



GUIDING PRINCIPLE #1:

CONSTRUCT a biblically based perspective both of mankind in created perfection and the extensive damage from the Fall common to us all as evidenced in broken relationships with God, self, and others.

A PERFECT BEGINNING: COMPLETE WELL-BEING

1. God created man an innocent physical being with 5 senses (sight, taste, touch, smell, hearing) that:
 - Gives us a unique and distinct identity
 - Allows us to interact with the physical world.
 - Our body defines our total self.
2. God breathed life into man, and he became a living soul with a mind, a will, and emotions.
3. God made us spiritual beings.
 - Sets us apart from the animal kingdom.
 - Most directly relates to God's image in us.
 - Gives us the capacity to be aware of ourselves.
 - Allows us to willfully fellowship and interact with God.
4. Man was created to be totally God-centered.

2 LEGITIMATE HUMAN LONGINGS

- **A pleasant, painless existence**
- **A state of equilibrium, balance and order**

3 BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

- **To Be Loved (By God and by another person)**
- **To Love (God, self, and others)**
- **To Have purpose and meaning for life**

7 DESIRES OF EVERY HEART

- **Heard and Understood:** Listened to, i.e., thoughts, feelings, needs, struggles, & opinions.
- **Affirmed:** Approved of who we are and what we do.
- **Blessed:** Special because of who we are; loved for who we are.
- **Safe:** Free from fear and anxiety. Free to explore the world.

- **Touched:** In healthy ways that communicates affection, security, and safety without confusion between sexual & non-sexual physical touch.
- **Chosen:** Selected, chosen for a special relationship. Accepted, desired.
- **Included:** Belonging; Broader than chosen we long to belong, to be in community.

These were all fulfilled in Eden in a perfect state of well-being before the desires were even known or identified.

BUT "THEN THE SERPENT" TEMPTED AND THE HUMANS SWALLOWED IT

1. In the beginning there was God and there was man innocent in body, soul, spirit.
2. Then Satan entered the world influencing Adam and Eve to sin.
3. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve we are all born with a sinful nature which affects all areas of our being and lives.
4. Man exchanges God for self, truth for lies & a sound mind for distorted thinking. (See Romans 1)
5. Now humans, left to themselves, are prone to use their mind & free will to exploit their body and other people to feel good through the senses of sight, taste, hearing, smell, & touch. (See Romans 1)

HOW BAD HAS IT GOTTEN?

1. Genesis 3:6 – 1 sin of Disobedience
2. Genesis 4 – Jealousy, Uncontrolled anger, Murder
3. Genesis 6 - God sees "... that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time."
4. Judges 17:6, 21:25 – "...Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

AND WHAT DOES THE N.T. SAY AS TO WHERE WE HAVE COME?

For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. **Mark 7:21-23**

²⁹ *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.*

Romans 1:29-32

¹⁹ *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery,*

enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. Galatians 5:19-21

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power... 2 Timothy 3:1-5

THE CAUSES OF PAIN & SUFFERING STEMMING FROM THE FALL (AN ESCAPABLE REALITY OF LIFE ON EARTH)

1. Logical by-product of a fallen world
2. Natural results of our personal violation of God's laws & principles
3. Results of others violating God's ways
4. Direct judgment by God upon sin
5. Satan
6. Result of striving to live a holy life (battle inside with flesh, the world, Satan)
7. God allows difficulty to test us

2 HUMAN STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH PAIN & SUFFERING

A. SELF-PROTECTION

1. Deny it
2. Medicate it chemically or behaviorally
3. Organize life in an attempt to avoid pain at all costs

B. "USING" TO DEAL WITH PAIN & SUFFERING

1. Use things in the physical world.
2. Use others
3. Use our bodies
4. Use "a higher power" of our own design

OPTION #1: DEAL WITH PAIN & SUFFERING WORKING FROM THE "OUTSIDE IN" & THEIR LIMITATIONS

1. **USE THINGS:** Things change.
2. **USE OTHERS:** People will fall short of our expectations or demands.
3. **LOOK TO SELF:** Frustration will quickly set in when we can't control the environment, others or self, or we simply reach the limitations of my own resources, knowledge, or influence.

4. USE A GOD OF OWN IMAGINATION: Disillusionment will result when expectations don't fit reality.

The 7 benefits of a perfect world instead of being the outcome of a state of spiritual well-being as the result of trusting God and obeying Him, all these become sought after as the goal, often using sinful ways even if only to leave God out the picture.

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. Galatians 5:17

"Sarks", the Gr. Word for "flesh", "is generally negative, referring to making decisions (actions) according to self - i.e. done apart from faith (independent from God's inworking). Thus what is 'of the flesh (carnal)' is by definition displeasing to the Lord - even things that seem 'respectable!' In short, flesh generally relates to unaided human effort, i.e. decisions (actions) that originate from self or are empowered by self. This is carnal ("of the flesh") and proceeds out of the untouched (unchanged) part of us - i.e. what is not transformed by God."

OPTION #2: Dealing with Pain & Suffering Working from the "Inside Out"

1. **GOD:** We develop a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
2. **SELF:** We take responsibility for the choices we make in response to life situations.
3. **OTHERS:** We look to others for godly counsel, mentoring, support, and encouragement.
4. **THINGS:** We use things sparingly, not as solutions, but simply as tools that may give us some relief for our pain and suffering.

GREAT EXCHANGE #2:

in exchange for OUR sin, God offers forgiveness & The only Pathway to begin to Recover a Sense of Well-being

1. When a person receives Jesus Christ as Savior & Lord, a spiritual division (between the sinful nature and Spirit of God) begins when, as a part of salvation, the person is given as a gift the sealing and indwelling Holy Spirit.
2. The good news is now we can in faith use our mind, will, and body to be yielded to God's Spirit, empowering us to deal in godly ways with life and our bruises, brokenness, and bondages.
3. Being transformed from a life dominated by the sinful nature is not a quick or instant change and will only be completed when we see Christ.
4. The more we are transformed to be like Christ the greater blessing we will be to others.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:11-14

We also grow in having a clearer understanding of human desires and look to God in hope to fulfill the 7 desires of every heart.

Desire without knowledge is not good... Proverb 19:2a

⁴ Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. Psalm 37:4-5

BETTER THAN GOLD

The Life-Changing Wisdom of the Bible

<https://discoveryseries.org/courses/better-than-gold/lessons/the-need-for-wisdom/>

"At this point, my spiritual journey has run parallel to what I've learned in marriage. The greatest similarity is the emotional baggage we bring into both. My inclinations before and after marriage were also a part of me before and after I put my faith in Christ. The self-centeredness that makes it difficult for me to hear the concerns of my wife also makes it hard for me to hear the voice of Christ living in me.

"I don't mean to downplay all the wonderful parts of marriage or conversion. But I see how wrong my expectations had been. I thought salvation would make me good, and I expected marriage to make me happy. I didn't see that in both cases my own faults stacked the deck against me if I didn't learn and live the wisdom of Christ.

"... I was wrong to assume that my whole life had already changed through faith in Christ; faith didn't automatically make me good or wise.

"It took time for me to discover that in faith and in marriage, growth and maturity do not come automatically or easily. And I wasn't prepared for what turned out to be the greatest challenges of my life. I didn't realize that the biggest enemy I would ever face would be my own natural self-centeredness.

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"Yes, my thinking has changed... Life has been harder than I expected and I now see more clearly the parallel between being married and entering a relationship with Christ. Upon a couple's public confession, a minister declares a man and woman married, but not mature in their love. And when we put our faith in Christ, God declares us legally blameless but not good or wise. In both cases, there is a difference between the legal declaration and the resulting quality of life.

"...I wish I had understood sooner that believing in Christ is not the same as sharing His wisdom..."

WHAT PAIN & SUFFERING REMINDS US AND WHAT WE NEED TO DO WITH IT

- Reminds us of our frailty and vulnerability
- Reminds us of the uncertainty of life
- Reminds us we are not in control
- Reminds us of our dependency
- Reminds us this is not always a great place to be, causing a longing for things to be made right

Pain and suffering should not be ignored, explained away, covered-up, or neutralized.

1. We need to admit we have bruises, brokenness, and bondages.
2. We need to assess our lives and accurately identify our personal bruises, brokenness, and bondages.
3. We need to deal with them in Biblical, God-honoring ways.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

AT LEAST ONE WAY THIS WEEK I WILL TRY TO PUT LESSON #2 INTO PRACTICE IS:

Weekly Going Deeper Study Guide
For Lesson #3: The Struggles are Real, but There is Hope

- **Before beginning each day simply ask God to help you see things that He would have you to see.**
- **When finished, pray again asking for the faith and the courage to follow His lead in areas He spoke to you about.**

DAY 1

1. Without rushing, read through this week's lesson.
2. Paraphrase in 2 or 3 sentences what in your mind is the main message you get out of this lesson.

DAY 2

1. Carefully read and meditate on each of the scriptures in this week's lesson.
2. Identify one that stands out to you and rewrite it in your own words.

DAY 3

1. Reread the lesson.
2. Write down any things you see that God would want you to avoid, change, or give up.

DAY 4

1. Reread the lesson.
2. Write down the most positive thing you see that you would really like to see become part of your life.

DAY 5

Pick out one verse from this week's lesson (does not need to be the whole passage) that means the most to you or some other verse that comes to mind related to this week's lesson, write it on a small card, and try to memorize it or at least read and meditate on it several times through the next days.

The verse(s) I chose is: _____

HERE IS WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IN GROUP AS TO HOW PUTTING LESSON #2 INTO PRACTICE WENT: