Session 5: Triggers: People, Places, Things, and Feelings

PHASE 1 — FOUNDATION: SURRENDER AND STABILIZATION (WEEKS 1–2) · WEEK 1 — UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLE

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 5 handout (Top-5 Trigger Map) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

A trigger is anything that switches on the urge to use — a street corner, payday, a certain person's name on the phone, an argument, loneliness at a certain hour, pain, boredom, or even a celebration. Our brains learned to link these things with relief. What was learned can be mapped and planned for. When we name our triggers ahead of time and plan a way out, we are not caught off guard nearly as often.

- Triggers are information, not failure Being triggered means the old learning fired — it says nothing about your sincerity today. What you do in the next ten minutes is the recovery.
- Rate them honestly A trigger list where everything is a '10' helps no one. Ranking forces the real question: which three situations actually endanger me this month?
- The way of escape is written down In the moment, the brain argues. A plan made in advance — who I call, where I go, what I say to leave — argues back.
- Feelings are triggers too For many people the strongest triggers are internal: resentment, shame, loneliness, and also joy and success. Feelings are not commands; they are weather reports.

Goals for this session

☐ I can sort triggers into external (people, places, things) and internal (feelings, body states, thoughts)

☐ I can list my five highest-risk triggers with a rating

☐ I can pair each top trigger with a specific 'way of escape' plan

Check-in

What is the trigger that has caught you off guard most often — the one you did not see coming until you were already in it?

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. Which category — people, places, things, or feelings — carries most of your risk right now?

2. Is there a trigger you have been protecting (keeping the number, keeping the route, keeping the 'just in case')? What keeps you holding it?

3. What 'ways of escape' have actually worked for you, even once?

4. Who needs to know your top trigger so they can help you guard it?

Session 5 — Skill Practice

Each participant builds a Top-5 Trigger Map in their workbook: trigger, risk rating 1–10, the way of escape in one sentence, and the person who will hold them to it. Volunteers share one row. Facilitator checks that every escape is concrete — 'call Marcus and go to the house meeting' passes; 'try harder' does not.

My Top-5 Trigger Map is the table below. Every way of escape must be concrete — a person, a place, an action.

Trigger	Risk (1–10)	My way of escape (one sentence)	Person who will hold me to it

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ Run the experiment: choose your highest-rated avoidable trigger and avoid it all week by design (route, contact, or cash plan). Log any moment the internal triggers fire and what you did. Report the data next session.

My log for the week:

Day / date	What happened — what I did	Notes

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.