

## Principles for a Transformed Life (PTL)

### Principle #1: Deflation

**Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. (1 Corinthians 8:2 NLT)**

“To deflate” means to collapse by letting out air or gas. In the human being, it means to make smaller or less important. In order to overcome stubborn problems, we must change our attitudes as well as our actions. If we don’t change, we will continue to get the same results we are getting now. We must be willing to go to any lengths, to do whatever it takes to get the job done. The motivation to change begins with deflation. There are three basic parts to deflation: Admission, desperation, and willingness.

- ◆ **Admission:** One of the largest hurdles in making needed life change is the recognition of the actual condition of our life. Admission means admitting to myself, to God, and to others that I have a problem I cannot control or change unassisted. It is the act of admitting the need for help. 1 John 1:8-10 / Galatians 6:3 / Proverbs 28:13
- The primary block to admission is **DENIAL**. This is a mental process by which I am able to effectively avoid the mental and emotional consciousness that the problem exists. “What problem?” All self-destructive, self-defeating, or harmful behaviors are characterized by an ability to deny the obvious. We don’t see the harm we cause, or we don’t see the connection between the damage done and the behavior that causes it. Proverbs 21:2 / 20:6

#### Topic for Discussion

Give examples of denial in your own life and describe the effects on you and others.

- Other mental defenses we all often use to avoid the pain of our problems are:
  1. Minimizing – failing to recognize the real seriousness of a situation, or the actual harm done by a particular behavior. Examples: The car I wrecked was old anyway. I only hit her once, and not hard.
  2. Rationalizing - finding excuses to justify unreasonable behavior. This would include blaming others for my actions. Proverbs 22:13
  3. Procrastination - consciously putting off the necessity to deal with the problem. Proverbs 27:1 / Matthew 25:2-23
  4. Projection - accusing others of your own shortcomings and feelings. Genesis 50:15 / Luke 15:29-30
  5. Displacement - directing negative feelings toward objects or people other than the one's that caused them. Example: I get mad at my boss, but I go home and kick the dog. (Or yell at my wife, punch the wall, etc.)

#### Topic for Discussion

Think of examples of these mental defenses in your own life. When are they helpful and when are they harmful? How so?

### **A Quick, non-scientific test**

- Ask yourself the following questions?
  1. Have you ever argued with your family about whether your behavior or attitudes are a problem?
  2. Have you ever missed or disrupted important family events because of your particular behavioral or attitudinal issues?
  3. Have you ever been in legal trouble because of your behavior or attitudes?
  4. Do you ever have times when you feel you are not in control of your behavior?
  5. How much does your behavior or attitude cost you in money, time, friendships, or peace of mind? Is this OK with you?
  6. Do you arrange your schedule and associations to make allowances for your habits or attitudes?
  7. Have you ever been in trouble on the job because of your behavior or attitudes?
  8. If you saw someone else who acts or reacts like you, what would you think?
  9. Do you ever lie to cover up your secret behaviors or ungodly attitudes?
  10. Do you ever feel guilty for things you have done and said, then repeat the same behavior?
  11. If you continue down the path you are on right now, where will you be in five years?

### **Topic for Discussion**

Looking at your responses to these questions, do you see patterns of behavior and attitude that are causing a problem? If so, what is stopping you from changing?

If you heard the same responses from another person, what advice would you give them?

- ◆ **Desperation:** In order to recover, to overcome our problems in a godly fashion, it is necessary to realize our own inability to do it in our own strength. As long as there is some hope that we can help ourselves we are not likely to reach out for God without reservations. Galatians 5:17 / Romans 7:15-23

- Ask the following questions:

1. Have you ever tried to control this problem yourself? What was the outcome?
2. Have you ever had prayer, counseling, or treatment for this problem?
3. What would you say has kept you from being able to successfully overcome your unwanted behaviors and attitudes??
4. Do you believe you can change on your own? If so, what is stopping you?
5. Do you ever feel you have no hope of overcoming and living successfully?

#### Topic for Discussion

Describe efforts you have made to change yourself. What else do you think might work? If you believe you can change on your own, what is stopping you?

- ◆ **Willingness:** Willingness is a simple desire for help that will provide the motivation to do whatever is necessary to achieve success. If there is any non-sinful action you are unwilling to undertake, then you are not yet willing. Romans 12:1 / Luke 15:16-19 / Luke 9:23-24

- Willingness usually comes from the pain caused by our own shortcomings. Only you can decide when you have had enough.
- Are you willing to employ spiritual means to solve your problem?
- Are you willing to ask for help from other people?
- Are you willing to change the way you think about life?
- Are you willing to give your quest to be free and happy first priority, after God Himself, in your life?

#### Topic for Discussion

#### MOMENT OF TRUTH

If you answered “no” to any of these questions, then you are not ready for the rest of these principles. You will have to suffer some more. Please come back when you are willing.

If you are now ready, what happened in your life to bring you to willingness?