

COPING WITH THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

**A RECOVERY WORKBOOK FOR
SURVIVORS OF WAR**

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A RECOVERY WORKBOOK FOR SURVIVORS OF WAR

Written For Those Who Have Served In War
Conditions – Afghanistan, Iraq, & the Middle East

And For Professional Counselors, Military
Chaplains, Pastors, and Ministers

To Facilitate The Healing Process

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRAUMA OF WAR

It has often been the lot of warriors who survive the struggle of war that they subsequently suffer from an aftermath of emotional wounds, often lifelong. It is not surprising then that the warrior David described his lingering distress thousands of years ago in the 55th chapter of the book of Psalms:

*"My heart is severely pained within me,
and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me,
and horror has overwhelmed me.
And I said, 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
For then I would fly away and be at rest.
Indeed I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.
I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest....
I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Destruction is in its midst.
Deceit and guile do not depart from its streets." ¹*

David's postwar symptoms are not unlike those suffered by present day combatants and war veterans. During the past century, considerable research was directed toward understanding post-war symptoms, particularly those affecting American soldiers. Civil War combatants suffered from 'irritable heart' and other significant problems.² One of the conspirators in Abraham Lincoln's assassination, Lewis Paine, was found guilty after the crime and hung in spite of evidence presented during the trial that he suffered from postwar 'homicidal mania.'³

Protracted artillery barrages and exploding shells occurring during World War I were found to cause 'Shell Shock' described as physical symptoms rather than emotional reactions: shakiness, trembling, pain, hearing loss, upset stomach, headache, perspiration, rapid heart rate, breathlessness, tightness in the chest, and loss of bladder and bowel control.⁴ In spite of such a description Sigmund Freud believed World War I Veterans' postwar symptoms were primarily emotional, rather than organic, and coined the term 'War Neurosis.'⁵

During World War II 'Combat Exhaustion' was described as emotional, physical, and mental difficulties - more specifically irritability, sleep disturbance, withdrawal, depression, confusion, and eventual mental disorganization.⁶ Postwar personality changes in World War II veterans, described by Kardiner and Spiegel, were characterized by the inability to adapt to civilian life and restricted capacity for emotional expression.^{7 8}

As time elapsed after World War II, mental health professionals forgot the lessons they learned and failed to recognize that combat veterans hospitalized during the 1970's had post-traumatic symptoms rather than diagnoses of personality disorder or psychoses as they frequently received. This diagnostic failure was finally corrected in 1980 in response to the work of several researchers^{9 10 11} and a commission's recommendation that Vietnam veterans' symptoms would be better depicted by the diagnostic label of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) - characterized by three groups of symptoms in response to a life threatening stressor: 1) intrusive memories, emotions, images, flashbacks, and nightmares; 2) emotional numbing and avoidance of triggers and reminders, and 3) autonomic arousal including exaggerated startle reactions, hypervigilance, autonomic hyperarousal, and aggressive outbursts.¹² By the time the war ended an estimated 800,000 suffered from PTSD.¹³

Does War Change People?

War changes men's natures. The barbarities of war are seldom committed by abnormal men. The tragedy of war is that these horrors are committed by normal men in situations in which the ebb and flow of everyday life have departed and been replaced by a constant round of fear and anger and blood and death. Soldiers at war are not to be judged by civilian rules.¹⁴
– Breaker Morant

I once worked for the Veterans Administration (VA) for 18 years and specialized in treating Vietnam veterans with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), making it easy for me to predict that soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq would suffer the emotional and personal consequences. In fact the research has indicated that among those sent to Afghanistan and Iraq, a conservative figure about the incidence of psychiatric disorders (Major Depression, Generalized Anxiety, and PTSD) has been found to be 15.6 to 17.1 % after duty in Iraq and 11.2% after duty in Afghanistan.¹⁵ But my experience leads me to believe that the incidence will rise as time goes on, as typified by the approximately 800,000 Vietnam veterans, many of whom had delayed onset symptoms, who were found to have PTSD. Why? Soldiers don't tend to acknowledge their emotional pain. Combatants rarely allow themselves to display emotions because that is considered to be a sign of 'weakness'. Given a choice, warriors prefer the Adrenalin-charged 'high' that enables them to suppress emotion and become clear-minded, hyperalert, and instinctively ready to react. But what about later, after the war is over? Instead of coming home and being able to relax, laugh, and feel joy, can they let down their guards? The truth is that for weeks, months, and sometimes years to come they will 'overreact' to sudden noises or unexpected movements. They will find it hard to sleep. Tempers may easily flare-up and many avoid emotional intimacy with loved ones.

Soldiers, after spending months in combat conditions, are not likely to relate the same way to their wives and children as they did before combat, as reported by one lieutenant home from Iraq.¹⁶

"Although [my wife] and I picked up as if I'd only been gone for a few days, not everything has been so easy to resume. Much to my surprise, it's been difficult readjusting to routine things. My first few days back, I found myself reaching to check the safety of my weapon, which for the past 89 days had been literally attached to my hip 24/7. I felt a little uncomfortable without it. Returning to work at the battalion aid station has been hard. I am finding that I have less patience for things than I did before, less tolerance for whiners and complainers. I guess part of me is bothered by the lack of toughness in some of the non-deployed [soldiers]... I have... noticed that... this deployment has changed me mentally. I can't place a finger on what exactly has changed, or what caused the change, for that matter. I just don't feel the same I have found it hard to talk about the things that I saw or experienced over there, even with my wife and closest family, despite the fact that I was never involved in direct combat. Maybe it is the realization of how fragile life can be, or how easily it could have been me staring down death in An Nasiriyah or Al Kut. I think the question of 'Why not me?' will be one I struggle with for some time."¹⁷

The Trauma of Killing

The vast majority of Americans have not killed another human being and do not realize the significant consequences that often follow such activity. Consider the words of one military officer who has been in Iraq:

“Killing does not come naturally, and those who kill reactively without having fully examined the moral choice in their hearts often have problems later as a result of their actions...”
- Dave Grossman¹⁸

The damage to soldiers who have killed and seen others killed may take several forms. Some will choose to become mercenaries after they’ve been discharged from active duty because they have become accustomed to the edgy thrill of war and grow numb to the qualities and skills that are needed to succeed in family and community life. Others may become emotionally and physically disabled. In both cases, there is often a protracted sense of personal guilt and alienation from God that is generally not talked about.”
- Stephen Muse¹⁹

Two years ago I had the pleasure of participating in a training workshop for army chaplains who were preparing for the return of combatants just finishing their tour of duty in Iraq. During that weekend of training, the chaplains told me that four soldiers who had recently returned from combat units had killed their wives or girl friends. It was a terrible tragedy. But it was not completely unpredictable because these men, who learned to turn off all feelings except anger, were reinserted into civilian society without enough time to assimilate their memories, find relief from their emotional distress, and relearn normal emotions.

Historically, warrior nations have known that soldiers - whose minds, bodies, and spirits are forged by the intensity of combat - cannot be expected to suddenly return to ‘normality’ and sit down at the breakfast table and talk about what is still fresh in their memories. Are they going to want to report on their recurring images of artillery fire and dead bodies? Are they likely to say they are feeling guilty about being alive? Is it going to be easy for them to listen to their wives and children ‘complain’ about minor struggles at home or school without thinking, “What in the h... are you complaining about?”

Primitive peoples have long recognized that war changes those who fight in it. For that reason these societies have always provided a purification ritual for combatants who return from war, in the form of washing or other type of ceremonial cleansing, before rejoining their communities. These rituals would enable warriors to rid themselves of guilt feelings and emotional distress and to decompress and relive their terror without feeling weak or exposed. It was also a way to welcome soldiers home with appreciation and full acceptance. Unfortunately, the men who fought in Vietnam suffered from prolonged emotional distress, guilt, and shame because they weren’t provided purification rites or acceptance by their communities after risking their lives on behalf of their country that asked them to fight against and defeat an evil regime.²⁰ There have been many anti-war protesters who believe that the war in Iraq parallels the one that was fought in Vietnam. On the other hand, all who have supported the president’s decision to send American soldiers to Iraq believe there are significant differences that make the war in Iraq a ‘just war’. None-the-less for those who face significant danger every day, war leaves its indelible imprint on those who serve.

During those years spent in the V.A. I treated groups of Vietnam veterans in specialized ‘stress recovery programs’. I learned that their feelings of anger covered over considerable impacted guilt and grief about their losses - of jobs, marriages, close friends, and hopes of ever being called American heroes. These men wouldn’t allow themselves to cry because they were afraid of losing control. They found it easier to harbor bitterness towards God, country, military leaders, friends, society, and the V.A. system. They were depressed, sleep disturbed, physically ill, suicidal, addicted, and sometimes anti-social. Nearly a half-million Vietnam veterans were arrested one or more times, placed on probation, convicted of assaults and homicides, served sentences, or placed on parole.²¹ Many described their loss of spiritual and emotional sensitivity with the words, "I lost my soul in Vietnam."

I met soldiers who felt victimized by the enemy, by the system, and by God and were “victims of an unexpected deadening of the soul... The ‘juice and joy’ feeling that Americans believe to be the essence of religion and spirituality was no longer possible... The American religious experience... and authentic Biblical faith was called into serious question... Is religious faith still possible? Can life ever have meaning again?”²²

RESOLVING SPIRITUAL ALIENATION AND GUILT

Biblical Examples of War – David. Combat veterans often sought relief from their spiritual alienation and guilt by seeking out ministers, priests, or rabbis but many times only felt abandoned and betrayed by the Church and God. Trained in traditional psychotherapy I felt ill equipped to help them with guilt resolution. I decided to look to the Bible for information, beginning with the story of the heroic warrior, David. His reputation began as a teenager when he met the challenge of the 9 ½ foot Philistine giant Goliath with a slingshot, knocked the giant to the ground, and finished the job by cutting off his head with his own sword. When the Philistines saw that their great champion was dead, they ran for their lives.²³

That famous encounter catapulted the young warrior into the national limelight and his reputation continued to rise as he became known as a very strong, courageous, and intelligent warrior. During his career David was exposed to many life-threatening events which included an attack on his life by the paranoid King Saul who attempted to kill him several times. After the death of Saul, David became the king of Israel at age thirty and kept the throne for 40 years during which time he waged war against a number of enemy nations. His primary adversaries were the Philistines with whom he soon waged war and defeated. He also fought and defeated the Moab nation and ordered the random execution of two thirds of the Moabites.²⁴ David’s conquests also resulted in victories over Hadadezer and the Syrians. David and his warriors are reported as slaying 22,000 Syrian soldiers, 18,000 Edomite soldiers, 700 Syrian chariot drivers, and 40,000 Syrian cavalry. David and his men mortally wounded Shobach, the Syrian army commander, who died on the battlefield.²⁵

David was not always admired by the warriors who looked to him for leadership. For example, when David and his men were in the field, their city, Ziklag, was attacked by the Amalekites who burned it to the ground and captured all of their wives, sons, and daughters. David and his men were overwhelmed with grief. Then his men became angry, blamed David, and threatened to stone him.²⁶

David’s long career as a warrior came at a high cost to him, his family, and his nation. Repeated involvement in combat eventually caused symptoms: terror, trembling, nightmares, intrusive violent imagery, and isolation. His symptoms, described in the Book of Psalms, fit the description of a combat veteran with PTSD:

*‘My heart is severely pained within me
and the terrors of death have fallen upon me,
and horror has overwhelmed me.
Oh, that I had wings like a dove.
For then I would fly away and be at rest.
Indeed, I would wander far off
and remain in the wilderness’.*²⁷

After being exposed to the violence of war, David lost his spiritual and emotional sensitivity and engaged in a secret and illicit relationship with Bathsheba. She became pregnant and he had her husband killed in battle.²⁸ God exposed his guilty secrets by having the prophet Nathan confront him:

“Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have smitten Uriah the Hittite, taken his wife, and slain her husband with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house... Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house... For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. ... Because you have scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die.”²⁹

David experienced the guilt of bloodshed, as he expressed in the book of Psalms: *“Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart – These, O God, you will not despise.”³⁰*

David described his shame, guilt, and alienation from the Lord: *“O God, you have cast us off. You have broken us down. You have been displeased; Oh restore us again!”³¹* And begged for forgiveness: *“I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now Lord, I pray Thee, take away the wrong of Thy servant, for I have indeed played the fool.”³²*

Although God forgave David He also told him that he would not escape the consequences: *“The Lord has taken away your sin; you will not die. Nevertheless, because this action has provided such an opportunity for the enemies of the Lord to ridicule, the son born to you must surely die.”³³*

David sought for and eventually rediscovered God's forgiving presence: *“As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice. He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle which was against me, for there were many against me.”³⁴*

GUILT RESOLUTION & SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The Writings of William Mahedy. William Mahedy, a combat chaplain who later became a mental health professional and consultant to the congress and V.A. officials who mandated the development of the Vietnam veterans Outreach Program in 1979, was one of the first to recognize veterans' spiritual desolation. In his book ‘Out Of The Night’ he described the Vietnam war as causing a complete breakdown of the capacity to love among those who share a common humanity under God. “If we take seriously the passage from the New Testament Book of I John, we must admit that the love of God is incompatible with the kind of hatred war unleashes. Cut off from love, we are cut off from God in the only avenue of access our limited nature really possesses. Isolation from God under these conditions brings about a different kind of spiritual night and a darkness that closes in upon us when our souls are pervaded with hatred.”³⁵

Mahedy suggested that combat veterans seek spiritual transformation to gain freedom from the ‘violence of the soul’ which he calls, ‘a residue from the violence of war’. He believed their spiritual quest could be best guided by counselors who had similar experiences, even if unrelated to war: “Touched by evil on a much larger scale than that of mere personal suffering, these true servants of the Lord experienced a deep anguish, sometimes bordering on the despair.”³⁶

He also believed that “veterans ... have ample resources to negotiate their journey out of the night. Scripture, the writings of the mystics, and guidance from those with personal experience of winter in the spirit are sufficient maps for the journey as long as one remembers that God alone is the light at the end of the tunnel.”³⁷

Mahedy discovered that God's help was important to combat the power of evil in the world and said that recovery would not be possible until these men were willing to walk away from the anger, rage, and hatred that had become the war's continuing residue. “One cannot make a

lifetime career out of hating the Vietnamese or Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Jane Fonda, either." ³⁸

Mahedy recognized however that the anger of combat veterans covered over emotional anguish which he called "the desert of their souls ... the anguish of Job, the cry of the Psalmist, and even of the agony of Jesus himself." ³⁹ He also saw that combat veterans who felt angry but also helpless to change, in their own strength, should seek God in a personal way, however obscure He may seem to be. "The God revealed in the Hebrew Scripture is intensely personal but always obscure and he is frequently encountered in a desert or on a lonely mountaintop. In the New Testament, Jesus is recognized as Lord in His resurrection from the dead, but the risen Lord always goes on ahead of His disciples into Galilee and then ascends to the Father. I believe the journey in spiritual darkness ultimately brings one to perceive God in this fashion. Perhaps a more intimate and tender sense of divine presence returns for a time -- I know a number of combat veterans who have regained or acquired for the first time a powerful awareness of Jesus as healer -- but most often the Lord seems to be saying, as he did to Mary Magdalene, 'Do not touch me.'" ⁴⁰

Spiritual Transformations in Combat veterans. My personal encounters with combat veterans led me to become interested in whether or not any of them had resolved their spiritual alienation through Christian teachings. A very dramatic self-report came from John Steer, a Marine combat veteran in Vietnam, who wrote an autobiography in 1982 wherein he described his traumatic childhood and combat experiences. ⁴¹ Steer suffered from a personality disorder before entering military service and after he was discharged he developed Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and alcoholism for which he sought psychiatric help with little or no benefit. Seven years later, he had a Christian conversion experience which brought about a remarkable change in his life. His nearly broken marriage was restored and his recurring traumatic dreams, rage attacks, and alcoholism ceased to be problems. Furthermore, his sense of pervasive meaninglessness was replaced by a desire to help others. Since then he has maintained a normal family life and developed a self-supporting Christian ministry for helping people in need, particularly other combat veterans.

A combat veteran patient whom I once treated in a Stress Recovery Program suffered not only from the typical symptoms of combat-related PTSD but became convinced that evil spirits possessed his body. He did not benefit from traditional treatment and was asked to leave the treatment program after assaulting another patient. Nine months later he reported that he had a Christian conversion experience which changed his life: "I felt that if I went to sleep, the Devil would get hold of me and I'd wake up in hell. So I called out to my wife and asked her to pray for me. She did, and I asked Jesus to take over my life. Within one or two days, I began to get a sense of peace and a new feeling of self-control that I never had before."

Other veterans' lives have been transformed after encountering Jesus Christ in their lives. One of these men, Bill Landreth, founded a Christian outreach organization called Point Man Ministries. After Landreth's death another veteran, Chuck Dean, took over leadership of the Washington state based organization which eventually became international in its scope. Dean has continued to be actively involved in leading veterans toward spiritual renewal and has written an inspiring and popular book about how a veteran can find resolution of PTSD through a belief in Jesus Christ⁴². He also has recently written another book to help families of Iraqi veterans.⁴³

DEVELOPING A SPECIALIZED PROGRAM FOR COMBAT VETERANS

While working within the V.A. system I sought out the Catholic Chaplain to help develop a structured approach to integrate psychological and spiritual topics⁴⁴. With the help of recovering alcoholic patients, we wrote a program that was based on twelve themes and spiritual steps and

presented it to interested combat veterans over an eight-week period. The steps were patterned in a small way after the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Twelve Step Program,⁴⁵ integrating some of the following AA principles:

- * Recovery should be viewed as an on-going and life-long process rather than a cure.
- * Education is necessary to learn tools to help understand and cope with stress.
- * Recovery is more effective when there is mutual sharing and helping those who have similar problems.
- * Recovery is more effective when participants in the program acknowledge God or a "Higher Power" - to be interpreted in a personal way.
- * Recovery begins when a soldier acknowledges his powerlessness to control his own addiction or other problem and is willing to surrender to God, as individually understood.

Higher Power. Since it was founded in 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and similar 12 step programs have helped many thousands, perhaps millions of persons addicted to drugs, food, sex, gambling, and other self-destructive activities. The principles of these programs include anonymity of the recovering person, the importance of 'surrendering' to a 'Higher Power' (God, as individually understood), self-examination, and helping other recovering persons. As with other 12 step recovery programs, this 12-step trauma recovery program encouraged participants to focus either outwardly or inwardly on spirituality and to believe and to 'surrender' themselves and their problems to their Higher Power.

The word 'surrender' when used in 12 step programs is not synonymous with defeat - an unacceptable word for combat veterans. Rather, surrender refers to a process whereby 12 step participants 'let go' of attempts to control their own addictions and cede control to their Higher Power. They have found that 'letting go' of control is an effective first step to alter undesirable behavior - addictions, bad habits, and self-destructive ways of living - and learn to replace these with new and better ways of living and coping.

The principle of faith and surrender did not originate with the founders of 12 step programs. Faith and surrender to the will of God are major teachings within the three monotheistic religions - Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The concept of surrender is widely accepted as a key ingredient of religious faith. For example, Muhammad, who founded Islam in 610 A.D., preached a message of submission and surrender to the will of God (Allah). In fact the principle meaning of the word Islam is 'surrender' or submission'.⁴⁶

Abraham, considered to be the father of both Islam and Judaism, demonstrated his willingness to surrender to God's request - sacrifice his firstborn son. Only after he demonstrated his obedience did God honor Abraham's act of surrender and provide a substitute lamb for a burnt offering.⁴⁷

Submission to God's will, according to the Torah, does not allow an individual to be sacrificed for the sake of society, including suicide bombings to fight an enemy. Thus, the Jerusalem Talmud reads: "If gentiles [surrounding Israel] demand, 'Surrender one of yourselves to us and we will kill him; otherwise we will kill all of you,' they just all suffer death rather than surrender a single Israelite to them" This means that the individual is of infinite value, that he stands on a par with the entire community.⁴⁸

Christians believe that human beings can be redeemed to eternal life by Jesus Christ, because He submitted himself to God, His Father, became the sacrificial 'Lamb of the world' only to be subsequently resurrected from death by crucifixion three days later. By believing in Jesus Christ individuals can enter into a personal relationship with Him, receive spiritual and physical healing, and be empowered to break the bonds of addictions and destructive behaviors. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."⁴⁹

Following the principle of Karma, many followers of eastern religions and increasing numbers of adherents to 'New Age' spirituality believe in reincarnation or the transmigration of the soul. It is known that ancient Egyptians believed the soul transmigrated from body to body while modern adherents to Hinduism and Yoga believe that souls pass through a series of rebirths which hopefully lead to a more positive Karmic future than the current life. Yoga recognizes the existence of a Jiva or individual soul who is reborn but Buddhism denies the existence of a soul and says that rebirth is just the continuance of a stream of karma.⁵⁰

It was not my intention to define Higher Power, or God, in a way that excluded nonbelievers or members of differing faiths. Instead, I encouraged participants to select one of a variety of options:

- * Choosing to not believe in a personal God but preferring to define Higher Power either as an internal spiritual strength or as the power of the therapist or group which supports, protects, and provides guidance.
- * Believing in God as defined in a more formal or mysterious fashion, according to the language of specific religious faiths or denominations.
- * Identifying God in a specific gender - either He or She, or as the object of worship of a specific ethnic group or race.
- * Believing that one can have a relationship with God in a personal way.
- * Believing in Jesus Christ as Savior and provider of power to transform personal difficulties into opportunities for growth.

We encouraged participants to think of and communicate with God in a personal way, using language which is most comfortable and meaningful. Group members were not required to but were encouraged to share their beliefs with other members at appropriate times, raise questions or objections, but not to criticize, demean, or pressure others about their specific beliefs or lack of the same.

We devised recovery principles specific for combat veterans, which included the following:

- 1) Provided education to help combat veterans learn to control target PTSD symptoms and self-destructive, destructive, and revengeful behaviors unique to the survivors of war.
- 2) Set up group meetings in which survivors could share their traumatic emotions and memories and discuss ways of coping.
- 3) Finally, with the help of combat veterans and others, we developed the following 12 theme and spiritual step program during which involved participants completed self-assessments and then discussed each of the 12 themes every day for two hours.

The remainder of this workbook will focus on helping participants find ways to understand and overcome their post-traumatic symptoms. Please proceed by completing the assessment on the following page and then complete each of the 12 worksheets systematically according to the schedule determined by your counselor or facilitator of your recovery program. Discuss the results with your counselor and/or with other participants in your group. Because of the spiritual focus of this program it will be beneficial for group members to read the spiritual step at the bottom of each theme-specific group discussion guide and say it together at the end of each group meeting.

HISTORY & SEVERITY OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Please complete this survey of possible traumatic events occurring in relationship to war experiences. Check the time in relationship to the invasion-liberation of the country when the traumatic event occurred. On a scale of 0 to 4, rank according to severity, the emotional after-effects by circling a number (0 = none, 1 = mild, 2 = moderate, 3 = severe, and 4 = devastating):

Traumatic Event	Invasion	Post-invasion	Severity of after-effects:
1. Witness to suicide/homicide bombing	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
2. Witness to a comrade being killed	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
3. Witness to civilians being killed	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
4. Witness to an assault against a civilian	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
5. Witness to violence between Americans	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
6. Witness to a comrade being wounded	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
7. Witness to American vehicle exploding	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
8. Caring for a G.I. as he or she was dying	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
9. Viewing dead bodies	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
10. Death of close friend	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
11. Mortuary duty - identifying the dead	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
12. Placing dead person in a body bag	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
13. Wounded by 'friendly fire'	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
14. Injured in non-combat accident	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
15. Wounded by suicide/homicide bombing	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
16. Wounded in face-to-face attack by civilian	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
17. Wounded by rocket or mortar fire	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
18. Accidentally wounding a G.I.	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
19. Flashbacks of past traumatic memories	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
20. Using alcohol/drugs to control symptoms	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
21. Afflicted by serious illness	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
22. Receiving emergency medical care	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
23. Charged with illegal/unacceptable behavior	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
24. Providing emergency medical care to G.I.	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
25. Providing medical care to wounded adversary	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
26. Death of GI to whom you provided medical care	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
27. Worried about serious financial problems at home	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
28. Worried about distraught family members	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4
29. Receiving a 'Dear John' letter	_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4

30. Close friend or family member seriously ill	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
31. Death of family member	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
32. Rejected by friends/family	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
33. Aggressive behavior toward family member	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
34. Loss of home in the USA	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
35. Broken marriage or significant relationship	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
36. Family member abusing drugs/alcohol	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
37. Serious conflicts among family members	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
38. Surviving a vehicular accident	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
39. Surviving incident of 'friendly fire'	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
40. Surviving crash of aircraft	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
41. Killing a woman or child	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
42. Killing the enemy from a distance	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
43. Killing the enemy face-to-face	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
44. Accidentally killing a non-combatant	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
45. Comrade killed by enemy combatants	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
46. Comrade killed by friendly fire	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
47. Engaging combatants in civilian garb	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
48. Participating in destruction of civilian habitat	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
49. Fighting in hand-to-hand combat	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
50. Being captured by the enemy	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
51. Tortured by enemy personnel	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
52. Victim of sexual assault – non-military	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
53. Victim of sexual assault – while in military	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
54. Victim of robbery or theft– while in-military	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
55. Victim of physical assault– non-military	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
56. Victim of physical assault– while in-military	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
57. Being the object of criticism by war protestors	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
58. Being the object of verbal abuse by war protestors	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
59. Being the object of physical abuse by war protestors	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4
60. Other _____	_____	_____	0	1	2	3	4

Number of traumatic vents _____ Trauma severity score: Add ___+___+___+___ = _____

Rank the numbers of your ten worst traumatic experiences from 1 to 10:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

TWELVE THEME POST-TRAUMATIC SYMPTOM ASSESSMENT

The following assessment instrument can be used to determine the severity of PTSD symptoms as well as the severity of theme specific problems. Please answer each of the following questions by circling the number (0 to 4) which comes the closest to describing their symptoms.

	0	1	2	3	4
	Never	Occasionally	Some of the time	Most of the time	Nearly all the time
1. I can't stop the disturbing 'flashbacks' that seem to control my mind.	0	1	2	3	4
2. The trauma was so upsetting that I wonder, 'why did this have to happen to me?'	0	1	2	3	4
3. My disturbing memories make me feel shameful and bad about myself.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I have 'blackouts' or lapses of consciousness and do things without remembering what I did.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I feel anger more than any other emotion when I think about what happened.	0	1	2	3	4
6. I have rapid heart rate, chest tightness, upset stomach, and other symptoms that upset me.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I have guilty memories and dreams about what I did or should have done.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I stay numb and avoid people because I don't want to cry or have other feelings.	0	1	2	3	4
9. I have urges to hurt myself.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I have thoughts and dreams about hurting whoever was responsible.	0	1	2	3	4
11. I have lost my purpose in life and wonder what will become of me.	0	1	2	3	4
12. I often think that someone wanted this to happen to me.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I feel like a victim and am afraid it's going to happen again and again to me.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I often feel confused and have difficulty concentrating on anything.	0	1	2	3	4
15. I may trust persons that can't be trusted or distrust those who want to help.	0	1	2	3	4
16. It can seem like the traumatic event never happened.	0	1	2	3	4
17. I am easily provoked and can go into a rage.	0	1	2	3	4
18. I am hypervigilant, 'on guard' most of the time, and loud noises or sudden moves startle me.	0	1	2	3	4
19. I feel guilty that I survived and think, "it should have been me instead of ..."	0	1	2	3	4
20. Sometimes I feel numb and other times I can't keep from crying.	0	1	2	3	4

21. I feel sad, fatigued, listless, depressed, and have thoughts I'd rather be dead.
0 1 2 3 4
22. I am bitter and feel like hurting or killing those who were responsible.
0 1 2 3 4
23. I feel alienated from God for what happened and detached from contact with Him.
0 1 2 3 4
24. I feel distant or cut off from other people and have trouble getting close to anyone.
0 1 2 3 4

Having answered the questions as honestly as possible, you can now determine your score.

Add up all of the numbers you have circled: TOTAL SCORE: _____

To determine the severity of your symptoms, see where your score fits, as follows:

Most severe (Red):	70 - 96	Less Severe (Yellow):	20 - 39
Fairly Severe (Black):	40 - 69	Minimal (Green):	0 - 19

To determine twelve theme scores, write individual scores in the blanks below and add them:

1+13, 2+14, 3+15, 4+16, 5+17, 6+18, 7+19, 8+20, 9+21, 10+22, 11+23, and 12+24.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____ 11 _____ 12 _____

13 _____ 14 _____ 15 _____ 16 _____ 17 _____ 18 _____ 19 _____ 20 _____ 21 _____ 22 _____ 23 _____ 24 _____

Add Totals: _____
Themes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Place each of your twelve number scores on the appropriate location on each of the twelve 'spokes' of the matrix on the next page. Connect each of the twelve scores with a pen or pencil to see your overall pattern. You will be able to determine the severity of our symptoms by looking at the position of the lines connecting each of the twelve spokes in the matrix. Lines drawn near the center - red zone - indicate the most severe symptoms. Lines in the black zone indicate moderate symptoms. Lines in the yellow zone indicate mild symptoms. Lines in the green zone indicate that symptoms are not significant.

THEME ONE WORKSHEET: SEEKING POSITIVE POWER

Bill W. is a combat veteran trying to adjust to civilian life since returning from overseas. He spends eight hours each week on the firing range or in the gym lifting weights to maintain his self-esteem, a sense of personal power, and readiness to deal with threatening situations. These activities have become obsessions and take up much of his time so that he has little time left over to spend with his family. Furthermore, when he is not working, doing body-building, or practicing on the firing range, he works outside in the yard. His wife accuses him of being addicted to these activities and thinks that he wants to avoid being with her and their two children. One evening while Bill was pruning bushes in the yard, a car drove by and someone yelled out the window, "Hey! Army guy. You think you're pretty tough don't you." Then a bottle came flying out of the car window, into the bushes and the vehicle sped away.

Please read through the following items and circle the number that best corresponds to what you might do in similar circumstances.

	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Probably</u>	<u>Yes</u>
RED: Immediate Power Response				
You react with lightning speed to defend yourself	1	2	3	4
You pull out your weapon and fire at the vehicle instinctively.	1	2	3	4
You run to the house, grab a set of car keys, and go after the car.	1	2	3	4
Against your wife's wishes, you vow to hunt the down the occupants of the car.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

BLACK: Delayed Power Response				
You decide to have several weapons available in case this happens again.	1	2	3	4
You decide to increase the time spent doing weapons training and weight lifting.	1	2	3	4
You decide to stay inside rather than work in the yard to avoid being a target.	1	2	3	4
You decide to keep a loaded gun in your belt when you are in the yard.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

YELLOW: Collaborative Power Response				
You have a talk with your wife and develop a response plan for future incidents.	1	2	3	4
You decide not to overreact with any kind of 'power play.'	1	2	3	4
You discuss with your friends appropriate non-destructive ways to respond.	1	2	3	4
You report the incident to the police and request more neighborhood patrols.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

GREEN: Seeking Positive Power				
You will be open to learning new ways of coping with feelings of powerlessness.	1	2	3	4
You will avoid being defensive when your wife confronts you.	1	2	3	4
You will seek new ways of enhancing a sense of power in your life	1	2	3	4
You will seek help from God, as you understand Him, to provide power to live..	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

ASSIGNMENT: Keep a daily diary of times you feel powerless and ways that you reacted – both negatively and positively. Positive methods of seeking positive power can include meditation, exercise, helping others, accepting help, activities, hobbies, and readings. Begin to learn new ways of breaking victimization patterns and gaining positive power in your life.

MEDITATION: Reflect on the significance of the spiritual step. When alone, say it aloud, & make it personal.

SPIRITUAL STEP ONE: *"I acknowledge that I often feel powerless to gain control of my post-traumatic symptoms and seek the help of God, as I understand God to be, as a source of positive power."*

THEME ONE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Participants should first review their theme one assessment scores and worksheet scores. Second, they should discuss pertinent worksheet items and, three, share whatever might be helpful. Four, they might read aloud the material - coping with powerlessness - on this page and share personal experiences related to this theme. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with participants reading the spiritual step at the bottom of this page together.

Coping with Powerlessness

Even though we had the strength to survive against the worst of combat conditions, we must admit we often feel defenseless to survive against a new enemy - our memories, flashbacks, and combat instincts.

Some of us feel helpless to control sudden impulses to lash out when we feel vulnerable.

We may feel powerless to control verbal or even physical abuse directed toward those who offend or confront us.

In our sense of powerlessness, we may withdraw, isolate ourselves or 'push people away' so that they tend to avoid, dislike, or even hate us.

We may feel powerless as we futilely attempt to live meaningful lives and cope with post-traumatic symptoms.

We may feel victimized by certain dominating people who tend to control us.

Our attempts to gain control may hurt others, be destructive, or hurt ourselves.

Realizing these facts, our first step is to accept that, in many respects, we lack the power to change what happens to us and to change the non-productive or destructive ways we react to many situations which threaten us.

Scriptures

"My eyes are ever looking to the Lord for help for He alone can rescue me. Come Lord and show me your mercy for I am helpless, overwhelmed, in deep distress - Save Me!" (Psalm 25:15).

"He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might, He increases strength... But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:29-31).

Spiritual Step One

"Our first step is to acknowledge the fact that we often feel powerless to control certain post-traumatic symptoms and to manage our lives as we would like. We acknowledge that to You, God, and to seek Your help as a source of positive power."

THEME TWO WORKSHEET: SEEKING MEANING

Bill sought help for recurring nightmares and memories of a battle in which he and his squad were overrun and several comrades were killed. He believes that his friends' deaths were completely meaningless and he's had difficulty resolving his grief and appreciating his own survival. His experience exemplifies how difficult it can be for a survivor to find meaning from a traumatic experience when he has lost friends or loved ones. It is indeed fortunate if those who have survived war, horrendous events, and imprisonment can transcend their post-traumatic emotional distress and become more mature, more empathic, and more able to discover new meaning in their lives.

Please read through the following items and circle the number that best fits your personal feelings.

	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Probably</u>	<u>Yes</u>
RED: Meaninglessness				
You feel hopeless and wonder "why did this happen to me?"	1	2	3	4
You take very dangerous risks to gain some sense of meaning from life.	1	2	3	4
You feel your life has been meaningless since you have left combat.	1	2	3	4
You are confused at times and your mind is scattered and lacks focus.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				
BLACK: Resolution of meaninglessness seems blocked				
Your attempt to find meaning always seems to be blocked in some way.	1	2	3	4
Maintaining weapons skills provides your only sense of meaning.	1	2	3	4
Your positive experiences are always balanced by negative ones.	1	2	3	4
Your military responsibilities were meaningful but it's not so clear anymore.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				
YELLOW: Seeking resolution of meaninglessness				
You acknowledge to your wife that you have had difficulty finding meaning.	1	2	3	4
You discuss with your wife ways that you can find meaning.	1	2	3	4
You acknowledge to key friends your difficulties finding meaning.	1	2	3	4
You discuss the problem of coping with meaninglessness with your friends.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				
GREEN: Finding meaning				
You're open to learning new ways of coping with feelings of meaninglessness.	1	2	3	4
You'll talk about your loss of meaning with someone you trust.	1	2	3	4
You will seek new ways of enhancing a sense of meaning for your life	1	2	3	4
You will seek help from God, as you understand Him, to seek meaning.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

ASSIGNMENT: Write down your memories of previous stressful and traumatic experiences which eventually led to something positive happening in your life. _____

MEDITATION: Turn your memories of suffering to your Higher Power as well as your questions about possible meanings that may be found from those experiences.

SPIRITUAL STEP TWO: *"I seek to find meaning from having suffered but also from having survived and open my mind to the help of God, as I understand Him to be, so that I can find meaning."*

THEME TWO GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Coping with Meaninglessness

Victor Frankl, who survived the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz exemplifies how a survivor can suffer immensely yet also find meaning from his traumatic experience and has written: "If one cannot change a situation that causes his suffering, he can still choose his attitude. Meaning is available in spite of - nay, even through - suffering" (Frankl, 1984).

Participants should review their theme two assessment scores and theme two worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. They might read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

We are struggling to seek meaning in our survival and our emotional pain.

We would like to be free from nagging thoughts telling us we should never have left the battlefield alive because that was where our comrades gave their lives in war.

Thus, even though we often doubt that living is better than dying, we seek to find meaning in life rather than death, and hope to find life a privilege rather than a burden.

Being in war taught us much, but perhaps most importantly it taught us three things: kill the enemy, protect our comrades, and keep from being killed. As meaningful as this once was, it has not always helped us after rejoining society.

Some of us would like to go back to finish what we feel was unfinished business, hoping that might provide us with a sense of meaning.

How do we find a sense of meaning? Do we find it in killing an enemy? Do we find it in drugs or alcohol? Do we find it in surviving dangerous situations? Taking risks? Provoking fights? No! We must seek meaning in positive ways; in ways that will lead to a fulfilling life.

We want to discover that it is possible to seek and find meaning from those who wish to help us and from creative and positive aspects within ourselves.

Thus, with God's help we will pursue our goals, plans, and positive actions (see previous page) and seek meaning from those we trust and our Higher Power.

Scriptures

"Show me the path where I should go, Oh Lord. Point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me. Teach me. For you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you" (Psalm 25:4);

"Lord, I lift my hands to heaven and implore your help. Oh, listen to my cry" (Psalm 28:2);

"Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life...." (John 14:6); "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9).

Spiritual Step Two

"Our next step is to seek meaning from having suffered and from having survived and open our minds to You, God, so that we can find that meaning."

THEME THREE WORKSHEET: TRUST vs SHAME & DOUBT

After returning from overseas, Army Sergeant Jack P. felt depressed, couldn't talk about his experiences, and isolated himself from family and friends. He decided to ask for help and revealed to the chaplain that he had witnessed an assault perpetrated by a ranking military officer upon a civilian female and failed to intervene. The chaplain listened empathically and then encouraged him to forget it if he wanted to protect his own career. Jack next decided to report the assault to a superior officer who criticized him for spying on an officer and warned him not to talk about it to anyone. He began to have nightmares, disturbing flashbacks and feelings of shame, distrust, and anger because of the event, his failure to intervene, and the ongoing cover-up. Jack's experience exemplifies the shame and self-doubt of individuals who witness horrendous traumas and later wish they had intervened. Jack's experience is also similar to those victims of war, sexual violation, crime, or industrial accidents who feel betrayed by supervisors, harsh authorities, uncaring bureaucracies, or adversarial officials.

Please read through the following items and circle the number that best corresponds to what you might do in similar circumstances.

	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Probably</u>	<u>Yes</u>
RED: Destructive Response				
You plan destructive force toward the offending officer.	1	2	3	4
You plan destructive force toward the criticizing officer who is covering it up.	1	2	3	4
You feel helpless, ashamed, and have self-destructive thoughts.	1	2	3	4
You react destructively to the chaplain, feeling he betrayed his position.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				
BLACK: Blocked Response				
You over-idealize the officer, convincing yourself there is no cover-up.	1	2	3	4
You harbor feelings of shame and become depressed.	1	2	3	4
You will no longer talk openly with the chaplain, feeling he let you down.	1	2	3	4
Your distrust of officers is so strong that it interferes with your functioning.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				
YELLOW: Planning ways to seek help				
You consider having another meeting with the chaplain to talk about it.	1	2	3	4
You decide to share your experience with your wife and get her opinion.	1	2	3	4
You think about talking to a trusted friend about the situation.	1	2	3	4
You inquire about the wisdom of reporting the assault to a legal officer.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				
GREEN: Seeking to Trust				
You talk with your wife and develop a response plan that is best for everyone.	1	2	3	4
You talk with a trusted friend and develop a response plan you can live with.	1	2	3	4
You decide you can trust the chaplain to listen and provide a response plan.	1	2	3	4
You decide to report the assault to a legal officer.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

COMMITMENT: I am taking steps to gain freedom from distrust, shame, and doubt, and to enhance my capacity to trust God and those who wish to help me. Repeat aloud the spiritual step when you are alone and meditate on it silently each day.

SPIRITUAL STEP THREE: "I seek your help, God, for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions in order that I may become free of distrust, shame, and doubt."

THEME THREE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Coping with Shame, Doubt, & Distrust

List those things you regularly do which are based on trust? _____

What are some ways you can improve your trust with individuals you care about: _____

List those disturbing or shameful memories you would like to turn over to God for 'healing'? _____

Participants should review their theme three assessment scores and theme two worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. They might read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

Some of us have a sense of shame about a troubling event or something that went bad about which we feel responsible.

Some of us have a sense of failure and may also have feelings of shame and self-doubt.

We may have been deeply hurt or betrayed by someone we trusted so that now we have difficulty trusting.

Some of us may not be willing or may not be able to openly talk about painful memories.

We may have self-doubt.

We find it hard to trust in God or those who wish to help us.

We are tired of feeling this way and to find relief we seek help from person(s) we can learn to trust.

We may have rejected those who want to help us; we may have walked away from someone who has offered to help us.

But we know we must open ourselves to help from friends, family, professionals, and God, realizing that until now we may have resisted the assistance we really need.

Thus we would like to ask God to help us become free of shame, self-doubt, and distrust.

Scriptures

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning? (Psalm 22:1).

"Create in me a clean heart Oh God and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 5:10).

"Trust the Lord completely instead of trusting yourself. In everything you do, put God first. He will direct you and crown your efforts with success" (Proverbs 3:56).

Spiritual Step Three

"We seek Your presence in our lives for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions that we may become free of distrust, shame, and doubt.

THEME FOUR WORKSHEET: SELF-INVENTORY

Bill's opinion of himself was inaccurate - both over-inflated as well as devalued. His friends noticed that he often bragged excessively about his accomplishments but was also self-demeaning or self-defeating. It was also apparent to others that he had changed as a result of combat experiences. He knew he was a good soldier but was uncertain if he was good at anything else. Many survivors of war find it difficult to accurately determine the truth about themselves and their combat experiences. They may exaggerate the significance of some events and overlook the importance of others. They may brag or they may demean some of the things that happened to them. They may have self-doubt and find it difficult to accept compliments. They may have faults they fail to see and are not open to constructive criticism. In order to help you with an accurate self-assessment, complete the following self-inventory and discuss it in counseling or group discussions.

Assess Your Capacity for Truth and Openness:

	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Probably</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Do you suffer from gaps in your memory?	1	2	3	4
Do you have secrets that you will never want to reveal?	1	2	3	4
Are you afraid of the consequences if you reveal too much?	1	2	3	4
Do you tend to avoid, exaggerate, or distort the truth?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

Assess The Quality of Your Relationships:

Do you knowingly or unknowingly hurt others?	1	2	3	4
Do you have problems acknowledging your faults or shortcomings?	1	2	3	4
Is it hard for you to accept constructive criticism or compliments from others?	1	2	3	4
Do you think crying and/or expressing 'feelings' reveals weakness to others?	1	2	3	4
Total: _____				

List Your Negative Traits:

List Your Positive Traits:

List traits you would like to change:

List compliments & constructive criticisms you've received:

List those individuals to whom you would like to apologize or make amends:

SPIRITUAL STEP FOUR (for personal meditation): *"I will make a searching self-inventory, acknowledge my positive and negative traits to You, God, and someone I trust & seek Your help to accept my positive qualities and change the negative ones."*

THEME FOUR GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Participants should review their theme four assessment scores and theme four worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. They might read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

Coping With Difficulties With Self-awareness and Relationships

Although we may be ready for a self-inventory, we may be afraid of what will turn up.

On the other hand, we may be very interested in discovering more about ourselves.

We might be willing yet still fearful to reveal our memories, thoughts, and feelings for fear that it will only bring about negative consequences.

We may think we remember accurately when, in fact, we do not have fully accurate memories.

Because we cannot remember accurately we cannot honestly assess what has happened to us.

We also would like to assess our own strengths as well as our failings.

We may have a tendency to exaggerate what makes us feel good and avoid those things that don't.

We may also minimize our positive qualities and even exaggerate our negative ones.

But the truth is that there are both negative and positive things that have happened in the past and we have both negative and positive traits now.

It has been said that 'the truth shall make you free'. Thus, we know it is important to evaluate the presence of both our desirable and undesirable qualities.

Thus, with God's help we wish to make an honest self-inventory and to be open to feedback – both positive affirmations and constructive criticisms – from others.

Scriptures

"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit and has lost self-control is like a city broken down without wall." (Proverbs 25:28).

"Cross examine me Oh Lord... Test my motives and affections" (Psalm 26:2). "Cleanse me from hidden faults, and keep me from deliberate wrongs" (Psalm 19:12-13).

"For though once your heart was full of darkness, now it is full of light from the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

Spiritual Step Four

"We will make a searching self-inventory, reveal hidden painful memories to God's healing power, acknowledge our shortcomings, and seek help from God to accept our positive qualities and change our negative ones."

THEME FIVE WORKSHEET: ANGER

Anger should be considered a normal emotion, but for Jack, his anger has become uncontrollable - a major problem for he and his family. Like other combatants, Jack's anger once served to energize his fighting spirit during combat situations. However, after returning to civilian life his anger has often become explosive, hurting those he cares about and causing him to feel ashamed. When he is not explosive he is emotionally detached and furthermore he does not have the capacity to be assertive in a calm way. He no longer seems to fit in at home where he can't trust himself and his self-control so he often seeks out situations wherein he feels more comfortable. Unfortunately he has tended to spend too much time in bars, has been drinking too heavily, and become involved in fights too easily. If you are interested in knowing whether you have a problem with your anger please answer the following questions and discuss them in your counseling or group sessions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

	No	Maybe	Probably	Yes
Do your outbursts sometimes cause destructive consequences toward others?	1	2	3	4
Are you afraid you're a time bomb and could easily hurt somebody?	1	2	3	4
Does your rage cause your mind to freeze up but your body go out of control?	1	2	3	4
Do you sometimes feel so enraged that you could kill somebody?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you walk out of rooms when people irritate you?	1	2	3	4
Do you believe that your angry outbursts have become a bad habit?	1	2	3	4
Do you use anger to block other feelings like grief, guilt, or affection?	1	2	3	4
Do you hold back your feelings because of a fear of exploding?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

YELLOW-GOALS & PLANS:

	No	Maybe	Probably	Yes
Would you like to assert yourself more effectively without losing your temper?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to understand how to express anger constructively?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to recognize your anger before it builds up and explodes?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to understand and express those feelings that your anger blocks?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

You recognizing and expressing lesser degrees of anger such as mild irritability	1	2	3	4
You can listen to someone who disagrees with you without retaliating angrily.	1	2	3	4
You are learning to assert yourself.	1	2	3	4
You are learning to understand and express those feelings that your anger blocks.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

ASSIGNMENT: Ask someone you trust to let you know when your anger is out of control or may cover over other feelings such as fear, guilt, or grief. Practice expressing disagreements in constructive ways rather than allowing anger to get out of control.

MEDITATION: Reflect on the significance of the spiritual step. When alone, say it aloud, & make it personal.

SPIRITUAL STEP FIVE: *"I acknowledge my problems with anger and seek Your help, God, to understand its sources and effects. Help me control my anger when it's destructive and teach me to express it constructively."*

THEME FIVE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Read over and answer the following questions:

What are the situations where it is important that you learn to assert yourself? _____

What are the situations where you are most likely to lose control over your anger?: _____

Identify one or more emotions that you may be covering up with hostility: _____

Please review your theme five assessment scores and theme five worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. You might read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences in your group. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with group members reading the spiritual step together.

Coping With Difficulties Expressing Anger

Those of us who have been in the midst of war have been an angry group of individuals. Anger fueled our fighting spirits. We may still harbor inner hostility so that everything makes us angry now, even when we have returned home. Unfortunately the truth is that we could explode at any moment so that even the littlest things might make us mad.

We may not want to let go of angry feelings if we only feel alive when we are angry.

Some of us may prefer to feel anger rather than to face other feelings within us like grief, fear, or guilt, which the anger covers over.

It would be nice to give up our anger but that seems impossible because it has been an important motivator that kept us going.

Some of us may not recognize that appropriate expressions of anger are desirable. Being assertive is a good thing but we may be so fearful of our anger that we might rather be passive and inactive than assertive.

Although we would like to learn how to let-go of our anger, it may be frightening to do that particularly if we use anger as a defense against feeling helpless and experiencing painful emotions and memories.

Nevertheless we recognize it is important to take this step. Thus, we seek help from others and from God to gain insight into the reasons we are so angry; 'let go' of the deep-seated 'killer' rage inside; find ways to use our anger constructively, uncover other feelings which anger blots out; and help to pursue our goals, plans, and positive actions.

Scriptures

"Listen much, speak little, and don't become angry" (James 1:19).

"Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath (Ephesians 4:26).

"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit and has lost self-control is like a city broken down without wall." (Proverbs 25:28).

"For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from His wrath" (Romans 3:25).

Spiritual Step Five

"We acknowledge our problems with anger and seek Your help, God, to understand its sources, to control its destructive effects, and to learn to express it constructively."

THEME SIX WORKSHEET: FEAR

John learned survival training and techniques to defend himself in the face of life-threatening dangers. He mastered the ability to remain calm during combat and other dangerous situations. He learned to control fear and be alert to threatening situations by developing his sensory perceptions, muscle strength, and motor reactions. He learned survival skills, evasive actions, weapons use, and hand-to-hand fighting techniques which became second nature in combat situations. When he returned to civilian life these conditioned responses became a liability rather than an asset. He maintained hypervigilance and reacted to every loud noise, sudden movement, or suspicious-person as a life and death situation. He suffered from severe insomnia, nightmares, startle reactions, and caused his family considerable stress. Please assess potential unresolved anxiety you may have by answering the following questions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

	No	Rarely	Sometimes	Yes
Do you react to potential danger reflexively as if it is a life or death matter?	1	2	3	4
Have you hurt someone because you lashed out reflexively?	1	2	3	4
Do you take dangerous, life-threatening risks in order to feel alive?	1	2	3	4
Do you have nightmares that cause reflexive aggressive behaviors at night?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Have you become paranoid and suspicious of people you used to trust?	1	2	3	4
Do you suffer from panic 'attacks' - racing pulse and shortness of breath?	1	2	3	4
Do you have amnesia for all or some portion of your terrifying experiences?	1	2	3	4
Does your anxiety prevent you from doing certain things you used to do?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

YELLOW-GOALS:

	No	Maybe	Probably	Yes
Would you like to better understand the source of your unrealistic fears?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to express feelings you learned to suppress in order to survive?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to understand how to overcome special fears or phobias?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to understand and express the fear that your anger blocks?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Are you learning to share fears and apprehensions with someone you trust?	1	2	3	4
Are you learning that prayer and a belief in God can conquer fear and anxiety?	1	2	3	4
Are you learning methods of replacing excessive fear or phobias with courage?	1	2	3	4
Are you learning to take risks and do things you had previously been afraid to do (within the limits of appropriate safety), either alone or with someone you trust?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

ASSIGNMENT: List examples of situations which have three different possible results: 1) Undertaking a potentially dangerous situation. 2) Could result in destructive consequences and 3) Could result in a positive outcome that builds self-esteem

Potential danger	Destructive Consequences	Positive Outcome
<u>Sail to Bahamas alone, no inexperience</u>	<u>Encounter storm, boat sinks, sailor lost</u>	<u>Obtain training & crew; survive storm</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

SPIRITUAL STEP SIX: *"I seek Your help, God, to relinquish 'the wall' around my feelings. I ask that You will provide comfort to me during moments of terror, and courage to take risks in constructive ways."*

THEME SIX GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Participants should review their theme six assessment scores and theme six worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. They might read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

Coping With Difficulties Pertaining to Fear

It is important to realize that fear is normal. It is at the root of our capacity to avoid or cope with dangerous circumstances with a fight, flight, or freeze response. If we are thrust into life-and-death situations, our physiological systems will respond with increased levels of stress hormones and energizing neurotransmitters, our senses will become hypervigilant, and our bodies will be hypersensitive to potential threat. Fear that persists after the danger is gone is post-traumatic anxiety which is associated with increased levels of stress hormones, neurotransmitters, and hypersensitivity to potential threat. Other post-traumatic symptoms include persistent hypervigilance, nightmares, night terrors, panic attacks and exaggerated startle responses to the slightest noise or sudden movement.

If we have been trained to kill the enemy before he kills us, that instinct has become ingrained in our bodies. But the survival instinct loses its appropriateness in a civilian society. Now that we have left the war zone there is no need to be on guard continuously. But that is easier said than done because we have been trained to be on guard and respond aggressively to any potential threat. That explains the link between anger and fear and why some of us are afraid of ourselves and the destructive things we might do.

Some of us have learned to control fear and anxiety by participating in highly stressful survival activities. That is because the accompanying Adrenalin rush may bring with it a sense of calmness and capacity to think clearly. But this can also be potentially dangerous if we take foolish risks and participate in highly risky or potentially destructive activities.

Recovery is possible if face our persistent fears and discover its origins. Recovery is possible if we accept relative helplessness as a normal condition and seek help from God and those we trust. Recovery is possible when we can learn to take risks in acceptable rather than highly dangerous ways.

- * Share your fears and apprehensions within your group and/or with someone you trust.
- * Talk about how prayer and a belief in God can conquer fear and anxiety.
- * Talk about how you can learn methods of replacing excessive fear or phobias with courage.
- * Talk about how you can take a risk and do something you had previously been afraid to do (within the limits of appropriate safety), either alone or with someone you trust.

Scriptures

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

"God is our refuge and strength. He is a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed ... mountains be carried into the midst of the sea... waters roar...[and] the mountains shake with its swelling" (Psalm 46:1-3).

"I will pray to the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

Spiritual Step Six

"We seek Your help God to relinquish 'the wall' around our feelings, open the doors to the past, and reveal to God and another person whom we trust our frightening, traumatic memories. We seek Your help to provide comfort to us so that we can withstand moments of terror, and give us the courage to take risks in constructive ways."

THEME SEVEN WORKSHEET: GUILT

John was caught in a mortar attack that killed two other members within his squad. In spite of being wounded he courageously rescued a severely injured soldier in the face of sniper fire. He was later decorated for his bravery but remained convinced he failed the two who had died. His squad leader also felt guilty because it was his decision that put the squad in jeopardy. These men suffered guilt feelings about surviving when two of their comrades were killed and for failing to do something they might have done. If you were John or his squad leader how would you respond to the following items?

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Probably</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Is your guilt responsible for overwhelming sorrow and suicidal thoughts?	1	2	3	4
Have you deadened your conscience, making it easier to hurt people?	1	2	3	4
Have you lost your emotional sensitivity and do things that could be immoral?	1	2	3	4
Do you blot out your guilt feelings and memories with alcohol and/or drugs?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you wake up at night with guilty memories and/or nightmares?	1	2	3	4
Do you have guilt feelings that cause you to feel depressed?	1	2	3	4
Is it impossible for you to apologize or ask someone to forgive you?	1	2	3	4
Are you alienated from God?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

YELLOW-GOALS:

Would you like to find relief from the guilt that causes your sorrow?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to regain your conscience and not hurt people anymore?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to discover some emotional sensitivity and moral behavior?	1	2	3	4
Would you like to find ways to resolve guilt feelings without alcohol or drugs?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Are you willing to talk about guilt feelings & memories with someone you trust?	1	2	3	4
Are you willing to ask for forgiveness if you've hurt someone?	1	2	3	4
Are you willing to talk with a chaplain about resolving your guilt?	1	2	3	4
Are you willing to seek God's help to get relief from your guilt?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

ASSIGNMENT: Make a list of situations that have caused you to feel guilt or self-blame and another list of situations where you have blamed someone to avoid feeling guilty and taking responsibility:

Assignment:

Situations causing guilt & self-blame	Situations where you have asked for forgiveness
1. <u>Slapping my spouse</u>	1. <u>Asking my spouse to forgive me</u>
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____

List those circumstances or relationship wherein you have done something wrong or failed to do something right and you would like to ask God's forgiveness. _____

SPIRITUAL STEP SEVEN: *"God, help me to face my guilty secrets and to reveal them to someone I trust. I ask and accept forgiveness from You and ask for Your help to forgive myself."*

THEME SEVEN GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Participants should review their theme seven assessment scores and theme seven worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful in a group or with someone they trust. Read aloud the material on this page alone or in your group and share personal experiences. Read and discuss the scripture reading. Close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

Coping With Difficulties Pertaining to Guilt

For many of us, persistent guilt feelings are a source of distress:

We may harbor guilty memories of friends who died. We may feel significant guilt if we believed we were directly or indirectly responsible for them.

Many of us continue to feel guilty after leaving the combat area where many of our friends are still engaged.

Many of us continue to feel guilty because we left before the task was completed.

Many of us continue to feel guilty because we saw civilians get killed.

Many of us continue to feel guilty because we lost our moral and emotional sensitivity in order to more easily participate in a high level of violence.

It is important for us to resolve our guilt feelings so that we can regain or maintain integrity, conscience, emotional sensitivity, the capacity to accept personal responsibility, and the ability to do the right thing.

We have lived with guilt long enough and we ask for and accept forgiveness from God and a person whom we trust - for committing, participating in, or knowing about acts committed which were unacceptable in our eyes, causing suffering and grief for other persons. After having accepted forgiveness, we can now forgive ourselves. But, we recognize that old habits of self-condemnation are difficult to break. Thus, seeking and accepting forgiveness must be a daily matter.

Scriptures

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

"But Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest who ...understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptations we do... So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

Spiritual Step Seven

"We face our guilty secrets and are willing to reveal them to someone we trust. We ask for and accept forgiveness from You, God, and ask Your help to forgive ourselves."

THEME EIGHT WORKSHEET: GRIEF

John was not able to grieve his losses so he 'stuffed his feelings' and blocked out all memories of the attack which killed his best friend. These were the consequences: he avoided close relationships, became depressed, had angry outbursts, and was unable to shed tears. John's 'impacted grief' is not unlike that experienced by other survivors whose friends have been killed or who suffered other kinds of losses, i.e. loss of a meaningful future, loss of health, loss of ideals, loss of innocence, or loss of trust. In order to 'work through' grief, it's important that survivors progress through predictable phases - anger, guilt, depression, and finally - acceptance. If you are interested in knowing whether you have a problem with unresolved grief please answer the following questions and discuss them in your counseling or group sessions.

RED:

	<u>No</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Do your memories of a significant loss trigger depression and suicidal thoughts?	1	2	3	4
Have you become detached from loved ones and 'push' them away?	1	2	3	4
Do you keep yourself from crying because it is too painful to shed tears?	1	2	3	4
Do you have disturbing memories and dreams about persons who have died?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

BLACK:

Do you continue to feel emotionally and spiritually numb?	1	2	3	4
Do you still find it very hard to accept that your loved one died or was killed?	1	2	3	4
Does your unresolved despair keep you alienated from God?	1	2	3	4
Do you avoid establishing close relationships?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

YELLOW:

Would you like to know if you are stuck in one of the phases of grief resolution?	1	2	3	4
Would you like help to deal with disbelief or denial?	1	2	3	4
Would you like help to deal with depression?	1	2	3	4
Would you like help to deal with anger?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

GREEN:

Are you willing to talk to someone about your grief?	1	2	3	4
Are you open to shedding the tears that you've bottled up?	1	2	3	4
Can you relinquish your guilt, anger, and grief to God?	1	2	3	4
Can you say goodbye to whoever or whatever you have lost?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

ASSIGNMENT: Make a list of losses: persons, physical health, emotional health, and missed opportunities which you've experienced. Then go through the grieving process for each and turn these losses over to God.

LOSS OF PERSONS	LOSS OF PHYSICAL HEALTH	LOSS OF EMOTIONAL H'LTH	LOSS OF OPPORTUNITIES
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

SPIRITUAL STEP EIGHT: *"I seek Your help, God, to grieve whomever or whatever I have lost, face my painful memories and emotions, and let my tears heal my sorrows."*

THEME EIGHT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

What significant person(s) in your life has died and left you 'stuck' in one or more of the following emotional phases: _____
Denial _____ Anger _____ Guilt _____ Depression _____

List one or more lost relationships about which you would like to complete your grieving process so that you can have memories that are free from emotional pain. _____

Participants should review their theme eight assessment scores and theme eight worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful in a group or with someone they trust. Read aloud the material on this page alone or in your group and share personal experiences. Read and discuss the scripture reading. Close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

Coping With Difficulties Pertaining to Grief

Many of us continue to harbor feelings associated with unresolved grief which may include anger at those who left us alone, guilt about surviving while others were killed, remorse for failing to save people who died, and yearnings to join those who have passed into another life.

We may remain numb and without tears, crying inside and never letting it show. Or we may cry easily and feel ashamed that we can't control ourselves.

The hurt may come back in our dreams, in our reluctance to become emotionally involved with others, and in the 'stone walls' with which we block our emotions and keep others at a distance.

We may be afraid to let our tears flow because of a fear that the dam will break and there will be no way of stopping the outburst of feelings.

We seek the necessary strength to complete the grieving process for those who have died. We seek understanding about the link between grief and other feelings associated with it.

We would like to be free to shed tears without being lost in unending grief. Thus, we ask for help from God and others to let down our walls and finally shed tears without shame and grieve for those whom we left behind.

Scriptures

"Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, 'See how He loved him?'" (John 11:35-36).

"Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

"Blessed be God, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulation." (2 Corinthians 1:3).

"And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever" (Revelations 21:4).

Spiritual Step Eight

"We seek Your help, God, to grieve those we have lost, face our painful memories and emotions, and let our tears heal our sorrows.

THEME NINE WORKSHEET: LIFE vs DEATH

Although John survived several near misses he found it hard to enjoy being alive. In fact, there were times he felt more like a dead man who only went through the motions of being alive. During the first year after surviving combat John's self-destructive behaviors cost him meaningful relationships and jobs. He abused alcohol and other drugs, mistreated his body, and was on a downhill course that could eventually kill him. Instead of relishing being alive he felt bitter and depressed. Rather than feeling aligned with the forces of life he was a captive to the forces of death. Rather than being a 'survivor', he remained a 'victim' - of depression, self-destructive activities, suicidal thoughts, and addictions. If you are interested in knowing whether you have a problem with these kinds of matters please answer the following questions and discuss them in your counseling or group sessions.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

	<u>No</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Do memories of past traumas and losses trigger suicidal thoughts?	1	2	3	4
Do you have thoughts about taking your own life?	1	2	3	4
Do you think about a plan to kill yourself if all else fails?	1	2	3	4
Do you abuse drugs, alcohol, pain pills, or prescribed medications?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you have obsessive thoughts or behavior about sex or pornography?	1	2	3	4
Do think you are a slave to your bad habits?	1	2	3	4
Do you think about dying even though you have no plan to kill yourself?	1	2	3	4
Do you feel seriously depressed?	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

YELLOW-GREEN:

Are you willing to list your bad habits, destructive activities, addictions, and plans to gain freedom?

Bad habits:

Plan to gain freedom:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Destructive activities:

Plan to gain freedom:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Addictions:

Plan to gain freedom:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

ASSIGNMENT: Write a meditation or prayer asking God to help you relinquish all of the destructive forces and addictions which enslave you and turn them over to Him, Who gives life and freedom:

SPIRITUAL STEP NINE: *"I surrender to You, God, all remaining addictions, self-destructive wishes, unhealthy desires, bad habits, and, with Your help, make a commitment to life."*

THEME NINE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Review your theme nine assessment and worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. Read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences. Discuss the scripture reading, then close the meeting by reading the spiritual step together.

Depression frequently accompanies Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and may manifest itself in one of a variety of forms: continuous depression, episodic depression, destructive behaviors which hide depression, and moods that swing from highs to lows.

Some of us may have experienced unbearable depression which created suicidal thoughts, behaviors, or impulses to kill ourselves directly or indirectly.

Some of us may be self-destructive in one of these ways: we may abuse drugs, alcohol, nicotine, or food. We may engage in compulsive self-destructive activities or behaviors which hurt ourselves or members of our family.

Some of us harbor suicide plans in the back of our minds to fall back on if we can't find an escape from emotional pain. But these plans interfere with enjoying life fully.

We would like to expose and purge those negative forces within us which prevent us from making a complete commitment to life. We want to believe that others care about us and want us to live full and happy lives.

We would like to share self-destructive thoughts within our group and/or with someone we trust. We would like to discuss how prayer and a belief in God can overcome bad habits, self-destructive thoughts, pleasure-seeking activities, and addictions.

We would like to discuss methods of replacing death wishes with a commitment to life and make this very important decision: *'We wish to live!'*

We would like to talk about the possibility of joining a 12-step program for an addiction if that is applicable.

Thus, after self-evaluation and discussion, we are willing to reveal to ourselves, to God, and to those whom we trust, all remaining suicidal or self-destructive wishes. We are willing to ask God to purge us of the remaining destructive, death forces which have hurt ourselves and others; and we rely on Him Whose strength we ask daily to provide us with the power to commit ourselves to living.

Scriptures

"When you were dead in your sins and... your sinful nature, God made you alive in Christ." (Col. 2:13).

"Through Jesus' death, the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with Him by baptism when He died, and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought Him back to life again, you were given His wonderful new life to enjoy. For you have become a part of Him, and so you died with Him, so to speak, when He died and now you share His new life and shall rise as He did." (Romans 6:3-5).

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John 11:25).

"I am crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Spiritual Step Nine

"We surrender to You, God, all remaining self-destructive wishes, addictions, self-destructive wishes, unhealthy desires, bad habits, and, with Your help, make a commitment to life."

THEME TEN WORKSHEET: JUSTICE vs REVENGE

George was assaulted and his girl friend raped by four men during an off-duty weekend while on overseas duty. They received medical help upon returning to base. His anger simmered for a several weeks because authorities seemed unwilling to investigate the case and even suggested he was partly to blame because of venturing into a dangerous part of the city. He felt victimized not only by the perpetrators but also by 'the system'. He decided to take matters into his own hands and obtained information about one of the alleged perpetrators. He thinks about getting revenge against the suspected perpetrator during his off-duty weekend. If you were George, how would you answer the following questions?

RED:	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Probably</u>	<u>Yes</u>
would develop a fool proof plan to get revenge against all perpetrators.	1	2	3	4
I would also plan a way to get my revenge toward the investigators.	1	2	3	4
I would be completely justified if I were to kill the perpetrator.	1	2	3	4
I will get revenge no matter what the consequences might be.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

BLACK:				
I would expect to have nightmares filled with themes of violence.	1	2	3	4
I would have murderous thoughts but no plans about gaining revenge.	1	2	3	4
I would be so enraged toward the justice system it would influence my work.	1	2	3	4
I would feel doubly victimized – by both the perpetrators and the system.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

YELLOW:				
I would like to learn to maintain self-control when I have revengeful thoughts.	1	2	3	4
I want to learn to "let go of" revengeful thoughts before they get out of hand.	1	2	3	4
I want to pursue justice without violence.	1	2	3	4
I am most concerned about helping my girl friend cope with her symptoms.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total: _____				

GREEN:				
I would like to discuss my revengeful thoughts with someone I trust.	1	2	3	4
It would help me to discuss the consequences of harboring hatred.	1	2	3	4
I would like help to 'let-go-of' revengeful thoughts and turn them over to God.	1	2	3	4
I would like to learn how forgiveness could ever apply to this situation.	1	2	3	4

ASSIGNMENT:

Describe your plan about rectifying an injustice which affects you, your family, or your friends.

Describe a situation where justice has not been carried out.

Describe when it would be helpful to forgive someone who has wronged you.

SPIRITUAL STEP TEN: "I seek Your help, God, to pursue the cause of justice, to gain freedom from my revengeful wishes and plans, and to be a channel of forgiveness to those I once hated."

THEME TEN GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

What was the problem with the justice system in the case presented?
Was George doubly victimized?
If the perpetrators had been found, how should justice have been obtained?
If George carried out a revenge killing what should be the consequences?
Is revenge ever justifiable?
What is the difference between justice and revenge?
What are consequences of harboring hatred?
How can you regularly 'let-go-of' your bitter thoughts, memories, and feelings and turn them over to God?
When it would be helpful to forgive someone who has wronged you?

Please read over the following statements, read them aloud within your group and share personal experiences. Discuss the scripture reading then close the meeting with the group reading the spiritual step together.

We may still feel the bitterness and rage at an enemy that killed our friends.

We may still be enraged because we felt abandoned by leaders, friends, spouses, or God.

We may harbor 'killer rage' within us fueled by deep-seated hostility.

If we harbor thoughts of bitterness and revenge we will suffer the consequences - broken relationships, isolation, illness, drugs, violence, and even prison.

We may have been angry for so long that we'd feel strange if the anger was gone from within. But if we do not let it go our persistent rage will be the real enemy because it can imprison us.

Are we ready to 'let go' of that bitterness? If so, we must find something to replace it.
Thus we seek and accept the presence of God in our lives to neutralize the bitterness within us.

We seek the help of God to pursue the cause of justice rather than revenge, to turn away from hatred, and to be channels of forgiveness to those who have wronged us.

Scriptures

"The nations fall into the pitfalls they have dug for others; the trap they set has snapped on them. The Lord ... punishes the wicked in their own snares" (Psalm 9:15-16).

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

"Love your enemies. Do good to them which hate you" (Luke 6:27).

"Be gentle and ready to forgive, never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you can forgive others" (Colossians 3:13).

Spiritual Step Ten

"We seek Your help, God, to pursue the cause of justice, to gain freedom from our revengeful wishes and plans, and to be a channel of forgiveness to those we once hated."

THEME ELEVEN WORKSHEET: FINDING A PURPOSE

After leaving military service with a medical discharge Rafael has had problems finding a purpose in life. He spent ten good years in the Army and was highly regarded as an infantryman. But now he is wondering what to do with the rest of his life. What would you advice for this veteran in order to find a sense of purpose? _____

Many of our most successful and productive leaders were POW's or suffered greatly in other ways during their military service. In spite of this, or possibly because of it, they became successful. How were they able to transform their sufferings into positive, productive, and purposeful lives? _____

Many national action groups or movements for positive change such as MADD have been started because the founders were themselves victims of pain and suffering. Can you name any other such organizations? _____

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

Has your sense of purpose become dim or foreshortened? Yes___No___
Do you only feel a sense of purpose when you are risking your life? Yes___No___

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you feel that your life is empty and without purpose? Yes___No___
Does your sense of purposelessness interfere with your relationships? Yes___No___
Do you feel blocked and unable to discover what your purpose is in life? Yes___No___
Do you lack the faith that God will provide you with a reason for living? Yes___No___

YELLOW-GOALS:

What trauma would you like to transcend in order to find a greater purpose? _____
Which other ways can help you prepare for your future: more training___ more education___ returning to school___ seeking specialty training___ increasing your personal studying___ changing professions or jobs___ seeking spiritual renewal___?

Make a list of those daily activities which can provide you with purpose in your life on a day -by-day basis.

Make a list of goals for the next year:

For the next five years:

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Talk about these issues in your group and/or with someone you trust:
How might it help your sense of purpose to commit yourself to seeking God's will? _____
How does it help your sense of purpose to be of service to others who are having difficulties? _____
How does it help your sense of purpose to be part of an activity or movement greater than you? _____
How does it help your sense of purpose to have meaningful relationships? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Keep a daily record of thoughts, readings, and other ways in which you can find purpose. Spend time each day practicing your contact with God.

SPIRITUAL STEP ELEVEN: "I seek knowledge, direction, a renewed purpose for my life, and ask You, God, for help to find it."

THEME ELEVEN GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Participants should review their theme eleven assessment scores and theme eleven worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. They might read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

Coping With Difficulties Pertaining to Finding a Purpose

We have sought positive power, meaning, trust, and truth, we have surrendered our destructive anger, fear, guilt, and grief, and we have committed ourselves to life and justice. Now, having been freed from those burdens which kept us from having meaningful and purposeful lives, we are ready to find a renewed purpose for our lives.

This may be uniquely different for each of us but finding a purpose is usually accomplished by moving ahead and taking constructive risks with help from God - replacing old victimization patterns with positive life styles, making new friends, learning new information, developing new skills, and being of service to others.

Recognizing that God can be a source of renewed purpose for us, we will daily seek freedom from old burdens or new problems through prayer, meditation, and a daily surrender to God.

In this way we can continue to find daily freedom from the past prisons of rage, guilty memories, and impacted grief, in order to gain knowledge of His purpose for our lives and the endurance to carry it out. By surrendering ourselves to God's leadership each day, each of us can continue the daily discovery of His will and purpose for a rewarding and exciting life."

Scriptures

"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with Thanksgiving... For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him who is the head of all principalities and powers" (Colossians 2:6-9).

Spiritual Step Eleven

"We seek knowledge and direction from You, God, and seek Your leadership in order to find a renewed purpose for our lives."

THEME TWELVE WORKSHEET: LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Bill and his wife Liz sought marriage counseling when Bill broke his commitment and Liz threatened divorce. She is angered by his infidelity but also with his lack of emotional and sexual intimacy, outbursts of rage, and inability to make a commitment. Sustaining a marriage has been difficult for Bill and Liz because Bill suffers from PTSD and his behavior causes Liz to be either fearful or angry. For their marriage to survive Bill must want to resolve his problems and learn to make a commitment and Liz must want to learn how to listen, forgive, and be patient with him. During their counseling sessions, they decided to make the marriage work and were willing to learn about improving their communication, understand each other better, renew their marital commitment, reestablish a mutually acceptable sexual relationship, and forgive each other. They also expressed a desire to build on their religious faith together, pray together, and seek God's love and direction for themselves and their marriage.

RED-DESTRUCTIVE:

	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Do you seek out erotic love as a substitute for real love?	1	2	3	4
Does it seem like you can only get attention if you do something destructive?	1	2	3	4
Are you so alienated from a loving relationship that life has lost meaning?	1	2	3	4
Are you unable to commit to and maintain sexual fidelity with your spouse?	1	2	3	4
Do you abuse your spouse physically or emotionally?	1	2	3	4

BLACK-BLOCKED:

Do you withdraw from those who express loving concern for you?	1	2	3	4
Do you believe it's dangerous to become emotionally intimate with your partner?	1	2	3	4
Are you unable to trust your own judgment about making relationships?	1	2	3	4
Are you feeling alienated from God's love?	1	2	3	4
Do you find it difficult to express genuine love and commitment?	1	2	3	4

YELLOW-GOALS:

Describe how you can become more open to receiving love and affection from someone important to you. _____

Describe how you can improve your expression of love toward someone whom you used to take for granted. _____

Describe ways you can show care and concern to someone about whom you used to be indifferent. _____

Make a list of three groups of people:

SPECIAL PEOPLE - EASY TO LOVE LOVE - TAKEN FOR GRANTED HARD TO LOVE

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

GREEN-POSITIVE ACTION:

Describe how you understand God's love. _____

Describe one or more relationships where you are able to give and receive love and affection. _____

*Practice giving and receiving love and, when appropriate, saying, "I love you" to the special people in your life.

*Become a channel for God's love by reaching out to those who are hard to love.

SPIRITUAL STEP TWELVE: "I seek your love, God, in my life and Your help to renew my commitment to my friends and family, to be a channel of your love toward those I find difficult to love, and to help those who have been victims as I once was."

THEME TWELVE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Participants should review their theme twelve assessment scores and theme twelve worksheet scores, discuss pertinent worksheet items and, if comfortable, share whatever might be helpful. They might read aloud the material on this page and share personal experiences. Additional discussion may follow the scripture reading. The meeting should close with the group reading the spiritual step together.

Coping With Difficulties Pertaining to Love & Relationships

Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we seek to carry this message and to help all those who suffered as we have suffered.

We seek to understand the true meaning of love, to become open to accept the love others have for us, and to renew our commitment to friends and family.

Thus, we ask for God's help to renew our commitments, love those we have found difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as we once were.

Finally, we would like to spread the message of hope to those who served our country during war - that freedom from victimization can be found in a day-to-day spiritual step program.

Scriptures

"Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:13-15).

"Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud... Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges... and rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. There are three things that remain - faith, hope, and love - and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13).

Spiritual Step Twelve

"Having experienced a spiritual rebirth we seek your love, God, in our lives and Your help to renew our commitments to our friends and family, to be a channel of your love toward those we find difficult to love, and to help those who have been victims as we once were."

About the Author

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OUTLINE FOR PROFESSIONALS LEADING RECOVERY GROUP MEETINGS:

Using the workbook as a guide: This workbook may be used as a guide for recovery group meetings. The twelve different themes, twelve worksheets, scripture references, and accompanying twelve spiritual steps are all important in the recovery program. They can be followed either sequentially or as desired. The twelve steps are unique and can also be used to supplement other step programs such as those found in the AA program.

Trauma assessment: Participants should complete the trauma assessment at the beginning of the program, either before the group process begins or during the first session. This will help participants determine the nature and severity of their symptoms and the specific themes that are most problematic for them.

Meetings: It works best to begin a meeting with new member introductions before moving into group discussion. The content of the discussion can involve any aspect of post-traumatic symptoms as revealed in the assessment, worksheet, or one of the pertinent themes. The duration of the group process can vary according to the amount of time available. Covering all 12 themes and steps is best accomplished by progressing through each of them sequentially over a period of time, whether 12 days or 12 weeks. Regular participants in the group process will benefit by completing pertinent worksheets before meetings and to use these completed worksheets to structure the group sessions.

Leadership & building trust: The designated leader should encourage the participants to listen and support one another during the discussion phase. It's preferable that participants take adequate time, even if it takes a number of meetings, to develop trust in one another before they talk about their most painful traumatic memories. It is important that the group members be supportive of one another to facilitate their open expression of feelings.

Encourage discussion of spiritual issues: Although most participants will focus on individual problems, memories, and emotions associated with their post-traumatic symptoms, there may be times when they will wish to discuss spiritual issues and belief in God.

**SELF-HELP GROUP OUTLINE FOR SURVIVORS WHO COMPLETE
THE AFORMENTIONED RECOVERY GROUP**

WAR SURVIVORS ANONYMOUS (WSA)

FORMAT: "Welcome to _____ WAR SURVIVORS ANONYMOUS. This is a program that is designed to help survivors of war with their post-traumatic symptoms and problems with living. There are no dues or fees and WSA is self supporting through the contributions of its members.

WSA is not allied with any sect, denomination, political organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

INTRODUCTIONS - particularly visitors and newcomers.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT: The primary purpose for participants is to stay free from victimization and help other survivors to find purpose and dignity. Open meetings are available to anyone. For those who desire to become participants in a 12 step support group, members should make a commitment to attend 'closed meetings' regularly for the following reasons: 1) to seek continuing support from the members 2) to seek information and advice about maintaining freedom from disturbing symptoms and 3) to find meaning in daily survival.

PICK A TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION

This is a time for survivors to talk important issues related to this topic and to share the ways they make each day meaningful. This is also a time to discuss any of the 12 recovery themes and spiritual steps.

TWELVE TRAUMA RECOVERY THEMES & SPIRITUAL STEPS

ONE: SEEKING POSITIVE POWER

We acknowledge to You, God, that we are powerless to gain control over our post-traumatic symptoms and we seek Your help, God, as a source of positive power.

TWO: SEEKING MEANING

We seek to find meaning in our traumatic experiences and survival and open our minds to You, God, so that we can find meaning.

THREE: SEEKING TO TRUST

We seek Your presence, God, for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions that we may become free of distrust, shame, and doubt.

FOUR: SEEKING TRUTH

We will make a searching self-inventory of both negative and positive traits, acknowledge them to You, God, and someone we trust. We seek Your help to accept those which are positive and change those which are negative.

FIVE: ANGER

We acknowledge our angry feelings and seek God's Power to help us understand the sources of our continuing rage, to control its destructive effects, and to learn to express it constructively.

SIX: FEAR

We seek Your help, God, to relinquish 'the walls' around our feelings, to withstand moments of terror, and courage to take risks in constructive ways.

SEVEN: GUILT

We face our guilty secrets and our willingness to reveal them to someone we trust. We ask and accept forgiveness from You, God, and ask Your help to forgive ourselves.

EIGHT: GRIEF

We seek Your help, God, to grieve those we have lost, face our painful memories and emotions, and let our tears heal our sorrows.

NINE: LIFE vs DEATH

We reveal to You, God, and someone we trust all remaining self-destructive wishes and make a commitment to life.

TEN: JUSTICE vs REVENGE

We seek Your help, God, to pursue the cause of justice, to gain freedom from our revengeful wishes and plans, and to be a channel of forgiveness to those we once hated.

ELEVEN: FINDING A PURPOSE

We seek knowledge and direction from You, God, and seek Your leadership in order to find a renewed purpose for our lives.

TWELVE: LOVE

We seek Your help, God, to renew our commitments to my friends and family, love those we find difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as we once were.

CLOSING



FINAL ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION: At the appointed time the Chairperson can begin to close the meeting by asking if anyone has a strong need to talk about anything else that is important to them. (If so, extend the meeting longer, if not proceed as follows):

PASSING THE BASKET: Prior to closing the Chairperson may elect to pass a basket among the members.

ENCOURAGING MUTUAL SUPPORT: The Chairperson may encourage people to provide support for one another and to remind them that personal information shared in the group meeting should remain confidential. The members of the group may also want to develop a sponsorship program where selected members make themselves available to provide individual support to other members if need be.

ASK FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYERS

MOMENT OF SILENCE: In closing let us share in a moment of silence for all combatants and war veterans suffering from post-traumatic symptoms, their families and all who have lost loved ones.

GROUP PRAYER: Group participants may wish to close with the WAR SURVIVORS' SERENITY PRAYER.

We humbly ask You God, help us cope with PTSD and problems associated with the trauma of war that affect us and our loved ones. Grant us the serenity to accept that which we cannot change, the courage to change what we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

An alternative closing may involve saying the THE LORD'S PRAYER or one of the twelve spiritual steps together. (Form a circle and link hands).

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father Who Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread. And Forgive Us Our Trespases, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. Lead Us Not Into Temptation. And Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, And The Power, And The Glory, Forever. Amen.

READINGS FROM THE KORAN* **

1:1-7 IN THE NAME OF GOD THE COMPASSIONATE THE MERCIFUL Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe, The Compassionate, The Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Judgment! You alone we worship. To You alone we turn for help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom You have favored, not of those who have incurred your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

3:17-19 God bears witness that there is no God but Him, and so do the angels and the sages. He is the Executor of Justice, the only God, the Mighty, the Wise One. The only true faith in God's sight is Islam.

71:1-5 We sent forth Noah to his people, saying: 'Give warning to your people before a woeful scourge overtakes them.' He said: 'My people, I come to warn you plainly. Serve God and fear Him, and obey me. He will forgive you your sins and give you respite for an appointed term. When God's time arrives, none shall put it back. Would that you understood this!'

71:9 'Seek forgiveness of your Lord,' I said, "He is ever ready to forgive you."

99:1-8 When Earth is rocked in her last convulsion; when Earth shakes off her burdens and man asks, 'What may this mean?' - on that day she will proclaim her tidings, for your Lord will have inspired her. On that day mankind will come in broken bands to be shown their labors. Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it also.

110:1-3 When God's help and victory come, and you see men embrace God's faith in multitudes, give glory to your Lord and seek His pardon. He is ever disposed to mercy.

112:1 Say: 'God is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him.'

113:1-5 Say: 'I seek refuge in the Lord of Daybreak from the mischief of His creation; from the mischief of the night when she spreads her darkness; from the mischief of conjuring witches; from the mischief of the envier, when he envies.'

*Dawood Translation, Penguin books, 1990.

** Followers of Islam are free to choose readings from the Koran to supplement (or substitute for) those scriptures which were included with each of the 12 spiritual steps.

MEDITATION

Some hearts are full of gratitude and joy
They are overflowing with the happiness of love and the joy of life.
They are eager to confront the day, to make the world more fair.
They are recovering from illness or have escaped misfortune.
And we rejoice with them.

Some hearts ache with sorrow.
Disappointments weigh heavily upon them, and they have tasted despair.
Families have been broken.
Loved ones lie on a bed of pain.
Death has taken those whom they cherished.
May our presence and sympathy bring them comfort.

Some hearts are embittered.
They have sought answers in vain; ideals are mocked and betrayed.
Life has lost its meaning and value.
May the knowledge that we too are searching, restore their hope
And give them courage to believe that not all is emptiness.

Some spirits hunger.
They long for friendship; they crave understanding; they yearn for warmth.
May we in our common need and striving gain strength from one another
As we share our joys, lighten each other's burdens,
And pray for the welfare of our community.

Lord our God, You are our unfailing help.
Darkness does not conceal you from the eye of faith,
nor do the forces of destruction obscure Your presence.
Above the fury of human evil and the blows of chance
You abide, the Eternal God.
When pain and sorrow try our souls, grant us courage to meet them
Undismayed and with faith that does not waver.
Let not the tears that must come to every eye blind us to Your goodness.
Amen.

*From GATES OF PRAYER, Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1975.

MEDITATION ON THE STEPS WITH ACCOMPANYING SCRIPTURE

Chaplains and pastoral counselors have often used Judeo-Christian principles including readings from Scripture to help interested Veterans resolve guilt and spiritual alienation. The following scriptures are organized according to the twelve themes and spiritual steps which are used in the recovery program:

ONE: SEEKING POSITIVE POWER

I acknowledge to You, God, that I am powerless to gain control over my post-traumatic symptoms and I seek Your help, God, as a source of positive power.

"My eyes are ever looking to the Lord for help for He alone can rescue me. Come Lord and show me your mercy for I am helpless, overwhelmed, in deep distress - Save Me!" (Psalm 25:15) "He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might, He increases strength... But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:29-31).

TWO: SEEKING MEANING

I seek to find meaning in my traumatic experience and survival and open my mind to You, God, so that I can find meaning.

"Show me the path where I should go, Oh Lord. Point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me. Teach me. For you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you" (Psalm 25:4); "Lord, I lift my hands to heaven and implore your help. Oh, listen to my cry" (Psalm 28:2); "Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the father but by me" (John 14:6); "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9).

THREE: SEEKING TO TRUST

I seek Your presence, God, for healing of mind, spirit, and emotions that I may become free of distrust, shame, and doubt.

"Trust the Lord completely. Don't trust yourself. In everything you do, put God first. He will direct you and crown your efforts with success" (Proverbs 3:56); "You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You [God] because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever. For... the Lord is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:3-4).

FOUR: SEEKING TRUTH

I will make a searching self-inventory of both negative and positive traits, acknowledge them to You, God, and someone I trust. I seek Your help to accept those which are positive and change those which are negative.

"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit and has lost self-control is like a city broken down without walls." (Proverbs 25:28); "Create in me a clean heart Oh God and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 5:10); "Cross examine me Oh Lord and see that I have kept your laws. Test my motives and affections" (Psalm 26:2); "Cleanse me from these hidden faults, and keep me from deliberate wrongs" (Psalm 19:12-13); "Therefore ... each one speak truth with his neighbor... (Ephesians 4:25); "For though once your heart was full of darkness, now it is full of light from the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

FIVE: ANGER

I acknowledge my rage toward those I feel abandoned or betrayed me. I seek God's Power to help me understand the sources of my continuing anger, to control its destructive effects, and to learn to express it constructively.

"Listen much, speak little, and don't become angry" (James 1:19); "Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath (Ephesians 4:26); "For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from His wrath" (Romans 3:25).

SIX: FEAR

I seek Your help, God, to relinquish 'the wall' around my feelings, to withstand moments of terror, and courage to take risks in constructive ways.

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4); "God is our refuge and strength. He is a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed ... mountains be carried into the midst of the sea... waters roar...[and] the mountains shake with its swelling" (Psalm 46:1-3). "I will pray to the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

SEVEN: GUILT

I face my guilty secrets and am willing to reveal them to someone I trust. I ask and accept forgiveness from You, God, and ask Your help to forgive myself.

"But Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest who ...understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptations we do... So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16); "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9); "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

EIGHT: GRIEF

I seek Your help, God, to grieve those I have lost, face my painful memories and emotions, and let my tears heal my sorrows.

"Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, 'See how He loved him?'" (John 11:35-36); "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4); "Blessed be God, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulation..." (2 Corinthians 1:3); "And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever" (Revelations 21:4).

NINE: LIFE vs DEATH

I reveal to God, and someone I trust all remaining self-destructive wishes and make a commitment to life.

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive in Christ." (Col. 2:13) "Through Jesus' death, the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with Him by baptism when He died, and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought Him back to life again, you were given His wonderful new life to enjoy. For you have become a part of Him, and so you died with Him, so to speak, when He died and now you share His new life and shall rise as He did." (Romans 6:3-5); "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John 11:25); "I am crucified with Christ. it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

TEN: JUSTICE vs REVENGE

I seek Your help, God, to pursue the cause of justice, to gain freedom from my revengeful wishes and plans, and to be a channel of forgiveness to those I once hated.

"The nations fall into the pitfalls they have dug for others; the trap they set has snapped on them. The Lord ... punishes the wicked in their own snares" (Psalm 9:15-16); "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and

evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32); "Love your enemies. Do good to them which hate you" (Luke 6:27); "Be gentle and ready to forgive, never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others" (Colossians 3;13).

ELEVEN: FINDING A PURPOSE

I seek knowledge and direction from You, God, and seek Your leadership in order to find a renewed purpose for my life.

"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with Thanksgiving... For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him who is the head of all principalities and powers" (Colossians 2:6-9).

TWELVE: LOVE

I seek Your help, God, to renew my commitment to my friends and family, love those I find difficult to love, and help those who have been victims as I once was.

"Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:13-15); "Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. There are three things that remain - faith, hope, and love - and the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:4-7, 13).

The Life & Ministry of Jesus Christ from the New Testament

For combat veterans from Christian backgrounds the New Testament has been suggested as a reference to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 4:23 “And Jesus went about all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the kingdom and healing all kinds of disease and illness among the people. His fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and He healed them all.

John 5:2-9 “Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate bathing pool, called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five entrances in which a crowd of invalids - blind, lame, paralyzed patients lay (waiting for the stirring up of the water. Whoever got in first after the agitation of the pool enjoyed healing, no matter of what ailment he suffered. One man was there who had been ill for thirty eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be healed?’ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed, and while I am going, another steps down before me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Get up. Take up your pad, and walk.’ Instantly the man was healed, and he picked up his pad and walked.

Mark 5:1-13 “Jesus and His disciples arrived at the opposite shore in the Gerasene country and no sooner had He disembarked than there met Him a man from the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. He made his home among the tombs; and no one could keep him bound, even with chains; for several times he had been bound with fetters and chains, but the chains lay shattered and the fetters smashed by him. Nobody could control him. All the time, night and day, he remained among the tombs and in the mountains, shrieking and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and worshiped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he said, ‘What dealings do you have with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure You by God, do not torment me.’ ... And Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ He replied, ‘My name is legion; for we are many.’ And he begged Jesus not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and the demonic spirits begged him, ‘Send us to the swine, let us enter them.’ So Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

Mark 9: 10-17 “Jesus and his disciples withdrew to a city called Bethsaida. When the crowds learned it, they followed Him; and He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing. Now the day began to wear away and Jesus’ disciples said to Him, ‘Send the crowds away to go into the villages to get provisions for we are here in a lonely place without food. But Jesus said to them, ‘You give them something to eat.’ The disciples replied, ‘We have no more than five loaves and two fish unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.’ For was a large crowd of about five thousand people. And Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each.’ And they did so, and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. All ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Mark 11:24-25 “As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, ‘Master, look. The fig tree which you cursed has

withered. And Jesus answered them. 'Have faith in God. For I assure you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass it shall be so for him. I tell you therefore, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have any grievance against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses.'

John 15: 1-11 “ ‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it stays on the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this is my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Continue in My love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I observe My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.’

Matthew 5:17-26 “ ‘Do not suppose that I came to annul the Law and the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to complete; for I assure you, while heaven and earth endure not one iota or one sign shall be dropped from the Law until all is finished. Whoever, therefore, disregards the least significant of these commands and so teaches the people, he shall be of least significance in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall observe and teach them shall be prominent in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 22:39-47 “ ‘And He came out, and went, as was His custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed Him. And when He came to the place He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, ‘Father if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done.’ And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. And when He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and He said to them, ‘Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.’

John 18:2-14 “ ‘Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew where he was, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that would befall him, came forward and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ They answered Him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am He.’ Judas who betrayed him was standing with them. When He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground. Again He asked them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ And they said, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus answered, ‘I told you that I am He; so if you seek me, let these men go.’ This was to fulfill the word which He had spoken, ‘Of those whom thou gravest Me I lost not one.’ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s slave and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given

me?’ So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas; for he was the father in law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

John 18:28-32 “Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium. It was early. They themselves did not enter the Praetorian, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, ‘What accusation do you bring against this man?’ They answered him, ‘If this man were not an evildoer we would not have handed him over.’ Pilate said to them, ‘Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.’ The Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.’ So the word of Jesus came true which he had spoken, indicating the nature of His impending death.

John 19:1-7 “Then Pilate took Jesus and ordered him to be lashed. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe. They stepped in front of him and said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews.’ And they slapped him in the face. Pilate came out again, and addressed them, ‘Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find him not guilty.’ So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, ‘Here is the man.’ When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, ‘Crucify him, crucify him.’ Pilate said to them, ‘Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find him not guilty.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he was made himself the Son of God.’

John 19:12-16 “Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, ‘If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend; everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar.’ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called Mosaic Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about 12 o’clock. He said to the Jews, ‘Here is your King.’ They cried out, ‘Away with him, away with him, crucify him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your king?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ Then Pilate handed Him over to them to be crucified.

Luke 23:32-35 “Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one at His right side and the other on His left. And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know what they do.’ And they distributed his clothes by casting lots. The people stood staring while the leaders sneered, ‘He saved others; let him save himself, if He is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.’

Mark 15:25-39 “And it was the third hour (nine in the morning) when they crucified Jesus. And the inscription of the charge against him read, ‘The king of the Jews.’ And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, ‘Aha. You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross.’ So also the chief priests mocked him to one another with the scribes saying, ‘He saved others; He cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.’ Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. And from twelve until three o’clock darkness settled over the whole country and at three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, Lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ And some of the bystanders hearing it said, ‘Behold, he is calling Elijah.’ And one ran and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put

it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down and Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that He thus breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God!''

John 19:38-42, 20:1-9 "Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, secretly asked Pilate if he might take away the body of Jesus and Pilate gave permission. Nicodemus also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds' weight. They took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Peter came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stopping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that He must rise from the dead [on the third day]."

Luke 24:1-12 "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise?" And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

Luke 24:15-31 "While two of His disciples were walking to a village seven miles from Jerusalem, talking and discussing together the events that had taken place, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, What is this conversation you are having? Looking sad, one of them answered, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he asked them "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." And He said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things that had been prophesied about himself. So they

drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and He vanished out of their sight.

John 21:1-14 "He revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias - to Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know it was Jesus. He said to them, 'Children, have you any fish?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it out and now they were not able to haul the net in, for there was a large quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved (John) said to Peter, 'It is the Lord,' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?'" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

John 15:12-17 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than I will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; and if you ask anything in My name, I will do it. 'If you love Me, you will keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; you know Him, for He dwells with you, and will be in you.'

Matthew 6: 25-34 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'what shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. And all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the days' own trouble be sufficient for the day.'