



CELEBRATE  RECOVERY

Life's Healing Choices

FREEDOM FROM YOUR HURTS, HANG-UPS, AND HABITS

STUDY GUIDE

 **COMMUNITY**
Groups



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Life's Healing Choices Study Guide! We're excited for you to embark on your journey towards freedom and healing. All of us wrestle with different hurts, habits, and hang ups in our lives, so you're in the right place! This study is for you!

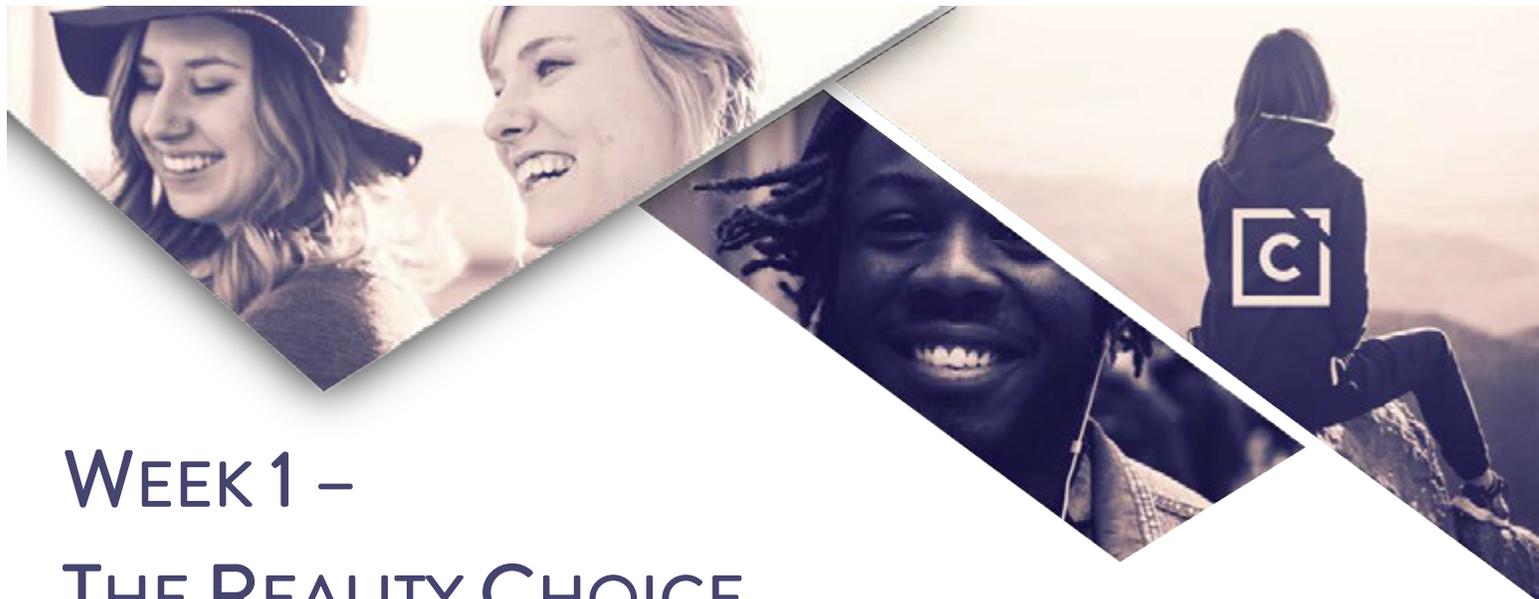
Jesus said "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20). As you and your group have the following conversations, be confident that God is with you and that he has the power to transform your life through Jesus Christ!

Below are some **Introductory Guidelines**. Please review them, for they will assist you in having the best Community Group experience possible when going through this material.

INTRODUCTORY GUIDELINES

- There are more questions than you will likely get through each week. Don't feel pressured to try to answer all of them. Pick the questions that are most relevant for your group.
- Due to the nature of this content, **we recommend splitting into gender-specific groups for the duration of this study if your group consists of both men and women.**
- For anyone who might need it, there are some training tips on the last page of this study for new discussion leaders.
- If something surfaces in someone's life that the leader feels is too much for the group to take on, don't worry! There are two next steps that you should recommend.
 1. Celebrate Recovery – Meets every Monday at 7:00pm at the Lynnhaven Campus and every Tuesday at 7:00 at the Norfolk Campus (beginning October 15 2019).
 2. Professional Counseling – Contact the Care Ministry of Grace Bible Church for recommendations. You can do so at www.gracebible.church/care or contact Keith Langland, Grace's Care Pastor, at keith@gracebible.church.





WEEK 1 – THE REALITY CHOICE

I realize that I'm not God and admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life unmanageable.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday's message?
- We all try to play God by attempting to control our image, other people, our problem, and our pain. Why do you feel the need to be in control? List some ways you try to control your image, your problems, your pain, or other people.
- What are some ways that we try to be God? What are some consequences of trying to be God?
- Read Romans 7:15-17. Can you relate to that? Share your experiences with this kind of tension.
- The first healing choice is to admit your powerlessness to change your past, control other people, and to cope with your problems. Which of these do you struggle with the most? Explain.
- Read James 4:6. Why do you think God "opposes the proud"? What does it mean to humble yourself before God?
- What is grace? How do you get it? Why is it important?
- Where are you in learning to trust God? Share honestly with your group and ask for prayer to grow in this process.

THE REALITY CHOICE PRAYER

Dear God, I want to take the first choice to healing and spiritual health today. I realize I am not You, God. I've often tried to control my problems, my pain, my image, and even other people—as if I were You. I'm sorry. I've tried to deny my problems by staying busy and keeping myself distracted. But I'm not running anymore. I admit that I am helpless to control this tendency to do things I know are unhealthy for me. Today I am asking for Your help. I humbly ask You to take all the pieces of my unmanageable life and begin the process of healing. Please heal me. Please give me the strength to choose health. Help me stick with this process for the next seven choices. In Your name, I pray. Amen.





WEEK 2 – THE HOPE CHOICE

I earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday's message?
- Why is it important to first realize that we are not God before we can start to ask for God's power? What happens when we try to ask for God's power without first admitting the reality of our situation?
- The question for most people is not "Is there a God?" but "What kind of God is he?" What do you believe about God?
- What part of God's character gives you the most hope? Read Romans 5:8. What does this verse tell you about the nature of God and his love?
- Read Isaiah 61:3. In your own words, what does this verse mean? What does it say about grief and loss?
- One of the benefits of pain is it helps us to face our denial. How has pain helped you face denial in your life?
- Is there a situation in your life now that feels hopeless? If you feel safe, share it with your group. Read Ephesians 1:19-20 and Luke 18:7. What do these verses have to say about these situations?

THE HOPE CHOICE PRAYER

Dear God, please help me not to ignore this pain. You are using to alert me to my need for help. In the past, as I've ignored the denial busters You've allowed in my life, I have actually refused your help. I am so sorry for this and ask Your help in facing the truth and trusting You to care for me. You know and care about all the pain and hurt I have in my life. Today I need Your help. I can't do it on my own. I have tried, and I keep coming up empty.

First, I pray for Your power in my life. I need Your power to break habits I can't break. I need Your power to help me do the things that I know are right and can't seem to do on my own. I need Your power to break free from my past. I ask for Your power to get on with the plans You have for my life.

Next, I pray for your love. I want real love. I want to be able to love people and have them love me. I pray that with Your love I can let go of my past hurts and failures so I can tear down the walls of fake intimacy. God, I ask you to help me have genuine intimacy with You and others. Help me not be afraid of really loving and of really being loved.

I also pray for real self-control. I realize that I'm not really in control until I allow Christ to be in control of my life and circumstances. God, please grant me Your power, love, and self-control. Amen.





WEEK 3 – THE COMMITMENT CHOICE

I consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday's message?
- Read Matthew 11:28. What does this verse tell you about Christ's character? What are the conditions for committing ourselves to Christ?
- In what area of your life do you need rest right now? What do you think it would look like for God to give you rest there?
- Of the following barriers to commitment, which do you struggle with the most? Pride, guilt, worry, fear, or doubt?
- There are four steps to making the Commitment Choice. The first is to **accept God's Son as your Savior**. Read Acts 16:31. What does this verse mean to you?
- The second step is to **accept God's Word as your Standard**. Read 2 Timothy 3:16. How can and do you use God's Word as the manual to guide your life?
- The third step is to **accept God's Will as your Purpose**. Read Psalm 40:8. What are some specific actions you take to follow God's will and purpose for your life?
- The fourth step is to **accept God's Power as your Strength**. Read Philippians 4:13. What does this verse mean to you? In what area do you need God's strength today?
- What next step do you need to take in committing yourself to God?

THE COMMITMENT CHOICE PRAYER

Dear God, I believe You sent Your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins so I can be forgiven. I'm sorry for my sins, and I want to live the rest of my life the way You want me to. Please put Your Spirit in my life to direct me. Amen.





WEEK 4 – THE HOUSECLEANING CHOICE

I openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday's message?
- What are some key insights that God has shown you from the first three choices? How have you been changed by *Admitting Need*, *Getting Help*, and *Letting Go*?
- All of us wrestle with guilt. What are some negative effects guilt has on our lives? Read Psalm 32:1. Would you say that confronting our guilt is an essential step towards healing and freedom? Why or why not?
- There are five steps to moving past our guilt. The first is to **take a personal moral inventory**. Read Psalm 139:23-24. A moral inventory is when you take the time to analyze your past honestly and write a list of both the good and bad choices and events in your life. Creating your moral inventory is something done individually. As a group, feel free to take time to work on this individually, or commit to do it for homework. Use [this guide](#) to assist you.
- The second step is to **accept responsibility for your faults**. Why can it be so challenging to accept responsibility for our faults and for the things we've done wrong?
- The third step is to **ask God for forgiveness**. Read Isaiah 1:18. Why do you think it's important to ask God for forgiveness before trying to resolve past issues with other people? What obstacles do you face when asking God for forgiveness?
- The fourth step is to **admit your faults to another person**. This step is vital. Making a list is not enough. Everyone needs someone they can trust, who is not a family member, and is of the same gender. Who is one person that fits this description with whom you can talk through your moral inventory?
- Read James 5:16. Summarize in your own words. Why is it important to confess our sins to someone else?
- The fifth step is to **accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself**. Read 1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:1. What is God's forgiveness like? How does that make you feel about confessing your faults to God?
- Read Isaiah 1:18. Think of the thing you feel the most guilty about. Do you believe God can forgive you even for that?
- **Homework:** Everyone should complete a personal moral inventory, and share it with someone they trust. The group will discuss how it went next week. [Here is a helpful guide](#) to assist you.





THE HOUSECLEANING CHOICE PRAYER

Dear God, You know my past—all the good and bad choices I have made and all the good and bad things I have done. In working through Choice 4, I ask that You give me the strength and courage to list the items called for below so that I can come clean and face the truth. Please open my eyes to the truth of my past—the truth of how others have hurt me and how I have hurt others. Please help me reach out to others You have placed along my pathway to healing. Thank You for providing these individuals to help me keep balanced as I do my inventory. As I come clean in this choice, I thank You in advance for the forgiveness You have given me. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.





WEEK 5 – THE TRANSFORMATION CHOICE

I voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did writing and sharing your personal moral inventory go? What was that experience like? How did it impact you?
- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday's message?
- *This week is about repairing your vertical relationship with God, while next week will be about repairing your horizontal relationships with other people.*
- When you think about changing your life, how does it make you feel? What do you think about the fact that God loves you too much to allow you to stay as you are?
- Read Philippians 1:6. What work is God doing in you? What evidence have you seen that he has already started it? Do you find this verse encouraging or discouraging?
- Read Romans 12:2. According to this verse, what does God want to transform? Why do you think we must change the way we think before we can change the way we live?
- Below are seven ways that we can cooperate with God as he changes us. Go down the list and discuss why each is important, and how not doing each of these can prevent God from changing us.
 - Focus on changing one defect at a time.
 - Focus on victory one day at a time.
 - Focus on God's power, not your willpower.
 - Focus on the good things, not the bad.
 - Focus on doing good, not feeling good.
 - Focus on people who help, not hinder you.
 - Focus on progress, not perfection.





- Which of the above do you struggle the most with? Which do you think would make the most impact in your life right now?
- Read Philippians 4:8. What are some things that Paul would say we should think about, and what are some things that we shouldn't think about?
- Read Philippians 1:6 again. What is one thing you need to do this week to cooperate with God as he changes you from the inside out?

THE TRANSFORMATION CHOICE PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for Your forgiveness. Now I am ready and willing to submit to any and all changes You want to make in my life. By Your grace, I am ready to face it and deal with the defects one by one.

I have defects that have hurt me and defects that have hurt others. I've lived with some of these defects for so long that they have become a part of who I am. I have tried by my own power to fight against my defects and have failed over and over. I now ask by Your power and the power of Your Holy Spirit that You transform my mind, my heart, and my actions.

I need Your help in knowing where to start. I cannot handle all my defects at once. I can only face them one at a time. Show me, Lord, where should I begin? Help me as I look over my inventory list. Which character defect is the most damaging to my life? Where do I need to start? I am ready to follow Your lead. Amen.





WEEK 6 – THE RELATIONSHIP CHOICE

I evaluate all my relationships, offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me, and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday's message?
- Why is it so hard to forgive people who have hurt you?
- Do you have an experience where you forgave or were forgiven? How did that go?
- Why should we forgive? What benefits do we gain from it? Read Colossians 3:13 and Mark 11:25 for further ideas.
- Do you think we should forgive others even when they don't ask for forgiveness? Why or why not?
- Read Matthew 18:21-22. What do these verses tell you about fairness and forgiveness? What gave Jesus the authority to teach this?
- There are three steps to forgiveness: Reveal your hurt, release the offender, and replace your hurt with God's peace. On a scale of 1-10, how good would you say you are at each of these three?
- Who is somebody you need to forgive? How will it affect you if you forgive them? How will it affect you if you don't forgive them?
- Not only do we need to forgive others, but sometimes we need to seek forgiveness from others. This is called making amends. This can be extremely challenging, but consider this question: How would it make you feel if someone you needed to forgive approached you to make amends? How would you respond?
- Who is somebody you need to make amends to, unless it would harm them or others? What is the first step you can take toward making things right?

THE HOUSECLEANING CHOICE PRAYER

Dear God, You have shown me that holding on to resentment for the wrongs done to me and refusing to make right my own wrongs has crippled me—emotionally, spiritually, and even physically. I ask You today to help me be honest about the hurts I feel. I've stuffed some and ignored others, but now I am ready to come clean and tell the truth about my pain.





As I do, I ask that You give me the strength and the courage so I can release those who have hurt me and let go of my resentment towards them. Only by Your power will I be able to do this, Lord.

I pray, also, that You will give me the courage and discernment to know how to make amends to those I have hurt. Help me to be honest as I look back and remember, and guide me as I find the ways to make restitution, where appropriate.

Finally, I pray that I can begin a new life today as I refocus my life on doing Your will in my relationships. Help me set aside my selfishness and set my whole heart on You—I know I have a long way to go. I want the promise found in Job that all my troubles will fade from my memory and be remembered no more. Amen.





WEEK 7 – THE GROWTH CHOICE

I reserve a daily quiet time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday’s message?
- Do you consider yourself handy? Are you generally on top of maintenance tasks? What happens when we don’t keep up with house and car maintenance?
- What kinds of activities would you consider “maintenance” activities for your body, heart, mind, and soul? What happens when we don’t keep up with these maintenance activities?
- A relapse occurs when you return to a hurt, hang-up, or habit. What would a relapse look like for you?
- Read Galatians 3:1-6. What was going on with these Christians in Galatia? God started a good thing in their lives as He changed them from the inside out, but they were putting everything at risk. Why would reverting to their own willpower put them (and us) at risk of relapsing?
- Read Proverbs 16:18 and James 4:10. What are some ways humility is the best protection against relapse?
- Read 2 Corinthians 13:5. What are some physical, emotional, or spiritual signs you can be watching for that will alert you to a possible relapse? Under what conditions—such as time of day, location, alone or in a group, etc.—do those signs most commonly occur?
- Do you have a regular quiet time with God? If so, what does it consist of?
- Why are self-evaluation, Bible reading, and prayer all necessary components of a strong quiet time with God?
- Celebrating victories helps build momentum and faith. What are some good things that God is doing in your life right now?

THE GROWTH CHOICE PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13





WEEK 8 – THE SHARING CHOICE

I yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you or challenged you from Sunday's message?
- Why do you think God allows us to experience pain? Are you able to give any examples from your own life? Read Proverbs 20:30, Psalm 119:71, and 2 Corinthians 1:4 for further thoughts.
- Do you think you have a good story? Do you think God wants to use your story? When was the last time you shared your story with someone?
- Read 2 Corinthians 1:4. Have you ever received comfort from another person who had gone through an experience like the one you were going through?
- Do you know someone who is going through a tough experience that you have gone through in the past? How can you comfort and encourage them?
- Why do you think helping others is a part of a person's recovery process?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Reflecting back on the past 7 weeks, what evidence are you seeing of this truth in your life? What encouragement for the future can you draw from the change you've already experienced?
- What would you say is the most important lesson that you've learned through this series, *Life's Healing Choices*? Who do you know that needs to hear that?

THE SHARING CHOICE PRAYER

Dear God, help me be ready to share with someone today the victories You have given me. Help me find the right words and the right time to share my heart with someone who is hurting and doesn't know where to go or how to stop the pain. I pray that I can share the ways you freed me from my hurts, hang-ups, and habits. Let me do so with gentleness and respect. Thank You for letting me serve You today in this way. Amen.





NEW LEADER RESOURCES

TIPS FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSION

1. Don't try to do it alone. Pray for God to assist you in leading, and, if you can, enlist a co-leader.
2. Be friendly and be yourself. Greet everyone with a smile and lead the way in being authentic and open.
3. Prepare for the meeting ahead of time.
4. When you ask a question, be patient. Even though you have thought about the question previously, the other group members haven't. Give them space to think, and someone will eventually respond.
5. Pray for your group.
6. Breaking into smaller groups occasionally can be helpful for application question and prayer.
7. Rotate facilitators occasionally.

REMINDERS

- There are more questions than you will likely get through each week. Don't feel pressured to try to answer all of them. Pick the questions that are most relevant for your group.
- If something surfaces in someone's life that the leader feels is too much for the group to take on, don't worry! There are two next steps that you should recommend.
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