

*Introducing...*



# TCA

*Teen Challenge Alumni  
Support Group*

A program to help Teen Challenge alumni  
sustain their recovery beyond graduation.

**2016 EDITION**

TCA  
Teen Challenge Alumni  
Support Group

2016 Edition

By  
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## TCA Overview

**What are Teen Challenge Alumni support groups?** TCA is an international support system for addicts who are currently in recovery, specifically Teen Challenge graduates.

**What is its mission?** To provide tools for sustaining long-term recovery from addiction.

**How does the program work?** TCA basically encompasses three elements:

- Accountability-centered small groups for support and fellowship.
- Take-home Bible lessons in seven areas key to the ongoing spiritual development and character maturity vital to long-term recovery:
  - Battling Temptation
  - Dangers & Obstacles
  - Emotions & Thought Life
  - Life Structure
  - Relating to Others
  - Relationship with God
  - Worship
- A website — [www.TeenChallengeAlumni.org](http://www.TeenChallengeAlumni.org) — to help Teen Challenge graduates find tools for personal growth, connect for support and encouragement and begin new TCA groups. It also includes downloadable versions of the enclosed materials as well as additional resources.

**How did TCA support groups originate?** Tim Batty has worked with the Teen Challenge center in Detroit since 1997, first as a staff member, then as a volunteer. Recognizing the need for post-graduation support, he began working with other staff members to develop TCA support groups and its lessons, which were then edited by Dave Batty. This material was first used in a weekly TCA support group in Detroit to help graduates, as well as students in their last two months of the program, stay grounded in recovery and achieve the full potential God has for them.

# Your TCA Support Group Resources

Now available for use in other Teen Challenge centers or similar ministries, the TCA support group resources can be downloaded free at the website: [www.TeenChallengeAlumni.org](http://www.TeenChallengeAlumni.org)

This book includes a sample of those materials, including:

- Starting a TCA Group Steps & Tips
- Leading a TCA Group Steps & Tips
- Additional Tips for Effective Leadership
- TCA Support Group Meeting Schedule
- Recommended TCA Meeting Rules
- Lesson Introduction
- Seven TCA Support Group Lessons (Leader's Guide & Daily Exercises Sheet)

## Questions and Suggestions

Far more important to us than how TCA stands now is where it's going. We consider this effort a work in progress, and we would love your help in our efforts to make it an effective, powerful tool for recovering addicts. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions for improvement at [TCA@TeenChallengeAlumni.org](mailto:TCA@TeenChallengeAlumni.org)

# Starting a TCA Group

## Steps:

1. **Spend time in prayer.** No better foundation will assure the success of this group than praying and getting others to pray for its success. TC alumni are facing spiritual battles every day, and the TCA group can be one tool for helping them win these battles.
2. **Get a conversation going.** If there is a Teen Challenge center and other similar ministries in your area, talk to the leadership about your interest in starting this TCA support group. Seek their help in identifying potential TCA group participants from their alumni records. Group members do not need to have graduated from Teen Challenge.
3. **Reach out to potential group members.** Personally contact TC alumni and invite them to join this group.
4. **Find a meeting place.** Determine a location for the weekly meetings of your TCA support group. This can be in someone's home, a church or other public building, or at a Teen Challenge center.
5. **Recruit help.** You need people who will be the facilitators of the group. If you want to be one, raise up a second person to be your co-facilitator and help lead the group. You will also need people to help set up chairs, do snacks, pass out prayer requests, spend time in people sharing, etc.
6. **Get TCA curriculum.** Download the TCA support group curriculum from the TCA website at [www.TeenChallengeAlumni.org](http://www.TeenChallengeAlumni.org)
7. **Establish a meeting format.** The sheet "Leading a TCA Group: Steps & Tips" provides a general structure, and the website has a more specific sample format that may help.
8. **Prepare your study.** Select the lesson for the first session early and get ready in advance.

## Tips:

1. Determine the time for each session — we recommend a minimum of 90 minutes and a maximum of 120 minutes.
2. Decide on rules and guidelines for sharing that are read regularly, emphasizing that what is said here in the group stays here. (Sample rules are included in this book and on the website).
3. Due to the nature of the sharing in each group session, it is best to keep the group no larger than eight. If you have more than eight people sign up, you may want to split the group into two groups.

# Leading a TCA Group

## Steps:

1. **Come prepared.** Bring the materials you want to use in the group: blank sheets of paper for prayer requests, snacks, the lessons and daily exercise sheets, and any additional materials to enhance the lessons (songs, etc.). It is good to delegate some of this to others.
2. **Arrive early.** Try to get there 15-20 minutes early to set up the room — put out chairs and snacks, post the sharing rules, etc.
3. **Bookend with prayer.** Beginning and ending each group session with talking to God is good to both keep Him at the center of the study and remind graduates to keep Him central in their own lives.
4. **Read your group's rules.** Structure helps foster a stable environment, and the emphasis on a safe place to share helps set the tone of the meeting.
5. **Teach the lesson.** We recommend keeping the lesson no more than 15-20 minutes long.
6. **Move on to sharing.** Open, honest self-examination which is centered on areas of temptation or struggle during the week and how they got through it is the key part of each TCA group meeting.
7. **Be mindful of time.** Let everyone know how much time they have to share based on the group size and honor the starting and ending time of each session. Emphasize that more in-depth sharing should be saved for accountability partners.

## Tips:

1. Set the tone for sharing by being the first to share, and share openly. Demonstrate vulnerability and honesty in sharing; talk about experiences and temptations. And don't tell people what they should do; tell them what has worked for you or others.
2. Ask them specific questions if their sharing is too general and vague.
3. You may need to occasionally reel in and redirect someone who becomes overly enthusiastic about sharing and gets off on a tangent.
4. When a person finishes sharing, ask if there is anything else they want to be held accountable to.

## Additional Tips for Effective Leadership

1. **Repeatedly emphasize that actions speak louder than words.** How seriously TC graduates take their recovery is revealed in what they do, not just in what they say. You don't want to harp or nag, but take advantage of every authentic opportunity to steadily encourage grads to demonstrate their commitment to staying clean through action. Keeping the meetings a priority by doing the homework, attending the meetings as frequently as possible, and sharing openly are some clear ways to do this.
2. **Stress that accountability is key.** Encourage those who do not have a weekly accountability partner to get one.
3. **Lead by example.** Speak openly about your own struggles with temptations and what has been difficult for you.
4. **Suggest writing a motivator list.** Encourage those who are struggling to create a list of motivators of why they want to stay clean, both positive (for example: I want to keep the relationships I have restored with my family) and negative (example: I don't want to live in fear and shame any more).
5. **Recommend writing an addiction pro and con list.** Encourage those who are struggling with motivation to write out the pros and cons of living in addiction.
  - What are the good things that keep bringing them back to their addiction?
  - What are the things that make them want to stop?
 Suggest they write out everything and then spend some time looking it over and deciding what they really want to do.
6. **Suggest a look into the future.** Have them write out where they see themselves in five years if they continue going down the path of addiction versus where they want to be.
7. **Be patient with them.** Addiction sidetracks a person's normal rate of maturity. Remember an alumni with years of recovery can still be behind the maturity curve.
8. **Resist the urge to tell them what they should do.** Knowing what you should do rarely helps someone who is struggling with whether or not they want to do it.
9. **Help guide sharing.** Don't allow them to habitually ramble on about nothing; this can be a defense mechanism against being vulnerable.
10. **Let intimacy come naturally.** Be willing to wait if they tell you they are not ready to share personal things with you, and continue to love them.



## Sample Teen Challenge Alumni Support Group Meeting Schedule

The schedule below is for a 90 minute session. If you have a 2 hour session, you may want to expand the times of the parts with numbers in parenthesis.

- 10 min. Fellowship and snacks
- 1 min. Welcome – **Leader/Co-leader**
- 4 min. Prayer – **Anyone**
- 1 min. Rules Reading – **Anyone**
- 5 (10) min. Worship Training – Explanation of worship, song, and time of individual worship. - **Leader/Co-leader**
- 5 min. Review of last week’s memory verse and assignment
- 10 (15) min. Teaching and challenge for this week  
Lesson Plan/Memory Verses
- 45 (65) min. Sharing time – **Leader/Co-leader**
  1. Pass out pieces of paper for them to write prayer requests. After the TCA group prayer time, distribute them to the group members to pray for them throughout the week.
  2. Does anyone want to go first to let us know how your week went?  
(Allow as many to share as are willing.)
    - Sins that need confession
    - Temptations gone through
    - Areas of struggle
    - Devotions update
    - Goals update
    - Were you honest in your responses?
  3. Personal goals for the next week  
(Hand out *Daily Exercises Sheet* for follow-up on this session.)
- 5 min. Prayer requests - **Anyone**
- 5 min. Prayer – **Anyone**

**Fellowship Afterward** – optional

# TCA Meeting Rules

1. What is said in here stays here. Nothing said in a TCA meeting should be talked about outside the group. The purpose of this ministry is to support and encourage each other in Christ. There are only forgiven sinners here.
2. Refrain from using offensive or explicit language. If the leaders feel you are being too explicit, they will address you on that. Let's speak in a way that honors Christ.
3. Be honest and personal in sharing. Do not attempt to "fix" anyone. If you have something to share, share what God has done in your life, not what someone else should do.
4. Be respectful. No interrupting (except for the leader). Also, be mindful of the time constraints when sharing so others have an opportunity to share. Let's love and encourage one another.

## Introduction to TCA Group Lessons

Since 1997, I've had the unique privilege of getting to know hundreds of Teen Challenge students and staff. Over conversations during Friday night dinners and random opportunities for prayer and counseling, I've been able to observe what happens when graduates relapse. There is a relatively short list of things that tend to pop up repeatedly.

In my observations of others, as well as in examining my own spiritual battles, I've also noticed trends related to sustained victory, particularly living by principles that can make success significantly less of a struggle.

So I started jotting down notes, then developed lessons based on Bible verses that complement the experiences of successful graduates by explaining those principles they live by that make the difference. In Detroit, the lessons are reviewed briefly during TCA meetings. Accompanying the lesson is a sheet of exercises to encourage further personal development, from questions for personal reflection to Bible verses for study and memorization.

On the next page you will find descriptions of the seven categories of lessons, as well as the names of some of each category's lessons. On following pages, you will find one sample lesson for each category. Currently, all 52 lessons the TCA program offers are available on the TCA website.

This truly is a work in progress and I would really appreciate your input. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions for improvement at [TCA@TeenChallengeAlumni.org](mailto:TCA@TeenChallengeAlumni.org)

— Pastor Tim Batty, TCA support group founder

## Category Descriptions & Lesson Examples

**BATTLING TEMPTATION (BT):** Strategies, tactics, and tips to understand and effectively battle the devil's schemes, particularly the ambush type of attacks.

→ “Battling Desires of the Flesh” is the enclosed lesson. (Other **BT** studies on the TCA website include “Mind Hijackers” and “Resisting Condemnation” and more.)

**DANGERS & OBSTACLES (DO):** Identifying and preparing to counter typical worldly traps that await graduates.

→ “Building Sexual Integrity” is the enclosed lesson. (Other **DO** studies on the TCA website include “Buddies in Sin” and “Overworking” and more.)

**EMOTIONS & THOUGHT LIFE (ETL):** Important areas to grow so you can become more stable and effective in dealing with life’s emotional and mental ups and downs.

→ “The Dangers of Secrets” is the enclosed lesson. (Other **ETL** studies on the TCA website include “Handling Rejection” and “Emotional Starvation” and more.)

**LIFE STRUCTURE (LS):** Guidance on establishing regular habits that promote healthy recovery and help build a stable life that can withstand the storms that will come.

→ “Be a 100 Percenter” is the enclosed lesson. (Other **LS** studies on the TCA website include “Stability vs. Rigidity” and “Living Free” and more.)

**RELATING TO OTHERS (RO):** Building relationship skills and establishing your own local support network.

→ “Accountability” is the enclosed lesson. (Other **RO** studies on the TCA website include “Healthy Relationships with the Opposite Sex” and “Dealing with Confrontation” and more.)

**RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (RG):** Building what must remain your most important relationship to sustain recovery.

→ “Doing Our Part, Not God's Part” is the enclosed lesson. (Other **RG** studies on the TCA website include “Earthly Rewards” and “Wanting vs. Obligation” and more.)

**WORSHIP (W):** Developing your intimacy with God through genuine worship and authentic spiritual experience.

→ “The Presence of God” is the enclosed lesson. (Other **W** studies on the TCA website include “Battling through in Worship” and “Worshipping in Truth” and more.)

## Accountability – Lesson

**Lesson summary:** Holding myself accountable to others is a tool to protect me from failure and help me grow.

How many have seen the nature videos that have an animal separated from its herd and attacked by predators?

The devil often uses isolation to cause us to despair and then destroy us.

One of the tools the Bible speaks about that can help protect us from failure is to develop a special relationship with a person or a small group where we can open up, confess sins, set goals, and share temptations we have faced. It is a common unwritten rule in churches that good Christians never struggle, so people pretend like everything is great. This is unbiblical (James 5:16) and an attempt by the devil to isolate us to keep us weak.

### **JAMES 5:16 (NIV)**

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

- Confessing sins and temptations helps you bring them out into the open to examine them in the light of others. Exposing things takes the power out of them.
- Praying for each other makes a difference.
- The goal is not to condemn or turn on the butt-kicking machine like we often do, but to **evaluate experiences**. Evaluating what we did wrong and what we could have done helps us to respond better next time.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 (NIV)**

**No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.** And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Accountability is not just for “weak people,” it’s important for everyone.

Recognize we all fall in different areas at times in our lives, and we all need each other.

### **PROVERBS 28:13 (NIV)**

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

We are as sick as the secrets we keep. For accountability to be successful you have to be committed to it 100%. The minute you choose to keep secrets from the group, accountability starts to lose effectiveness. Accountability is not something someone else can do for you. You have to want to be held accountable with the temptations that have caused you trouble.

**What are some areas of temptation that have caused you trouble in the past you considered too embarrassing or personal to share?**

**Are you willing to share them with someone now?**

Accountability is not a one-time act. It is a new life habit.

**Are you willing to include accountability as an ongoing part of your lifestyle?**

# Accountability – Daily Exercises

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*Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.*

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## Day 1

Have you had experiences that felt like the devil was trying to destroy you? Did you feel isolated at that time? Can you look back now and see how he tried to isolate you?

Write out a description of the crisis that brought you to Teen Challenge.

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## Day 2

What are some areas you know you need to, or want to, grow in...

Spiritually:

Emotionally:

Relationally:

In areas of self-discipline:

What are some areas you want to be held accountable in?

✓ *devotions*

✓ *prayer*

✓ *clean time*

✓ *allowing things that can lure you into sin in your life.*

Make a decision on how much time you will spend in prayer and how much time you will spend reading and studying the Bible.

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## Day 3

### Memorize

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 (NIV)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

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## Day 4

#### JAMES 5:16 (NIV)

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

This verse promises healing through accountability.

Many of us have hurts from the past in our lives that drove us to addiction.

What do you want to be completely healed from?

What are some reasons that you haven't shared sins and instead covered them up?

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## Day 5

Create a list of 4-8 accountability questions you want someone to ask you.

Find someone you are willing to hold yourself accountable to and ask if you can get with them weekly to do this.

## Building Sexual Integrity – Lesson

**Lesson goal:** Maintaining sexual integrity is essential to maintaining sobriety. It is very common for guys to relapse right after falling sexually.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 6:18 (NIV)**

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

### **Things to Understand About Lust**

- Most men don't need to know that they shouldn't lust, but how to resist it.
- Lust is a pitfall that many graduates struggle with because they swallow lies from the enemy.
- There have been recent studies that have shown up to 60-70% of men in churches look at porn of some kind on at least a monthly basis. There is a battle raging against the church. You aren't alone.
- The root problem is not about a strong sex drive, or being a man, but a lack of ability to deal properly with internal pain and difficulty.
- Masturbation and porn will destroy you spiritually if left unchallenged.
- Getting married won't help it. It is best to get it under control before marriage.

*Victory in this area is not achieved like a trophy that you earn and put on the shelf, it is more like being an undefeated football team while the season is still going on. The only way you maintain victory is by continuing to practice. When a team stops practicing and stops being disciplined in their eating or sleeping habits, they will soon be defeated.*

### **Conquering Sexual Sin**

- Step 1 – Truly wanting to change – coming to the end of yourself
- Step 2 – Giving things up, making sacrifices to achieve success
- Step 3 – Acknowledging small successes
  - Turn off the butt-kicking machine that constantly condemns you.
- Step 4 – Building a completely restructured lifestyle
  - On average, those who end up walking in victory in this area find themselves changing around 30 to 40 distinct areas of behavior in their lives.
- Step 5 – Seeking God
  - If you stop doing these things you were dependent on, you will automatically go to some different excess.
  - You need to put God in the position of being the one you derive meaning from and are dependent on. He will heal you and reduce the internal tension.
- Step 6 – Accountability
  - Finding an accountability partner is essential to maintaining victory in your life.
  - All you need is someone you can trust who will ask you certain questions every week. If you can find someone who has gained victory in this area, great!
  - It is more important for a partner to be consistent, and willing to ask you the questions you give them, than spiritually mature.
  - Finding a mentor who can give you wise counsel can also make a big difference.

**What are some temptations you have faced recently in this area?**

# Building Sexual Integrity – Daily Exercises

*Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.*

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## Day 1

One of the most difficult aspects of gaining victory in this area is coming to a point of resolve and truly not wanting to do this anymore. Really believing that God's way is better. The fact is, we eventually do what we really want to do. If, in our hearts, we want to get as close to sexual sin as possible because we like it, then we will never gain victory in this area. The good news is that many of the principles of maintaining victory in this area are the same used in maintaining victory over drugs and alcohol. One difference is that sexual desire is always with us, indulging in it is free, and is usually undetectable by others for quite a long time. First, write out the good things that sexual sin does for you, and reasons you like it. Then, write out the negative consequences and the bad that comes from it. Then take some time to read both lists and compare the benefits with the consequences and decide what you really want to do.

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## Day 2

Coming to a point of being willing to do anything it takes to gain victory is essential to gaining victory. Being willing to take suggestions and trust those who have gained victory in this area are important parts of this. These are principles of success in any area. This includes making sacrifices of things that are not sinful. How far are you willing to go in order to walk in victory? On average, those who find victory in this area end up changing dozens of areas in their lives. How many things have you changed about your lifestyle in order to maintain victory in this? Make a list of all the things you have changed in your lifestyle so far.

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## Day 3

### Memorize

#### **1 CORINTHIANS 6:18 (NIV)**

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

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## Day 4

The longer you walk in sexual integrity you begin to see how things are connected. If you are eating properly, sleeping properly, exercising, and being responsible around the house, it becomes much easier to maintain victory in the sexual areas of your life. Things that seem to have no logical connection seem somehow connected. Self control is something that affects every area of our lives, and it is one of the fruits of the Spirit, indicators of true Christians. The question to ask yourself is not if this is sinful or not, but will this make it harder for you when temptations come?

Write some things you feel God is asking you to change to make it easier to gain victory.

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## Day 5

The most important area for maintaining sexual sobriety is developing your walk with God. We all need a sense of wonder to make life meaningful, whether we admit it or not. We get that from different places, but God is the only one who can completely satisfy that need for "WOW!" Find some good Christian books that really open your mind to thoughts about God and spend time in His presence daily. Ask God to begin revealing areas in your life that need to be healed by Him and begin seeking him to do that.



## The Danger of Secrets – Lesson

**Lesson summary:** To the degree that you allow sinful secrets to remain in your heart, to that degree you will be sick and weak and unable to grow in Christ.

**PROVERBS 28:13 (NIV)**

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

- Your life is like a house. It is possible to allow Christ in, but not allow Him into every room.
- Coming here to this group and pretending that you are doing great when you are struggling in your heart, is like going to the work out gym and spraying water on yourself and walking around and saying, “Wow! What a great workout!”
- It is possible to be a Christian and be walking in victory and then begin to keep secrets about something as small as your sinful thoughts.
- This is very dangerous, and the beginning of the path to destruction.

**The longer you hold a secret:**

1. The sicker and more distorted your thinking and reasoning becomes
2. The more miserable you become
3. The more you desire the flesh and the more difficult it becomes to resist sin
4. The more resentful you become towards others and God.
5. The more spiritually dry you become, the more difficult it becomes to pray

**Why do we hold secrets?**

1. We don't trust others
2. We are afraid of what others will think of us
3. We are afraid others will stop respecting us
4. We see ourselves as someone who needs to be a leader and can't let anyone know we are struggling with anything
5. We don't want to humble ourselves to others
6. We want to keep enjoying and indulging in the sinful things

**What are the lies behind these reasons?**

- Lie: What others think of me has some bearing on how spiritual I am.  
→ Truth: What is most important is not what others think of us, but what God thinks of us
- Lie: Nobody will understand, they aren't struggling like I am, I am alone.  
→ Truth: Everyone has weaknesses and struggles.
- Lie: There isn't anyone I can trust  
→ Truth: You can't trust everyone, but there is always someone you can trust.
- Lie: This isn't a big deal and I can control it. It doesn't hurt anyone.  
→ Truth: There is a heavy price to pay for continuing in sin, small sins always lead to a lapse in judgment and quickly goes out of control and hurts those you love.
- Lie: People don't respect you when you show vulnerability  
→ Truth: Showing vulnerability shows strength, hiding things shows weakness.

# The Dangers of Secrets – Daily Exercises

*Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.*

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## Day 1

Keeping a secret is like holding poison inside your body. It slowly kills you. Have you ever had an experience when keeping a secret led to worse things? What was the secret? What was your motivation for keeping it a secret? What were the effects of it? Did it ever become known to others? Write out your experience and what you can learn from it about secrets.

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## Day 2

What did Jesus have to say about keeping secrets?  
Are they able to be kept for very long?  
Spend some time reading the New Testament or searching a concordance for “hidden” or “secret.” Write out what you find.

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## Day 3

### Memorize

#### **PROVERBS 28:13 (NIV)**

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

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## Day 4

One of the things the devil wants to do most is to isolate us. How does keeping a secret isolate you? Does it make it more difficult to maintain a solid relationship with someone when you are keeping secrets from them? What about in a marriage? Does keeping secrets from your spouse help or hurt the relationship?

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## Day 5

One of the fascinating things we come to realize when we begin to share things that we have kept secret is that those temptations we talk about lose their power. It is like someone sucking the poison out of a wound. The devil uses emotions and feelings and desires to tempt us to sin, but when we expose those, it is amazing how quickly they dry up. What are some areas in your life where you have been keeping secrets? Have you ever had God expose something you have been keeping secret in your life? Was it more painful or less painful than if you would have come clean with it on your own? Spend some time seeking God and asking Him if there is anything you need to share with someone.

## Doing Our Part, Not God's Part – Lesson

**Lesson summary:** It is not all God, nor is it only our efforts that change our lives for the better. We need to work together with God to bring about this transformation.

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

**MATTHEW 5:48 (NIV)**

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

1. There are things we cannot do on our own, like change our desires
2. There are things God will not do for us, like self-discipline, and renewing our mind.
3. What we want to do here is to do our part and seek God to do His part in us.

### What is our part?

Largely, it's doing what we can do to set ourselves up for a touch from God. Examples:

- Building structure in our lives and making time to seek God.
- Resisting sin until He touches you and causes you to stop desiring it.
- Fighting the attacks and temptations of the enemy as hard as you can.
- Asking for His help in times of stress and temptation or tension. (We cannot keep on white knuckling it without seeking Him in the times of stress.)
- Resisting any overindulgence. You can't change your desires, but if you are constantly indulging in them, you will delay God's work in you, or possibly stop it altogether.
- Seeking the fellowship and advice of godly people, especially in hard times.
- Trying to understand why others love God so much.

### What is God's part?

Largely His job is to do what we can't. Examples:

- Placing in us a hunger for more of Him.
- Diminishing the desires for the things of the world.
- Giving us the power we need to resist temptation, and the power to obey Him.
- Interrupting us in the midst of a weak moment when we have decided to sin.
- Throwing a "Holy Ghost Monkeywrench" into our plans to protect us.
- Healing us on the inside so we become whole.
- Setting us free inside so we rejoice more and fall deeper in love with Him.
- Shaping us to become the person He originally intended us to be.
- Being the wonderful, loving, faithful, forgiving Savior and Lord we want to give our lives to serve.
- Revealing ourselves to us, who we really are so we can change.
- Stabilizing us and giving us complete freedom.

What are some ways we try to take over God's part?

What are some ways that we can neglect our part?

# Doing Our Part, Not God's Part –Daily Exercises

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*Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.*

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## Day 1

On a separate piece of paper, write out things you need God to do for you in your own life. These are things that you either don't know how to do, or don't have the power to do.

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## Day 2

There is often much confusion in the lives of new and old Christians about what their part is in working with God to grow. There are some who live with the motto of "I will work harder" and some who live with the motto of "Let go and let God." Both of these have a place in the life of a healthy Christian, but both of them, when taken out of context, are extremes that must be avoided. There are times to let go, and there are times to do all in your power, and take whatever steps are necessary to hold on. One important thing to keep in mind is that God often has different goals for us than we have for ourselves. We need to be in constant conversation on a daily basis to hear from God what He wants us to do. There are always acts that God wants us to do with His power, because that is how we demonstrate faith. We throw sissy punches and God delivers the knockout blow. Just trying harder is never the answer nor is it God's direction for you.

On a separate piece of paper, write out some specific things you believe God has been telling you to do.

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## Day 3

### Memorize

#### **PHILIPPIANS 1:6 (NIV)**

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.

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## Day 4

On a separate sheet of paper, write about an instance in your life when you tried to do something that is God's job, and only became frustrated in the process.

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## Day 5

What do these stories show us about the part God wants us to play when He does great things?

### Gideon

Judges 6 and 7

What did God ask Gideon to do? What did God do?

### Moses

Exodus 14:13-31

What did God ask Moses to do? What did God do?

### Joshua

Joshua 6:1-27

What did God ask Joshua to do? What did God do?

In all of these situations, God asked them to do specific things, and in return He acted.

# The Presence of God – Lesson

**Lesson summary:** The biggest changes in your life will happen in the presence of God. Make it a daily goal to seek His presence.

## **PSALM 105:4 (NIV)**

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

## **PSALM 24:5-6 (NIV)**

<sup>5</sup>He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior.

<sup>6</sup>Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

*To pray successfully is the first lesson the preacher must learn if he is to preach fruitfully; yet prayer is the hardest thing he will ever be called upon to do and, being human, it is the one act he will be tempted to do less frequently than any other.*

- A.W. Tozer

## **What are some elements of successful prayer?**

- It has to do with entering the presence of God.
- Delighting yourself in the Lord.
- Expressing the depth of your heart in love to Him.
- You hear from God.
- Your heart is put at peace.

## **How do we pray successfully?**

- Practice makes perfect.
- Praying in the Spirit (speaking in tongues in your prayer time).
- Allowing your whole being to be caught up in God's presence.
- Letting go of everything else, so that the only thing that exists is you and God.
- Imagine yourself in His throne room seeking Him and worshipping Him.
- Being willing to devote the time to being with God long enough for the distracting thoughts to go away and your focus to be completely on Him.
- Interceding for those you care about is an important aspect of prayer as well.
- Telling God how wonderful He is.
- Thanking God for all He has done for you.
- You will get to a point where you can't even really speak anymore, and you are overwhelmed by His power and holiness. Don't fear that.
- Have a heart that longs for more of Him.

## **Why His presence?**

- That is where you will be healed of your wounds inside.
- That is where you will begin to understand His dealings with you.
- That is where you will be made whole.
- That is where you will receive a greater desire for Him.
- That is where you will begin to learn His voice and His character through experience.
- That is where you will come to "know" Him.

# The Presence of God – Daily Exercises

20

*Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.*

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## Day 1

Think about a time when you felt the presence of God. Write about it. Where was it? Was it in church, or some other location? What were the circumstances? What was your attitude towards God at the time? What did it feel like? What makes you think it was God?

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## Day 2

There are times when God reaches out to us and touches us with a special dose of His presence, and there are times when we cry out to Him and seek Him and as we draw close to Him, He draws close to us. We have the opportunity to spend time in God's presence every day. Read this verse and answer the questions below:

### **JAMES 4:7-9 (NIV)**

<sup>7</sup>Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

According to this verse, how do we experience God's presence?  
What are some things that hinder us from drawing close to God?  
How can we eliminate the obstacles to God according to this verse?

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## Day 3

### Memorize

#### **PSALM 16:11 (NIV)**

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

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## Day 4

There are many different ways to pray, focusing on a list of needs that others have, spending time just focused on how wonderful God is and just thanking Him for who He is, asking for things for yourself, for help or strength. These are all appropriate at different times. What does your prayer time usually consist of? Is it a set routine with a list you go through, or is it just sitting and thinking about God? What is most important is that you are connecting with God. Jesus described it as Him being the vine and us as the branches. We draw our strength, the sap, from Him. As long as we are connected with God, and His Spirit is guiding us, there will be growth. The problem is there are so many things that threaten that connection with Him. What are some things that have hindered the sense of God in your life?

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## Day 5

There is a book titled "The Practice of the Presence of God" written in the 1600s by someone who visited a monk. In it he describes how he lives in the presence of God every moment of every day. He described it as something he practiced because it didn't come right away. He did it by thanking God as often as he could for everything and doing everything he did out of a heart of love for God. Try doing this for a day. Make it a point to do everything out of gratitude and love for God, from work, to enjoying life.

## Be a 100 Percenter – Lesson

**Lesson summary:** You cannot afford to indulge in the flesh like some Christians do. Do not envy them, but pursue God with all your heart and give them an example of the good life.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 5:11 (NIV)**

But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

Have you ever hung out socially with someone who was a leader in church but outside it's walls you can't tell they love the Lord? For example, someone is in charge of a ministry at church, but by his conversation, smoking, and cussing you would never have known he was a Christian. (Use personal example of a similar situation if possible)

If you have people like that in your life, who are not drug addicts or anything, but live a half-way life for God, do not try to become like them. They are not the standard. In fact, the Bible says not to even eat with them.

You can't afford to compromise like that, because it will eventually take you right back into your addiction. You need to rebuke them, and if they don't repent, stop spending time with them. You need to tow the line, and surround yourself with people who love God enough to live for Him.

### **The devil wants to feed you these lies:**

1. You don't have to do all that Christian stuff to be okay.
2. Just make being clean your goal, not being holy.
3. The world still has lots of fun things for you that are harmless.

### **God's truth:**

1. You are either growing in Christ or falling away towards destruction.
2. Everything that stems from the flesh is destructive, even if it isn't obvious at first.
3. Every good thing comes from God, the devil has nothing that ends good for you.

Your goal needs to be to get as close to God as possible.

Your secondary goal needs to be to make staying clean as easy as possible. The more you feed the flesh, the more difficult it becomes to stay close to God.

We need to be examples to those who are in the church and still have not been fulfilled with Christ because they have neglected pursuing Him.

What are some things you do that cause temptations to become more intense?

What are some things you have changed in your life that afterwards you have noticed a lessening of temptations?

# Be a 100 Percenter – Daily Exercises

22

*Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.*

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## Day 1

Growing up in the church, my church friends were the worst influence in my life. From smoking and drinking to being promiscuous, there were any amount of sins going on in the lives of people who were regular church-goers. I have found that the longer I live and the more I experience, that was not a unique experience. There are people like that in almost every church. Write about an experience you had with someone who was a Christian, or called themselves a Christian, that was a bad influence on you. How did you handle it? Did you get mad at God? Did you make excuses that if it was okay for them, it must be okay for you? Did you take a stand and rebuke them? How did it influence your perspective of what it takes to be a man or woman of God?

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## Day 2

When you begin following Jesus outside of Teen Challenge, you need to make decisions that may not seem too important, but will impact you for the rest of your life. What kind of friends will you pursue? What kind of people will you choose to not befriend or hang out with? Will you be friends with everyone who wants to be your friend? As Christians, we are called to reject the fellowship of some people, namely those who call themselves believers but have no problem indulging in sinful pleasures and conversation. It is not a matter of being snobby, but a matter of the direction your eternal life will take. You need to build close relationships with safe people. Take some time to write out some standards you are going to set for those who you will allow yourself to be friends with. You can't choose your relatives, but you can choose those whom you will hang out with. It is pleasing to God to not be willing to spend time with a relative who refuses to repent of sin and still calls himself or herself a Christian.

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## Day 3

### Memorize

#### **1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 (NIV)**

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

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## Day 4

One mistake that some Teen Challenge students make is that they are going through this program so they can get out and go back to indulging in all the things they used to do without getting high. Unfortunately, the truth is that because the flesh is all connected, the more you indulge in the flesh, the closer you come to falling back into your addiction. The life of a graduate needs to completely change. There are many ways to have fun without indulging in the flesh. Write a list of things that you notice an increase of temptation when you spend time doing them. Begin looking at ways to diminish these things in your life.

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## Day 5

It is interesting how God begins to change our lives completely when we begin following Him. He makes us into a new creation, and that means we make a lot of changes in our lives. Where we derive pleasure and meaning from must change. Write out a list of the things that you have changed since before you started the Teen Challenge program. There should be many things that have changed, as many as 30 or 40.



## Battling Desires of the Flesh – Lesson

**Lesson summary:** Feeding the Spirit and starving the flesh is the most effective way to stop wanting to sin, this is a choice that takes place in between the times of temptation.

One of the big questions that comes up a lot is, “How do I stop wanting to sin?” The problem is not only that we are sinning, but that we want to sin, and we are just trying to cage those desires. We feel pressure that it is going to eventually explode.

### **GALATIANS 5:16-17 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

<sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

### **The Flesh and Spirit are like two dogs fighting**

- > The one you feed more wins the fights.
- > You have spent years feeding the bad dog and it is a huge monster.
- > You have starved the good dog most of your life and it is very small and wimpy.

#### **1. You have to cage the bad dog**

- a) In the TC program, the bad dog has been caged and starved by the enforced rules.
  - Someone else held the key to the cage.
- b) When you leave, you are the one deciding what is acceptable behavior.
  - Now you hold the key to the bad dog’s cage and determine if it stays there.
- c) At first, restricting the flesh is unpleasant, but something else has to change, or it will break out.

#### **2. You have to starve the bad dog**

- a) In the program, the bad dog has been starved, and the desires have diminished some.
  - There haven’t been a whole lot of things that you could do to feed the flesh, even though you wanted to.
- b) Now that you are out of the program, you need to determine if you will start feeding those desires or not.
  - The world will feed the flesh some, even against your will, so it will grow some.
  - You know when the desires of the flesh start to become stronger, you can feel it.
    - Stop and think about what you have been doing in the last 24 hours when you began to feel the flesh rise up and identify what fed it.
  - Remember, if you cage the bad dog, but still feed it, it will break out and harm you and those you care about. You can only white knuckle it for so long.
  - Keep in mind the bad dog is still big because you fed it for a long time.
  - The desires will SLOWLY diminish, not immediately. You have a good head start from TC. But, they will QUICKLY return when you start feeding it.
  - Determine what you need to do or not do to starve the flesh.

#### **3. You have to feed the good dog**

- a) In the last year, you have been feeding the Spirit, so the good dog has grown some.
- b) Now you need to find ways to feed the Spirit yourself.
  - Lots of Bible reading – very good – LEARN TO RUN TO GOD IN STRESS.
  - Christian books and listening to sermons and Christian teachings.
  - Godly relationships and conversation and mutual prayer.
  - The more you feed the Spirit, the more you want to feed the Spirit.

# Battling Desires – Daily Exercises

*Thoughts and questions for reflection, writing, and prayer to enhance personal growth.*

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## Day 1

When you first entered the Teen Challenge program, what were some of the things you didn't like about the rules? At what point did you come to the realization that you were beginning to want to do things that were godly? Was it before or after you came to the program? What was one of the biggest differences you saw in your desires while in the program? What are some ways you have noticed your flesh has been fed since you graduated? Write out the answers to these questions and read them to yourself out loud.

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## Day 2

There will be times that you will not want to obey God, but instead will want to begin running after the things of the world. You need to anticipate and prepare for those times. There are things you can do, like coming to this group and talking about things the devil has been tempting you with lately, that will help you to further kill the flesh and walk in spiritual victory.

What are some ways your flesh was "caged" while in the program? What are some things you can do to protect yourself against a flesh that might not be totally under control? Write out some steps you will take to protect yourself in preparation of moments in your life that you will be weak and tempted to give in to the flesh.

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## Day 3

### Memorize

#### **GALATIANS 5:16-17 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

<sup>17</sup> For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

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## Day 4

The flesh is connected all across the different areas of our lives. Our sleep habits, our eating habits, our use of free time, and our time spent in devotions, are all connected. When we improve one area we find it becomes easier in other areas. That is also one reason why we might come to a point where we feel we hit a spiritual plateau. There might be an area in our life we are neglecting to be self-disciplined in that we need to improve to continue growing. You may even notice that cleaning your house brings a renewed vigor and motivation to seek God and study His word.

Each of us is unique and sometimes struggle in different areas in our lives.

What was one of the most difficult fleshly desires for you to let go of?

What steps are you taking to starve the flesh in that area?

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## Day 5

What were some ways that you fed the Spirit while in the Teen Challenge program?

What are some ways you can feed your Spirit now? Write out a list of ways you can feed the Spirit and write out a schedule of when you can do them, and what you want your spiritual life to look like in three years. Make sure to take time to reflect on what God has been teaching you.