**Principle # 1**

***“If God is against it, so am I”"***

**1. What stronghold or addiction has the devil gained in your life?**

**Prov. 5:21-23**, “*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray*”

(See also Prov. 11:3, Gal. 6:7-8, and II Cor. 10:3-5).

**What do you continue to do, even though you know it is bad for you?**

**Rom. 7:18-21**, “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but* ***how to perform that which is good I find not****. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me*.”

(See also Gal. 5:17-26, Eph 4:24-32, Col. 3:5-8, Rom. 1:29-32, and Matt. 7:21-22).

**2. Are you convinced that your addiction is sin? Can you find a Bible verse that proves that your addiction is wrong?**

**Is it damaging your testimony**?

**I Cor. 10:31**, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*.” (Matt. 5:16)

**Is it destroying your body** (God’s temple)?

See **I Cor. 6:19-20**, and Rom. 12:1-2.

**Is it dishonoring God**?

**I Peter 2:9**, “*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*.”

**3. Would you quit a sinful practice if you knew God was against it?**

**Ps. 97:10**, “*Ye that love the LORD, hate evil*.”

**Ps. 34:11-14**, “*Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it*.”

(See also I John 5:2-3, Ps. 34:14, 119:104, 163, Prov. 3:7, 8:13, Rom. 12:9, Heb. 12:14, and I Thess. 5:15).

**4. What things do you allow in your life that FEED your addiction?**

**Ps. 101:3-7**, “*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.* *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight*.” (See also Ps. 26:4-5, 39:1, 101:1-8, 119:37, 113, 115, Ex. 20:7, Prov. 6:25, 23:31, II Cor. 6:14-17, I Cor. 5:9-13, Rom. 8:5-13, I Thess. 5:22, and II Tim. 2:19).

**5. When are you most likely to give into your addiction?**

**Eph. 4:27**, “*Neither give place to the devil*.”

**James 1:14**, “*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*.” (I John 2:15-16).

**6. Have you ever called a Challenge Leader, Helper, Program Director, or fellow student when you were weak and about to give in?**

**James 5:16**, “*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*.” (See also I Thess. 4:1, 5:14, II Tim. 4:2, Heb. 3:13 and Jude 1:3).

**If you did call, did it help? If you did not call, WHY NOT**?

**Rom. 1:32**, “*Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*.”

**7. Do you believe that God loves you and wants to help you?**

**I John 4:16**, “*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him*.” (See also Ps. 25:8, I John 4:9-10, Ps. 36:7-9, and John 3:16.)

**8. Do you believe you can be set free?**

**John 8:32**, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*.” (See also Prov. 2:1-7).

**9. What will help your faith to increase and continue to grow?**

**Rom. 10:17**, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*.” (See also I Cor. 1:18, I Thess. 2:13, James 1:19-21 and I Peter 2:1-2).

**Remember:**

 “***We must draw a clear line of separation and then make sure that we are on God’s side of the line.***” …S. Curington

“***The man who is content to stay in the middle of the road will soon be run over***.”

…M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 2**

***“Every sin has its origin in our hearts”***

**1. Can you trust your own heart?**  ***NO!***

**Jer. 17:9,** *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*

(See also Ps. 10:4, 94:11, Prov. 24:9 and Gen. 6:5).

**2. What thoughts came into your heart or mind this week that tried to overcome you or deceive you into sin?**

**Matt. 15:18-20a,** *“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man.”*

(See also Prov. 28:26).

**What temptation did you allow your heart to dwell on?**

**I Cor. 10:13,** *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* (See also Rom. 13:14).

**3. Did you allow your heart (mind) to control you or did you immediately ask the Holy Spirit to control it?**

**Prov. 4:23***, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* **Prov. 23:7**, *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”*

**Did you compare your thoughts to what the Scripture says?**

**Hebrews 4:12**, *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* (See also II Cor. 10:4-5, II Thess. 2:13 and Eph. 6:16-18).

**How long are you allowing these thoughts to linger in your heart before praying and asking the Lord to remove them?**

**Ps. 139:23-24**, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

(See also Matt. 26:41).

**4. Did you do anything that helped to create these thoughts?**

 (Music, TV, wrong friends, visit the wrong places, etc.) **Eph. 5:11-12**, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”*

(See also Rom. 12:9).

**5. What Biblical principle did you violate to fulfill these thoughts?**

**Isa. 55:7**, *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”*

(See also Pr. 15:26, Matt. 5:27-28, Heb. 3:12 and Matt. 6:25-34).

**6. Do you need to study the Bible more so that you can fight these temptations with the right weapon?**

**I Thess. 5:21**, *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”*

**Ps 119:130**, “*The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*” (See also Heb. 5:11-14, II Peter 1:2-7 and I John 4:1).

**Are you working in the Stronghold Course?**

**II Tim. 2:15**, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*.”

(See also I Tim. 4:6-16, John 5:39 and Acts 17:11).

**7. What are you doing each day to fill your heart with things that are** “*true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of a good report*?” (**Phil. 4:8-9**).

**Are you using your Journal on a daily basis?**

**Rom. 12:21**, “*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*.”

(See also I Thess. 5:6-8, Tit. 2:6-8, Phil 1:9-11 and Rom. 12:9-21)

**8. Is there anything else you could have done to control your thought life?**

**Prov. 15:14**, “*The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.”* (See also Prov. 3:1-6, 6:20-21, 14:15, 15:14, 16:3, 21:5, 23:12, 17, 27:9, 28:14, 30:32 and I Cor. 13:11).

**Have you taken time to honestly evaluate what comes in you ears and eyes? Do you carefully monitor your choices of entertainment?** (music, videos, DVD’s, television, etc.).

**Ps. 101:3**, “*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*”

**Are you willing to open your heart to God and pray the same prayer that Job or David prayed?**

**Job 13:23**, “*How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.*”

**Ps. 139:23**, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*.”

**Remember:**

 “***Before you ever did it, you thunk it!***”

…S. Curington

***“Actions may appear to spring forth from the hands, but in reality, they spring forth from the heart.”*** …M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 3**

***“It is easier to keep your heart clean than it is to clean it once it has been defiled.”***

**1. What changes did you make last week that helped to keep your heart clean?**

**Prov. 14:16**, “*A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident*.” (See also Prov. 4:23). **Ask other students in the group to tell how they have been able to keep their hearts clean**.

**2. What worldly influence affects your stronghold the most*?***

(Music, movies, friends, Internet, etc.)

**Prov. 22:3**, “*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”*

**3. How successful are you at overcoming your stronghold(s) once your heart had been defiled?**

**Rom. 6:19**, *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.iniquity unto iniquity*,” (See also Rom. 6:11, James 1:15-15 and Rom. 6:21).

**4. What guidelines should you use to determine what will affect or defile your heart?**

(The Bible, testimony of others, preaching, teachers, etc.)

**Ps. 119:105**, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*.” (See also Ps. 19:8, Heb. 4:12 and II Peter 1:19).

**5. Who, besides the Holy Spirit, can help us to keep our hearts from being defiled**?

(Pastor, Challenge leaders, fellow students in RU, etc.)

**Eph. 4:11-12**, “*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*.” (See also Rom. 15:14, Gal. 6:1-2, I Peter 5:1-4, Heb. 3:13, 10:24 and I Thess. 5:11).

**6. Why do people refuse to try and stop their heart from being defiled or why do people continually expose themselves to things that defile their heart and lead them to give in to their addiction?**

 **There are many reasons, but they can all fit into two general categories:**

**(a) They think that they can handle their sin.**

**I Cor. 10:12**, “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*.” (See Prov. 16:18, 28:14 and Matt. 26:41).

**(b) They believe the temporary pleasure is worth indulging in the sin.**

**Rom. 1:32**, *“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them.”*

(See also Heb. 11:25, Ps. 84:10 and Rom. 8:18.)

7**. How can we get our defiled heart clean?**

**(a) Recognize that your heart has been defiled.**

**I John 1:8-10**, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us*.”

(See also Psalm 51:1-12, Prov. 28:13, and Review Principle # 10).

**(b) Confess your guilt in allowing your heart to be defiled** **(Read Ps 32:1-5).**

**(c) Confess any sin that may have resulted from the fact that your heart was defiled. One sin usually leads to other sins**.

**Rom. 6:19**, *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”*

**(d) Determine to make reparation and/or restitution for acts of sin that you did while your heart was defiled and to ask for forgiveness from those whom you have offended**.

**Matt. 5:23-24**, *“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”*

(See also Rom. 12:17-18, James 3:13-18, 5:16, Matt. 18:15-16 and Luke 19:8).

**(e) Ask God for help. In other words,** “*Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh unto you*,” (**James 4:8**). ***Do it tonight!***

**Remember:**

“***If you always do what you’ve always done, then you’ll always be what you’ve always been.***”

…S. Curington

“***The wise soldier leaves no gate unguarded. He sets a faithful watch by his eyes, his ears, his mouth, and his heart***.” …M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**R.U. Principle # 4**

***“We cannot fight a fleshly appetite***

 ***by indulging in it.”***

**1. What excuses do you most commonly make when you indulge your flesh?**

(“This will be the last time. I need just one more.” “I can’t help it.” “I need it.” “You don’t know how hard it is for me to stop.” “I deserve a little pleasure in my life.” etc.) **James 1:13-14**, *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”* (See also I Cor. 10:12, Heb. 2:1, and 3:12-13).

**2. Did giving in to the flesh completely satisfy the flesh, or was it only a temporary solution?**

**Prov. 27:20,** “*Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied*.” (See also Ecc. 1:8, 5:10 and I John 2:16).

**3. Did indulging the flesh weaken or strengthen the flesh?**

**II Peter 2:19**, “*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage*.” (See also Gal. 6:7-8 and Hosea 10:12-13).

**4. If we break free from our stronghold for a while and then indulge in it one more time, what does that usually do to us?**

(It brings feelings of frustration, depression, discouragement, guilt, anger, etc.)

**Prov. 1:30-33**, “*They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.*” (See also Prov. 26:11, Ex. 8:15 and Rom. 2:4-5).

**5. Sin originates in the heart.** (See Principle # 2 - Jer. 17:5, 9, Rom. 7:18). **What thoughts in your heart fed your to desire to indulge in your addiction one more time?**

**Matt. 12:34b-35**, “*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*” (See also Prov. 4:23-27).

**6. Have the students share the thought process they went through when they were unsuccessful in fighting a fleshly temptation.**

**How did they rationalize their sin?**

**Gal. 5:24-25**, *“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

(See also Rom. 8:4-5 and Gal. 5:16).

**Then ask the other students, “What could he/she have done to obtain victory?”**

**Rom. 13:14**, “*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*.”

(See also I Thess. 2:11-12 and 4:1).

**7. Have each student share how they were able, at one time or another, to abstain from indulging the flesh.**

**Prov. 4:7**, “*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*” (See also Gal. 5:16-17, I Peter 2:11-12, II Tim. 2:22 and II Cor. 7:1).

**8. Which appetite are you feeding the most?**

**John 6:26-27**, “*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed*.”

**Which is more important to you, feeding the Spirit of feeding the flesh?**

**Rom. 8:5**, “*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit*.”

(See also Rom. 8:13, 13:14 and Gal. 5:17).

**Remember:**

 “***The only way to weaken a fleshly appetite is by starving it to death***.”

…S. Curington

 “***God’s way of escape never leads through the city of temptation***.”

…M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 5**

***Small compromises lead to great disasters***

*(Little sins lead to big sins).*

**1. What small choices did you make this week kept you from getting the victory over your stronghold or addiction?**

**Luke 16:10**, “*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much*.” **James 3:5**, “*Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.* ***Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth****!”*

**2. Which was more important to you this week, your wants or God’s will?**

**John 3:30**, “*He must increase, but I must decrease.*” (See also Ps. 40:8, 119:16, 24 and 47.)

**3. When the temptation came, were you looking for a way to escape or for a way to indulge the flesh?**

**I Cor. 10:13**, “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*” (See also Luke 11:14, I Cor. 1:4-9, and II Thess. 3:3).

**4. Why were you unprepared to meet that challenge? Do you read, meditate, and memorize the Scripture?**

**Ps. 119:11**, “*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*.” (See also Ps. 119:97, 37:31, Prov. 2:1-5 and Col. 3:16).

**5. How strong is your Prayer life?**

**Matt. 26:41,** *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* (See also Matt, 6:9-13, Luke 22:40, Rom. 12:12, Phil. 4:6 and Eph. 6:18).

**Are you using your Daily Journal and the Personal Prayer Time to help you to concentrate on your requests? Have you listened to the CD that explains how to use your Journal?**

**6. How could you have been better prepared to face the temptation?**

(By studying the Scripture, continuing in the curriculum, faithful to the RU meetings and church services, avoiding the wrong people and places of temptation, etc.)

**Luke 8:15**, *“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”*

(Please also see II Tim. 2:15, Heb. 10:25, Acts 2:42, I Peter 5:8, Prov. 4:14-15).

**7. Was there a point this last week when you should have called your Challenger Leader, Challenge Helper, or other Christian friend for help? Did you call? Why or why not?**

**Rom. 15:1**, *“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.”*

(See also Gal. 6:1-3, 5:13-14, I Thess 5:14, and John 15:12).

**8. In what way(s) did you let down your guard or compromise this week that resulted in a struggle?**

**John 8:34**, “*Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*”

**Why is it so important that you don’t yield to small compromises?**

**Rom. 6:16**, “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*”

(See also II Peter 2:19 and Prov. 5:22).

**9. Which of the 10 Principles did you violate before making these compromises?** (Possibly #2, #6, #8?) **Do you regularly review the 10 Principles?**

**I Tim. 4:15-16**, “*Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*” (See also Ps. 1:2, 49:3, 77:12, 119:15, I Tim. 4:6 and Josh. 1:8).

**10. Can someone in the group quote all 10 Principles for us publicly?**

**11. What small choices did you make this week that gave you victory over your stronghold or addiction?** (Gal. 5:16-17, Rom. 8:5). **Where does victory over sin come from?**

**I Cor. 15:57**, “*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

(See also I John 5:4).

**Remember:**

“***You will never read your Bible every day until you read your Bible on the days that you don’t want to.***” …S. Curington

***“Mr. Little always opens the door for Mr. Lot.”*** …M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 6**

***Those who do not love the Lord***

***will not help us serve the Lord.***

**1. Ask each student to share the names of at least three people who either discouraged them from doing what was right or encouraged them to do what was wrong.**

(You may want to only use first names for privacy. It may also be a good idea for the student to make a written list to share privately with the Challenge leader.) **Prov. 1:10**, “*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*”

(See also Prov. 11-15, 23:17, and 24:1-2).

**Rom. 15:1**, “*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*”

(See also Gal. 6:1-2 and James 5:19-20).

**2. What did the people on your list do or say that caused you to stop serving the Lord? What weapons did they use against you to cause them to join them in sin?**

(Pride, embarrassment, the lure of promised pleasure, etc.) **Prov. 24:19**, “*Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out*.” (See also Ps. 37:1, 1:1, 26:4-5, and I John 2:15-16).

**3. Have someone share a testimony of how breaking ties with those who did not love the Lord made the difference for them in obtaining victory over sin.**

**Prov. 9:6**, “*Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding*.”

(See also Ps. 1:1-2 and 26:1-5).

**4. Have the students share the names of at least three people that are an encouragement to them and who help to them to do right.**

**Prov. 13:20**, “*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”*

(See also Ps. 119:63, 115, Acts 2:42 and Heb. 3:13).

**5. Ask the students, “Is a good relationship with your “*friends*” more important than a good relationship with your Lord?”**

**Ps. 101:4**, “*A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.”* (See also Pr. 8:13, Ps. 6:8, 101:1-8, John 15:18-20 and Eph. 5:6-11).

**6. Make sure that your students understand that “Good Friends” will tell you the truth and sometimes the truth hurts!**

**Prov. 24:24-26**, “*He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.*” (See also Prov. 17:17, 27:6, 28:23 and Ps. 141:5).

**7. Ask the student to name their “Best Friend.”**

**John 15:14-15**, *“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”* (See also Prov. 18:24).

**8. Make sure the students understand that (as much as possible) they must avoid the company of the wicked.**

**(a). You should not walk with them**.

**Prov. 1:15**, *“Walk not in the way with them*.” (See also Ps. 1:1 and Prov. 1:15).

**(b).You should not stand with them**.

**Ps. 1:1**, “*Blessed is the man”* that does not *“stand in the way of sinners.”*

**(c). You should not sit with them**.

**Ps. 1:1**, *“Blessed is the man”* that does not *“sit in the ear of the scornful.”*(See also Ps. 26:4-5).

**(e). If you find yourself in their presence, you should not “*tarry*” with them**.

**Ps. 101:7**, “*He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.”*

**(f). If they come to fellowship with you, you should quickly “*forsake*” them and “*depart from*” the presence of their company**.

**Prov. 9:6**, *“Forsake the foolish, and live...”*

**Ps. 119:115**, *“Depart from me, ye evildoers...”*

**(g). As much as possible you should “*avoid*’ the company of the wicked**.

**Prov. 4:14-15**, “*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.”*

**Rom. 16:17**. “*Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them.”*

 **Remember:**

“***I found that when I got right and stayed right that my old friends left***.” …S. Curington

“***Regardless of intent, fellowship implies agreement***.” …M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 7**

***Our sinful habits do hurt those***

***who follow us.***

**1. Should you be concerned with the influence you might have on a weaker brother?**

**I Cor. 10:31-33**, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God*. *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*” (See also Rom. 14:13, 15:1-3, II Cor. 6:3 and Gal. 6:1-2).

**2. Do you think that your sin hurts others?**

(We often convince ourselves that we are not hurting others).

**I Peter 2:9-12**, *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”*

(See also I Cor. 8:9-13, 10:24, and Rom. 14:7)

**3. What decisions could you make tonight that would reduce the hurt that others feel because of your sin?**

**Phil. 2:15-16**, “*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*”

**Matthew 5:14-16**, “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*.”

**4. Have you ever confessed this sin of hurting others to God?** (I John 1:8-9).

**Have you forgiven those who injured you in some way or are you still holding a grudge against them?**

**Matt. 18:21-22,** *“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?* *Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”*

(See also Matt. 6:12, 14-15 and 18:21-35).

**5. Have the students make a list of people that they have hurt (intentionally or unintentionally) because of their stronghold or addiction and note how they may have hurt them.**

**6. Have you admitted your sin to those you have hurt or offended and asked them for their forgiveness**?

**James 5:16**, *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”* (See also Matt. 18:15-17).

**7. What kind of a testimony would you like to have?**

**Heb. 11:5**, “*By faith Enoch… had this testimony, that he pleased God*.”\

**What are you doing to build a godly testimony?**

**Heb. 13:18-21**, “*Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever*.”

**Remember:**

“***The idea that ‘I’m not hurting anyone but myself,’ comes directly from the devil***.”

…S. Curington

“***He who denies he is ever in error, is ever in error.***” …M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 8**

***It is not possible to fight***

***a fleshly temptation with fleshly weapons.***

**1. What is the definition of an addiction?**

**“*An addiction is anything I continue to do even though I know it is bad for me*.” It is habitual sin.**

**Prov. 29:6**, “*In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.*” (See also Rom. 6:11-18, 23 and I John 3:4-10).

**2. What are some fleshly weapons that people try to use to overcome strongholds?** (Willpower, prescription drugs, psychology, fleshly reasoning, etc.)

**Will any of these fleshly weapons be effective in our spiritual battle?** **NO! Remember the R.U. Motto; “Only the Truth makes free!”**

**John 8:31-32, 36**, “*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;**And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*” (See also Rom. 8:5-8, 13, and Prov. 2:1-7).

**3. What does God think about fleshly weapons?**

**II Corinthians 10:3-5**, “*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.)*”

(See also Gal. 2:20, I Peter 4:1 and Rom. 8:13).

**4. What are the most effective weapons in our battle against our addiction?**

**The three most important spiritual weapons are:**

**(a). The Word of God –**

**Col. 3:16**, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*” (See also Ps. 119:11, Heb. 4:12, and Jer. 15:16).

**(b). The Holy Spirit of God –**

**Gal. 5:16-17**, “*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*”

(See also Gal. 5:18-25, 6:8, Rom. 8:1-5 and I John 4:4).

**(c).** **The Mind of Christ** –

**Phil. 2:5**, “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*.”

**I Peter 4:1**, “*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*.”

**5. How are we to arm ourselves for Spiritual Battle?**

**Eph. 6:12-13**, “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* (See also Eph. 6:14-18, I Thess. 5:8 and I Peter 4:1).

6**. What other weapons are available to us?**

**(a). Prayer** –

**Phil. 4:6**, “*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” (See also Eph. 6:18, I Peter 5:7, and I John 3:22).

 **(b). The preaching and teaching of a good local church** –

**I Cor. 1:18**, “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God*.” (See also Heb. 10:25 and Acts 2:42).

**(c). The fellowship of godly believers** **–**

**Col. 1:9**, “*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*” (See also Col. 1:12-23, and I Thess. 4:1).

**7. A Hard Question to Ask Yourself:**

***“Am I here because I’m trying to gain more control over my life?” OR “Am I here because I want to learn how to yield myself daily to the Holy Spirit’s control?”*** (Gal 5:16-17).

**Remember:**

“***The battle cannot be won with a fleshly weapon because the battle is spiritual. The battle is inside of us and that is exactly where Christ has chosen to take up residence!***” …S. Curington

“***Choose your weapons carefully. Worldly weapons may gleam in the noonday sun, but they will not prove true during the heat of battle. Carnal swords hold little power against spiritual wickedness. I advise you to choose a weapon that has proven to be quick, powerful and sharp***, (Heb.4:12).”

…M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 9**

***We lose the freedom to choose***

***when we give in to temptation.***

***The consequences of our sins are inevitable, incalculable and up to God.***

**1. What do the words “*inevitable*” and “*incalculable*” mean?**

**(a).Inevitable = “*That which cannot be avoided, evaded, or escaped – Something that is sure to happen.”***

**(b). Incalculable = “*Impossible to estimate, to determine, or to count.”***

**Prov. 5:21-23**, “*For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins*.”

(See also Rom. 2:1-11, Prov. 11:21, 16:5, Ps. 62:11-12 and Isa. 3:10-11).

**2. What were you trying to find when you started your addiction?**

(Pleasure, peace, escape from reality, etc.)

**How long did it take you to realize that sinful pleasures don’t bring happiness?**

**Ps. 144:15**, *“Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.”*

**Ps 146:5**, *“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God.”*

**3. Did your addiction bring you what you sought?**

**Isa. 59:2, 8**, “*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. The way of peace they know not*.”

**When we yield ourselves to the Devil or to any material or immoral temptation that our heart desires, we only find sorrow.**

**Some Biblical Examples of this Truth:**

**(a). Adam and Eve** –

**Gen. 3:16-17,** *“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy* ***sorrow*** *and thy conception; in* ***sorrow*** *thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in* ***sorrow*** *shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.”*

**I John 2:16, Yielding to the PRIDE OF LIFE does not bring joy! (The pride of life is a compelling drive to be something or someone.)**

**(b). King David** –

**Ps. 51:10-12**, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.* ***Restore unto me the joy*** *of thy salvation*.” **I John 2:16**, **Yielding to the Lust of the FLESH does not bring joy! (The lust of the flesh is a controlling desire to do something.)**

 **(c). The Rich Young Ruler** –

**Matt. 19:21-22**, “*Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away* ***sorrowful****: for he had great possessions.*”

**I John 2:16, Yielding to the Lust of the EYES does not bring joy! (The lust of the eyes is a compulsive urge to have something or someone.)**

**I Tim. 6:10**, “*For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many* ***sorrows****.*”

**4. What consequences have you had to pay because of the stronghold(s) in your life?**

(Loss of job, family, home, respect, health etc.) **Prov. 5:22**, “*His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins*.” (See also Prov. 1:10-19, 5:23, 9:17-18, Ps. 7:14-16 and Ps. 9:16).

**Did you expect the consequences to be so costly?**

**Ps. 140:11**, “*Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him*.” (See also Prov. 12:13, 13:21, 17:20, Ps. 34:21 and Isa. 3:11).

**5. Did you believe you could hide your addiction and avoid the consequences?**

**Num. 32:23**, *“Behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.”* (See also Ps. 90:8, 139:1-12 and Gal. 6:7-8).

**6. Has your addiction caused you to commit other sins?**

(lying, cheating, stealing, physical violence, etc.)

**John 8:34**, “*Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*.” (See also Rom. 2:7-10 and Prov. 13:21).

**7. What future consequences do you foresee if you do not get the victory?**

(Poverty, homelessness, jail, death, etc.)

**If you continue in your addiction, where do you think it will it all end?**

**James 1:14-15**, “*Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*.”

(See also Prov. 9:17-18).

**8. How has your sin affected others**

**(**Your friends, relatives, coworkers, spouse)?

**What consequences or costs have they had to bear because of your strongholds?**

(Loss of property, loss of trust, emotional damage, etc.)

**Prov. 13:20**, “*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed*.” (See also Prov. 10:17, Rom. 14:7 and Phil. 1:20).

**9. Why do we choose to give into temptation?**

**(a). We have a sin nature that always tries to do wrong,** (Rom. 5:12, 19) **and a spiritual battle is always taking place within us*.***

**Rom. 7:18-19**, *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* (See also, Rom. 6:11-14, 7:21 and Gal. 5:16-17).

**(b). We often focus on the temporary pleasure of our sin and blindly ignore the consequences that are sure to follow!**

**Heb. 11:24-26a**, “*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.*” (See also Luke 12:19-20 andIsa. 47:8-11).

**10. What causes you to continue in your sin even when you know there will be stiff consequences to pay?**

(The selfish desire for pleasure, the stubborn pull of the flesh, the lack of spiritual food to feed the Spirit instead of the flesh, the fellowship with the wrong kinds of people, the belief that it won’t happen to you, the idea that you can control it, etc.)

**Gal. 6:7-8**, *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*

**11. How can you find freedom from your stronghold or addiction?**

**Isa. 55:7**, “*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”*

(See also I John 1:8-9 and Eze. 18:30).

**Remember:**

“***You can choose your sin, but you cannot choose your consequences***.” …S. Curington

“***God already knows today the sin you will attempt to hide tomorrow.***” …M. D. Hunsucker Sr.

**Principle # 10**

***God balances guilt with blame.***

***Accept the blame for your actions***

***and God will remove the guilt.***

**1. Ask your students if they understand the Biblical principle recorded in**

**Prov. 28:13**.“*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso* ***confesseth*** *and forsaketh them shall have mercy*.”

**2. What happens when we confess our sins? “To confess,” means “to agree with the charges against you.”**

**Ps. 32:5**, “*I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will* ***confess*** *my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*.”

**I John 1:8-9**, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we* ***confess*** *our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.”

**If we confess, He forgives, but we have to be willing to tell the “truth” about ourselves!**

**Ps 145:18**, “*The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in* ***truth***.”

**Ps. 34:18**, “*The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit*.” “*Contrite*” means to be broken or humbled by a sense of our own guilt! (**Ps. 34:18, 51:17**).

**3. In the story of the prodigal son, what happened when he finally “*came to himself*” and decided to confess his sin,** (**Luke 15:18-23**). **What will happen if you come to God confessing your sin?** (James 4:8, Jer. 29:12-13).

**4. Ask your students to honestly evaluate their lives and determine if they are accepting the blame for their sin or still blaming someone else** (a parent, a friend, spouse, etc.) **or something else for their addiction or stronghold** (a tragedy in their life, income level, environment, marriage problems, etc.)

**Remind the students that until they accept the blame, that is, their personal responsibility for what they have done, they will never find forgiveness.**

**Ps. 32:3-4**, “*When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer*.”

**David is literally saying, “Before I humbled myself, and confessed my sin, my soul was under continual conviction and I felt the hand of God heavy upon me every day.”** (See also Ps. 31:9-10, Ps. 38:1-6, 17-18, 51:1-13).

**5. Explain to your students that there are two things connected to this principle.**

**-There is confession of sin and there is also the forsaking of sin.**

**-“To forsake,” means to depart from, to abandon or to let go of.**

**Isa.** **55:7**, “*Let the wicked* ***forsake*** *his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*.”

**Prov. 28:13**, *“…and* ***forsaketh*** *it.”*

**6. If we confess and forsake our sin, how can we be sure that God will forgive us? The truth is that God not only wants to forgive you, but He is patiently waiting for you to come to Him.**

**Ps 86:5**, “*For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee*.”

**Ps. 86:15**, “*But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth*.”

**Ps 103:3**, “*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases*;”

**Ps 145:8**, “*The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy*.”

**Ps. 145:9**, “*The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*”

**Micah 7:18**, “*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*.”

**Jer 33:3**, “*Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not*.”

**Remember:**

“***God allows us to experience guilt for our sin. The only way to remove the guilt is to accept the responsibility for our actions and ask God to forgive us from the filthiness of our sin***.”

…S. Curington

“***Many times I have been wrong claiming I was right, and right admitting I was wrong***.”

…M. D. Hunsucker Sr.