



LifeNIGHT
 Whole People In A Broken World
 An Interactive Bible Study Series for Summer 2002

R	Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor. (Matthew 5:3, GN)
	Principle #1: Realize I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable.
E	Happy are those who mourn. (Matthew 5:4, GN)
	Principle #2: Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.
C	Happy are those who are humble. (Matthew 5:5, GN)
	Principle #3: Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.

- **Matthew 11:28-30 (PHI)** Come to me, all of you who are weary and over-burdened, and I will give you rest! Put on my yoke and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
- **Illustration:** A pet store delivery truck was going down the road, and at every stop light the driver came to he would run to the back of the truck, grab a 2x4 and start beating on the side of the truck. Nobody could figure out what he was doing, so finally somebody asked him, "What are you doing?" He said, "This is only a two-ton truck and I'm carrying four tons of canaries. I've got to keep two tons of them in the air all the time."
- Isn't that a picture of life? Many of you are out there beating yourself, trying to keep it all in the air so it won't come crashing down. We have a tendency to get STUCK in life. We get stuck in relationships, habits, grief, anger, work, sexual addictions, etc. Then when you can't get out of it, you get into a cycle ...
- You get STUCK in some kind of problem.
- You feel GUILTY that you're stuck.
- You feel ANGRY that you can't change.
- You feel FEAR that you'll never be able to change.
- You feel DEPRESSED and focus on feeling sorry for yourself.
- Whatever you focus on will REPEAT – so you're stuck even further!

- So how do you break out of being “STUCK”? That’s what we’re talking about in this series:

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- But it’s not enough just to know that God will help you. You have to take action. You have to make a decision and walk across the line.

C	Happy are those who are humble. (Matthew 5:5, GN)
	Principle #3: Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ’s care and control.

- This step is based on what Jesus said in our text: “Come to me, all of you who are weary and over-burdened, and I will give you rest! Put on my yoke and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
- Jesus says, “I will make your life easier. I will lighten your load. You will have relief. You will have release. You will have rest. You will have rejuvenation. Give Me control and care of your life and watch what I do. Life will get so much easier and less stressful.”
- What a deal! Why would anybody turn that deal down? Yet some of you have heard this before and you’ve never acted on it. It’s like having an unopened gift. God says I want to give you this gift of recovery and you’ve done nothing about it. What keeps us from taking this step? What causes me to procrastinate giving my problems to God and to delay surrendering my life to His control?

WHAT KEEPS ME FROM LETTING GO?

1. PRIDE

- **Proverbs 18:12 (TEV)** No one is respected unless he is humble; arrogant people are on the way to ruin.

- **Proverbs 10:8 (LB)** The wise man is glad to be instructed, but a self-sufficient fool falls flat on his face.
- If you’re not ready to give control of your life to the Lord, maybe you just need a greater dose of pain. God will gladly allow that to get your attention!

2. GUILT

- **Psalms 40:12 (LB)** Otherwise I perish, for problems far too big for me to solve are piled higher than my head. Meanwhile my sins, too many to count, have all caught up with me, and I am ashamed to look up. My heart quails within me.
- Are you ashamed of all your broken promises to God? Are you embarrassed to go to God yet another time for help? Don’t forget that there is no sin that God cannot forgive!
- WHAT HAS GOD DONE WITH MY SINS?
 - He has taken them away – John 1:29
 - He has forgotten them – Hebrews 10:17
 - He has washed them away – Isaiah 1:18
 - He has blotted them out – Isaiah 43:25
 - He has wiped them out like a cloud – Isaiah 44:22
 - He has pardoned them – Isaiah 55:7
 - He has buried them in the depths of the sea – Micah 7:19

3. FEAR

- **John 8:31-32 (LB)** Jesus said to them, "You are truly my disciples if you live as I tell you to, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- Basically, I’m afraid of what I might have to give up. Like the man who fell off the cliff and grabbed a branch half way down. He cries out, “Somebody help!” and hears the voice of God: “This is the Lord – trust me, let go and I’ll catch you.” The man looks down the five hundred foot drop, then looks up and says, “Is there anybody else up there?” Sometimes it’s hard to let go!
- What is it that you are afraid will happen if you give God control of your life? You say, "I don't want anybody controlling me." Who are you kidding? You're being controlled all the time. You're controlled by the opinions of other people. You're controlled by hurts you can't forget. You controlled by habits, hang-ups, or even your own ego!

- But you get to CHOOSE who you're being controlled by when you let God control your life. Real freedom is choosing who your master will be. So what are you afraid of?
- **FREEDOM IS CHOOSING WHO CONTROLS YOU.**
- **Mark 8:36 (LB)** And how does a man benefit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process?
- When you take this step, you give up everything and then suddenly you never had it so good. Because God takes what you've given Him, turns it around, adds new meaning, new significance, new vitality, and gives it back to you in a whole new way. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD WORKS BACKWARDS!**
- Give God a blank check. "God, here's my life." Let Him take care of the rest, and don't worry about it.

4. WORRY

- **1 Peter 5:7 (LB)** Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.
- Sometimes in life we confuse the decision-making phase with the problem-solving phase. Some of you remember back in 1963 when John F. Kennedy announced publicly, "We're going to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade." That was the decision. Had all the problems been solved when he made that decision? No! If you're a good manager you know you never confuse decision making with problem solving. If you confuse them, you never make the decision. Kennedy said, "We're going to do it," then it was NASA's problem to figure out the details.
- Have you ever bought a house? You make the decision, but then you have to get financing, pack boxes, arrange moving trucks, fill out change of address cards, etc. The details get handled after the decision is made.
- Nearly thirty years ago, I made the decision to give the Lord control of my life, and I'm still sending out change of address cards saying, "No, I don't do that anymore - that's not the new me, that's the old me."
- **THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A DECISION FOLLOWED BY A PROCESS.**

- It is the same with recovery after you are saved. It is a decision followed by a process. All we're talking about today is the decision – let's just DO IT!
- **Philippians 1:6 (LB)** And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns.
- In World War II, the Marines had a definite strategy they used in the Pacific when they went to retake it from the Japanese. They used the same strategy on every island and it worked every time. First, they would go to the island that had been taken captive, and they would start bombing it. That was called the softening-up period. **Some of you are in the softening-up period right now, and all kinds of explosions are going off in your life. You finally come to a point where you say, "Yes, I need help beyond myself." It's softening up your pride.** In the second phase, the Marines would come in and establish a beach head, maybe only twenty yards deep and two hundred yards wide but they would just get a presence on the island. Had they completely liberated the island when they established the beach head? No, they had just gotten in – but from there they began to fight the battles. Sometimes they'd move one hundred yards forward and sometimes they'd get pushed back. Sometimes they'd win the battle and sometimes they'd lose it. But once they established a beach head, total liberation of the island was inevitable. In the history of WW II, once the Marines had landed and established a beach head they never lost an island. It was just a matter of time that the entire island would be set free.
- When you take the step of letting go, what's happening is God gets a beach head in your life. You allow God's presence to come into the situation. Does that mean everything in your life is perfect? Absolutely not. It means that God has a beach head and for the rest of your life He's going to be setting you free, little by little by little. It's a process, so don't worry about it.

5. DOUBT

- **Matthew 17:20 (GW)** He told them, "Because you have so little faith. I can guarantee this truth: If your faith is the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."
- **IT'S NOT THE SIZE OF YOUR FAITH THAT MATTERS, BUT THE SIZE OF YOUR GOD!**

- Remember the father of the demon-possessed boy that was brought to Jesus? He said, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24, NIV)
- In other words, your faith doesn't have to be "perfect" to get results. It just needs to be committed to God as the solution. (Don't be like the kamikaze pilot who went on 40 missions – he was involved but not committed!)

SO HOW DO I LET GO?

1. ACCEPT GOD'S SACRIFICE AS MY SALVATION.

- **Acts 16:31 (KJV)** And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
- Remember, the word "believe" in the Bible means to be committed! When you had eggs and bacon for breakfast this morning, the hen was involved but the pig was committed! Believing on Jesus Christ means that you give Him your life and obey the gospel on His terms, not yours.

2. ACCEPT GOD'S WORD AS MY STANDARD FOR LIVING.

- Have you seen this graffiti? "This life is a test, it is only a test. Had it been an actual life you would have been given an instruction manual to tell you what to do and where to go." Fortunately we do have an instruction manual – it's the Bible!
- **2 Timothy 3:16 (PHI)** All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for resetting the direction of a man's life and training him in good living.

3. ACCEPT GOD'S WILL AS MY GOAL IN LIFE.

- **Psalms 40:8 (KJV)** I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.
- I want God's purpose in my life even if I do not understand it!

4. ACCEPT GOD'S POWER AS MY STRENGTH.

- **Philippians 4:13 (LB)** For I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power.
- Remember, things work better when they are plugged in!

- **Revelation 3:20 (LB)** "Look! I have been standing at the door, and I am constantly knocking. If anyone hears me calling him and opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me.
- Taking this step in the recovery process simply means to open the door. The key that unlocks that door is your willingness.
- **REAL WILLPOWER IS MY WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT GOD'S POWER.**
- When pilots fly planes, they fly either by IFR or VFR. IFR stands for Instrument Flight Rules, and VFR stands for Visual Flight Rules. Every pilot is flying by one or the other. **VFR is fine as long as you can see everything** – if it's clear weather and not a lot of air traffic. But one day, if you fly enough, you're going to eventually hit bad weather. It's then you have to call the control tower and say, "I need to switch over to IFR" and you submit to the plane's computer.
- All airlines fly IFR. All pros fly IFR but a lot of amateurs fly VFR. The FAA says that a lot of small plane crashes could have been prevented if the person in the cockpit had simply picked up the microphone and said, "I need help."
- You may have made it pretty well thus far in life flying VFR and you've controlled everything, but it's an inevitable part of life that you're going to have bad weather. You're going to hit the tough spots. You're going to hit the clouds where you flip upside down and you don't even know which direction you're going. At that point you've got to pick up the microphone and switch to God's system, or it's an invitation to disaster.
- **THE CHOICE IS YOURS!**