

## V. THE BIBLICAL PROCESS OF CHANGE

### A. A Macro Look at the Problem of Sin (Origin and Progression) as It Affects Worship

#### 1. Its Beginning (Gen.3)

- a) Man had divine counsel before the fall. He was innocent, but not autonomous or independent.
- b) Man also required the counsel of the Word (Gen.1:28-30). Without the Word, life is absurd; life has no purpose or future.
- c) Man turned from the divine counsel to devilish counsel.
  - (1) Doubt ➤ Gen.3:1
  - (2) Distortion ➤ Gen.3:2
  - (3) Denial ➤ Gen.3:4
  - (4) Denunciation ➤ Gen.3:5
- d) Man rejected divine counsel and suffered the consequences.
  - (1) Immediate Consequences: gained knowledge of good and evil; lost power to effect change; gained guilt, separation, blindness, rejecting responsibility; developed problems with God, others, and self, blame shifting
  - (2) Eternal Consequences: spiritual death - physical and eternal

#### 2. Its Continuation

- a) The first man born (Gen.4)
- b) The first king of Israel (I Sam.13-31)
- c) The assessment of all mankind at the time of Paul (Rom.3:9-23)

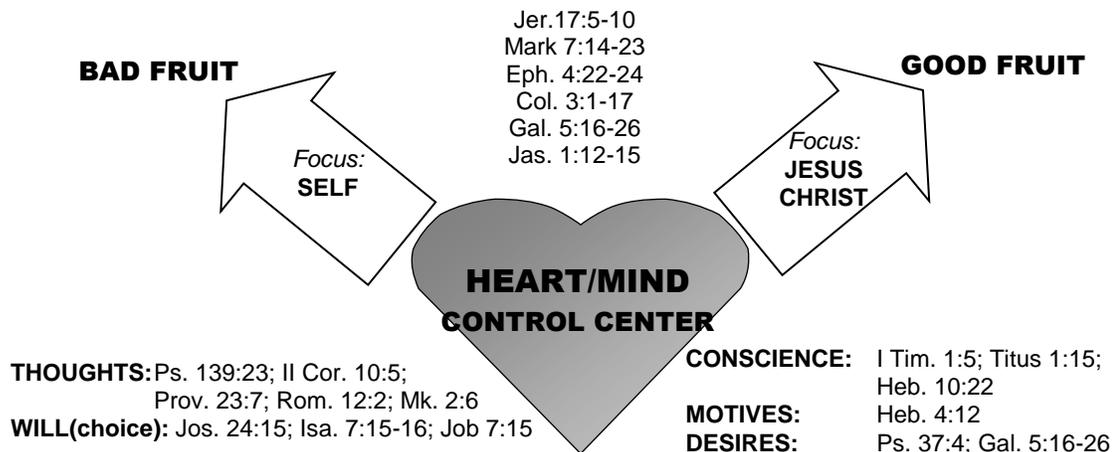
3. Its Present Status (II Tim.3:1-13)
  - a) There is wholesale iniquity (II Tim.3:2-4)
  - b) There is wholesale hypocrisy (II Tim.3:5-7)
  - c) There is wholesale apostasy (II Tim. 3:8-9)
  - d) There is wholesale persecution (II Tim.3:12-13)

4. Its Alternatives

- a) One can quit; many have.
- b) One can seek help from man's counsel. – Jer 6:14
- c) One can seek help from God through His Word (II Tim. 3:15 - 4:2).

B. A Micro Look at the Problem of Sin as It Affects Worship

1. The Location - The Heart (Gen.6:5; Matt.22:34-40; Prov.4:23; Mk.7:20-23; I Sam.16:7; Ps.111:1; Prov.23:7)



**Fig. 7 Man's Control Center**

2. The Occupation – Worship (Ex.20:1-6; Rom.12:1; Jer.2:13; I Kings 18:21; Matt.12:34; Jos.24:14-20; Rom.6:16; Matt.6:21)
  
3. The Frustration – Idolatry / Lust (I Kings 11:4; Ezk.14:1-11; Rom.1:25; I Cor.10:1-14)
  - a) Wanting or desiring something that God does not want or desire
  
  - b) Wanting something that God wants or desires but wanting it so much that one becomes ungodly to get it or ungodly if they don't
  
  - c) Being controlled by expectations and becoming ungodly in thought, word, or deed when the expectation is not realized
  
  - d) Perceiving a deserved right and following through with ungodly thoughts, words, and actions to try to get it when that right is denied
  
  - e) Believing in something, a standard or rule, that is not of God and that leads to ungodly practices
  
  - f) Having a mindset that is against the truth of God's Word, that leads to ungodliness in thoughts, words, and actions
  
4. The Regeneration — versus Rehabilitation
  - a) The Gospel and its counterfeit, the psychologized gospel
  
  - b) Rom.10:8-10; Matt.7:21-23; Eph.3:17
  
5. The Transformation - The Renewing of the Mind / Heart
  - a) This is a battle (war) (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:22; II Cor.10:5) - into Christlikeness

- b) Rom.8:28-29; II Cor.3:18; Gal.4:19, Eph.4:13-15; Col.1:17; 3:10  
6. The Glorification - Christ's Return (Rom.8:18-25,30; I Cor.15:50-58)

## 7. Summary and Conclusion

- a) Pray daily (Psalm 139:23-24)
- b) Ask yourself:
- (1) What are my goals, expectations, or intentions?
  - (2) What do I become anxious over or fearful over?
  - (3) What makes me happy?
  - (4) What motivates me?
  - (5) What would I like, possibly more than anything?
  - (6) In what situation do I respond in anger?
  - (7) What perceived right(s) has been denied?
  - (8) What biblical standard or principle permits that thought, word, or action?
- c) Write down how that particular idol/lust is worshipped in thought, word, and deed.
- d) Acknowledge what it is and confess it = sin of idolatry.
- e) Ask forgiveness from God and whomever is part of the worship process.
- f) Study God's character to examine how your view of God is skewed.
- g) Be ready to learn how to replace idol/lust worship with the worship of God.
- h) Do an in-depth study on the character and attributes of God that are directly involved in this area of change.

## C. General Considerations

### 1. Three Models of Sanctification

- a) The Wesleyan View (Christian Perfection)

A "second work of grace" catapults the believer into a state of sinlessness, which is often called "entire sanctification." (Sin is defined as only that which is a "willful transgression of the known law of God." Anything we do not clearly "intend" to do or are ignorant about is merely a "mistake.") Spiritual growth takes place after the second work of grace by increasing in good works.

b) The Keswick View (Higher Life or Deeper Life)

A unique post-salvation commitment (or enlightenment) allows the believer to enter into a victorious and consistent life of obedience. The struggle with sin continues, but it is lessened significantly by the new truth that has been understood and accepted. Spiritual growth takes place after that primarily by a passive trust in the work of God, appropriately represented by the slogan "let go and let God."

\* 2 Corinthians 3:18

c) The Biblical View of Progressive Sanctification (commonly referred to as The Reformed View)

A lifelong cycle of sin, repentance, renewal, and growth toward Christlikeness that will only be complete when we meet our Lord (Rom.6-8). This is accomplished through the active discipline of the believer himself, who trusts that the Holy Spirit is energizing his efforts (Phil. 2:12-13).

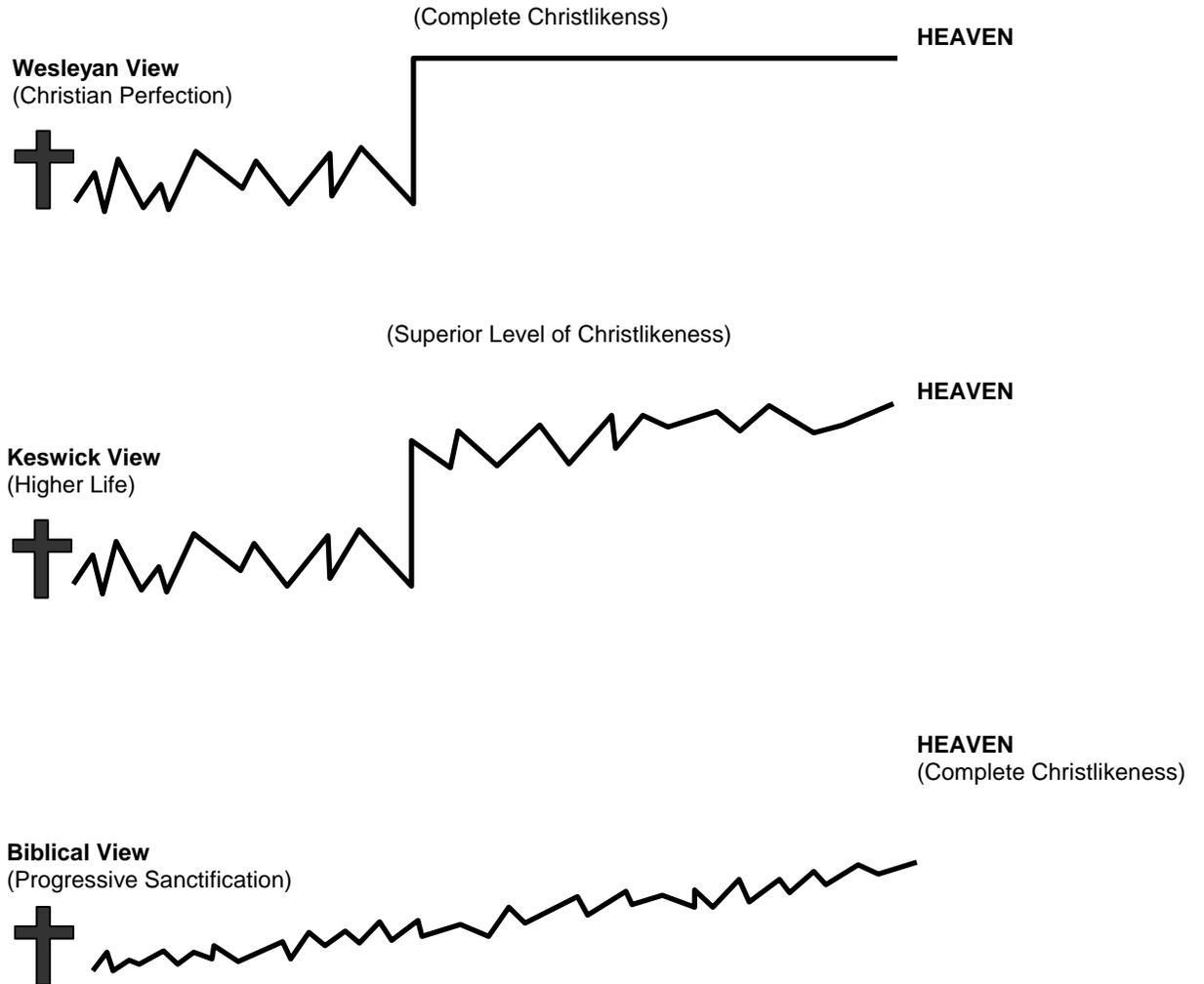
(1) The Westminster Confession, Chapter XII states:

- I. They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
- II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.
- III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

(2) Many people who claim to believe the biblical view nevertheless fall practically into the errors of the other approaches.

- (a) They echo both the Wesleyan and Keswick views when they seem to be waiting for some divine event that will take away the strongest pulls of sin and eliminate the need for concentrated self-discipline.

- (b) They echo the Wesleyan view specifically when they admit that we sin "all the time" but very seldom confess it or ask forgiveness.
- (c) And they echo the Keswick view specifically when they "let go and let God's Word" by thinking that the absorption of scriptural teaching alone, without its practice, will change them.



**Fig. 8 Sanctification Models**

#### D. Specific Concepts

The biblical counselor must possess a deep theological understanding of guilt, repentance, forgiveness, and replacement in order to help people change biblically. Because these concepts are so central to the doctrine of sanctification, Satan and man's sinful flesh work overtime to distort them.

#### 1. Guilt

##### a) The contemporary war against guilt

###### (1) Examples in society (from *The Vanishing Conscience*)

\* It's not my fault, I'm a victim, It's my parents, its my genes

###### (2) Explanations for the effects of guilt

No one can deny that depression, conflict, hatred, greed, hedonism, and other problems are rampant in our society. But those problems are "explained away" by the following:

(a) Environment

(b) Sickness – a syndrome. Group of symptoms defined as a sickness.

(c) Heredity

(d) "False guilt"

(e) "Shame" – result of sin, not the cause.

###### (3) Efforts to eliminate the effects of guilt

(a) More sin – don't feel bad about it, we live in America. Sear your conscience.

(b) Chemicals – escape and try to silence the conscience

(c) Blameshifting – make someone else to be at fault

(d) Self-Esteem – this is actually the root of man's problems

(e) Self-Gratification – hedonism. Just seek after pleasure.

##### b) The biblical understanding of guilt

###### (1) Definition: A legal liability or culpability to punishment

\* Guilt is a position, not a feeling. Negative feelings are the result of a guilty conscience. We can be truly guilty but not feel it.

###### (a) The fact of guilt vs. the feeling of guilt

The term "guilt" properly denotes the fact of liability and not the feeling that often accompanies it. Negative feelings are a result of guilt. So we can be truly guilty but not feel guilty (e.g. the man who slows down to 35 mph in a 15 mph zone).

(b) The idea of "false guilt"

\* Not a biblical concept. Refers to feelings, not the position. Regret, remorse, sadness over sin. Pride which wallows sin while never really acknowledging true culpability.

(2) Dealing with guilt

(a) We must never minimize the fact of guilt

- i) Guilt is universal because sin is universal (Rom.3:19, 23).
- ii) Guilt is serious because God is a holy Judge (Rom.1:18, 2:5-6).
- iii) Guilt will remain even if it is explained away or if its effects are somehow lessened, and where guilt remains punishment is inevitable.

\* People must learn to be honest and confess.

(b) We must never minimize the feeling of guilt

There is always an underlying reason for guilty feelings, and taking them seriously provides great hope for change.

(c) We must never underestimate the effects of guilt.

Psalm 32:1-5 and Psalm 38:1-8 graphically reveal the devastating emotional and physical effects guilt can have on a person.

\* Those who wallow in guilt and self-pity. Look for an underlying theme of pride. I can't believe I did that (why not, are you not sinful like the rest of us). Often they have not really forsaken their sin. Might have a wrong view of sin. Its not that big a deal, so why do I feel so bad.

c) The "warning light" that reveals guilt

God has given us the faculty of conscience to help us identify the presence of guilt. The word literally means "a knowing with" (*suneidesis*) and has been defined as "the soul reflecting on itself." Our inner man uses the information it possesses to evaluate our thinking and actions, much like a diagnostic program running perpetually on a computer.

NOTE: Conscience involves what we know or believe rather than what we feel. We may believe something is right but feel hesitant or even hostile toward it, and we can feel good about what we know is wrong. Feelings are often a result of the operations of conscience but are not identical with them.

(1) The importance of a clean conscience

(a) Explicit references (Acts 23:1, 24:16; I Tim.1:19; Hebrews 13:18)

(b) Implicit principles from Romans 14:23

If we don't believe a certain action is right, it would be a sinful choice to go ahead with it. If we choose to do something we are not sure is right, we remove ourselves from the realm of faith and obstruct our relationship with Christ (James 1:6-7).

(2) Variations of conscience referred to in Scripture

Each person has one conscience, but that conscience may respond to various issues differently because of the "facts" informing it. Any of these could be true of the same conscience in regard to different issues.

(a) A seared conscience (I Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15; Ephesians 4:19)

Such a conscience has been silenced through repeated sin, bad theology, or excuses.

(b) An untrained conscience (cf. Lev.4:22-24; I Timothy 1:13; Hebrews 5:14)

Our consciences need to be continually trained to understand the "whole counsel of God," because we are culpable for our sins of ignorance (and for our ignorance itself).

(c) An overactive conscience (Rom.14:1-5, 23)

Sometimes we believe that a desire, thought, or action is morally wrong when the Bible does not actually condemn it. In those cases we are required to act according to our conscience (Rom.14:23), but we should also seek to retrain our conscience according to biblical standards (Rom.14:22).

So our conscience should not be our "guide," as the old saying goes, but it should be our "guard."

(d) A biblical conscience

(3) The solution to guilt

The only true answer to guilt is forgiveness through repentance. God must remove the guilt of our sin through His appointed means of repentance. This is true before salvation (Luke 24:47) and after (Matt.6:12).

## 2. Repentance

The word "repent" basically means to turn or to change. It is best illustrated by the picture of someone who is walking one way but does a "180" and heads in the opposite direction.

Repentance is a necessary component of genuine conversion (Luke 3:3; II Cor.7:10). Unsaved people must turn from sin, which is the state of self-rule they have lived in as their own lord and master (Rom.10:9; I John 3:4).

Repentance also remains continually necessary after conversion (Psalm 51; Luke 17:3-4). Saved persons must turn from sins, which are the specific symptoms of the lingering disease called "the flesh" (Rom.7:14-25; Galatians 5:16-17).

All true human repentance has reference to a turning from the state or occurrence of sin and turning to God for forgiveness and renewal. Scripture often alludes to a false repentance that does not actually bring forgiveness (eg. Matt.3:7-8; II Cor.7:10b), so we must understand some elements, effects, and examples of repentance in order to practice it ourselves and help others do so as well.

### a) Elements of true repentance

#### (1) Comprehending

We must understand the truth relevant to our sin and our Savior before we can repent. The Greek word most often translated "repentance" is *metanoia*, which denotes "a change of mind."

#### (2) Confessing

The two-fold nature of inward confession is revealed in the meaning of the Greek verb *homologeō* ("to say the same thing"). We must acknowledge to God the fact of our sin and agree with God about the nature of our sin (Prov.28:13; I John 1:8-9).

#### (3) Choosing

True repentance always includes a willful resolve to not repeat the sin (cf. Isaiah 1:16-17; Luke 5:27-28).

### b) Effects of true repentance

Although repentance itself is an inward turning that takes place in the heart and mind, it inevitably leads to change in other areas of a person's life. If it is not accompanied or followed by such effects when they are appropriate, it is not a real repentance but a false one that fails to bring forgiveness (cf. Matt.3:7-8; Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20; II Cor.7:10b).

\* True change hasn't taken place, until change takes place.

(1) Restitution

The word means "to set things right" - the repentant sinner must fulfill any obligations to the offended party (cf. Ex. 22:1; Lev.5:15; Luke 19:1-10). This includes both an outward confession when it is appropriate (James 5:16) and a willingness to accept the consequences of our sin (Ps. 51:3-4).

(2) Reconciliation

When our sin has resulted in a broken relationship with another, true repentance will cause us to do whatever we can to transform the conflict into a peaceful and edifying friendship (Matt.5:24; Rom.12:18; II Cor.2:7-8).

\* Penance and repentance and not to be equated. One is sinful, the other is biblical

(3) Regret

True repentance may not always be accompanied by emotions (especially those that are visible to others), but in many cases a feeling of sorrow corroborates other evidences and points to a real change in thinking (Ps. 51; Job 42:6). Emotional responses alone, however, do not prove that repentance is genuine (cf. I Sam. 15:27; II Cor.7:10b).

(4) NOTE: We must remember that not every case of repentance requires all of the above changes, and we also must be very careful to allow the fruits of repentance to be defined by God rather than by man (Mark 7:6-13; I Corinthians 4:5-6).

c) Examples of true repentance:

(1) Psalm 51 (David)

(2) II Corinthians 7:9-11

### 3. Forgiveness

a) What is forgiveness?

The primary Greek verb translated "forgive" (*aphiemi*) means "to send away" or "to release." So in reference to sin it means "to pardon." But forgiveness has also rightly been described as a promise, because when God forgives, He promises that He will never hold our sins against us (Jeremiah 31:34).

So the best definition of forgiveness is a promise of pardon.

(1) God's forgiveness

Man needs forgiveness from God both before salvation and after salvation.

The forgiveness needed before salvation can be called judicial forgiveness, because God acts as a judge, declaring us righteous forever and delivering us from eternal condemnation (Romans 4:3-8; Colossians 2:13-14).

The forgiveness needed after salvation can be called parental forgiveness, because God is now our loving Father who wants to free us from the temporal discomfort of His chastening (Matthew 6:12; Hebrews 12:5-11).

(2) Our forgiveness

We are to forgive one another just as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13), so when we grant forgiveness to someone, we are promising that we will "not remember" their sins anymore (Jeremiah 31:34).

That means we will never use their sin against them, so practically we are saying the following to the one we forgive:

- (a) "I will not remind you of this sin (unless it would be absolutely necessary to do so for your good)."
- (b) "I will not mention it to anyone else (unless it would be absolutely necessary...)."
- (c) "I will not allow my mind to dwell on it."

We are commanded to forgive, so we are sinning if we refuse to make that promise. Therefore forgiveness is a matter of obedience rather than feeling.

It is also sin for us to break our promise after we make it, and we can keep it regardless of how we feel.

b) Whom should we forgive?

Some passages in Scripture clearly imply that we can only forgive those who ask for it (e.g. Luke 17:3-4), while others seem to imply that we should forgive everyone who sins against us, regardless of whether they ask for it or not (e.g. Mark 11:25). How can we understand this apparent discrepancy? Perhaps the best way is to make a distinction between the transaction of forgiveness and the attitude of forgiveness (or “reconciliation” versus “release”).

(1) The attitude of forgiveness

Even though we may not be able to fully reconcile with everyone who sins against us, our attitude toward them should never be one of anger, bitterness, resentment, or any kind of ill will. We should also treat them very kindly and graciously (Romans 12:17-21). We are commanded to love everyone (Luke 6:27-35), so we must desire their best, which means we will do everything we can to bring them to repentance and we will always be ready to reconcile, as Psalm 86:5 says about God.

This loving attitude has been called "forgiveness in the heart." It has also been called "vertical forgiveness" because it is mentioned only in the context of prayer. It is something that we do before God that enables us to have the right attitude toward an individual (Matt.18:35). The following verses relate to this "release" that takes place in prayer:

(a) Mark 11:25

(b) Luke 23:34

(c) Matthew 6:12-15 and Luke 11:4

We can conclude from those verses (and others concerning love and graciousness) that any time someone wrongs us, we should pray to God in this way: ("Father, you know what has happened between \_\_\_\_\_ and me. Help me to not be angry or bitter at him, nor to seek revenge in any way, but help me to love him and desire only his good. Please work in his heart and bring him to repentance so that we can have a reconciled relationship. Use me in any way You can to help him.") For a believer that help may involve a confrontation according to Matthew 18, and for an unbeliever it would involve witnessing to him if possible.)

(2) The transaction of forgiveness

Just as God does not make His promise of pardon to people unless they repent (Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38), we cannot actually say "I forgive you" to people unless they admit their sin and repent. Therefore the transaction of forgiveness is conditional in that we can only be fully reconciled to those who repent. Those who refuse to repent of their sin are not forgiven by God (in the parental sense mentioned above) and so the consequences of a broken relationship with the offended person continue.

Luke 17:3 says that our part of responsibility to those who sin against us is to confront them (if we are unable to "overlook" or "cover" their sin - Prov.19:11 and I Pet.4:8 - and if we have truly dealt with our own heart attitudes first, (i.e. if we have a forgiving heart attitude). Then, if they recognize their wrong and repent from it, we can be reconciled to them. Matthew 18:15-17 makes it clear that we cannot be fully reconciled to those who have not repented, because if we did we could not continue the process described in those verses.

### (3) Other issues related to whom we forgive

#### (a) Confronting vs. "covering"

- \* Is this a clear cut sin issue. Does the cover keep "blowing off" so it must be dealt with.
- \* Seek wise council, pray, is it the right time, is this vindictive, is it for restoration, is it for their best.

#### (b) Apologizing vs. asking for forgiveness

#### (c) What about forgiving God?

- \* Forgiving God.

#### (d) What about forgiving unbelievers?

- \* As far as it depends on you be a peace with all men.

#### (e) What about forgiving dead people?

- \* We are not to harbor resentment in our hearts. We have an attitude of forgiveness before the Lord, knowing the justice will be done.

#### (f) What about forgiving ourselves?

- \* They need to deal with the underlying issues that caused the sin

#### c) How should we forgive?

##### (1) Immediately (Luke 17:3)

##### (2) Repeatedly (Luke 17:4)

##### (3) Lavishly (II Corinthians 2:5-8)

(4) Why should we forgive?

#### 4. Replacement

##### a) The concept of replacement

Biblical change must involve both "putting off and "putting on." In other words, It must involve both dehabitation and rehabituation. Old sinful patterns must be replaced with new godly ones in order for the change to be pleasing to God and to last over time.

Replacement is taught everywhere in Scripture (e.g. Psalm 1:1-2; Isaiah 1:16-17; Romans 13:14; 1 Thess.5:21-22; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:12; I Pet.3:9; III John 11), but the most clear and complete reference is Eph.4:22-32.

##### b) The characteristics of replacement

###### (1) Breaking and establishing habits

(Quotes from Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, pp. 180-181)

###### (2) Enduring in obedience

Hebrews 10:36 says, "You have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

(More quotes from Jay Adams; pp. 185-186)

###### (3) Structuring our environment

\* Just restructuring the environment does not stop the lust going on in the heart. They must stop being the person they were before, not simply stop doing what they did before.

Romans 13:14 says, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." We need to remove impediments to change and replace them with facilitators for change.

###### (4) See Jay Adams' homework diagram in Appendix 2

#### 5. Mind Renewal

##### a) The priority of renewal

- (1) O.T. - Ps. 15:2; Prov.23:7; Eccl.3:17-18; Obad.1:3; Zeph.1:12
  - (2) N.T. - Matt.9:3-4; Mk.7:20-23; Rom.12:2; II Cor.11:3; Eph.4:23; Phil.4:8; Col.3:2,10,16; I Thess.4:13; 5:21; I Cor.3:16; II Cor.1:8; Rom.1:28; 6:3,16; I Pet.1:13
- b) The prerequisite of renewal
- (1) Prior to regeneration, one's mind is corrupt, blinded, futile, and darkened (Rom.1:28; II Cor.4:4; Eph.4:17,18).
  - (2) Since the mind of the lost is corrupt, it doesn't choose what is good; since it is spiritually blind, it doesn't know what is good; since its thoughts are futile, it doesn't perform what is good; and since it is ignorant, it doesn't even know what evil it is doing. What a tragic train of thought." - MacArthur, *Anxiety Attacked*
  - (3) In regeneration, one's mind has a new capacity to be interjected with and controlled by divine thoughts. (I Cor.2:11-12; Rom.1:16; Lk.10:27; Eph.5:17-18; Col.3:16).
- c) The pursuit of renewal (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:23; Col.3:2,10,16; I Thess.5:21)
- (1) Read the pamphlet George Sanchez, "Changing Your Thought Patterns" (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1975).
  - (2) Read pages 64-65 in Jay E. Adams, *How to Help People Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).
- d) The polemics in renewal (II Cor.10:5)  
*Polemos, strateuo* = battle, war, encamp, fight, conflict (Gal.5:16-17; I Tim.1:18; 4:7-9; II Tim.2:3-4; James 4:1-2; I Pet.2:11; Rev.12:7)
- e) Suggested patterns of renewal from (Phil.4:6-9) – See Appendices 3-6