

Out of Darkness Into Light

Wholeness Prayer Basic Modules Module 10

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

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Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

Biblical Basis – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

*“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **to be made new in the attitude of your minds**; and **to put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).*

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off everything that hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us **fix our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).*

*“This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘**In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength**, but you would have none of it. You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’ Therefore you will flee! You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses.’ Therefore your pursuers will be swift! A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill.’ Yet the **LORD longs to be gracious to you**; he rises to show you compassion. **For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!**” (Isaiah 30:15-18).*

*“Many are asking, “Who can show us any good?” Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. **You have filled my heart with greater joy** that when their grain and new wine abound” (Psalm 4:6-7).*

*“**Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me**; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Then will I go to the altar of God, to **God, my joy and my delight**. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God” (Psalm 43:3-4).*

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praise worthy – think about such things. **Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you**” (Philippians 4: 6-9).*

Brief Explanation – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

People desire to experience joy¹. “In a child’s first two years, the desire to experience joy in loving relationships is the most powerful force in life. In fact, some neurologists now say that the basic human need is to be the ‘sparkle in someone’s eyes.’... Wonderfully enough, that innocent, pure desire that begins in childhood continues throughout life. Life makes sense and is empowered by joy when people are in relationship with those who love them and are sincerely ‘glad to be with them.’... Joy also comes from being in relationship with God. Throughout the Bible it is established that a powerful joy comes from a relationship with God who knows everything about me and is still ‘as-glad-as-glad-can-get’ to be with me.”²

“While most of the first year of development is committed to building joy, the child over 12 months begins the important task of returning to joy from every unpleasant emotion.”³ Knowing how to return directly to joy from an unpleasant emotion facilitates healthy patterns operating your life. *Healthy patterns* are consistent with Biblical truth. They consist of mature, godly responses to situations and emotions.

If you haven’t yet learned how to return directly to joy from an unpleasant emotion, you can still learn this. The section of the brain involved in returning to joy from unpleasant emotions “is the one section of the brain that retains the ability to grow for our entire lives, which means that “joy strength” can always continue to develop!”⁴

Often there are unpleasant emotions from which a person hasn’t yet learned the direct way back to joy. If you have any of these, you will tend to look for an intermediate emotion to go to, one that you do know how to get back to joy from. *For example: You don’t know how to get back to joy from frustration, but do know how to get back to joy from sadness. When you get frustrated, you get sad; then you get back to joy. Going to sadness as an intermediate emotion is more common for women. Going to anger as an intermediate emotion is more common for men.*

If you have *no* indirect way back to joy from the unpleasant emotion (“no way out”), you tend to wander around *lost* from negative emotion to negative emotion. *For example: You get frustrated and want to give up. You feel that if you give up you will be a failure. So, you feel you can’t give up, and you keep trying. You feel inadequate and become more frustrated. And so on.*

If you don’t have a direct path back to joy from the unpleasant emotion, you probably have an unhealthy pattern operating. An *unhealthy pattern* is a habitual sequence of unhealthy responses, made in an attempt to get back to joy from the negative emotions involved. These unhealthy responses are part of living in the patterns of the old nature, rather than those of the new nature (Ephesians 4:22-24). See “Example – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns,” in this module.

¹ One definition of joy is “deep gladness and delight”.

² From *The Life Model: Living From the Heart Jesus Gave You*, by James G. Friesen, Ph.D.; E. James Wilder, Ph.D.; Anne M. Bierling, M.A.; Rick Koepcke, M.A.; and Maribeth Poole, M.A.; pg 11-12

³ *ibid*, pg 20

⁴ *ibid*, pg 16

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An unhealthy pattern may have many steps in its sequence, or it may have only a few. It is generally triggered by an unpleasant emotion that arises in a situation, from which there is no direct path back to joy.

If you have unhealthy patterns operating in your life, you may not know what a healthy replacement pattern would look like. Or, you may not know what a healthy *response* would be, in a given situation. *For example, if someone makes a joke about you, this may feel like a threat. A healthy response might include not feeling threatened at all, because you are so secure in Christ.* Even if you do know of a healthy response, you might be either unable or unwilling to respond in that way.

Some indications that you *might* have unhealthy patterns operating in your life are:

- You respond to some situations in unhealthy ways. You may not know why you're responding that way.
- You can't seem to change these unhealthy responses.
- Sometimes you don't know how to get back to joy from how you feel.
- Others react to you in negative ways. (This could also mean they have unhealthy patterns operating in their lives.) For an example, see "Attachment 1: A Looping Bowtie Pattern," in this module.

If you *do* have unhealthy patterns operating in your life:

- You may know about them.
- You may not be aware of them.
- You may have learned them in childhood.
- They may be the same or similar to your parents' unhealthy patterns.
- You may feel stuck in them because:
 - You don't know of any better way to respond.
 - You know of a better response but can't seem to respond in that way.

Steps to *replace* an unhealthy pattern with a healthy one include:

- Identifying the pattern
- Finding the root (the first unpleasant emotion in the cycle and what triggered it)
- Finding the healthy way back to joy from initial unpleasant emotion
- Asking God to show you how to respond to the initial situation in a healthy way
- Understanding and applying a new, healthy pattern.

There are a number of ways to learn healthy patterns. They include:

- Identifying people you know who have healthy patterns operating in their lives, then:
 - seeing those patterns modeled
 - asking questions to learn more about the pattern
 - talk through case studies
 - role-playing as appropriate to help you learn to apply the healthy pattern in your situation
- Learning about healthy patterns through books
- God directly helping you create and implement a healthy pattern.

Example – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

Old Unhealthy Pattern

Situation: Tryouts for the school play were just beginning. Sandra was trying out for the lead role. Though she was *nervous*, she was enjoying talking with her friend Susan. Then she saw Dan and Barry, who were deciding who would get each part in the school play, talking together.

Sandra felt *afraid*. Her emotions started to spiral downward. *Anxious* thoughts ran through her head, one right after the other. “I’m afraid I won’t remember my lines.” “What if I don’t get the part?” “I’ll be too embarrassed to go to school tomorrow.” “What can I do?” She became more and more *afraid*.

Sandra decided to *try to control the situation* by *pushing* herself *harder*. She told herself: “You have to do this well.” “Otherwise you’ll be a failure.” She began to *panic*. When the time came for her tryout, she couldn’t think straight. Though she could act quite well and knew her lines perfectly, she forgot her lines. She *felt like a failure*. She was sure she wouldn’t get the part now. She felt *hopeless*.

Then she got *angry* and *blamed* Susan for what happened. “Why didn’t you help me practice more?” “It’s your fault I didn’t know my lines.” Susan walked away, feeling rejected. Sandra felt *empty* and *discouraged*.

New Healthy Pattern

Background: After last year’s tryouts, Susan had prayed with a friend about the unhealthy pattern above. It started with *fear*, then led to *anxiety* and a *desire for unhealthy control*. Next it led to *panic* and a sense of *failure*; then to *anger, blaming others, emptiness* and *discouragement*. God had helped her to identify this pattern and work to replace it with a new pattern. She had asked Him to help her remember and follow this new pattern. She didn’t always remember to follow it right away; but the new pattern was getting to be more of a habit, as she practiced it.

Situation: Tryouts for the school play were just beginning. Sandra was talking with her friend Susan while waiting to try out for the lead role. Dan and Barry, who were deciding who would get each part in the school play, were talking together.

Susan felt *nervous*. She started to feel *afraid*. God reminded her that she had another choice besides trying to force herself to perform well or giving up. She could follow His road in Philippians 4: 6-9. (See “Attachment 3: Living Beyond Fear,” in this module.)

She *told God of her desire* to play the lead role, then *surrendered that desire to Him*. She also *told Him of her fear*. He reminded her that He would be with her. He encouraged her to focus on pleasing Him, not other people. She became *calmer*. She *chose to trust in God*. She then *stopped thinking about herself* and *performed to the best of her ability*. She knew that she had done her best and *felt God’s pleasure*. She thanked Susan for helping her practice. She hoped to get the part, but knew that even if she didn’t there was no need for her to feel shame, fear, or a sense of failure. She *thanked God* for His goodness and for helping her. She *rejoiced* that He always is with her.

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Step-by-Step Process⁵ – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

Note: See “Module 1: Overview and Introduction” for beginning and ending steps, and information on how to use the modules in various contexts. Also see “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds” for more information on following negative emotions back to their source, then getting God’s perspective there.

Note: You may want someone to help you work through this process.

1. Ask God to show you any unhealthy patterns presently operating in your life.

For each unhealthy pattern:

2. Ask God to show you what triggered it. To facilitate this:
 - Ask God to bring to your mind a representative time in the recent past when this unhealthy pattern was operating in your life.
 -
 - Start with the *first* step you’re aware of in the unhealthy pattern.
 - Ask God to help you remember how you *felt* and *reacted* at that time
 - Ask Him to show you *why* you felt and reacted that way
 -
 - Ask God to show you how you felt and reacted right *before* that
 - Ask God to show you *why* you felt and reacted that way
 -
 - Keep asking God to show you *how* you felt and reacted and *why* you felt and reacted the way you did, until you get to the *first* step in the sequence.
 - Ask God to show you *what* triggered the first negative emotion(s) in the sequence.
3. Seek healing for any emotional wounds that are related to the first negative emotion(s) in the sequence. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.”
4. Work through any other modules, as needed, to get back to joy from this (first negative) emotion. See “Attachment 1: Guide to Which Modules to Use” in “Module 1: Overview and Introduction.” For example, if you felt hurt by someone and haven’t yet forgiven them, see “Module 7: Forgiving Others.”
5. If you haven’t already identified the entire pattern, ask God to reveal any other steps in it that you need to be aware of, to facilitate breaking it. To facilitate this:
 - Start with the *last* step you’re aware of in the unhealthy pattern.
 - Ask God to help you remember how you *felt* and *reacted* at the that time
 - Ask Him to show you *why* you felt and reacted that way
 -
 - Ask God to show you how you felt and reacted right *after* that
 - Ask God to show you *why* you felt and reacted that way
 -
 - Keep asking God to show you *how* you felt and reacted and *why* you felt and reacted the way you did, until you get to the last step in the sequence.

⁵ “Step-by-Step Process” contains steps that are generally involved when addressing the issue. Modify these as needed to fit the specific situation. Follow God’s leading.

Module 10: Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

6. If the negative emotion or unhealthy pattern might be generational, see “Module 2: Freedom from Generational Bondage”.

Two examples of negative emotions or unhealthy patterns that can be generational are:

- An alternating generational pattern of anger and fear, intertwined with shame
- Bitterness

More examples are listed in “Attachment 1: List of Potential Generational Sins and Negative Patterns” in “Module 2: Freedom from Generational Bondage.”

7. Ask God to show you what a healthy response would have been to the *initial* situation – the one that triggered your first negative emotion and unhealthy response. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.”

Note: God may already have revealed this in the steps above.

8. Ask God to show you if this healthy *response* is one you feel able and willing to choose.

- If so, ask Him to help you
 - remember that you can choose this new response
 - develop the habit of responding in this way.
- If not, ask Him why. Seek healing for any emotional wounds. Also see any other modules that apply.

9. Ask God to show you a healthy pattern that could spring from this new healthy response. Some ways to learn healthy patterns are listed in “Brief Explanation – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns,” in this module.

Note: God may already have revealed this, or parts of this, in the steps above.

10. Ask God to show you how this new, healthy pattern could apply in similar situations you may encounter.

11. Ask God to show you if this new *pattern* is one you feel able and willing to learn to apply.

- If so, ask Him to help you walk in this new pattern.
- If not, ask Him why. Seek healing for any emotional wounds. Also see any other modules that apply.

12. Ask God to help you walk in this new pattern. Ask Him to gently remind you if you start to respond in the old way.

13. Find Scriptures that relate to this new pattern. Meditate on them. Enjoy them.

14. Thank God for what He’s done!

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Follow-up – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

1. Learn to walk in the new pattern. Practicing it will help it become a habit. Telling others about it helps to reinforce it.
2. If fear was (one of) the negative emotion(s) in your old pattern, or if you struggle with fear, see “Attachment 3: Living beyond Fear,” in this module.
3. If an unhealthy desire for control was part of the old pattern, or if you might have an unhealthy desire for control, see “Attachment 2: Giving up Unhealthy Control,” in this module.
4. If perfectionism is an issue for you, see “Attachment 4: Overcoming Perfectionism,” in this module.
5. Ask God to continually show you
 - Any unhealthy patterns that are operating in your life.
 - Any time you respond to a situation in an unhealthy way. (If you respond to a situation in an unhealthy way, ask God to show if this is part of an unhealthy pattern.)

As He shows you these, work through the process above, as needed. Also see any other modules that apply.

6. Ask God to help you continually take captive any unpleasant emotions you experience. If you don't yet know how to get back to joy from them, ask God to show you the way back to joy from the emotion. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.”
7. Continue to work through the principles in other modules, as they apply. See “Attachment 1: Guide to Which Modules to Use” in “Module 1: Overview and Introduction.”

Process Diagram
Module 10 – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

- *Opening prayer*
- *Ask God to show you any **unhealthy patterns** presently operating in your life.*
- **For each unhealthy pattern:**
 - *Ask God to show you **what triggered it.***
 - *Seek healing for any **emotional wounds** that are related to the first negative emotion(s) in the sequence. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.”*
 - ***Work through** any other modules, as needed, to get back to joy from this (first negative) emotion.*
 - *If you haven’t already identified the **entire pattern**, ask God to reveal any other **steps in it that you need to be aware of**, to facilitate breaking it.*
 - *If the negative emotion or unhealthy pattern might be **generational**, see “Module 2: Freedom from Generational Bondage.”*
 - *Ask God to show you what a **healthy response** would have been to the initial situation – the one that triggered your first negative emotion and unhealthy response. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.”*
 - *Ask God to show you if this healthy response is one you feel **able and willing to choose.***
 - *If so, ask Him to **help you***
 - ***remember** that you can choose this new response*
 - ***develop** the habit of responding in this way.*
 - *If not, ask Him **why**. Seek healing for any emotional wounds. Also see any other modules that apply.*
 - *Ask God to show you a **healthy pattern** that could spring from this **new healthy response.***
 - *Ask God to show you how this new, healthy pattern could **apply in similar situations** you may encounter.*
 - *Ask God to show you if this new pattern is one you feel **able and willing to learn to apply.***
 - *If so, ask Him to **help you** walk in this new pattern.*
 - *If not, ask Him **why**. Seek healing for any emotional wounds. Also see any other modules that apply.*
 - *Ask God to **help you** walk in this new pattern. Ask Him to **gently remind you** if you start to respond in the old way.*
 - ***Find Scriptures** that relate to this new pattern. **Meditate** on them. **Enjoy** them.*
- *Thank God for what He’s done!*
- *Closing prayer*

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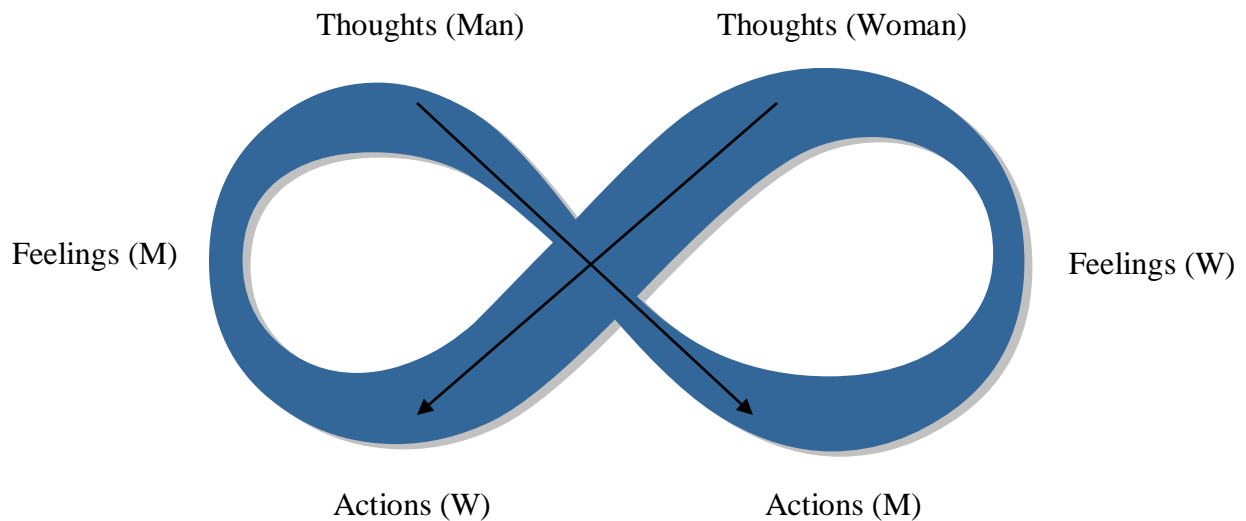
Attachment 1. A Looping Bowtie Pattern⁶

Sometimes two people become stuck in an (unhealthy) continuous looping pattern.

Following is an example of a married couple relating with each other in this way. In this example, the man treats his wife in such a way that she thinks she is misunderstood and unsafe. Her behavior then is to withdraw and put up a wall. That makes the man think he has been abandoned so he pursues her harder and this makes her believe that she is even more unsafe, and so the circle goes.

Included in this pattern are three levels of interaction: 1) *thinking*, 2) *behavior*, and 3) *feelings*.

	The Man	The Woman
<i>Thinking Level</i>	She is abandoning me.	He does not understand me. I am not safe.
<i>Related Behavior</i>	I pursue her. I take charge.	I withdraw. I put up a wall.
<i>Feeling Level</i>	1) on the <i>surface</i> – anger 2) down <i>deep</i> – rejection	1) on the <i>surface</i> – fear 2) down <i>deep</i> – insecurity



⁶Adapted with permission from *A Theory and Process for Christian Counseling & Inner Healing* by Alfred Davis, pg 41-43

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This looping pattern is a seamless figure eight of thoughts, actions, and feelings. Underneath, each individual is experiencing *negative feelings* from the interaction. Beginning to identify a looping pattern can start at any point.

If you think you might be one member in a looping pattern:

- Seek to identify *your own* negative emotions and unhealthy responses within the looping pattern.
 - If you're stuck, start by identifying what you *think* and *do* before seeking to identify your *feelings*.
 - Once you've identified what you *think* and *do*, begin to identify your *feelings*.
 - Seek to identify first the *superficial* feelings, and then the *underlying* feelings that are part of this loop.
- Seek to change *your own* reactions within the looping pattern. Some questions you can process together with God are:
 - How can I *think* differently [about any triggers, about the person]?
 - What can I choose to *do* differently?
- For more details, see “Step-by-Step Process - Replacing Unhealthy Patterns,” in this module.
- *Don't* assume you know *why* the other person initiates or responds in a certain way. They may have different thoughts and emotions that you think they do.
- Pray that the other person will seek healing as needed.
- Ask God to help you love them (Colossians 3:13-14; 1 Corinthians 13).
- Tell the other person, as appropriate, what God has done in you.

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Attachment 2. Living beyond Fear⁷

Biblical Basis – Living beyond Fear

“I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing” (Psalm 34:4-10).

*“There is **no fear in love**. But **perfect love drives out fear**, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. **We love because he first loved us**” (1 John 4:18-19).*

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things” (Phil 4:6-8).

Brief Explanation – Living beyond Fear

You as a follower of Christ have been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9-10). As you increasingly live in this light, you will see more of the reality of how much He loves you. As you understand more of this reality, and live in it, you will increasingly be set free from unhealthy fear (1 John 4:18-19).

Light drives out darkness. Love drives out fear. When you live in the reality of the light of God’s love, you will live beyond fear.

Like a giant tree, fear can have many roots. It can also have many branches, such as unhealthy patterns, a desire for unhealthy control, and perfectionism.

Learning to live beyond fear is a process. It includes:

- Taking fearful thoughts captive
- Seeking healing for related emotional wounds
- Learning new responses to things that trigger fear, and practicing those responses
- Applying God’s truth to each situation
- Growing in understanding of how much God loves you
- Finding true security (See “Module 11: Finding True Security.”)
- Applying God’s plan in Phil 4:6-8 for overcoming anxiety

⁷ The word fear, as used in this attachment, refers to unhealthy fear. There is also healthy fear. Healthy fear helps people to choose what is wise, *for example, driving safely and using electricity carefully.*

“The Christian has been delivered from fear of the wrath of God (see 1 John 4:18). But the Christian has not been delivered from the discipline of God against his sinful conduct, and in this sense he still fears God. He works out his salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12); he lives his life as a stranger here in reverent fear (1 Peter 1:17). For the child of God, however, the primary meaning of the fear of God is veneration and honor, reverence and awe” (The Practice of Godliness by Jerry Bridges, pg 26).

Step-by-Step Process⁸ – Living beyond Fear

Note: See “Module 1: Overview and Introduction” for beginning and ending steps, and information on how to use the modules in various contexts.

1. Choose that you want to live beyond fear. Ask God to help you.
2. If fear is a generational issue in your family, see “Module 2: Freedom from Generational Bondage.”
3. Ask God to help you take fearful thoughts captive. In each situation where you feel fearful:
 - Ask God if you need to be afraid in this situation
 - If not, ask Him why not.⁹
4. Seek healing for any related emotional wounds. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.” Also see any other modules that apply to the issues involved.
5. Ask God to show you what other response you could have to the thing(s) that triggered your fear. Ask Him to reveal to you His perspective on the situation, and His way to solve any dilemmas.
6. Grow in realizing that you are safe in Christ. (See “Module 11: Finding True Security.”)
7. Grow in knowing (experientially) how much God loves you (Eph 3:14-21). Ask him to help you catch anything that hinders you from understanding this fully. Bring those things to Him. Seek healing for any related emotional wounds. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.” Also see any other modules that apply to the issues involved.
8. Ask God to hide you under the shadow of His wings. (Psalm 17:8)

Find other verses about hiding in God, trusting Him, resting in Him, and being protected by Him. Meditate on those. If it’s hard for you to believe and apply the principles in those verses, ask God why. Seek healing for any related emotional wounds. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.” Also see any other modules that apply to the issues involved.

9. Choose to put your hope in God. Ask Him to help you trust fully in Him. Ask Him to show you anything within you that makes it hard for you to *choose* or to *act on* these things. Work through these issues. See any modules that apply.

⁸ “Step-by-Step Process” contains steps that are generally involved when addressing the issue. Modify these as needed to fit the specific situation. Follow God’s leading.

⁹ Unhealthy fear is never needed. God says, “*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand*” (Isaiah 41:10).

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10. If your fear is part of an unhealthy pattern, work through “Step-by-Step Process – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns,” in this module.

11. Learn to apply God’s plan for overcoming anxiety (Isaiah 30:15; Philippians 4:6-8). Ask Him to help you.

- Recognize that you’re feeling anxious
- Tell God about it
- Ask Him for what you need
- Ask Him to give you His perspective on the situation
- Trust your desires to Him (Psalm 37:4)
- Surrender the outcome to Him
- Thank Him:
 - For His goodness (and for His goodness to you in the past)
 - That He is in control
 - That He loves you
 - That He works all things together for good (Romans 8:28)
- Follow through with any other steps He shows you
- Keep working through the steps in this plan until you have the peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7)
- Thank God for giving you His peace
- Follow-up: Remember to thank God for what He does in the situation.

12. Ask God to help you focus on things that are pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8). Practice doing this.

13. Ask God to help you live a life characterized by praise and thanksgiving. Practice doing this.

14. Ask God to help you grow in intimate relationship with Him. Develop a habit of processing everything of significance with Him.

15. Seek Scriptures that tell you:

- Not to be afraid
- Why you don’t need to be afraid.

See “Module 12: Living in the Light.”

16. Remember that learning to live beyond fear is a process.

Process Diagram

**Module 10 – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns –
Attachment 2 – Living Beyond Fear**

- **Opening prayer.**
- **Choose** that you want to live beyond fear. Ask God to **help you**.
- If fear is a **generational** issue in your family, see “Module 2: Freedom from Generational Bondage.”
- Ask God to help you **take fearful thoughts captive**. In each situation where you feel fearful:
 - Ask God if you need to be afraid in this situation
 - If not, ask Him why not.
- Seek healing for any related **emotional wounds**. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.” Also see any other modules that apply to the issues involved.
- Ask God to show you **what other response** you could have to the thing(s) that triggered your fear. Ask Him to reveal to you His perspective on the situation, and His way to solve any dilemmas.
- Grow in realizing that you are **safe in Christ**.
- Grow in knowing (experientially) **how much God loves you** (Eph 3:14-21). Ask him to help you **catch anything** that hinders you from understanding this fully. Bring those things to Him. See any modules that apply to the issues involved.
- Ask God to **hide you** under the shadow of His wings. (Psalm 17:8)
- Choose to **put your hope in God**. Ask Him to help you trust fully in Him. Ask Him to show you anything within you that makes it hard for you to choose or to act on these things. Work through these issues. See any modules that apply.
- If your fear is part of an **unhealthy pattern**, work through “Step-by-Step Process – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns.”
- Learn to apply **God’s plan for overcoming anxiety** (Isaiah 30:15; Philippians 4:6-8). Ask Him to help you.
- Ask God to help you focus on things that are **pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise** (Philippians 4:8). Practice doing this.
- Ask God to help you live a life characterized by **praise and thanksgiving**. Practice doing this.
- Ask God to help you grow in **intimate relationship with Him**. Develop a habit of processing **everything of significance** with Him.
- **Seek Scriptures** that tell you:
 - Not to be afraid
 - Why you don’t need to be afraid.
- See “Module 12: Living in the Light.”
- Remember that learning to live beyond fear is a **process**.
- **Closing prayer**

Out of Darkness into Light

Attachment 3. Giving Up Unhealthy Control¹⁰

Biblical Basis – Giving Up Unhealthy Control

“This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’ Therefore you will flee! You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses.’ Therefore your pursuers will be swift! A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill.’ Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!” (Isaiah 30:15-18).

Brief Explanation – Giving Up Unhealthy Control

Control can be healthy¹¹ or unhealthy. Attempting to coerce or manipulate someone is an example of unhealthy control. Seeking unhealthy control is part of living in the patterns of the old nature, rather than those of the new nature (Eph 4:22-24). It is a bondage.

If you don’t know the way back to joy from unpleasant emotions, such as unhealthy fear, shame, pain, guilt, anxiety, or anger; you might try to avoid experiencing the painful emotion again, by trying to control a situation or another person. If this strategy doesn’t work, you might become even more controlling. If that doesn’t work, you might turn to perfectionism. If that still doesn’t work, you might develop an addiction.

Unhealthy control, perfectionism and addiction are all focused on a distorted view of who you are in Christ. This focus makes it harder for you to hear God’s voice; and to understand who you truly are in Christ.

Unhealthy control masquerades as a strength, while actually interfering with resolving the underlying painful emotion(s). The way out involves repentance and rest; and quietness and trust (Isaiah 30:15). It follows the path of trust (in God) and surrender (to God), instead of seeking to take control and choose your own way.

If you have trouble trusting God and surrendering to Him, it might be that you didn’t learn trust when you were young. If so, recognizing this fact is a good first step. Other steps include:

- walking through the process of sorting through what your parents (or others) were like, and how those characteristics are the same as or different from God’s
- forgiving your parents, if needed
- growing in understanding how much God loves you
- growing in understanding who you truly are in Christ
- learning how to respond to God, who’s full of kindness.

¹⁰ Adapted with permission from *A Theory and Process for Christian Counseling & Inner Healing* by Alfred Davis

¹¹ Healthy control includes directing, regulating, governing, or restraining someone or something that you are in charge of; without attempting to coerce or manipulate them. Healthy control is needed to carry out designated responsibilities well. *For example: training up a child in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6); driving a car; persevering in a task; exercising self-control.*

Module 10: Replacing Unhealthy Patterns

Walking in trust and surrender, and the joy that it facilitates, helps your brain to actually function better. You think more clearly when you're not stressed. This helps you to find solutions to problems more easily. And, since your own voice isn't clamoring for attention, it's easier to hear God's voice. This is the path to true strength.

Note: Overcoming addictions is not addressed in this basic training.

Representative Example – Unhealthy Control and Perfectionism

A middle-aged man had reached the presidency of his organization and had proven himself to be very successful in the business environment. However, at home there were problems. Every time his wife raised an issue, he became angry. As a result, his wife learned to keep quiet, so that she would not incur his wrath. Progressively the couple lived separate but parallel lives. Communication about important subjects was avoided and tension and resentment grew.

When praying through this cycle with a friend, the man remembered that his father used to call him "stupid" when he was young. He had transformed that message into the lie, "I am stupid." Later in life, whenever his wife questioned something he said, it was *as if* she was saying, "You're stupid". He reacted with anger. Deep down, he felt insecure.

He had been hiding the false belief "I am stupid" for years by covering it with controlling behavior and perfectionist performance. The distorted message had produced pain, which he had tried to control by hiding the message with anger. Once the false belief was uncovered and replaced with truth, he was able to start really communicating with his wife, because he realized for the first time that she was not trying to prove that he was stupid. She was merely expressing her opinion.

Out of Darkness into Light

Step-by-Step Process¹² – Giving Up Unhealthy Control

Note: See “Module 1: Overview and Introduction” for beginning and ending steps, and information on how to use the modules in various contexts.

1. Ask God to show you if unhealthy control is an issue for you.
2. If it is, ask God to show you what unhealthy emotions underlie your desire for control.
3. Seek healing for any emotional wounds that are related to these negative emotions. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.”
4. Work through any other modules, as needed, to get back to joy from this emotion.

For example, if you are angry at someone, see “Module 7: Forgiving Others.”

See “Attachment 1: Guide to Which Modules to Use” in “Module 1: Overview and Introduction”.

5. Work through the step-by-step process in the main part of this module for any related unhealthy patterns.
6. Seek to grow in your understanding of who you are in Christ. Ask Him to help you. See “Module 11: Finding True Security” and “Module 12: Living in the Light.”
7. Seek to grow in your ability to trust God and surrender to Him. Ask Him to help you. See “Module 11: Finding True Security” and “Module 12: Living in the Light.”
8. Choose to give God full control of your life. Ask Him to help you grow in living this out.
9. Ask God to gently remind you when you start try to take control. Ask Him to help you notice if others respond in a way that indicates you might be acting in a controlling way.
10. Share what God has done and is doing in you, with someone you can trust.

Follow-up – Giving Up Unhealthy Control

1. If you struggle with fear, see “Attachment 1: Living beyond Fear,” in this module.
2. If perfectionism is an issue for you, see “Attachment 4: Overcoming Perfectionism,” in this module.

¹² “Step-by-Step Process” contains steps that are generally involved when addressing the issue. Modify these as needed to fit the specific situation. Follow God’s leading.

Process Diagram

**Module 10 – Replacing Unhealthy Patterns –
Attachment 3 – Giving Up Unhealthy Control**

- **Opening prayer**
- Ask God to show you if **unhealthy control** is an issue for you.
- If it is, ask God to show you what **unhealthy emotions** underlie your desire for control.
- Seek healing for any **emotional wounds** that are related to these negative emotions. See “Module 6: Healing from Emotional Wounds.”
- Work through any **other modules**, as needed, to get back to joy from this emotion.
- Work through the step-by-step process in the main part of Module 10 for any **related unhealthy patterns**.
- Seek to grow in your understanding of **who you are in Christ**. Ask Him to help you.
- Seek to grow in your ability to **trust** God and **surrender** to Him. Ask Him to help you. See “Module 11: Finding True Security” and “Module 12: Living in the Light.”
- **Choose to give God full control of your life**. Ask Him to **help you** grow in living this out.
- Ask God to gently **remind you** when you start try to take control. Ask Him to **help you notice** if others respond in a way that indicates you might be acting in a controlling way.
- **Share** what God has done and is doing in you, with someone you can trust.
- **Closing prayer**
- **Follow-up**
 - If you struggle with fear, see “Attachment 1: Living beyond Fear,” in Module 10.
 - If perfectionism is an issue for you, see “Attachment 4: Overcoming Perfectionism,” in Module 10.

Out of Darkness into Light

Attachment 4. Overcoming Perfectionism

Biblical Basis – Overcoming Perfectionism

*“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. **Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on** to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” (Philippians 3:10-12).*

*“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are **being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).*

*“For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. **But we have this treasure in jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Corinthians 4:5-7).*

*“It is for **freedom** that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and **do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery**” (Galatians 5:1).*

Brief Explanation – Overcoming Perfectionism

A perfectionist “demands of himself or others an exceedingly high degree of excellence.”¹³ Living in this way tends to focus on law (Romans 8:1-2) instead of grace (Ephesians 1:5). It is a “yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1).

If you struggle with perfectionism, you may:

- think that you yourself, others, and situations should already *be* perfect
- condemn whatever you don’t think is perfect
- be demanding of yourself or others
- struggle with judging others
- lack joy
- believe that, if you do anything wrong, something terrible will happen
- not be able to acknowledge or accept
 - your imperfections
 - being wrong about something
 - doing something wrong

The truth is that we’re all in process. If we’re in Christ, we’re being perfected, but we are not yet perfect. God is rejoicing in this process (Ephesians 1:4-5)), and He encourages us to as well (Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Ephesians 5:1).

¹³ Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary

Not being able to hear when you're doing something imperfectly gets in the way of the process of being perfected. When you can't see that you're doing something wrong, you don't address it. Thus perfectionism gets in the way of *actually* being perfected. It hinders the very goal it claims to seek.

The path to overcoming perfectionism includes:

- recognizing that its part of the old self, not the new (Ephesians 4:22-24)
- recognizing that it gets in the way of truly being perfected
- recognizing that its part of an unhealthy desire for control
- working through related issues of unhealthy control
- finding the underlying emotion(s) that trigger it
- seeking healing for underlying emotional wounds
- forgiving yourself and others
- accepting yourself and others as imperfect
- finding true security in Christ
- growing in living in truth

This life therefore
Is not righteousness
But growth in righteousness
Not health but healing
Not being but becoming
Not rest but exercise.
We are not yet what we shall be
But we are growing toward it,
The process is not yet finished
But it is going on,
This is not the end
But it is the road
All does not yet gleam in glory
But all is being purified.

Martin Luther

Out of Darkness into Light