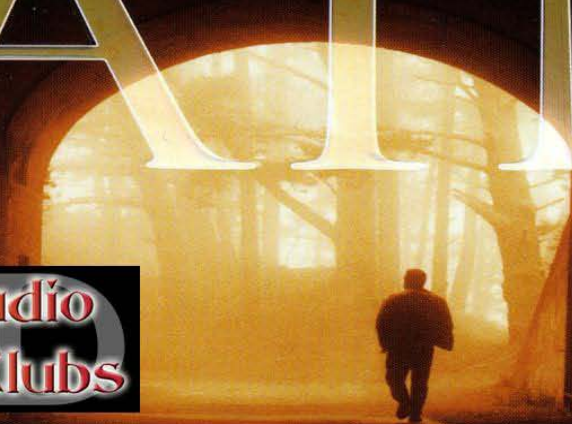


# HOW TO STOP THE PAIN

PAIN IS  
INEVITABLE

SUFFERING IS  
OPTIONAL

A person is walking away from the viewer down a long, brightly lit tunnel. The light is warm and yellow, creating a hazy atmosphere. The tunnel has a high, arched ceiling and appears to be made of stone or concrete. The person is a small silhouette in the distance, walking towards the light.

 Book, Audio  
& DVD Clubs

DR. JAMES B. RICHARDS  
LEADER'S GUIDE

## Introduction

1. What does Dr. Richards say is the result of treating people in destructive, self-centered ways?

As people treat one another in destructive, unscriptural ways, they create emotional wounds that make us afraid to love and trust. The less we feel loved the more pain we inflict upon one another. Thus, the cycle grows and grows and pain abounds.

2. What is the result for those who never acquire the tools to resolve personal hurt?

Most people have never acquired the tools to resolve personal hurt. Hurt grows into bitterness, sorrow, depression and loss of physical health. Our future becomes controlled by a past that locks us into an unending cycle of more hurt and disappointment.

3. According to Luke 17:1, what is one of the things in life over which we have no control? What do we have control over?

Among the things in life over which you have no control is the constant barrage of offenses. Jesus Himself said, "*It is impossible but that offenses come*". We have no control over the fact that pain will come. But we have complete control over that pain's ability to turn into suffering.

## Chapter 1

1. What is the 80/20 rule?

This rule says that 20% of your effort will produce 80% of your results. The wise personal manager discovers the 20% that is important, focuses his/her efforts in this critical area and accomplishes 80% of the work.

2. What is the starting place for the pathway out of pain?

The starting place for sanity and the pathway out of pain is to always remind ourselves that we are accepted in Jesus, we are righteous through Him, we are free from every curse of the law because we are in Him, we are qualified for every aspect of the inheritance through Him, and every promise God has ever made to anyone is “Yes” because we are in Him.

### 3. Define Critical Factors

Critical factors are truths that are so broad in scope they affect nearly every area of our life. There are other principles that, when applied, affect large areas of our life. The critical factors solve a wide scope of problems. They are the difference between the fruit and the root. They are the underlying principles that govern the many different actions.

### 4. Where can we find the answers to our dilemma of finding joy and peace?

Instead of looking for some deep, hidden, mystical answer to bring joy and peace to our life, we should simply look back to the word of God. The answer to our dilemma is always found in Him, His finished work, His Word, and His example.

### 5. Discuss the difference in dealing with “fruit” and “root” problems.

When we deal with a “fruit” problem it is like picking fruit from a tree. We spend our time going round and round the tree attempting to pick all of the bad fruit. Regardless of how hard we try, it grows back. Sometimes it grows back before we ever make our way around the tree. It is terribly discouraging to work so hard and only see minute results. It is even more discouraging when the problems grow back. When we, however, go right to the “root” problem, we eliminate the source that is feeding the fruit. We deal with one issue that makes all the bad fruit stop growing.

## Chapter 2

1. How does judgment differ from observation?

Identifying what someone does is not judgment; that is merely observation. It is when we assume to know “why” they did what they did, that we have entered into judgment.

2. Matthew 7:1-2 says that if we judge people, people (not God) will judge us.

3. What do we learn from reading Luke 6:38?

Peoples’ response to me is in direct accordance with the way I treat them. With one exception, when they give it back, they always give me more than I gave.... *“pressed down, shaken together, running over to good measure will other people give unto my bosom.”* If you give kindness and love, other people will give you kindness and love, *“...pressed down, shaken together, running over to good measure.”* However, if you give judgment and criticism, others are going to give you judgment and criticism, *“pressed down, shaken together, running over to good measure.”* Whatever you give, people will give back to you in a greater measure than you gave to them.

4. How does judgment perpetuate misunderstanding and pain in our lives?

The moment you attempt to determine why another is doing what they do, you have given it significance. Nothing has the power to hurt you until you attach significance to it. Another person’s actions are as significant to you as the judgments you pass. The judgment is based on your decision about “Why” they did what they did. The amount of pain or insult you experience from the actions of others is solely based on the judgment you pass.

## Chapter 3

1. In order for something to become an abiding torment, we must first attach significance to it.

It is this significance that takes a single event and turns it into a life of suffering.

2. We fall in response to events and circumstances.
3. Define “rebuke” and explain how it relates to offense.

The word rebuke comes from two Greek words. One means “upon,” the other means “to fix a value or to honor”. Some translate it as “to charge strongly”. It could be that a rebuke is nothing more than making a person aware of the value of their actions. To say to a person, “I know why you did this” is not a rebuke, but a judgment.

4. According to Luke 17:3-4, what should be our motive for the rebuke?

The goal should be to bring the offender to repentance. The goal cannot be punishment.

5. According to Romans 12:19, vengeance belongs only to God. If we are seeking vengeance, we have already passed judgment.

## Chapter 4

1. What determines how things are “measured back” to us?

How things are measured back to us is determined by how we measure. If we measure something by giving it value, size, and significance, that measurement we give determines its effect on us.

2. Give an illustration of how this process might work if someone doesn't speak to you at church.

Imagine a simple event that could be devastating: on Sunday morning, unknown to you, the pastor has been dealing with a crisis situation: the difference between life and death, heaven or hell, or a saved marriage instead of divorce. As he rushes into church, which has already begun, his mind is totally occupied with that crisis. You speak to him as he walks. He seemingly ignores you. Nothing negative actually happened; he simply did not speak to you. Through your feelings of inadequacy, you begin to think about it and attach significance to it. You create a judgment.

**LEADERS NOTE:** Discuss areas where we have personally attached such significance to other's actions. And how this can escalate into major issues.

3. What hinders us from having meaningful relationships/communication?

We can't have meaningful relationships or communication because we are always judging what the real motive is behind what everybody is saying or doing.

## Chapter 5

1. Through judgment, observation is distorted and discernment lost.
2. What happened in the Garden when Adam combined judgment with a fearful nature?

Before the fall, man trusted God and His opinion. He had no need or desire to determine good and evil for himself. Prior to the fall, man was an observer of the world. There was no need for judgment because there was no fear. When man fell, he became fearful by nature. His self-worth plummeted, and he no longer trusted what God said about anything. He became the god of his own world. As god, he reserved the right to judge for himself.

3. What is the only observable way we have of knowing people?

Fruit is the only thing that is observable. Fruit is something that grows over time. It is not a single event, mistake, or even their actions at this very moment.

4. Our fruit is our track record.

5. How do we attempt to justify our actions?

When we feel the need to justify saying “no”, we pass a negative judgment about the person to justify our action. Then there are times we want to violate wisdom. Again, we have the need to justify our actions, so we pass a “good” judgment. (i.e. - We come up with all kinds of good reasons why he didn't pay on time.) When we create enough “good” judgments to justify our actions, what usually results is a bad decision.

## Chapter 6

1. What is finding fault a product of?

Finding fault is the product of fear, low self-worth and anger!

2. For many, the definition of helping people is to “fix” them. Describe the actions of a “fixer”.

The “fixer” always finds themselves being misunderstood. We have all of these good intentions, after all, we doing it for their good. Yet, we are not valued and appreciated. Jesus said that our attempts at fixing others would be as appreciated as us blindly sticking our fingers in a person's eye. Regardless of our motive we are simply going to cause pain.

3. What is the best thing I can do for you and your problems?

The best thing I can do for you and your problems is to take care of me and my problems.

## Chapter 7

1. Describe an externalist.

Judgment is always a characteristic of externalists. Since the externalist is not looking and listening in their own heart, they never experience the comfort of God's love and acceptance. There is no intimacy with God. It is replaced by the false sense of security that comes from finding fault in others, thereby elevating themselves. Since they measure godliness externally, there is constant comparing, condemning and measuring. The externalist does not try to follow God from their heart - it is all about behavior.

2. Where do those who live in judgment keep their focus?

The person who lives in judgment will always keep their focus on others thereby avoiding dealing with personal issues.

3. What is Christian idolatry?

Christian idolatry is when one creates a false image of God in their own heart and mind. When we see God differently than Jesus presented Him we are idolaters. We serve the God of our imagination, while rejecting God the Father of the Lord Jesus, whom He clearly showed us through His life's teaching and model.

4. Read 1 John 4:7-8. The word *know* comes from the Greek word ginosko. If we know God's love, we will feel or experience that love.

5. Read Matthew 10:8. Apply that verse to your own beliefs and explain why the way we deal with others is so important.

Jesus said, *"Freely you have received, freely give."* Matthew 10:8, NIV. One of the reasons more people do not give the love of God freely, is they have never freely received it. They think they are laboring under God's scrutiny. The natural expression of that is they give scrutiny.

## Chapter 8

1. Describe the traditional way of presenting the Gospel.

We have declared ourselves to be the world police force. We are the self-proclaimed militant army that is here to police and judge the world. Our very concept of presenting what we mistakenly call the gospel<sup>1</sup> is to make them know they are sinners so they will realize their need for Jesus.

2. The way we view something is the product of our heart. If we have a critical eye, it is because we have a critical heart.
3. Read Proverbs 17:20. Describe a "forward heart".

*"He that hath a froward heart findeth no good"*. Proverbs 17:20. A froward heart is a crooked heart. It is a heart that has been reshaped through the pressures of sin, legalism, religion, or life circumstances. It is a heart that only sees the bad; it cannot find the good.

4. According to Colossians 4:6, what should our speech convey?

Our speech should always convey ability and empowerment. It should make them completely confident that they can do all things through Christ. In our scrutiny, we should see the power of God instead of the weakness of the flesh, and we must let them know that we are confident of Christ in them.

5. A person's experience with God begins where?

The goal for all conversation, for all ministries, must be to bring people to an experience with God. That experience begins with what they encounter is us.

6. Read the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13. How does that relate to helping people with their problems?

The critical eye sees the fault and, in the name of love and ministry, begins to pluck up the tares in a negative attempt to remove the problem. In the end, the devastation is so great that the field (heart) is destroyed. Jesus warned of the devastation of trying to solve problems by pulling out the wheat. He warned that the tares would be pulled out as well. The fault finding critical eye, finds what it judges to be the problem and begins to pull it out. In the process the wheat is destroyed and the person is left with nothing.

## Chapter 9

1. Describe the concept of boundaries as found in this chapter.

Boundaries establish the limits over which no one should venture. Some boundaries are established by the Bible as basic and essential for healthy relationships. Failure to observe those boundaries will always result in pain and dysfunctional relationships. Then there are the boundaries over which a person may invite you. Yet, there are boundaries that we should not cross even when invited. Judgment is a boundary which no person should cross. The attempt to fix another person is a boundary which should never be crossed.

2. What does Dr. Richards teach us about communication in this chapter .

We must realize that every principle of communication we violate reduces the effectiveness of our message. It sends a message to the person with whom we wish to communicate, It says you are of no value. Our message may be the Gospel or it may be a deep relational need. Regardless of the content if want it to be received it must be communicate in a meaningful way.

3. Does the fact that a problem affects us make it our "business"?

A problem is not ours just because it affects us. Judgment leads us to the failure to recognize boundaries

4. Define "offense".

An offense is something that causes you to stumble. A person has only created an offense when they have deliberately attempted to make you stumble.

5. How do you free yourself from the control of others?

Free yourself from the control of others by making your own choices and recognizing your own boundaries.

## Chapter 10

1. What are we doing the moment we judge or control another person?

The moment I judge or control I have set myself up as god.

2. What did we learn about "control" in this chapter?

We usually have good intentions in our desire to control. Those intentions are usually based on our judgments. It is essential, however, to realize that control is never a suitable option. Control is a form of witchcraft. Paul told the Galatian believers they had been bewitched. They had been brought under the control of the Judaizers. The Judaizers had justification for their control. In their mind, they were acting on behalf of God.

3. How does God lead and instruct us?

God never uses control to accomplish His will in the Earth. He works through the hearts of people. He leads and instructs us as the children He loves. If control was God's method He could solve the world's problems in one decisive act of control.

## Chapter 11

1. Reality is distorted by our perception.
2. How I see it is not how it is, it's just how I see it.
3. What does Dr. Richards say is present in every sin?

Self-centeredness is present in every sin.

4. Describe how forming strong opinions affects the reticular activating system located at the base of the skull?

When a person passes a judgment or develops strong opinions, they lock themselves into selective processing. Studies show that forming strong opinions causes activity in the reticular activating system (RAS), located at the base of the skull. This neurological activity produces a mental state where one can only see what they have pre-determined. In other words, you no longer see it how it is. Your mind selectively processes information that will confirm your perception while ignoring data that is contrary to your point of view. We've all done it, looked at a label and were sure that it said one thing only to later discover that it said something completely different.

5. We never remember what actually happened. What do we remember?

You never remember what actually happened, you remember how it made you feel.

6. Define "repentance" as it relates to your perception of events.

To surrender our opinion...to have a change of mind. In repentance, we must be willing to release the way we see it. Then we are free to look at it from another position.

7. Describe "revelation" as discussed in this chapter.

A revelation from God is not when He shows us something new. It is simply when we are flexible enough to change our mental/emotional position about an issue enabling us to see it from a different point of view.

## Chapter 12

1. The problem in conflict resolution is that people usually fail to understand why others do what they do. What erroneous judgment do we pass in these situations?

One of the greatest assumptions that leads us into judgment is the idea that people do things for the same reasons we do them.

2. Of the four basic behavioral styles discussed in this chapter, can you identify which characteristics best describe you? In what ways, areas, etc?

Leader's Note → Read about each behavioral style (pages 67-68)

### 3. What reasons motivate the different behavior styles to lie?

A direct person would be most apt to lie for the purpose of maintaining respect. An inspirational person would lie to maintain social acceptance. The steady person would lie to avoid conflict, and the analytical person to appear to be right.

## Chapter 13

1. Having a "sin nature" ultimately puts "me" at the center of a person's experience.
2. We must interpret the world in light of our new identity in Jesus. We must look at the world after we have placed Him at the center.
3. Read Mark 4:24-25, according to this scripture; why are our new relationships are just like our old ones?

Jesus taught that what we have we'll get more of, good or bad. Unless the Word is sown in the heart and the beliefs of the heart change, we are doomed to repeat the same patterns.

4. Why do we need new relationships with different kinds of people?

We have a view of a good friend and a bad friend. That view was established by the judgments we've made throughout our life. Based on that view we will accept or reject a new acquaintance before ever really getting to know them. This is why people fall into repetitive patterns in their relationships. They have already decided what kind of person they will accept and what kind of person they will reject. This is also a part of what "locks us into" getting into the same destructive patterns in relationships.

The Bible is very clear about the effects that fellowship/socialization have on our thoughts and actions. Unfortunately, our judgments keep us in the same social circles all of our life, making change virtually impossible.

We keep it the way it has always been and then wonder why nothing changes. Because we are not interacting with different types of people, we are never challenged. Failure to free ourselves from the judgments of the past insures a repeat of past failures and past relationships. We will never face change in a positive way until we release people from our judgments.

## Chapter 14

1. Whose responsibility is it to minister to your heart?

Proverbs 3:1 tells us to store God's commandments in our heart. Then, in verse 3, It tells us to write certain attitudes and beliefs on our heart. This verse reveals what the Bible consistently teaches: we have the responsibility to minister to our heart.

2. What are two sources from which beliefs are written on our hearts?

- negative and positive experiences that were out of our control
- the product of the actions of dysfunctional people.

3. We write on our hearts through a combination of emotion and information.

4. How do children develop healthy perspectives? Will giving them the right information work?

As children, our heart is extremely vulnerable. This is supposed to be the time that we develop a healthy view of ourselves and our world. Healthy perspectives do not happen because a child is given the right information, but as the result of how a child is made to feel.

5. A sense of security and acceptance must be the environment for learning; otherwise the information may not accomplish its intended goal.
6. People should never be taught because they are wrong, but because they are loved.

7. Ultimately, we come to God and judge Him to be like our parents.
8. The meditative state wherein one's heart is easily influenced is called the alpha state.
9. What are the three instances in which the alpha state is reached?

The alpha state is reached in times of deep prayer, meditation, or simply deep thought and study.

10. What are the two times of day that we enter the alpha state?

We all enter the alpha state just before entering the sleep-state and for a time after awakening in the morning.

11. Explain Matthew 18:3 in light of this information.

While most adults have lost their ability to easily enter the alpha state, children stay in it almost constantly. Some studies indicate that children remain in the alpha state until around ten years of age. This means that every experience a child has can potentially affect his/her heart. Maybe this is what Jesus meant when He said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven". Matthew 18:3, NIV.

## Chapter 15

1. What does the sin nature thrive on?

Getting saved from sin also means that we are redeemed from this nature that thrives on fear and self-centeredness.

2. What does it mean to be freed from the world's system?

The world's system is one that operates on principles of self-centeredness, fear, control, and power. It is the system we created using ungodly principles. More specifically each of us have created our own world system based on the negative principles and have place ourselves at the center as god.

3. What does it mean to give up the right to be "god of our world"?

When we accept Jesus as Lord, we give up our right to be god of our world therefore we must surrender our right to judgment. We surrender our view and opinion to His. We accept His wisdom above ours.

4. Love is the governing factor in the kingdom of God.
5. What will be the result of continuing to think and act on vain imaginations/past judgments?

If we continue to think and act on the vain imagination of our past judgments, we will never experience the transformation.

6. How do we renew our minds and why is it important?

Renewing our mind isn't so much about the refusal to think "bad thoughts." Renewing our mind is about accepting Jesus as Lord, seeing ourselves the way He says we are and thereby accept and experience our new identity in Him. Only when we see ourselves as God has created us, can we actually see God as He is. The need to renew our mind demands that we release everyone and everything from our past judgments.

## Chapter 16

1. What judgment was being made concerning Paul and Apollos?

Paul was not as eloquent in his speaking skills as Apollos. His spirituality was judged based on his ability as an orator. Apollos was judged to be more "anointed" Paul was judged to be less.

2. Using the law of sowing and reaping, describe the individual that is unrealistically affected by the opinions of others.

People who are controlled by judgment feel that opinions have power over them. They lash out at people for offering advice. They even accuse others of attempting to control them. That feeling of control is the fruit of sowing and reaping. As Matthew 7:2 says, *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* People who attempt to control others by judgment feel so controlled that they seldom seek or listen to advice. They are unrealistically affected by the opinions of others.

3. Perfectionism is a torment based on fear. Fear is the fruit of not experiencing love. The perfectionist fears judgment.
4. What question should we ask ourselves anytime we are feeling controlled?  
  
“What do I value in this situation so strongly that I am giving up control of my life?”

## Chapter 17

1. The wise person deals only with the facts. All we can know about anybody is what is observable.
2. Why is it better to ask “**what**” than to ask “**why**”?

The moment we judge why a person does something, instead of dealing with what they did, we have crossed the line into judgment. We have entered a place Jesus said not to go. We have infringed upon that which belongs to God alone. Without realizing we are saying “What you do doesn’t really matter as long as your reason is good enough.” This is the beginning of a life of self-justification. “If I have a good enough reason, I can get by with anything.” From our earliest childhood experiences, we are taught to look for the “why,” instead of the “what.” We are taught to use justification and judgment to negotiate our way out of personal responsibility

3. What is the fear of confrontation usually based on?

The fear of confrontation is usually based on previous negative experiences.

4. What is the first law of confrontation?

The first law of confrontation is “release all judgment.” This is not the place to tell them “why” they did what they did.

5. What does judgment always seek?

Judgment seeks a penalty.

6. Describe a healthy confrontation?

In a healthy confrontation, we are merely going to “reveal” to the person the effect of their actions. We can point out what they did. We can inform them of how it made us feel. But we can never make

this an assessment of their character, nor can we pass judgment. It is completely improper for us to bring up a pattern of this happening unless we have confronted them in this same manner in the past.

7. What questions can we ask ourselves before confronting someone who has offended us?

- “Am I doing this just to prove myself right?
- Am I simply trying to get in the last word?
- Am I trying to win the argument?
- Am I trying to get even?
- Will the way I am doing this promote peace or conflict?
- Will the way I am planning to handle this touch the person’s self-worth?”

By asking ourselves these questions, we get a firm grip on our personal responsibilities.

8. What must be the goal of confrontation?

The goal of confrontation must be to help the other person as much as to help me. I must help them understand the nature of the offense. They need to realize the effect their actions have on others so they have the opportunity do something about it. If we make this an act of serving them in love their response will usually be positive and appreciative.

## Chapter 18

1. Can you live a reactionary life and still be in control?

Reactionary living, regardless of the reason, puts us out of control.

2. According to John 4:8, if someone is saved, but does not love, what does it mean?

1 John 4:8 says, *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. NKJV.*

This does not mean the person is not saved. It does not mean He has never met God as much as it means he is not currently experiencing God.

3. What keeps us from experiencing freedom from judgment?

The only true way to find freedom from judgment is to be experiencing that same freedom from God. God is offering freedom. A refusal to accept the unconditional love of God keeps us from experiencing freedom from judgment.

4. An intrinsic part of the reactionary life is the need for self - [justification](#).

5. Why is “good” judgment just as wrong as “bad” judgment?

We don't have the right to judge good or bad. Some think it is only wrong if our judgment causes us to reach a negative point of view. We must realize it is just as wrong and destructive to judge someone “good,” as it is to judge them “bad.” We often hear someone say, “They have a really good heart.” We don't know anyone's heart. God alone knows a person's heart. People think that a comment like that is a compliment, but, in fact, it is a judgment.

So, how do these “good judgments” cause negative situations? Example: We go into a business situation with people and make decisions about them based on our judgments. We could end up losing money, or in some other desperate situation, all because we passed a “good judgment.”

The Bible says, “*You shall know them by their fruits.*” All we can really know about another person is their track record. Everything else is a judgment.

6. Why can showing love never be viewed as being a doormat?

We fear that walking in love will make us too vulnerable. We tend to view love as a “doormat” syndrome. We think that if we walk in love, others will walk on us. But love cannot be manipulated, it cannot be controlled; it cannot be taken advantage of. Jesus walked in love at all times, yet, He was never controlled or manipulated, and He never felt compelled to fulfill everyone's requests.

## Chapter 19

1. Why is self-judgment destructive?

Self-judgment becomes the basis for our self-talk. Negative self-talk coupled with the strong emotion it can produce will write all manner of destructive things on our heart. Self-judgment usually becomes a condemnation or a justification; neither is healthy.

2. Our perception is always clouded, so when we do pass a judgment, we do not know if it is accurate.
3. Where did Paul's sense of identity come from?

Paul did not assume to be right or wrong. He didn't use self-judgment as an excuse to defend or condemn himself. Paul simply attempted to follow God wholeheartedly and walk in love. His sense of identity came from his relationship with Jesus, not his self-evaluation. He earnestly sought to follow God and keep a clear conscious. Because he was free from "works-righteousness", he did not need the constant validation that comes from self-evaluation. He knew he was righteous in Jesus; that was the Source of his peace.

4. What is the first step in freeing ourselves from the control of the judgment of others?

We cannot free ourselves from the control of the judgment of others until we free ourselves from the control of self-judgment.

5. Self-judgment causes emotional dysfunction, physical sickness, and even death.
6. What is key in freeing us from the need to judge others?

Releasing our judgments about ourselves not only frees us from the judgments of others, it is key in freeing us from the need to judge others.

7. We must accept God's view and opinion of us and reject all others. Any other view, from any other source, will produce dysfunction and pain.

## Chapter 20

1. What principle do we find in Proverbs 6:34?

I don't need to carry you pain. I have enough of my own.

2. What do our minds do to distract us from the problems we are afraid to face?

Sometimes we unconsciously take on the problems of others as a way to escape our own problems. Research indicates that problems that our mind must, for survival purposes, create distractions from the problems we are afraid to face. That denial does not reduce the pain in my life it just keeps me from facing what I believe to be too painful.

3. How did Jesus keep from crossing people's boundaries?

He refused to be drawn into someone else's "stuff." He never invaded another person's boundaries and He never did for them what they should do for themselves.

4. How does a fool choose to learn? And the greater fool is the one who does what?

A fool is a person who will not learn by instruction. Instead they choose to learn the hard way, only by experience. The Bible says that stripes are for the back of a fool. A fool's only hope of learning is when he has faced the consequences of his actions. Much of the pain in our life is simply because we will not listen. Children who do not listen to their parents usually experience a lot of pain. People who do not seek and consider good advice are always in trouble. They want to avoid pain, but they always want to do things their own way. The most tragic person is the one who refuses advice then experiences pain and still refuses to learn from the consequences.

The greater fool is the one who tries to keep the fool from paying the price.

5. How did Jesus respond to the man in Mark 10:17-23? What can we learn about ourselves and others through Jesus' example?

When the man walked away, Jesus didn't stop him. He accepted where the man was and recognized that he had issues that he needed to resolve with God. Jesus recognized and accepted that the young

man had some “stuff” that he had to work out. If Jesus had pursued him that would have been Jesus’ “stuff”.

6. What does Dr. Richards say the result is when we pursue situations or people we shouldn’t?

We pursue people and negotiate terms for our benefit not theirs. We pursue people and situations that we shouldn’t, and when it doesn’t come out the way that we desire we say, “You’re making me unhappy.” Or, “You are hurting me.” The truth is we’re not happy because we have made someone else’s stuff ours. We are now experiencing the pain of their foolishness because we have crossed a boundary that we should not have crossed.

7. After reading this chapter, are there people/situations you are willing to let go of? Have you made someone else’s “stuff” your own?

➔ **Leaders Note:** Allow people to express their decisions regarding “letting go” and taking on other’s “stuff” and help them come to a realization of how they might be allowing someone else to affect their lives, happiness, health, peace, etc.

8. Why were people not able to draw Jesus into their personal or religious issues?

Jesus knew where He was going. He knew who He was. His identity and self-worth were established because of who He was in relationship to God. Therefore, men could not draw Him into all their personal or religious issues.

## Chapter 21

1. How are we, as Christians, guilty of creating idols?

We do not, create our idols with an ax and a carpenter's tool, but with our vain imagination. Our vain imaginations become a "high thing" that opposes all that we know about God through His Word and through the life of Jesus. We create idolatrous concepts of God when we pass judgment on Him.

*Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-5*

2. How are we like the Israelites, as found in Hebrews 3:7-9?

They knew God was able. Who they really didn't trust was themselves. Like us, they had no problem believing in the mighty power of God. They believed His every promise until it had to be done through them.

3. What is a vain imagination?

A vain imagination is the result of reasoning, computing, and reaching a concept about God that is not based on truth or reality. It is an argument with reality.

4. What do we seek to justify when creating our concept of God?

I must create a concept of God that justifies my life's experiences. We look to our experiences and ask, "Why did this happen to me?" Or, we look at the tragedies of the world and ask, "Why did God let that happen?" As we answer those questions, we become like the worker of wood. Each idea, each false concept carves and shapes an image of the god that we come to believe in. We create a god that justifies our perception of the world.

5. What are the two most important judgments you can ever make and why are they overlapping realities?

The two most important judgments you will ever make will be how you see yourself and how you see God. These are two overlapping realities. It is a continuum that is so interconnected that one forges the other. I cannot see myself properly until I see God properly. Only after I accept Jesus' testimony of who God is, can I then see who I am in relationship to Him. My concept of self should never evolve independent of my concept of God. After all, I am created in the likeness and image of God. I am a new creation in Christ. Every time I create a concept of God to justify or explain that which I do not

understand, I alter my perception of God, which ultimately alters my perception of myself. One begins a downward spiral of the other.

## Chapter 22

1. Stereotyping is a form of subconscious judgment. Identify areas in your own life where stereotyping exists.

➔ **Leader's Note:** Give group opportunity to express areas where they have given into stereotyping.

2. How do we approach people based on track record without entering into judgment?

We can observe or realize that their particular track record says we cannot trust them in that area. It is wise not to venture in trust beyond what we know about a person. It is, however, wicked to hold in apprehension without reason. Even when someone's track record says they should not be trusted in an area, we still do not know if they are being honest this time. We do not refuse to trust them because their past proves they are currently dishonest. Wisdom and love give us the freedom to take appropriate actions without having to pass a judgment.

3. What happens when we allow associations to dominate our emotions?

Associations become judgments the moment we say, "this equals that." Regardless of the similarities, the past does not necessarily equal the future. We cannot judge one person on the basis of other people's actions. When we allow associations to dominate our emotions, we are giving control of our life to those people from the past who've hurt us.

4. We should give people the benefit of the doubt only until when?

Give people the benefit of the doubt until they give you reason to do otherwise.

5. What is the key to conquering suspicion?

Information is the key to conquering suspicion. If we are afraid to gather that information, we must realize that is our problem and we cannot precipitously project that fear onto others.

## Chapter 23

1. How do leaders, with character flaws, attempt to spiritually manipulate those who desperately seek to follow God?

Every day people are influenced and controlled by the actions, judgment, and influence of others because of the elevated position we have given them in their mind. In a day when so many people claim to speak “in the name of God”, those who desperately seek to follow God are easily controlled by the judgment of spiritual leaders.

2. Spiritual gifts come to people who are what?

Spiritual gifts are not something that comes because we are more holy than someone else is. They usually come because we are more willing and available. If we could earn them, they wouldn't be gifts.

3. When looking for a way to justify our actions; what is often our approach to loving people with issues?

Too often, our approach is, “We can love you if we can give you an excuse.” We can only give you an excuse if we can answer the question “why” in an acceptable manner. We are so bound by judgment, that we need a judgment that justifies our kindness to others.

4. What is judgment that gives us permission to be kind?

Judgment that gives us permission to be kind is nearly always a factor in denial. If I can't love him without justification then I am the one who has a problem. The fact that God loves people should be enough.

5. What must we do, and not do, when we feel controlled by a spiritual leader?

When we feel controlled by a spiritual leader, we must not judge his/her motive, but simply realize that we have given them too much influence in our own heart. That is “our stuff” regardless of their intent. At that point, we must give that place in our life back to its rightful Owner, Jesus our Lord, who faced sin and death for us!

## Chapter 24

1. What do we experience when we will not learn by teaching?

Criticism is what we experience when we will not learn by teaching. When we do not listen to what our friends try to tell us in kindness, we then face it through the harshness of our enemies.

2. A fool is a person who will not learn by what?

A fool is a person who will not learn by instruction.

3. What comes after instruction? And after that, what is left?

After instruction there's correction. When correction is ignored, there are only consequences. Those consequences can range from criticism to personal destruction.

4. What must we ask ourselves when faced with criticism?

If a person sees something in us that brings them to a judgment, we must reject the judgment but accept the criticism. We must ask ourselves, "What is it in my behavior that makes them reach this judgment about me?"

5. A fool never asks how or why others see things the way they do. So, how does the fool respond to other's observations?

The fool responds to the observation of others with defensive accusations.

6. Every person is our teacher and every circumstance our classroom.

## Chapter 25

1. What is the ultimate reason people seek counseling?

Regardless of what the individual issue may be, when people seek counseling, the issue will ultimately revolve around relationships. If the issue seems to be money, anger, or fear, it is usually the way the money, anger, or fear affect our ability to have relationships that causes us to do something about it.

2. What is the only real gauge we have for personal growth?

The only real gauge we have for personal growth is our effectiveness at developing meaningful relationships.

3. What must we accept in order to have meaningful relationships?

We cannot have meaningful relationships unless we accept the rights of the people with whom we share our life. In a relationship you give other people the privilege of speaking into your life. Since your life affects them there are no other options.

4. What must follow all communication?

Flexibility and adaptability must follow all communication.

5. How do we determine how our behavior affects others?

We can never know how our behavior is affecting other people unless we are willing to let them speak into our life. Finding new friends is not the way to respond to unfavorable input from current friends.

6. With whom should we be vulnerable, open and honest?

The people to whom we make ourselves vulnerable should not be those from whom we hope to receive benefit. It should be from the people who are effective in the areas we need input. It should come from people who are stable and have proven they have genuine love for us.

## Chapter 26

1. What does more to incite judgment and invite pain than anything else?

The way we communicate will do more to incite judgment and invite pain than any thing else! Even when people's actions are unacceptable, our communication can make the consequences worse or better.

2. According to Proverbs 18:2, what is the source of many of our troubles?

The desire to air our opinions may be the source of many tribulations.

3. If the way you communicate was the only basis others had for judging you, what opinion would they form of you?

➔ **Leader's Note:** allow people the opportunity to be honest about their communication style/difficulties.

4. If we do not like the way people are judging us, what question must we ask ourselves?

**Do we offend in the way we communicate? Is our communication clear and understandable? Are we accepting the responsibility to be a good communicator, or are we asking those around us to figure out what we really mean?**

## Chapter 27

1. What alleviates the fear of judgment?

**Confession alleviates the fear of judgment.**

2. According to Proverbs 28:13, what is our only hope of finding mercy?

**The only hope of finding mercy is honesty. "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy". Proverbs 28:13, NIV. When we find ourselves in fault, the shortest route to peace of the heart and possible forgiveness from the offended, is in confession. Confession not only appeases the offended it frees the guilty heart.**

3. What constitutes a "safe place"?

**When the goal of the person or church is to restore and heal, it is always safe to confess. If the goal is to punish, it is never safe.**

4. What assumption are we making when we assume the job of making people "right"?

**Preachers think their job is to get people right. That requires the assumption that "they are wrong."**

5. According to Dr. Richards when God said to Paul (2 Corinthians 12:9-10), "My grace is sufficient"; what was he saying?

Christianity doesn't revolve around us being right or able. It revolves around Jesus being right and able. That only becomes relevant when we recognize that we are in Him, and we partake in His strength.

6. What should acknowledging our weaknesses bring us to?

Acknowledging our weakness and trusting God should always bring us to the place of power and ability, i.e., God's grace to overcome.

7. What does confessing our faults lead us to?

Confessing our faults is a part of the healing process. It leads us to transparency and open communication. It helps us discover and release the places where we are "stuck."

8. What does the freedom of confessing allow?

Confession is the only thing that frees us from the expectation of judgment. When we say what we did, we are on the way to discovering for ourselves why we did it.

## Chapter 28

1. What is meant by the phrase, "let a man examine himself" 1 Corinthians 11:28? And how is this different than what we've been taught?

The word "examine" means to examine for approval. This is not an internal audit for fault. The goal is not to look inward and determine why we are disapproved. The goal is to look inward and remind ourselves of the cross of Christ, what His blood purchased for us, and why His sacrifice makes us approved.

Religion, school, and life, in general, have all taught us to look into our own heart and ask the question, "What's wrong with me?" We look into our heart and say, "I've got to find what is wrong so I can fix

the problem.” This is just the opposite of Paul’s teaching. To solve the problem, we’ve got to find what’s right with us. So he says, “*Examine yourself for approval. Look in your heart and try to find what brings you approval.*”

2. What is meant by taking communion “unworthily” (1 Corinthians 11:29)?

It is done unworthily when we fail to find ourselves approved in Christ.

3. Define condemnation.

The word judgment is the same as the word condemnation. Condemnation is a sense of guilt wherein one expects punishment. Condemnation is the result of judgment. It can be the judgment that others place on us, or it can be self-judgment. Regardless of the source, if we accept anyone’s judgment but God’s, we will find ourselves to be unworthy. Then, we expect punishment.

4. Define “chasten” as found in 1 Corinthians 11:32 and what it means for us.

The word “chasten” in the Greek language does not mean to beat, whip, punish, or execute. It means to “child train.” God chastens us as the child in whom He delights. To child train is to draw and compel someone to walk in the right way. It is done tenderly, with great love and affection. It is not done by inflicting pain.

5. Why does our mind create sickness and pain in our bodies?

When we have emotional pain or other issues that we do not know how to deal with, the mind will create sickness or pain somewhere in our body. Having this pain gives us something legitimate to focus on to avoid dealing with something that we would consider more painful.

6. Can you identify issues in your own life you are afraid to confront that might be causing physical pain?

➔ **Leader’s Note:** Give group opportunity to discuss fears and physical pain that may be a result.

7. What is the result of believing that the pain in our life is punishment from God?

The mind always seeks equilibrium. It seeks to bring about or prove the view that we currently hold to be true. Every cell in our body works to bring about our beliefs. If we believe we are unworthy to

succeed, yet we start succeeding, our emotions, or even our physical body, will work to halt our success. If we believe we have done something that deserves physical punishment, we will have pain and sickness.

## Chapter 29

1. How do we lose our destiny?

We have lost our destiny by accepting our judgments as reality. The loss of destiny is a lifetime of disappointment and frustration.

2. How do we develop "inner beauty" as described in this chapter?

Developing inner beauty is not a process of acquiring something that we do not have. It is simply becoming aware of and yielding to that which is in us by Christ Jesus. When He came into your heart, He brought righteousness; he brought power. He brought a quality of life that can be found only in Him. We're not trying to get Him to give it to us. Our part is to look into our heart and discover this new you on the inside.

3. In what way did satan try to tempt Jesus (Matthew 4:3) and what was Jesus' response?

When satan came to the Mount to tempt Jesus, he tried to deceive Him into proving His identity by His performance. *"If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."* Matthew 4:3-4, NKJV. The Living Bible says, *"It will prove you are the Son of God."*

Jesus refused to use His works to prove His identity. Instead He said, *"It is written"*. What God had spoken was sufficient for Him. That would be His source of identity.

4. Why do most people avoid looking into their hearts?

Most people are afraid to look into their heart, because they are afraid of what they will see. They are convinced that they will see something they do not like. They will see something so hideous that they will be unable to bear it.

## Chapter 30

1. In what way does sin influence our soul?

Sin destroys the soul. The Bible says the *“soul that sins shall die”*. The moment we participate in sin of any kind, it begins influencing our soul i.e., our emotions and thoughts; the way of think changes. Our emotions are altered. Paul said in Ephesians that it *“darkened our understanding”*. In other words, the way we see and comprehend things begins changing.

2. What insight do we gain from 3 John 2?

We can only prosper and be in good health if we are prospering in the realm of the soul, the mind, and emotions. When sin affects our soul, we begin to see and experience life differently. We find ourselves doing things we never believed we would do. Life becomes a downhill spiral until we allow God to restore our soul.

3. What is the darkness that holds people (Isaiah 42:7)?

The darkness that holds people is the unquenchable longing of self-centeredness; it is the despair and disappointment that comes from carnal attempts at gratification; it is the deceitfulness of sin.

4. What must happen in order for your soul to be restored?

In order for God to set you free from your bondage and restore your soul, He must first recover your sight.

5. How did Jesus “recover sight” when faced with the loaves and fishes (Mark 6:41)?

When Jesus was overwhelmed by the need to feed so many with such limited resources, He looked into heaven and “recovered sight.” Before He could work a miracle, He had to see things from God’s perspective. Had He continued to view His situation from His own limited perspective, as a man, He would have been taken captive by the problem. No miracle would have happened.

6. What are strongholds (2Corinthians 1-:4-5)? What strongholds are affecting you personally?

Strongholds are the vain imaginations and beliefs that conflict with what we know about God.

- ➔ Leader’s Note: Allow group members to discuss the areas in which their beliefs and thoughts about themselves do not line up with the finished work of Jesus and God’s view and opinion.

## Chapter 31

1. What does it mean to be vexed?

A vexation is something that is consuming. It dominates our attention. It becomes the focus of our thoughts. It renders us incapable of giving our attention to the present, because we are stuck in the past.

2. What is the result of being vexed by anything?

When we become vexed, we magnify the problems, fears, temptations, or pains beyond proportion. They become the focus of our life’s experience. They become the matrix around which our life and emotions are formed.

3. Explain the principle, “we become what we behold”?

We are often drawn to those things that vex us, even if we hate them. There is a scriptural principle that says we become what we behold. That is how God takes us through transformation. We behold an

image of God and we are transformed into His likeness. Or, we hold a positive quality in our mind and we find ourselves expressing that quality. Conversely, if we hold an image of someone we hate in our mind we will become like that person.

4. How do our judgments give actions significance?

Since our judgment determines "why" the other person did what they did "to us", their actions become about us. Most events would have little effect on our life apart from the judgments that forge deep heart-felt beliefs. What could have been a momentary pain becomes suffering through judgment. Our judgment gives the action significance in our life. It makes a statement about us and why things happen to us.

5. Are there people in your life you need to release from judgment? Are you willing to release these people? What method will you use (i.e. letter)?

➔ **Leader's Note:** Encourage people on the value of releasing other's from their judgments. Help them determine what action they will take to solidify their decision.

## Chapter 32

1. What is the verdict of the world as discussed in this chapter?

This is God's verdict of the world: If you are blind, I will give you sight. If you insist that you that the way you see it is reality, you will become blind.

2. What is the sin of self-righteousness?

The sin of self-righteousness is not the particular verdict that is reached. The sin of self-righteousness is the fact that we choose our own (self) standards over God's standards. It is just as self-righteous to

declare ourselves unrighteous, when we have been declared righteous, as it is to be unrighteous and declare ourselves as righteous.

3. What does God's righteousness require? How was that penalty paid for us?

God's righteousness required that all men be declared guilty. His righteousness required that every person pay the penalty of eternal death for their sin.

Jesus became our sin so He could take all of our punishment, thereby, freeing us from the punishment of sin. The Apostle Paul said it this way, *"I have been crucified with Christ."* That death on the cross was God's judgment against our sin. *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."* Romans 6:6-7. NIV. Your old self, with all its sins, limitations, and judgments that you passed against it is dead. This is God's judgment.

4. What must be our primary effort for personal development?

Our primary efforts for personal development must be to accept who we are in Jesus. We must establish our heart in this new identity, or we will spend our life in the limiting self-judgment of the past.

5. What should our lives reflect about God?

We are the glory of God in the earth. Our life should be a reflection of His love, character and provision. People should be able to look at us and see the greatness of God.

6. How will the world see the "glory of God" in us?

When we stop judging and are able to love one another, in spite of our faults, the world will see the glory of God in us. The glory of a father is never revealed in a rejected child.

## Chapter 33

1. What is the pathway to a life without limits?

As we release others and ourselves from judgment, we enter into a new realm of freedom and opportunity. The clearly defined boundaries that once controlled our lives give way to a new vision. We cross the limits that once controlled us, hardly noticing that they ever existed. This is the pathway to life without limits.

2. What creates the strongholds that limit our dreams and successes?

God's promises are of no benefit to us when we make them subservient to our self-judgments. We are exalting our imagination above the knowledge of God, thereby creating the strongholds that will limit our dreams and successes.

3. What is the key to winning the battle (Ecclesiastes 9:11)?

Winning the battle is not always about strength. Riches are not always about understanding. The key to winning is not in possessing great strength or a mystical blessing from God. The key is seeing and seizing the opportunities that come our way. Most people do not see. They are blinded by the walls of limitation they have built through self-judgment.

4. What determines if a situation looks like an opportunity or a threat?

Our self-perception determines whether a situation looks like an opportunity or a threat.

## Chapter 34

1. What do we make every decision in light of?

Our every decision is made in light of our sense of self-worth, which inspires us to act in confident boldness or timidity and fear.

2. From where did Adam's feeling of worth emerge? How did sin affect that?

Adam's feelings of worth emerged from his relationship with his Creator, Father, and God. Because of who he was in relationship to God, he experienced love and acceptance from God and felt right about himself

When man became a sinner, he became fearful. Out of this fear, his heart condemned him before God. The shame and guilt not only made Adam afraid of God; it caused him to lose his sense of identity and worth.

3. Low self-worth thrives on what?

Low self-worth thrives on judgment like a "junkie" on their drug of choice. Although it is destroying them, they do not know how to survive without it.

4. How is our present sense of value determined?

Our present sense of value is determined by how we see ourselves in Jesus or how we see ourselves in relation to others, one or the other. Our perception is based on our judgments about why they do what they do. It is an endless ride of ups and downs based on the actions of others.

5. What does the word "propitiation" mean (1 John 4:9-10)? How did Jesus become our propitiation?

The word propitiation means, "appeasing of anger." Jesus fulfilled that by becoming our sin, taking all the punishment we deserved and obtaining our righteousness. God's wrath was appeased. God is not angry with anyone. His wrath is satisfied.

6. When we look to our performance to establish our worth, what are we saying about Jesus?

When we look to our performance to establish our worth we are saying, "What Jesus did is not enough!" The Great White Throne judgment will consist of those who say, I don't want the righteousness that God gives. I choose to be judged by my own works.

## Chapter 35

1. What qualifies us to teach others?

Being right does not qualify us to teach others. Loving, caring and knowing the truth qualifies us to teach.

2. Read Matthew 7:3-5. What do we learn from this scripture?

*"And why worry about a speck in the eye of a brother when you have a board in your own? Should you say, 'Friend, let me help you get that speck out of your eye,' when you can't even see because of the board in your own? Hypocrite! First get rid of the board. Then you can see to help your brother". Matthew 7:3-5. TLB.*

I need to deal with me, before I attempt to deal with you. The way to truly help others is by removing the log from our own eye. We must deal with ourselves in order to benefit someone else. We must realize that our role is never to “fix” another, but to serve them.

3. What are the two commitments we must make every day?

1. *Will I follow Jesus whole-heartedly today?*
2. *Will I walk in love?*

4. Define the word “believe” as discussed in this chapter.

The Greek word for believe also means obey. Believing and obeying are synonymous. The Amplified Bible translates it as, “to believe in, trust in, adhere to and rely on.”

5. What does love have the ability to do?

Love is able to see the wrong and still find the good. Love is able to see the weakness and point out the strength. Love is able to be offended by the sin, yet tenderly love the sinner. Love is able to listen patiently and preserve self-worth. Love qualifies us to remove the splinter when they are ready. The greatest thing that we can do for our fellow man is to remove the log out of our own eye.

6. What should we ask ourselves before we seek to help anyone?

*Am I motivated by love?*

Until love motivates us, we cannot trust our intentions and we will try to fix others, instead of lovingly healing them. Until love motivates us, we will be governed by a self-centered agenda that uses ministry as an opportunity to meet our own needs.

## Chapter 36

1. What is the goal of all instruction (1 Timothy 1:5)?

Paul said all instruction is designed to bring people to the place of love; love for God and love for people. *“The purpose of my instruction is that all Christians there would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscious and sincere faith”*. 1 Timothy 1:5, NLT.

2. What does the law have the ability to do?

The law has one overwhelming ability, it makes you feel guilty and it empowers sin.

3. What does love trust in?

Love does not trust in the power of control. It trusts in God's principles of acceptance and empowerment.

4. How does love operate?

Love operates from a personal character that is developed between the believer and God and does not react to the environment. Judgment declares one guilty until innocence is proven. Love simply relates to one based on the principles of 1 Corinthians 13 whether they deserve it or not.

5. What happens in us as we give love to others?

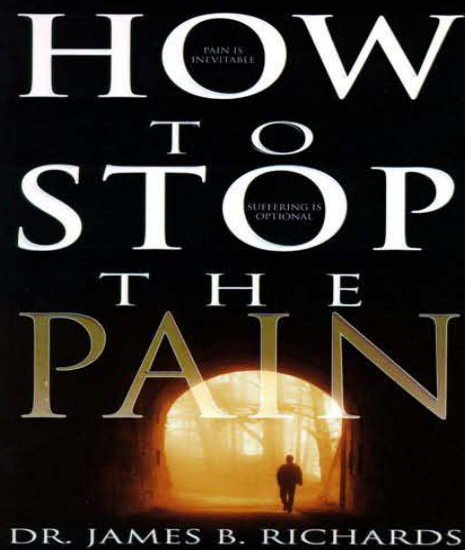
As we commit ourselves to a life of love, we open our heart to receive love from God and people. A process begins that opens our heart. As we give love to others, we become able to receive love. This life of love frees us from the need to judge. Unconditional love washes away the pain of a mean world.

6. What is the only real cure for pain?

The only real cure for pain is to allow God to love it away. Know love and know God. There is no other way to experience the realities that Jesus taught and modeled.

7. What is the only antidote for a life of judgment?

The only antidote for a life of judgment is a life of love.



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