Chapter 1 – The Light Comes On

• We seem to have it together
• Sometimes we fall into patterns of behavior that seem to be working
• We are able to control the people around us through attitudes and intimidation, and we seem to be successful
• Then one day it all falls apart
• Our wife and children are gone and we are alone. Very alone
• Reality is a moment when the light goes on and we would like to do it all over

We have been hurt

• We don't realize how destructive our behaviors have been until the light comes on
• Many of us have been hurt emotionally, relationally and spiritually but have not really known the extent of our wounds and how we can recover
• We lack objectivity in looking at ourselves.
• We may say the right things but not believe them for ourselves
• We have questions like: Why don't I feel close to my spouse? We think success is what counts in life. We experience loneliness or resentment.

What stops us from looking at things the way they are?

• Why do we lack objectivity?
• When we were hurt in the past, we developed ways to cope with it.
• We suppress emotions, we're compulsive perfectionists, we are driven to succeed, we withdraw and become passive, we attack people who hurt us, we punish ourselves when we fail, we say clever things to be accepted, we help others so we will be appreciated, etc.
• Sometimes we are forced into a situation where we have to start dealing with it
• Or maybe we want to change but don't know how
• It is hard to be objective by ourselves.

We need guidance and encouragement

• We need to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and usually we need the honesty and encouragement of at least one other person who wants to help us.
• We may become depressed when we see the effects of our wounds
• We may have scars from neglect, abuse, manipulation, that come from living in a dysfunctional family
• These scars may be alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce, absent father or mother, a hot temper, verbal abuse, physical abuse, etc.
• Perhaps we don't feel as though we are like this – but all of us carry the effects of a fallen sinful nature, or the imperfections of others

We need God's support

• Often we think that God doesn't really want to know
• But God does want us to be honest with Him
• “Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost places” (Psa 51:6)
• When we read through the Psalms we see that David was like us too, in that he experienced God's love and forgiveness
• He also experienced different emotions and expressed them to God: Psa 42:9 (abandonment), Psa 58:6-9 (anger), Psa 55:4-5 (despair), Psa 44:24-25 (despair), Psa 13:1-2
He also expressed his love of God (Psa 42:1-2), his trust in the Lord (Psa 27:1-3), and he praised God (Psa 145:1-3).
So we see that David was honest with God about what he was feeling, good and bad.

Why didn't it work before?
- We may have done programs and seminars but they didn't work before
- This may have been because of perceptions we have of ourselves
- These may be:
  - God doesn't really care about me
  - I am an unlovable, worthless person
  - Nobody will ever love me
  - I'll never be able to change
  - I've been a failure all my life, I guess I'll always be a failure
  - If people really knew me, they wouldn't like me
- It can hurt to recognize these or other perceptions in ourselves

Healing is possible
- But God's love and His word can, over time, bring healing to even our deepest wounds, and give us an appropriate sense of self-worth
- The purpose of the book is to:
  - Understand the nature of man's search for significance, or self-worth
  - Recognize and challenge inadequate answers
  - Apply God's solutions to your search for significance
- There are two options we can use to determine our self-worth:
  - The world's way: Self-worth = Performance (what you do) + Others' opinions (what others say or think about
  - God's way: Self-worth = God's Truth about You

Discussion Questions
- How would you define self-worth?
- Are you glad you are you? Do you have a healthy sense of self-worth?
- List some activities, relationships or achievements that make you feel better about yourself
- List some activities, relationships or achievements that make you feel worse about yourself
- What difference would it make if you realized that your self-worth is not conditional, based on performance, but is based on the Truth that your self-worth is based on God's unconditional love, forgiveness and acceptance
- Whose opinion do you value most? What would be your usual answer to this question?