

WHY DO YOU “DO” WHAT YOU DO . . . AND WHY DO YOU “FEEL” AS YOU FEEL?

Preface

What is it that makes you Spirit-controlled . . . or out of control?

Perhaps you blame people, or circumstances or events. Or maybe you feel trapped by your own emotions -- anger, guilt, stress, loneliness, bitterness or hostility!

But the truth is this: The course of your daily life takes place **in the way you think!** You **can gain control** of what happens to you, as well as what takes place inside you. **You can be controlled** by the Word of God and the fruit of the Spirit.

This study will show you how!

Most of us look at our feelings and relate the causes of how we feel to the events in our lives. If good things happen to us, we feel happy and satisfied. If bad things happen to us, we feel sad or mad. We a result, we spend all kinds of effort trying to rearrange the circumstances of our lives in order to insure our happiness.

Then maybe we are bothered by examples that often contradict how we think about ourselves. We often are confronted by someone who is worse off than we are, yet appears to be happy and content with life. Or perhaps we recall a time when we could make an inventory of our lives and we were full of the joy of the Lord.

But we have allowed our responses to the events, people, or circumstances of our lives to bring sorrow, defeat, anger, and possibly a great amount of bitterness. How can we be set free? This is what we will see in this study. I trust this booklet will greatly challenge your life and give you many new insights!

-- Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

Table of Contents

PART ONE

We Do What We DO and Feel As We FEEL . . .

Because of Our Programming	Pg. 3
Because of Our Self-talk Practices	Pg. 6
Because of Our Attitudes	Pg. 11
Because of Our Emotions	Pg. 14
Because of Our Behavior	Pg. 18

PART TWO

Self-Talk and a Walk by Faith	Pg. 22
Self-Talk and Our Problem With Anger	Pg. 24
Self-Talk and Our Problem of Worry, Anxiety, and Anxiousness	Pg. 28
Self-Talk and Our Problem With Guilt	Pg. 30
Self-Talk and the Problem of Stress	Pg. 32
Self-Talk and Assertive Living	Pg. 34

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

WHY DO YOU “DO” AS YOU DO AND “FEEL” AS I FEEL?

(Read and ponder the following: Prov. 23:7; Isa. 26:3; Matt. 12:33-36; 15:18-20; Jh. 8:32; Rom. 8:5-8; 12:2; II Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 4:23)

Introductory Thoughts:

What are we taught from the verses listed above? I would encourage you to begin by reading them and mediating upon them carefully. From a thoughtful reading you will decide the Word of God places a great emphasis upon our thoughts. You will note that we cannot be transformed without the **renewing** of the mind. After reading these verses consider the following questions.

- How do we help the hurting, failing, the discouraged and sorrowful, or the anxious person?
- How do we minister to the devastated individual, or the defeated family, the disheartened single, or the failing spouse, teen or child?
- How can we help the family with strife, conflicts, and confrontations or hostilities?
- We ask, “*Why do I feel this way? Why am I depressed, discouraged, anxious, resentful or disheartened?*”

To understand why we do what we do and feel as we feel there are five basic words that we must look at. There is an inter-relationship within these five basic things, and they consist of: **programming, self-talk practices, attitudes, emotions, and behavior or actions.**

We will study these five words that deal with this subject!

Chapter I

We FEEL What We Feel and DO as We DO? -- Because of Our PROGRAMMING!

We all have a past! Sometimes the past has to be dealt with for we may be holding on to **bitterness, anger**, or some other sinful responses to **people, events, or circumstances we have faced.** **The past must be dealt with when sins and failures of the past have not been confessed and forsaken.**

There is an endless list of things that make up one's life, both past and present. All of these things have had an impact upon our lives -- largely from the way we responded to those things and the kind of decisions we made as a result.

Programming Includes:

1. We all have past programming which can be either good or bad programming.
2. We produce our programming by our sowing. (See Gal. 6:7-8.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

3. Programming includes all the *significant* things that have happened to us. This includes the events, circumstances, and the people who have had an effect or impact on our lives.
3. Programming is primarily produced by our own habits and patterns of life, whether they are sinful habits or godly.
4. We have also reproduced patterns in our lives from the example of others and from our own habitual practices.

Consider the following!

What kind of programming did Paul have as he set in jail as seen in Acts 16? What kind of programming did David build in his life that effected him as he dealt with Goliath, or King Saul? Programming includes so many different potential things, such as: when we were saved, type of schooling we experienced, kind of friends we had or do have now, type of TV viewing we allow, things we read, etc.

If we grew up in a family where there was drunkenness, or mental, physical, or sexual abuse we, doubtless, have things that we must overcome from the past.

How are things for you, dear Christian? How are you responding to the **events**, **circumstances** and **people** who touch your life? These three things are the only things that effect our lives on a daily basis. To these three things we often respond sinfully and habitually in the wrong way as we build defeating patterns or habits in our lives which I am calling ***programming***..

Effecting Change:

1. We must recognize and change sinful habits that we have built in the past.
2. We ought to at least partially recognize how others have come to the actions we see in their lives and why ***they feel as they feel and do as they do!***
3. There are habits and patterns of life that we must PUT OFF. Col. 3:8-9

LIST SOME YOU NEED TO PUT OFF!

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. There are habits and practices of life that we must PUT ON. Col. 3:10-14

LIST SOME YOU NEED TO PUT ON!

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

The Search For Self-Control!

God tells us that a person out of control is as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls. (See Prov. 25:28.) We live in a world characterized by an ever-growing sense of being out of control. This is in direct conflict with the longing and need, deep within us, to exercise control over our daily lives. *"I don't know what is happening! I feel so helpless -- so out of control!"* is a concise description of many in today's society. Even many Christians feel that their lives are out of control.

Many people feel overwhelmed by the effect of things as they are in the world today. And I feel that many have built a steady programming of reactions that bring about their feelings of lack of control. Things are, probably, little different today than from the times of the Psalmist. In Psalm 42 and 43 we read of one whose life seemed out of control, ***but his answers were found where we find them today -- in the LORD.***

Many Christians experience defeating, destructive emotions described as: worry, guilt, anxiety, sadness, depression, bitterness and hostility. Some of these emotions were experienced by the Psalmist as stated in Psalm 42 and 43. He had certain **thoughts** that he had ***programmed into his life*** which caused him to think as he thought and react as he did.

The ***love of God*** is basically, the emotion of self-control, for when love is our response and when we live in the **power** of the LOVE of GOD, we are able to **act** and not just **react** to life. In I John 4:16-19 we are told that *perfect love casts out fear, for fear has torment, and those who are made perfect in love. . . do not live in fear.* Only to the extent that the Psalmist lived in the power of the love of God would he also know the joy of God's presence regardless of the difficulties or the circumstances of life. This is also true of all of us today!

This would teach us that as we allow the love of God to saturate our lives we will build a consistent programming of life that will bring about complete surrender, satisfaction, and peace in God's providence and will for us.

In the balance of this series you will note the consistent inner-relationship of: ***programming, self-talk practices, attitudes, emotions*** and finally ***present and future behavior*** that we live from day to day !!

We will see how our own personal programming and self-talk practices helps us build our attitudes, emotions, and our present and future behavior.

For Consideration, Discussion, and Study:

1. What did Christ promise in John 8:32, note also 8:32-26, and why is this so significant?
2. We can only bring out of the treasure of our hearts what we have put in according to Matthew 12:34-36.
3. What have you been putting into that treasury?
4. What has happened in the past that presently has effected your life?
5. What habit or sinful programming from the past do you need to face, reject, and work at removing from your life?

We Do What We Do and Feel as We Feel -- Because of SELF-TALK PRACTICES!

Recognition of Thoughts and Their Effect on the Life!

Biblical counseling always includes dealing with both the “*inner man and the outer man*” -- with thoughts and emotions and with words and actions. For a Christian to live a consistent life, his **thoughts**, emotions, words, and actions must cooperate with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Christ emphasized the relationship of inner thoughts, understanding, and desire with outer actions and words. (See Matthew 12:34,35.)

In our lives inner thoughts and outer works are intertwined. The outer renewal consists of new ways of behaving that are consistent with biblical principles. But to make this work, there must also be a change in the thinking of the person. Change must take place both in the inner life thoughts as well as the outer life actions. The sin problems of lust, jealousy, envy, bitterness, anger, and pride, for example, must be faced first as thoughts, as well as the outcome produced in sinful practices or actions.

We must recognize that the great battle in life is in the arena of our thought life. We are in a war! (See II Cor. 10:3-5.) The battlefield is the mind. Satan produces a *self-feeding system* through the thought life. He does this by establishing fortresses of deception which are produced in the thought life. These fortresses stand against the truth of God.

Fortresses of deception are *belief systems* that are reinforced over years by thoughts, then by the emotions and actions that they produce. This deception becomes self-feeding for as we reinforce thoughts they produce further thoughts about the same lies or misbeliefs.

The Recognition of the Importance of One's Thoughts!

We need to understand how God made us and how thoughts have such an impact on our daily life. Our thoughts take the form of internalized sentences or what we could call -- **self-talk**. Thinking is a train of ideas manifesting itself in sub-vocal speech.

1. *People's thinking includes their beliefs, attitudes, opinions and values.* We self-talk to ourselves about almost anything and everything we consider to be significant to us. We do most of our important thinking in terms of **self-talk** or internalized sentences.
2. We can be constantly talking to ourselves about things which are then often reflected in our moods and actions. Our inner thoughts or words, spoken to ourselves, do have a great influence upon our emotions and our actions.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

3. Mentally, we are in a battle. II Corinthians 10:3-5 is very clear about this battle. Most of us do not understand that this war involves our thought life. Since the beginning, when sin entered into the world, the battle people face is a sinister battle with our enemy who first defeats us in the area of our thought life.
4. People do not go to counselors because their thoughts are irrational or sinful but because they hurt emotionally. Usually they do not see the sinful self-talk behind their emotional pain. They have thoughts that are sinful and irrational as they are not founded on truth.
5. We often pervert truth because it is human, sinful, and natural to do this as we walk in our sinful ways. This is why we need, so desperately, to meditate upon the Word of God.
6. We must be encouraged to question the validity of our beliefs, attitudes and thoughts. Do they manifest truth as we apply the Word of God, or do we embrace lies and therefore we walk in sinful practices, habits, and actions?

A. Self-Talk Practices Include:

1. We self-talk evaluate almost everything of any significance that takes place in our lives.
2. We talk to ourselves in the inner mind and heart about past events, circumstances, and people who are a part of our lives.
3. By our self-talk we build a belief system about many things. This belief system can be made up of both lies and truth.

Note: Our belief system comes from our self-talk about truths or lies; from our family background, our past experiences and relationships, and from patterns of responses. We talk to ourselves about all of these things.

Because every situation in our lives is **interpreted** by what we believe, our belief system, not the situation, is the key to our response.

In other words our communication (which reveals our thoughts, emotions and intent of our actions), comes from our hearts or our belief system. (See Matt 12:34.)

It is what we say to ourselves, so repeatedly, that builds our belief system which in turn **produces** our actions, attitudes, emotions, and reactions.

4. Our self-talk has immense impact on our programming and vis-versa.
5. As we evaluate things much of the time we speak lies to ourselves, rather than Biblical facts or truth.
6. It is so easy for us to be influenced by Satan, the father of lies.
(See John 8:44; consider Gen. 3.)

Consider:

What kind of self-talk do you think Eve engaged in when tempted by Satan? (Gen. 3) What does Proverbs 23:7 teach us? What is the emphasis in II John and III John and why? What are Satan's wiles, or darts? What does it mean to think *carnally*? (See Romans 8:5-8.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

How did the Israelites think as they were going through the wilderness experiences? (See Psa. 106: 7, 12-14, 21, 24-25, Num. 13:30-33; I Cor. 10:9, 10.)

What do you think King Saul was thinking when he was hunting David to kill and destroy like an animal.

B. What We Must Do To Effect Change!

1. To change, we must face the lies that we speak to ourselves.
2. To change, we must recognize the content of the belief system we have built in any given area of our life where we see the sin and failure.
3. To help our children or spouse (others as well) change we must help them recognize the kind of self-talk they practice.
4. Self-talk can only be changed by our rejection of lies, embracing of truth, and that takes place by the application of the Word of God.
(*Jh 17:17; Phil. 4:8; Psa. 139:1-6, 17,18, 23,24; Psa. 15:2*)

God Desires Accurate, Truthful Thinking!

1. God desires that we focus on the right things. (See Philippians 4:8 and write in the things we are to think upon.)_____
2. As thought life changes, so behavior will change. Truthful thinking will free us from the bondage of sin, satan's lies, and the practice of self-deception or telling oneself lies which are embraced and practiced. This is what God desires!
3. Lies are often in the form of generalizations, rationalization, and defensive mechanisms. We must face our lies if we are to change.
4. Thoughts can be evil continually as we build some kind of obsession or compulsive behavior in our lives.
5. Sinful imaginations and falsehoods can form strongholds in the mind and then in the will. (See II Corinthians 10:3-5.) Imaginations can include fears, worries, doubts, and other forms of sinful unbelief which can undermine our Christian walk.
6. The mind is a battle ground where we often fail as we build mental barriers to truth and resist what we see in our own lives.

God Desires a Change in Our Thinking!

1. This can only take place when the Christian **chooses** to be **transformed** by the renewing of the mind by the Word of God with resultant change in behavior. (See Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:8-14.) If I am to change sinful actions, I must be renewed in the spirit of my mind. My thoughts must be brought under God's control by memorizing and meditating on the Word of God.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

2. God desires to set us free from sinful practices. Wrong thinking causes havoc in emotions and generally produces sinful actions and reactions.
3. When a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions are based on the Bible, he receives wisdom, peace, righteousness, and the blessed fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22,23; Prov. 2:1-11.)
4. Change will not come about by trying harder, or just doing your best, or by trying to control your emotions or behavior. Often we try to control our actions without even thinking about the thought processes behind the actions. Without a change in our thoughts we will find it very difficult to change behavior or actions.
5. By God's grace you must capture your thoughts. What you think generates how you feel. Ideas do have consequences. Your thoughts ultimately determine your emotions. If your emotions are to be securely anchored in Christ and the Word of God then proper thought patterns are absolutely essential. ***We must think God's thoughts!*** To do this we must ***demolish arguments and every pretense that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we must take into captivity every device of human reasoning and obey Christ.*** (Study II Cor. 10:3-5.)
6. If we are alert and on guard, we will be able to evaluate the thoughts that come into our minds. If we search the Word of God we will be able to compare all thoughts with the truth. (See I John 4:1.)
7. **God expects us to change!** In order to live a godly life we must capture the thoughts that come from the world, the flesh and the devil. We must demolish any satanically inspired thought process. Submit these evil thoughts to capital punishment. **Destroy them with a vengeance.** Then we must replace the evil arguments, and satan's fakery with two mandatory Christian military disciplines: *meditation upon God's Word and implementation of God's truth in our lives. Are your thoughts God honoring? Purity of thoughts and purity of life goes hand in hand.*
8. **We must learn to expose ungodly thoughts.** We usually allow every thought run its course in our minds without analyzing its worth. We need to ask questions: Is the thought God-honoring? It is speculation? Is a lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God?
9. It is very helpful to be able to identify thoughts that are not honoring to God. Then we can reject them and replace them with truth. It is helpful to state the thoughts and then to compare them with Biblical truth.
10. Our thoughts are seldom neutral. They either reflect beliefs based on the Word of God, or beliefs based on the world's values. We must have God's leadership in perception to identify the source of our thoughts and determine those that are not of Him. (See Phil. 4:8; Rom. 8:5-8.)

Example:

Irrational or sinful thinking produces disaster in the emotional sphere. A good example of this is the person who carries much free-floating anger around with him. As a result he finds the world he encounters also to be angry in order to justify his own feelings of anger. Even in this case, where emotions have influenced thinking, it

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

is evident that it is the thinking element in the original free-floating hostility that needs to be discovered and handled if the person is to live more effectively, victorious, and for God's glory.

For consideration, discussion and study:

1. Do you recognize that your self-talk greatly influences your daily life?
2. As an assignment, for the next 24 hours take special note of your inner self-talk practices. Notice the negative, critical, sinful inner-thought patterns and you will also notice how these influence your attitudes to life in general.
3. We must recognize that we all build a *belief system!* And then with that we must recognize that we interpret every situation in life by what we believe. Do you see this in your life? Think it through! It is our belief system, not our situation, that is the key to our response. So consider what some of your belief systems might be in given areas of your sinful failure!
4. You are challenged to consider the lies you hold on to, and then face those lies with the Word of God.
5. To change you need to prepare a *stop card* on which you
 - a. write the lie you need to reject,
 - b. the truth statement you need to embrace and
 - c. a verse you will memorize as the Biblical answer.

***We Do What We Do and Feel as We Feel
Because of ATTITUDES WE HAVE BUILT!***

Consider:

1. Attitudes have to come from some place. They don't just happen by themselves. *Attitudes are a state of mind about something!*
2. An attitude is the composite of the way we think and feel about something or someone. One cannot separate attitudes from thoughts.
3. Probably, most of our attitudes are built by 1) **what** we think about, 2) **how** we think, and 3) **what** controls those thoughts.
4. Attitudes reveal what we have put into our hearts.
5. Attitudes are formed in the inner being by how we respond to things about us from the time we are small children.
6. We note the attitudes in the lives of others by their words, actions, and reactions. Our very lifestyle, priorities, value system, and purposes in life reveal the inner attitudes we have toward life in general.
7. Our surrender to the will of God for our lives comes out of our attitude to true discipleship and the claims that God has on our lives.

Consider James 3:13-18

We can live by the wisdom of the world which will produce envy, strife, sensuality, etc., or we can live in the wisdom that comes from above. Wisdom comes through thoughts we put into our hearts, or by the belief system we build. God desires that our responses in thoughts, attitudes, actions, and reactions will be that which is pure, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, etc.

We need to face the truth about our attitudes for they can easily include the following: negativeness, criticalness, indifference, apathy, laziness, slothfulness, resistant, envious, jealousy, irritableness, anxiousness, unforgiveness, bitterness, etc.

Attitudes Include:

1. Our attitudes are partially produced by our self-talk and our programming.
2. We build our attitudes as we talk within ourselves about events, circumstances, and the people about which we are concerned.
3. As you read Malachi 1:11-16 carefully, what was it that God spoke about that we are to carefully guard? *"Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." (vs. 15)*
" Therefore take heed to your spirit that ye deal not treacherously. " (vs. 16)
4. What does God command us in II Cor. 7:1? _____
_____.
5. What did the Psalmist desire according to Psa. 139: 23, and 24? _____
_____.

Notice Hebrews 4:12 and think about the fact that the Word of God was given to help us make discernment about the thoughts and the intents of the heart. Here we see that the Word of God searches us out concerning both our words and motives.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

How Do We Effect Change?

1. We must face the negative, destructive, sinful attitudes! (See Heb. 12:15.)
2. We must look at the attitudes that defeat us! (Psa. 106; Heb. 3:17-19).
3. We must face the lies and whatever sinful attitudes we have built into our lives in the present.
4. It is necessary that we recognize the wrong sinful attitudes that we have built by our reactions to people, events, and the circumstances that make up life.
5. We must recognize that many of our attitudes are produced by our perception and our personal self-talk evaluations.
6. We build a general outlook on life as a Christian by our own self-talk because we are either talking Biblical truth or lies to ourselves.

Consider:

What kind of attitudes did Jonah have as he fled from God's will? What kind of attitude did Adam have as sin came into their lives, and whom did he blame? What was Paul's attitude as he sat in jail when you compare this with the Epistles he wrote? (See Romans 5:3-5 and the theme of the book of Philippians.)

Behind bad attitudes are patterns of sinful actions (or sinful habits) and self-talk lies. In many ways we endeavor to take ourselves off the *hook of personal responsibility* by our inner self-talk lies.

To build and maintain the right kind of attitudes we must put away pride (an attitude) and seek to have a broken and contrite heart. (See Psa. 34:18; 51:17; James 4:6-10.).

Consider:

What Example of Attitudes Do We Find in Hebrews 3:7-13?

1. We are exhorted to hear His voice, lest we have an attitude of indifference. (3:7)
2. We are exhorted not to harden our hearts, lest we have an attitude of rejection.
3. We are to take heed, lest we have an evil heart of unbelief. (3: 12)
4. We are to exhort one another daily, lest we build an attitude of hardness. (3: 13)

What Kind of Example Do We See in Christ's Life in Philippians 2:5-11?

1. Christ came to be a servant and He had a servant's heart. (Cf Matt. 20:28.)
2. We see Christ's attitude of humility, setting aside His rights, entering completely into servanthood.
3. Christ set aside all His rights as He gave Himself in sacrificial death. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

Note:

We must face the past and what we need to change, and reject the sinful reactions we still live from the past. We must take a stand against the wrong of the past if we are to change our present sinful attitudes.

We must recognize that our present attitudes are produced by our inner personal heart evaluations. We build a general outlook on life as a Christian and through this we also produce present reactions and attitudes to things that take place on a daily basis.

Behind bad or sinful attitudes are patterns of sinful actions or habits and many self-talk lies and a belief system that is not Biblical.

For consideration, discussion, and study:

Let's consider the sinful attitude of unforgiveness. Such an attitude comes from our thought life as we *hold out* against someone who has offended us.

1. We determine that the person does not deserve to be forgiven. We sin in thought and attitude.
2. We hold on to a list of offenses and build bitterness and rejection toward the other person.
3. We thus open the door to Satan. Unresolved anger and bitterness accompanies a failure to forgive and is a welcome mat for demonic activity. We literally give Satan a *toehold in our lives*. *These attitudes are very destructive.* (Consider Eph. 4:26,27.)

Note the following chart:

False Beliefs	--->	Ungodly Thoughts	--->	Painful Emotions	--->	Ungodly Actions
----------------------	------	-------------------------	------	-------------------------	------	------------------------

Situation (In our situation we can follow the track above or the one below. We can trace the actions back to the false beliefs and self-talk lies and sinful attitudes which brought its results.)

God's Truth	--->	Godly Thoughts	--->	Healthy Emotions	--->	Godly Actions & attitudes
--------------------	------	-----------------------	------	-------------------------	------	--------------------------------------

False beliefs produce ungodly thoughts which then brings painful emotions because of our sin which also then produces ungodly actions.

In the bottom track the opposite is true for when we embrace God's truth this will produce godly thoughts, healthy emotions, and then godly actions and attitudes.

It does make a difference how we respond to events, people, and circumstances in our situations of life. We can choose either one of the above. It all depends upon whether we embrace God's truth or not!

We Do what We Do and Feel As We Feel Because of EMOTIONS THAT WE EXPERIENCE!

Emotions of themselves are not evil. In fact the reason why the Psalms means so much to us is that the writers of the psalms wrote about the spectrum of every emotion that we will ever experience. We relate to the psalms because the emotions we experience in the vicissitudes of life are similar to those the psalmist experienced.

When wonderful gospel songs and hymns are sung we might be moved deeply by the lyrics and their message to our hearts and lives. Years ago, when I was a kid, I heard Kate Smith sing *God Bless America* as only she could sing it. I was deeply moved by her singing. When a large group sing our national anthem often I am too deeply moved to sing. As a child and youth I remember the hymn singing at our house and my grandfather's singing, and his love for the hymns of the faith. His great voice, as he sang from the heart, moved me emotionally. Yes, emotions are a part of life in many ways.

God gives us the ability to feel pain, joy, hurts, love, and a host of other emotions. There are the good emotions of the heart produced by the Holy Spirit and godly living. (See Galatians 5:22,23.) And there are the damaging, sinful, defeating emotions that come from sinful practices, failure, guilt, and wrong thinking.

Christ is touched by the feelings of our infirmities. (See Hebrews 4:14-16.) He experienced every kind of emotion we will ever experience with the exception of those emotions that come from guilt and sin. (See Hebrews 5: 7-9.)

In contrast, the evil person is past feeling, (See Ephesians 4:19.) In the last days people will be without natural affection and many other sinful emotional factors will be evident in their lives. (See II Timothy 3: 1-5.)

If you watch the ads on TV you know how this generation puts a high priority on feeling good. And they tell you how you are to reach this goal:

1. First you are to surround yourself with the right things -- the latest styles in clothing, a new car, and a home in the right neighborhood.
2. The world says that you are to give yourself whatever you desire because you *deserve* it.
3. They teach us that we are to be free from all physical pain or discomfort. If you have a headache, you are to take a pain killer. If you are depressed then there are stimulants you ought to take. And if you are stressed out and have tension then you should take depressants.

A bumper sticker capsulizes the mood in our culture. If it feels good -- do it!

There may be times we seek to insulate ourselves from emotions. Maybe we have been deeply hurt by someone so we endeavor to stay away from that person or any similar circumstances. Not only our *perceptions* but our *evaluations* of what we perceive causes our emotions and our reactions which are sometimes so very sinful.

We perceive our own thoughts and memories and evaluate them as well. Emotions do not exist mysteriously in their own right; they are caused. We can have emotional reactions to thoughts themselves by our evaluative self-talk, and out of that we produce many sinful responses which can bring sorrow to many around us.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

When a smoke detector goes off we don't say that it caused the smoke. But we say the detector tells me something is wrong. Our emotions do not cause our thoughts and actions for the most part. But instead our emotions reveal that something has become a stimulus that produced our emotional response (s).

The Emotional Concerns of Each Person

It is natural that many who need counseling (or who need help) are distraught and overcome by emotional factors which seem to dominate their lives moment by moment.

Some people seem to be emotionally controlled in many ways. They may be high-strung, anxious, fretful, worrying-type people. Often because of pride the person is controlled by his feelings. The predominate reaction may be manifested in angry outburst, bitterness, holding grudges, resentment, and unforgiving attitudes.

Often people who come to a counselor are hoping to be set free from the emotional distress, anguish, and pain they feel in the midst of the problems they are experiencing.

The Word of God speaks much to these sinful life patterns which are manifested in thought life, emotional responses, and actions.

Where Do Emotions Come From?

Many people think that they cannot control their emotional responses and that emotions or feelings cause their behavior. Therefore, they feel that they are **not** accountable for their actions!

What is the truth about this?

1. We will never change our sinful emotional responses until we call sin--sin, and see the wrong in our own sinful, self-talk evaluations, or thoughts. (See Proverbs 23:7; Romans 8:5-8; 12:1,2; John 8:32.)
2. Our thoughts are bound to have a great impact on our feelings and emotions. What we think and what we have built in our lives in programming of habits and life patterns has a tremendous effect upon our emotions.
3. Sinful self-talk is usually manifested in unbelief and the embracing of lies which have been rehearsed mentally over and over again. Emotions are not usually causes but the product of our sinful thoughts.
4. One of the primary concerns of a biblical counselor (or parent and any godly leader) is truth itself. He will watch for error or distortion in the person's thinking, speaking, and feelings. (See II John 1, 2, 4; III John 1, 3, 4.)
5. A biblical counselor will attempt to help the person to recognize wrong feelings and the resultant submission to those feelings through wrong thinking.
6. The counselor will encourage the counselee to believe what God has said over and above his feelings or emotions. Because feelings are deep and are usually close to the heart of man, they appear difficult to change and they appear to be so right. God can bring change by the renewing of the mind. (See Romans 12:2.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

7. The counselee's (or saved person's) feelings or emotions are formed by his:
 - a. natural environment,
 - b. circumstances, and past experiences,
 - c. patterns or habits of life,
 - d. and by his thoughts and perception of these factors.
8. Emotions or feelings may range from the sublime to the sinful. When feelings and desires agree with the Word of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit, they are holy and God-honoring. (See Galatians 5: 22,23; 5: 15-17.)
9. When emotions and desires originate in the flesh, they become focused on self and grieve the Holy Spirit. The counselor will want to be sure that the counselee (or distraught person) does not deny the existence of sinful feelings and desires. (See Romans 8:5-8.)
10. Because of hurts and distortions of perception, feelings are often unreliable indicators of truth. Certain feelings may be just the opposite of what is true.

How Can We Change Hurtful Emotions?

1. *We can change emotional responses by putting on Christ, and being renewed daily by the Word of God. (Write in the following.)*
 - a. Romans 13:14 _____

 - b. Ephesians 4:23 _____

 - c. Ephesians 4:24 _____

2. *Secondly, we can only change by recognizing wrong thinking and doing battle with those wrong thoughts. Behind the actions and the emotions or feelings is wrong thinking. (Study II Corinthians 10:3-5.)*
 - a. We must pull down strongholds which we will find in our sinful thinking. (vs. 4)
 - b. We are to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (vs. 5)
3. *We must endeavor to bring our emotions under control by the application of truth, the Word of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
4. *We can so easily manifest anger, pride, wrath, envy, fear, bitterness and hostilities.*
5. *Fears, anxiety, and worry is the result of wrong thinking and a lack of a walk by faith. We have not applied the Word of God.*
(Study Matt. 6:24-34; Phil. 4:19; 4:6-8.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

We Need to Understand the Pitfall of Living by Feelings!

1. **A life based on feelings is an invitation to the sin of disobedience.**
Our feelings will run counter to what God has desired of us. Most sinful habits are developed by simply following the path of least resistance; we do what we feel like doing or neglect what we don't feel like doing.
We feel that we can't be loving because we don't have any feelings to be loving. We can't forgive because we don't feel like forgiving. If we think we have to feel like it or have the right emotional feelings before we do right, we will never do right.
2. **A second danger of living by our feelings is that we will tend to derive our doctrinal beliefs from our feelings.**
Maybe we believe God is with us because He feels so close. Or there are days when He forsakes us because we feel that He is so far away. (See Hebrews 13: 5,6.) Christ had many kinds of feelings, but He never the lost the joy of the Father's love. (Consider John 15: 9; Hebrews 5: 7; John 12: 27,28; Matthew 26: 38.) Many people derive their various ideas and perceptions about doctrine or beliefs from their feelings rather than Biblical facts.
3. **Living by wrong thoughts and feelings will cause a lot of depression.**
(Study Psalm 42 and 43.)
4. **Living by your feelings will bring about a life of procrastination.**

We Need To Understand How Christ Handled His Feelings!

1. He Admitted His Feelings! (See Matthew 26:38.)
2. He requested the support of His friends and asked them to pray with Him. (See Matthew 26: 36-45.)
3. He knew that His emotional suffering would not separate Him from the Father's love and approval. (Study John 17.)
4. He knew that blessing would following obedience regardless of what feelings told Him. (Study Hebrews 12: 1-4; I Peter 2: 20-25.)

For consideration, discussion and study:

1. What sinful emotions do you notice in your daily life?
 2. What thoughts or self-talk do you notice that is behind your emotional responses, or have an influences on your emotions?
 3. Are you willing to reflect upon your sinful emotional actions and reactions and then analyze what is the stimulus to those emotions? In this process you will find thinking that you need to change. A thorough study of Psalm 42 and 43 will help you to see this.
 4. Emotions in themselves are not sinful, so what makes them sinful, if and when they are? What are you doing about change?
 5. Do you allow your emotions to control you? What can you do about it?
 6. List some good emotions of the heart: _____
-

We Do What We Do and Feel As We Feel and It Is Seen In BEHAVIOR THAT WE LIVE OUT!

God expects us to change. The primary purpose of all counseling is to bring about change whether it is directed by a parent, teacher, pastor, or a full-time counselor, or other leaders.

The greatest barrier to being what we ought to be is the power of the sinful nature and the extent to which we allow sin to dictate -- whether in *thought, word, attitude, or in action*.

We are to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. (Study Gal. 2: 20; 5: 16,17, 24; Rom. 8: 1-8.)

Consider:

1. Finally, present and future, behavior most of the time comes from the other four things we have looked at: or ***programming, self-talk, attitudes, and emotions***.
2. *Why do we do what we do and why do we feel as we feel?* (Consider Romans 6, 8) The sin nature within us is first evident in thought-generated lusts and desires.
3. In early history after the creation of the world God, the Father, had repented that He had made man . . .for every *"imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* (Gen. 6:5)
4. Truth that is known, embraced, obeyed, and practiced is what makes the difference. Lest we walk and live in lies and sinful practices.

So why, as a husband, do you DO what you do? Why, as a wife, do you DO what you do? Why do you react as you react? **It is a choice you know!** So why does your child or teen do as they do and act as they act? Have you found the answers in this series of lessons? You should have!

All of these five things become circular in their effect. Good programming, our godly self-talk thoughts, attitudes, and emotional responses build a changed behavior. The change in behavior in one area helps us to change our programming, thoughts, etc., in still another area and we gradually have tremendous change.

By the same token, we can have a spiraling downward response of worse and worse sinful practices and worse and worse godless results in all four of the foregoing aspects that make up our lives. It is a choice!

How Do We Bring About Change?

1. Change can only take place by a consistent, determined application of Biblical truth.
2. Change takes place as we take a stand against all the wrong sinful programming of sinful habits.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

3. There must be a God-controlled thought life for we must recognized our thoughts that are lies, our misbeliefs, and a belief system that is anti-biblical.
4. Attitudes ought to change as we work at changing all the programmed habits and wrong sinful thoughts.
5. Emotional responses will also change as we apply God's truth to our thoughts and our doings.

Some Barriers to Changing Our Behavior!

1. We expect God to bring about the change as so often we wait passively for God to act for us.
2. We feel that since we made a decision to change that takes care of it. Since we prayed about it and made a choice we feel that takes care of it, but we are wrong.

Three Facts We Must Remember If We Are to Change Our Behavior!

1. In every aspect of the Christian life there is God's part and my part.
2. God will never do my part.
3. God does His part WHEN I am in the process of doing my part.

Three Essentials for Change! (Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:8-14)

1. Put OFF What God Commands You to PUT OFF!

- a. (Eph. 4:22) I am to put off the old man with his deeds.
- b. This necessitates my determination both in heart and mind and outward action.
- c. Putting off demands that I take a stand against my sin, I am to hate it, reject it, and plan by God's grace to see this sinful action removed.
- d. Mentally, I must take a stand against my sinful actions and practices. To do this I must recognize all past programming. Then I must reject those past habits and patterns of life.
- e. In **Colossians 3: 8, 9** God gives us a list of things we are to put off.
 - These things are the actions and sinful reactions of a life controlled by the old nature, the flesh.
 - The old nature is corrupt with its deceitful lusts that bring degradation and loss.

2. PUT ON What God Commands You to Put On!

(Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10-14)

- a. I am to put on the new man with its deeds. The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. (See Colossians 3:10.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

- b. This new man is created in righteousness and in true holiness. (Eph. 4:24)
- c. God gives us a list of things we are to put on as found in Colossians 3:12-14!
 - I am to do this as His elect, holy, and beloved child.
 - These godly characteristics can only be produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit as we are fully controlled by Him.
 - These are only maintained as we walk in the Spirit. (See Gal. 5:16-24.)

3. ***We need to be daily RENEWED in the Spirit of our Mind.***

(Eph. 4:23; See Rom. 12:2.)

- a. This is a process. This requires that our lives become saturated by the Word of God through daily memorization and meditation.
- b. This takes place as we allow God's Word to take the place of inner truth of our lives.
- c. This can only take place as we replace our old sinful habits and patterns of sinful action with new habits of godly action.
- d. This demands the daily work of self discipline.
 - I am sowing, and I will be reaping on a daily basis. (See Gal. 6:7,8.)
 - This necessitates daily discipline, exercising myself unto godliness.

Thought Patterns Can Be Changed, and We Must Change Them!

Behind our behavior then are the thoughts that gives us impetus to do what we do and to feel as we feel!

What are you thinking? How often have you been asked that question? And how many times have you answered, "Oh, I don't know."

At this moment, you probably are not very aware of the thoughts that are actually producing your behavior, your emotions, your life. You see, so many of our thoughts are so automatic, so subconscious, that we are not even aware of them. It is like riding a bicycle. In the beginning we are very aware of every usage of the handle-bars as we steer first this way and then that. We were very conscious of falling and probably talked to ourselves about what we were doing. But after we gained experience balancing the bike we automatically steered without any conscious thoughts.

Most attitudes and behavior are learned in this same way. Your responses to conflict, ways of showing love, our expressions of anger, are all motivated by subconscious self-talk. Some of these inner thoughts are constructive and helpful with positive behavior resulting from them. But other inner thoughts motivate us to engage in self-destructive, and sinful actions that hurts others as well.

How Can We Be Helped By Facing Our Thought Patterns?

First, by discovering what undesirable thoughts are lurking beneath the surface. Secondly, by using methods to help us get rid of sinful, hurtful automatic thoughts and sinful beliefs. And third, by replacing these sinful mental distortions or lies with eternal truths.

As we build up storehouses of memories, knowledge, and experiences we seem to retain and remember those things which we concentrate upon the most. If we concentrate upon rejection and hurt, they will be parts of our experience. Each person is responsible for the things he allows his mind to dwell upon. Basically the focus of our thoughts does make a big difference.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

The Scripture promise that sinful, wrong thinking can be changed to truthful, Biblical thinking for our ***thoughts need to be Christ-like and pleasing to Him!***

Change must take place or we will continue in our sinful ways. If we allow deceptive thoughts these will become self-feeding for as we feed on our thoughts, we will produce further thoughts about the same lies or misbeliefs. This in turn will defeat us. We must work simultaneously on changing both our thoughts and our sinful habits. If we continue sinful self-talk lies these lies will increase. We will insulate ourselves from change as we rationalize and in the process delude ourselves into the idea that we have no sin to forsake.

So IF we will work at changing our programming or habits of the past, and self-talk practices we will then effectively change -- our attitudes, emotions, and our present and future behavior! Behind our problems we will find the impact of our daily thoughts!

***May we work toward personal victory as we daily
bring our thoughts under God's control
and as we work at replacing sinful
practices with godly ones!***

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

PART TWO

Specific Application Areas To Our Daily Lives!

I. Self-Talk Practices and Our Walk by Faith!

God says that “Faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen!” (Heb. 11:1) In a walk by faith we trust God for the fulfillment of things we cannot see, and trust Him to bring about the evidence of things not as yet seen.

Where does unbelief come from? When a person reacts in unbelief it is because, first of all, he thinks negatively as he rejects the possibility of certain things when he could have exercised faith and trust. It is so easy for us to walk by sight and not by faith. If we walk by faith we must fully trust God and the sinful flesh finds this hard to do. It seems it is easier for us to trust self or anyone but God.

Unbelief is a serious sin that closes the door to God’s blessings and negates many things that God wants to do in our lives. Many serious things befell the Israelites because of their unbelief. A study of Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 will disclose much of this truth. A whole generation of the Israelites died outside God’s will because of their unbelief. (See Numbers 14:1-24.) What they said to themselves in self-talk doubts and rejection of God’s ways meant results to their own lives. (See Psalm 78: 18-22.) You can’t examine a single aspect of the Israelites history without finding that unbelief was practiced from beginning to end. All the judgments of God came upon them because they did not trust God. Hebrews chapters three and four are very clear about this.

Christ was hindered in much of His ministry because of the unbelief of the people. So if our self-talk is in the vein of unbelief we can expect to have great loss in our daily life.

Faith is a process of life by which we act in faith. No one is *faithless*. It is not a question of whether we possess faith or not. It is rather a question of **where** we place our faith. When we practice unbelief our faith is actually in our ideas, thoughts, or in what we have embraced from others. And our self-talk, our thoughts, are the best barometers of the object of our faith. Where do you place your trust? Is God and His Word loved and obeyed. Is it the authority in your life?

Look at human examples: For example, have you ever noticed how much more tired you feel after yawning and saying, “I’m so tired?” You feel more tired because your self-talk has just released power in the direction of tiredness! You can actually talk yourself into weariness by your own self-talk in the inner thought life.

In the same way, recent studies have shown that people who begin to talk about the possibility of divorce often find themselves proceeding inevitably in the direction of divorce. Later on they commented on how they felt trapped by their words. Things were not that bad, but talking about divorce, again and again, gave power of action toward that decision. They talked themselves into the idea that this was their only hope, or only choice. They did this by their own words or inner-thought meditations. Often people leave good places of employment for the same reason -- they talked negatively about certain aspects of their job and gradually believed their own lies about their inner thoughts and self-talk about their employment.

Do you talk yourself into actions that are contrary to fact, contrary to God’s will and His plan for your life?

A Divine example: Christ brought healing in three different circumstances and in each case the people uttered words of faith. There is the story of the centurion in

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

Matthew chapter 8. He tells Christ of his servant, who is paralyzed and in terrible distress. Jesus offers to go and heal the servant, but the centurion felt, *“Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.”* (8:8). Jesus marvels at the man’s faith and then says, *“Go, thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.”* (vs 13).

Then the ruler, Jarius, comes to Christ in chapter nine of Matthew. He knew that if Christ would come and lay His hand on his daughter she would be healed. He must have spoken those words of faith to himself in his own inner-heart meditation.

While going to the ruler’s house, He is interrupted by a woman who has been bleeding for twelve years. The woman had said to herself (using self-talk) *“If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.”* (vs 21). As soon as she touches His garment power flows out of Jesus and she becomes well. In her heart she trusted Him for healing when it had not yet taken place and she had not yet touched Christ.

These three acted in faith, not doubting, but trusting Christ, His person, power, and His words. The actions of faith came about because of their inner-heart meditations of faith and trust. **On what do you meditate?** How do you respond to the stimuli of life? ***An evaluation of your inner self-talk practices ought to cause you to see what needs to be changed in your thought life.***

Consider:

1. Do you speak words or have inner-thoughts that manifest faith or doubt?
2. Do you reject inner negative self-defeating thoughts? Do you ever really honestly consider what your thought practices include?
3. Do you act upon Christ’s Words by faith. His promises are to be yea and amen to the glory of God by us! (See II Cor. 1:20.)
4. Have you considered that thoughts of unbelief bring actions that manifest unbelief in God’s power? In times of difficulty, trials, and crisis do you say things to loved ones that evidence an unbelieving heart? What you do say shows what you have in your belief system.
5. Do you practice repeating God’s promises to yourself, in the inner man, and thus embrace God’s clear promises and honor Him in a walk by faith? The focus of our thoughts and meditations makes all the difference in the world.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

II. Our Self-Talk and a Practice of Anger!

Common Misbeliefs Connected With Anger

1. *“All anger is bad, and if I am a Christian, I will never get angry.” “All anger is bad,”* a sweet lady tells her Sunday School class. *“Anger is sin, children, and you must never get angry.”*

The problem of anger cannot be dealt with so simply. Like taxes, anger does not just go away, even if you decide it ought to. And like your nose or your hair color, your angry feelings are part of you and your human nature. (See Ephesians 4:26, James 1:19-21)

2. Anger always means I have a right to yell and throw things or do whatever else it takes to *drain off* the emotion. **NO, ventilation is not the answer.**

3. If I do get angry, it is always better for me to swallow the anger, suppress it and act like it is not there, than to express it.

4. I have every right to be angry when another person does not live up to my expectations. I have no choice but to stay angry as long as things do not change.

5. It is outrageous and insufferable when others do things I do not like, or if they fail to treat me as well as I ought to be treated.

These are misbeliefs concerning anger. They are lies, distortions of the truth and they bring many sad results. Constantly repeating such lies in self-talk sustains and perpetuates anger, resentment, bitterness, and malice.. Constantly repeating the Truth in God’s WORD generates peace and health.

The Truth About Anger

1. Anger is not always bad or sinful. Christ experienced anger! The simple emotion of anger is not always harmful or unloving. It is what causes you to be angry and what you **DO** when you are angry that has moral significance. (Eph. 4:26.) What we **DO** when angry is where the sin comes in. We should not allow ourselves to remain angry by continuing our destructive, resentful self-talk. God tells us to deal with our anger and its issues promptly. It is true that most of the time we do sin when we are angry. God gives us many definite prohibitions against living an angry life, or allowing anger to control us.

2. Sometimes it is better to express the anger! Christ expressed anger but in such a way that He dealt with sin. **He was angry at SIN and not in a sinful way.** When anger is manifested (or handled) correctly (not in a hateful or vengeful way) it can bring good results. Our problem is that we are seldom angry without sinning and hurting others in the process. And we don’t get angry at the right things -- such as pornography, abortion etc. It is **HOW** we express the anger and over what that makes the difference. Matthew 18:15-17 tells us what to do when a brother has offended us. We are to go to him, not screaming at him or persecuting him, but telling him in love how he has offended us.

3. Anger does not mean we have a right to yell, throw things, or have other intemperate behavior. If aggressive behavior is rewarded or encouraged, the aggression will increase. Our emotions are not some kind of gas or fluid that we must expel in order to prevent *blowing apart* in a million pieces.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

4. You DO NOT have a right to be angry when another person does not live up to your expectations. You do have a choice whether or not to remain angry.

There shouldn't be a necessary connection between the behavior of another person and your anger. It does not matter how fairly, unjustly, or thoughtlessly someone has behaved toward you. **You are angry because of your own self-talk.** You must say, *"I made myself angry. No one forced me to be angry or remain in a stew over their behavior. I did this to myself."* ***We tell ourselves in words, images, and attitudes the very things that cause us to feel the anger.***

5. Anger is behavior! Anger is responses of your body and mind to a stimulus. When the stimulus is withdrawn, or we by God's grace willingly receive the things as God-allowed, and if we do not continue to tell ourselves how unfair and unjust the treatment has been and how miserable we are because of it, then the angry responses will cease. It is not essential to our mental health to express anger by shouting, screaming, punching, etc. God tells us to control our emotions! (See James 1: 19,20.) So often we get angry over people, events, or circumstances that we do not like. . . we want our wills to be fulfilled, our agenda done.

6. It is not dreadful or even especially unusual if others do things I don't like or fail to treat me as well as I treat them. We waste our time, energy, and thought when we brood over the offenses of others.

When Anger Is Normal!

1. When it is a simple brief, emotion, anger is normal. When it is something that affects us because it is a response against our person, conviction, self-worth, or against someone we love -- then brief anger is normal.

When the anger explodes into a

- a. rage, stewing,
- b. passive-aggressive reaction,
- c. bitterness, and a desire for revenge,
- d. or not dealt with and put away before the *night comes* and we continue to be moved by that emotion -- IT HAS BECOME SIN.

If the anger does not bring positive ends, it will end in further sin.

2. None of us can go through life without ever having had the emotion of anger! When we tell children never to be angry, we are telling them an impossible thing! If we do this when they are angry, they will learn to practice self-deception, pretend they are not angry, deny it, suppress it, and that will bring untold problems in every way in their lives and in the lives of others. *They will not learn how to deal with their anger in godly, righteous ways.*

When Anger Is a Problem!

Anger is a problem when we lie in our self-talk and play like we are not angry or believe our lies about it. We might say, *"I should never get angry."* This misbelief leads to self-deceptive words of *"I am NOT angry,"* when one is quite plainly saying and doing hostile angry things and even hurting others. The internal conflict and destructive behavior then becomes hard to interpret, identify and control.

Christian are often prime targets of such deception. Many think they must be perceived as always nice, always smiling, laughing, saying nice things, when possibly they are furious inside, refusing to confront the truth in their lives.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

Christians, often hurting, cover up with religious sounding words, smiles, grins, shrugs, and silence, and play the part of not being angry.

The Healthy Way to Express Anger!

Maybe you know someone who is chronically angry. They are always nursing a grudge, ready to ignite any minute. These people have one common trait -- they are uncommunicative and withdrawn. They are reluctant and shy about expressing their desires truthfully and openly. They are fearful of simply telling someone else what hurts them or how they have been offended.

You need to go to that person honestly and openly without accusing or manipulating the person. Prayerful, assertive, *loving confrontation* that uses no harsh or hurtful words or actions can bring a dramatic change.

When Someone Else IS Angry at YOU!

We live in a world where many times we have to face anger in someone else. What should we do? Here are some ways to deal with the anger of others.

1. Don't be angry every time someone is upset with you. You can cope with it effectively, it is not a disaster. Allow others to fail without feeling you need to respond adversely.

2. Don't shape your behavior just to prevent others from getting upset with you. They might anyway! When they do, it is their problem, not yours. Just be sure you are doing right! You need to stand for and live for truth and still be a witness.

3. Be careful not to reward the angry outburst of others. Ignore them when they yell at you, but be very attentive when they speak reasonably. Don't be intimidated to respond in kind. Speak and say, *"Please talk to me reasonably, and I will listen."*

4. Be kind and loving. Just because someone is angry does not mean you have to be angry back. Say words like, *"I'm sorry you are feeling bad. Can I do anything to help you feel less upset? What can I do to see things change?"*

5. When there is truth in an accusation directed to you, admit it. Don't lie about it and defend yourself. You don't have to be right all the time. Say words, like, *"It's true, I wasn't using my heart. I have sinned! Please, forgive me."*

6. Give others the right to be angry at you. Don't be shocked and offended when it happens. If you insist that everyone sees you as the PERFECT HUMAN BEING WITHOUT FAULTS, you will be deeply disappointed not to mention that you are the victim of gross misbelief and self-directed inner lies. Consider your inner thoughts, for maybe you do lie to yourself!

7. Sometimes the anger someone has vented at you has nothing to do with you. You may merely be the target of someone's frustrations and unhappiness. Learn to identify such things, refusing to take offense personally. It is their problem, not yours. Don't make it your problem!

How to Handle Anger Personally!

1. Confess your sinful anger to God and receive His forgiveness. (Study Psalm 32; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:7, 9.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

2. Locate and identify your misbeliefs about anger! What are you telling yourself that is not true by which you have allowed yourself to hold onto the anger?

3. Replace your misbeliefs and self-talk lies with TRUTH. The truth of God's Word is what will set you free, if applied and lived. (See John 8:32; Romans 8:5-8.) Start REPEATING TRUTH TO YOURSELF -- **truth** according to God's Word and not your self-talk ideas. ***Take a stand against the practice of your inner self-talk lies.***

4. Behave according to truth! Old destructive ways of expressing or repressing anger, for instance, needs to be gone now. React according to the Word of God and the will of God. Be honest with yourself, God, and others.

5. Pray for solutions instead of talking about problems! Trust the Lord fully, believe the Lord, for nothing is impossible, including the elimination of bitterness and anger from your life. (See Mark 11: 23, 24; Luke 11: 7,8 John 15: 7; Philippians 4: 13; I John 5: 14, 15.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

III. Our Self-talk and Our Problem of Daily Worry, and Anxiety

What do you worry about ? Money? Kids? Parents? Your health or weight? The future or job security? Do you sometimes worry about not having anything to worry about? Or maybe you are not the one in the family who worries -- you leave it all to your spouse. Do you truly understand what worry is? Do you recognize the difference between rightful concern and anxiety?

Someone defined worry as "*stewing without doing.*" That is a good definition because there is really nothing you can do about your worries or fretting since they are usually oriented to the future. And beside, almost everything we worry about is uncontrollable, or usually improbable.

Since the things we worry about usually do not come to pass, our tendency to think irrationally leads us to believe that somehow, through our worrying, we will prevent those events from happening. But we know that is not the case.

Worry effects us greatly! Worry tends to paralyze us. We feel helpless, frustrated, unable to counteract some uncontrollable event that might take place. In looking up worry in the dictionary you will find that it comes from an old English word that means "*to strangle, or to choke,*" I think that we can see that this would give us the thought of helplessness. When we worry, we are strangling and or choking our emotions, and blocking any flow of creative energy potential in our lives to meet the things that truly do take place. Worry takes place because we do not rest in our wonderful Lord and His promises.

Anxiety is similar to worry, except that anxiety usually does not have a specific object. We can feel anxious and not even know why. Do you have anxiety and don't know why? Have you considered that it comes from a lack of simple trust in a wonderful Heavenly Father?

Often with worry, we have difficulty separating between worry and genuine concern. We often defend our tendency to worry as being a form of caring. We care so much about our kids, for example, that it is just natural to worry about them. Maybe that is why women especially tend to be worriers, because their role is often defined as caring.

But caring and concern slip very easily into worry and anxiety. The line that separates them is often difficult to define. Concern can be defined as a feeling that motivates us to action. **Worry, on the other hand, usually paralyzes us.** Concern focuses on controlled behavior and events; worry often focuses on events and behavior that are beyond our control. Do you practice a life of worry and fretting? Could it be that you don't even recognize that you worry?

Worry is an attempt to control the future. And for some worry and anxiety lead to the development of compulsive behavior and phobias. Worry can also lead to self-deception. If we worry about something sufficiently then we will probably deceive ourselves into not wanting to know the facts lest what we are worrying about comes to pass. Yes, worry does easily paralyze us from rightful, godly action.

Our self-talk gives us away! By our self-talk we know whether we are worrying or not or building anxiety in our lives. Your worries also identify where you faith really lies. The key to breaking the paralyzing habit of worry and anxiety is to find something solid in which to trust. For me, and for you, that ought to be the LORD and His Word.

Christ deals with the subject of anxious care in Matthew 6:24-34. And you will note that you cannot change things by having anxiety over things And how do we have anxious care? By what we are saying to ourselves. We must break the cycle of self-talk that brings such anxiety. Christ gives a number of illustrations of His care and concern for us and His promises to meet our needs!

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

Why not study Matthew 6:25-34 again. Christ speaks about having anxious care... spoken of as “*take no thought. . .*” I would also encourage you to study Philippians 4: 6-8 and II Timothy 2:13.

Consider four things that would help you!

1. You must decide to bring personal change. Make a conscious effort to change your self-talk, attitudes, and behavior as it applies to worry and fretting, and practicing anxious care. Don't decide to stop worry; that is focusing on the wrong thing. But decide to change and keep on making that choice, but do it by focusing on God's promises. Change is possible by gaining control of your thoughts. You change by putting your thoughts on the positive -- on the blessings from the Lord. It comes by practicing the truth of Philippians 4:8-9.

2. Work on the words of your mouth! Make a conscious choice to watch what you say. Stop your worrying talk. When you starting talking about what you are worried about, you are focusing on your worries, and you give power to those thoughts. They effect what you believe about God's care, providence, promises, and love to you. You are building a belief system of unbelief if you don't change what you are saying. What is it that you are saying to yourself and others that are *absolute* statements that you think are true, but are untrue, falsehoods and lies? Your words spoken to yourself in the inner man over and over again will become what you believe and thus how you will respond to life and all its issues.

3. Verbalize your faith and trust, not your doubts, anxieties and worries! If you are worried about something then replace the thoughts of worry that come with promises. Speak outloud your faith in WHAT God has said. Learn to rest in the words of our great Heavenly Father. Then memorize the verses that will bring peace, inner assurance, and trust. Do battle with the thoughts of distrust. (Maybe you need to memorize such verses as Heb 11: 6; Isa 40: 28-31; Isa. 41: 10; Psa. 27: 1, 2, 14; Psa. 103: 1-5; Phil. 4: 13; 4:19) Only be memorizing, meditation and living these truths will change take place. Isn't that what you want?

4. Live expecting God to act because of your affirmation of faith and trust. Live *as if* God is alive, on the throne, and will bring about what is best for you. (For He is!) He is alive you know and He can do all things, and has promised this in Romans 8:28, 29 and in Phil. 2:13.

Consider for thought, discussion, and study:

1. Who does most of the worrying in your family?
2. Describe how they worry and what they worry about.
3. What are some of your worry statements?
4. How do you verbalize your worry and anxious statements?
5. Are you willing to face them, and change them with trust?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

IV. Our Self-talk and Our Problem with Personal Guilt!

Guilt is often attached to feelings of anger and possibly depression and always relates to the past. We can't feel guilty about the future -- that just doesn't make sense. Guilt takes us away from the present, back into the past, in an attempt to *reform the past*. Do you carry guilt as a weight each day?

We must do right with our guilt. We may go back in our memories to the past in an effort to remake the past, so we won't feel so guilty. This will be done by our self-talk practices. We want to get rid of the feeling of guilt. We can't separate any past event from our experience -- it all stays there. So instead we try to reshape our memory of that event so that we won't look so bad, or we won't feel so guilty. **This means that in our self-talk we tell ourselves lies** and we try to put a better picture on the past event than what actually took place. This too is sinful!

It is easy to see how we develop the ability to feel even more guilt because of our self-talk. In actuality we have not dealt with the past event as we should have. **If we would:**

- a. **repent** (of the sin problem (toward God),
- b. **make restitution** with the people involved
- c. and **forgive** others who were involved, we could put the past in the past. Then our guilt would be gone also.

In this case our guilt is valid. Obviously, when we have done something that is clearly wrong, the guilt we feel is correct and serves to push us to correct the wrong. This is what Paul calls a *godly grief* in II Corinthians 7:9, 10. When we have sinned it will not help to try and *self-talk ourselves out of our guilt*, but instead relief only comes through repentance, and forgiveness. (See I John 1:7, 9, 2:1-3)

We also face false guilt! Guilt can be a blessing or a curse.

1. Many times God's people struggle with false guilt over some issue or thing in which they are not actually guilty. Often this kind of guilt is associated with many inner *oughts or shoulds!* We are sure that there are many things we *should have done, or ought to have done or not done!* I am not talking about sin now, but the **tyranny of *oughts or shoulds*** that are self-imposed by our self-talk. I have met many people who live lives of depression and sorrow about their failures that have nothing to do with sin, but with an expectation in personal performance that is impossible to fulfill. (Of course pride can also enter into all of this as they want to feel good about their selves.)

2. Self-talk can run wild in imposing inner demands based upon our many years of self-imposed condemnation about any and all things we feel we *should have gotten done or should not have done*. These may come from an over-active mind, or from others who have reminded us all our days of the *should and oughts of life* or from an over-active conscience. Of course can also be an element of pride which drives this kind of self-talk practice. . . which is sinful indeed.

If we don't remove the *shoulds or oughts* we place on ourselves, that have nothing to do with sin, one of two things will occur. These self-made demands will create guilt. The other thing that occurs is that we become paralyzed and depressed. For our guilt will make us angry with ourselves and that is one of the major causes of depression. Now we are practicing anger which is sinful.

In these situations, for example, people have an unreal picture of what they should get done from day to day and impose upon themselves an unreal expectation that is not given of God or directed by the Holy Spirit. The longer you grovel in this kind of self-talk, you will either sit there, immobilized or you will go home and get

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

depressed because you are so angry at yourself. Or you may take it out on your family. I think that the latter takes place a lot of the time.

Depression then becomes a major problem! Depression is related to both guilt and anger. Unless it is caused by some physiological problem, or by some specific life trauma, *depression* is best described and understood as anger turned inward upon oneself. And most often we get angry at ourselves over the same things that trigger our guilt for both anger and guilt in these situations are related to the *shoulds and oughts* that are self-imposed.

When you go back into the past and try to reform some event that triggers your guilt, you are usually dealing with a lot of anger directed at yourself. This all comes from self-talk practices and a belief system that is unreal, irrational and not of God and isn't based on Bible truth.

Sometimes our grief and anger at ourselves gets all tangled up. We might think wrongly as Elijah did when he fled from Jezebel. So we also practice self-reproach, feelings of despair and guilt that never ends because of our sense of failure and wrong.

Nothing takes the place of embracing truth and living by the principles of God's Word.

1. David helps us understand the solution to the problems of guilt and self-directed anger. God used the prophet Nathan as the truth of his parable penetrated deep within David to the root of his guilt and anger. (See II Samuel 12:1-14.) Some time after that confrontation with his own sinfulness, David writes Psalm 51 and shows us how he dealt with his guilt. In reading and studying thus chapter one sees the tremendous importance of making a clean, complete break with sin. David is asking for forgiveness and cleansing.

2. Only forgiveness can resolve the downward cycle of guilt -- both valid and false guilt. But our tendency is to try and feel less guilty by our self-talk lies as we rationalize and in various ways try to get ourselves *off the hook* so we don't feel responsible. Psalm 32 is one of my favorite chapters in the Psalms. David writes of the *blessedness of knowing sins are pardoned, forgiven, and guilt no longer imputed to him*. This comes out of dealing with sin in the proper way -- confessing, forsaking, and knowing forgiveness and cleansing! Study and memorize Psalm 32:1-5.

3. Self-talk can be an accuser or it can glory in forgiveness as David did. You can let your thoughts run wild with guilt and anger, or you can capture every thought and bring it under the umbrella of forgiveness. Accept God's forgiveness for only forgiveness can cancel out the debt of guilt and anger.

For consideration, study, discussion:

1. What self-talk is blocking your ability to forgive yourself?
2. Where is your self-talk telling you to *try harder* as you are controlled by a tyranny of *oughts and shoulds* that are self-imposed?
3. Where are you still have difficulty in experiencing forgiveness? In being forgiven?
4. In what way are you endeavoring to remove your own responsibility by your own self-talk so that you won't have to deal with wrongs, failures and sinful practices?
5. Do you embrace *good grief* over sin and wrong, then repent and forsake that sin? Only then can you know removal of guilt and self-imposed anger over failure.

V. Self-talk and the Problem of Daily Stress

Maybe few in Bible times knew stress better than the Apostle Paul. He was thrown into prison numerous times, beaten and left for dead, shipwrecked and rejected by his fellowship Christians. He was hated by the religious Jews of his day and maybe even by friends whom he knew well prior to his conversion. Yet he was not only able to endure these stress points in his life, he also maintained an attitude of victory that has inspired many over the centuries that have followed.

Paul wrote about this stress in II Corinthians 4:8,9 where we find these thoughts: *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.*

Paul did not stop there, or bemoan his difficulties, speak of bitterness and desire for revenge, or anything of this kind. In fact not only did he not engage in self-talk of self-pity, but instead he wrote of answers in the Lord. He wrote about not losing heart, that though the outer man is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. (vs 16). Paul gives us a definition of stress, that is, he writes of the outer nature, his body wasting away. Paul endured great wear and tear on his body. Yet he does not give in to stress or pressures, but he adds that his inner nature - his mind, and spirit, are being renewed every day!

Paul renewed his mind by capturing every thought and bringing into obedience every thought to Christ. (See II Cor. 10:3-5.) Paul knows how to take the stressors of life and turn them around to his advantage. His secret is in his self-talk and his focus on Biblical truth. (II Cor. 12:9-11)

We have a vivid picture of his practice and victory over stress as we read of the beatings and imprisonment in Acts 16. While there, Paul captures his thoughts by focusing on those things worthy of praise. (See Phil. 4:8.) He and Silas spend their time praying and singing hymns to God. He renews his inner nature, in the face of terrible stress, through his inner self-talk meditations on God's goodness, mercy and love.

Paul knew all kind of suffering. (See II Cor. 11) While in prison, when writing to the Philippian believers his theme was *rejoice*. Paul had learned to be content in what ever state he found himself. He urged the believers to rejoice in everything. How does he do this in the face of so much stress? Only one way -- by the renewal of his mind! (See Phil. 4:11; Rom. 12: 2.)

He guards his thoughts!

What was Paul's secret weapon against stress? In his self-talk he aimed at developing the attitudes that he saw in Jesus.

1. **He gave all his rights to God.** Therefore he did not have agendas that had to take place in order to be happy. He did not have any demands or standards of God's doings for him to be happy. He had given all his *rights to the Lord*. In that attitude the demands for his rights are set aside.

2. **He lives in the attitude of a servant.** Paul's ministry and example in life is centered on the person of Christ. (See Matt. 20:28.) Paul experienced what Isaiah wrote about: that one whose mind is stayed on God will have perfect peace. (See Isa. 23:6.) *Perfect peace in the midst of stress!* How can we learn to be survivors in a stress-filled culture? How can we develop the same attitudes as shown to us by Jesus Christ?

We need to identify stressful situations in our lives! We need to recognize those things that build feelings of anger, depression, worry, anxiety, and guilt -- for these are all stress-creating situations. If we don't handle these things properly and

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

Biblically, we will naturally have a lot of stress in daily life.

We can build a lot of stress by our thoughts and demands on life. That is, what we think has to be or we are not happy. All in the same day -- we can be angry over a child's failure to perform a job, upset with what we have in our lunch bag, thinking of all the things we must get done that day, or we must do, scared to death over a meeting we have tomorrow, and be thinking upon what our wife wants -- all at the same time. No wonder we have stress!

1. Maybe we need to make a list of the things that give us stress and then consider Biblically how we are going to handle them in a God-pleasing, honoring way.

2. Then we need to work on our self-talk. We need to recognize what we are saying to ourselves about the problem(s) that bring our stress. What are we already saying to ourselves that helps to trigger feelings of threat, anger, frustration and of being overwhelmed? What are the contents of your thoughts? How do they bring additional stress to your life and to others?

3. Then we need to think through how we can handle the problems of life without stress or threat. Our mental pictures are a part of our self-talk. We need to focus our lives on trust, dependence on the Lord, and live without stress or reactions in the wrong way. Our stress and negative self-talk are often crystallized by mental images we created in our own imaginations. We need to reverse all of this, seeing ourselves coping and changing can help us make that behavior a reality. We must trust the Lord for what we need. (See Isa. 40: 28-31; 41: 10.)

4. It would help to write down your negative self-talk statements that bring stress. Then rewrite them considering Biblical truth about the situation. Often our whole problem of stress is brought about by our self-talk and belief system that is not based on the promises of God's word.

For consideration, study and discussion:

1. Have you ignored the truth about a sovereign, caring, loving, providing God whose is working all things for our good and His glory? (See Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:28, 29.)

2. Work on a list of positive, Biblical self-talk statements. Write out the statements and then work on memorization of the verses that would give answers to your stress problem.

3. Work on a diary of stress situations, identifying the stress producing self-talk statements. Spend time applying the Word of God to these situations, and expect victory in the power of the Lord. (See Eph. 6:10-18.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

VI. Self-talk and Assertive Living Compared With Being Aggressive!

By this title I am not suggesting that by being assertive we would know better how to unload our feelings or to express our anger. Often people have lived lives of passivity for years, and underneath it all they are building a lot of anger, bitterness and hostility. Their very pattern of passiveness has led them to store up their anger, which now comes boiling over to the hurt of many around them. As you reflect upon how people relate in life this ought to be very helpful to you.

Being passive, aggressive, or assertive which will it be? In the world's system of things, a lot of people in the United States have received training in what is popularly called, *Assertiveness Training Seminars*. Many of these otherwise quiet, passive people have suddenly become aggressive when they received the above mentioned training. And their aggressive behavior, along with the awareness of their anger, scares them. They don't want to be angry or aggressive. Some get their assertive skills confused with aggressiveness, and in frustration they retreat back into their passive behavior patterns. Now they continue to hurt, and hold a lot of hostility inside themselves.

Passivity is usually attached to the emotion of fear. And as we have seen in our study in part one emotions are created basically by our self-talk.

The passive person, in his self-talk, is usually saying things like:

"I can't say no, I'd feel so guilty."

"I can't tell my husband to spend more time with me, he'd only get angry."

"I can't take this blouse back to the store. They'd only tell me to make sure I get the right size next time."

"There is not need of defending myself, they won't understand anyway."

These are a few examples of self-talk practices of the passive person who often feels misunderstood, hurt, and unable to correct wrongs.

In their passive approach to people and events, they end up violating their own rights by failing to face their honest feelings and thoughts. In the process, by being very apologetic and self-effacing, they have allowed other people to violate them. What their self-talk is really saying is, "*I don't count! Do go ahead and take advantage of me!*" In this process, the passive person soon loses any sense of self-respect, or they create an inner boiling cauldron of anger and resentment. They may become a time bomb, in some cases, just waiting to explode.

I think that many who are passive, as just described, really believe their self-talk and have build a belief system that is very contrary to Scripture. In fact, they may feel that a spiritual person is one who never confronts others about anything, but just holds all their feelings inside themselves. By their self-talk they have build a trap for their selves that will bring even more failure and hurt. Such people, as they remain passive, feel that their goal is to avoid any conflict, regardless of the costs.

What about the aggressive person? Often they are the passive person who has now turned from their passiveness and with pent-up anger and resentments they do explode. They have become the aggressive person.

1. This aggressive person is now standing up for his rights, and how he feels, but look at how he does it! (I don't believe that we need to *stand up for our rights* in actuality, but we need to give all our rights to God. And then learn how to practice 1) loving confrontation, 2) speaking the truth in love, 3) entreating others, and 4) loving assertiveness for the sake of both parties. This we will look at later.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

2. The aggressive person now expresses his thoughts and feelings in a way that now violates the other person's rights and feelings. The aggressive person's desire is to dominate in such a way that he can insure himself of winning. And again all of this comes out of his or her self-talk practices, what they now believe, and have embraced as a belief system. I would urge you to reread the section on self-talk and know it so well that you see how all of this applies.

3. The aggressive person's angry self-talk leads him to use humiliation, belittling, or over-powering tactics -- anything as long as he wins. **His self-talk is now dominated by the thought -- the other person does not count!**

4. In contrast the passive person is usually trying to either *suppress his feelings* or simple to *repress and deny* what he is feeling. When we attempt to handle our feelings this way the result is like sitting on a time bomb, or like stuffing more and more items into the bag of our personal hurts and frustrations with others. Soon something gives, the bag is full and overflowing, and our emotions spill out all over the place.

What is this aggressive person really doing!

1. In his self-talk he justifies his temporary outburst of anger by thoughts and statements that say he's earned the right to be angry.
2. He feels like his rights have been violated and he has the right now to redeem what he feels are his rights.
3. He wants to claim the right of his anger, for he no longer is denying or suppressing his emotions, but he is now *expressing them loud and clear*.

In both the passive and aggressive mode the person caught in these behavior patterns does not feel good about himself. There is guilt, frustration, anger at himself for the way he has acted and for his feelings inwardly. If honest, he may well feel that he is out of control.

Assertiveness is different! It is neither passive nor aggressive!

It is neither motivated by fear or anger! True assertiveness is behavior motivated by God's love. You care enough about *others* and yourself that you will speak up for what is right and yet be careful not to violate someone else. We do not repress, suppress, or express our emotions. We confess them! In the Greek, the meaning of *confess* is "agree with." When you confess your feelings and emotions, you are verbally agreeing with what you are feeling inside. When you confess these emotions and feelings you are describing for the other person what is going on inside of you.

The main purpose is to have self-control and to act responsibly. You are not pushing others around at their expense, and you are not being pushed around -- both ways of reacting to life. You are now experiencing self-control, and are able to *act the way you choose, and not react!*

When we practice assertiveness, we are lovingly confronting others. We will work at *speaking the truth in love*. (See Eph. 4:15, 25.) And we will practice *attacking problems and not people*. Once again, the battle for loving confrontation or assertiveness begins in your mind -- in your self-talk.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

Consider how to practice assertiveness!

So what can you do and how should you do it? Let's consider **four "D's" for assertive living**, or for the practice of love-confronting.

Describe: Describe the kinds of situations in which you reacted passively or aggressively. Analyze what you could have done in conversation that would have been love-confronting or assertiveness.

Take the time to write out the description of the conflict, how you reacted and what your self-talk was. Examine your self-talk in the light of the Word of God and what it teaches about personal relationships in the following portions.

(Study and write out the following verses and consider how you will apply them and allow them to change your self-talk practices. Eph. 4: 1-7; Phil. 2: 1-4; 4: 8-12; Col. 3 :8-14; I Thess. 2: 7-12; 5:11-15; Rom. 12: 9, 10, 14-21.)

Define: Define what is happening to you. Consider and describe what you are saying, doing, and thinking! What is your self-talk? What have you been saying that is destructive? What are your expectations in this situation? What is it you want to see accomplished? What does God want? Define as clearly as possible your feelings, hurts, fears, hostilities, and behavior. Are seeking God's glory?

Discern: What have your motives been? Are you primarily concerned about the well-being of the other person and glory of God? What does the other person feel? What is going on inside the other person that is involved in the problem or situation?

Decide: Make a decision of what you are going to do about the situation.

1. Do what the Word of God teaches you to do, and do battle with your self-talk what has been sinful and wrong.

2. What new assertive strategy of loving words can you use to change this trap of anger? How can you form the words to help the other person face the situation and yet do it with no malice, no hidden agenda and no self-fulfilling purposes.

3. If you give your rights to God, and want His will and way, you can trust God to protect you in the end. And if you react Biblically you will then help the other person for the purpose of their good and not your selfish ends.

Consider the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus always spoke directly and honestly about what He was feeling.

1. He spoke out of justice;
2. demonstrated by word and behavior His firm belief in the value of each person;
3. loved deeply and passionately;
4. refused to honor dishonesty;
5. refused to be intimidated and then told us to love others the way we love ourselves.

Consider the following: We ought to develop self-talk and a belief system that is based on the following five points, which are also based on Scriptural principles:

1. Every person has the right to be respected by others and also has the right to self-respect.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EMOTIONS

2. Every person has needs, but no one has the right to demand that another person sacrifice his needs for their needs.

3. Every person has feelings. And everyone has the right to confess those feelings in a way that does not violate the rights of another person.

4. Every person has opinions. And everyone has the right to properly express those opinions.

5. Every person has the right to make decisions, and has the right to live with those decisions.

All of this is to be applied in the light of our responsibility, individually to obey the Word of God. We must seek to live obediently, responsibly, and responsively to God's Word and will. And this demands that we replace sinful self-talk practices with the Word of God.