

The background of the entire page is a dense, close-up photograph of various green leaves. The leaves are a deep teal or forest green color, with prominent, lighter green veins. They are layered and overlapping, creating a rich, textured appearance. The lighting is soft, highlighting the natural shapes and textures of the foliage.

FREEDOM

SMALL GROUP WORKBOOK

**“THEN YOU WILL KNOW THE
TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH
WILL SET YOU FREE.”**

JOHN 8:32

INTRODUCTION

Life as you know it may never be the same. No matter where you are in your faith journey, this curriculum will challenge you to take a step toward truth—about God, about faith, and about yourself. It is for freedom that Christ set us free. That's what Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1, and Jesus Himself said that He came to the earth so we may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10). Just imagine that: abundant life—not barely surviving, but truly living. It means days filled with hope, joy, and purpose. This is the kind of life God always intended for you to have.

God wants a relationship with you, and He sent His son, Jesus, to bridge the gap between the earth and heaven so you could know Him. The journey may not be easy, but it will be rewarding. During this semester, you'll be the one who decides how far you're willing to go to find freedom. Here's a promise from Jeremiah 29:13: If you seek Him with your whole heart, you'll find Him. The pursuit of freedom begins today.

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Note: All Scriptures are taken from the New International Version (NIV).

CHAPTER ONE

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

CHAPTER ONE: VIDEO NOTES

TO WATCH THE CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION VIDEO, VISIT
CALVARYFTL.ORG/FREEDOM-VIDEOS.

“Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’”

GENESIS 2:8-9, 16-17

The two trees presented here are more than just the backdrop to a biblical story. They can also represent two different approaches and outcomes when it comes to the most important aspect of lives: our relationship with God. Here are some of the important differences we’ll see along the way on our freedom journey.

THE CHOICE

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil says:

_____ to get to God.

The Tree of Life says:

Receive the fact that Jesus has already _____.

"You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life."

JOHN 5:39-40

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil says:

Keep trying to get _____.

The Tree of Life says:

Receive the fact that He _____.

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

ROMANS 5:8

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil says: _____.

The Tree of Life says: _____.

"This is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, . . . Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

1 JOHN 5:3, 12

FOUR RESPONSES

Fall in love _____.

"If you love me, keep my commands."

JOHN 14:15

Serve God through _____ not _____.

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;
I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."*

MATTHEW 5:17

Respond to all sin with _____.

*"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who
are in Christ Jesus."*

ROMANS 8:1

Guard your _____ from going back.

*"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have
set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that
you and your children may live. "*

DEUTERONOMY 30:19

CHAPTER ONE

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'"

GENESIS 2:16-17

The Tree of Life is more than just a backdrop to a Bible story; it can be a way of life. To find out how, let's start at the beginning: Genesis, the first book of the Bible. In Chapter 1, the first Scriptures tell us about the creation of our world and define God as the Creator and Ruler who has authority and dominion. The second story in the Bible tells us about Adam and Eve, the first sin, and the two trees in the Garden of Eden.

It's the second story for a reason: everything else in the Bible hinges on it. From it we learn humanity has to choose every day between the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

TREE OF LIFE

Grace; eternal life; God is good; God is forgiving

TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

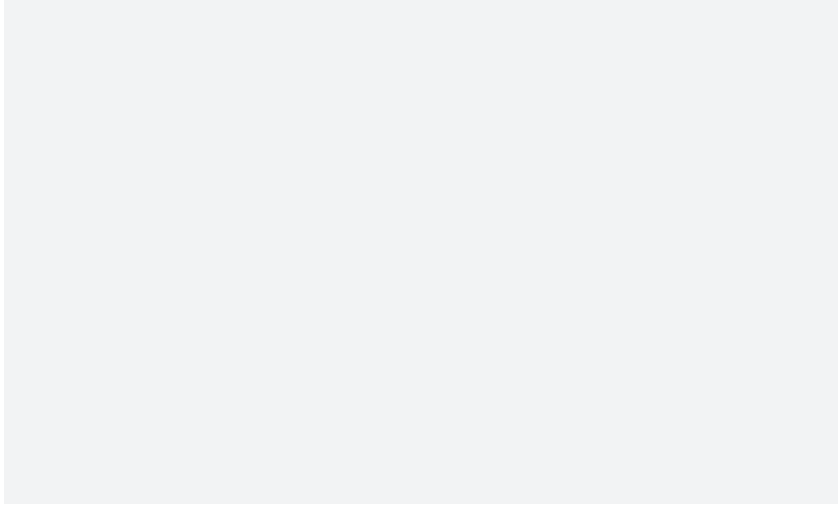
Bondage; the Law; leads to death; God is only a judge; we're condemned

When we study Scripture, it's always a good idea to find the first place a subject is mentioned. In our journey to walk in communion with God in freedom, we must find out why we may be separated from God and why we may be in bondage. The first place in the Bible where separation from God is mentioned is Genesis 3. The first people God created made a bad choice that caused this separation (Romans 5:12).

Prior to Genesis 3, Adam and Eve walked with God and enjoyed His presence. The Word tells us God made these two humans in His image and gave Adam dominion over everything He had created. God gave Adam authority through the relationship He established with him. Without their relationship, Adam wouldn't have had authority. When Adam and Eve sinned, they forfeited this authority.

Through deception and rebellion, the serpent took the authority and dominion that God had given to man. The Bible tells us that Satan's desire was to exalt his throne above the stars of God (Isaiah 14:13). Until the fall of man, he lacked power and influence to set up rulership. Jesus called Satan "the prince of this world" (John 12:31).

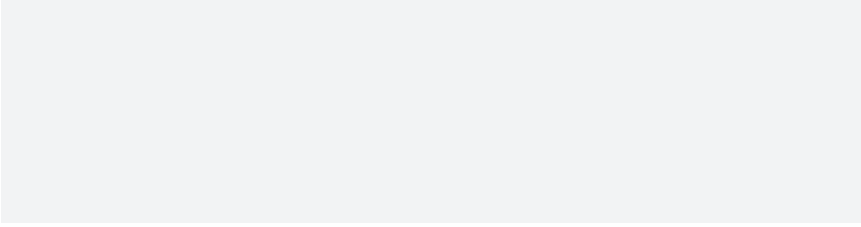
Write 1 John 5:19.



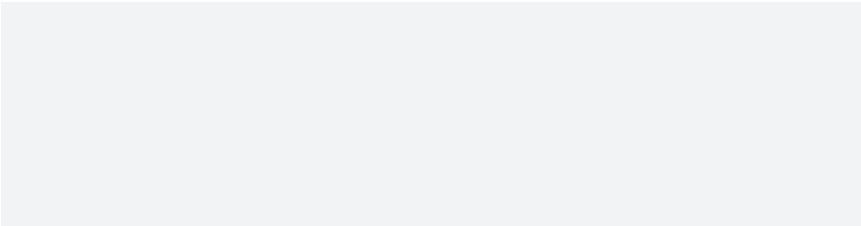
Colossians 1:21 tells us, “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.” Sin separates, and this separation costs us our freedom and the authority over Satan that God gives to His children (see Luke 10:19). Praise God He made a way to end this separation! Colossians 1:20 says, “And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

Before we proceed any further, you should know that the starting point to a relationship with God and walking in freedom is accepting that you’re a sinner and that Jesus paid the penalty for your sin by shedding His blood and dying on a cross.

Write John 14:6.



Write Romans 10:13.



Have you ever asked Jesus to come into your heart and be your Savior? If not, below is a simple prayer you can use to invite Him to be the Lord of your life.

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for dying on the cross and making a way for me to come to God. I receive this extravagant gift and ask You to come into my heart and be the Lord of my life. I give You all of me and ask You to turn my life around for Your glory. Fill me with Your Spirit, and help me live the life You died to give me. In Jesus name, amen.

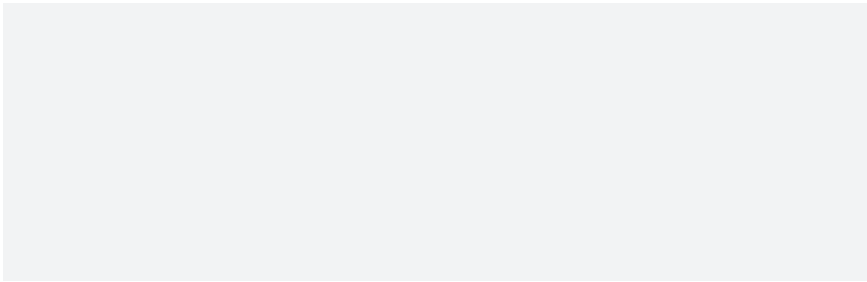
This is the first step toward your life of freedom!

SEPARATION AND THE FIRST SIN

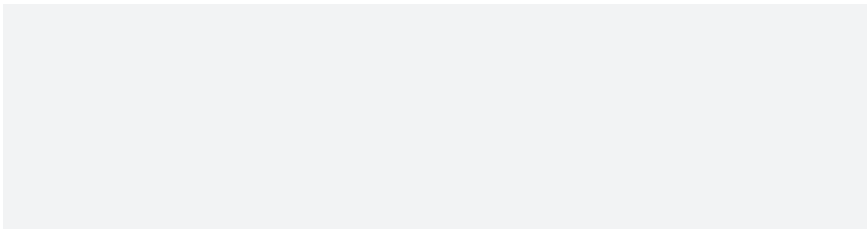
“The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’”

GENESIS 2:9, 16-17

Read Genesis 3:1-8 and notice who is doing what. In verses 7 and 8, what did Adam and Eve do?



Read Genesis 3:9. What did God do?



Don't miss this part: Adam and Eve hid and God came looking for them. The Bible says God is seeking after sinful man. God is in love with sinful man and sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue people.

Ask yourself: *Are there things in my past that have caused me to want to hide from God?*

Read James 4:8 and 2 Chronicles 15:2. What do these passages teach us about our relationship with God?

Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit of the tree that was forbidden to them. This fruit was not just any fruit—it was knowledge of good and evil. They mistakenly thought that this fruit would make them like God. Learning the truth about this fruit will help us avoid making this mistake.

Ask yourself: *Have I used knowledge of God as a basis of my relationship?*

TRUTHS ABOUT THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

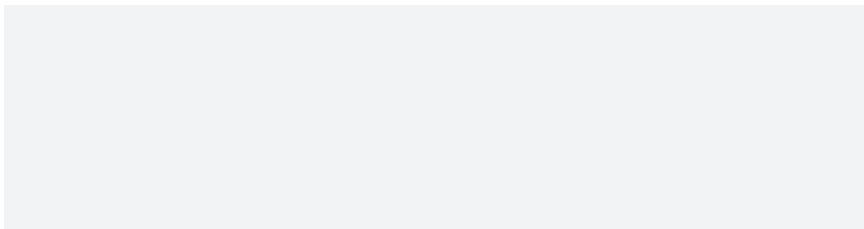
1. THE FRUIT IS KNOWLEDGE.

Most of us think of this fruit as some sort of apple, but it's not. The fruit of this tree is exactly what the Bible says: knowledge (information, data, ideas, worldview, thought patterns)—the knowledge of good and evil. Note that God didn't say it's wrong to have knowledge. In fact, God said to Israel through Hosea the prophet, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). The issue isn't necessarily knowledge; rather, it's the motive behind its acquisition. In other words, why do we desire knowledge? Is it to gain God's wisdom and understanding, or is it to somehow exalt ourselves?

"We know that 'We all possess knowledge.' But knowledge puffs up while love builds up."

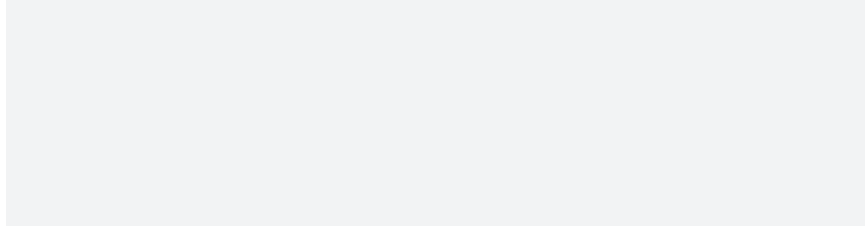
1 CORINTHIANS 8:1

According to Colossians 2:3, what do we find hidden in Jesus?



From the beginning, human beings have desired to be wise. God is actually pleased with this desire. In 1 Kings 3:5, we have the account of God appearing to King Solomon in a dream and saying to him, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” Solomon asked for two things: wisdom to govern the nation of Israel and the ability to discern good from evil.

Read 1 Kings 3:10–13. How did God respond to Solomon’s request?



Wisdom from God varies greatly from wisdom from the world. We can tell the difference between the two by observing characteristics of each.

WISDOM FROM GOD

Pure, peace-loving; gentle at all times; willing to yield to others;
full of mercy and good deeds; showing no partiality; always sincere

WISDOM FROM THE WORLD

Jealous; selfish; earthly; unspiritual; motivated by evil

When do we need wisdom? All the time! We’re constantly making decisions, and even the smallest ones can be made with wisdom from God. Using godly wisdom allows us to become more like God as we emulate Him. His wisdom draws us closer to Himself. Worldly wisdom leads us to sin, which alienates us from God. James 1:5 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

2. THE FRUIT IS DEADLY.

“And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’”

GENESIS 2:16-17

Eating from the Tree of Knowledge (consuming knowledge) in your own pursuit of godliness is deadly. Satan didn’t tempt Eve with blatant rebellion. Instead, he tempted her with a desire to become like God (Genesis 3:4-5). It’s important to note that often the desire to know is in direct opposition to the desire to trust. We’d rather gain knowledge to try to control our own lives than to trust God to take care of us. But as we’ll see, in attempting to attain this control for ourselves, we actually lose something far more valuable as a result. Read Genesis 3:22-24. Why were Adam and Eve driven from the Garden of Eden?

Adam and Eve didn’t die physically when they ate from the Tree of Knowledge; they died spiritually. Through Adam’s disobedience, death entered the entire human race, and we’re all born spiritually dead in need of resurrection. The good news is that, through Jesus, we have access to the Tree of Life. If we pursue life Himself in our desire for godliness, we’ll become truly like Him.

3. THE FRUIT IS CONSUMED.

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”

GENESIS 3:6

“Eating” is not just putting food in your mouth. It literally means to “consume” or “ingest.” Ideas are ingested in our minds and then sin is conceived. This is what we see happen with Adam and Eve. They consumed the idea and began to process it. This progression tells us that sin doesn’t begin with the act; it begins in our minds (James 1:13-14).

We have to be very careful about the things we ingest because they can have a lasting effect on our lives. For instance, watching certain movies or television shows might expose you to images that could trouble you for the rest of your life. Likewise, spending time reading and studying certain types of ideologies has the potential to pollute your mind and lead you to ruin and despair. Just as a parent takes extra care to guide what their children are exposed to, we should take the same caution with what we let ourselves be exposed to.

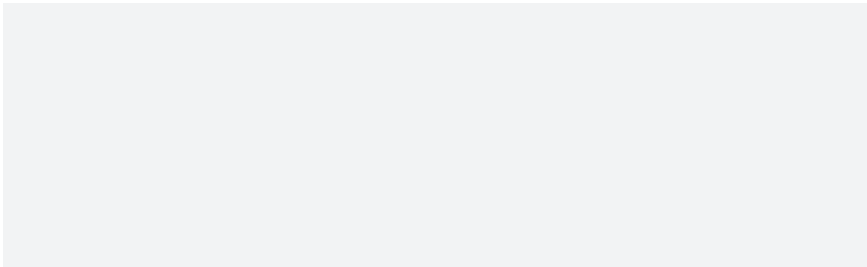
4. THE FRUIT CAUSES SEPARATION.

“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”

GENESIS 3:8

Again, remember that it was man who hid from God. Many have been taught that Adam and Eve sinned and that God, in His holiness and righteousness, turned His back on Adam and Eve because His holiness couldn't stand to be in the presence of sinful man. But that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says Adam and Eve sinned, their eyes were opened, they covered up, and then they hid from God because they were ashamed and afraid of His reaction. The truth is, Adam and Eve misjudged how God would respond to their sin. He wasn't watching from behind a tree waiting for them to fail so He could judge them. God searched for them as He walked through the garden, calling out, "Where are you?" because He loved them. God isn't watching and waiting in anticipation for us to fall short. God is love (1 John 4:8) and the Bible says that "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). When we see His heart for us, we'll run to Him instead of hiding from Him when we sin.

From Romans 8:38-39, name everything that can't separate us from the love of God.



THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL PRODUCES SHAME AND VICTIMIZATION

"He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.' And he said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?' The man said, 'The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'"

GENESIS 3:10-13

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil robs us of innocence.

Imagine this situation to see how this process might happen: A young teenage boy has always been a delight to his parents—bright-eyed, enthusiastic, and curious, with no hesitation about him. But his mother begins to notice a change in him. He's becoming serious and angry, coming home with droopy shoulders and his head hung. The sparkle has left his eyes. He barely speaks to his parents and goes straight to his room. One day, while picking up laundry off his bedroom floor, his mother notices pornographic magazines under his bed. She begins to understand what has happened: Her bright, lively son now has darkness inside of him. His innocence has been polluted; he's no longer a little boy. Knowledge of the evil in those magazines advanced the kingdom of darkness in his life. All the things he saw in the magazines were real and true—the issue is, he didn't need to know. Now that he's allowed that darkness inside of him, he's filled with shame, and he isn't able to relate to his parents like he used to. It's not that his parents have distanced themselves from him; his sin has caused him to pull away from them in shame. He's no longer innocent.

Shame causes us to separate ourselves from God, making it so we can't operate in the freedom Christ has for us. Shame is a veil that comes between God and us. It covers us completely, even our eyes, so we can see only dimly who and where God is. God said to Adam and Eve, "Who told you that you were naked?" (Genesis 3:11). His tone was probably like that of the teenage boy's mother, filled with great sadness and angst. "Who gave you those magazines? You really shouldn't know about that." God doesn't want us to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil because it builds barriers—like shame—between Him and us. Those barriers break His heart. He wants to be close to us.

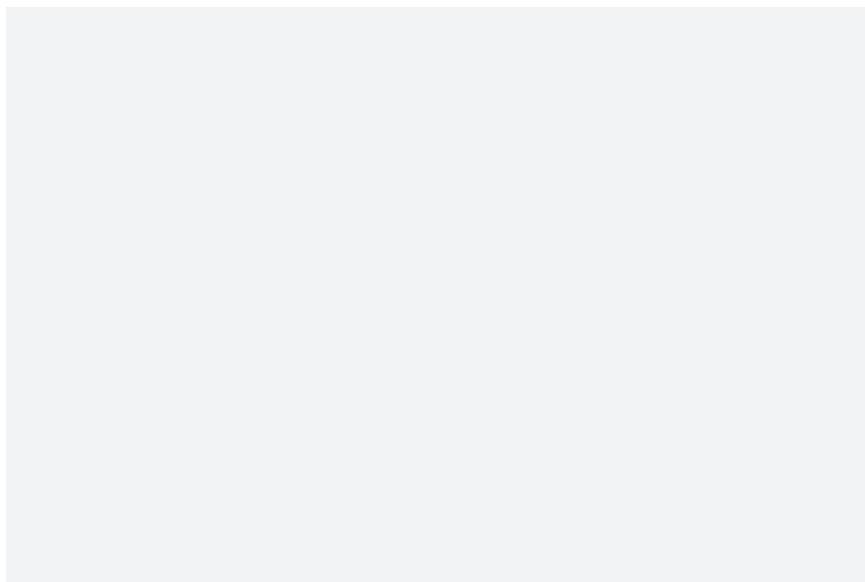
Shame causes us to do all sorts of things that keep us from connecting with God. Shame makes us want to hide. Prior to eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve were both naked and not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). Afterwards, they came up with the idea of sewing fig leaves together to cover themselves and then tried to hide from God's presence in the trees of the garden. This represents our human instinct to try to undo the effects of eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And it's something every person does whether they realize it or not. We sense that something isn't right within us and try to cover up this awareness with a variety of things, such as substances, ideologies, relationships, etc. But at the end of the day, none of our attempts to cover ourselves is sufficient to address our deepest shame.

THE RESULTS OF SHAME

1. Covering up with religion and becoming focused on works
2. Lying, deception, false pride
3. Making promises we can't keep
4. Getting our self-worth from the things we do
5. Inability to come to a place of honesty with God because we believe we have no true value
6. Concentrating on our sin instead of concentrating on our Savior

Why is shame so deadly? Because it strips us of the power to change. It keeps us from receiving the provision God made for our sin through the blood of Jesus. There's a difference between guilt and shame. Guilt is about what we've done, but shame is about who we are. With guilt, we can always get a fresh start. With shame, we're caught in a noose because the problem stays with us. Another way of illustrating this difference is that guilt is an off-ramp to a different direction, but shame is a dead end to nowhere. In fact, with shame, we're the problem. In order to be free from shame, we must begin to see ourselves as God sees us.

Ask yourself: *Have I ever been overcome by shame? What steps can I take to remove the barrier of shame from my life?*

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Just as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil produces shame in our lives, it also makes us susceptible to victimization. Victimization is a natural response to our sin. Eve essentially responded, “The devil made me do it,” and Adam responded, “The woman you gave me made me do it” (Genesis 3:12-13). We blame others to displace responsibility. When we place blame, we excuse our internal condition or difficult outward circumstances by focusing on the actions of others. We say, “If my husband would just treat me right, I wouldn’t be so unhappy and manipulative.” “If my family were less argumentative, I wouldn’t be so irritable.” “If everybody would just live like they’re supposed to, everything would work right.”

THE RESULTS OF VICTIMIZATION

1. We notice others’ sins, but not our own.
2. We excuse and condemn ourselves, saying, “I’ve just always been this way. I’ll never change. I’ll never be good enough.”
3. We feel rejected.

Whether we victimize ourselves by blaming others or excusing and condemning ourselves, we’re powerless to change. This is why victimization is so deadly.

Are there any areas of your life—perhaps with your parents or other people in your past, in your marriage, at work, with friends, or even at church—where you’ve taken on a “victim mentality”? How should you change your way of thinking regarding that situation?

With victimization and shame, we’re either the Pharisee or the woman caught in adultery (John 8). We’re either saying, “You’re not good enough,” or “I’m not good enough”—basing our relationships with God and others on behavior and merit, but that’s not the perspective God wants us to have. That’s the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thinking, and it keeps us from changing

and connecting with God. It's a trap of the enemy devised to keep us from changing. The devil wants us to be forever stuck in the world of blame and self-condemnation.

We must get to a point where, no matter what happens, we take responsibility for our own lives. We can no longer blame anyone else for the quality of our relationship with God.

The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil lacks the power to transform the heart. It can reveal what is lacking, but it's powerless to provide. It can also provide facts and information, but it's powerless to give you life.

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"

JOHN 8:12

JOURNAL

CHAPTER TWO

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THE TREE OF LIFE

CHAPTER TWO

THE TREE OF LIFE

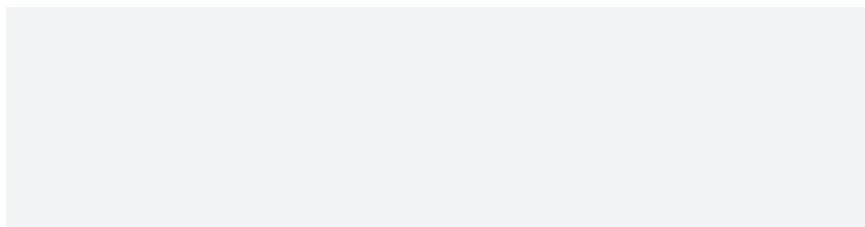
"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free."

GALATIANS 5:13

In the last chapter, we studied the two trees in the Garden of Eden and how they each represent a way of living. We explored how the deadly fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil leads to shame and victimization. In this chapter, we'll look at the Tree of Life and its ability to set us free from incorrect thoughts about God and ourselves.

If you have weak muscles you haven't been using correctly, you might begin a weight-training program to grow in strength and skill. As followers of Jesus, we have to build up our faith by reading God's Word to retrain our thought processes so they line up with biblical truth. In John 8:31-32, Jesus tells us those who abide in the truth of His Word are those who will ultimately experience true freedom. Just like weight lifters need a spotter to help encourage, challenge, and assist them when the burden is heavy, we need partnership and support in this faith-building process. This small group is designed for your leaders and fellow group members to help you learn how to truly live in freedom. As you progress through this group, you'll be able to use Tree of Life thinking as a framework for the way you approach every situation you encounter. Remember that God's commands were never meant to be burdensome. In fact, as you grow close to Him and learn to hear His voice, you'll find His heart for you. His divine plan was made for your good and for the fulfilling of His good and perfect purposes for your life, which ultimately bring Him glory!

Write Zephaniah 3:17.

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for the user to write the verse Zephaniah 3:17.

THE FRUIT OF LIVING IN THE TREE OF LIFE

1. THE TREE OF LIFE RESULTS IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

JOHN 17:3

According to Vine’s Bible Dictionary, “know” in this verse is the Greek word *ginosko*, which means “to recognize, to understand, or to understand completely.” *Ginosko* can also be defined as knowledge gained through personal experience versus intuitive knowledge. There’s an aspect of discovery versus instinct involved with *ginosko*. It indicates a relationship. The only way to experience abundant life is by truly knowing the living God. He asked us to love Him, but only after His lavish display of love for us through the sacrifice of Jesus. “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9–10). In 1 John 4:19, we read the only reason we have any love at all is because He first loved us.

God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die on a cross to make a way for us to be in relationship with Him. The cross represents more than a sacrificial death. It’s a promise, a blood covenant, God made with His Son so we could have confidence He would never change His mind about His relationship with us (Hebrews 6:17–18). In the Old Testament, God made covenants with man, and man always broke them. This time, God sealed the covenant with the blood of His Son Jesus so nothing could separate us from His love.

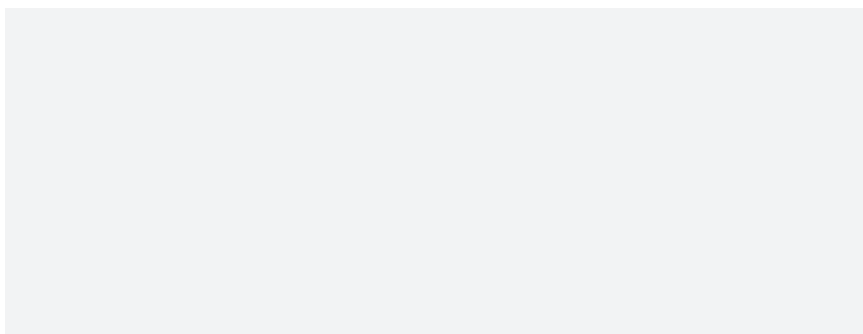
2. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD RESULTS IN INNOCENCE—NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

“They realized they were naked” (Genesis 3:7). As we spend time walking with God, listening to His voice, talking to Him, obeying Him, worshiping Him, and enjoying Him, we’ll notice a transformation taking place, not only on the outside, but on the inside as well. We’ll become, in a sense, “naked” or transparent and unashamed before Him. In Genesis 3:7, “nakedness” speaks of innocence. Adam and Eve were unaware of any reason to hide anything from God. They had no sin consciousness. Think of little kids running around with no clothes on after a bath. Absolutely no shame! Childlike innocence is an amazing virtue. Adam and Eve’s nakedness was part of the innocence and simplicity of their lives. Before they sinned, they had nothing to be ashamed of. This is the same concept Jesus was talking about when He said we had to be like little children to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:14). Children are not technically innocent; they just don’t have any hesitation about them. They’re not weighed down by guilt, shame, or burdens. 1 Corinthians 14:20 says, “Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.” God wants us to be mature in our thinking, but for the kingdom of God to work powerfully in us, we must foster a childlike spirit. Childlikeness may look to some like naivety or simple-mindedness, but it’s actually a biblical way to live. Jesus says we should be as shrewd as a snake and as innocent as a dove (Matthew 10:16). That’s a mysterious and rare combination for the world we live in! In 1 Corinthians 1:27, Paul says, “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.” Dare to be misunderstood in your pursuit of relationship with God because only the pure in heart will see Him.

Simple innocence is born out of a friendship with God. It happens when we rest in God. We abide in His favor and presence so when someone offends us,

we can respond with kindness instead of anger. As we're transformed into the image of God, we become less and less affected by the negativity of the world. If we truly live with an innocent spirit, the enemy has no ammunition. If we sin, we know how to receive forgiveness, and if someone offends us, we know how to forgive.

Read Matthew 5:39-44 and Luke 6:27-36. In these passages, Jesus tells us how to live as a child of God in innocence and freedom. Using the Scriptures as a reference, describe what living in innocence looks like.

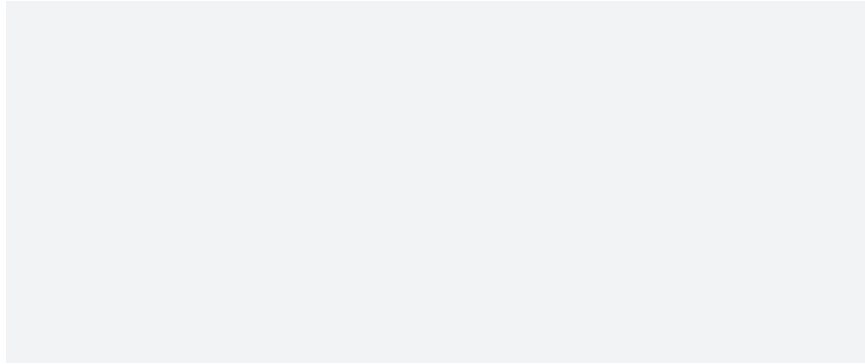


3. INNOCENCE IS A CONDUIT OF GOD'S POWER.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). This is what Jesus said after His great temptation by Satan in the desert. He came out full of the Holy Spirit and power to begin His public ministry. This Scripture says God anointed Jesus to preach the good news. What does it mean to be “anointed” to do something? It means to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. When we’re filled with the Holy Spirit and abide in Jesus, we become free from the works of darkness in our lives.

We become vessels of honor useful to God. Innocence keeps our minds and hearts pure, helping us continually recognize our need for God. An attitude of dependence on God is fertile ground for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. As we seek God and submit our lives to Him, He equips us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).

Rewrite Acts 10:38, replacing Jesus' name with your name and "Nazareth" with the name of your city. Read it out loud.

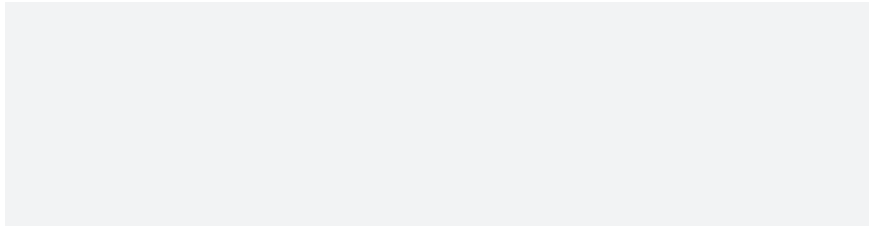


Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." Innocence and power always produce the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

4. JESUS GIVES US FREEDOM.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1). This is the mystery of godliness: We will sin and fall, but if we sin with the Tree of Life as our perspective, we can easily receive forgiveness and get back up. How quickly we get back up depends on the degree of understanding we have in our hearts of the completeness of God's forgiveness.

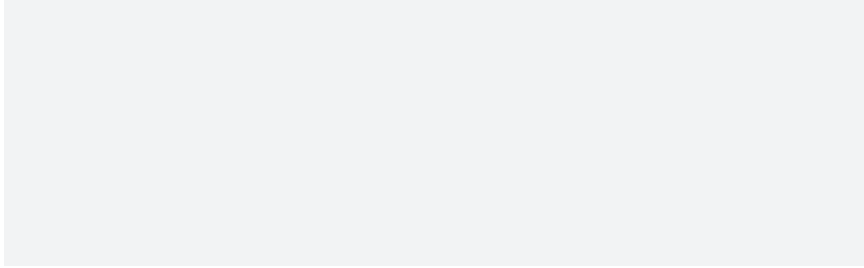
What does Psalm 37:23-24 say happens when the godly stumble?



When we approach life with an innocent spirit, it changes the way we live and think about every part of our lives. Approaching life with innocence allows us to see the good things in front of us instead of picking every person, church, or situation apart. Innocence sets us free! Relationships change in the innocence of the Tree of Life. We no longer hold people to impossible standards; we're quick to extend forgiveness and slow to take offense. Instead of looking for people to meet our needs, we look for ways to serve others. Because we live for Jesus and His kingdom, people are no longer able to "take advantage" of us. This is true freedom.

Reading the Bible, praying, and serving others should be sources of life, security, strength, and delight to us. These things should never be religious duties to be checked off a to-do list. In the innocence of the Tree of Life, we realize these tasks are done out of relationship, not responsibility. Falling in love with Jesus turns the idea of duty into devotion, and it's a beautiful and wonderful thing. Prayer will be powerful, and reading the Bible will refresh our spirits when we're living in the Tree of Life. No more guilt-ridden sittings where we plow through twenty chapters a day because "that's what Christians do." Religion says, "I obey, therefore I'm accepted," but Christianity says, "I'm accepted, therefore I obey."

Ask yourself: *Do I feel completely innocent before God? What would it be like to have true fellowship with God?*



"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

ROMANS 8:1-2

HOW TO LIVE IN THE TREE OF LIFE

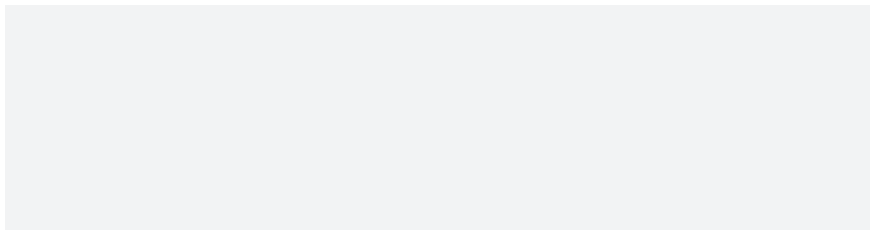
Now that we know it's possible to be free from bondage in our thinking, our actions, and our relationships with God and people, let's take a look at some powerful truths that can help us form a firm foundation upon which we can build a life that's both abundant and free. In order to move out of the shadow of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and into the light of Tree of Life living, we must know who Jesus is and who we are because of Him. To help us understand this, we need to "be transformed by the renewing of [our minds]" (Romans 12:2).

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT A FEW TRUTHS THAT WILL HELP US LIVE IN THE TREE OF LIFE.

We must remember that relationship with the Father is essential to living in the Tree of Life. In order to enjoy this right relationship with God, we must receive His extravagant love for us. Romans 5:8 says that God expressed His great love for us in this way: “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Before we looked for God, He made a way for us to be in relationship with Him. He made the first move.

Because of the finished work of the cross, we're declared righteous before God. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Many of us have been serving God out of duty or fear—much like a servant. A servant has an obligation to do what's expected. He's required to be faithful or suffer consequences. A son serves because he's a part of the family. A son is faithful because of the love he has for his father. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, God now sees us as sons and daughters.

Read Galatians 4:7 and 2 Corinthians 6:18. What does God say about your identity?



Ask yourself: *Do I live my life as a son or as a servant?*

Recognize the two environments where you can live: the Tree of Life or the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Knowing you can choose a Tree of Life response and attitude in every circumstance is crucial to walking in freedom. It's a daily choice to respond with life and godliness. Throughout the Bible, God compares the fruit of godly decisions with the fruit of ungodly decisions. It's clearly God's desire we live a life that produces godly fruit. We can only do this by choosing to live God's way—in the Tree of Life.

In Matthew 11, Jesus compares His way of living to that of religious Pharisees. The Pharisees were legalistic and self-righteous. Their approach to God was in the strict keeping of all Jewish laws.

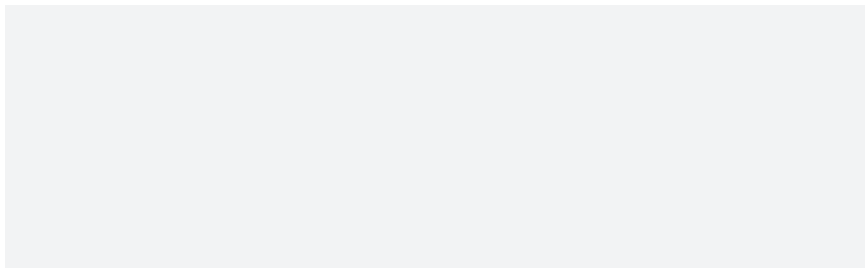
Read Matthew 11:28–30 and write out Jesus' response to the heavy burden that comes from trying to keep the law.

Read Deuteronomy 30:19 (NIV). Moses challenged the Israelites to determine what path they'd follow. One path led to life and the other led to death. He exhorted them, "Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

Ask the Lord to help you to make life-giving decisions every day. Throughout the day, when faced with a difficult decision or situation, pause, examine your motives, and ask Him for wisdom. Though retraining the way we think and respond takes time, we learn and grow through both our successes and failures. Remember God loves you, and He's for you. Grace was His idea.

Ask yourself: *Do my daily responses and decisions bring life to others?*

In what tree do I live?



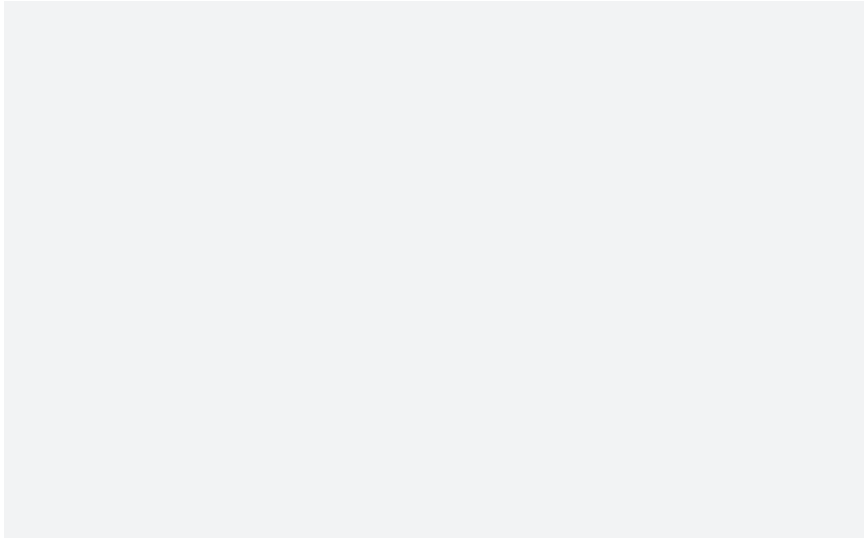
Renew your mind with what the Word of God says is true. Transformation can take place when we know what the Word of God says about our lives. Often, our worldview and past experiences shape our version of truth. We cannot make the Bible line up with what we think is true, but we can decide to align our beliefs with the truth of the Bible. In order to do this, we must consume the Word. Changing our internal truth will change our external responses.

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good pleasing and perfect will." The pattern of this world will lead to death. God's will leads to life.

2 Corinthians 10:5 says that every thought should be examined for godly accuracy. If it doesn't line up with what the Bible says, we must take it captive and make it obedient to the Word of God. This will become a way of life as we practice putting God's Word ahead of our feelings and beliefs. In other words, don't just read the Bible, let it read you.

In Ephesians 4, Paul tells us to let the Holy Spirit renew our thoughts and our attitudes and to put on our new self that has been created in the very likeness of God in righteousness and holiness. These are choices we must intentionally make. We must choose to renew our thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs in God's Word, and we must choose to put on holiness and righteousness. If we do, we'll begin to experience true Tree of Life living!

Read Philippians 4:8 and write out a way to renew your mind.



JOURNAL



CHAPTER THREE

SPIRITUAL
ORDER

CHAPTER THREE

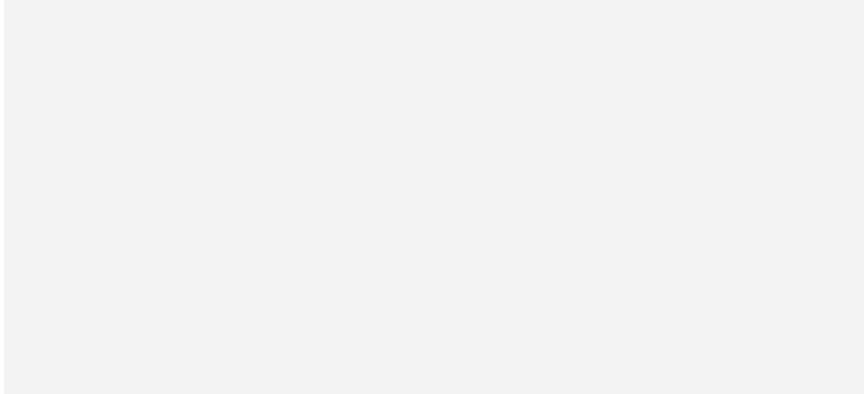
SPIRITUAL ORDER

*“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through
and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept
blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23

To daily live in the Tree of Life, we need to know two things: God designed us with three distinct parts, and we need to embrace the principles of spiritual order. Understanding spiritual order will help us get rid of the sin in our lives and walk in holiness and freedom. As believers, we long to live lives of fellowship with God. But while this is our desire, life in fellowship with God doesn't come naturally for us. Since the fall in the garden, mankind has battled a sin nature that wars against our desire to be holy. The apostle Paul said that there's an internal struggle that goes on between the desire to do right and the natural tendency to do wrong.

Write Romans 7:21-23.



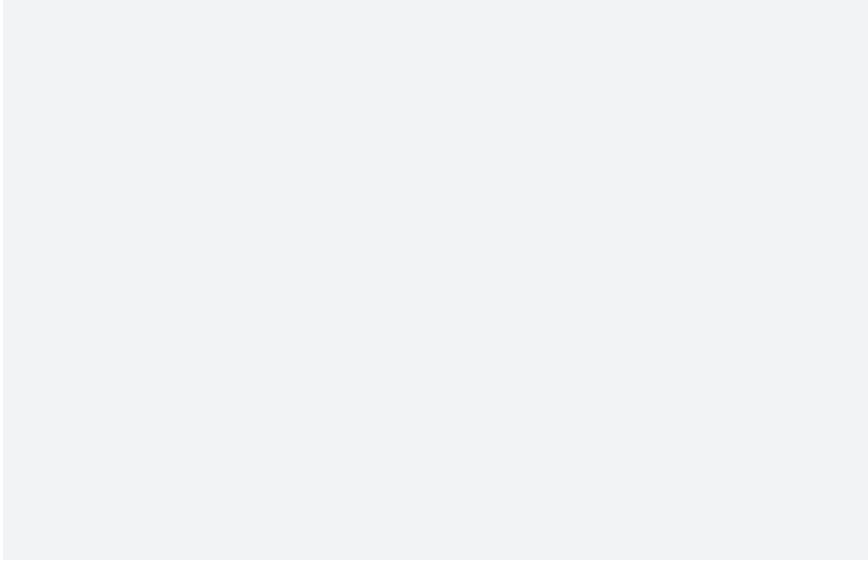
GOD CREATED US WITH THREE DISTINCT PARTS:

1. A spirit that must be redeemed
2. A soul that must be restored
3. A body that must surrender

At the moment of salvation, our spirit is made alive in Christ and immediately put into right standing with God (Romans 3:24, 5:1). The Bible calls this event justification: “just-as-if I had never sinned.” However, the soul and body will require time and effort to be conformed to the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13). This gradual process is called sanctification.

God desires for us to be transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory. We must learn to hear His voice and be led by His spirit.

Write 2 Corinthians 3:16-18.



In Galatians 4:19, Paul portrays sanctification as a process. How long this process takes depends on our willingness to engage with the Word of God, accept it as absolute truth in our lives, and apply it to all of our circumstances.

THE SPIRIT

SPIRIT (GREEK: PNEUMA): THE PART OF HUMANITY THAT RELATES TO GOD . . .

While both the soul and spirit deal with the inner being, there's a difference between them. While the soul speaks to that which makes us who we are (our mind, will, and emotions), the spirit is the part which connects us to God, through which God, through the Holy Spirit, speaks to our soul conveying God's heart to direct our mind, will, and emotions, and to our bodies to direct our physical impulses, cravings, and desires toward that which is godly.

The spirit is what connects the physical and temporal to the eternal.

Consider the creation of man. In Genesis 1:27, we're told about the sixth day of creation. After having created the whole universe, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the trees, and all plants and animal life in the air, on the ground, and in the ocean in the first five days, we're told: "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them."

The crowning jewel of the Lord's good and perfect creation, Adam, which is also the Hebrew word for "man," was given life. But not just any kind of life . . . not like the animals. He wasn't just spoken into existence. Genesis 2:7 says, "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

It's easy to pass this over, but it's so important! Not simply spoken into existence like everything else, Adam was 1) formed by the hands of God using the dust of the earth, which made him a physical being of the earth, but then 2) given a spirit. He was made alive by the breath of God. In the Greek, the word here for "breathed" is *pneuma* (which we referenced earlier). This word is used to refer to both our spirit and the Holy Spirit (*Hagiou Pneumatos*).

So, what this often-overlooked aspect of the creation story is showing us is how unique mankind is among all of God's creation. While the fish, birds, and beasts of the field have a body and even a soul, only humanity was given a spirit—the very essence and breath of God; the likeness of God. This shows us clearly that the spirit is the cross section between the earth and heaven for humanity, the natural, made of dirt and earth, and the eternal, brought to life by the Holy Spirit through the working of the Son. This is what it means to bear the likeness of God!

We're thus spiritual beings having a temporary physical experience on the earth rather than a physical being having a temporary spiritual experience. And it's God's plan that our spirits become the strongest part of our three-part design and be the "command center" of who we are and what we do.

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."

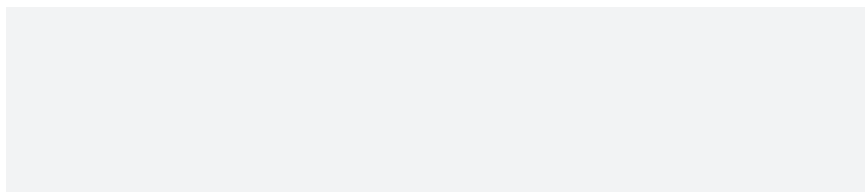
COLOSSIANS 2:13-14 NIV

The blood of Jesus has forever purchased our capacity for friendship with God. This was the price God paid so we could be reconciled back to Him and have the fellowship that Adam once enjoyed (2 Corinthians 5:18). The moment we're

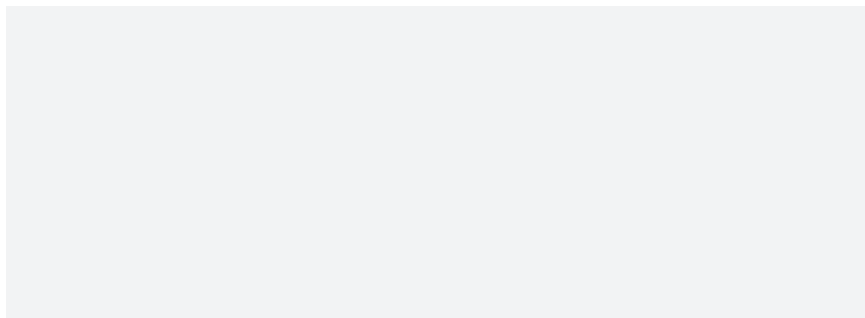
saved, we're made alive in Christ, forever redeemed, and made righteous before the Father. Along with the gift of eternal life, we receive the Holy Spirit and immediately have the ability to be in relationship with God. In short, the cross of Christ bridges the chasm of death and gives us a way to have fellowship, communication, and access to the Tree of Life.

Just as a bride and groom are united in matrimony and become one, at the point of salvation, our spirit and the Spirit of Christ are united and become one.

Write 1 Corinthians 6:17.



Ask yourself: *How does knowing that my spirit is redeemed and in right standing with the Father change the way I see myself?*



Now that we're one with Christ, we have the ability to understand spiritual truth and discern right from wrong. We can adjust our lives to hear the voice of God. It's much like tuning a dial to pick up a radio station. Sometimes there may be static in the airwaves (distraction, confusion, fear, etc.), but if we continue to seek the Lord and His way of doing things, our spirits will rise above the static, and we'll be able to tune into the broadcast of truth.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14 and write why the world cannot accept the things that come from God.

THE SOUL

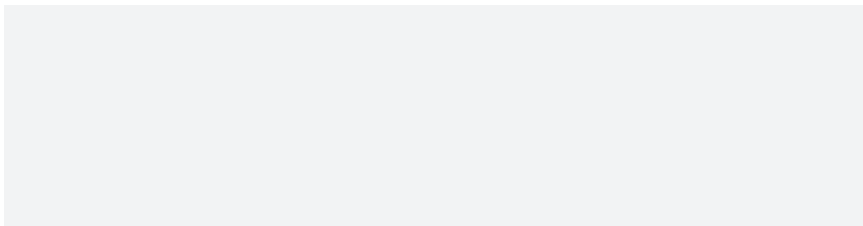
The soul (Greek: psyche) is one of God's most beautiful creations. It enables us to experience relationships and appreciate the beauty of our surroundings. We've been made in the image of God with the capacity to think, reason, and express emotions. God could have programmed us to do and be whatever He wanted, but instead He gave us the ability to choose.

OUR SOULS ARE MADE UP OF THREE PARTS:

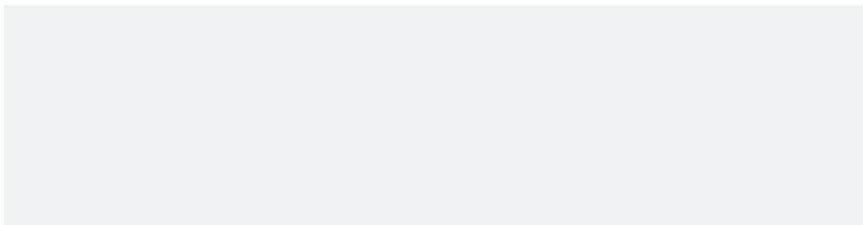
1. The mind, which thinks and reasons
2. The will, which believes and makes choices
3. The emotions, which feels and remembers

WRITE OUT THE VERSES BELOW AND IDENTIFY WHICH OF THE THREE PARTS OF THE SOUL THEY ADDRESS.

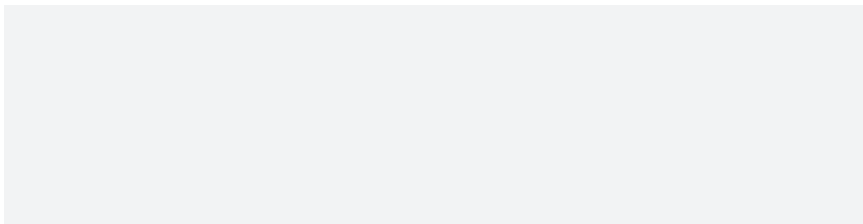
Proverbs 2:10



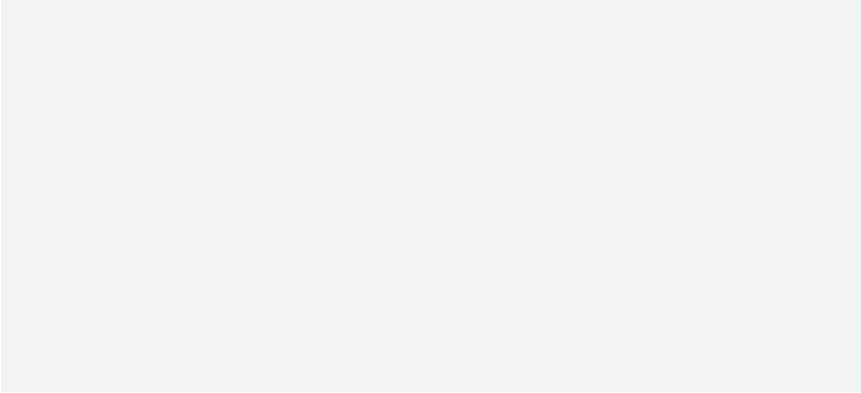
Psalms 119:167



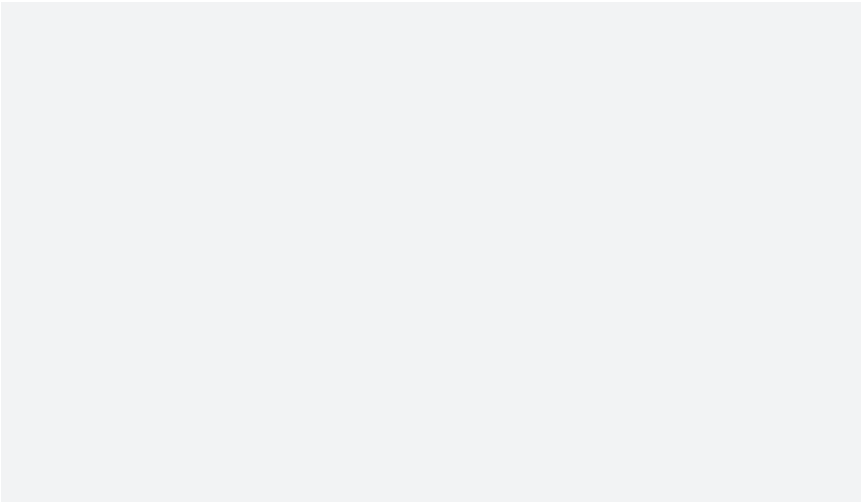
Psalms 139:14



Write Joshua 24:15.



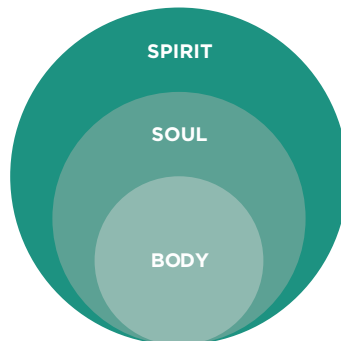
Ask yourself: *Are my thoughts driven by my emotions?*



THE BODY

In Genesis 2:7, we learn that God formed our bodies from the earth. The body acts as a temporary house or shell that contains our soul and spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19 says that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, the presence of God was housed in the inner sanctuary of the temple called the Holy of Holies. At the death of Jesus, the veil of the temple was torn and the presence of God moved out of the structure and into the hearts of all believers. Just as we wouldn't go to church and shatter the windows and destroy the furniture, we shouldn't do anything to intentionally harm our bodies because they're special, designed by God, and given to us in order to carry out the plans He has for us on this earth.



Our bodies have appetites, both good and bad. The Bible says to be careful of any sin that leads to our flesh getting anything it wants. Often people want to know how far they can sin and still enjoy the benefits of God's blessings. The snare with sin is that it never satisfies. We're constantly looking to fulfill the next craving. Sinful desires cause us to need satisfaction and, though we may satisfy them in the moment, the craving soon returns and brings with it increased intensity. This cycle will repeat itself time and again until we break it by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ask yourself: *Are my actions driven by my cravings?*

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12 (NIV) AND FILL IN THE BLANKS:

*"'I have the right to do anything,' you say—
but not everything is _____.
'I have the right to do anything'—
but I _____"*

Another real consequence of sin is the ripple effect. A filter for our sinful actions should be to ask the question, "How will this action affect those around me?" We should rehearse daily the consequences of sins and how they would affect our spouses, our family, and our friends. Would your actions cause another to stumble or be offended?

Read 1 Corinthians 8:9 and hear the heart of our Father.

"Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak."

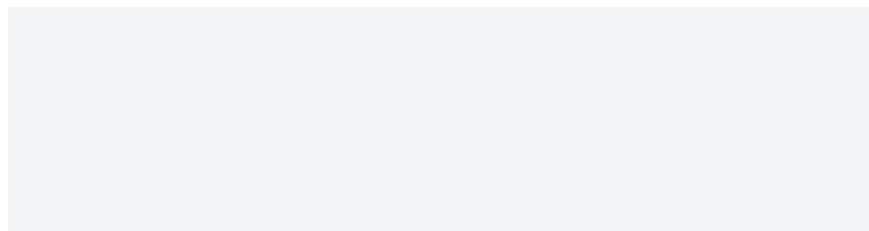
1 CORINTHIANS 8:9

ORDERED LIVING

Spiritual order provides a framework for living in the Tree of Life. It allows you to live with your spirit united with God and your soul and body submitted to your spirit. In other words, your spirit, which is now one with God, calls the shots, and your soul and body follow. So, here's the real question: If we're saved, why do we struggle with sin? The answer is found in the process of sanctification and the principle of spiritual order. When we give our lives to Jesus, we receive everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), but we may still struggle because our spirit is not in the lead. What we give the most attention to will become the most influential. Our spirit can take the lead only if we feed it more than our soul and body.

The world around us constantly feeds our souls through things we see and hear. And our bodies, if starved, make it known that they're hungry. If we withhold gratification from our souls and our bodies, they get loud. Our spirit, on the other hand, when not fed, gets quiet. The less we feed our spirit, the less we recognize our need to feed it. The more we feed our spirit, the more we recognize our need to feed it. Also, the less we feed our spirit, the less we'll desire the things of the spirit, and the more we feed our spirit, the more we desire the things of the spirit. We have to be intentional to feed our spirit.

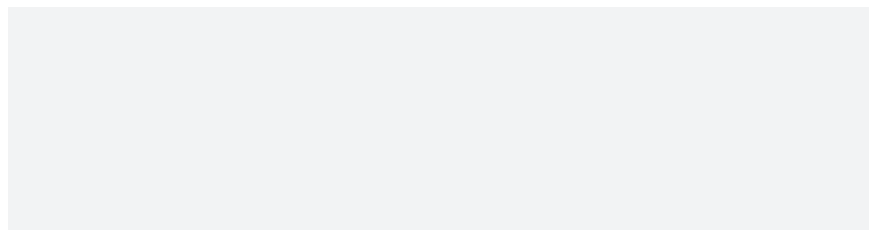
Ask yourself: *What am I doing to feed my spirit?*



WHO IS IN CONTROL?

The soul and the body are complex and can often be confusing, especially since we're accustomed to them taking the lead. Let's consider the following: Very early in life, we learn to take instruction from our souls. We have all seen the toddler throw himself on the floor and demand his own way. He's being led by his emotions when he holds his breath until the parent gives in to his demands. We might think this only happens in the lives of children, but adults can possess the same tendencies.

Read Galatians 5:19-21 and list the works of the soul-led nature.



When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, He'll produce the following kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

According to Galatians 6:8, what is the result of living a life that gratifies the body? What happens to a person who lives a spirit-led life?

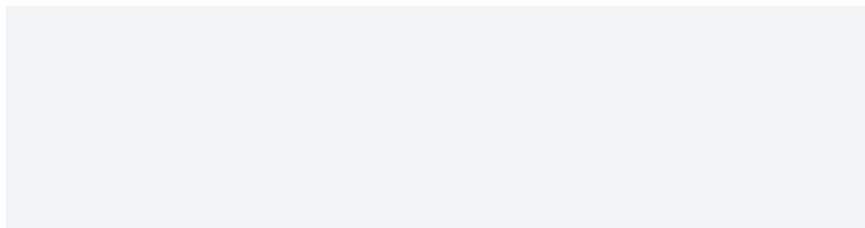
DAILY LIVING

Living in spiritual order brings with it incredible benefits, such as protection, spiritual growth, and power to overcome obstacles in our lives. And it's important to understand that living out of spiritual order is dangerous. When we allow our soul or body to lead, it opens a door for the enemy to operate in our lives. We'll be protected from the enemy when we choose to do things God's way and give control of our lives to Him.

Read Psalm 91. According to verses 9 and 10, who will receive the benefits of protection and safety?

We want to do things God's way, but what happens when we fall short or give into temptation? We respond by distancing ourselves from God. We feel shame and condemnation, but that's Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thinking. Remember, God convicts; He doesn't condemn. Godly sorrow for sin will lead us to repentance, which means "to turn and go the other way."

Write Psalm 66:18-20.



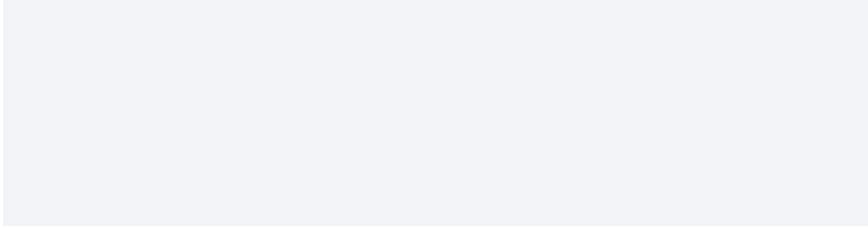
When you realize you're out of spiritual order, stop and repent. Then, ask for and receive His grace. It's the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). Remember, He's the God who came looking for Adam and Eve.

STAYING IN ORDER

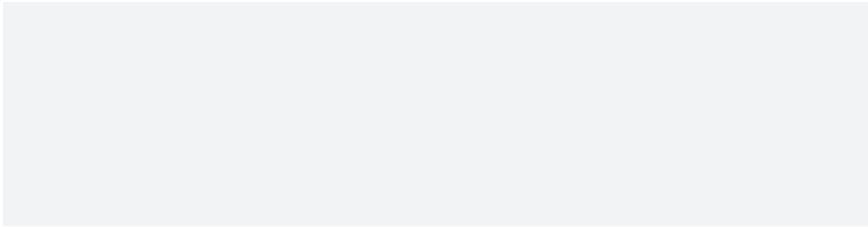
We face decisions every single day, and the choices we make dictate the lives we lead. So, how do we make good decisions? We need to change the way we think.

Knowing our identity is also a key to being led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we need to think about who we are in Him.

Write 2 Corinthians 5:17.



Write Ephesians 1:4.



To walk in spiritual order, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. He's our counselor, our friend, our guide, and the One who reveals truth. Start getting to know Him today. As we grow in our relationship with Him, Bible reading will become more enjoyable, worship more intimate, prayer more powerful, and living in the Tree of Life more tangible and exciting. When we walk with Jesus, life is abundant indeed—and this is only the beginning!

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CHAPTER FOUR

A LIFE OF
SURRENDER

CHAPTER FOUR: VIDEO NOTES

TO WATCH THE CHAPTER 4 VIDEO, VISIT
CALVARYFTL.ORG/FREEDOM-VIDEOS.

*"My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words.
Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart;
for they are life to those who find them and health to one's
whole body. Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it."*

PROVERBS 4:20-23

FOUR BLOCKAGES OF THE HEART:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

EZEKIEL 36:26-27

THREE STEPS TO TRANSFORMING THE HEART:

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to _____.

2. Invite the Holy Spirit to _____.

3. Invite the Holy Spirit to _____.

CHAPTER FOUR

A LIFE OF SURRENDER

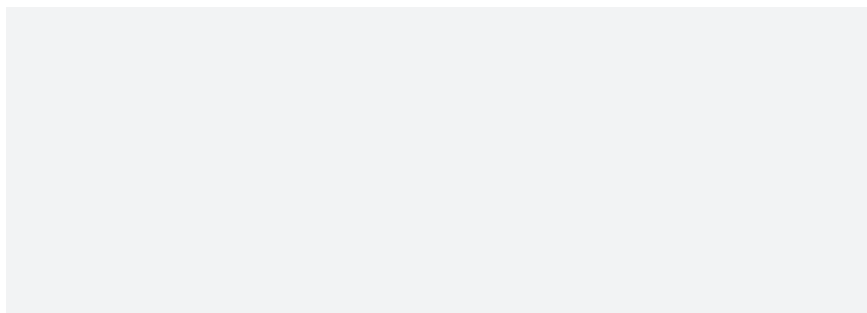
*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”*

PROVERBS 3:5-6

The word surrender brings to mind many pictures, perhaps a white flag waving atop a surrounded military fort or a troop of outnumbered soldiers with their hands raised. We typically associate surrender with defeat. However, when it comes to life with Christ, the act of giving up control to Him is actually the beginning of our freedom. A life of surrender requires trust, and that trust is developed in the context of relationship. Would you allow a stranger to care for your children or watch over your home while you were on vacation? Of course not. Trust is earned, so until you have an understanding of a person's character, it isn't possible to trust him or her with something of value.

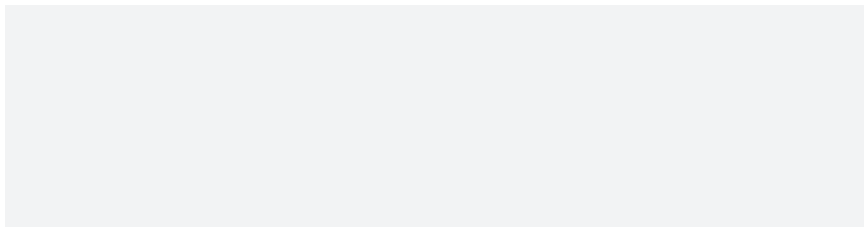
In order to surrender our lives to God, we must believe that He's good and worthy our trust. For many of us, that's easier said than done, and it's often due to doubt or disappointment from past experiences with people or churches. Our hearts can become weary and hardened by such things, but there's hope! We can begin to trust Jesus when we understand what He did for us. He left heaven and came to the earth; He felt hunger, hurt, and rejection; He was beaten and crucified, and three days later rose from the grave—all so He could prove His love, earn our trust, and be in relationship with us.

Write Psalm 119:68.



If you want to get to know God better, you'll need to do what you'd do when getting to know a friend: spend time with Him. This doesn't have to look a certain way. The key is to invite Him into your life. The Lord will reveal Himself to you as you do things that feed your spirit, like studying the Word, seeking Him in prayer, and building relationships with like-minded friends.

Write James 4:8.



“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

ISAIAH 55:9

Sometimes, God’s way of doing things doesn’t make sense to us. His way of thinking is much different—and much greater—than ours. Though we don’t always understand, when we make the choice to trust and obey Him, we find assurance of God’s guidance and provision.

Picture this: You’re going to take a road trip in your car to see the Grand Canyon, but you don’t have a smartphone, map, or compass for the trip. Your best friend not only has all of these items, but also knows every pothole, gas station, and restaurant along the way. Wouldn’t you want him to come along? What if he has a single condition for joining you: to be in the driver’s seat? There’s the dilemma. It’s hard to hand over the steering wheel because it involves giving up control. However, as a believer, the only way you can live the abundant life that God has for you is to fully surrender your life to Him and adopt His way of doing things.

Ask Yourself: *What areas of my life have I not surrendered to God? Am I having a hard time trusting Him with those areas?*

AN EPIC JOURNEY

God wants to spare us a lot of unnecessary self-inflicted pain and regret by being Lord over everything. It's only when He's in control that we can walk in spiritual order. Anything we decide to hold on to becomes our responsibility to maintain. However, if we surrender every area of our lives to Him, He'll partner with us on this journey and bring us safely to our final destination.

Write Luke 14:33.

Man was created to worship, and we worship what we value most. In Exodus 20:3-4, God told the Israelites not to place any gods before Him or make any kind of idol. We may think of an idol as a carved statue, but an idol is also anything we desire more than God. If we want to walk in spiritual order, God must be first.

Materialism is a common culprit of misplaced priorities in our lives. When material things become most important to us, we find ourselves consumed by pressure and stress as we strive to gain more. Materialism gives the enemy an opening to attack our minds and emotions with incessant thoughts about what we have and what we want. The more we have, the more it demands our attention.

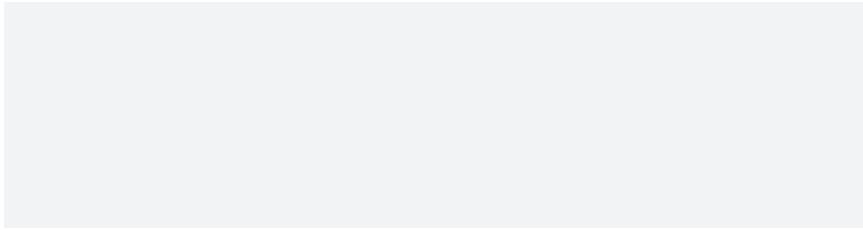
Read the following verses. What happens when we give things and money the place of priority in our lives?

MATTHEW 13:22

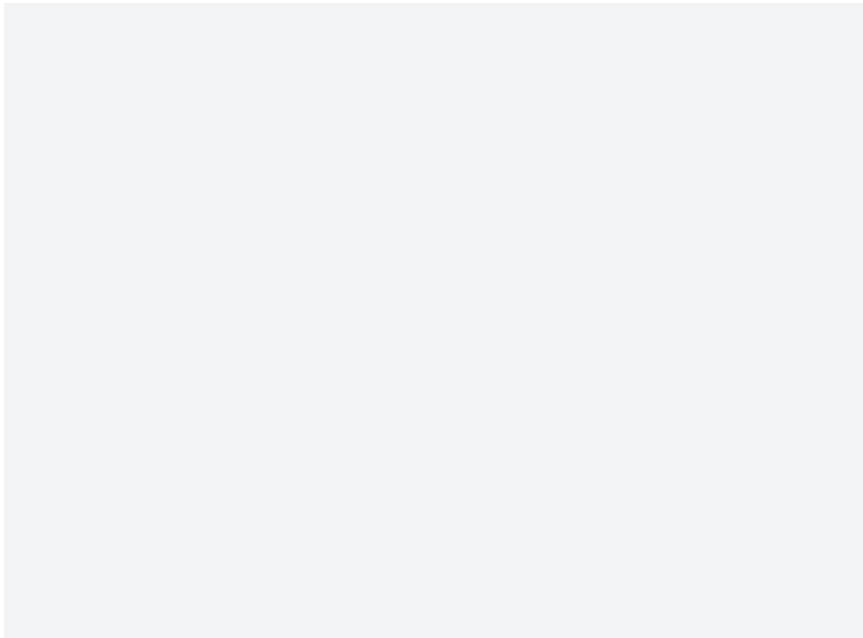
REVELATION 3:17

1 TIMOTHY 6:9-10

Ask yourself: *Is there anything in my life that's more important than God?*



Read the following verses: Psalm 62:10, Hebrews 13:5, and Luke 12:22–31. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how these passages apply to your life.



"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

MATTHEW 6:33

SURRENDER AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

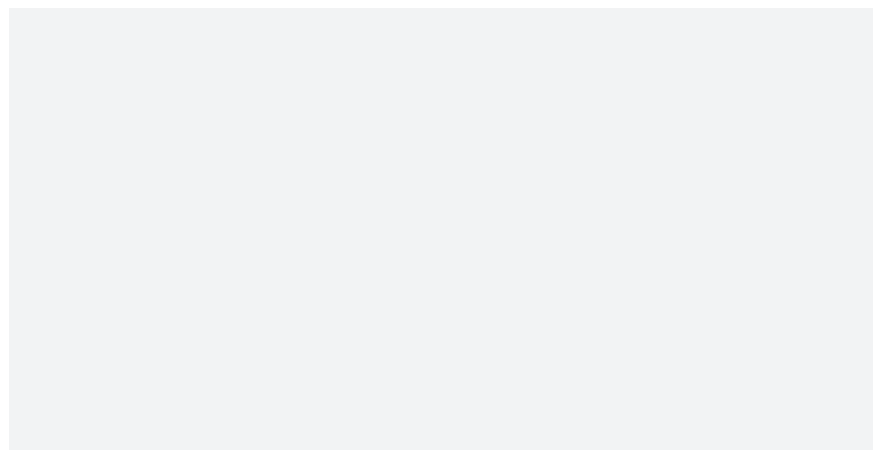
Similar to materialism, relationships can often create misplaced priorities and even come between you and God. It can be relationships with family, friends, co-workers, pastors, church members, neighbors, and even enemies. Whether good or bad, when these relationships become more important to us than our relationship with the Lord, we've gotten things out of order.

Read Genesis 22:1–18. In this passage, Abraham faces an inconceivable situation. He's waited decades for a big promise to be fulfilled—the promise that he'd be the father of nations. In Abraham's old age, God blesses him with a son, Isaac. The child grows and so does Abraham's joy. And then, one day, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son on an altar. Surely Abraham had questions. He loved his son very much, but he also trusted God.

The Bible tells us Abraham rose early the next morning to obey God's command. In other words, he didn't try to delay or find a way out. There was no hesitation in his conduct. In a great act of faith, he placed Isaac on the altar and would have followed through with the command if an angel had not stopped him. God saw Abraham's willingness to obey, provided an alternate sacrifice, and blessed him with a family heritage unlike any other. His descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the shores.

We often insist on having our own way in relationships, not realizing that our attempts to control them may be detrimental. Not only are our relationships unlikely to flourish when we try to control them, they can take our focus off of God and take inappropriate priority in our lives. As was true for Abraham, God's blessings can flow into our relationships if we readily surrender them to Him.

Ask Yourself: *Do I have a relationship that has come between God and me?*



Another principle that allows us to have healthy relationships is staying free of offense. Our most difficult relationships to surrender may be the ones in which there's offense and unforgiveness.

Consider this: What if you gave up your “right to be right” and instead chose to be unoffended, no matter the situation?

SIX WAYS TO STAY UNOFFENDED

1. TAKE THE LOWEST SEAT.

Consider everyone more important than yourself. Put the needs of others before your own. Strive to please God, not yourself or others. Be a servant, and look to honor others rather than yourself.

2. ALWAYS REMAIN GRATEFUL.

Gratitude changes our attitude by keeping us aware of God's provision and blessings.

3. GIVE OTHERS THEIR FREEDOM.

Don't try to control others. People need the freedom to make their own decisions. Sometimes they make good ones; sometimes they make bad ones. Either way, it's their decision.

4. MAKE DECISIONS THAT PROMOTE LIFE IN OTHERS.

When someone offends you, it may seem natural to ignore that person or pay back wrong, but Jesus says there's a better way. Maintain a positive attitude toward them. Choose to speak words of life over them and do things that build them up. How they respond is up to them.

5. TRUST GOD TO BRING JUSTICE WHEN AN OFFENSE COMES.

Vengeance belongs to the Lord. Think about what it would be like to pay for your own sin rather than Jesus taking care of it. None of us want what we really deserve. We'd rather have grace!

6. DEDICATE TIME TO THE LORD.

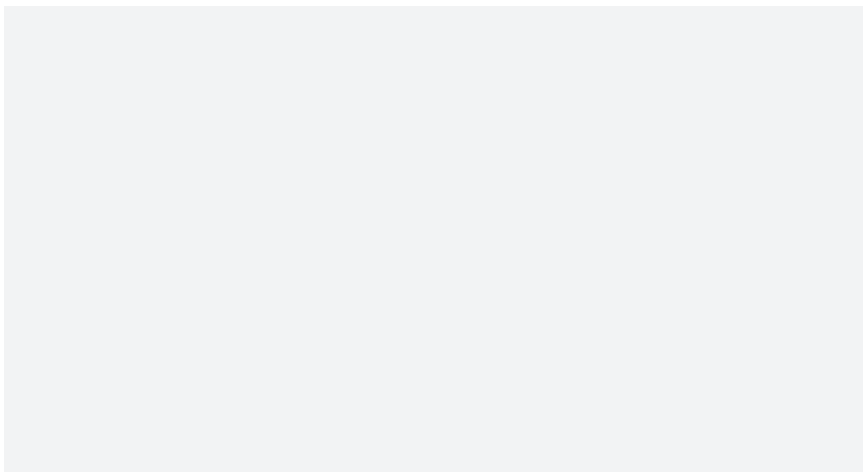
Refresh your spirit in prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with Jesus. God's presence brings change.

I SURRENDER ALL

There are many areas of our lives we need to surrender to God. These include plans, goals, pleasures, ambitions, hurts, the future, the past, selfishness, ego, sin, pride, physical appearance, lust, anger, fear, and health. We must also surrender unforgiveness, because holding on to an offense is essentially saying we have a right to withhold grace from someone. This type of pride is an idol that will cause a wedge between God and us.

Surrendering doesn't mean we no longer have goals or ambitions. On the contrary, God is the One who puts desires in our hearts. When we surrender everything to Him, we'll find that His path to the fulfillment of those desires is better than we could have imagined on our own. We simply have to submit to God's will and join with Him in His plans for us.

Ask Yourself: *Have I surrendered my past, present, and future to God? Do I trust that His way is better than my own?*



JOURNAL

WEEK FIVE

FORGIVENESS

CHAPTER FIVE

FORGIVENESS

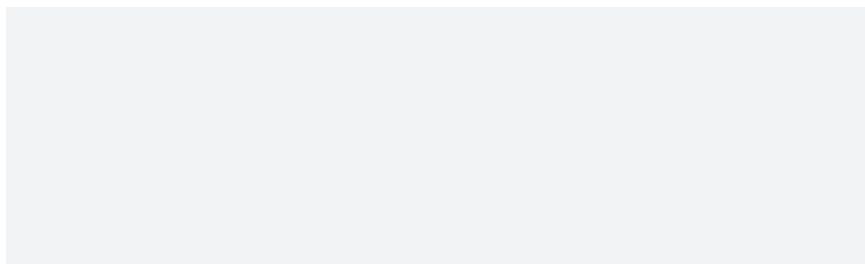
"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."

EPHESIANS 1:7

Because we live in a fallen world, we face the realities of hurt and offense. The words and deeds of others can wound us to the core in indescribable ways. Things like neglect, abuse, violence, betrayal, and cruel remarks can cause bitterness and resentment to infiltrate our hearts, and we, perhaps even unintentionally, begin to harbor unforgiveness.

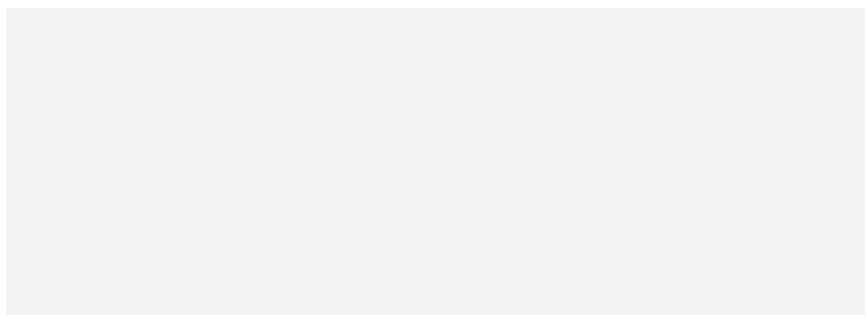
An unforgiven offense is like an arrow dipped in poison. The offense slashes through our defenses and hurts us in the moment, but the aftermath of unforgiveness is like a leftover poison that remains long after the event takes place. It seeps into our lives, tainting our thoughts and clouding our vision. If left unchecked, it will eventually penetrate our hearts and paralyze our ability to live, to love, and to be loved. Harboring unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting another person to die; it does much greater harm to us than the person we refuse to forgive.

Write Proverbs 18:19.



When we become offended, we become unyielding. Think about a city surrounded by walls. The walls' purpose is to protect the city. We use this same thinking to protect ourselves, placing walls around our hearts. People may have hurt us once, but we will not allow them to do it again. But what works for a city of stone doesn't necessarily work in the same way for a heart of flesh and blood. Walls may keep out the bad stuff, but they also keep out the good. With walls around our hearts, we not only protect ourselves from pain and rejection, but from experiencing love and life-giving relationships. We think it's up to us to protect our hearts, but the truth is, God never meant for this to be our responsibility—it's His.

Ask Yourself: *Am I harboring unforgiveness?*



Unforgiveness holds us in bondage and keeps us from living in the Tree of Life. So, why is it so hard to forgive others? Here are a few possible explanations.

REASONS WE MAY STRUGGLE TO FORGIVE

1. WE HAVE A WRONG IDEA OF FORGIVENESS.

The first reason we don't offer forgiveness easily to others is that we may have an incorrect definition of forgiveness. To truly understand what it means to forgive someone, we need to start by learning what forgiveness is not.

- **FORGIVENESS IS NOT MINIMIZING THE OFFENSE.**

Offering forgiveness to someone who has wronged you is not saying, "It's not a big deal," or "It didn't really hurt." What was done or said was not right, and harm never reflects the Father's heart for you. God's perfect will is to protect and nurture you. When you choose to forgive, you let go of the offense because it robs you of freedom.

- **FORGIVENESS IS NOT FORGETTING WHAT HAPPENED.**

Sometimes we think in order to forgive someone, we must forget what's happened. "Forgive and forget" is a cliché that holds no truth. The reality is, we may never forget. However, God wants to do something extraordinary in our lives. He wants to bring healing to our hearts so that when we remember these past experiences, we won't relive the pain associated with them. God wants to show us how He can make all things new.

- **FORGIVENESS IS NOT RECONCILIATION.**

We often make reconciliation a caveat for our forgiveness, saying, “When they apologize, I will forgive them.” In doing so, we actually become a hostage to the very one who has wronged us because it leaves our freedom up to another person. Letting go of offense doesn’t mean we must reconcile with the person. Romans 12:18 says, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” God understands there are times when reconciliation may not be the best choice. In such situations, rely on the Holy Spirit to lead you. Begin by allowing the miracle of forgiveness to happen in you.

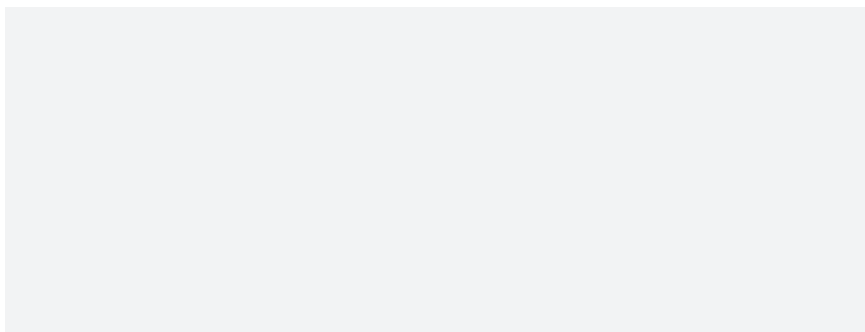
Reconciliation is a two-way street. If you’ve forgiven someone and desire to revisit the relationship, use wisdom throughout the process. The door to reconciliation may be open if you see the following in the other person:

- ***Repentance:*** *Turning away from wrong actions and going in the opposite direction*
- ***Restitution:*** *Making things right if possible*
- ***Rebuilding Trust:*** *Proving themselves consistent in words and actions*

2. WE DON'T THINK IT'S FAIR.

The second reason we don't offer forgiveness to those who've hurt us is that it doesn't seem fair to let them off the hook. We reason in our minds they don't deserve forgiveness. But God doesn't use "fairness" logic (or doesn't hand out forgiveness based on merit)—and thank goodness, because none of us deserve forgiveness!

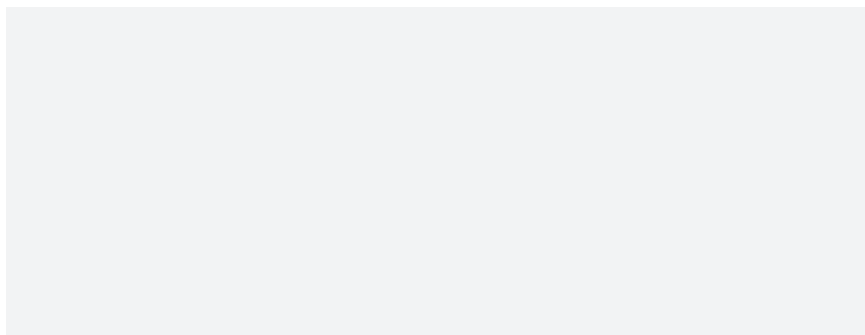
Read Matthew 18:21-35. Through this parable, Jesus explains the profound and undeserved forgiveness we receive as believers. What instruction does Jesus give us regarding forgiveness?



Jesus told Peter he needed to forgive 490 times a day—that's once every three minutes! Considering how fast our minds often race, that number doesn't seem too far fetched, does it? In the Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor, the first man owed the king millions of dollars, but when he begged for mercy, the king canceled his debt. As sinners, we owed a great debt we couldn't pay. But God showed us great mercy and, by the blood of Jesus, paid our debt in full. We've been forgiven more than we will ever know.

The second man owed the first man a debt of a few thousand dollars. While this isn't an insignificant amount of money, the first man was forgiven a much greater debt. In light of the incredible mercy he was shown by the king, he should've readily shown mercy to the second man as well. Since we've been forgiven so very much, we should extend what we've received to others. The forgiven must forgive!

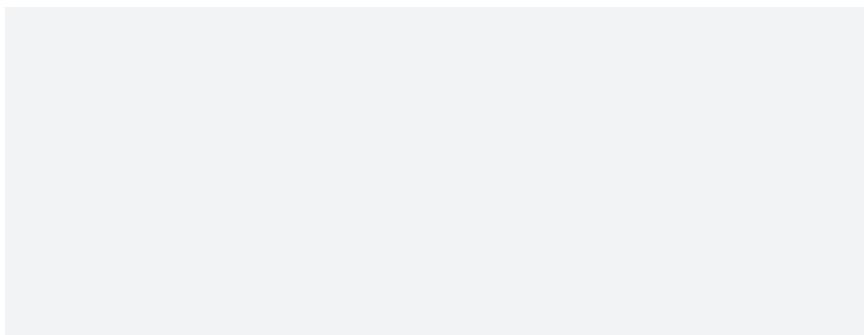
Ask Yourself: *In light of all the sin for which I have been forgiven, am I able to release those who have wronged me? Would I trade my forgiveness from God for the right to hold someone accountable for their offense toward me?*



3. WE DON'T THINK WE CAN DO IT.

The third reason we don't forgive is we don't think we have the power and strength to do so. This is the voice of the enemy. We must recognize and silence the voice of our adversary. In our own human power, we may not be strong enough to forgive the great wrongs done against us, but we don't have to walk through this Christian life in our own strength. We're empowered by the supernatural strength of God.

Write 2 Corinthians 12:9.



In this passage, Paul is saying something incredible happens in the midst of his struggles—the power of Christ is at work! Forgiveness doesn’t turn us into doormats. On the contrary, forgiveness makes us victorious.

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling, and it’s a choice we have to make daily. We prefer to wait until we feel like forgiving, but if our lives are dictated by our feelings, we’ll always live according to the reality of this world. God’s inviting us into a new reality.

If we dare to believe God, and choose first to forgive, our feelings will follow our decision. Then, instead of merely “reacting” to what happens to us, we can choose to live in the Tree of Life. Remember: Choices lead, feelings follow.

THE FORGIVEN FORGIVE

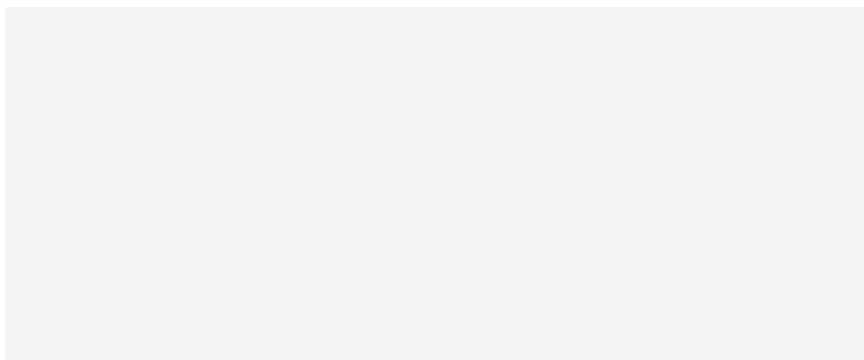
We forgive others in response to the great forgiveness we've been shown by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18-19 (NIV). This passage says that our sins were scarlet, and Jesus made them white as snow; they were crimson, and He made them as wool. Note that the end of the Scripture says "are willing and obedient." Forgiveness is not a suggestion, but a requirement from our loving Father for our benefit. The forgiven forgive.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

EPHESIANS 4:31-32

Romans 5:6 says that while we were still sinners, God sent Jesus to die for us. When it comes to understanding forgiveness, this is critical. It's impossible to forgive others of their offenses until we receive forgiveness for ourselves. If we struggle with forgiveness, chances are we haven't fully grasped what God has done for us. We've been given total forgiveness for past, present, and future sin. It's not that God forgets our sins, He chooses to remember our sin no more. He chooses to never mention our sin again—ever. Why does He do this? Because God desperately wants to be in relationship with us.

Write Isaiah 43:25.



THE UNFORGIVENESS TRAP

An offense is something we consider to be a violation of what we think is right and fair. We need to understand that the enemy uses offense to hold us captive and keep us from moving forward in the freedom God has for us. The word offense comes from the Greek word “scandalon,” which means “the bait.” In Old Testament times, when someone wanted to trap an animal, they’d cover a pit with branches and place a piece of flesh (scandalon) on top of the branches to lure the animal into the trap.

Satan uses offense as bait to lure us into a trap of unforgiveness and bondage. By holding on to offense, we think we’re trapping the person who hurt us, but in reality, we’re the ones who are ensnared.

Below is a list of five common snares the enemy uses to lure us into unforgiveness. Notice that Jesus Himself also suffered these offenses. Jesus was fully God and fully man. He allowed Himself to be tempted in every way we are today because He wanted us to know that no matter what we face, He's been there—and He has overcome.

WHEN WE ARE . . .

Betrayed – by a best friend who lied, a spouse who didn't stay forever, a confidant who broke our trust, etc.

Falsely Accused – misunderstood, the subject of gossip and slander

Rejected – by a spouse, friend, trusted authority, or even a church

Abused – emotionally, physically, verbally, or sexually

Humiliated – haunted by an embarrassing moment, ashamed, disgraced

REMEMBER, JESUS WAS . . .

Betrayed – by Judas, a trusted friend and one of His disciples

Falsely Accused – wrongly indicted in several courts

Rejected – by Peter, one of His disciples and closest companions

Abused – beaten, tortured, cursed, and crucified on a cross

Humiliated – crucified and disgraced in a public setting

To get a better understanding of why Jesus had to suffer in the way He did, read Hebrews 2:17-18:

“For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

It was important for Jesus to experience all of these offenses in a human body so He could understand every struggle we would encounter. Now, when we come to Him with our hurts, He can honestly reply, “I understand. I went through that, too.” Not only is Jesus able to empathize with our pain, but He set an example for how we should respond when we suffer at the hands of others.

At His death, Jesus asked the Father to forgive the very ones who cursed Him, who nailed His hands and feet to the cross, saying, “They do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). In reality, they knew exactly what they were doing: killing a man they hated and making sure He felt every ounce of their malice. Jesus knew His oppressors were blinded by hate, but He chose to view their actions with a heavenly perspective. Offenses will undoubtedly come, so we must arm ourselves with the same thinking of Jesus.

Our primary prayer for relationships should be that the Lord would allow us to see the other person through the eyes of Jesus. If we begin to see others as God sees them, we’ll find ourselves loving people the way Jesus did, regardless of what they do or don’t do to us.

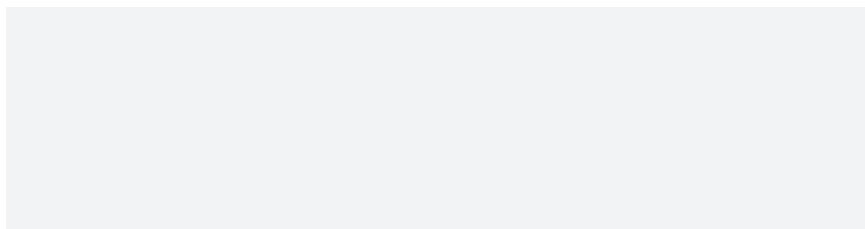
LIVING AN UNOFFENDED LIFE

How do we keep our hearts pure and unoffended? Consider these three simple statements:

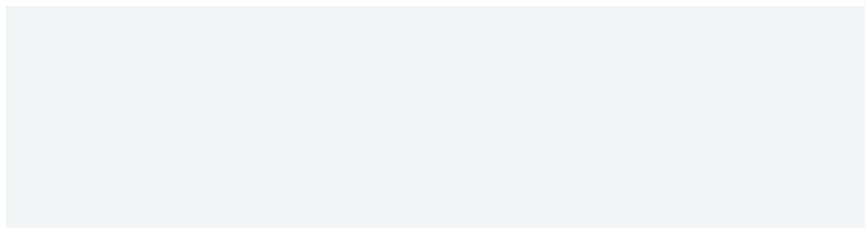
1. RECOGNIZE OUR OWN IMPERFECTION.

We will never have to forgive others for more than God has forgiven us.

Write Romans 3:23.



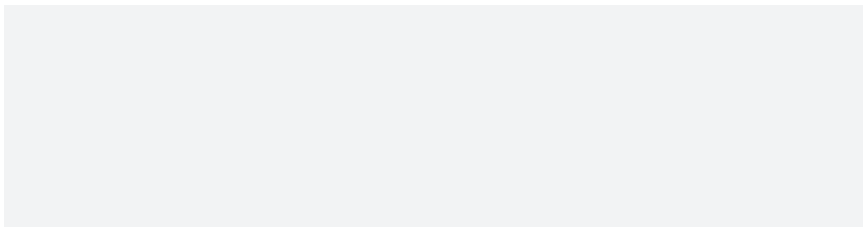
Write Matthew 10:8.



2. FOCUS ON THE REAL ENEMY.

Jesus made a choice to see the people with the hammer and nails as unknowing participants in Satan's agenda of darkness. If it's true that hurting people hurt people, then the people who've hurt us have their own story as well. Our approach should be to love people and hate the devil.

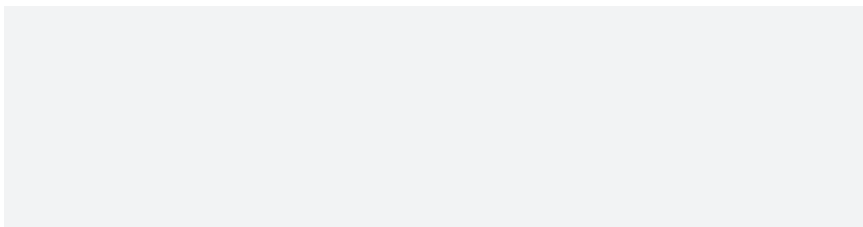
Write 1 Peter 5:8.



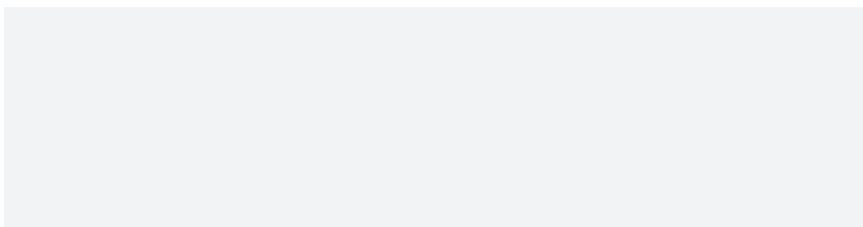
3. RECEIVE THE LOVE OF GOD.

Allowing yourself to be deeply loved by God will change the way you view people. When you live out of the knowledge of being intimately known, radically loved, and fully accepted by God, your capacity to love difficult people will grow.

Write 1 John 4:10.



Write Romans 5:5.



FORGIVENESS IN ACTION

The Bible's steps for walking out forgiveness are countercultural (the opposite of mainstream society) and counterintuitive (different than what would be expected). But if you follow them, they'll change your life. Our way of thinking and God's way of thinking are not the same. Read 1 Corinthians 1:25–28 to gain the proper perspective on submitting to God's way of doing things:

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are.”

DAILY STEPS FOR WALKING OUT FORGIVENESS

1. PRAY FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED YOU.

Society will encourage us to return evil for evil or isolate anyone who offends us so they can't do it again. The Bible says that justice belongs to the Lord, and our responsibility is to forgive and give it to Him. Giving the situation to God in prayer will transform and heal you in the process.

Write Matthew 5:43-44

2. BLESS PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED YOU.

For some of us, it's hard not to talk negatively about the people who've wronged us. But Jesus wants us to go a step further; He asks us to bless them. The word bless means to "speak well of." This isn't something that's demonstrated in today's culture. Listen to what the Bible says:

"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

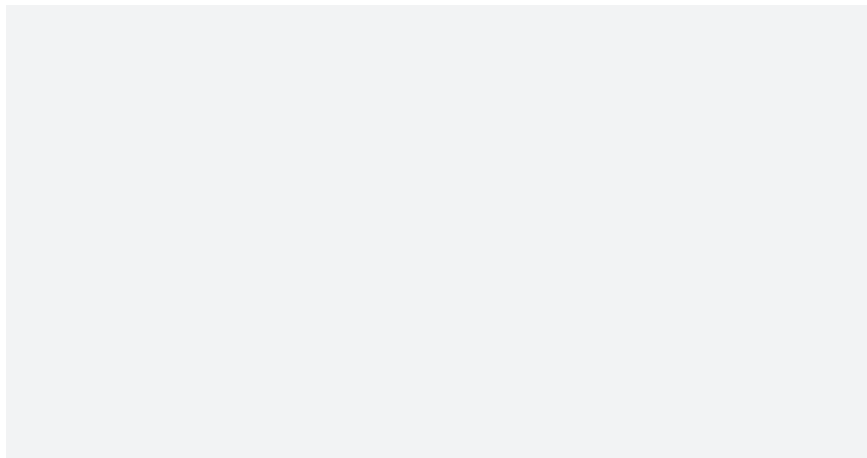
LUKE 6:27-28

Write Romans 12:14.

3. DO GOOD TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE OFFENDED YOU.

This requires a change in our way of thinking. It's not that we're repaying good for evil; it's that we've made the decision to do only good to others. So, whether someone is serving or attacking us, our response should be to treat them well as Luke 6:27-28 says to do.

Ask yourself: *Are there people in my life who I've not released to the Lord? Am I trying to get revenge for their offense?*



LET FREEDOM RING

Below is a declaration based on Romans 12:17–21. Read it out loud.

I do not repay evil for evil. As far as it depends on me, I will live at peace with everyone. I will not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath, because God has promised He will handle it. On the contrary, if my enemy is hungry, I will feed him; if he is thirsty, I will give him something to drink. I will not be overcome by evil, but I will overcome evil with good. Because Jesus has blessed me, I will bless others.

A PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

This is a simple prayer of forgiveness you can use to release anyone who has offended you. Insert the name or names of those you feel you need to forgive, and say the words out loud.

Lord, instead of loving, I have resented certain people, and I have unforgiveness in my heart. Forgive me for my sin of holding on to offense. I ask you, Lord, to give me the power to forgive those who have hurt me. I release them to you now. Give me the strength to pray for them, bless them, and want the best for them. Thank you for breaking these chains off of my life. Amen.

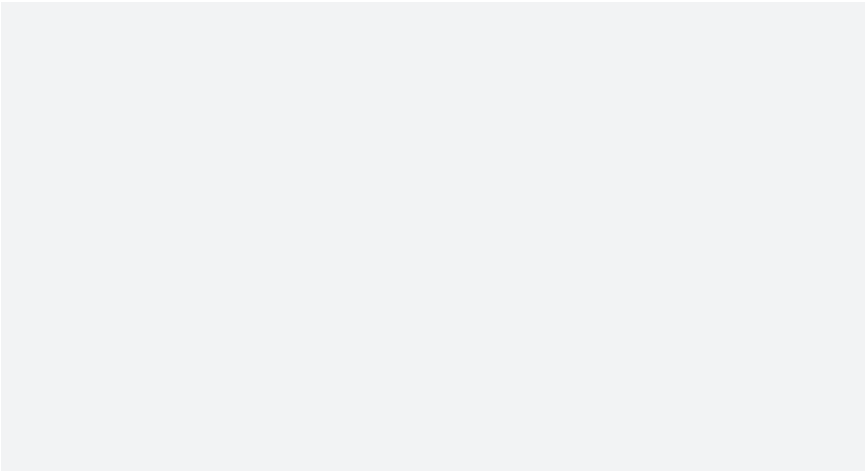
At this point we should also address what we should do when we're the ones who need to be forgiven by someone else. Each of us have wronged someone else at some point in our lives, and Jesus taught us that we need to make every effort to resolve any rift we may have wrongfully caused in any of our relationships. In fact, not doing so can actually affect our relationship with God, Himself (Matthew 5:23-24). A healthy way of initiating this process is by exercising "The 3 A's": Admit (confess what you've done wrong to the offended), Apologize (express how you're genuinely sorry and repentant for what you've done), and Ask (ask for their forgiveness). Whether this leads to reconciliation or not depends on the attitude of the one you've wronged. But even if they're not receptive, you can move forward with a clear conscience that you've obeyed God's will to the best of your ability.

ACCEPTING GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR OURSELVES

Getting past your past may be the biggest obstacle you face in your spiritual life. Every time you seem to be making progress, that old movie reel of the sinful things you've done begins to play in your mind. Peace and freedom slip away as your past rises up to remind you of your failure. You think forgiveness is for other people but not for you because you've done too many horrible things and it's just too late.

You may be surprised to know that these feelings are actually common for many believers. The enemy loves to remind us of the mistakes we made in the past because guilt keeps us stuck, unable to move forward into the future God has planned for us. We feel we must repent for our past over and over again as we're continually bombarded by painful memories that we're powerless to change. These thoughts come solely from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Ask Yourself: *Am I constantly reminding myself of past failures? Does the sin of my past continue to bother me even though I've asked God to forgive me?*



CONFRONTING THE PAST

When our past rears its ugly head, there are three ways we usually respond:

1. WE TRY TO BURY IT.

Have you ever heard the phrase, “You’ve got to bury the past”? Well, the fact is, you can’t. It’ll find its way to the surface at some point. We hear that time heals all wounds, but that’s also untrue. Only the Holy Spirit can heal. Concealing the past never works. Proverbs 28:13 says, “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” The Bible also says that confessing our sins and praying for one another actually helps us find healing and wholeness (James 5).

2. WE BEAT OURSELVES UP.

Some of us live in the land of regret. We dwell on the “if only” scenarios from our past. But “if only” is a trap. We cannot change the past and the enemy uses the notion to torment us. King David knew this type of grief. He committed adultery with his own soldier’s wife and then had the soldier killed when she became pregnant with his child. When the prophet Nathan confronted David, he repented and cried out to God. In Psalm 38:4–8, David says, “My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning. My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.” David shows us that an unwillingness to trust and accept God’s forgiveness of our sin can even cause physical pain in addition to emotional pain.

3. WE BLAME OTHERS.

This tactic has been used since the days of Adam and Eve. When God asked Adam why he disobeyed, Adam blamed Eve. Eve’s response was to blame the serpent (Genesis 3:12–13). We must take responsibility for our actions, then repent and move forward.

Since these are unhealthy ways to deal with our past, what is the best way to face it? We need to look to the Word and agree with God’s perspective on our past. God says when we ask Jesus into our hearts, our old lives vanish and we become new people. You may know this in your head, but is it your reality?

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

The apostle Paul had a terrible past of persecuting and killing Christians, but he understood the truth below, and it allowed him to accept the grace of God and move forward in freedom.

“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.”

1 TIMOTHY 1:13-15

GETTING PAST THE PAST

To let our past die, we must change our way of thinking. The old way of thinking doesn't line up with God's Word, so it doesn't produce life. We must accept what the Bible says and renew our minds with the truth so that we, like Paul, can walk in freedom. In order to walk in freedom from our past, we need to do the following:

1. STOP TRYING TO EARN FORGIVENESS.

Most people don't understand the gospel. They think if they work hard to be good more days than they're bad, they get to go to heaven. That's not true. The price has been paid. Forgiveness is received, not earned. If we think we have to earn forgiveness from God, we'll make others earn forgiveness from us.

Here is the gospel:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

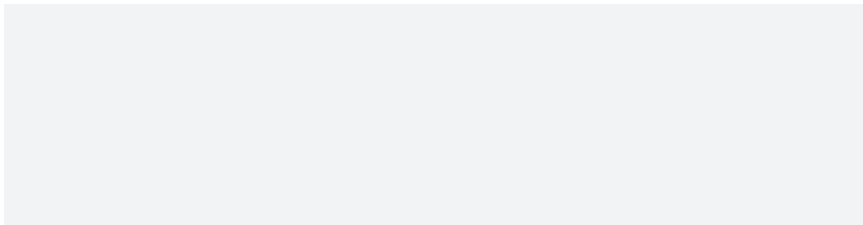
2. RECEIVE GOD’S FORGIVENESS BY FAITH.

It will free our hearts and allow us to forgive others.

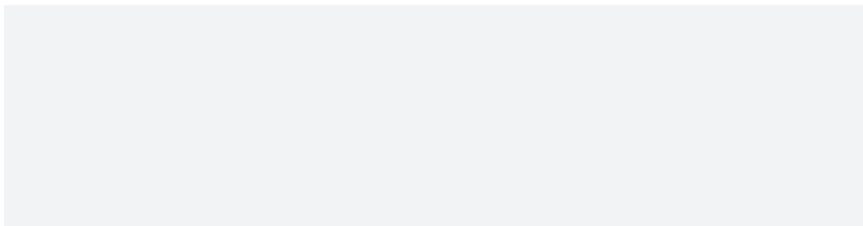
3. DEFEAT EVERY LIE WITH THE TRUTH.

It’d be great if once we had received forgiveness, we never thought about our past again. The truth is, the enemy will continue to bring up our past every day. He’ll wait for weak moments in our lives and whisper our failures to us. We have to resist him every day. Remember, he’s the accuser of Christians and the “Father of Lies” (John 8:44). We defeat him by knowing and speaking the truth.

Write 1 Corinthians 1:30.



Write Romans 8:28.



God never said forgiveness would be easy. In fact, following the instructions in His Word takes courage and strength. But His instructions work. They'll lead us into pathways of righteousness where we can live again, free from the ghosts of our past. No more guilt, no more hiding, no more shame. Free.

It takes faith to believe that these words are true, but if you do, they'll change your life. Trust that God's Word is true. Believe you've been made new and clean and that He can and will make you whole again. Life as you know it will never be the same. As you begin to see yourself the way God sees you, you'll begin to see others differently. You'll find yourself with open hands, releasing offenses, and receiving abundant life. You'll be living in the Tree of Life.

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The background of the image is a close-up, high-contrast photograph of several large, overlapping leaves. The leaves are a deep teal or forest green color. The lighting is dramatic, with bright highlights on the veins and edges of the leaves, creating a strong sense of texture and depth. The veins are clearly visible, radiating from the central midrib. The overall composition is organic and naturalistic.

THE POWER
OF WORDS

CHAPTER SIX

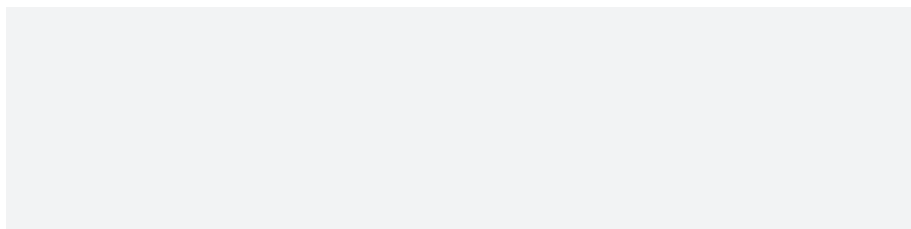
THE POWER OF WORDS

*"The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit."*

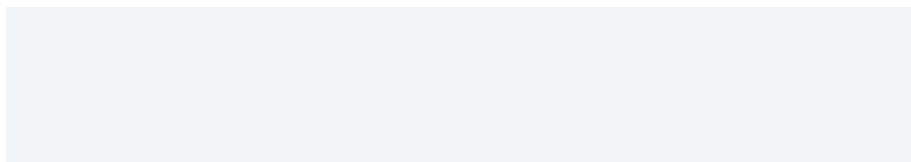
PROVERBS 18:21

The words we speak are a spiritual gauge, showing how much of our soul we've surrendered to God. If we've allowed our minds to be renewed by the Word, our conversation can't help but reflect what we've learned. If, on the other hand, we're hesitant to release our old habits and beliefs, our words will betray us and reveal our true spiritual condition. If our souls are not in submission to God and we haven't surrendered everything to Him, our tongues will be the first to sell us out.

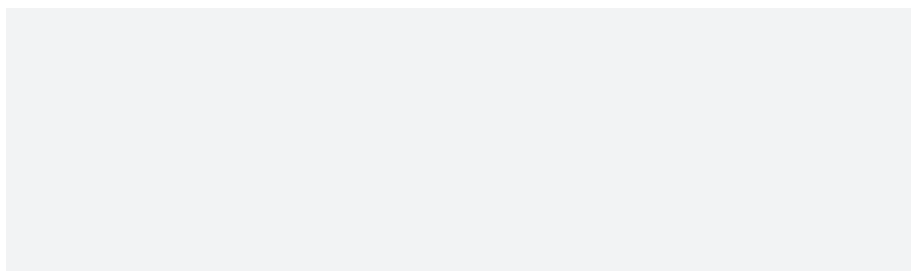
Write Luke 6:45.



Read Matthew 12:34–35. What does Jesus say about the relationship between our hearts and what we say?



Ask Yourself: *What does my day-to-day conversation say about my spiritual condition? Do my words reflect that God lives inside of me?*



Jesus tells us that a life consumed with the cares and treasures of the world will lead to fruitless talk that will bring judgment upon us. A life surrendered to God and filled with the Holy Spirit will produce speech full of grace, mercy, love, and power.

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORDS

“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

HEBREWS 11:3

With words, God spoke the entire universe into being. With words, He communicates to us. Through the Bible, with its thousands of words, He reveals Himself to us. John 1:1 says that Jesus is actually the living, breathing Word of God. Words and language were His idea, and His words are literally life to us. Because God created man in His image, our words have power. Since Jesus is our example in everything, and we’re to follow in His steps, let’s look at a few verses that demonstrate the power of His words. In the following verses, underline what happened when Jesus spoke.

Matthew 8:26: *“Jesus responded, ‘Why are you so afraid?’ Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.”*

Matthew 8:32: *“‘Go!’ So they came out and went into the pigs.”*

John 11:43–44: *“When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out.”*

As you can see in these verses, the spoken Word of God can bring healing, peace, deliverance, and life!

TWO KINGDOMS

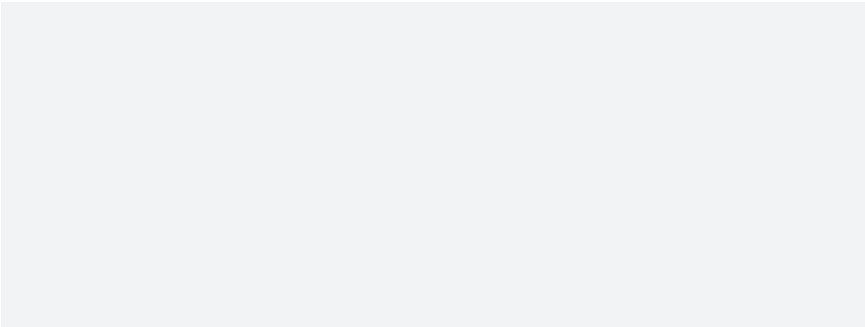
Isaiah 14 recounts the fall of Satan. Verses 12–14 say, “How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’”

Through the power of Satan’s spoken words of rebellion, the kingdom of darkness was established. And he actually spoke the first words of rebellion in his heart. Satan and his demons continue to speak words of rebellion to our minds. If we aren’t enlightened to this truth, we’ll be his advocate in hurting others and even ourselves with the words we speak. Every time we open our mouths to talk, we either advance the kingdom of life or we advance the kingdom of death.

When we were saved, we weren’t taken directly to heaven because we’re Jesus’ body—His hands, feet, heart, and mouth designed to reach the lost and make a difference in this world. But we can’t advance the kingdom of heaven on our own.

Knowing we would need help in order to represent Jesus to the world, God set us up for tremendous success by sending us the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples it would actually be to their advantage if He left and went back to heaven (John 16:7). Though Jesus was fully God, He was also fully human—He could only be in one place at a time while He walked around in a human body. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit and have Him as our personal guide through life no matter where we are on the earth. Through the Holy Spirit, God will disclose to us all the guidance we’ll need, including what to say.

Ask Yourself: *Am I intentional to use my words to promote the kingdom of God and to minister to others?*



CONTROL ISSUES

In the Garden of Eden, Satan spoke to Eve to entice her. Eve didn't know it, but when she and Adam had a conversation about Satan's idea, she advanced the kingdom of death through her spoken words. God said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life" (Genesis 3:17). Satan didn't bring death to Eve by biting her and releasing poisonous venom or by wrapping his coils around her and squeezing the life out of her. He talked her to death. She then proceeded to talk Adam to death by discussing the evil idea. Can you see how important it is to control our words?

Controlling what we say requires us to tame the part of ourselves that contains the power of life and death: our tongues.

"We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check."

JAMES 3:2

Some of our greatest hurts and heartaches come from what people have said to us. Conversely, some of our greatest memories center on positive things people have said to us, like the phrase, “I love you.” Those are wonderful words to hear, but for some of us they’re hard to say, even to those we love. Our words can either tear others down or build them up.

Think of all the conversations you have in a given day. Are the words that come out of your mouth reflective of what you say you believe in your heart? As Christians, our words and actions should reflect our love for God. This is why the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 4:29 (emphasis added), “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, **but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**”

If our words don’t do this, it’s important to look inward and see where our hearts and our words are not matching up. Jesus’ brother James makes the argument that if you say you’re a Christian and love God, but your attitude and actions reflect something different, you may fall into the category of the deceived. In James 3:2, he says that we can control ourselves in every way if we can control our tongues.

Read the statements below and consider the effect these words of life or words of death can have on someone’s life.

WORDS OF LIFE

I love you.

You’re such a blessing! You look great.

I see potential in you. You’re smart.

You’re so thoughtful. You can do it!

You did your best. I forgive you.

I’m committed to you.

Life is better because of you.

WORDS OF DEATH

I hate you.

I wish you had never been born.

You’re ugly.

You’ll never amount to anything.

You’re stupid.

You’re selfish.

You shouldn’t even try. You’re a failure.

I never want to see you again.

I want a divorce.

You were a mistake.

TONGUE-TIED

The Book of James goes on to talk about the power of the tongue, our spoken words. In chapter three, James tells us the tongue can defile the whole body, and he uses three vivid images to help us see his point:

1. A BIT: The tongue is petite, weighing only about two ounces, but it's powerful. Like the small piece of metal used to steer horses, the tongue can control the direction of our lives (James 3:3).

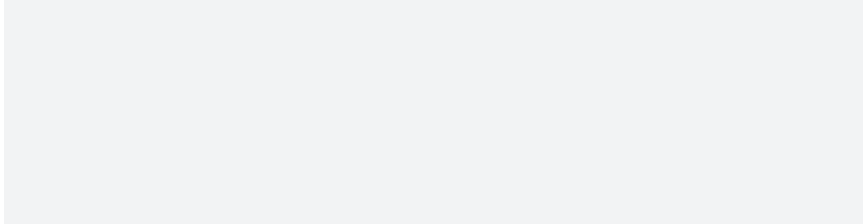
2. A RUDDER: Although ships are typically large and driven by strong winds, they're steered by this very small blade. Too often we focus on the big things and forget that this one little issue of the tongue could determine the direction of our lives. The tongue can control us, or we can use it to control our destiny (James 3:4).

3. A SPARK: A spark, though caused by a quick strike, can set off a wild fire. In the same way, what we say might be curt but can be consuming. Some of the most hurtful things we've said or that have been said to us are sharp one liners or even one word. These abrupt, rude statements may be quickly forgotten by the one who said them, but the impact stays with the person who receives them (James 3:5).

Thousands of acres of forest can be destroyed by a fire that hundreds of firefighters cannot extinguish. Similarly, the tongue can cause destruction beyond belief. While at times words can be petty and seemingly insignificant, they can be poisonous. Careless words often cause great harm. Imagine a child struggling to read and a frustrated and worried parent listening to the child twist the words day after day. Finally, after losing all patience, the parent

screams, “What’s wrong with you? You can’t read!” Those words have the potential to make the child feel stupid and give up even trying. Thoughtless words can have a lasting effect that could change the course of a person’s life and cause widespread destruction.

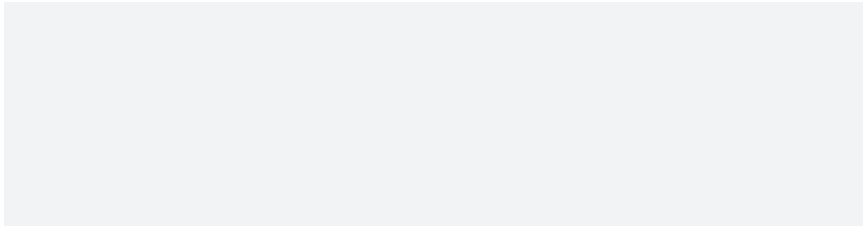
Write James 3:7–8.



“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”

JAMES 3:9–12

Ask yourself: *Do I say things about myself, or others, that I quickly regret?*



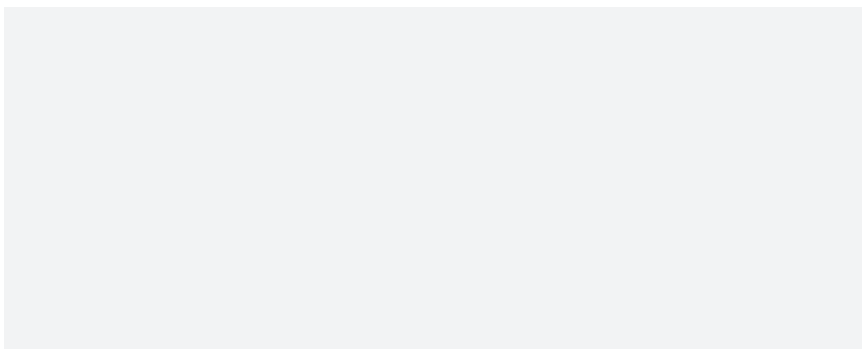
HOW TO TAME THE TONGUE

We need God's help to change the way we speak, but know this . . . change is possible. Because we're made in God's image, we were meant to speak words of life that build up, bring healing, and offer encouragement. Let's take a look at a few principles that will help us use words that advance the kingdom of life.

1. GUARD YOUR HEART.

Jesus says in Matthew 12:34, "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." The words of our mouth reflect our inner condition. If we desire to control our tongue, we need to control the junk that bombards our ears and saturates our souls. Remember, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him" (Matthew 12:35). It's the old "garbage in, garbage out" principle.

Write Psalm 51:10.



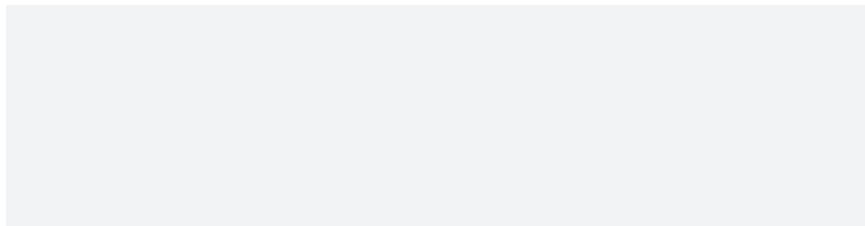
Some of us grew up in homes where everyone was critical, where belittling remarks were part of the daily routine and yelling was the main form of communication. If you were raised in that kind of environment, you may have already made a decision to do things differently. But maybe you still experience great discouragement after you lash out at someone, wishing you had not acted that way. Because you saw verbal attacks modeled when you were young, you react the same way. This is a vicious cycle that may lead to something called generational sin.

Generational sin is a pattern of sinful behavior passed down from person to person in a family until it's recognized and broken. One of the ways to break the cycle is to put a filter on our minds and protect ourselves from the venomous effects of careless and evil speech.

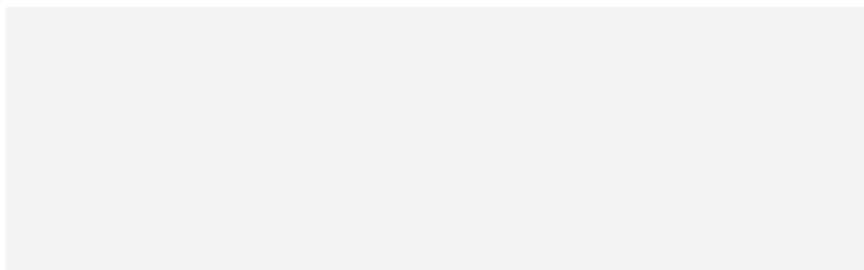
2. GAUGE YOUR TONGUE.

A gauge is a tool used to measure or determine the maximum amount of something. If we had a gauge on our tongues, we would know when to stop speaking. Colossians 3:8 says, "But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips." We must decide that we aren't going to say the things we used to say. We need to make the decision today and then manage our decision daily.

Write Psalm 141:3.



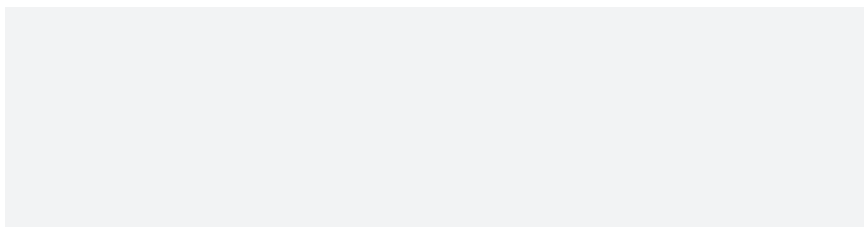
Read Proverbs 10:19. What happens when we talk too much? What do sensible people do?



3. GARNISH YOUR SPEECH.

A garnish is an extra flourish set on a plate to add a pleasing aesthetic to the dish. What would it be like if we decided that before we let anything out of our mouths, we would garnish it to make it sound pleasing to others?

Write Ephesians 4:29.



At times, we need to say things that are difficult or may appear negative, but even so, we can speak in a way that can bless and encourage the other person. Even bad news can be delivered in a life-giving way. Discipline can be given in a way that truly benefits the one being corrected.

Sometimes, the best thing to say is nothing at all. There were plenty of times

Jesus held His tongue, even when He endured absolute brutality. In fact, although He never committed a sin, the Bible says Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered. “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats” (1 Peter 2:23).

WISE WORDS

The proverbs are full of teaching regarding how we should use our tongues.

Read the following Scriptures and write the instructions given.

PROVERBS 4:24

PROVERBS 15:1

PROVERBS 16:13

PROVERBS 16:28

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Sometimes, entire families are characterized by certain words. “They’re just a bunch of losers. None of them even finished school.” “They’ve always been that way—they say even her grandmother had a bad temper.” Sinful patterns of behavior can be passed down from generation to generation, and so can the consequences (Exodus 20:5). If your family has generational sin in any form, the good news is you can be freed from it! You can be the first generation to walk in freedom and begin a flow of God’s loving kindness and blessing to a thousand generations after you (Exodus 20:6). Ask God to shine light on words that should never have been spoken to you.

Write down any words of death spoken by others that has shaped you.

Write down any words of death you've spoken to yourself.

Write down any words of death you've spoken to others.

THE VOICE OF VICTORY

If you've been on the receiving end of destructive words, there's good news: You can truly be healed and set free from the effects of those words. Below are four steps you can take to be set free from harmful words that have been spoken over you. Pray through these steps as you begin to identify any lies you've believed.

1. **CONFESS:** Healing starts with admitting we were wrong. We must first acknowledge we've believed something that's not true and have agreed with the lies of the enemy.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

1 JOHN 1:9

2. **REPENT:** To repent means to change direction. When we repent, we choose to turn around and go the opposite way of our previous path. Stop your agreement with the enemy in its tracks and set your mind on a new course of thinking. If anyone has hurt you by reinforcing lies in your life, forgive them and release them to the Lord.

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."

ACTS 3:19

It's important to note that when we confess our sins and reject the enemy's lies, we realign ourselves with God's truth. Armed with confidence in His Word, we're set free from the power of the enemy and the effects of his lies from our lives.

3. **CAST OFF:** We must refuse to allow the enemy to continue to use destructive words or events against us. By the authority in the name of Jesus, we must stand against any attack of the enemy and trust in His power to protect and deliver us.

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

JAMES 4:7

4. **BLESS:** Once the enemy has been removed, fill the place he held with truth and promises found in Scripture. Speak the life-giving truth of His Word over yourself by declaring an accurate view of how God sees you.

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

EPHESIANS 2:10

LIFE PROMISES

All throughout the Bible, we see our God is a God who loves to bless, so much so He regularly speaks words of blessing over His people. To be blessed means to have the Lord’s good and perfect provision for our lives. And because we’ve been blessed, we’re joyful, content, satisfied, and full of gratitude in all that He’s done for us and given to us.

Read these words aloud and receive the truth from God's Word:

BECAUSE OF JESUS . . .

- I am blessed! (Numbers 6:24-26)
- I am blessed with God's supernatural wisdom, and I can have clear direction for my life. (Hebrews 13: 20-21; Proverbs 3:5-6)
- I am blessed with courage, strength, and abundant life in Christ. (John 10:10; Psalm 84:7)
- I am blessed with self-control and self-discipline to fight temptation. (Psalm 1:1-3)
- I am blessed with the life God has ordained for me, with the relationships He's put in my life, and with the family of faith, the church. (Acts 2:42-46; James 5:14-16; Psalm 127:3-5)
- I am blessed with God's presence, grace, and physical and spiritual provision in any and every health situation. (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)
- I am blessed with faith, favor, and fulfillment. (Jeremiah 17: 7-8; Ephesians 3:20)
- I am blessed with perseverance, supernatural strength, and divine protection. (Philippians 4:19; Isaiah 41:10)
- I am blessed with an obedient heart and a positive outlook on life. (Philippians 4:7; Psalm 119:2-3)
- I believe any words of death spoken over me and those I have spoken over others have been paid for by the cross of Jesus. (Romans 4:7-8; Ephesians 4:31-5:2).
- I am blessed wherever I go. (Numbers 6:24-26; Matthew 6:30-33)

THE LIVING WORD

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

HEBREWS 4:12

Imagine if someone offered you a special gift that would guarantee you direction, wisdom, and provision. A gift that would give you the ability to rise above any circumstance and stand against any enemy. A gift that would keep you from sin, destruction, and despair. Wouldn't you be eager to receive this gift? Well, you can! Through the gift of the Bible, we have access to all of that power. You see, the Bible is the primary way God has chosen to reveal Himself to us. It's the chief vehicle He uses to tell us who He is and to explain His heart, mind, character, nature, and will. Over and over, Jesus tells us if we know Him then we know God and have seen God. And the primary way we get to know Jesus is through the Bible. It's His powerful, authoritative, enlightening, and life-changing self-expression. It's the very breath of God on each page! 2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

In the same way that time spent and communication with a friend, family member, significant other, or spouse is essential for you to know them, so it is with the Bible as it pertains to knowing the Lord! And on the flipside, without true commitment and intentionality to regularly read, study, and meditate on Scripture, we quickly lose sight of the true, genuine gospel and of the real Jesus! Without hiding His Word in our hearts, we won't be able to recognize His voice when He speaks!

So, what does this look like practically? Well, there are a few time-tested, foundational practices that have helped strengthen many believers' relationship with the Lord.

STUDY GOD'S WORD

Biblical scholar and author Wayne Grudem once wrote that if we develop a rhythm of engaging in God's Word and "allow [ourselves] to be daily, hourly mentored by God's Holy Spirit, [our lives] will undergo an unprecedented change for the better."

It's been said that the quality of the Christian life is dependent upon the quality and consistency of a disciple's devotional life. There are many ways to study the Bible; many different study methods and guides to help us get the most out of God's Word.

One popular and easy way of personally studying the Bible is by using a tool called S.O.A.P

SCRIPTURE: Choose a passage from the Bible to study.

OBSERVATION: Write down what the text says to you. What do you notice about what you're reading? What is of personal interest to you?

APPLICATION: Now that God has spoken to you, write down how He wants you to apply what He said to your life. How can you take this passage to heart and make it real in your everyday life?

PRAYER: Finally, end with writing out a prayer to God based on what you've read—something to ask for, something to confess, and something to praise Jesus for.

HERE'S A QUICK SAMPLE:

Scripture: *"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."*—James 1:19 (NLT)

Observation: *I feel this passage is encouraging me to control my anger—to be slow to anger, to think before I speak, and to make sure I'm always listening to others.*

Application: *I realize that, often, I get the two speeds out of order. I'm quick to speak and get angry and I'm slow to listen. I think God wants me to work on this.*

Prayer: *Lord, thanks for giving me the perfect example of how to approach the people I come in contact with. Help me today with the people I encounter, that I may display Christ-like qualities to them. In Jesus' name, amen.*

NOW LET'S PRACTICE IT!

Here's a passage for you to get familiar with the S.O.A.P. method:

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

You may find another method you're more comfortable with. That's great! There are many different models for studying God's Word. If you test one method for a few days and find it doesn't really work for you, try another until you find the one you're comfortable with. Or maybe you use something different or something you've refined over the years. Whatever works best in helping you to know the Lord on a deeper level and to apply His Word in your life . . . run with that!

There's no secret formula or one-size-fits-all method. Just pray and ask for guidance as you seek to establish your healthy routine of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ through His Word. That's the key: to be consistent, to establish a rhythm, to make devotion time a priority, and to build a true habit.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LIFE OF A WORSHIPPER

CHAPTER SEVEN: VIDEO NOTES

TO WATCH THE CHAPTER 7 VIDEO, VISIT
CALVARYFTL.ORG/FREEDOM-VIDEOS.

*"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power,
and how he went around doing good and healing all who were
under the power of the devil, because God was with him."*

ACTS 10:38

THREE THINGS TO KNOW:

1. Demons are _____.
2. Demons want to _____.
3. Demons respond to a _____.

*"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one
who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

1 JOHN 4:4

THREE WAYS TO LIVE THIS OUT:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

CHAPTER SEVEN

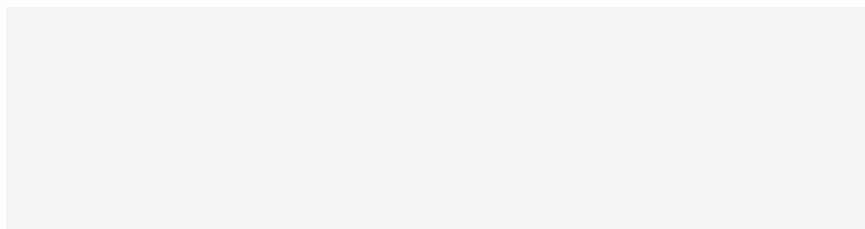
THE LIFE OF A WORSHIPPER

"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."

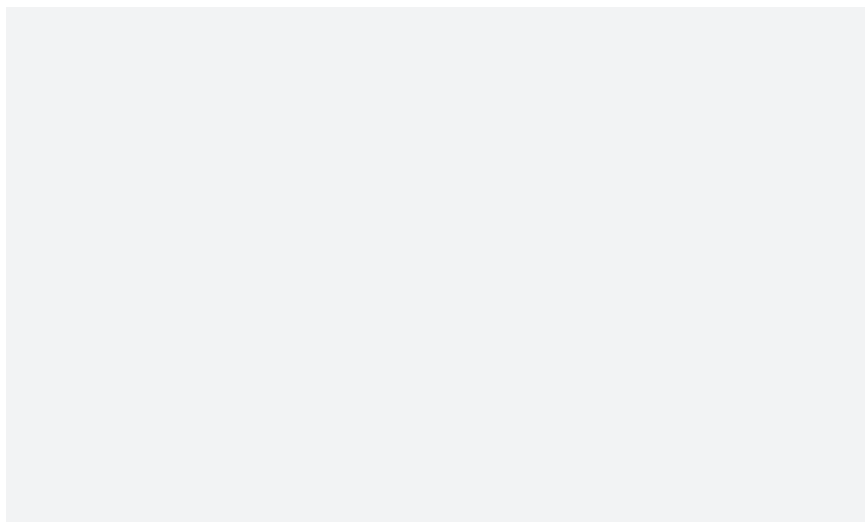
2 TIMOTHY 2:20-21

In this passage, the apostle Paul uses household items as an analogy to describe believers and our ability to be useful to God by serving Him and fulfilling our respective destinies. We see that some items are inexpensive and ordinary, but others are honorable, used for special occasions. In the Master's hand, these are utensils that accomplish great things. Every person is at a different place in his or her walk with Christ. No two stories are the same, and no one starts out as silver or gold; it's a process. The gospel shows us we can't cleanse ourselves, only Jesus can cleanse us. It's His work inside of us! If you're unsatisfied with where you are in the process, God's eager to take you to the next level. He's the One who prepares you, refines you, and makes you holy. Though you may not feel very special or pure at this moment, God still sees you this way because the holiness of Jesus has been placed on you. You're not defined or limited by your past. He says in His Word that He makes all things brand new (2 Corinthians 5:17), and He wants to help you become a new creation.

Write Revelation 21:5.

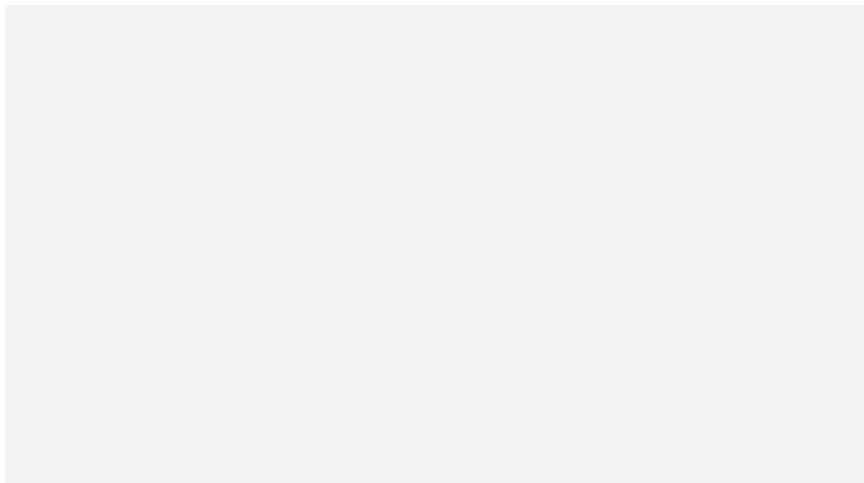


Ask Yourself: *Am I satisfied with where I am with God? How do I want my life to be different?*



The Holy Spirit knows when there's something in your life keeping you from who God created you to be. Will you let Him reveal those areas to you? He wants to bring you to a new level of personal integrity, and He'll do a miracle in your life if you'll allow Him.

What areas of your life might need to be confronted and cleaned up by the Holy Spirit? Write them out below as a way of surrendering them to the Lord.



When we talked about spiritual order in chapter four, we discussed justification and sanctification. Remember, justification is an event that takes place when we're saved. When Jesus becomes our Savior, at that very moment, every sin of our past is wiped clean. God removes the junk of yesterday just as if we had never sinned.

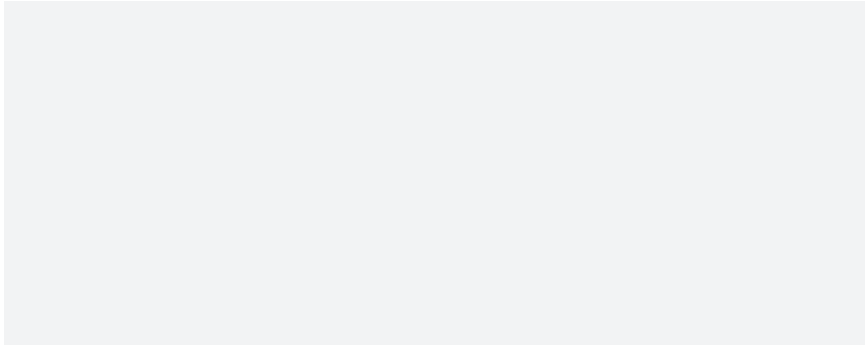
Sanctification; however, is not an event—it's a process. It's a journey through which God molds and transforms our character. As He sanctifies us, God takes us to new stages of faith, continually making us more like Him. He sets us free from habitual sin, purifies our hearts, and empowers us to fulfill the kingdom purpose for which He created us.

Read the four stages listed below and identify where you are right now.

FOUR STAGES OF CHRISTIANITY

1. Unbelievers become believers.
2. Believers become disciples who begin to grow.
3. Disciples become leaders who find their purpose in life.
4. Leaders become servant leaders.

Write Matthew 20:26.



HOLINESS IN ACTION

There are three steps we can take to see more of God's sanctifying work in our lives: offer our bodies, renew our minds, and surrender our wills.

1. OFFER OUR BODIES.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

ROMANS 12:1

God desires us to bring our whole selves to Him. We might sin by saying something with our mouths, looking at something with our eyes, or touching something with our hands. In Job 31:1, a righteous man says, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman." When we surrender every area of our lives to God, He begins His restorative work in making us a new creation. Because of Jesus and His work on the cross, we can boldly go to God and say, "Here I am Lord; clean me up. Take each member of my body and the things I've done and wash me. Take my appetites, my addictions, my habits, my tongue, and my attitudes and consecrate them."

Underline the first word of each command in the following verse:

“Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:22

“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.”

ROMANS 6:11-14

2. RENEW OUR MINDS.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

ROMANS 12:2

Sin functions in the body, but the mind controls the body. Sin begins in the mind.

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5

In this passage, we see that spiritual warfare is an essential component of the Christian life. Many Christians love God but have no clue how to fight the enemy. We must become equipped for battle because the devil is scheming to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8).

The enemy's goal is to plant thoughts in our minds that are contrary to God's thoughts. A lot of the ideas we've subscribed to, even about God, are simply wrong because they're contrary to Scripture. Don't listen to the voice of the enemy; listen to the Word of God. For example, Ephesians 2:4-5 says, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." These verses are a great reminder when we're in the battle. Believe what the Word says over you! Warfare is exchanging the report of the world for the report of the Lord. Peace can reign and rule in our hearts when we align our thoughts with the truth of God's Word.

Here's the main question when it comes to spiritual warfare: Can the devil get us to believe him? We must take thoughts captive and compare them to what the Bible says is true. Be wise and careful when it comes to what you allow yourself to be influenced by, especially when it comes to the messages you're receiving through music, TV, movies, books, and entertainment. When you turn off the programming of the world, the voice of God will become clearer to you.

Renewing our minds by the Word of God requires us to use Scripture to combat the lies of the enemy.

Write the truth from Scripture that will dismantle the enemy's lies.

LIE	TRUTH
You're confused.	1 CORINTHIANS 2:16
You're fearful.	2 TIMOTHY 1:7
There's no hope.	JEREMIAH 29:11
You're going to die.	PSALM 118:17
Something bad is going to happen.	PSALM 91:10
God can't hear you.	PSALM 34:17
Nothing will ever change.	ISAIAH 43:18-19

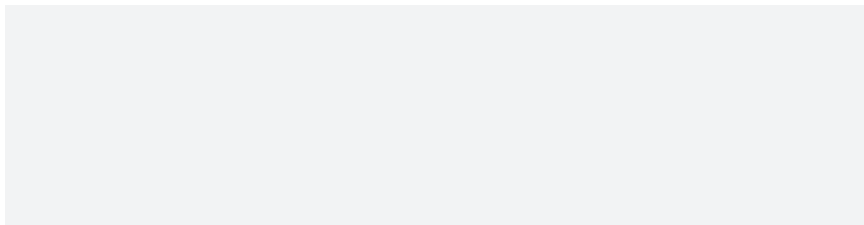
3. SURRENDER OUR WILLS.

“Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

ROMANS 12:2

The body carries out sin and the mind controls the body, but the will controls the mind. As we surrender our will to God, His perfect will becomes the motivation of our lives. In Matthew 6:10, Jesus tells us to pray this way: “Your kingdom come, your will be done.” Instead of coming to God with our agenda, we should approach prayer with this mentality: “Father, I want what You want. Have Your way.” Come to Him with an open and willing heart. If we’re biased toward a specific answer to our prayers, God’s voice will be difficult to discern.

Write Luke 22:42.



When we pray like this and surrender our will, we’re inviting God to align our will to His. He will stir up purpose within us and empower us to fulfill our God-given destiny and expand the kingdom of heaven.

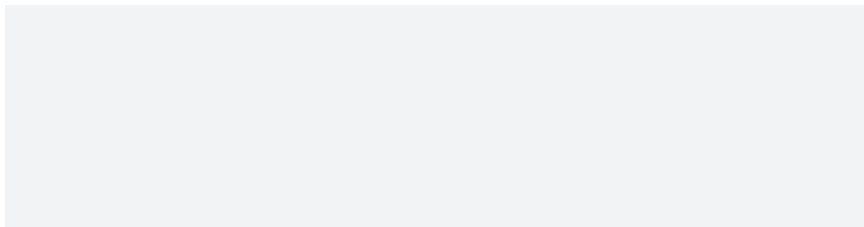
REPENTANCE

Surrendering our will to God requires repentance. Often, people believe that just the admission of sin clears their conscience and frees them from any consequence or responsibility. While admitting a sin is part of repentance, it's not full repentance. Repentance not only means admitting your sin but turning away from the sin and choosing to no longer continue in it. Titus 2:11-12 tells us that through God's grace and salvation, we can say "'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives."

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10. What might be missing in a person who struggles with turning from sin?

Read Romans 2:4. What else leads us to repentance?

Write Romans 13:12.



If you find yourself in a cycle of sin, don't give up hope! God desires to help you break the cycle. Ask Him to give you godly sorrow that leads to repentance and meditate on His goodness and His kindness. And remember, "The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand" (Psalm 37:23-24).

RESPONDING TO SPIRITUAL ATTACKS

1 John 1:7 says that if we're repentant, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. But sometimes people can feel they aren't forgiven even after they've confessed and repented of a sin many times.

If you're feeling this way, it may be the result of a focused spiritual attack of the enemy. Over time, sin will allow the enemy to gain a foothold, which feels like a "hook" lodged in your soul. When you're least prepared, you'll experience a tug on that hook that makes you feel unworthy and defeated. Those feelings are lies! Because of the finished work of Jesus, your sin has been paid for and He has set you free from sin, guilt, and shame. The gospel frees you to experience the complete peace of God's forgiveness. Only the gospel can remove the hook! After the hook is removed, ask the Lord to heal the wound and fill the space with His peace and power. Only after repentance can God begin His restorative work in your life.

You don't need to be afraid to do this because God has given you the authority in Christ over sin and any dark spirit. The Holy Spirit is with you, and God promises to never leave or forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:8). Remember "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Below is a list of common struggles you may need to overcome. Identify the areas where Satan may have a foothold in your life and, by using the prayer outline above, pray through prayers of repentance and fight against the enemy's attack.

rejection • abuse • self-hatred/unworthiness • depression
pride • unforgiveness • greed • guilt/shame
lust/sexual impurity • control • anger • fear

The specific example of worthlessness is used to show the application of the following prayers.

1. **CONFESS:** Healing starts with admitting we were wrong. We must first acknowledge we've believed something that's not true and have agreed with the lies of the enemy.

Father, I confess I've believed the lie that I'm worthless and unlovable. Please forgive me for not trusting that what Your Word says about me is true.

2. **REPENT:** To repent means to change direction. When we repent, we choose to turn around and go the opposite way of our previous path. Stop your agreement with the enemy in its tracks and set your mind on a new course of thinking. If anyone has hurt you by reinforcing lies in your life, forgive them and release them to the Lord.

Father, I repent and come out of agreement with the lies of the enemy regarding my worth. I recognize I'm greatly valued and loved by God. Father, I choose to believe Your Word and what You say about me. I choose to forgive _____ for any way in which they've led me to believe that I'm worthless, whether deliberately or inadvertently.

It's important to note that when we confess our sins and reject the enemy's lies, we realign ourselves with God's truth. Armed with confidence in His Word, we can take authority over the enemy and remove the effects of his lies from our lives.

- 3. BELIEVE:** We must refuse to allow the enemy to continue to use destructive words or events against us. With the authority of the name of Jesus, we must replace the negative thought patterns with the truth of God's Word.

I reject the lie that I'm worthless, and I believe that because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, He has adopted me as a child of His own. In the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I believe that the spirit of unworthiness has no place in my life.

- 4. BLESS:** Once the enemy has been removed, fill the place he held with truth and promises found in Scripture.

I declare and choose to believe what the Word of God says in Ephesians 2:10, that I'm "God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus." I receive the blessing of value and purpose found in the gospel of Jesus.

Pray for the Holy Spirit's discernment and guidance. He desires for you to be free!

JOURNAL

WORSHIP

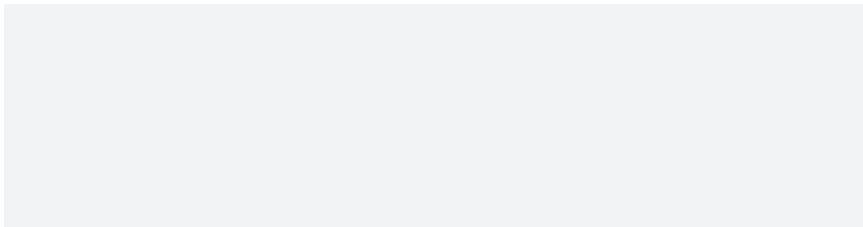
"For the grave cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today; parents tell their children about your faithfulness."

ISAIAH 38:18-19

By this time in the freedom journey, hopefully you know one thing for certain: God's love for you is real and vast. When we truly embrace the love God has for us, we begin to trust Him, and as our relationship with Him grows, we develop a great love for Him as well. Love for God allows our "religious requirements" to become relational joys. What we once saw as duty has now become devotion. It's our delight to know Him and follow His commands.

An overflow of our relationship with God is worship. Worship is more than singing songs; it's a lifestyle. Worship can be expressed through acts of service, words of praise, and giving, as well as singing, dancing, and even shouting. When we live this way, the Holy Spirit works inside of us to sanctify us, meaning He works to make us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our daily lives.

Ask yourself: *Am I living the life of a worshipper? Am I looking more like Jesus?*



LOVE & WAR

When we give God all of our attention, we strip the enemy of any power he has over our souls or our bodies as we enter the safety of God's presence. In His presence, we're protected from every scheme of the enemy. We become like Jesus, who said that the ruler of this world "has no hold over me" (John 14:30).

We're able to come boldly into the presence of God because of the blood of Jesus. Hebrews 9:22 says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." And without forgiveness for our sins, we cannot enter the presence of God. The blood of Jesus has removed every spot and stain from our lives and made a way for us to "approach God's throne of grace with confidence" (Hebrews 4:16).

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God said, "You will surely die." Obviously, He was referring to spiritual death, because they went on to live very long lives after they were banished from the garden. Remember: Sin has consequences. But even though God departed from man's spirit when man sinned, He didn't abandon His creation. In response to Adam and Eve's loss of innocence and awareness of their nakedness, He covered them with garments made from animal skins. This was the first blood sacrifice.

Throughout the Old Testament, sins were only forgiven when certain animals were sacrificed. God considered these blood sacrifices to be acts of worship. The blood of the animals would be poured on the horns of the altar that sat at the entrance to the tabernacle (sanctuary). The offering was then taken into the Holy of Holies, a sacred place containing the Ark of the Covenant, which housed the tablets with God's Law written on them (the Ten Commandments).

The blood would be put on the mercy seat (lid) of the ark and, when the sacrifice was appropriate and right, the presence of God would fall.

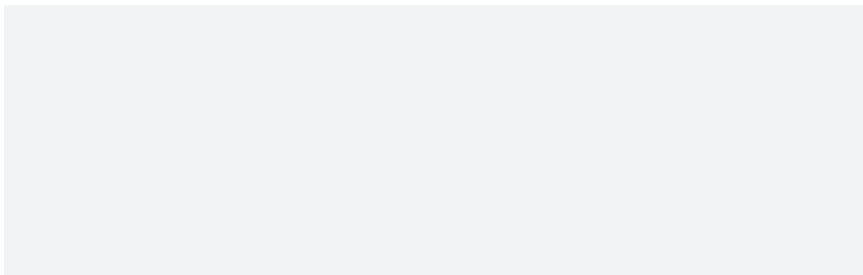
In the Holy of Holies, there was a thick veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (also called the Most Holy Place), where the presence of God dwelled. This veil represented the unapproachability of God to anyone but the high priest. When Jesus gave up His Spirit on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. Notice that it was not torn from bottom to top. God tore this veil from above because He was moving out of that place. A few chapters later at the feast of the Pentecost, God moved into the hearts of believers.

TRUTH UNVEILED

“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”

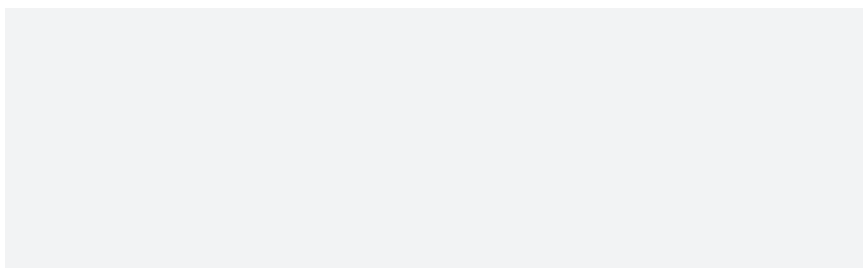
ACTS 2:2-3

Write Acts 2:4.



This incredible experience with the presence of God described in Acts 2 was made possible by the acceptable sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. Thank God for this new and better way for us to experience Him! “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12). This redemption includes eternal life with God, healing for our souls and bodies, and deliverance from all the powers of the enemy.

Read Revelation 12:10–12. God says that Satan, the accuser of the believers who accuses us before God day and night, is overcome. Write verse 11.



The blood of Jesus has overcome Satan. As believers, we’re fighting from victory—not for victory! The veil has already been torn; the victory has already been won; Satan is a defeated foe. There’s nothing separating us from God’s presence! Now, we can be in an intimate relationship with Him. He’s declared and expressed His love for us; we need only to receive that love and learn how to love Him in return.

FIRST LOVE

God desperately longs to connect with our hearts. In Matthew 15:7–9, Jesus says there are people who honor Him with their words, “but their hearts are far from [Him].” Their worship is a farce. Genuine worship comes from a heart consistently connected with God, and that connection happens in two ways: corporately (at church gatherings with fellow believers) and personally (anytime, anywhere).

Ask Yourself: *Is my worship coming from a genuine place in my heart? What am I doing to create an atmosphere of praise in my daily life?*

LESSONS FROM A RIVER

Most Christians get distracted by striving to find the happiest, most pleasurable, most personally preferable way to live. But in order to discover God's will for our lives, we must surrender control. It starts when we say, "My life is not my own. I know I've been bought with a high price, and I'm your servant by choice. What would you like me to do, King Jesus?" With that kind of attitude, we'll live a far more fulfilling life than we ever could have imagined or obtained on our own.

Read Ezekiel 47:1-12. In this vision, the river symbolizes the presence of God. As we venture forward in our relationship with God, we have a tendency to want to keep our toes on the ground, ensuring our head stays above water and we're in control of our lives. But God is inviting us to trust Him, to go deeper, to experience the fullness of His presence. As we surrender control to God, we'll be swept away by His love and freely enjoy our journey with Him. When we see God is worthy of our trust, we'll more easily give up control and live in spiritual order.

FOUR LEVELS OF WORSHIP

ANKLE DEEP:

We can enjoy refreshing in God's presence, but we're in full command. We can splash and play, then choose to walk out of the river with no lasting effects on our lives.

KNEE DEEP:

The current of God (His presence) can be felt, but we maintain control. In knee-deep water, we have a good view of those who've ventured out into deeper waters, and we see that He fills us "with joy in [His] presence" (Psalm 16:11), but we still find security on the riverbank.

WAIST DEEP:

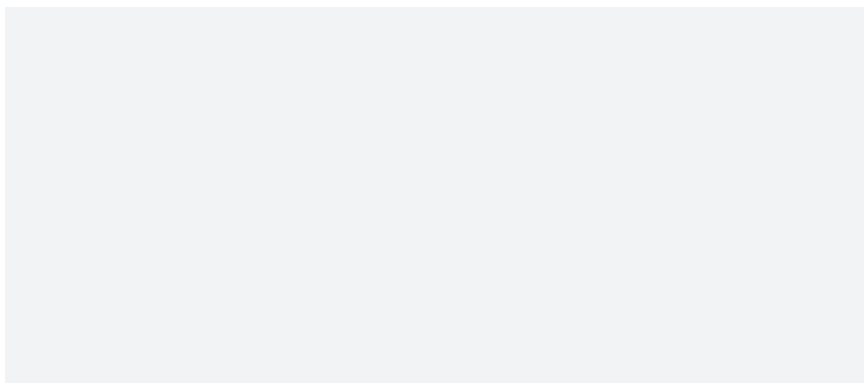
Here, the stream of His presence is strong. We've walked into deeper water, but we fight the current and struggle to keep contact with the bottom. Often the fear of what others think or the fear of losing control will tempt us to go back to the riverbank. It's at this place that we make a crucial decision. Who will be in control: God or us?

THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER:

Most people want to experience God in ankle-deep, knee-deep, or even waist-deep water, but they want to stay in control. In other words, many want to "do the God thing," but reserve just enough control that God doesn't take them too far. Those who live this way have believed a lie that if they abandoned themselves to His control, He would make them do things they don't want to do. They think He would embarrass them or send them to some faraway place they don't want to be. But the truth is, God has only good things for his kids. You'll never come to a place of true worship until you're honestly able to say, "God, have Your way."

God led Ezekiel back to the riverbank, and suddenly, to his surprise, there were many trees growing on both sides of the river, and the river was now teeming with life! Ezekiel 47:9 says, “Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows.” The leaves of the trees will not wither, their fruit will not fail, and they will bear fruit every month because of the living waters. The trees represent healing and the fish an abundance of life. Wonderful things will happen when we abandon ourselves to God’s will and His presence: souls will be saved, people will be healed, and we’ll experience the life that’s truly life!

Write Proverbs 3:5–6.

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for the user to write their response to the prompt above.

WAYS TO BE A TRUE WORSHIPPER

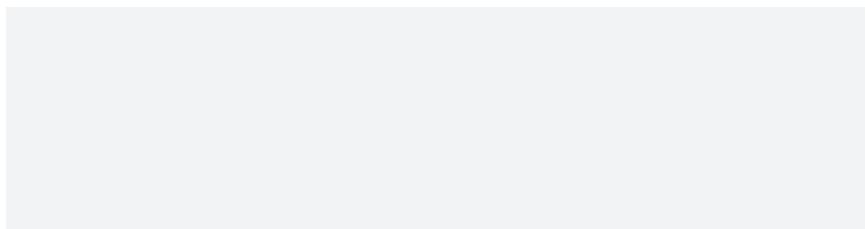
1. GIVE GOD YOUR AFFECTION.

“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”

2 CHRONICLES 16:9

God wants to be in a covenant (devoted, unbreakable) relationship with you that involves much more than singing songs. He wants you to desire and enjoy His presence. Worship Him out of the overflow of your heart because He’s worthy of the best you can offer Him. Psalm 84:1-2 is a song of craving to worship God: “How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord.”

Finish this passage by writing out the second half of Psalm 84:2.



2. COMMIT TO UNCONDITIONAL WORSHIP.

True worship means praising God even when we don’t feel like it. We must be committed to worshipping Him. It’s common for us to take a conditional approach to God, just as we do with sports teams. As long as our team is winning and making great plays, we’re excited and engaged in the game, but we lose interest and leave early when things don’t go as we hoped. In the same way,

we praise God when our lives are going well, but disengage and withdraw when things get difficult. The truth is, God is worthy of our worship in good times and bad, when we tangibly feel His presence and when we don't, when we see our prayers answered and when we don't.

The quality of our circumstances doesn't dictate God's worthiness of worship. We must make a commitment that whatever comes in our lives, we'll continue to posture ourselves to worship God.

3. INCLUDE GOD IN YOUR DAILY LIFE.

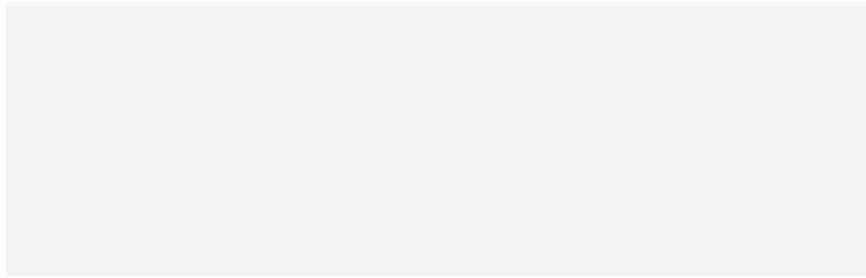
"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

JOHN 15:5

Many of us struggle in our relationship with God because our Sundays do not look like our Mondays. When our everyday world looks different than our "church world," we compartmentalize our lives and limit God's access to our hearts. Our secular and sacred worlds should look the same, equally reflecting the commitment we've made to worship Jesus.

Often, we don't know how to include God in our marriage, parenting, jobs, vacations, or hobbies. What would happen if we made God a part of every area of our lives? When you approach a new disciplinary challenge as a parent, ask God what you should do. When you have difficulty with someone at work, pray for wisdom to handle the situation well. When you have a headache, ask Him to heal you! Don't compartmentalize; God wants access to every aspect of your life. He cares about you and what happens to you (1 Peter 5:7). Including God in all areas of our lives reveals our level of surrender to Him. As we invite Him to be a part of everything we do, we'll have moments of worship every day.

Write Romans 12:1–2 (MSG).



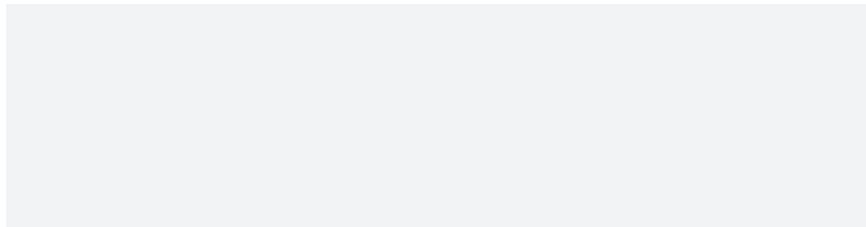
4. BE OBEDIENT.

The first place where worship is mentioned in the Bible is in a story that reveals a heart of unconditional love for God: the story of Abraham laying Isaac on the altar in Genesis 22. Abraham trusted God with his greatest treasure—his son. And God called this worship.

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.”

HEBREWS 13:15

Write Hebrews 13:16.



The greatest sacrifice we can give to God is a heart of humility willing to serve Him with unconditional obedience. This kind of worship doesn't earn God's love, but comes from a heart shaped by God's love. We worship from relationship, not for relationship. Read this incredible promise from Jesus out loud:

"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

JOHN 14:21

5. SHOW REVERENCE.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise."

PSALM 111:10

In this verse, "fear" means respect. Our God is like no other—almighty, awesome, and beyond comprehension. It's only appropriate that we approach Him with awe and reverence. True worship requires that we fear the Lord.

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."

JOHN 4:23

The Greek word for "worship" in this verse is *proskuneo*, which literally means "to kiss the master's hand in reverence." It indicates both love and respect. This is a powerful combination. When we both fear God and love Him, we feel safe in the shelter of His immense greatness. This reverent approach to worship allows

us to enjoy resting in His presence, and if He tells us to jump, we say, “How high, Lord?”

IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”

COLOSSIANS 3:1-5

Each day, we have the opportunity to respond to God’s love and live for Him by aligning our lives with the truth of His Word. We cannot separate our love for God from our submission to Him. God says He wants us to worship Him not only in spirit, with enthusiasm, gratitude, and affection, but also in truth. Worshipping in “truth” requires us to examine our lives and rid ourselves of anything that doesn’t line up with His Word. We must confess and surrender every part of our lives to Jesus, no matter how dark or shameful.

We need to ask God to purify us. True worship comes from a place of purity. The bad news of the Bible is that God does demand holiness and perfection, and let’s be honest, none of us will ever measure up. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus was perfect on our behalf. He lived the perfect, sinless life that none of us could have lived on our own. This is good news because the gospel tells us that it doesn’t matter who we are, what we’ve done, or where we’re from, we’re never too far from the love of Jesus. When we confess and surrender our sin to God, we

don't earn His love to keep His love, but because He first loved us. Listen to these comforting words from Chuck DeGroat:

“Purity, or *katharoi* in Greek, is about a state of being, about a fundamental undividedness or wholeness that marks the life of shalom . . . Purity is about being put together again, being made whole, so that our inner life matches our outer life. As it turns out, it's not about some exhausting holiness project; it's about letting God do the purifying work through our brokenness, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst, mercy, and more. It's about surrendering our clean-up acts and allowing God to do the deep cleansing.”

Purity is not about performing, it's about surrender. Every one of us has something in our lives that doesn't line up with Jesus and His Word. But instead of being cast away because of our sin, Jesus draws us in. Because of His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus frees us to bring all our sin and shame to God—we have nothing to hide! Our sins were known and forgiven at the cross and then defeated through His resurrection. What do you need to confess to Him now? You can bring Him all your secret sin and areas where you've fallen short.

Hear the heart of humility in this prayer:

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

PSALM 139:23-24

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything in you that has grieved Him or restricted His influence in your life—and be willing to confront that area and align yourself with the truth of God's Word. As you go through this process, know this: The voice of the Holy Spirit convicts, but the voice of the devil condemns. You need to discern which voice you hear so you can respond correctly. Condemnation says, “Here's the problem. Look at it. It's all your fault, and there's no way

out.” That’s not the voice of God. Our heavenly Father tells us there’s no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). He sent His Son to save you, not condemn you (John 3:17). Conviction through the Holy Spirit says, “Here’s the problem, but because Jesus knew all about it and paid the price for it, we can do something about it. There’s hope and Jesus is the way out.”

The gospel of Jesus speaks a better word over all our sin. In Isaiah 1:18, God says, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Jesus has made it possible for us to walk in purity! Let’s make every effort to worship Him with clean hands and pure hearts.

PRAYING FOR PURITY

God desires for you to live a life of purity. If there’s an area of sin in your life that you know you need to deal with, ask Him to forgive you. Use the prayer below as a guide and fill in the blank with the sins you want to confess:

Lord Jesus, I’ve sinned multiple times and been guilty of pride and unbelief. I’ve neglected to seek You in my daily life. My sins and shortcomings present me with a list of accusations, but I thank You that they will not stand against me, for all my sin and shortcomings have been laid on Christ. Deliver me from _____, every evil habit, every interest of former sins, everything that dims the brightness of Your grace in me, everything that prevents me taking delight in you. Amen.

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

Worship not only brings freedom in our own lives, but it also has the power to set others free. In Acts 16:23–34, we find Paul and Silas in jail. They’ve been arrested and flogged and are now in the depths of a prison. Chained, weary, and surrounded by darkness, with every reason to be afraid, what do they do? They worship.

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.”

ACTS 16:25-26

Salvation came to many that night, including the jailer and his entire family. That’s the power of true worship. Chains fall off and people are set free. When God is the focus of our love and attention, we’ll see Him do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Choose to love Him with your whole life and He will move you from “strength to strength” (Psalm 84:7).

JOURNAL

A P P E

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PREPARING FOR THE ENCOUNTER

During this freedom journey, you've devoted a great deal of time to studying the truth of Scripture and applying it to your life. There have probably been many moments when you discovered you had believed a lie that was contrary to God's Word and were challenged to renew your mind and embrace what God says is true. While this freedom journey of spiritual growth may have been difficult or even painful at times, the effort you've put into the journey is worth it!

The Freedom Conference is the culmination of everything you've studied and discovered over the last seven chapters—and you don't want to miss it. Each chapter of study has been thoughtfully designed to prepare you to have a powerful encounter with God.

There are three specific ways you can prepare your heart to receive everything the Holy Spirit has for you at the conference:

1. BE EXPECTANT.

In your prayer time before the conference, confess to the Lord that you believe He can do anything. Allow Him to fill you with anticipation and hope that He will do the miraculous in your life.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

ROMANS 15:13

2. CULTIVATE AN ATTITUDE OF WORSHIP AND PRAISE.

Intentionally set aside time every day to worship the Lord. Challenge yourself to go to deeper levels of worship, spending time in His presence, growing in confidence that He's eager to do something powerful for your benefit, and thanking Him in advance.

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

PSALM 95:6

"The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

ZEPHANIAH 3:17

3. SHUT OUT THE WORLD.

In the days leading up to the conference, limit your exposure to secular influences like television, news, social media, etc. Spend your free time in prayer, worship, and reading the Bible, tuning into the voice of God as you tune out the voice of the world. This will allow your spirit to become sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

"Come near to God and he will come near to you."

JAMES 4:8

"Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert."

ISAIAH 35:4-6

Make the conference a priority in your schedule. The Lord has been arranging appointments for you throughout your life and this journey and encounter are part of His plans! You can expect resistance from the enemy, but focus on all that you've learned and set your mind to finish strong!

FREEDOM SONG:

SCRIPTURES FOR LIVING IN FREEDOM

The secret to staying free lies within the Word. The Scriptures are living and active, and they'll show you how to live in the Tree of Life every single day as they strengthen your spirit. In dark times, the Word will illuminate your path; in trials, it will bring you peace.

Ask the Lord to inscribe these truths on your heart, and they'll become a part of you and all you do. No longer will old ways govern your decisions; instead, you'll be transformed into a new creation that radiates the hope of heaven in joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

HOW TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

“It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure.”

2 SAMUEL 22:33

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty.”

ZECHARIAH 4:6

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”

ROMANS 6:6

“For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.”

ROMANS 6:14

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17-18

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

GALATIANS 2:20

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

GALATIANS 5:1

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

GALATIANS 5:24

“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

EPHESIANS 6:13

“I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

WHEN YOU STRUGGLE WITH AUTHORITY

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.”

ROMANS 13:1

“Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.”

HEBREWS 13:17

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority.”

1 PETER 2:13

GOD IS WITH YOU

“The Lord replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’”

EXODUS 33:14

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

PSALM 46:1

“But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.’”

ISAIAH 43:1-2, 5

“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

HEBREWS 13:5

WHEN YOU STRUGGLE WITH PRIDE OR SURRENDER

“Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”

MATTHEW 10:38

“Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.”

MATTHEW 10:39

“Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

MATTHEW 18:4

“For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

MATTHEW 23:12

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

GALATIANS 2:20

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

“All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

1 PETER 5:5-6

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”

1 THESSALONIANS 4:11-12

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

JAMES 3:16

WHEN ANGER ARISES

“Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.”

PSALM 4:4

“The wise fear the Lord and shun evil, but a fool is hotheaded and yet feels secure.”

PROVERBS 14:16

“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.”

PROVERBS 14:29

“Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end.”

PROVERBS 29:11

“Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.”

PSALM 37:8

“The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”

PSALM 145:8-9

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

HEBREWS 8:12

WHEN YOU FEEL REJECTED

“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.”

PSALM 27:10

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

PSALM 139:14

"I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant, I have chosen you and have not rejected you.'"

ISAIAH 41:9

"No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord."

ISAIAH 54:17

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

JOHN 8:36

"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

ROMANS 8:31

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

ROMANS 8:37

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

EPHESIANS 2:10

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."

EPHESIANS 1:4

WHEN YOU STRUGGLE WITH PURITY

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

PSALM 51:10

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word."

PSALM 119:9

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

PROVERBS 4:23

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

MATTHEW 5:8

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

ROMANS 12:2

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

“How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”

HEBREWS 9:14

“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”

HEBREWS 10:22

WHEN YOU FEEL ASHAMED

“Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.”

PSALM 32:1

“He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.”

PSALM 103:10

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

PSALM 103:12

“You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

JOHN 15:3

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.”

EPHESIANS 1:4-7

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

HEBREWS 8:12

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

1 JOHN 1:9

“If anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

1 JOHN 2:1

WHEN YOU FACE TEMPTATION

“I will not look with approval on anything that is vile.”

PSALM 101:3

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

MATTHEW 26:41

“Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”

ROMANS 13:14

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

“No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

1 CORINTHIANS 9:27

“All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”

EPHESIANS 2:2-6

“Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:22

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

TITUS 2:11-14

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

JAMES 4:7

WHEN YOU FEEL CONDEMNED

“Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.”

PSALM 34:5

“Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.”

ISAIAH 54:4

“Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion.”

ISAIAH 61:7

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”

JOHN 3:17

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’ . . . Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ ‘No one, sir,’ she said. ‘Then neither do I condemn you,’ Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’”

JOHN 8:7, 10-11

“When he [Satan] lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

JOHN 8:44

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

ROMANS 8:1

“For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”

REVELATION 12:10

WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN WRONGED

“Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.”

PROVERBS 17:9

“But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

MATTHEW 5:44

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

MATTHEW 6:14

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

MARK 11:24-26

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

ROMANS 12:17-18

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

EPHESIANS 4:32

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

HEBREWS 12:15

“See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

1 PETER 3:9

WHEN YOUR HEART IS BROKEN

“I am the Lord, who heals you.”

EXODUS 15:26

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

PSALM 34:18-19

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

PSALM 147:3

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”

ISAIAH 61:1-3

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

ROMANS 8:35, 38-39

MOVING PAST THE PAST

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

ISAIAH 43:18-19

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14

WHEN YOU NEED PEACE

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

JOHN 14:27

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

WHEN YOU HAVE MONEY ISSUES

“The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none.”

DEUTERONOMY 28:12

“Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.”

1 CHRONICLES 29:11

“Though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.”

PSALM 62:10

“In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”

PSALM 102:25-27

“Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the life of those who get it.”

PROVERBS 1:19

“The one who sows righteousness
reaps a sure reward.”

PROVERBS 11:18

“The greedy bring ruin to
their households.”

PROVERBS 15:27

“Whoever loves money never has
money enough; whoever loves
wealth is never satisfied with their
income. This too is meaningless.”

ECCLESIASTES 5:10

“He will be the sure foundation for your
times, a rich store of salvation and
wisdom and knowledge; the fear of
the Lord is the key to this treasure.”

ISAIAH 33:6

“See, I will create new heavens and a
new earth. The former things will not
be remembered, nor will they come
to mind.”

ISAIAH 65:17

“Bring the whole tithe into the
storehouse, that there may be food
in my house. Test me in this,’ says the
Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not
throw open the floodgates of heaven
and pour out so much blessing that
there will not be room enough to
store it. I will prevent pests from
devouring your crops, and the vines
in your fields will not drop their
fruit before it is ripe,’ says the Lord
Almighty. ‘Then all the nations will
call you blessed, for yours will be a
delightful land,’ says the
Lord Almighty.”

MALACHI 3:10-12

“For where your treasure is, there
your heart will be also.”

MATTHEW 6:21

“No one can serve two masters.
Either you will hate the one and love
the other, or you will be devoted to
the one and despise the other. You
cannot serve both God and money.”

MATTHEW 6:24

“If you, then, though you are evil,
know how to give good gifts to your
children, how much more will your
Father in heaven give good gifts to
those who ask him!”

MATTHEW 7:11

“The devil led him up to a high place
and showed him in an instant all
the kingdoms of the world. And he
said to him, ‘I will give you all their
authority and splendor; it has been
given to me, and I can give it to
anyone I want to. If you worship me,
it will all be yours.’ Jesus answered,
‘It is written: “Worship the Lord your
God and serve him only.”’”

LUKE 4:5-8

“Be merciful, just as your Father is
merciful. Do not judge, and you will
not be judged. Do not condemn, and
you will not be condemned. Forgive,
and you will be forgiven. Give, and it
will be given to you. A good measure,
pressed down, shaken together and
running over, will be poured into
your lap. For with the measure you
use, it will be measured to you.”

LUKE 6:36-38

“Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”

LUKE 12:33

“So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”

LUKE 16:11

“Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.’”

LUKE 12:15

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

GALATIANS 6:7

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

“My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”

HEBREWS 13:5

“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

1 TIMOTHY 6:6

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

1 TIMOTHY 6:10

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”

1 TIMOTHY 6:17

“For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:18-22

WHEN YOU FEEL AFRAID

“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today.”

EXODUS 14:13

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

JOSHUA 1:9

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

PSALM 23:4

“Though an army besieges me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.”

PSALM 27:3

“For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.”

PSALM 27:5

“You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”

PSALM 32:7

“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

PSALM 34:4

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

PSALM 56:3-5

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.”

PSALM 55:22

“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”

PSALM 91:1-2

“‘Because he loves me,’ says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.’”

PSALM 91:14

“No harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

PSALM 91:10-12

“The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

PSALM 118:6

“The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.”

PROVERB 18:10

“Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid.”

ISAIAH 12:2

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

ISAIAH 41:10

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

ISAIAH 43:2

“Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

ISAIAH 44:8

“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

MATTHEW 7:25

“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”

ROMANS 8:15

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

ROMANS 8:31

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

1 JOHN 4:18

WHEN YOUR HEART IS HEAVY

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

PSALM 34:18-19

“Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

PSALM 37:4

“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”

PSALM 118:17

“How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.”

PSALM 139:17-18

“See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.”

ISAIAH 49:16

“‘Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,’” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”

ISAIAH 54:10

“For this is what the Lord says: ‘I will extend peace to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.’”

ISAIAH 66:12-13

“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’”

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-24

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:20

“Then Jesus said, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?’ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.’ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, ‘Take off the grave clothes and let him go.’”

JOHN 11:40-44

“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”

EPHESIAN 3:17-18

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

WHEN YOU FACE TRIALS

“Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

NEHEMIAH 8:10

“For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”

PSALM 30:5

“My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”

PSALM 42:3, 5

“Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

PSALM 51:12

“Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.”

PSALM 126:5

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

ROMANS 8:18

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

JAMES 1:2-3

REASONS TO REJOICE

“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

PSALM 16:11

“The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.”

PSALM 118:24

“You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.”

ISAIAH 55:12

“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

LUKE 15:10

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

JOHN 15:11

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

ROMANS 15:13

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

THE ARMOR OF GOD

“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

EPHESIANS 6:11-13

Use this prayer as an outline to help you prepare for each day. First, put on the armor of God, and then ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom, guide your steps, and help you stand and fight against the enemy.

PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Thank You, Lord, for my salvation. I receive it in a new and fresh way from You and I declare that nothing can separate me now from the love of Christ and the place I shall ever have in Your kingdom.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

And yes, Lord, I wear Your righteousness today against all condemnation and corruption. Fit me with Your holiness and purity—defend me from all assaults against my heart.

THE BELT OF TRUTH

Lord, I put on the belt of truth. I choose a lifestyle of honesty and integrity. Show me the truths I so desperately need today. Expose the lies that I’m not even aware I believe.

THE SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

I choose to live for the gospel at all times. Show me how I can be a part of what You're doing on the earth. Keep me focused on the path You want me to walk.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

Jesus, I lift the confidence that You're good against every lie and every assault of the enemy. You have good in store for me. Nothing is coming today that can overcome me because You're with me.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Holy Spirit, show me specifically today the truths of the Word of God that I will need to counter the snares of the enemy. Bring them to mind throughout the day.

CONNECT WITH GOD

Holy Spirit, I agree to walk in step with You in everything—in all prayer as my spirit communes with You throughout the day.

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

EPHESIANS 6:18

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

I AM ACCEPTED

JOHN 1:12	I am God's child.
JOHN 15:15	I am Christ's friend.
ROMANS 5:1	I have been justified.
1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20	I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.
1 CORINTHIANS 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body.
EPHESIANS 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child.
EPHESIANS 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
COLOSSIANS 1:14	I have been forgiven of all my sins.
COLOSSIANS 2:10	I am complete in Christ.

I AM SAFE

ROMANS 8:1-2	I am free forever from condemnation.
ROMANS 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good.
ROMANS 8:31-34	I am free from any condemning charges against me.
ROMANS 8:35-39	I can't be separated from the love of God.
PHILIPPIANS 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be completed.
PHILIPPIANS 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven.
2 TIMOTHY 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and of self-control.
HEBREWS 4:16	I can find grace and mercy to help in time of need.
1 JOHN 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I AM IMPORTANT

MATTHEW 5:13-14

I am the salt and light of the earth.

JOHN 15:1, 5

I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.

JOHN 15:16

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.

ACTS 1:8

I am a personal witness of Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

I am God's temple.

EPHESIANS 2:10

I am God's workmanship.

EPHESIANS 3:12

I may approach God with freedom and confidence.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

