



Welcome from CTO

# FOREWORD

(Please go over this section with your discipler)

You are starting a spiritual journey – one that may involve changes in how you think about God, yourself and others. Our desire is that you will develop a more in-depth understanding of your view of God and the gospel, as well as grasp the reality that you are a citizen of a new Kingdom with a new identity! Hopefully, as you experience the grace of God in this process, you will grow in your role as an "image-bearer" of Christ. By living in greater obedience to Him, you will be further equipped to disciple others as servants in God's Kingdom where Jesus is King.

## **YOU WILL FACE DIFFICULT PEOPLE AND DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.**

You may be engaging in this discipling process because you are dealing with a difficult relationship or you may be in the middle of an incredibly difficult circumstance. Perhaps you have had difficult relationships and experiences in the past for which you desire biblical solutions.

On the following page, the diagram *Four Approaches to a Problem* describes your attempts, through your own resources and strength, to deal with the difficult people and circumstances that you feel are disrupting your world. Often unknowingly, at an early age you began to adopt sinful approaches to deal with pain and problems that became ingrained and "fine tuned" over many years. These responses became instinctive, and even as a believer they can feel normal. Therefore, you continue to use them as a means of emotional survival.

### **APPROACH #1**

The goal of this approach is to avoid difficult people and circumstances. These people ignore or suppress painful realities, withdraw from hurtful people, avoid conflict, and instead pursue pleasure, comfort and peace. This strategy includes trying to keep others happy by being a "people-pleaser." This approach: avoid pain, suppress, ignore painful realities, please people.

### **APPROACH #2**

The goal of this approach is to fix or change difficult people or circumstances through their own resources and repeated attempts. These people believe if they can convince others to do what they think is right, in their way and in their timing, then life is good! They try to control through demands, manipulation and intimidation. Always focused on the problem, they go around and around in it, never implementing a biblical solution. This approach: fix the problem by changing people or circumstances.

### **APPROACH #3**

When Approach #1 or #2 does not work, the goal can be to escape the problem or pain. These people often resort to sinful behaviors, such as fantasy, drugs, alcohol, pornography, gluttony or illicit sex. Or they may engage in excessive pursuits that appear good, such as social media, career, hobbies, exercise, sports or ministry. All escapes eventually compound the original problem by creating bigger problems. This approach: escape the problem by attempting to eliminate or mask the pain.

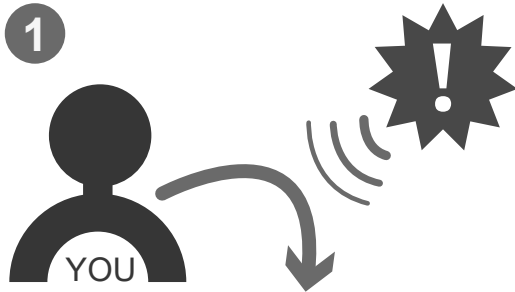
*Important question: Which approach most characterizes you when walking in the flesh?*

### **APPROACH #4**

Your hope lies in facing problems head-on by relying on God and His resources, and accepting His plans. This approach: face the problem by depending on God.



# 4 APPROACHES TO A PROBLEM

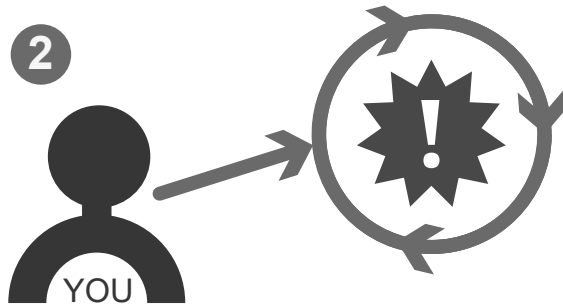


## SUPPRESS OR IGNORE THE PROBLEM

- Withdraws, avoids difficult people/circumstances
- Controls by pleasing people/avoiding conflict
- Seeks comfort, pleasure, stress-free life

\*GOAL: IGNORE PROBLEM - PLEASE PEOPLE

*"I see no problem!!"*

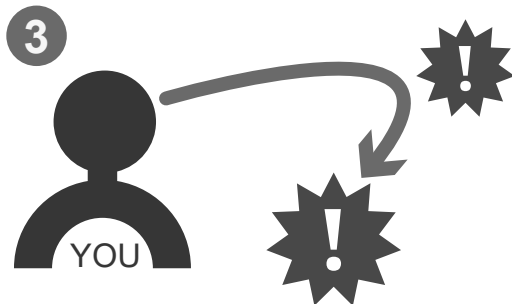


## GO AROUND IN THE PROBLEM

- Focuses on the problem without a biblical solution
- Controls by demanding, convincing, arguing, worrying
- Seeks to control people/circumstances

\*GOAL: FIX PROBLEM - CHANGE PEOPLE

*"I will fix the problem!!"*



## ESCAPE THE PROBLEM

- Escapes into fantasy, social media, TV, sports, hobbies, porn, illicit sex, drugs, alcohol, work, ministry
- Seeks to find relief from pain in sinful ways
- Creates a bigger problem

\*GOAL: ESCAPE PROBLEM - ELIMINATE PAIN

*"I will escape the problem!!"*



## STRAIGHT THROUGH THE PROBLEM

- Faces the problem head-on
- Relies on God and His resources
- Accepts God's plan
- Perseveres in the trial

\*GOAL: FACE PROBLEM - DEPEND ON GOD

*"I will rely on God to take me through the problem!!"*

*Original concept from Jay E. Adams*

## THE FOURTH APPROACH EXPANDED: FACING EMOTIONAL PAIN

On the following page the diagram *Facing Emotional Pain* further describes how all four approaches work. When you face difficult people or circumstances, you may feel that you are walking into a fiery blaze. Your first response often can be: Get away from the heat and out of the pain! Out of self-protection, you can make the unbiblical decision of responding with Approach #1, #2 or #3. (Refer to previous diagram.) The list of the results of responding in an unbiblical way to protect your kingdom not only includes many destructive attitudes and actions, but also may lead to unrest and hopelessness. Identify any sins from the “unbiblical decision” column that may characterize your life.

The only biblical path forward is *through* the fire. God’s purpose is to use your painful realities to draw you into a greater reliance upon Him and to continue to shape you into Christ’s image. As you turn to Him, He gives you the grace to *persevere through the fire with Him*. The good news is that you can make the biblical decision by turning to God and His resources to help you make the biblical decision. As you honor God through your dependence on Him, you will also be encouraged by the results that come as you respond biblically through Approach #4.



# FACING EMOTIONAL PAIN



4 APPROACHES  
TO A PROBLEM:  
APPROACH  
#1, #2 & #3

## UNBIBLICAL DECISION

### *Depending on self and your resources*

- Unbelief; doubt God
- Pride; selfishness
- Fear; anxiety
- Self-oriented goals
- Disobedient life
- Blame others, anger
- Suppression; denial
- Fantasy
- Detachment; busyness
- Bitterness, self-pity, depression
- Manipulation, control
- Escapes to find relief

### **Protect your own kingdom**

### *Results: hopeless, unrest*

- Focused on self/circumstances
- Bondage to self
- Further frustration; depression
- Lack of growth
- Sinful attitudes
- Lack of spiritual fruit; bad fruit
- Broken relationships

### **Your kingdom crumbles**

## BIBLICAL DECISION

### *Turning to God and His resources*

- Believe in, rely on God
- Humility, love others
- Trust His promises
- Pursue God's goals
- Obey out of love
- Forgive; respond graciously
- Accept God's plan
- Focus on God's truth
- Pursue fellowship
- Give thanks in all things
- Yield; surrender
- Face pain with God's help

### **Live for God's Kingdom**

### *Results: hope in God, rest*

- Focused on God/others
- Set free from self
- Peace and joy in the pain
- Maturity
- Christ-like attitudes
- Fruit of the Spirit; love
- God-honoring relationships

### **God's Kingdom grows**

4 APPROACHES  
TO A PROBLEM:  
APPROACH #4



# THE CTO STRATEGY FOR CHANGED LIVES



The CTO disciple-making strategy utilizes three books comprised of eight main studies in the front part of each book (lettered A-H). These studies are designed to help you begin to address the heart issues that may hinder your love for God and others (Matt. 22:37-38). The supplemental studies in the back (numbered within each study) are designed to encourage you to think rightly about God. *Typically you will have reading assignments in both the front and back sections of the book each week.* These assignments are more of an "independent study". The focus of your time with your discipler will be practical projects designed to help you apply the principles of scripture you are learning. As you work together with your discipler, you will have the opportunity to experience the intersection of God's grace with your obedience. (Scan the QR codes above to view the diagram or watch the video for a more complete outline and explanation).

## THE THREE PARTS ARE DESIGNED AS A SERIES AND ARE BUILT UPON EACH OTHER

As you progress through Part One, God often does a significant work in healing a difficult relationship. After completing Part One, you may tend to believe that your problems are solved. However, this is often just the beginning of God **transforming** you from the inside out. **We have observed that those who do not complete all three Parts, along with the application exercises, often do not experience as much lasting transformation and change as those who complete the whole series.** The additional time with God in His Word and exposure to the heart issues, addressed in Parts Two and Three, provide further opportunities for the Spirit of God to work more specifically and thoroughly in your life. *Completion of all three Parts is necessary to best equip you to disciple others through the CTO disciple-making approach.*

## CTO DOES NOT CHANGE ANYONE

Going through a curriculum or even being disciplined does not change you. CTO is a tool which God may use for your transformation. He alone causes your growth and gives you the necessary resources to experience His life lived through you – for His glory. God's process for change utilizes the Spirit of God, through the Word of God in the context of the people of God. The studies you read are designed to get you "in" and "under" the Word of God, so that His Spirit can do His work. The projects you will engage in will help you apply principles of Scripture to your daily life. When you take these "hard steps of obedience," you will be surprised at what God may do!

This context of discipleship is designed to be a committed, accountable, and loving relationship – a unique expression of the grace of God through which you become more like Jesus. This growing relationship with God is most effectively passed on to others life-to-life, not head-to-head. We are grateful that you have chosen CTO as part of your discipleship process and are excited about what Jesus may do in your life.

## DISCIPLE-MAKING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

The CTO website ([www.ctoministries.org](http://www.ctoministries.org)) provides a description of the CTO ministry philosophy. It also includes significant resources for your personal growth as well as key resources to better equip you to disciple others. Use the "search" feature (magnifying glass) to locate specific articles, diagrams or videos.

**Please register at [www.ctoministries.org/register](http://www.ctoministries.org/register) if you have not already done so.**

## FOREWORD-V