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STUDY GUIDE

FOR INDIVIDUALS AND SMALL GROUPS

thegoodbook
COMPANY

UNSTUCK

INTRODUCTION

A nine-step journey to change that lasts.



WELCOME TO YOUR JOURNEY TO LASTING CHANGE!

Welcome to the workbook for *Unstuck: A Nine-Step Journey to Change That Lasts*. I hope that this will serve as a practical companion to the book and that it will provide practical steps for you to engage in the change process. My prayer for you and/or your group is that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3 v 18).

WHERE DO WE BEGIN WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE CHANGE PROCESS?

In most books on change, the starting point is a problem; some bad behavior that you want to stop or a better more productive behavior you want to start. So, before we go there, I would like to put the whole idea of change within a larger framework.

CREATION

The Bible's vision of change is first and foremost rooted in the fact that human beings have been made in God's image. We were created to reflect the character and glory of God in the same way the moon reflects the brilliance and glory of the Sun. In Genesis 1 v 26-27, God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness.' ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." No other aspect of God's creation is made in God's image—this is something unique about human beings. Christian scholars have written quite a bit about what it means to be made in God's image; while their views differ, they all connect it to how we reflect God's character in the way we live life in this world. Here is a helpful summary from a footnote in the ESV Study Bible:

Many scholars point out the idea, commonly used in the ancient Near East, of the king who was the

visible representative of the deity; thus the king ruled on behalf of the god. Since [Genesis 1 v 26] links the image of God with the exercise of dominion over all the other creatures of the seas, heavens, and earth, one can see that humanity is endowed here with authority to rule the earth as God's representatives or vice-regents. Other scholars, seeing the pattern of male and female, have concluded that humanity expresses God's image in relationship, particularly in well-functioning human community, both in marriage and in wider society. Traditionally, the image has been seen as the capacities that set man apart from the other animals—ways in which humans resemble God, such as in the characteristics of reason, morality, language, a capacity for relationships governed by love and commitment, and creativity in all forms of art. All these insights can be put together by observing that the resemblances (man is like God in a series of ways) allow mankind to represent God in ruling, and to establish worthy relationships with God, with one another, and with the rest of the creation. This "image" and this dignity apply to both "male and female" human beings. At this stage, humanity as a species is set apart from all other creatures and crowned with glory and honor as ruler of the earth.

This has profound implications for where we begin our discussion of change. We start from a place of profound dignity and honor. Human beings were made for something great. You were made for something very special; to reflect God's image; to represent him in this world; to display his image and character. We were designed for a state of *shalom*—a Hebrew word which means "peace," or more accurately, "wholeness." All aspects of creation were intended to reflect God's glory and human beings were to do so in a unique way as God's image bearers. There was to be "wholeness" at every level:

- *Theologically:* men and women were made to be in right relationship with God—enjoying his love and reveling in his beauty and greatness.
- *Morally:* men and women were made to reflect the glory of God's perfect character in attitude and deed.
- *Psychologically:* men and women were made to be in right (sound) relationship with themselves. There were to be no "identity crises" in God's good creation!
- *Sociologically:* men and women were to live at peace with one another: no domestic violence, murder and social injustice was to exist in this world.
- *Ecologically:* men and women were made to live in right relation to the environment: no exploitation and pollution would exist in the place.

- *Culturally*: men and women were to build a culture of beauty that would reflect the creative beauty of the Creator God.

THE FALL

But as the biblical narrative explains in Genesis 3, our first parents were not satisfied with this degree of secondary glory and dignity. Something in them wanted more. Rather than being *like* God, Adam and Eve wanted to *be* God! It was this fatal expression of hubris that caused the fall of humanity into utter chaos. Every area of life was tainted, and the result was the opposite of *shalom* or wholeness. While the imprint of the image of God in humanity was not completely obliterated (because of God's kindness), the results of human pride showed up immediately:

- *Theologically*: men and women were cut off from God's love and very presence. There was open hostility from humankind toward God.
- *Morally*: men and women turned inward and sought to please themselves by serving their own unbridled passions.
- *Psychologically*: men and women were cut off from themselves. "Who am I?" was now a common and confusing question.
- *Sociologically*: men and women were cut off from one another. Hurt, violence and oppression became a part of human experience.
- *Ecologically*: men and women sought to wrongly exploit the creation as they used it for their own gain and power. The environment was polluted due to this type of exploitation.
- *Culturally*: men and women used their creativity in ways that demeaned others and failed to reflect the beauty of the Creator God.

REDEMPTION

This is where the whole notion of change or "redemption" entered the human story. Because we had fallen so far (due to our own choosing), it became necessary for God in his grace to send a Redeemer to bring about change. In Ephesians 4, after speaking about the desperate state of humanity, the apostle Paul says this:

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off

*your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds;
and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4 v 20-24)*

This is Paul's way of saying that God came to completely restore his creatures by sending a Savior, Jesus. He lived, died, and rose again so that all spheres of human existence could be restored. Indeed, one day the entire creation will be cleansed forever and will be better than Eden even before the Fall! We are not there yet, but the process of restoration *has* started in the life of a Christian. What does this look like?

- *Theologically:* men and women can now find forgiveness of sins and a new right standing and relationship with the true and living God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This was set into motion and accomplished by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the gospel (good news!) that we will talk so much about throughout *Unstuck*.
- *Morally:* men and women can now begin to experience a new motivation and power to fight their fallen self-centered desires and reflect God's glorious character.
- *Psychologically:* men and women can now experience healing and find their true identity outside of themselves as God had originally designed. This is far more satisfying and joyful than anything else.
- *Sociologically:* men and women can now fight for peace in all of their relationships. They can do this in every relationship. Lines that once divided marriages, families, societies, and cultural and ethnic groups can be overcome as we are united to one another in Christ.
- *Ecologically:* men and women can strive to serve and care for the creation while at the same time enjoy it in rightful ways, without destroying it for their own pleasures.
- *Culturally:* men and women can express creativity and build cultures that display the uniqueness of each group while also bringing honor to God.

RESTORATION

This is the larger narrative for change, redemption and restoration. If you have never understood the larger message of the Bible, this is it! In God's kindness, he wants to cleanse, redeem and restore anything and everything that he has made. And he wants to use human beings who have been restored in their relationship with him and who are growing in their ability to reflect God's character to be at the center of this restoration. While change, redemption and restoration are cosmic in scope, it begins at the basic level of individuals being transformed from the inside out by God. The change process is intended to make you more fully human, not less. Change is

a restoration of your true humanity as it was always intended to be; imaging the beauty of the one who created you.

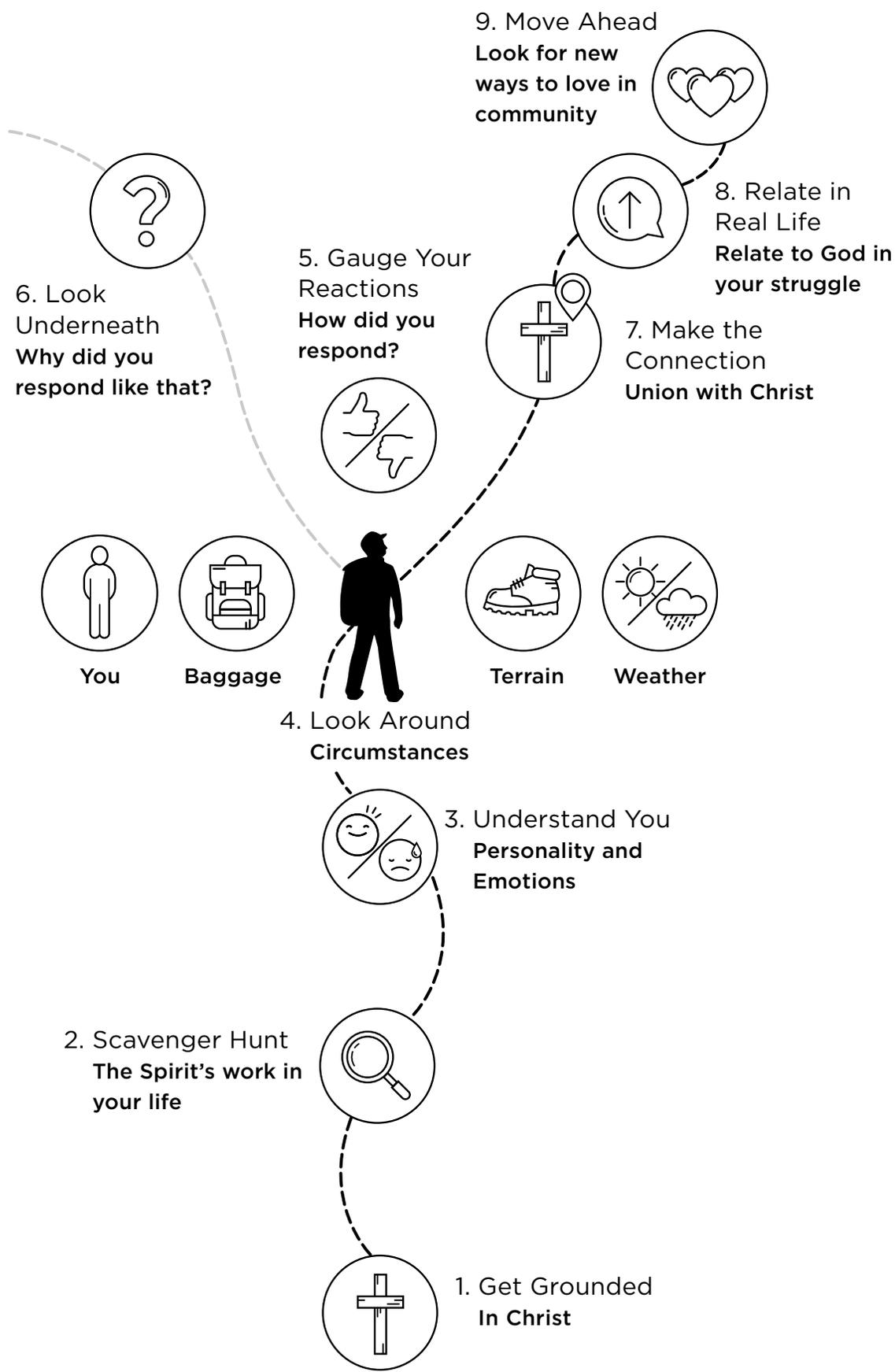
HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

There are lots of books out there which show how God's grace enables change in marriage, the workplace, the environment, politics and so on. The goal of *Unstuck* is a bit narrower: it shows how God's grace for us in Christ changes us as individuals. This emphasis does not negate the broader agenda that God has for his creation, but it does drill down and focus on the most basic aspect of renewal; the individual. As God changes countless individuals, they then can band together to impact the wider world as they seek to bring *shalom* to all of life.

To use this workbook, you'll need a copy of *Unstuck: A Nine-Step Journey To Change That Lasts*. Each week, read the relevant chapter in the book. This workbook expands on the "Work it through" section at the end of each chapter, allowing you to further apply and meditate on the content over the course of the week. Meditation, reflection and prayer are powerful habits in the change process. What we focus on has a profound impact on spiritual formation.

Below, you will see a diagram that outlines the journey you are about to embark on. Over the following chapters of *Unstuck*, we'll be imagining ourselves at the junction it depicts. The junction represents those pressure-point moments that we face every day. It could be anything: those moments when our kids are disrespecting us, or when our colleagues are disagreeing with us, or when temptation rears its ugly head. The question is: how do we respond?

If you're reading this book, it's probably because you feel stuck on the "left hand track" of negative, unhelpful and sinful attitudes and behavior. But in order to change your direction of travel—in order for you to choose the "right track" in the micro-moments—you need to see the junction as a whole. So the nine steps in this book will help you to look back along the road you've already traveled; consider why you so often take the left-hand fork; and, finally, show you how to increasingly do the right thing instead.



WORK IT THROUGH

If you haven't done already, read the introduction to *Unstuck*. Then, as it suggests, pick an area in your life where you would like to see change. Don't be discouraged. We all have areas of struggle. In fact, we all have more than one! But for the purposes of this journey, it helps to start by focusing on just one—the one that runs deepest or is having the biggest effect on your relationships. Write it in the space below:

Area of Desired Change: _____

If you can't think of anything, here are some suggestions:

- Is there something you tend to worry about? Finances, your job, a relationship.
- Is there something you tend to get angry about? Interruptions, other drivers, a certain type of person?
- Is there a typical way that you tend to escape when life gets hard? Watch TV, drink too much, eat for comfort?
- Do you tend to avoid conflict with others at all costs?
- Do you find yourself struggling with envy when you compare yourself to others? (Maybe with regards to appearance, material possessions, lifestyle?)
- Do you struggle with the "blues"? What do you get down about?
- Do you think a lot about material possessions and struggle to live within your means?
- Do you find yourself arguing with other people a lot?
- Is there a person or group of people that you have to have the approval of?
- Do you struggle with holding grudges and not being able to forgive someone?
- Do you struggle with fear? What is it that you fear? Rejection, getting a diagnosis from the doctor, losing your job?
- If you have a hard time picking something, you could ask someone you trust to tell you where they think you need to grow. (But be careful who you choose!)
- As we move along in our journey, you can keep coming back to the issue you have chosen as a practical way to apply what you are learning in each chapter.

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

After each chapter in the workbook, you will be given an opportunity to ponder what you have learned over the course of a week. Why is this important? Because change not only involves the heart, but also involves forming new habits that will actually re-wire your brain. Regular practice is important.

For example, I have a pen holder on my desk. It had been in the same location for several years: on the left side. A few weeks ago, I decided to clean and rearrange my desk and put the pen holder on the opposite side of my desk. At first, every time I wanted to get a pen out I would naturally reach to the left side of my desk. But over time, I started to naturally reach to the right. It took about 2-3 weeks before that happened. Why? Because my brain was automatically wired to go left. It took time and practice to form a new habit.

You could argue that the same is true of any kind of change. The encouraging thing about a Christian vision of change is that we have a new power to change that flows out of a our relationship with God.

Throughout the week, meditate daily on Ephesians 3 v 4-21 and Titus 2 v 11-14, while paying attention to how the struggle your have chosen manifests itself in your life. Don't dwell on your struggle without keeping those two passages in view. Use them to interact with God as you grow in gratitude for his grace and commitment to you as his child.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 1

GET GROUNDED

Look back at what Christ has done for you.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 1.

JIM WAS A NORMAL GUY

TIME TO TAKE STOCK OF THE PLAYERS

GOODBYE TO GUILT

THIS IS WHO YOU REALLY ARE

JERRY AND SUSAN: THE GOSPEL IN REAL TIME

WORK IT THROUGH

In light of chapter 1 in the book, let's start to get very practical. Locate a few passages which remind you that you belong to God and that you are secure in his gracious and loving embrace. Take a moment to find a few passages that are particularly relevant for the area of struggle you chose at the beginning of your journey. If you're not sure where to start, ask someone you trust to help you find some passages together. If you are still having a hard time, here are a few suggestions: Titus 2:11-14; I John 3:1-3; Hebrews 4:12-16; Philippians 2:1-4; Psalm 40:1-3; Isaiah 53; Revelation 19-21; Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:1-4; I Peter 1:3-9; 2 Peter 1:3-11.

PASSAGE 1

PASSAGE 2:

PASSAGE 3:

Don't stop there. Select the most helpful passage and put it in a place where you can easily access it; your phone, a notebook, on your refrigerator. Whenever you see those verses, talk to God and thank him for how he has loved you.

Are there other ways to meditate on God's love for you? Is there a favorite song or hymn that reminds you of his grace? A poem? A phrase? A work of art? A friend who tells you the Great News whenever you see them?

Take a moment and write that down.

HYMN OR SONG:

POEM, PHRASE, OR WORK OF ART:

A FRIEND:

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

As you think about the struggle that you chose at the beginning, what was your experience when you first wrote it down? Guilt? Embarrassment? Despair? Now that you have turned your gaze to Jesus, how do you feel? Can you see why this first step is so vital to getting unstuck from your sin and moving forward?

So often we listen to the voice of our conscience that whispers words of guilt, shame and condemnation. These thoughts hum in the background of our minds like white noise and prevent us from hearing the clear sound of God's voice. You must fight to replace the voice of this false narrator with that of the true Narrator, who speaks the truth about who you are and to whom you belong. He says this about you in Romans 8 v 1:

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!"

Take a moment and sing the song or read the passage out loud. You have taken the first and most vital step on the journey to lasting change! This first step is one that you must keep coming back to every day, and in every moment of every day.

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION: WEEK 1

Don't let what you've seen in this session fade into the background. Spend 10 minutes each day reflecting on what you have learned and how this has enabled you to better ground your identity in Christ. Sing the song, pray through the passage, recite the poem or prose and give thanks. Journal your reflections in the space below.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 2

SCAVENGER HUNT

Look for evidence of the Spirit's work in you.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 2.

A TYPICAL MARRIAGE?

WHY YOUR GLASS IS HALF FULL

A FIGHTING CHANCE

HOPE FOR HOPELESS CASES

HOW DO YOU SEE CINDY?

WORK IT THROUGH

In light of what you have read in chapter 2, let's go on a scavenger hunt for evidence of the Spirit's work in your life. Be as meticulous as a good detective. As you consider various areas of your life, look for any and every evidence of the Spirit's work, no matter how small. Let this move you in the direction of gratitude. *Be utterly thorough about this.*

Let me prime the pump to help you get started.

- If you have struggled with the same old temptation and are still in the fight, that is a mark of the Spirit.
- If you have been fighting an addiction and you have invited another person to hold you accountable, that is a mark of the Spirit.
- If you have said or done something to hurt another person and you desire to confess your offense and ask for forgiveness, that is a mark of the Spirit.
- If you have been struggling with depression for years but you stay connected to the body of Christ and you occasionally think about reading your Bible or praying, that is a mark of the Spirit.
- If you are married and you are still desiring a good marriage and seeking good counsel, that is a mark of the Spirit.

- If you have given of your time and other resources and didn't expect to be acknowledged or repaid, that is a mark of the Spirit.

These are confirmations that you belong to God and that his Spirit is working in you. Never despise the simple signs of his presence in your life. I use the word "never" not to shame you but to encourage you!

Be practical. Use the next page and start pondering every evidence of God's work in your life. Over the next week try to list five new things a day.

If you are having trouble, ask a trusted friend to help you. Sometimes other gracious people can see evidence of God's work in you better than you can. Maybe you can do the same for them. Make it an occasion to encourage one another.

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION: WEEK 2

Find five things each day which are evidence of the Spirit's work in your life. Spend some time expressing gratitude for God's gracious presence and work in your life. If you are doing this in group setting, be prepared to share some of the things you listed.

SUNDAY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

MONDAY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

TUESDAY

- 1.
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- 3.
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- 5.

WEDNESDAY

- 1.
- 2.
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- 4.
- 5.

THURSDAY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

FRIDAY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

SATURDAY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 3

UNDERSTAND YOU

Rightly understand your personality and emotions, and how this relates to change.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 3.

BUSINESS PARTNERS/DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

MARRIED COUPLE/DIFFERENT EMOTIONS

PERSONALITY ON A PAGE

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PERSONALITY

BACK TO JOSEPH AND STUART

UNDERSTANDING YOUR EMOTIONS

NOT WRONG JUST DIFFERENT

WORK IT THROUGH

Considering what you read in chapter 3, think about your personality and emotions. While there is no substitute for taking the Birkman and getting more objective results, the various categories can help you think about how you might be perceived and what your strengths are. With that in mind, think about the various categories in the Birkman Map and Components.

BIRKMAN MAP

Take some time to think about the Birkman Map. In which quadrant might you land? Ask a few other people who know you well to tell you what they think.

It is possible to have some degree of all the quadrants in your personality. But in general, are you...

- Extrovert or introvert? What makes you choose one over the other?
-
-

- Task- or people-oriented? What makes you choose one over the other?
-
-

BIRKMAN RELATIONAL COMPONENTS

Take some time to think about the various relational components. Which do you most feel represents your style?

- **Social energy:** your sociability, approachability, and preference for group and team participation.

Low scores: more independent.

High scores: more sociable.

- **Physical energy:** your preferred pace for action and physical expression of energy.

Low scores: more efficient.

High scores: more active.

- **Emotional energy:** your openness and comfort with expressing emotions.

Low scores: more practical.

High scores: more expressive.

- **Self-consciousness:** your use of sensitivity when communicating with others.

Low scores: more candid.

High scores: more tactful.

- **Assertiveness:** your tendency to speak up and express opinions openly and forcefully.

Low scores: more suggesting.

High scores: more directing.

- **Insistence:** your approach to detail, structure, follow-through, and routine.
Low scores: more flexible.
High scores: more consistent.
- **Incentives:** your drive for personal reward or preference to share in group reward.
Low scores: more collaborative.
High scores: more competitive.
- **Restlessness:** your preference for focused attention or varied activities.
Low scores: more focused.
High scores: more responsive.
- **Thought:** your decision-making process and concern for consequences in making the right decisions.
Low scores: more decisive.
High scores: more reflective.

Take a moment to think about a few people with whom you interact on a regular basis at work or in your family. Where do you think they fit best?

Are there areas of your life where you have allowed personality differences to lead to misunderstanding or hurtful conflict? What are those areas?

If so, what have you read in this chapter that could help you improve these relationships?

EMOTIONS

Take a moment to look at the various families of emotions. Think about how you express and respond to positive and negative emotions.

- **Anger:** fury, outrage, resentment, wrath, exasperation, indignation, vexation, acrimony, animosity, annoyance, irritability, hostility, and, perhaps at the extreme, pathological hatred and violence.
- **Sadness:** grief, sorrow, cheerlessness, gloom, melancholy, self-pity, loneliness, dejection, despair, and, when pathological, severe depression.
- **Fear:** anxiety, apprehension, nervousness, concern, consternation, misgiving, wariness, qualm, edginess, dread, fright, terror (phobia and panic).
- **Enjoyment:** happiness, joy, relief, contentment, bliss, delight, amusement, pride, sensual pleasure, thrill, rapture, gratification, satisfaction, euphoria, whimsy, ecstasy (mania).
- **Love:** acceptance, friendliness, trust, kindness, affinity, devotion, adoration, infatuation, agape.
- Surprise: shock, astonishment, amazement, wonder.
- **Disgust:** contempt, disdain, scorn, abhorrence, aversion, distaste, revulsion.
- Shame: guilt, embarrassment, chagrin, remorse, humiliation, regret, mortification, contrition.
- **Inadequacy:** feeling helpless, inferior, powerless, incompetent, useless, inadequate, inept, mediocre, unworthy.
- **Confusion:** feeling distracted, rattled, baffled, anxious, bewildered, mystified, flustered, perplexed, jarred, puzzled, jolted.

Is there any connection to how you were raised? How did your family express the emotions listed above? Were there any emotional problems like anger or depression? How has this shaped the way you think about emotions?

Take a moment to think about a few people with whom interact on a regular basis at work or in your family. How do you think they express and respond to positive and negative emotions?

Are there relationships where you have allowed differences in the way you expresses emotions lead to hurtful conflict?

If so, where and how can this chapter help you grow in grace?

WEEKLY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

While you have a certain pre-disposition in terms of your personality and emotions, there is still a need to grow in self-awareness, wisdom and Christ-likeness in all of these areas. And the good news is that you can, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Take a Birkman Component and an Emotion Family and ponder the implications for your own growth in grace. What are your tendencies? How can these be strengths and weaknesses? What emotions do you need to learn to detect and express in wiser ways? Some need to be more in touch with their emotions while others need to work on how to express their emotions in ways that are constructive and edifying. Pick your top seven Birkman Components and Emotion Families for your reflection this week.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

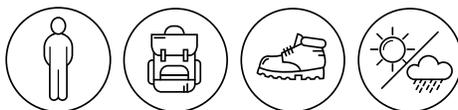
SATURDAY

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 4

LOOK AROUND

Rightly understand your circumstances.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 4.

TELLING YOUR STORY

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CIRCUMSTANCES”?

1. YOU

2. YOUR BAGGAGE

3. THE TERRAIN

4. THE WEATHER

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

WRONG WAY #1

WRONG WAY #2

THE RIGHT WAY

WORK IT THROUGH

Research has shown that telling your story can be very helpful as you seek to move forward and change. Tell the story of your struggle that you chose at the beginning of the workbook. What is the history? What is the narrative of your struggle?

Briefly journal this story:

Now, take that area and consider each of the categories we have been discussing, and then write or tell your “story” in relation to it. Think about both the blessings and sufferings you have experienced in each of the following categories. Did, or do, any of these aspects of your circumstances play a significant role in the struggle?

YOU:

Your brain, your physical body, and your gender.

BAGGAGE:

Your event and relational history, your political / cultural / socio-economic history, your religious and moral context, and your ethnicity.

TERRAIN:

Your age and season of life, your current work, and your current family relationships.

WEATHER:

Current smaller issues that are your typical triggers associated with this struggle.

GIVE THANKS AND GRIEVE

When you're finished, take time to give thanks for the strengths and blessings in each area. Also, pay attention to the ways you have suffered. Where have you experienced hardship and suffering that was not of your own doing or choosing? It is good and appropriate to grieve these painful experiences. If you need help, read Psalm 27 with your suffering in mind. It can guide you along the path of grief.

Consider doing this exercise with a friend who is struggling in an area of their lives. If you do this, err on the side of listening, asking helpful questions, and just understanding, instead of giving unsolicited advice. Imagine how understanding their story and context will enable you to have more empathy as you walk with them through temptation or suffering.

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

At the end of each day next week, use the categories of “You,” “Baggage,” “Terrain,” and “Weather” to unpack an area of struggle that you faced that day. Alternatively, you could take one area of struggle and focus on the four elements over the entire week. The main goal is get a deeper and better understanding of why this area is a vulnerability. This will bring you greater patience in this area of your life as well as greater clarity and self-awareness. These are essential steps along the journey of change.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 5

GAUGE YOUR REACTIONS

Pay attention to your responses.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 5.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

A GENTLE WARNING

THE LIFE THAT JESUS LOOKS FOR

UNWISE RESPONSES

WISE RESPONSES

“IF...THEN” VERSUS “SINCE...THEN” THINKING

WORK IT THROUGH

Considering what you learned in chapter 5, get specific about how you tend to respond to your circumstances. Let's get very practical. Remember, Scripture calls us to pay attention to the way we are responding to life with prayerful self-examination (Psalm 4 v 4).

Pick a type of situation where you tend to respond in an ungodly way. Use the following framework to write down your answers and reflections.

PHYSICAL SENSATIONS AND EMOTIONS

Over the course of a week, pay attention to your emotions and try to identify what triggered your response. The aim is to determine if there are recurring patterns of similar circumstances and responses. (Use the list on pages 48-49 of the book to help you identify what you are feeling.)

Rate the intensity of your struggle on a scale of 1-10.

Describe the physical sensations associated with your emotions. These may involve increased heart rate, muscle tension, chest discomfort, body temperature, chill or hot flashes, and so on.

Journal your emotions and physical sensations in the space below.

Look over your journaled emotions and physical sensations. Do your initial emotional and physical sensations provoke a further emotional response? If so, what is it? Shame, guilt, anger, etc.?

THINKING PATTERNS

We are all trying to make sense of what is happening around us. What negative thinking patterns do you see?

Check the box next to the negative thinking patterns you recognize.

- Catastrophizing: "I am going to do the same old thing."
- Jumping to conclusions: "Murphy's Law—if something can go wrong, it probably will."
- Tunnel vision: "I am only able to think about my typical way of responding."
- Nearsightedness: "I am stuck in the moment and can't see past it."
- Emotional reasoning: "I am going to lose it and really embarrass myself."
- All-or-nothing thinking: "Either this is going to be great or terrible."

What other thinking patterns can you identify? Write them below.

BELIEFS

What beliefs are a part of your responses? Look at page 78 of *Unstuck* and write your answer to the following belief statements.

- What do you believe about the situation?

- What do you believe about yourself?

- What do you believe about God?

- What do you believe about other people?

- What do you believe will help you avoid what you don't want to happen?

- Look at pages 75-76. Have you moved into "if ... then" beliefs instead of "since ... then" beliefs?

SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS

These are visible responses and ways by which you seek to manage/control your circumstances.

Check the box next to any responses that you recognize:

Avoidance behaviors: You check out by physically avoiding the situation or seeking comfort in a (usually addictive) behavior like eating, watching TV, using some chemical substance, and so on.

Controlling behaviors: These usually involve trying to exert your power in a situation to overcome any obstacles. Anger is very common, but so are obsessive behaviors.



Addictive behaviors: The main theme in these behaviors is an attempt to minimize pain and maximize pleasure. There are many addictive behaviors that don't involve a substance. Shopping or cleaning your house could be an addictive behavior.

What other specific behaviors can you identify? Write them below.

Take a moment to journal below on how your unproductive and/or ungodly responses to your circumstances are potentially making things worse.

Remember, if you are not careful this step could backfire on you. If dwelling on this step discourages you, keep this truth in mind:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8 v 1-2)

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

At the end of each day this week, unpack an area of struggle that you faced that day. Alternatively, you may want to take one area struggle and focus on your responses over the entire week. The main goal is to get a deeper and better understanding of how you are responding to life with all its challenges. Seeing patterns of responses is a critical step on the journey to change. Focus on pages 72-73 of *Unstuck* and see if you can find unwise as well as wise responses that correspond to Galatians 5 v 19-25.

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SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 6

LOOK UNDERNEATH

Ask the “why” and “what” questions.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 6.

ROOTS, SHOOTS AND ENGINES

YOUR ULTIMATE DEFINITION

ASKING THE “WHY” AND “WHAT” QUESTIONS

WORK IT THROUGH

As we saw in chapter 6, if lasting change is going to happen, we must begin to ask “why?” and “what?” questions. You have to get under the surface of your responses. If you don’t do this then you will simply move into behavior modification mode and miss what is necessary for deep, heart change. Here is what those questions sound like:

- Why do I do the things I do?
- What motivates me to do the things I do, either good or bad, helpful or unhelpful?

We’ve seen in previous chapters that Christians are called to Spirit-led self-awareness. This self-examination includes seeing Christ, his work in us, our circumstances, and our behaviors; but it also goes deeper. We must seek to grow in an awareness of what drives that behavior. Paul encourages this kind of insight in Philippians 2 v 3:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.

Selfish ambition and vain conceit are attitudes of the inner person that express themselves in behaviors that put us first, instead of seeking the wellbeing of others. In verse 5 Paul goes on to say that we should “have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” Why? Because our behaviors grow out of fundamental attitudes. This is Paul’s way of talking about the deeper motivations that drive responses.

Take a recent situation and describe what was going on and how you responded in an unproductive and ungodly way. Now begin to ask the “why?” and “what?” questions and journal your responses below.

- What did I do?

- Why did I do what I did (If this question is hard to answer, the next two questions may be of help)?

- What did I want that I was not getting?

- What did I *not* want that I *was* getting?

Chances are, as you do this in a variety of areas in your life, you will probably see particular themes that show up in many other areas of your life.

- Review your journaling above. What themes show up?

As a Christian, seeing these patterns can help you engage in meaningful repentance and help you start to change. Remember that whatever your struggle, all of us stand in need of grace. And whatever our struggle, God has and will continue to “give us more grace” through Christ (James 4 v 6).

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

Looking at the examples on pages 89-92 of *Unstuck* (anger, anxiety, addiction), start to think about your own life and pay attention to your responses to circumstances. Over the next week, take a moment to reflect on some response to life and use the “why?” and “what?” questions to help you grow in greater self-awareness of what tends to make you tick. Seeing what you tend to live for other than Christ is another step in the journey of change. Name the response and try to name the motivation that was underneath your response.

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SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 7

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Remember that you are united to Christ.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 7.

REMODELING OLD HOMES AND YOU

READY TO TURN RIGHT

THE MORE YOU KNOW?

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

WORK IT THROUGH

Considering what you have read in chapter 7, what does it look like to practically connect with Christ in the moment? It is more than talking to yourself and trying to convince yourself to change. It involves more than telling yourself to not worry, or get angry, or look at pornography because it is wrong. It is more than thinking positive thoughts (even biblical ones). It is even more than reminding yourself of who you are in Christ! It involves talking to and relating to Christ during your anxiety, anger, and addiction, or whatever your battle is. Since God is personal, change will be the result of you relating to him personally as you struggle. When you relate to Jesus in this way, gratitude and joy for his grace begin to work their way down deep into your soul. This is what drives true change! Relating to Jesus in this way could be called Christian meditation. It can be done alone in a quiet place or right in the middle of a hectic day—essentially, this word describes what it means to enter into a relationship and converse with a personal, loving, gracious God.

So here is the right way to approach change: *right relating to God based upon right thinking about God will lead to right living before God.* This does not mean it will be easy to overcome your struggles, nor does it mean that change will happen automatically or quickly. Rather, it will happen gradually over time. But it will happen.

- What typical approaches have you employed to see change in your life? Give some example of real struggles.

- What results have you seen with those approaches?

- How has this chapter highlighted a new and different way to approach the change process?

UNION WITH CHRIST: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Below are a host of different ways that God has entered into relationship with you. They describe a certain blessing or aspect of that relationship. Take a moment to read these descriptions, which are on pages 101-104 of *Unstuck*.

CHOSEN AND PREDESTINED (EPHESIANS 1 v 4, 11)

Before you ever came into existence, God chose you to be his very dear child. The idea of being predestined or chosen does not imply that there was something special about you. No, just the opposite. Like Israel in the Old Testament, you were not the most impressive but the least. You were not on the top of the pile but at the bottom of the heap! This means you can feel built up without being puffed up. He chose you because he loves you.

CALLED (EPHESIANS 4 v 1, 4)

By his Spirit, God began to draw you to himself long before you ever started thinking about moving in his direction. Although you were hostile to him, God did not leave you to your own destructive devices; he called you (2 v 3-5). He called you because he loves you.

MADE ALIVE/REGENERATED (EPHESIANS 2 v 4-5)

As part of the process of being called, you were given new, spiritual life, which enabled you to confess your sins and place your trust and hope in Jesus. This is what the Bible calls being “born again.” The Spirit of God made

you alive when you were spiritually dead in your sin and utterly helpless. He gave you the desire to know him because he loves you.

JUSTIFIED (EPHESIANS 1 v 7; ROMANS 5 v 1)

As a result of your initial trust in Christ, your sins were forgiven because Jesus died to pay the penalty for those sins. But there is even more. You are now viewed by God as if you have lived a perfect life, because Jesus lived a perfect life in your place. Not only has your debt been erased, but you have been given all of Christ's assets—his righteousness. So you can step off the treadmill of perfectionism and enjoy freedom. God forgave your sins and treats you as righteous because he loves you.

ADOPTED (EPHESIANS 1 v 5)

At the very moment that you trusted in Christ, you were “adopted” by God. You have moved out of the courthouse, where he sits as Judge, and you have been welcomed into the family home, where he embraces you as your Father. Consider how intimate that is. You have also become part of a large family of brothers and sisters who are all united to Jesus: the body of Christ. And the Holy Spirit is within you, enabling you to talk to God as your Father day by day. God adopted you because he loves you.

ONGOING CHANGE (EPHESIANS 1 v 4, 13-14)

Now that God has adopted you, he is committed to sanctifying you—making you more like Jesus. He has given you the Holy Spirit, who gives you a new power and ability to fight sin through the practice of daily repentance and faith. Many times the path is slow and difficult; at other times you experience “growth spurts.” And although every single day you fail and need to come to God for forgiveness, every single day he will grant it. He will not give up on you. He is changing you because he loves you.

HOPE IN SUFFERING (EPHESIANS 3 v 13)

God loves you so much, and is so committed to making you like Christ, that he's prepared to use any means to do it. And sometimes, that involves suffering (1 Peter 1 v 6-9). Jesus said that since he suffered, his followers will suffer too. But when difficult times come, you are not alone. You are not being punished. God is refining you like gold in a fire. Christ is with you in your suffering, and he is able to empathize and bring comfort because he loves you.

PERSEVERANCE (EPHESIANS 1 v 13-14; 2 v 10)

God is going to finish what he started in you (Philippians 1 v 6). You are in a spiritual war that will not end until you die or Jesus returns (Ephesians 6 v 10-18). Your enemies are the world (the world around us that is at odds with God), the flesh (remaining sin in you that is not yet completely eradicated), and the devil (the one who would love to derail your faith). But those who truly belong to Jesus will never be defeated. No one can snatch you from the Father's hand once you belong to him (John 10 v 28). So take courage as you continue to fight the good fight. He will never let go of you because he loves you.

GLORIFICATION (EPHESIANS 1 v 10, 13-14)

And as if all of this were not enough, you have his promise that one day you will be completely transformed into the glorious likeness of Jesus. You will spend eternity in the company of the true and living God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) as well as with your brothers and sisters in Christ, in a wonderful new creation. One day, all the traces of sin will be done away with and joy will be all that remains! God will wipe away every tear and completely eradicate sin and suffering because he loves you.

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

Each day this week, take one of the above descriptions of what it means to be in a relationship with Christ. Ask God to work deep in your soul a knowledge of what this means for you as you struggle to fight a temptation or face some experience of suffering. Talk to God on the basis of your union with Christ and thank him for these blessings. Connect these realities to a struggle in your life.

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THURSDAY

FRIDAY

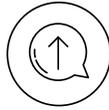
SATURDAY

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 8

RELATE IN REAL LIFE

Relate to God in the midst of your struggle on the basis of your union with Christ.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 8.

GOSPEL DECONSTRUCTION: REPENTANCE

WHY GOOD THINGS MAKE BAD GODS

WHAT'S UNDER THE HOOD DRIVES THE GAUGE OF BEHAVIOR

EXPERIENCING DEEP CHANGE

MOCKING YOUR FALSE OBJECT OF WORSHIP

WORK IT THROUGH

Considering what you have read in chapter 8, take some time to think about how change happens. The process of change is not primarily a discipline or technique. Nor is it even a case of thinking positive thoughts about your new standing in Christ. Though those things may be a part of the process, it is a conscious relating to Christ based on what he has done for you that is fundamental. He is a person. You can talk to him. This is where real strength for the journey is found. The writer of Hebrews describes what that looks like in Hebrews 4 v 15-16:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus has identified with your weakness and wants to help you—he knows what you are going through. You can relate to God with confidence in your time of need or temptation! How? Only by the fact that you are united to

Christ! His standing before the Father is your standing before the Father. Jesus' track record is perfect—"he did not sin"—and that's how God sees you, too.

Step 7 on our journey of change was to focus on the various ways that we are connected to Jesus. Now we need to bring these truths into the real-life fight to grow in grace. So here is the challenge: how do we take the truth of our union with Christ and utilize it in such a way that we relate to God during our struggle, and therefore actually change? That's Step 8.

Think about a recent incident when you responded to circumstances in an unhelpful or sinful way. What would it have looked like instead if you had related to God in that moment?

GOSPEL DECONSTRUCTION: REPENTANCE

Repentance involves identifying your false objects of worship, and seeing how destructive they are and how grievous they are to God. This step must take place if you are going to grow in faith. It is in knowing that you are loved by God that enables you to face your false objects of worship. So, take a recent struggle and look at the categories on pages 108-109. Let those areas guide you as you engage in repentance.

- Look Around You (Step 4) What was going on?

- Gauge Your Reactions (Step 5) How did you respond?

- Look Underneath (Step 6) What was driving the response? What made your false object of worship so attractive?

GOSPEL RECONSTRUCTION: FAITH

Faith involves seeing in fresh ways the glory and beauty of God’s grace. Once that happens, you are re-captured by God’s beauty and the beauty that you once found in your false object of worship pales in comparison. This dynamic is what fuels deep and lasting change. Now that you know what was driving your behavior, what do you need to see about Christ and your relationship with him that will weaken the sway of your false object of worship? How will you talk to God based on your renewed vision of his beauty and his love for you?

- Write out your own “extended version” of how that could have sounded, like the one on pages 113-114 of the book.

- What specific passage/s of Scripture will be of aide to you as you talk to God? (1 Corinthians 1 v 30 is just one example.)

- What were the idols that you were valuing more highly than Christ in that moment?

- What would it look like to “mock” those false objects of worship? Write out your taunts, like the ones on page 116 of *Unstuck*. Read Jeremiah 10 v 1-16 for more inspiration!

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

The more you talk to and relate to God, the more you'll develop your "voice." Don't be discouraged if you're not sure what to say initially—the Holy Spirit has been given to help you, so you are not on your own (Romans 8 v 26-27). In the space below, write in your own words your conversation with God as you turn from your false object of worship to God. Feel free to look again at pages 113-114 of *Unstuck* as a guide for what it could sound like.

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SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

STEP 9

MOVE AHEAD

Look for new opportunities to love others for the long term.



Journal your reflections on the following sections from chapter 9.

PLAY THE LONG GAME

LOOK FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO LOVE

EMBRACE CHANGE IN COMMUNITY

A TELLING QUESTIONS

WORK IT THROUGH

As you reflect on chapter 9, what strikes you about the nature of change? Who are the people that God is calling you to love? Your spouse? Your children? A neighbor? A Christian brother or sister? Someone who has hurt you or neglected you? What is the context where change needs to happen for you?

PLAY THE LONG GAME

Take a moment to re-read pages 119-122 of *Unstuck*. As you think about the nature of the change process, how does this help you? In what way?

LOOK FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO LOVE

Who is God calling you to love? Write their names below?

How might the change process in you benefit those around you? Think about a specific area of struggle where you are seeking change. Where do you hope to be in this area in one year's time?

Where do you hope to be in this area in five years' time?

Where do you hope to be in this area in ten years' time?

What might life look like if you continue growing? Allow this exercise to encourage you about what is possible long term, and to move you to pray for your future.

What opportunities would this open for you to love others?

In what concrete ways would you like to increasingly love others as you continue to grow and change? Talk to God and ask for his help in this.

EMBRACE CHANGE IN COMMUNITY

Which Christian friends are you going to seek to deepen your relationship with? How are you going to start?

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

As you look back over the past eight weeks, ponder how various areas of your life have been impacted by your growth in grace. Are there relationships that have been impacted? What new perspectives are you now aware of? How are you relating to Jesus in the midst of your day? What is new or different about it? What areas are still in need of change? How has your perspective on the often slow nature of change been re-framed? These are just a few questions to ponder. Feel free to think of some of your own.

SUNDAY

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SATURDAY

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

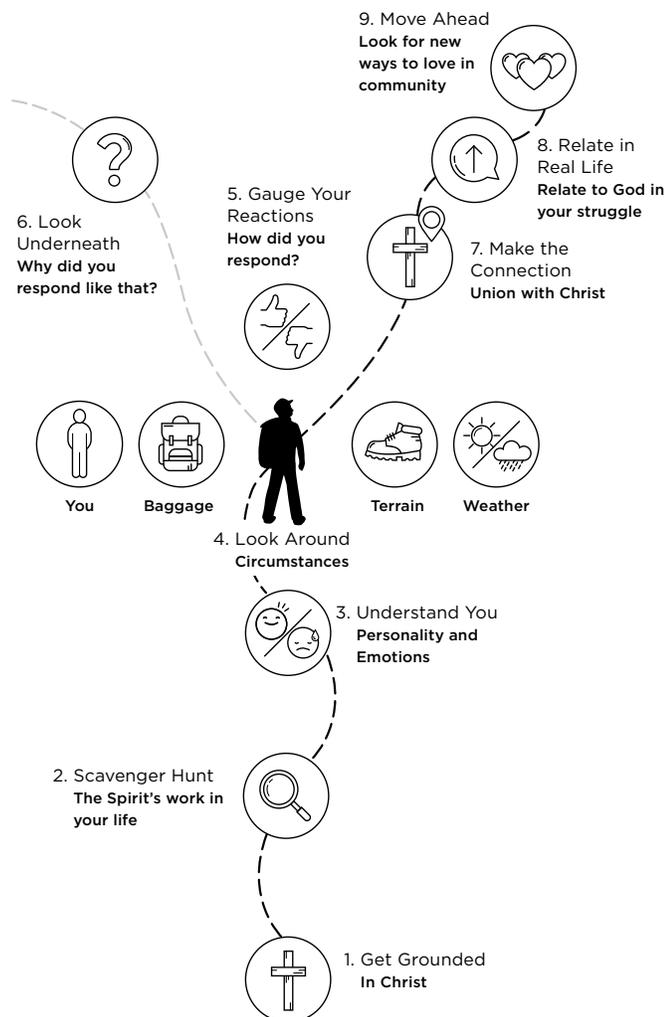
CONCLUSION

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Your journey to change that lasts.



Take a moment to read the “Jim” case study on pages 129-138 of *Unstuck*. After doing that, use this last section to pull together everything that you have learned about the nine steps, particularly as they relate to the issue in your life you chose at the start. Step back and look at the big map of change and then spend some time on each step summarizing what you have learned. You can write as much as you like or keep it short and simple. This is all part of growing in self-awareness, gospel-awareness and other-awareness.



STEP 1: GET GROUNDED



Look back at what Christ has done for you.

STEP 2: SCAVENGER HUNT



Look for evidence of the Spirit's work in you.

STEP 3: UNDERSTAND YOU



Rightly understand your personality and emotions, and how this relates to change.

STEP 6: LOOK UNDERNEATH



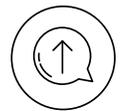
Ask the “why” and “what” questions.

STEP 7: MAKE THE CONNECTION



Remember that you are united to Christ.

STEP 8: RELATE IN REAL LIFE



Relate to God in your struggle based upon your union with Christ.

STEP 9: MOVE AHEAD



Look for new opportunities to love others for the long term.

DAILY GOSPEL-AWARENESS MEDITATION

Use this final week to spend time expressing gratitude to God for his saving grace, sustaining grace and his ultimate triumphant grace. Here are some passages to ponder each day. Feel free to chose some of your own.

SUNDAY: TITUS 2 v 11-14

MONDAY: 1 JOHN 3 v 1-3

TUESDAY: HEBREWS 4 v 12-16

WEDNESDAY: PHILIPPIANS 2 v 1-4

THURSDAY: PSALM 40 v 1-3

FRIDAY: ISAIAH 53

SATURDAY: REVELATION 19 - 21

SUMMARY FOR THE WEEK

AND FINALLY...

Congratulations on completing your journey! Now you know all of the basic elements that are needed and involved in this lifelong process of change. Remember, change can often be slow and the work is never done, but that doesn't mean that you haven't made progress. Remember Philippians 1 v 3-6? "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." What encouraging news. Even though you have not arrived yet, God is going to make sure you get there one day. Yes, you will continue to struggle, but take heart—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are at work in you to one day conform you into the very likeness of Jesus himself!