

Steps to Freedom in Christ

It is my deep conviction that the finished work of Jesus Christ and the presence of God in our lives are the only means by which we can resolve our personal and spiritual conflicts. Christ in us is our only hope (see Col. 1:27), and He alone can meet our deepest needs of life, acceptance, identity, security, and significance. The discipleship counseling process upon which these steps are based should not be understood as just another counseling technique that we learn. It is an encounter with God. He is the Wonderful Counselor. He is the One who grants repentance that leads to a knowledge of the truth which sets us free (see 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

The "Steps to Freedom in Christ" do not set you free. Who sets you free is Christ, and what sets you free is your response to Him in repentance and faith. These steps are just a tool to help you submit to God and resist the devil (see Jas. 4:7). Then you can start living a fruitful life by abiding in Christ and becoming the person He created you to be. Many Christians will be able to work through these steps on their own and discover the wonderful freedom that Christ purchased for them on the cross. Then they will experience the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, and it shall guard their hearts and their minds in Christ Jesus (see Phil. 4:7).

You May Need Help

Ideally, it would be best if everyone had a trusted friend, pastor or counselor who would help them go through this process, because it is just applying the wisdom of James 5:16, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Another person can prayerfully support you by providing objective counsel. I have had the privilege to help many Christian leaders who could not process this on their own. Many Christian groups all over the world are using this approach in many languages with incredible results because the Lord desires for all to come to repentance (see 2 Pet. 3:9), and to know the truth that sets us free in Christ (see John 8:32).

Appropriating and Maintaining Freedom

Christ has set us free through His victory over sin and death on the cross. However, appropriating our freedom in Christ through repentance and faith and maintaining our life of freedom in Christ are two different issues. It was for freedom that Christ set us free, but we have been warned not to return to a yoke of slavery which is legalism in this context (see Gal. 5:1) or to turn our freedom into an opportunity for the flesh (see Gal. 5:13). Establishing people as free in Christ makes it possible for them to walk by faith according to what God says is true and live by the power of the Holy Spirit and not carry out the desires of the flesh (see Gal. 5:16). The true Christian life avoids both legalism and license.

If you are not experiencing freedom, it may be because you have not stood firm in the faith or actively taken your place in Christ. It is every Christian's responsibility to do whatever is necessary to maintain a right relationship with God and mankind. Your eternal destiny is not at stake. God will never leave you nor forsake you (see Heb. 13:5), but your daily victory is at stake if you fail to claim and maintain your position in Christ.

Your Position in Christ

You are not a helpless victim caught between two nearly equal but opposite heavenly super-powers. Satan is a deceiver. Only God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. Sometimes the reality of sin and the presence of evil may seem more real than the presence of God, but that's part of Satan's deception. Satan is a defeated foe, and we are in Christ. A true knowledge of God and knowing our identity and position in Christ are the greatest determinants of our "mental health." A false concept of God, a distorted understanding of who we are as children of God and the misplaced deification of Satan are the greatest contributors to "mental illness."

Many of our illnesses are psychosomatic. When these issues are resolved in Christ our physical bodies will function better, and we will experience greater health. Other problems are clearly physical and we need the services of the medical profession. Please consult your physician for medical advice and the prescribing of medication. We are both spiritual and physical beings who need the services of both the church and the hospital.

Winning the Battle for Your Mind

The battle is for the mind, which is the control center of all that we think and do. The opposing thoughts you may experience as you go through these steps can control you only if you believe them. If you are working through these steps alone, don't be deceived by any lying, intimidating thoughts in your mind. If a trusted pastor or counselor is helping you find your freedom in Christ, he or she must have your cooperation. You must share any thoughts you are having in opposition to what you are attempting to do. As lies are exposed by the truth of Scripture, the power of Satan is broken. The only way that you can lose control in this process is if you pay attention to a deceiving spirit and believe a lie.

You Must Choose

The following procedure is a means of resolving personal and spiritual conflicts which have kept you from experiencing the freedom and victory Christ purchased for you on the cross. Your freedom will be the result of what you choose to believe, confess, forgive, renounce and forsake. No one can do that for you. The battle for your mind can only be won as you personally choose truth. As you go through this process, understand that Satan is under no obligation to obey your thoughts. Only God has complete knowledge of your mind because He

is omniscient (all-knowing). So we can submit to God inwardly, but we need to resist the devil by reading aloud each prayer and by verbally renouncing, forgiving, confessing, etc. Also, the Greek word used in Ephesians 6 for the Sword of the Spirit being the **Word** of God is **Rhema**, meaning the spoken word. So, praying warfare prayers aloud is the best way to use the Sword of the Lord, His Word, in battle.

This process of reestablishing our freedom in Christ is nothing more than a fierce moral inventory and a rock-solid commitment to truth. It is the first step in the continuing process of discipleship. There is no such thing as instant maturity. It will take you the rest of your life to renew your mind and conform to the image of God. If your problems stem from a source other than those covered in these steps, you may need to seek professional help.

May the Lord grace you with His presence as you seek His face and help others experience the joy of their salvation.

Dr. Neil T. Anderson

STEP 1 - Counterfeit vs. Real

The first step to freedom in Christ is to renounce your previous or current involvement with satanically-inspired occult practices and false religions. You need to renounce any activity and group which denies Jesus Christ, offers guidance through any source other than the absolute authority of the written Word of God or requires secret initiations, ceremonies or covenants.

In order to help you assess your spiritual experiences, begin this step by asking God to reveal false guidance and counterfeit religious experiences.

Dear Heavenly Father,

I ask You to guard my heart and my mind and reveal to me any and all involvement I have had either knowingly or unknowingly with cultic or occult practices, false religions or false teachers. In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Review the "Non-Christian Spiritual Experience Inventory" and answer the questions that follow. When you are confident that your list is complete, confess and renounce each involvement, whether active or passive, by praying aloud using the following prayer, repeating it separately for each item on your list:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess that I have participated in _____, I renounce _____, and I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through _____. Thank You that in Christ I am forgiven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Non Christian Spiritual Experience Inventory

To use the *Non-Christian Spiritual Experience Inventory*, carefully think through this list and check anything in which you were involved. This list is not exhaustive, but it will guide you in identifying non-Christian experiences. Add any additional involvement you have had. Even if you ‘innocently’ participated in something or observed it, you should write it on your list and renounce it just in case you unknowingly gave ground to Satan.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astral Projection | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ouija Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Unity | <input type="checkbox"/> Hare Krishna |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table/Body Lifting | <input type="checkbox"/> The Way
International | <input type="checkbox"/> Bahaism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dungeons &
Dragons | <input type="checkbox"/> Unification Church | <input type="checkbox"/> Rosicrucian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trance Speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Mormonism | <input type="checkbox"/> Science of the Mind |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Church of the Living
Word | <input type="checkbox"/> Science of Creative
Intelligence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magic Eight Ball | <input type="checkbox"/> Jehovah’s Witness | <input type="checkbox"/> Transcendental
Meditation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telepathy | <input type="checkbox"/> Children of God
(Love) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hinduism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spells or Curses | <input type="checkbox"/> Swedenborgianism | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Séance | <input type="checkbox"/> Unitarianism | <input type="checkbox"/> Echkankar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Materialization | <input type="checkbox"/> Masons | <input type="checkbox"/> Roy Masters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clairvoyance | <input type="checkbox"/> New Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Silva Mind Control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spirit Guides | <input type="checkbox"/> The Forum (EST) | <input type="checkbox"/> Father Divine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fortune Telling | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirit Worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Theosophical
Society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tarot Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Pow Wow | <input type="checkbox"/> Islam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Palm Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Horror Films/Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Muslim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astrology/horoscopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Satanic/Ungodly
Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rod & Pendulum | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hypnosis | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental manipulations
Or mind swapping | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/white magic | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wicca | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Age Medicines | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blood Pacts/Cutting | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fetishism/charms | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Incubi/Succubae
(sexual spirits) | | |

1. Have you ever been hypnotized, attended a New Age or parapsychology seminar, consulted a medium, Spiritist, or channeler? Explain.
2. Do you or have you ever had an imaginary friend or spirit guide offering you guidance or companionship? Explain.
3. Have you ever heard voices in your mind or had repeating or nagging thoughts condemning you or that are foreign to what you believe or feel, like there was a dialogue going on in your head? Explain.
4. What other spiritual experiences have you had that would be considered out of the ordinary?
5. Have you ever made a vow, covenant, or pact with any individual or group other than God?
6. Have you been involved in satanic ritual or satanic worship in any form? Explain.

All satanic rituals, covenants, and assignments must be specifically renounced as the Lord allows you to recall them. Some who have been subjected to satanic ritual abuse may have developed multiple personalities in order to survive. Nevertheless, continue through the *Steps to Freedom* in order to resolve all that you consciously can. It is important that you resolve the demonic strongholds first. Every personality must resolve higher issues and agree to come together in Christ. You may need someone who understands spiritual conflict to help you maintain control and not be deceived into false memories. Only Jesus can bind up the broken-hearted, set captives free and make us whole.

Satanic Ritual Abuse victims with Dissociative Identity Disorder will need help from a believer specially trained to help resolve traumas and to deal with the demonic systems programmed into their subconscious. This is not to be entered into lightly. Deeper Walk International Ministries is an excellent source of referrals for help (www.deeperwalkinternational.com).

If there has been any involvement in satanic ritual or heavy occult activity, you need to state aloud the following special renunciations which apply. Read across the page, renouncing the first item in the column on the Kingdom of Darkness and then affirming the first truth in the column on the Kingdom of Light. Continue down the page in this manner.

Special Renunciations for Satanic Ritual Abuse

Kingdom of Darkness

I renounce ever signing my name over to Satan or having had my name signed to Satan.

I renounce any ceremony where I may have been wed to Satan.

I renounce any and all covenants that I made with Satan.

I renounce all satanic assignments for my life, including duties, marriage and children.

I renounce all spirit guides assigned to me.

I renounce ever giving of my blood in the service of Satan.

I renounce ever eating of flesh or drinking of blood for satanic worship.

I renounce any and all guardians and Satanist parents who were assigned to me.

I renounce any baptism in blood or urine whereby I am identified with Satan.

I renounce any and all sacrifices that were made on my behalf by which Satan may claim ownership of me.

Kingdom of Light

I announce that my name is now written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

I announce that I am the bride of Christ.

I announce that I am a partaker of the New Covenant with Christ.

I announce and commit myself to know and do only the will of God and accept only His guidance.

I announce and accept only the leading of the Holy Spirit.

I trust only in the shed blood of my Lord Jesus Christ.

By faith I eat only the flesh and drink only the blood of Jesus in Holy Communion.

I announce that God is my Father and the Holy Spirit is my Guardian by whom I am sealed.

I announce that I have been baptized into Christ Jesus and my identity is now in Christ.

I announce that only the sacrifice of Christ has any hold on me. I belong to Him. I have been purchased by the blood of the Lamb.

STEP 2 - Deception vs. Truth

Truth is the revelation of God's Word, but we need to acknowledge the truth in the inner self (see Ps 51:6). When David lived a lie, he suffered greatly. When he finally found freedom by acknowledging the truth, he wrote: "How blessed is the man ... in whose spirit there is no deceit" (Ps. 32:2). We are to lay aside falsehood and speak the truth in love (see Eph 4:15,25). A mentally healthy person is one who is in touch with reality and relatively free of anxiety. Both qualities should characterize the Christian who renounces deception and embraces the truth.

Begin this critical step by expressing aloud a prayer of commitment to believing only truth. Don't let the enemy accuse you with thoughts such as this isn't going to work" or "I wish I could believe this but I can't" or any other lies in opposition to what you are praying.

Dear Heavenly Father,

I know that You desire truth in the inner self and that facing this truth is the way of liberation (Psalm 51:6; John 8:32). I acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies (John 8:44) and that I have deceived myself (1 John 1:8). I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that You, Heavenly Father, will rebuke all deceiving spirits by virtue of the shed blood and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith I have received You into my life and I am now seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:4-7; Col. 3:1-4). I acknowledge that I have the responsibility and authority to resist the devil, and when I do, he will flee from me (James 4:7). I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to me all the lies I have believed and to guide me into God's truth (Psalm 139:23-24; John 16:13). In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

It is important to pause at this point to consider some of Satan's deceptive schemes. In addition to false teachers, false prophets, and deceiving spirits, you can deceive yourself. Now that you are alive in Christ and forgiven, you never have to live a lie or defend yourself. Christ is your defense. How have you deceived or attempted to defend yourself according to the following?

Self-deception

- ___ Hearing God's Word but not doing it (see Jas. 1:22; 4:17)
- ___ Saying we have no sin (see 1 John 1:8)
- ___ Thinking we are something when we aren't (see Gal. 6:3)
- ___ Thinking we are wise in our own eyes (see 1 Cor. 3:18-19)
- ___ Thinking we will not reap what we sow (see Gal. 6:7)
- ___ Thinking the unrighteous will inherit the Kingdom (see 1 Cor. 6:9)
- ___ Thinking we can associate with bad company and not be corrupted (see 1 Cor. 15:33)

Self defense

(defending ourselves instead of trusting in Christ)

- Denial (conscious or subconscious refusal to face the truth)
- Fantasy (escaping from the real world)
- Emotional insulation (withdrawing to avoid rejection)
- Regression (reverting back to a less threatening time)
- Displacement (taking out frustrations on others)
- Projection (blaming others)
- Rationalization (making excuses for poor behavior)

Take a piece of paper and make two columns. As the Holy Spirit reveals the lies you have believed, write them in the left column, and then write God's truth in the right column. When you are finished making your list, pray through each lie using the following prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess I have believed the lie _____. I renounce this lie because the truth is _____. Lord, I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through believing this lie.

Choosing the truth may be difficult if you have been living a lie (been deceived) for many years. You may need to seek professional help to weed out the defense mechanisms you have depended upon to survive. The Christian needs only one defense — Jesus. Knowing that you are forgiven and accepted as God's child is what sets you free to face reality and declare your dependence on Him.

Faith is the biblical response to the truth, and believing the truth is a choice. When someone says, "I want to believe God, but I just can't," they are being deceived. Of course you can believe God. Faith is something you decide to do, not something feel like doing. Believing the truth doesn't make it true. It's true; therefore, we believe it. [The New Age movement is distorting the truth by saying we create reality through what we believe.] We cannot create reality with our minds; we face reality. It is what, or who you believe in that counts. Everybody believes in something, and everybody walks by faith according to what he or she believes. But if what you believe isn't true, then how you live (walk by faith) won't be right.

Historically, the church has found great value in publicly declaring its beliefs. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed have been recited for centuries. Read aloud the following affirmation of faith, and do so again as often as necessary to renew your mind. Experiencing difficulty in reading this affirmation may indicate where you are being deceived and under attack. Boldly affirm your commitment to biblical truth.

Step 2 Lie vs. Truth sample list

<u>Satan's Lies</u>	<u>God's Truth</u>
I will never gain victory over this sin.	Sin is no longer my Master, and I am dead to it. (Romans 6:7).
God has given up on me.	Because I am in Christ, He will never condemn me and never leave me. (Romans 8:1, 31-39; Heb 13:5).
No one loves me.	God showed His love for me when Jesus died for me on the cross (Rom. 5:8; John 15:13)
I'm a sinner saved by grace, not a saint.	All who are in Christ are saints (1 Corinthians 1:2).
Everybody is better and more important than me.	I am a unique part of Christ's body and just as important as every other member. (1 Corinthians 12:14-16).
I'm a hopeless failure.	I am not defined by what I do. I am a child of God and precious in His sight. He has made me a success in Him. (2 Cor. 2:14).
The Bible is too hard for me to understand.	I have been given the mind of Christ and the Holy Spirit will teach me all things (1 Cor 2:16b; John 14:26).
I'll never change.	I've already been changed. I'm a new creation; the old things have "passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
I am a loser.	I am the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).
I am not safe or secure.	I've been sealed with the Spirit, I'm safe in Him (Ephesians 1:13).
I'm inadequate and lacking.	I am complete in Christ (Col. 2:10) and He makes me adequate (2 Cor.3:5, 6).
My life is my own.	I have been bought with a price; I am not my own; I belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
I would be happy if I had lots of money.	I've been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3).
Everything is my fault.	God has declared me not guilty; no one else can put the blame on me (Rom. 8:32-39)
Everything that can go wrong will go wrong.	My glorious future is set in spiritual concrete (Ephesians 1:10-11).
I hope to go to heaven when I die.	I believe in Jesus and know that I have eternal life in Him (1 John 5:13).
I can't figure out God's will for my life.	I was re-created for good works that the Holy Spirit will lead me in as I trust in Him (Ephesians 2:10).
God always is so far away.	I've been brought near to God. I am in Him

	and He is in me (Ephesians 2:13).
I can't pray. I am too messed up to come to Him.	I have boldness and confident access to God (Ephesians 3:12; Heb 4:14-16).
I can't memorize verses.	The Holy Spirit helps me remember (John 14:26).
What if	God is in control of all of the what ifs and He loves me. I am safe in Him (Phil. 4:6-7)
I'm worthless.	I'm of infinite value in Christ because God bought at the price of the blood of His Son (Acts 20:28).
Feelings determine Truth.	God's Word determines Truth! (Col 1:5-6)

DOCTRINAL AFFIRMATION

I recognize that there is only one true and living God (Ex. 20:2-3) who exists as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that He is worthy of all honor, praise and glory as the Creator, Sustainer and Beginning and End of all things (Rev. 4:11; 5:9-10; Is. 43:1, 7, 21).

I recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1,14) I believe that He came to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8), that He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them (Col. 2:15).

I believe that God has proven His love for me because when I was still a sinner, Christ died for me (Rom 5:8). I believe that He delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to His kingdom, and in Him I have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-14).

I believe that I am now a child of God (1 John 3:1-3) and that I am seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6). I believe that I was saved by the grace of God through faith, that it was a gift, and not the result of any works on my part (Eph. 2:8-9).

I choose to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Eph. 6:10). I put no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3) for the weapons of warfare are not of the flesh (2 Cor. 10:4). I put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10-20), and I resolve to stand firm in my faith and resist the evil one.

I believe that apart from Christ I can do nothing (John 15:5), so I declare myself dependent on Him I choose to abide in Christ in order to bear much fruit and glorify the Lord (John 15:8) I announce to Satan that Jesus is my Lord (1 Cor 12:3) and I reject any counterfeit gifts or works of Satan in my life.

I believe that the truth will set me free (John 8:32) and that walking in the light is the only path of fellowship (1 John 1:7). Therefore, I stand against Satan's deception by taking every thought captive in obedience to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). I declare that the Bible is the only authoritative standard (2 Tim. 3: 15-16). I choose to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

I choose to present my body as an instrument of righteousness, a living and holy sacrifice, and I renew my mind by the living Word of God in order that I may prove that the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect (Rom. 6:13; 13 2). I put off the old self with its evil practices and put on the new self (Col. 3:10), and I declare myself to be a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

I trust my Heavenly Father to fill me with His Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), to lead me into all truth (John 16:13) and to empower my life that I may live above sin and not carry out the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16). I crucify the flesh (Gal. 5:24) and choose to walk by the Spirit.

I renounce all selfish goals and choose the ultimate goal of love (1 Tim. 1:5). I choose to obey the greatest commandments: to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and mind, and to love my neighbor as myself (Matt. 22:37-39).

I believe that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18) and that He is the head over all rule and authority (Col. 2:10). I believe that Satan and his demons are subject to me in Christ since I am a member of Christ's body (Eph. 1:19-23). Therefore, I obey the command to submit to God and to resist the Devil (Jas. 4:7), and I command all spiritual forces of darkness in the name of Christ to leave my presence.

STEP 3 - Bitterness vs. Forgiveness

We need to forgive others in order to be free from our pasts and to prevent Satan from taking advantage of us (see 2 Cor 2:10-11). We are to be merciful just as our Heavenly Father is merciful (see Luke 6:36). We are to forgive as we have been forgiven (see Eph. 4:31-32). Ask God to bring to mind the names of those people you need to forgive by praying in the following manner:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank You for the riches of Your kindness, forbearance, and patience, knowing that Your kindness has led me to repentance (Rom. 2:4). I confess that I have not extended the same patience and kindness toward others who have offended me, but instead I have harbored bitterness and resentment toward them. I ask the Holy Spirit to bring to my mind everyone that I need to forgive so that I can do so (Matt. 18:35).

As names come to mind, make a list of the names and offenses in pencil. At the end of your list, write "myself." Forgiving yourself is accepting God's cleansing and forgiveness. Also, write "thoughts against God." Thoughts raised up against the knowledge of God usually result in angry feelings toward Him. Technically, we can't forgive God because He cannot commit any sin of commission or omission. But we need to specifically renounce false expectations and thoughts about God and agree to release any anger we have toward Him.

Before you pray to forgive these people, stop and consider what forgiveness is, what it is not, what decision you will be making, and what the consequences will be. In the following explanation, the main points are in bold print.

Forgiveness is not forgetting. People who try to forget find they cannot. God says He will remember our sins "no more" (Heb. 10:17), but God, being omniscient, cannot forget. Remember our sins "no more" means that God will never use them against us (see Ps 103:12). Forgetting may be the result of forgiveness, but it is never the means of forgiveness. When we bring up the past against others, we are saying we haven't forgiven them.

Forgiveness is a choice, a crisis of the will. Since God requires us to forgive, it is something we can do. However, forgiveness is difficult for us because it pulls against our concept of justice. We want revenge for offenses suffered. However, we are told never to take our own revenge (see Rom. 12:19). You say, "Why should I let them off the hook?" That is precisely the problem. You are still hooked to them, still bound by your past. **You will let them off your hook, but they are never off God's.** He will deal with them fairly, something you cannot do.

You say, "You don't understand how much this person hurt me!" But don't you see, they are still hurting you! How do you stop the pain? **You don't forgive**

someone for their sake; you do it for your own sake, so you can be free. Your need to forgive isn't an issue between you and the offender; it's between you and God.

Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin. Forgiveness is costly. You pay the price of the evil you forgive. You're going to live with those consequences whether you want to or not; your only choice is whether you will do so in the bitterness of unforgiveness or the freedom of forgiveness. Jesus took the consequences your sin upon Himself. All true forgiveness is substitutionary, because no one really forgives without bearing the consequences of the other person's sin. God the Father "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Where is the justice? It's the cross that makes forgiveness legally and morally right: "For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all" (Rom. 6:10).

Decide that you will bear the burdens of their offenses by not using that information against them in the future. This doesn't mean that you tolerate sin. You must set up scriptural boundaries to prevent future abuse. Some may be required to testify for the sake of justice but not for the purpose of seeking revenge from a bitter heart.

How do you forgive from your heart? You acknowledge the hurt and the hate. If your forgiveness doesn't visit the emotional core of your life, it will be incomplete. Many feel the pain of interpersonal offenses, but they won't or don't know how acknowledge it. Let God bring the pain to the surface, so He can deal with it. This is where the healing takes place.

Don't wait to forgive until you feel like forgiving; you will never get there. Feelings take time to heal after the choice to forgive is made and Satan has lost his place (see Eph. 4:26-27). **Freedom is what will be gained, not a feeling.**

As you pray, God may bring to mind offending people and experiences you have totally forgotten. Let Him do it, even if it is painful. Remember you are doing this for your sake. God wants you to be free. Don't rationalize or explain away the offender's behavior. Forgiveness is dealing with your pain and leaving the other person to God. Positive feelings will follow in time; freeing yourself from the past is the critical issue right now.

Don't say, "Lord, please help me to forgive," because He is already helping you. Don't say, "Lord, I want to forgive," because you are bypassing the hard-core choice to forgive which is your responsibility. Stay with each individual until you are sure you have dealt with all the remembered pain—what they did, how they hurt you, how they made you feel (rejected, unloved, unworthy, dirty, etc.).

You are now ready to forgive the people on your list so you can be free in Christ, with those people no longer having any control over you. For each person on your list, pray aloud:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I forgive *(person's name)* **for** *(verbally share every specific hurt and pain the Lord brings to your mind)*. **It made me feel** *(you must touch the depth of your emotions!)*, **and I choose to leave all these emotions at the cross. Lord, I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through my unforgiveness.**

As you choose to forgive each person, erase their name and their offense(s) to symbolize erasing their debt as God has erased ours.

STEP 4 - Rebellion vs. Submission

We live in rebellious times. Many believe it is their right to sit in judgment of those in authority over them. Rebelling against God and His authority gives Satan an opportunity to attack. As our commanding general, the Lord says, "Get into ranks and follow Me. I will not lead you into temptation, but I will deliver you from evil" (see Matt. 6:13) .

We have two biblical responsibilities regarding authority figures: Pray for them and submit to them. The only time God permits us to disobey earthly leaders is when they require us to do something morally wrong before God or attempt to rule outside the realm of their authority. Pray using the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23). I know that in action and attitude I have sinned against You with a rebellious heart. Thank You for forgiving my rebellion, and I pray that by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ all ground gained by evil spirits because of my rebelliousness will be canceled. I pray that You will shed light on all my ways that I may know the full extent of my rebelliousness. I now choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant's heart. In the name of Christ Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

Being under authority is an act of faith. You are trusting God to work through His established lines of authority. There are times when employers, parents and husbands are violating the laws of civil government which are ordained by God to protect innocent people against abuse. In these cases, you need to appeal to the state for your protection. In many states, the law requires such abuse to be reported.

In difficult cases, such as continuing abuse at home, further counseling help may be needed. And in some cases, when earthly authorities have abused their position and are requiring disobedience to God or a compromise in your commitment to Him, you need to obey God, not man.

We are all admonished to submit to one another as equals in Christ (see Eph. 5:21). However, there are specific lines of authority in Scripture for the purpose of accomplishing common goals:

Civil Government (see Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4, 1 Pet. 2:13-17)

Parents (see Eph. 6:1-3)

Husband (see 1 Pet. 3:1-4) or Wife (see Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:7)

Employer (see 1 Pet. 2:18-23)

Church Leaders (see Heb. 13:17)

God (see Dan. 9:5, 9)

Examine each area and make a list of those times you have not been submissive, and use the following prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I agree I have been rebellious toward _____ by _____. I renounce this rebellion, and I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through my rebellion. I choose to be submissive and obedient to Your Word and to the authorities You have placed over me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

STEP 5 Pride vs. Humility

Pride is a killer. Pride says, "I can do it! I can get myself out of this mess without God or anyone else's help. Oh no, we can't. We absolutely need God, and we desperately need each other. Paul wrote, "we worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). Humility is confidence properly placed. We are to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (Eph. 6:10). Spiritual conflict follows pride (James 4: 6-10, 1 Peter 5:1-10). Use the following prayer to express your commitment to live humbly before God:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have said that pride goes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before stumbling (Prov. 16:18). I confess an attitude of independence and trying to live the Christian life out of my own strength and resources. I confess not denying myself, taking up my cross daily and following You (Matt. 16:24). I confess placing my will before Yours, centering my life around myself, and refusing to yield complete control of my life to You. I now renounce the self-life and ask God to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through my pride and independence. Lord, keep me from the self-life and cultivate within me an attitude of total dependence upon You. Guide me so that I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (Phil 2:3). Enable me through love to serve others and in honor prefer others (Rom. 12:10). I ask all this in the name of Christ Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

Having made that commitment, now allow God to show you any specific areas of your life where you have been prideful such as:

- ___ Having a stronger desire to do my will than God's will;
- ___ Being more dependent upon my strengths and resources than God's;
- ___ Too often believe that my ideas and opinions are better than others;
- ___ Being more concerned about controlling others than developing self-control;
- ___ Sometimes consider myself more important than others;
- ___ Having a tendency to think that I have no needs;
- ___ Finding it difficult to admit that I was wrong;
- ___ Having a tendency to be more of a people-pleaser than a God-pleaser;
- ___ Being overly concerned about getting the credit I deserve;
- ___ Being driven to obtain the recognition that comes from degrees, titles and positions;
- ___ Often thinking I am more humble than others;
- ___ These other ways: _____

For each of these that has been true your life pray aloud as follows:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I agree that I have been prideful by _____. I renounce this pride, and I choose to humble myself and place all my confidence in You. I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through my pride.

STEP 6 - Bondage vs. Freedom

The next step to freedom deals with habitual sin. People who have been caught in the trap of sin-confess-sin-confess may need to follow the instructions of James 5:16, "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Seek out a righteous person who will hold you up in prayer and to whom you can be accountable. Others may only need the assurance of 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession is not saying "I'm sorry"; its saying "I did it." Whether you need the help of others or just the accountability to God, pray the following prayer structure:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have told us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust (Rom. 13:14). I acknowledge giving in to fleshly lusts which wage war against my soul (1 Pet. 2:11). I thank You that in Christ my sins are forgiven, but I have transgressed Your moral law and thereby have given the enemy an opportunity to wage war in my physical body (Rom. 6:12-13; Eph. 4:27; Jas. 4:1; 1 Pet. 5:8). I humbly enter Your presence to acknowledge these sins and to seek Your cleansing (1 John 1:9) that I may be freed from the bondage of sin. I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to my mind all the ways I have grieved Him by transgressing His moral law. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The deeds of the flesh are numerous. Many of the following issues are from Galatians 5:19-21. Check those that apply to you and any others you have struggled with that the Lord has brought to your mind. Then, confess each one with the concluding prayer. (Note: sexual sins, eating disorders, substance abuse, abortion, suicidal tendencies, perfectionism and fear will be dealt with later).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> stealing | <input type="checkbox"/> cheating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fighting | <input type="checkbox"/> gossiping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jealousy | <input type="checkbox"/> controlling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> envying | <input type="checkbox"/> procrastinating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> outbursts of anger | <input type="checkbox"/> swearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lying | <input type="checkbox"/> complaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> criticizing | <input type="checkbox"/> greediness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lusting | <input type="checkbox"/> laziness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> divisiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank You that my sins are forgiven in Christ, but I have walked by the flesh and therefore sinned by _____. I renounce _____, and I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through _____. I ask You, Lord, to keep me from willful sin that it may not rule over me (Psalm 19:13).

It is our responsibility not to allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies by using our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness (see Rom. 6:12,13). If you are or have struggled with sexual sins (pornography, masturbation, sexual promiscuity, etc.) or are experiencing sexual difficulty in your marriage, pray using the following prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I ask You to reveal to my mind every sexual misuse of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As the Lord brings to your mind every sexual misuse of your body, whether it was done to you (rape, incest or other sexual abuse) or willingly by you, pray as follows:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess participating (*against my will*) in unholy sex with _____. I renounce this unholy sex and I ask You to break my sexual bond with _____ and to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through this unholy sex.

If you have viewed pornography, it is vital that you have it cleansed out of your subconscious by the Holy Spirit. To do this pray:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess viewing pornography by (*viewing videos, magazines, websites, etc.*). I renounce viewing all of these pornography images, and I ask You Lord Jesus to cleanse all of these images out of my subconscious. I need Your grace to think on what is pure, right and holy. I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through viewing pornography. Amen.

Now use the following prayer structure to commit your body to the Lord:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess and renounce using my body as an instrument of unrighteousness, and I ask You to break all bondages the enemy has gained in my life through my involvement. I now present my body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto You, and I reserve the sexual use

of my body only for marriage. I renounce the lie that my body is unclean, dirty, or in any way unacceptable as a result of my past sexual experiences. Lord, I thank You that You have totally cleansed and forgiven me and that You love me unconditionally. Therefore, I choose to accept myself and my body as cleansed. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Special Prayers for Specific Problems:

Homosexuality

Lord Jesus Christ,

I renounce the lie that God created me or anyone else to be homosexual, and I affirm that You clearly forbid homosexual behavior. I choose to accept myself as a child of God, and I declare that God created me a (your gender). I renounce all my homosexual behavior and ask God to break the bonds between me and all my sexual partners. I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through homosexual behavior. I ask You to keep me from homosexual behavior that it may not rule over me. I announce that I am free to relate to the opposite sex the way God intended. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Abortion

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess not assuming stewardship of the life You entrusted to me. I ask You to forgive me and to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through the abortion. I choose to accept Your forgiveness and to forgive myself. I now commit the child to Your care in eternity. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suicidal Tendencies

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess and renounce all suicidal thoughts and attempts I have made on my own life or inflicting injuries on my body. I renounce the lie that life is hopeless and that I can find peace and freedom by taking my life. I recognize that Satan is a thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy. I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through suicidal thoughts and/or attempts. I choose to be a good steward of the physical life God has entrusted to me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Eating Disorders or Self-Mutilation

Lord Jesus Christ,

I renounce the lie that my value as a person is dependent upon my physical beauty, weight or size. I renounce cutting myself, vomiting, using

laxatives or starving myself as a means of cleansing myself of evil, controlling my weight, or distraction from emotional pain. I announce that only the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ cleanses me from sin. I choose to accept the reality that the enemy has gained a foothold due to the lies I have believed and the wrongful use of my body. I renounce the lie that I am evil or that any part of my body is evil. I announce that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that I belong to God. I ask God to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through eating disorders and/or self-mutilation. I choose to receive God's unconditional love and acceptance in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Substance Abuse

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess misusing the substances (alcohol, tobacco, food, prescription or street drugs -- be specific) for the purpose of pleasure, to escape reality or to cope with difficult situations -- resulting in the abuse of my body, the harmful programming of my mind, and the quenching the Holy Spirit. I ask your forgiveness. I renounce all satanic connection or influence in my life through the misuse of chemicals or food. I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through my substance abuse. I choose to cast all my anxiety onto Christ who loves me, and commit myself to the Holy Spirit to keep me from willful sin. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Drivenness and Perfectionism

Lord Jesus Christ,

I renounce the lie that my self-worth is dependent on my ability to perform. I announce that my identity and self-worth are found in being a child of God. I repent of and renounce seeking the approval and acceptance of other people, and I choose to believe that I am already approved and accepted in Christ because of His death and resurrection for me. I choose to believe that I have been saved, not by deeds done in righteousness, but according to God's mercy and grace. I choose to believe that I am no longer under the curse of the law because Christ became a curse for me. I renounce striving for perfection by living under the law. I ask You to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through perfectionism and legalism. I choose to abide in Christ and to believe that God declared me accepted the moment I accepted Christ as my Savior. I choose to live under God's grace which teaches me to say "NO" to ungodliness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Plaguing Fears

Lord Jesus Christ,

I acknowledge that You are the only legitimate fear object in my life. I believe that God alone is always present, all-knowing, and all-powerful and that He is the only means to expel all other fears. You are my sanctuary and You have not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind. I confess allowing the fear of man and the fear of death to exercise control over my life, instead of trusting You. I renounce all other fear objects and choose to worship God alone. I ask God to reclaim the ground I have given to the enemy through anxiety and fear. I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me afresh that I may live my life and speak Your Word with boldness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

STEP 7 - Acquiescence vs. Renunciation

Acquiescence is passively giving in or agreeing without consent. The last step to freedom is to renounce the sins of your ancestors and any curses which may have been placed on you. In giving the Ten Commandments, God said: "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me" (Ex. 20:4,5).

Familiar spirits can be passed on from one generation to the next if not renounced and if your new spiritual heritage in Christ is not proclaimed You are not guilty for the sin of any ancestor, but because of their sin, Satan may have gained access to your family. This is not to deny that many problems are transmitted genetically or acquired from an immoral atmosphere. All three conditions can predispose an individual to a particular sin. In addition, deceived people may try to curse you, or satanic groups may try to target you. You have all the authority and protection you need in Christ to stand against such curses and assignments Ask the Lord to reveal to your mind the sins and iniquities of your ancestors by praying using the following prayer format:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank God that I am a new creation in Christ Jesus. I desire to honor my parents, but also acknowledge that my heritage has not been perfect. I ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to my mind the sins and iniquities of my ancestors in order to confess, renounce and forsake them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As the Spirit brings things to mind pray as follows for each generational sin:

Lord Jesus Christ,

I confess my family's sin of _____. I renounce it, and I ask God to reclaim the ground I and my family have given to the enemy through _____.

Now declare in prayer your position and protection in Christ by humbly praying as follows:

Declaration

I here and now reject and disown all the sins and iniquities of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I ask God to cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. I announce that I have been crucified and raised with Christ and am now seated with Him in the position of victory. I renounce all satanic

assignments directed toward me and my ministry and break all spells and curses cast against me. I announce that Jesus became a curse for me when He died for my sins on the cross. I reject any and every way by which Satan may claim ownership of me and declare myself to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased me with His own blood. In the name of Jesus and by His blood, I bind all familiar spirits and command them to depart and go where Jesus sends them. I announce myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. I commit to doing only God's will from this day forward.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to You as Your child purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are the Lord of the universe and Lord of my life. I submit my body as an instrument of righteousness, a living sacrifice, that I may glorify God in my body. I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me, and I commit myself to the renewing of my mind in order to prove that God's will for me is good, acceptable, and perfect. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Once you have secured your freedom by going through these seven steps, you may find demonic influences attempting reentry, days or even months later. One person shared that she heard a spirit say to her mind, "I'm Back" two days after she had been set free. "No, you're not!" she proclaimed aloud. The attack ceased immediately. One victory does not constitute winning the war. Freedom must be maintained. After completing these steps, one jubilant lady asked, "Will I always be like this?" I told her that she would stay free as long as she maintained a right relationship with God. "Even if you slip and fall," I encouraged, "you know how to get right with God again."

One victim of incredible atrocities shared this illustration: "It's like being forced to play a game with an ugly stranger in my own home. I kept losing and wanted to quit, but the ugly stranger wouldn't let me. Finally, I called the police (a higher authority), and they came and escorted the stranger out. He knocked on the door trying to regain entry, but this time **I recognized the voice and didn't let him in.**" What a beautiful illustration of gaining freedom in Christ. We call upon Jesus, the ultimate authority, and He escorts the enemy out of our lives. Know the truth, stand firm and resist the evil one. Seek out good Christian fellowship, and commit yourself to regular times of Bible study and prayer. God loves you and will never leave nor forsake you.

AFTERCARE

Freedom must be maintained. You have won a very important battle in an ongoing war. Freedom is yours as long as you keep choosing truth and standing firm in the strength of the Lord. If new memories should surface or if you become aware of lies that you have believed or other non-Christian experiences you have had, renounce them and choose the truth. Some have found it helpful to go through the steps again. As you do, read the instructions carefully.

To maintain your freedom, we suggest the following:

1. Seek legitimate Christian fellowship where you can walk in the light and speak the truth in love.
2. Study your Bible daily. Memorize key verses.
3. Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Assume responsibility for your thought life, reject the lie, choose the truth and stand firm in your position in Christ.
4. Don't drift away! It is very easy to get lazy in your thoughts and revert back to old habit patterns of thinking. Share your struggles openly with a trusted friend. You need at least one friend who will stand with you.
5. Don't expect another person to fight your battle for you. Others can help, but they can't think, pray, read the Bible or choose the truth for you.
6. Continue to seek your identity and sense of worth in Christ. Renew your mind with the truth that your acceptance, security and significance is in Christ by saturating your mind with the truths found in the list of who you are "in Christ" and the Doctrinal Affirmation (in Step 2) morning and evening over the next several weeks (and look up the verses referenced).
7. Commit yourself to daily prayer. You can pray using the following prayer structures often and with confidence:

Daily Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

I honor You as my sovereign Lord. I acknowledge that You are always present with me. You are the only all powerful and wise God. You are kind and loving in all your ways. I love You and thank You that I am united with Christ and spiritually alive in Him. I choose not to love the world, and I crucify the flesh and all its passions.

I thank You for the new life that I now have in Christ, and I ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit that I may live free from sin. I declare my dependence upon You, and I take my stand against Satan and all his lying ways. I choose to believe the truth, and I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope, and I am confident that You will my all of my needs as I seek to live according to your Word. I express with confidence that I can live a responsible life through Christ who strengthens me.

I now take my stand against Satan and command him and all his evil spirits to depart from me and go where Jesus sends them. I put on the full armor of God (breastplate of righteousness, belt of truth, shoes of the gospel of peace, helmet of salvation, shield of faith, sword of the spirit -- God's Word, unceasing prayer). I submit my body as a living sacrifice and renew my mind by the living Word of God in order that I may prove that the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect. I ask all these things in the precious name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bedtime Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for bringing me into Your family and blessing me with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Thank You for providing this time of renewal through sleep. I accept it as part of Your perfect plan for Your children, and I trust You to guard my mind and my body during my sleep. In the name of Jesus and by His blood, I bind all spiritual forces of darkness that would come against me in my sleep and command them to depart and go where Jesus sends them. As I have meditated on You and Your truth during this day, I choose to let these thoughts continue on my mind while I am asleep. I commit myself to You for Your protection from every attempt of Satan or his emissaries to attack me during sleep. I commit myself to You as my Rock, my Fortress and my Resting Place. I pray in the strong name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Cleansing Home/Apartment

After removing all articles of false worship from your home/apartment, pray aloud in every room, if necessary:

Dear Heavenly Father,

We acknowledge You as Ruler of all heaven and earth. In Your sovereign power and love, You have given us all things richly to enjoy. Thank You for giving us this place to live. We claim our home as a place of spiritual safety and protection from all the attacks of the enemy. In the name of Jesus and by His blood we bind all spiritual forces of darkness claiming ground in the structures and furnishings of this place due to the previous occupants activities and command them to depart and go where Jesus sends them. In the name of Jesus and by His blood, we break all spells and curses cast on this place. We ask You, Heavenly Father, to post guardian angels around this dwelling to protect it from the enemy's entrance in order to disturb God's purposes for us. Thank You for being our Shield and Strong tower. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Living in a Non-Christian Environment

After removing all articles of false worship from your room, pray aloud in the space allotted to you:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank You for my place to live and for the renewal of sleep. I ask You to set aside my room (portion of my room) as a place of spiritual safety for me. I renounce all allegiance given to false gods or spirits by other occupants and any claims the enemy may have on this room based on the activities previous occupants or me. In the name of Jesus and by His blood, I bind all spiritual forces of darkness my room and command them to depart and go where Jesus sends them. I ask God to set His holy angels around me while I live in this place. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.