

## **A Plan for Change**

### **PIP CONTRACT**

1. Describe the problem in detail, be specific. How does the problem show up in your behavior, words, thoughts, attitudes, emotions? When, where and with whom does it appear? How often is it a problem? How intense? How long-standing? What was the starting point? What has helped in the past? What has hindered change?

**My problem is a lack of trust in the sovereignty of God. This problem manifests itself in the macro perspective by a desire to control all aspects of my life. In the micro perspective, this problem manifests itself in the following ways:**

#### **Behaviors:**

- \$ **Giving excessive attention to relatively unimportant details**
- \$ **Not properly differentiating between the important and the urgent**
- \$ **Excessive checking of my emails and voice mails to see if there are new fires to put out**
- \$ **Making unsolicited suggestions to others**
- \$ **Pushing people rather than waiting for them to respond in their own time**
- \$ **Attempting to initiate forward movement in a project prior to a reasonable point of progress**
- \$ **I organize excessively in an attempt to give myself the impression that things are under control**

#### **Words:**

- \$ **At this time, I am not aware of specific words I use which are associated with my problem. My problem is primarily internal and behavioral rather than verbal.**

#### **Thoughts:**

- \$ **I missed something important**
- \$ **I don=t know the answer and I should**
- \$ **I may get sued**
- \$ **God is not concerned about this trial**
- \$ **This is too much to bear**
- \$ **Nobody understands what I am going through**
- \$ **I have it harder than others**
- \$ **If I don=t do it, it won=t get done**
- \$ **People just don=t care**

#### **Attitudes:**

- \$ **Impatience**
- \$ **Frustration**

§      **Arrogance**

**Emotions:**

§      **Fear**

§      **Panic**

§      **Worry**

§      **Dread**

§      **Anxiety**

§      **Resentment**

**While this problem manifests itself in virtually all aspects of my life, it appears most often in my work environment. Because I am self-employed, there are more opportunities for me to exercise controlling thoughts and behaviors as I carry out my work tasks.**

**The problem manifests itself often at work, and to a lesser degree in the non-work-related areas of my life. When it manifests itself, it is usually quite intense, often resulting in feelings of fear and anxiety.**

**I do not know how long I have had this problem. I became aware of the problem approximately two years ago, when my wife asked me why I was so fearful about work-related issues, and my excessive checking of voice mails during our Aweekend getaways@. She was particularly concerned that I was reacting fearfully to imaginary scenarios which, ultimately, never came to pass.**

**What has been particularly helpful has been to mediate on Phil. 4:8, particularly the phrase Awhatever is true@. I have been guilty of creating mental speculations and reacting to them rather than disciplining my mind to focus on those things which are actually true.**

**What hinders positive change is that I still create speculations and allow myself to dwell on them.**

2. Identify your goals for working on this problem.

**My goals for working on this problem are as follows:**

§      **Sharpen my understanding of my problem**

§      **Identify underlying heart idols associated with my problem**

§      **Confess and repent of sinful thoughts, attitudes and behaviors associated with my problem on the spot!**

§      **Practice putting off sinful thoughts, attitudes and behaviors associated with my problem**

§      **Renew my mind with Scripture and other helpful resources**

- < **Spend time meditating on God as Creator in order to develop a bigger idea of God (see esp. Is. 40-48).**
- < **Practice putting on new thoughts, attitudes and behaviors (this is where I should focus most of my energyBwhat would please God!)**
- < **Not giving in or giving up as God sanctifies my heart in this area**

3. This behavior or attitude comes from what heart idolatry? Please be specific. For example, "I desire and live to keep things under control." Or, "I make people my refuge."

**The specific heart idol is my desire to rule my life and control my universe.**

4. Have you asked the Lord's forgiveness? When will you?

**Yes, I have asked the Lord=s forgiveness.**

5. Have you asked the forgiveness of anyone who has been impacted by this? If not, when will you?

**Yes, I have asked my wife=s forgiveness as she is directly affected by my efforts to always be in control.**

6. In what ways do you need to die to this idolatry? What behavior or attitude needs to be "put off"? How could you or should you practice the principle of "radical amputation," demonstrating your sincere desire to change (Matt 5:28-30; Col 3:5)?

**I need to die to my lust for control. I need to die to my fear of loose ends. I need to die to my sense of need to mistrust others.**

**Behaviors and attitudes which need to be put off encompass those noted on pp. 1-2, above.**

**I need to stop giving in to my fleshly desire to control all aspects of my life. This will require exercising patience as I wait upon others, forcing myself to let minor loose ends remain untied, watching God work things out in His timing and way, practicing self-control with my email and voice mail checks, practicing contentment when things don=t go as I planned.**

7. What behavior or attitude needs to be "put on"?

- \$ **Humility/meekness**
- \$ **Patience**
- \$ **Confidence in and dependence upon God**
- \$ **Waiting on God and upon others**
- \$ **Serving others in order to take my mind of being served**

8. How will you do this and when?

**I have already started. I have begun to make myself aware that God is going to allow disorder (sometimes much!) in my life. I have been tested with work and ministry issues that have required me to trust God for the outcome. I am making a greater effort to cover all my attempts to change with prayer. I am trying to change my communication style to be considerate of when others may not want to talk about my pet issues.**

9. How do you need to grow in your love for or trust in the Lord related to this/these areas?

- \$ **I need to believe in my heart that God is fully aware of, and ordains, all my circumstances.**
- \$ **I need to trust God with outcomes, no matter what they may be, because Aall things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.@**
- \$ **I need to thank God for my trials, knowing they are ordained by Him for my good and His glory.**
- \$ **I need to wait upon the Lord and see that He is good.**
- \$ **I need to delight in my Lord (Ps. 37:4).**
- \$ **I need to worship my Lord in all circumstances.**

10. How will you do this and when?

**I have started to do this by praying for God=s help and asking Him to make me aware of my blindness to manifestations of my problem. I have started to memorize specific scriptures during the week that address my heart attitude relating to my problem, and, which illustrate those specific attributes of God which under-gird my wholehearted trust in Him.**

11. Who will you ask to hold you accountable, and how will they do it? Ideally, this should be someone in your local church or a close brother or sister in Christ.

**I have asked my wife to hold me accountable. I have given her permission to let me know when she observes me behaving in a manner that is characteristic of trying to seize control of my life. I will also report to my wife at the end of the day if I have sinned in this area, and when I am victorious when I face life-tests related to my problem. Lastly, my wife will test me on my scripture memory verses each evening.**

**Specific questions I will have my wife ask me are:**

1. Tell me of any successes or failures you today had with control issues.
2. What were you thinking when you failed? When you were victorious.
3. What were you fearful of?
4. What Scripture helped you?
5. What did you learn from this situation?

12. What literature do you need to read that addresses this subject?

**I intend to read carefully the book *Trusting God* (and complete the attendant workbook) by Jerry Bridges. I am also currently reading *Humility - True Greatness* by C.J. Mahaney. Because I believe I also have a ~~A~~Fear of Man problem, I am reading *When People are Big and God is Small* by Edward T. Welch. I have just completed the book *Idols of the Heart* by Elyse Fitzpatrick, which I plan to consult on an on-going basis.**

13. What verses do you need to memorize, meditate on or study?

**The verses I need to memorize, mediated on or study are:**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Memorize:</b>             | <b>Phil. 4:8-9; Prov. 3:5-7; 1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:28-29; Psalm 32:10</b>   |
| <b>Study and Meditation:</b> | <b>Psalm 27:14; Psalm 28:7; Psalm 31:19; Psalm 34:4, 9, 17-19; Psalm 37:1, 4, 7; and; Matt. 10:29-31; Isaiah 40-48</b> |