationships
   b. Tonight we will see that we need 3 very important relationships to navigate this road:
      i. Obvious First relationship is the one you have with JC.
      ii. 2nd, you need relationships in your recovery group /or church family
      iii. Finally, (what we are going to focus on tonight) is your relationship with your SPONSOR and your ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER
   iv. You will see that this is why I have been pushing you to get a Sponsor. The main reason for this is that you will see how important this person is as you move into Principles 4-6 (getting right with God, yourself, & others)

3. Now – Last week I opened the subject of you all doing a Moral (Honest) Inventory (where you evaluate your weaknesses & strengths)
   a. HOWEVER – to attempt to do a moral inventory BY YOURSELF can be extremely frustrating.
      i. John Baker says: “It’s like trying to peel an onion to find the core – when you’re finished all you have are peelings and tears.”
   b. Whole point is to “come clean” to identify (honestly) everything about ourselves
      i. Proverbs 15:14 says: “A wise person is hungry for the truth, while a fool feeds on trash.”
      ii. Are you ready to “feed on the truth about your life?” well then, it’s time to take out the trash !!!
4. ALRIGHT – let’s get started – take out your handout – NO acrostic for a change - Just take good notes.
   a. Ok, taking out the “trash” can be difficult – can’t do it alone
   b. Need a genuine mentor, coach, (or in Recovery terms: a SPONSOR - & to lesser degree; account partner
   c. Now, some of you are obviously not convinced you NEED a sponsor or AP - you don’t think you need someone to come alongside you on your road. SO tonight we will answer the following 5 questions
      i. Why do I need a sponsor / AP?
      ii. What are the qualities of a Sponsor?
      iii. What does a Sponsor do?
      iv. How do I find a Sponsor / AP?
      v. What is the difference between a sponsor & an AP?
5. OK, 1st question: “Why do I need a Sponsor and/or AP? - there are 3 reasons
   a. (1st) Having a Sponsor / AP is BIBLICAL.
      i. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 lays it out: “Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But is someone is alone..., there is no one to help him... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone.”
      ii. AND, Proverbs 27:17 says: “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”
      iii. The phrase: “One Another” is used in the NT over 50 times.
   b. Ok (2nd reason you need a Sponsor: Not only is having a Sponsor Biblical, Having a Sponsor or AP is a key part of your recovery.
      i. There are 4 “KEY ELEMENTS” (within this 2nd reason) to success of your own recovery: (not on your handout – put them in yourself in “notes”)
         1. 1st – Maintaining your honest view of reality as you work each step.
            a. The people who have been working w/ CR for years have never seen someone fail who was able to be completely honest with themselves & w/ others. (REPEAT THIS )
            b. HOWEVER: There are many who fail because they get stuck in denial.
i. Having someone holding you accountable to be honest before God and man makes all the difference.

2. 2nd Key Element – Making attendance at CR a priority in your schedule.
   a. Means: NOT taking the summer off
   b. Means: NOT staying home when the weather is bad
   c. Means: NOT staying away when you have failed or relapsed into your HHH.
   d. Means: Understanding that the other people here need you as much as you need them.
   e. NOW – I’m not saying you can’t take a vacation – everyone needs a vacation – but after the vacation COME BACK.
   f. REMEMBER: Your HHH do not take vacations.
   g. You need to make Monday nights and later if you get into a Step Study meetings a Priority. YOUR Accountability Partner or Sponsor encourages you to attend faithfully.

3. 3rd Key Element – Maintaining your spiritual life & growth with Jesus Christ through prayer, meditation, and study of His Word.
   a. We will focus more on this in Lesson #7
   b. Don’t wait till we get there before you start working on this.
   c. Your Sponsor can/should be praying for you and holding you accountable to spend the time with God that He desires.

4. 4th & Final Key Element - Is Getting Involved In Service.
   a. You will see later on we will focus on this in detail.
   b. Do you remember that it is a requirement of the CR program that you Serve Back or Pay Forward the blessings you have received.
   c. Key principle used in counseling all the time – once you are over a crisis, part of the healing is to serve others in the area you have struggled.
   d. We need help with CR. Even if you don’t feel ready to lead a group – there are lots of other things you can do.
c. OK, Back to your handout (3rd reason you need a Sponsor: Having a Sponsor or AP is the best guard against Relapse.
   i. This is a fact.
   ii. They know your old dysfunctional patterns & can know when they are creeping up again. He/she can confront you w/truth without shame or guilt. (Especially when they have struggled in same area that you have struggled)
   iii. Ecclesiastes 7:5 is our reference point here: “It is better to be criticized by a wise man than to be praised by a fool!”
      1. WOW – profound. Truth is: “most of us would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.”
      2. Not wanting a Sponsor is a sure sign that you are still in Denial and you are trying to keep yourself ISOLATED!

6. Alright – In answering our next question we will tackle: “What are the Qualities of a Sponsor?
   a. “Though good advice lies deep within a counselor’s heart, the wise man will draw it out.” Proverbs 20:5
   b. When selecting a Sponsor, look for the following qualities:
      1. Does his/her walk match the “talk”?
         a. It requires more than being able to recite the 12 step process.
         b. Be sure that the person you choose as a Sponsor is someone whose life example is worthy of imitation.
      2. Does he/she have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ?
         a. You definitely want to see Christ in them & in the choices they make in life
      3. Does she/he express the desire to help others on the road to recovery?
         a. Remember you are NOT looking for someone to “FIX” you – you just need some help along the road.
         b. Need to try to avoid becoming “codependent” or getting involved in an unhealthy relationship.
4. Does he/she show compassion, care, & hope?
   a. Not talking about Pity – you don’t need someone feeling sorry for you.
   b. BUT you do need someone who is sensitive to your pain.
      i. Rick Warren says: **“People don’t care about how much you know until they know about how much you care!”**

5. Is he/she a good listener?
   a. If they turn everything you say or bring up into being about THEM, - move on.

6. Is she/he strong enough to confront your denial or procrastination?
   a. You know what I’m saying here right? No wishy washy!

7. Does he/she offer constructive good suggestions?
   a. Sometimes we need someone who is objective and wise
   b. Good if they’ve lived life a while in victory
   c. NOT looking for someone to order your life

8. Is she/he able to share her/his own struggles with others?
   a. Can he/she open up, be vulnerable themselves, or transparent?
   b. We are looking for Sponsors who are “Living” the principles

7. The next question to tackle: What is the **Role** of the Sponsor?
   a. Six things that your Sponsor Can do:
      1. They can be there for you to discuss issues in detail that are too personal or would take too much time to discuss in a meeting.
         a. Obviously, in small group if you shared your COMPLETE history there wouldn’t be any time for the others to share.
      2. They are available in a time of crisis or at threat of relapse.
         a. John Baker always tells his newcomers: “call me before you take that first drink. You can still take it after we talk, if you decide to. But please call first!”
         b. Remember **Ecclesiastes 4:12** “**Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone.**”
3. They can serve as a Sounding Board by providing an objective point of view.
   a. Sometimes all we need is to hear our thoughts out loud. & to see how others would respond.
4. They are there to encourage you to work the principles at your own speed.
   a. Not their job to work the principles FOR YOU.
   b. Encourager primarily They are NOT a counselor / therapist. Not their job to FIX you.
5. MOST IMPORTANT: They attempt to MODEL the lifestyle that results from working the 8 principles.
   a. It is impossible to inspire others to accomplish what you haven’t been willing to try yourself.
6. A Sponsor can resign OR be fired! It is NOT a lifetime position.
8. OK, Now: How do I Find a Sponsor and/or AP?
   1. First & Foremost: MUST be same sex as you NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS!
   2. Can you relate to this person’s own story?
      a. Make sure they meet 1-6 just mentioned above
   3. Fellowship w/them first – get to know them a little before finalizing. Café is great for this.
   4. If you ask someone and they say “NO” do NOT take it personally.
      a. Some people are not prepared for this responsibility.
      b. Some would rather not let you know that they do not qualify because they are STILL in relapse themselves and no one knows about it.
         i. Their own recovery has to come first.
      c. Some would want their Open Share group leader to be their Sponsor, but they can’t do that for every member of the group – burn out.
5. MOST IMPORTANT: Pray & ask God to lead you to the sponsor and/or AP
9. Finally – last question on your handout: What is the difference between a Sponsor and an Accountability Partner?
   a. SPONSOR:
      i. Need to be at least familiar with CR. (book calls for them to have actually gone through a CR program themselves – but we can’t do that yet)
      ii. Meet the 6 requirements we talked about in the Role Of Sponsor section earlier
      iii. Main Goal: Choose someone who will guide you through the program with compassion, understanding, prayer.
   b. ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER:
      i. Person you ask to hold you accountable for certain areas of your recovery, such as meeting attendance, journaling, etc.
      ii. Can be at same level of recovery as yourself.
      iii. Main Goal: Encouragement
      iv. Can even get together as a small group (3-5) who all encourage & hold accountable. They act as a TEAM while the Sponsor acts as the COACH
10. Start forming your accountability teams/partners tonight if you haven’t done so yet. Do it in your Open share groups tonight.
11. Serenity Prayer -
12. Dismiss to Open Share Groups. (Newcomers to room 304)