

SERIES: THE PROCESS OF BREAKTHROUGH
PART 1: BECOME CLEAR

This series is for everyone. Everyone in this room needs to experience the breakthroughs that God has for us, because none of us are perfect. But if you haven't lived a perfect life, if you've ever been hurt, if you've ever had a hang-up or a habit that you'd like to get rid of, you need to learn the process of breakthrough.

The good news is this: regardless of the problems and barriers you need a breakthrough in, whether it's spiritual, emotional, relational, financial, vocational, intellectual, physical, sexual or whatever, regardless of what you need a breakthrough for, the steps to the process of breakthrough are always the same. I came up with the acronym BREAKTHROUGH. Each week we're going to go through each step that it takes to get the breakthrough you're seeking and needing from God. Learning these 12 steps for your breakthrough will help you to establish a lifestyle of where you identify what's blocking you, and you can breakthrough the barriers and blockades that life and the devil put in your way.

What is blocking you from God's best? Where do you need your breakthrough?

The first step to my breakthrough:
(The B in Breakthrough)

Become clear: I'm not God which means I'm not all powerful, all knowing, and ever present. My life is out of control.

Do you ever stay up late when you know you need sleep? Do you ever eat or drink more calories than your body needs? Do you ever feel you ought to exercise, but you don't? Do you ever know the right thing to do, but you don't do it? Do you ever know something is wrong, but you do it anyway? Have you ever known the selfless act to engage, but you do the selfish thing instead? Have you ever tried to control someone or something and found it was uncontrollable, and you just tried harder to control the person or thing? If your answer is yes to any of those questions, welcome to the human race. We're all in need of breakthroughs and redemption, recovery and restoration.

I. The cause of my problem: My sin nature

The Bible has a word for this. The Bible calls that tendency: my sin nature. My sin nature gets me in all kinds of problems, and you in all kinds of problems. I do things that aren't good for me. I do them even when they are self-destructive, and I don't do things that are good for me. I respond the wrong way when I'm hurt, and it just increases the hurt, rather than lessening it. I react the wrong way to people. I treat them in wrong ways, and then it backfires when I know it's not going to work. I try to fix problems, and often when I fix them they are worse than they were when I started. Proverbs 14:12 says

“There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.”

The Bible says that there is a fierce battle that is being waged in your life between your sin nature and the Holy Spirit that lives within if you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. In Galatians 5:16-17, 19-23 he writes, **“I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit give us desires that are opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.... ¹⁹When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. ²²But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things.”**

The first step to breakthrough is you must understand the cause of this problem. Why does this happen in my life? **You need to understand the CAUSE, then the CONSEQUENCES of the problem, then the CURE.**

What's the cause of my problem? The cause of all your problems is this—I want to be God. I want to decide what's right and what's wrong. You say, “I don't want anybody telling me what's right and what's wrong, I want to decide what's right and what's wrong. I want to call my own shots, I want to make my own rules. I want to put myself at the center of the universe. I want to be my own boss, live my own way, if it feels good, do it. I don't want anybody telling me what to do with my life.” That’s called playing God. What it says is, “I want to be in complete control.” And the more insecure you are, the more you're driven to control. The more insecure you are, you want to control yourself, control other people, and control your environment. You are driven to do this. And, this is what is often called the Codependent Personality in our Recovery process. One author has said that **Codependency is the mother of all addictions. Three leading characteristics of those who struggle with codependency are the needs to *rescue*, *caretake* and *control*.**

This is man's oldest problem. Even Adam and Eve had it. God put them in Paradise and they tried to control Paradise. God said, “You can do anything you want to in this entire Paradise except one thing: Don't eat from this certain tree.” What did they do? They made a beeline for that tree. The only thing in Paradise God said was off limits. Satan said, “Eat this fruit and be gods.” That's been the problem from the very start. I want to be God. I want to call the shots. I want to run my own life.

We want to be in control. How do we play God? Please look at your notes and fill in the blanks.

By denying our humanity and by trying to control everything for selfish reasons

I want to be at the center of my universe. Control is the real issue. I want to be in control, and we try to control ourselves, other people, everything around us.

How do we play God? Four areas we try to control in our lives:

A. Our image

You want to control what other people think of you. You don't want other people to really know what you're like. We play games, we wear masks, we pretend, we fake it, we want people to see certain sides of us, and we hide other parts, and we deny our weaknesses, and we deny our feelings (“I'm not angry, I'm not upset, I'm not worried, I'm not afraid.”) We don't want people to see the real us. *Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?* The answer is: If I tell you who I really am and you don't like it, tough for me ‘cause I'm all I have. So we try to hide and we try to control our image.

B. Other people

Parents try to control kids; kids try to control parents. Wives try to control husbands; husbands try to control wives. People

try to control other people. There are politics in your office. Countries try to control other countries. We use a lot of tools to manipulate each other. We use guilt to control, we use fear, we use praise, and some of you use the silent treatment to control, anger, and rage. We try to control people.

C. Our problems

We're good at this. We use phrases like: "I can handle it; it's not really a problem." That's somebody trying to play God. "I'm O.K. Really, I'm fine." We control our problems: I don't need any help, and I certainly don't need counseling. I can quit any time, I'll work it out on my own. The more you try to fix your problem yourself, the worse the problem gets.

D. Our pain

Have you ever thought how much time you spend running from pain? Trying to avoid it, deny it, escape it, reduce it, and postpone it. People try to postpone it many different ways. Sometimes we try to postpone our pain by eating or not eating. We try to postpone our pain by getting drunk or by smoking or by taking drugs or by getting in and out of relationships. "This next relationship is what I really need to feel really whole and significant." And you get in the relationship—"Oh, that wasn't it," and you get out. It's in and out of one relationship after another. Or you develop some kind of compulsive habit to try to control your pain. Or you become abusive and you get angry with other people or critical and judgmental to hide your pain. Or you get

depressed. There are many, many ways we try to control our pain.

Pain comes when we realize in our quiet moments we're not God, and we can't control everything, and that's scary.

That's the first step to Breakthrough. You're not going to get well on your own. Face it. Don't deny it.

II. The consequences

Four problems that always happen when we try to play God:

A. Fear

When I try to control everything, I get afraid. In Genesis 3:10 Adam says, **“I heard You, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”** We are afraid somebody's going to find out who we really are, that we're fakes, we're phony, we really don't have it all together, we're not perfect. So I don't want to let anybody get real close to me because they'll find out I'm scared inside. And so we fake it and pretend and fill our lives with fear, afraid that somebody's going to reject us, not love us, or not like us because they don't really know what I'm like. They only like an image of me. If they really knew what I was like, they wouldn't like me. So I resent that. And we're filled with fear when we try to play God.

B. Frustration

It's frustrating trying to be the general manager of the universe. We suppress one compulsion and another one pops up. We whack down one problem and another one comes up. We deal with one relational conflict and another pops up. It's so frustrating because you can't get them all resolved at the same time. You walk around pretending you're God: I'm powerful, I can handle it.

David understood this: In Psalm 32:3 he writes, **“When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long.”**

If you're frustrated it is a symptom of a deeper problem that you have not dealt with: the root issue. You're not God. You're trying to control everything, and it doesn't work.

C. Fatigue

It's tiring playing God. Trying to control everything, pretending you've got it all together, denial takes a lot of energy. In Psalm 32:4-5, David said: **“Day and night Your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. ⁵Finally, I confessed all my sins to You and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, ‘I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.’ And You forgave me! All my guilt is gone.”** Most people try to hide their pain and run from the pain by keeping busy, because we think, “I don't like the way I feel when I slow down. I don't like the sounds that go through my mind when I lay my head back on the pillow, and I don't like those

feelings and those sounds so I'll just keep busy.” You run from pain by constantly being on the go, work yourself to death at work. Or you get in some hobby or some sport, and it becomes a compulsion. Or you can get involved in religious activities; church activity can hide your pain. You're hoping you'll be so tired that when you lay your head down on the pillow, you'll be fatigued so much; you'll go to sleep and won't have to hear your pain.

If you're in a constant state of fatigue, always worn out, ask yourself, **“What pain am I running from? What problem do I not want to face up to that motivates and drives me to work and work so that I'm in the constant state of fatigue?”**

D. Failure

When you try to play God, that's one job description you're guaranteed to fail at. Proverbs 28:13, **“People who cover over their sins will not prosper. But if they confess and forsake them, they will receive mercy.”** You need to be honest and open about your weaknesses and your faults and failures.

There's not a person in this room that has it all together. We're all weak in different areas, and we need each other. In fact we need each other because we become mirrors to reveal each other's hurts and help each other. Many times others see things I don't see and vice versa. 2 choices that will thwart the breakthroughs you're wanting in your life:

1) **“My problem is not that bad.” That's called denial.**

How bad does it have to get before you admit that you need some help? How bad does that hurt, that relationship, that pain, that problem, that memory have to get before you admit that you need help? Unfortunately, it is human nature that we never change until our pain becomes greater than the fear of change. **We don't change when we see the light—we change when we feel the heat** and the marriage starts falling apart or the kids start going off the wrong way or you get that phone call in the middle of the night. Save yourself some pain, start early on the breakthroughs that you need. One man said, “It happened to me when the acid of my pain finally ate through the wall of my denial.” C.S. Lewis has written, **“God whispers to us in our pleasures, but He shouts to us in our pain.”** Pain is God's megaphone. Let it motivate you to get help, to face the issue that you've been ignoring ten, twenty, maybe thirty years. How's your pain level? It's a warning light to you. Listen to it.

The second inappropriate way to respond to is:

2) **“That's fine, but I can solve my problems myself: This series on breakthrough, restoration and recovery is for somebody else.” That's called denial, too.**

Unless you've had a perfect life, there are some things you need to deal with. You say, “I can handle my problem, I can take care of it.” The fact is if you could handle it, you would have, but you can't, so you won't. If you could have handled

that problem, it wouldn't be a problem; you wouldn't still have it today. But you can't, so you won't. This denial is as old as Adam and Eve. They had a problem. They ran and hid behind the bush. God had made them, and God had made the bush, and they're hiding from God. That's how silly it is.

(Scottie teaches...)

III. The cure

The first step to the breakthroughs you need is to admit your powerlessness. The Bible says that in admitting my weakness I find strength. This is not a popular idea in self-sufficient American culture which says, "Raise yourself up by your own bootstraps; don't depend on anybody else; do the Lone Ranger thing." But this is the essential first step to getting the help you need. Admit you're powerless to do it on your own. You need God, and you need other people.

Admitting I'm not God means I recognize three important facts of life. Maturity comes when you recognize these three facts of life:

A. I admit that I cannot change my past

It hurt, I still remember it, but all the resentment in the world isn't going to change it. I'm powerless to change my past.

B. I admit that I am cannot control other people

I try, I like to manipulate them, I use all kinds of little gimmicks, but it doesn't work. I am responsible for my actions, not theirs. I can't control other people.

C. I admit that I am not coping with my harmful habits, behaviors, actions

Good intentions are not enough. How many times have you tried and failed. Will power is not enough. You need something more than will power. You need a source of power beyond yourself. James 4:6, **“God sets Himself against the proud, but He shows favor to the humble.”** God’s grace, His unconditional love and acceptance of who I am is the power to change. Grace is the power God gives me to make the changes in my life that I want to make, and He wants me to make—the power to change. And for you to recover from hurts, habits and hang-ups in your life, you need God's grace. How do you get it? Only one way: He gives it to the humble.

Let me ask you, what needs changing in your life? What hurt, hang-up or habit have you been trying to ignore? For many people this is the hardest step. This is the first barrier and roadblock that every one of us must be willing to tear down and just admit it, “I have a problem, I have a need, I have a hurt.” It's hard for many of us to admit that, because it's humbling. It says, “I'm not God, and I don't have it all together as much as I'd like everybody to think that I do.” This is what it means to Become Clear on what the real issues are. I am not God, and I admit that I am not winning over my addictions, compulsive behaviors and character flaws that are

ruining my life and blocking me from the love, acceptance and forgiveness from God and others that we so desperately need. If you tell that to somebody, they're not going to be surprised, because they know it, God knows it, you know it; you just need to admit it. It means being honest and facing a problem that you've wanted to ignore for a long time. To Become Clear means that I and you acknowledge that we need God's grace. Here is the last fill in.

Grace is: The power to change

I'm asking you to join me for these next 11 weeks to engage with me and your CVCHURCH family in **The Process of Breakthrough.**

COMMUNION

“Then He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then He said, ‘Take this and share it among yourselves. For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.’ He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, ‘This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.’ Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, ‘This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.’ After supper He took another cup of wine and said, ‘This cup is the new covenant between God and His people—an agreement confirmed with My blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.’” Luke 22:17-19