

Freedom in Christ

Walking in Victory

**“And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free”
(John 8:32)**



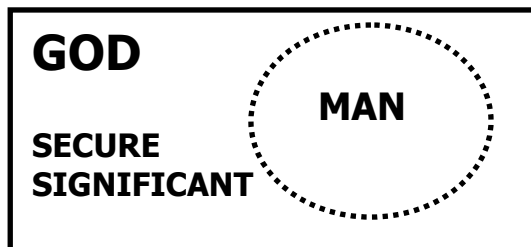
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Freedom in Christ

Our Authority in Christ

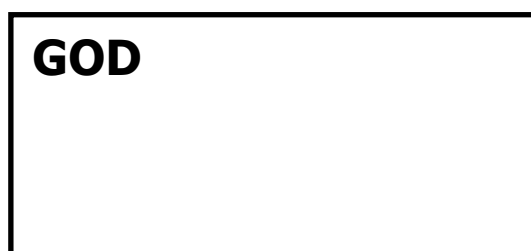
Our Original Dominion (Authority) Mandate

God created mankind in harmony with Himself and entrusted us with His dominion authority (Genesis 1:26-28). In this divine connection, mankind had a healthy *personal-worth* (our identity), being *secure* in relationship with God and *significant* in fulfilling His dominion mandate.



Mankind in Creation:
Secure and significant in God

This authority was lost to satan in the fall (Genesis 3:1-7), even though God immediately initiated His redemption plan that was to be fulfilled in Christ Jesus (Genesis 3:15). The effects of the fall was that mankind's sense of security and significance, formerly *attributes* fulfilled in God, now became driving *needs* disconnected from God. Mankind became driven to fill the void within; to find security and significance in sources other than in God.



**INSECURE
INSIGNIFICANT**

Mankind in the Fall:
Insecure and insignificant without God

Jesus Christ has reclaimed all authority; thus victory is ours, and we are now to rule on His behalf (1 John 3:8; Colossians 2:15; Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:55, 57; Romans 5:17; 8:37)! We are now to appropriate (i.e. make it our own) this victory as we stand in His authority (Ephesians 4:20-24, 27; 1 John 5:4); *finding security in relationship with Him and significance in His Kingdom mandate.*

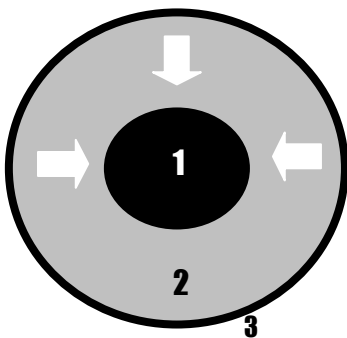
The Effects of the Fall

[The diagrams in this course are based on the trichotomous view of man (1 Thessalonians 5:23)].

Without Christ, we were slaves to sin (Romans 6:15-23) ruled by our *selfish nature*, driven to *self-preservation*, *self-improvement* and/or *self-advancement* in order to meet our need for security and significance (our identity problem). We have a fallen nature; “**the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked**” (Jeremiah 17:9). *Our basic human nature is self-centred, contrary to God.* This is a crucial understanding.

The Unbeliever – Living Trapped “Outside-In”

[The “**natural man**” (1 Corinthians 2:14)]



1. An unbeliever's **spirit** is dead, disconnected from God's light and life.
2. An unbeliever's **soul** (mind, will and emotions) is inwardly-driven (selfish), solely motivated to meet the need for security and significance. The unbeliever is thus in bondage to the obsessive, selfish nature.
3. An unbeliever's **body** is often just used to find relief and escapist pleasure through the five physical senses. The unbeliever lives ruled by fear, bitterness, anxiety and despair, dependent on externals (people, circumstances).



The arrows show the direction of the unbeliever's life-focus: **self-preservation**, **self-improvement** and **self-advancement**.

In order to meet our need for security and significance we, in our mind, *establish a goal* that we believe will be the solution to our inner void: “I need (affection) to feel secure” or “I need to (achieve) to be significant.” This goal is determined by basic assumptions, *our belief system*, we have unconsciously developed from our family upbringing, our background, our education, from authority figures and through positive and negative life experiences. We are then, often obsessively, *motivated* to obtain this goal. However, this belief system, stored in the unconscious mind, is largely based on false assumptions (lies, including half-truths). As we pursue our “establish goal” three outcomes are possible.

1> *Despair/Hopelessness: Unrealistic Goal*

Many of our goals are unrealistic and can never be achieved. Consistently missing this elusive goal breeds a sense of guilt and despair, and when we finally accept that it is unrealistic we may become overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness. We can become cynical and ultimately depressed.

2> Frustration/Anger: Blocked Goal

Many of our goals may (seem to) be blocked from being achieved by circumstances or people. In our minds, someone or something has robbed us of the opportunity to achieve this goal we need. The inevitable outcome is frustration and anger. We can become bitter, resentful and wallow in self-pity.

3> Disappointment/Fear: Achieved Goal

Many of our goals may actually be achieved. We obtain them...wow! We enjoy a sense of satisfaction...temporarily that is...and then face the reality that it did not deliver on the promise. We then establish another goal and begin again. Over time we become increasingly disillusioned and anxious. We can even become fearful that true peace and joy is not possible for us.

Our New Identity in Christ

Our victory is solely based on the completed work of Jesus Christ.

“He has DELIVERED us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13, 14).

Our authority in Christ lies in embracing our new identity in Christ.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a NEW [literally, “new in form and quality”] CREATION; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become NEW... For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21).

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the RIGHT [refers to our “privilege and authority”] to become CHILDREN of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are SONS of God.... The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – HEIRS of God and joint heirs with Christ...” (Romans 8:14-17).

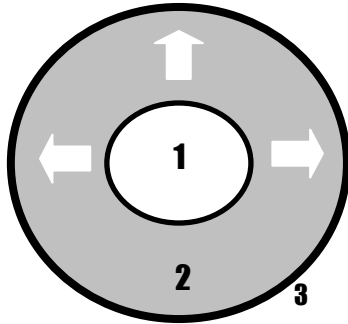
“But God who is rich and mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us ALIVE together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us SIT together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6).

“Yet in all these things we are more than CONQUERORS through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

Our new nature is Christ-centred, connected to God. In Christ, we are delivered from sin and freed from our self-centred nature. The Bible uses the phrase the “**new man**” (Ephesians 4:20-24) to describe the “**new creation**” miracle.

The *Victorious Believer* – Living Free “**Inside-Out**”

[The “**spiritual [man]**” (1 Corinthians 3:1)]



1. A believer's **spirit** is born again, connected to God's light and life.
2. A believer's **soul** (mind, will and emotions) is liberated from the bondage of the selfish nature; enabling the believer to grow in the truth, governed by the Lordship of Christ.
3. A believer's **body** is the temple of the Holy Spirit, to be used for the glory of God and in service to Him. The believer enjoys the pleasures of God – righteousness, peace and joy – drawing on the internal resources of the indwelling Spirit.



The arrows show the direction of the believer's life-focus: **passion for Christ** and **compassion for others**.

In Christ we are saints, not sinners. When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church—clearly a church with many faults and problems – he begins his letter by reminding them of their identity in Christ: “**To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be SAINTS...**” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Until we grasp our identity in Christ we will, like the Corinthians, continue to be “**carnal [governed by the flesh] behaving [walking according to man] like mere [unbelieving] men**” (1 Corinthians 3:3). But for the grace of God we would still be sinners; but because of the grace of God we are saints!

Our behaviour is a reflection of what we believe. We will never enjoy true freedom and peace until we grasp our new identity in Christ and then live consistently with this truth. We should not expect to sin; we should expect to walk in victory, grateful to God for His mercy when we need His forgiveness. “**And IF [not, “when”] anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**” (1 John 2:1).

Dealing with the Old Nature

The Bible uses the words “**flesh**” [“**sinful nature**” (NIV)] (Galatians 5:16-21) and “**old man**” [“**old self**” (NIV)] (Ephesians 4:20-24) to describe our former, self-centred nature. The believer is to consider the “**old man**” **dead**.

The believer’s old nature *has been* crucified with Christ (past tense), and the believer must, in faith, *consider* his old nature dead.

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I (the old Paul) who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I (the new Paul) now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24).

“[Our] old man was crucified with Him...reckon [literally, “to consider;” “count” (NIV)] yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:6, 11).

As the old nature attempts to re-exert its influence, the believer is to “**walk in the Spirit, and [thus] not fulfil the lust of the flesh**” (Galatians 5:16). In this way we “**live according to the Spirit**” and thus “**put to death the deeds of the body**” (Romans 8:12, 13). The focus of the believer is not to resist the flesh but to ignore it altogether – considering it dead (powerless) – deliberately walking in the Spirit. While we are to resist the devil (a subject we will consider later), the Bible does not teach us to resist temptation. We are to ignore it or if necessary “**flee**” from it (1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22). This is the place and importance of discipline.

Renewing the Mind

The Two Natures

The believer has two natures, the “**old man**” and the “**new man**,” the one he feeds will dominate. The Bible then makes it clear that our *first war* is with the flesh – this old, selfish nature – itself.

“But I see another law in my members [our lower, self-centred nature], warring against the law of my mind [our new identity]” (Romans 7:23).

“Beloved...abstain from fleshly lusts [desires that arise from the flesh] which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).

Before we take on the devil and his demonic forces, we have to win the battle within. For this reason, the Bible stresses the importance of self-rule (Proverbs 16:32, 25:28) and self-control (Galatians 5:23; 2 Peter 1:6).

Temptation arises, not from the devil, but from our old undisciplined, unrestrained selfish nature: the flesh. Yes, the devil is a master at exploiting our selfish nature but the responsibility lies directly in the believer’s faithfulness.

“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:14).

As the believer considers his selfish nature dead, he must continuously feed his “**new man**” and starve the “**old man**”. If he neglects his new nature and feeds his old nature, he starts to lean on his own understanding – instead of drawing on the enabling grace of God – and once again walks according to the flesh.

“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (Galatians 5:16, 17, see Romans 7:18-23).

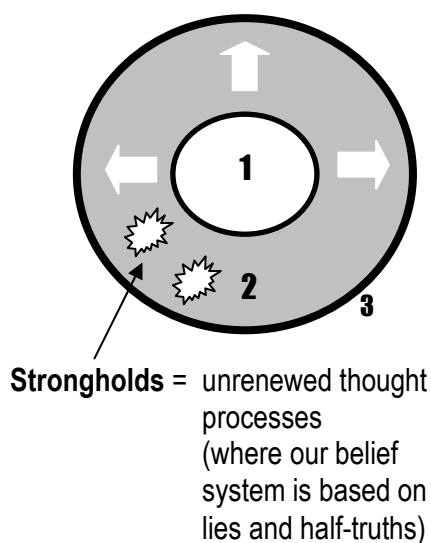
Renewing the Mind

As the believer lives from his new identity in Christ, he is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit by renewing his mind. The overwhelming focus of New Testament teaching on growing in Christ is captured in the letter to the Roman church:

“[Do] not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the *renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect *will of God*” (Romans 12:2).

If a believer does not deliberately **“renew their mind”** (Romans 12:2), they live **“according to the flesh”** (Romans 8:12) in direct contradiction to their new nature, inviting personal confusion and demonic exploitation. The Bible reveals that the *soul* (mind, will and emotions) is the battleground, specifically the *mind*, and describes the incorrect and ungodly thinking of a believer as **“strongholds”** (2 Corinthians 10:4). It is through these wrong belief patterns, our false basic assumptions (see pages 3, 4), that the believer lives in defeat and is open to exploitation.

The Oppressed Believer

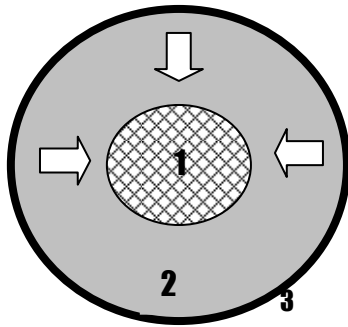


While our *spirit* (1) is instantly saved, our *soul* (2) requires the continual transforming work of the Spirit (the process of sanctification).

The soul consists of the *mind*, *will* and *emotions*; the key part of the soul being the mind. When our mind is illuminated by the truth of God, our will is enabled to obey God's will and our emotions follow suit. But when we neglect our responsibility to grow in the truth (Philippians 2:12), it is through the *unrenewed thought processes* in our soul – **“strongholds”** – that we remain bound and open ourselves to demonic oppression.

Strongholds, incorrect thinking, develop through our upbringing and our exposure to negative life experiences. Whenever we believe something that is not the truth of God – His light – we believe a lie and become entrapped in darkness. For example, if I believe God does not heal today, my stronghold of unbelief will keep me from experiencing His healing touch. If I believe that God is distant and disapproving, my stronghold of fear will keep me from experiencing intimacy with God and security in my relationship with Him.

The Defeated Believer – Living Confused “Outside-Out?”
[The “carnal [man]” (1 Corinthians 3:3)]



The defeated believer has access to God's indwelling Presence and power but through ignorance, unbelief, apathy or deliberate wilfulness, they live like an unbeliever. The word “**carnal**” is a derivative of the word “**flesh**” and refers to a life governed by the selfish nature rather than the Spirit of God. The chaos and confusion is tremendously acute for the believer who has seen the light but does not walk in it.



The arrows show the direction of the defeated believer's life-focus: rather than directed outwardly from the overflow of a Christ-governed centre, they point inwardly contradicting the new nature.

Self-Discipline: The Attitude Required

Through spiritual discipline we strengthen our response to our new, Christ-centred nature, and reset our default reaction to the old, self-centred nature, thus we renew the mind.

Discipline means to aggressively align our life – renew our mind – with the truth God reveals (see Romans 12:1, 2). Discipline is not a religious, back-beating act of appeasing God; rather knowing we have the privilege of bringing God delight as His children, we discipline ourselves to be true to ourselves, thus releasing the goodness He has deposited within us by His indwelling Spirit. Through spiritual discipline we position ourselves in the grace of God so that He can mould and shape our lives.

“But I DISCIPLINE [literally, “to beat black and blue”] my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Through spiritual discipline, the believer is true to his new nature by...

denying (ignoring) the old, self-centred nature, i.e. **“put off the old man”**

and ***releasing*** (nurturing) his new identity, i.e. **“put on the new man”**

as he focuses on and cooperates with the Holy Spirit’s urgings and promptings.

In this way, the believer confirms his old nature is dead, and releases the godly desires, **“the fruit of the Spirit”** (Galatians 5:22, 23), that arise from his new identity in Christ.

“...PUT OFF, concerning your former conduct, the OLD MAN which grows corrupt... and be RENEWED in the spirit [attitude] of your mind, and that you PUT ON the NEW MAN which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

“...PUT OFF the OLD MAN with his deeds, and...PUT ON the NEW MAN who is RENEWED in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Colossians 3:10, 11).

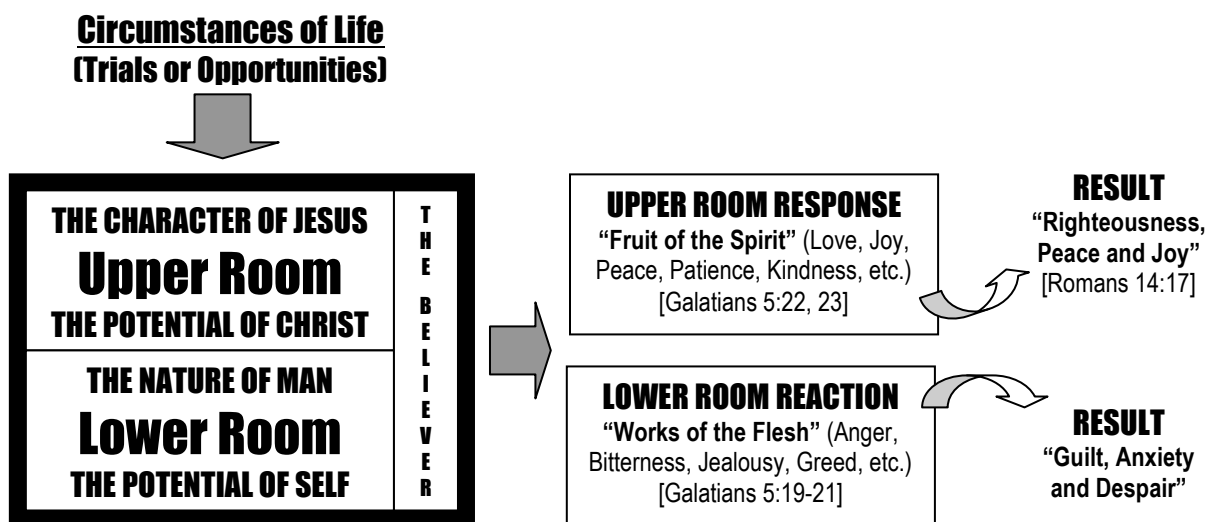
“But PUT ON the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts” (Romans 13:14).

“Therefore BE IMITATORS OF GOD as dear children” (Ephesians 5:1).

Think of your life as a house with two rooms: one upper and lower room.

The upper room is the new man in Christ – the real, new you! This is your identity, and you have the potential of Christ within you! In every circumstance of life, both good and bad, we are to draw on the indwelling Spirit’s resources and release our new nature. **“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk [literally, “walk in line with”, “to follow exactly”] in the Spirit”** (Galatians 5:25).

The lower room is the old man; which is no longer your identity! You are no longer defined by the septic thoughts and desires of your old nature! As we face the circumstances of life we will be tempted to draw from the foul contents of this lower room; but we need to deny (ignore) the thoughts and desires that arise from this septic tank of the selfish nature, and release (nurture) the godly thoughts and desires of the Christ-filled new nature.



Through faithfully learning to deny and release we **“put on the new man”** and reset our default reactions: our instinctive responses start to become increasing Christ-like. *Through discipline our ungodly reactions are replaced with godly responses, hence the mind is being renewed.*

Discipline proceeds deliverance and maintains deliverance. Discipline proceeds deliverance in that before we confront the enemy, we need to ensure that we have not given **“place to the devil”** (Ephesians 4:27). Before we **“resist the devil”** we need to first **“submit to God”** (James 4:7) – what we call, the principle of “submit-first”. The word **“submit”** is a military term meaning, “to come into line” or “fall under rank,” hence, “to align”. Deliverance is the act of expelling the enemy who no longer has right to be present. Discipline is the act of removing the enemy’s right to be present.

Discipline maintains deliverance in that once the demonic has been expelled, discipline prevents us from slipping into the old habits of the selfish nature that gave the enemy the right to exploit us in the first place (see Matthew 12:43-45).

Bible Meditation: The Action Required

Bible meditation is vital to the process of renewing our thought processes enabling us to apply God's truth instead of merely acting on the untruths we have come to believe. Bible meditation contains no mystery to it – it is just hard work! The word meditation means “to turn over in the mind,” thus, “to think deeply on;” literally, “to ruminate,” the way a cow regurgitates the cud. Through reading, study and hearing God's Word we are to replace our incorrect thinking processes – concerning the nature and will of God and our own nature and responsibilities as His children – with the truth God reveals. The goal is to conform to the character of Christ as we become “**doers of the word**” (James 1:22).

“This Book of the Law shall not depart *from your mouth*, but you shall *meditate in it day and night*, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word...Your word I have *hidden in my heart*, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:9, 11).

“He [will] *sanctify and cleanse* [the church] with the *washing of water by the word*” (Ephesians 5:26).

“*Abide in Me, and I in you...If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you*” (John 15:4, 7).

Spiritual Warfare

Understanding the Demonic

Bible meditation is vital to the process of renewing our thought processes enabling us to apply God's truth instead of merely acting on the untruths we have come to believe. Bible meditation contains no mystery to it – it is just hard work! The word meditation means “to turn over in the mind,” thus, “to think deeply on;” literally, “to ruminate,” the way a cow regurgitates the cud. Through reading, study and hearing God's Word we are to replace our incorrect thinking processes – concerning the nature and will of God and our own nature and responsibilities as His children – with the truth God reveals. The goal is to conform to the character of Christ as we become **“doers of the word”** (James 1:22).

“[Lest] satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan, meaning **“adversary”**, was a leading angel in heaven called Lucifer and he was expelled from heaven because of his rebellion (see Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19). Demons are fallen angels who sinned by joining Lucifer in his anarchy (Revelation 12:7-9). [There is another school of thought that believes that demons are disembodied spirits from before the creation of the earth. However, there is little Scriptural validation for this school of thought].

Satan and his demons were expelled from God's Presence, spiritual light and life, and bound in spiritual darkness and death (Jude 6). Therefore demons can go wherever darkness exists, hence, the Lord's exhortation to: **“walk in the light”** (1 John 1:7). Satan and his demons await final judgment in hell (Revelation 20:10), but God, in His wisdom, has delayed this judgment now to serve His redemptive plan: He allowed satan to rebel, and sin to exist, so as to give us the power of choice, thus the ability to love.

Satan is not omnipresent and therefore carries out his purpose through an organised hierarchy of demonic forces (Ephesians 6:12). Demons differ in strength and influence (Matthew 12:45). [One interpretation of Ephesians 6:12 is this: **“principalities”** or **“world rulers”** are leading dark angels, supported by the **“powers”** or **“hosts”** of demons]. Leading demons, called principalities, control regional areas (Daniel 10:13); often residing in an influential person (Acts 13:6). By region we mean any social grouping of people whether this is culturally or geographically defined. [We believe that when Jesus said He has given us

“authority...over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19), He meant **“ALL the power of the enemy”**, including these high-ranking demons. We look at overcoming **“principalities”** in our article entitled, “His Mission – Our Commission.” In this article “Freedom in Christ”, we focus on personal-level spiritual warfare].

Demons seek to inhabit human beings and intend on full possession but they will exploit any degree of access they are given (Matthew 12:43-45). It seems that demons, as body-less spirits, are nourished and find meaning by inhabiting human beings. [The demon expelled from a human being is described as homeless, restless and malnourished (v. 43), referring to a human being as **“my house”** (v. 44)].

Demons can only control human beings to the degree that they allow spiritual darkness – through ignorance, apathy or sin – to exist within their lives (Matthew 12:44; John 14:30); thereby giving the demonic **“place”** (Ephesians 4:27). Born again believers cannot be possessed by the demonic, since they are indwelt by the Spirit, but they can be seriously oppressed.

Satan and his demons have a corrupt nature – **“unclean”** (Matthew 12:43) – but they can use the power of deception to mask themselves as angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:14); they are masters at making “good” look “bad,” and “bad” look “good”. Generally, the word **“demon”** refers to what they are; while the word **“spirit”** refers to what they do, what their influence is. For example, a **“deceiving spirit”** (1 Timothy 4:1) is a demon whose assignment is deception for satan’s purpose.

Satan and his demons have a three-fold purpose: (1) To blind unbelievers from seeing the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4), (2) To retard believers from growing in the truth (2 Corinthians 10:4) and (3) To cause as much suffering as possible (John 10:10).

Understanding Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare is not an *eternal* conflict between *impersonal* forces of *equal* strength and influence. God is the *all-powerful* being, who in His divine wisdom, allows satan to exist for a time for His own ultimate good (Colossians 1:16; Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:7; 20:11-15). Satan is not eternal; he is a creation of God and he will one day face ultimate defeat when he is cast into hell for His cosmic crime (Ezekiel 28:13; Revelation 20:10). Until that day real, *personal* angels and demons operate in the supernatural, invisible world, a realm that determines the outcome of the natural, visible world.

Satan enjoyed a relatively unchallenged reign before Christ came to the earth. Although God protected those who followed Him by faith as He outworked His redemptive plan (Genesis 3:15), satan's realm was only contested when Jesus came to earth (1 John 3:8). When Jesus was tempted, satan could offer Him the nations of the world (Matthew 4:8, 9). Jesus Himself called him the "**ruler of this world**" on three occasions (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:10). *Even after the cross* the language to describe him – "**god of this age**" (2 Corinthians 4:4), "**the prince of the power of the air**" (Ephesians 2:2) – and his influence is strong – "**the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one**" (1 John 5:19).

Jesus came in fulfilment of God's declaration of war (Genesis 3:15); His *purpose* for coming involved warfare – "[to] **destroy the works of the devil**" (1 John 3:8) – and His *ministry* involved warfare – "**God anointed Jesus...healing all who were oppressed by the devil**" (Acts 10:38). Immediately after His baptism, He was led by the Spirit to confront the devil (Matthew 4:1). From this first victory, He made His intent clear, "**Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand**" (Matthew 4:17). This was a direct statement that a change in authority, at a cosmic level, was taking place!

Jesus entrusted His people, the church, with this same *militant mentality* (Matthew 16:18, 19). He made it crystal clear to His first recruits that confrontation with demonic forces was part of the mission (Matthew 10:7, 8), and made the same clear to us, His recruits in the future (Mark 16:17). He has entrusted His church with His authority "**over all the power of the enemy**" (Luke 10:19). Toward God our attitude is *worship*, towards people it is *ministry*, but towards demonic forces, it is to be full-blown *warfare*!

Jesus won the victory on the cross (Colossians 2:15), and will consummate this victory at His second coming (2 Timothy 4:2). Until the Lord's return, we are to **appropriate** (make it our own) His victory, enforcing the devil's defeat in our life and in the lives of others. The charge Jesus gave to all seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 was the word "**overcome**," a word meaning, "to conquer, to obtain victory," referring to direct warfare against the demonic*.

Though the devil has been stripped of his authority, his power lies in his knowledge of the human psyche. He has three key weapons: (1) **deception**, (2) **temptation** and (3) **accusation**. He *deceives* us into believing a lie (half-truths are his favourite, see Genesis 3:1-5), until we give into our carnal impulses and become *tempted*; once we sin, he entraps us in guilt through *accusation*. Thus he has place to begin to oppress the believer no end.

The battle then comes down to a battle of faith; that is to believe the truth, living in **God's ways instead of satan's deception** (untruths). Recall that the places from which demonic forces exploit us are termed "**strongholds**," unrenewed thought processes, thinking built on lies (including half-truths) concerning the nature of God, our responsibility to God and what is "good" and "bad". Jesus said: "**the truth shall make you free**" (John 8:32). The answer to darkness is the light; the answer to lies is the truth. When we believe God's truth we no longer give satan the power to deceive... and we blaze a path of victory.

*After casting out a demon from a mute person (Luke 11:14), Jesus taught on spiritual warfare. He described the demonic as a "**strong man**" (v. 21). In this way, the strong man uses a stronghold to oppress and exploit. The "**strong man**" guards "**his goods**," that is a person, or people. The "**strong man**" is "**armed**" (v. 21); his arsenal being the *spiritual darkness* that unrighteousness or unrenewed thinking provides. The "**strong man**" (demon spirit) is only defeated when a "**stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him**" (v. 22); that is, the Holy Spirit (v. 20; c. Matthew 12:28). Here is the first time Jesus uses the battle term "**overcome**" ("to conquer"), and his point is clear: our dependence on the Holy Spirit is the key to spiritual victory.

This brings up an interesting point when we read Matthew's account of this teaching. Matthew uses the word "**bind**" (Matthew 12:29); a word misunderstood by many. It does not mean that we must now use this word as a prayer term to bind the works of satan with some sophisticated prayer formula. Jesus' point was that we overcome (or bind or defeat) the works of the devil by the anointing of the Spirit.

Deliverance*

The Believer's Response

The believer's first response to the appearance of demonic attack should be Godward, and after finding shelter in God, to go on the offensive!

God is our Shield, our Fortress and Deliverer (Psalm 18:1, 2), and the believer is to run into His protective arms by...

- (1) Allowing God to search his heart: "Is there any unrighteousness, or perhaps a stronghold of wrong thinking, through which the enemy may exploit me?"

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24).

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands...purify your hearts... Humble yourselves I the sight of the Lord" (James 4:8-10).

- (2) Allowing God to evaluate his personal sowing and reaping habits. "Am I reaping negatively where I have sown badly?"

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

*We prefer to use the word "deliverance" rather than "casting out demons". There is no biblical account of "casting out demons" from *Christians*. Jesus ministered to people before the cross and therefore dealt with *unsaved* humanity. Furthermore, when the Gospels record a specific account of "casting out demons" from someone, it is clear that they were possessed by demons. Biblically it would be more correct then to use the phrase, "casting out demons," in reference to ministering to unbelievers who are demonically bound. Certainly Christians can be oppressed by demons and a better word to use in reference to ministering to Christian's struggling with demonic oppression is the word "deliverance". Jesus taught us to pray: "Our Father...deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:9-13).

Can a Christian "have a demon" (John 8:48)? Yes. A Christ cannot be *possessed* by demonic power in the way an unbeliever can. Possession amounts to full control; it implies that the spirit of a person is inhabited by demons. A Christian's spirit is the abode of the Holy Spirit. But a Christian can be severely *oppressed* by demonic power. Paul urged the Ephesian believers to put on the new man, "[giving] no place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27), counsel that would have been meaningless unless it was of course possible for believers to surrender "place" to the devil in the first place. Remember, demons do not live in people, they live in darkness; and when a Christian allows spiritual darkness within their life – through ignorance, apathy and sin – the demonic has legal access to exploit them.

- (3) Allowing God to discipline any childishness in his life: “Is there any juvenile delinquency in my attitudes, or is God desiring me to grow to a new level of maturity through His discipline?”

“[Do] not despise the chastening [parental discipline] of the Lord...For [our humans fathers] chastened us as seemed best to them, but [our heavenly Father does so] for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness” (Hebrews 12:5-10).

Wherever the Lord reveals unrighteousness (sin) in our hearts or unrenewed thinking (strongholds) in our minds we are repent and turn to our Deliverer in faith. We often refer to this action as the act of “**renouncing**” (2 Corinthians 4:2); that is, a deliberate and specific act of repentance and faith to break with the old and embrace the new in Christ.

In the fresh connection with God, and the renewed assurance of His grace and mercy, we can then stand in “[**submission**] to God” and “**resist the devil**” knowing he must flee (James 4:7). [The “submit-first” principle].

Resisting (Confronting) the Demonic

- (A) When the believer discerns the devil’s attack on his person (or family), he is to confront (resist) him with the Word of God.**

The word “**resist**” used in James 4:7 is exactly the same word used in Ephesians 6:13, translated in this verse, “**withstand**”. The word means “to aggressively stand against and oppose”, thus “to confront”. And we told exactly how to confront (resist) the devil and his demons:

“Therefore take up the whole *armour of God* that you may be able to withstand [confront, resist]...” (Ephesians 6:13).

We need to understand the “**whole armour of God**” but here we make two observations:

- (1) It is our *faith (trust) in God’s character (truth)* that enables us to stand firm against satanic onslaught.

“Put on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [literally, “strategies”] of the devil...above all, taking the *shield of faith* with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ephesians 6:16).

- (2) It is our **declaration of the revelation Word of God** that becomes our offensive weapon against the devil.

“Put on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [literally, “strategies”] of the devil...And take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word [Greek: *rhema*, referring to, “the living, spoken word”] of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

The **“Word [Greek: *logos*, referring to, “the written word”] of God is living and powerful”** (Hebrews 4:12); that is, the Bible contains much potential, life-giving power. But it is only when the Word [*logos*] becomes **alive in our hearts and minds** and then **spoken from our mouths [*rhema*]** that it becomes a mighty offensive weapon that shatters satan’s intentions against us. This is exactly how Jesus thwarted satan’s assault on Himself:

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil... But [Jesus] said, ‘It is written...’ ‘It is written...’ ‘It is written...’” (Matthew 4:1-10).

The attitude behind this confrontation against the demonic is seen in these statements from Jesus*:

“The Jesus said to [the devil], ‘Away with you, satan! [Marginal reference: ‘Get behind Me’] For it is written...’” (Matthew 4:10).

“Get behind Me, satan! You are an offence to Me...” (Matthew 16:23).

As we wield God’s Word against demonic power, our attitude is to expel an unwanted tenant who no longer has any legitimate right to stay!

(B) When the believer discerns the presence of demonic influence in those he is ministering to, he is to confront the devil as the Spirit of God leads him.

Jesus made it clear that He expelled demons by the **“Spirit of God”** (Matthew 12:28), and as with all ministry, **dependence** on the Spirit’s guidance is crucial.

There are no formulas to successful ministry; we need to learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit who is well able to set captives free. And it is through the gifts of the Spirit that we discern demonic activity and thus the appropriate action we should take in every occasion (1 Corinthians 12:10). Jesus was anointed **“with the Holy Spirit and with power...healing all who were oppressed by the devil”** (Acts 10:38).

*Although the devil obviously attacked Jesus personally, most of our confrontations with the enemy will probably not be against him personally; but against his demon forces. However, by addressing satan, we confront the source of demonic power involved; the source from which lower ranking demons operate. For example, Jesus refers to a woman **“whom satan has bound...for eighteen years”** (Luke 13:16). It would be unlikely that the devil himself kept this woman personally bound; a lower ranking demon would have done so in the power of the devil. By confronting the devil’s power, Jesus defeated the demon involved.

Often, ministering to others requires that we *counsel* them; that is, to help them realise the problem they have, repent of their sin and embrace the truth of God. A person must be willing to be free before they can be free. Paul urged Timothy to counsel those “**ensnared by the devil**” with gentleness, patience and humility, so that “**they may come to their senses,**” find “**repentance...and know the truth**” (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Once the principle of “submission first” is applied – the person repents and submits to God – the believer ministering should proceed to *expel* the demon in the Name of Jesus.

Demons are not impressed with noise, they respond to authority in the Name of Jesus. The only Biblical example we have of someone ministering deliverance – in this case, casting out a demon from a demon possessed woman (Acts 16:16) – Paul used the terminology: “**I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out**” (Acts 16:18). This is, of course, very similar to the words used by Jesus Himself (see Mark 1:25; 5:8; 9:25).

Our authority is derived from the Name of Jesus. Jesus said: “**And these signs will follow those who believe: In My Name they will cast out demons...**” (Mark 16:17). The Name of Jesus is not a magic formula that we chant to guarantee results; rather, the Name of Jesus refers to the authority of Jesus derived from His Nature as the Resurrected King of kings and Lord of lords! It is because of our identity as the redeemed that we can stand in the authority of our Redeemer. [The sons of Sceva learnt this the hard way – see Acts 19:13-16].

Should there seem to be an obstruction to the deliverance, the specific obstacle needs to be *identified*.

Demons often put up a struggle; they are not happy to leave and will cling on if they have any right to stay, especially if they can play on any unwillingness to repent in the person they are oppressing. Unconfessed sin or unforgiveness are common obstacles to liberty. Persevering prayer and patient counsel is required at times like this.

Adequate *follow up* for the individual who has been delivered is important. Since demons seek to return to where they were once expelled (Matthew 12:43, 44), adequate follow-up covering repentance, renewing the mind and baptism with water and the Spirit are vital “**lest the last state of [the] man [be] worse than the first**” (Matthew 12:45). Unless a person is filled with God’s Spirit they will always be vulnerable to counter attacks of the enemy.

Appendix A

“Our Identity in Christ”

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing
in the heavenly places in Christ”
(Ephesians 1:3)**

In this Appendix, you will find Biblical professions and statements of faith to aid you in meditating on Scriptural truth.

Professions of the Redeemed

I believe that there is only one true and living God who exists as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16, 17); I thus live by the authoritative Word of the Father (2 Timothy 3:16), submitted to the loving Lordship of Jesus (Colossians 1:16-18) and enjoy the empowering ministry of the Spirit (Acts 1:4, 8); I am the beneficiary of the love of the Father, the grace of Jesus Christ and the intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14)!

I believe Jesus, knew no sin, but became sin so I could become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21); He has delivered me from the power of darkness and transferred me into His Kingdom (Colossians 1:13); I am justified by God Himself (Romans 5:1); redeemed through His blood, forgiven of my sin (Ephesians 1:7); He has removed my transgressions from me as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12); thus He remembers my sin no more (Jeremiah 31:34)!

I believe God my Father has not left me orphaned but has given me His Holy Spirit by which I call Him “Abba (Daddy)” (John 14:16-20; Romans 8:14, 15); I am indwelt and empowered by the mighty Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11; Luke 24:49); I have an anointing from God to walk in the life of His Spirit and to follow His lead (2 Corinthians 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27; Galatians 5:25); and in the power He gives, I am a channel of healing and love to the hurting world I live in (Luke 4:18, 19; Acts 1:8)!

I believe God my Father has made me a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17); He has given me the sublime right to be His child (John 1:12); thus I am accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6), seated together with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6), blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3), having being given an inheritance in Him (Ephesians 1:11), therefore I am an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ (Romans 8:17)!

I believe God my Father created me for His purpose before the creation of the world (2 Timothy 1:9); He has made me beautifully, uniquely and specifically (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5), gracing me with the necessary spiritual gifts to fulfil my God-ordained ministry and destiny (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10); God my Father is for me (Romans 8:31), His plans are to give me a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11) and He will never leave or forsake me (Hebrews 13:5)!

I believe God my Father is the Potter and I am the clay (Isaiah 64:8); He will perfect that which concerns me (Psalm 138:8); I am confident that He will complete the good work He has begun in me (Philippians 1:6) and will work all things together for my good (Romans 8:28), thus I am secure in His firm and gentle hands even when, as a functioning Father, He disciplines me for my profit (Hebrews 12:5-11)!

I believe God my Father is my Refuge and My Fortress (Psalm 91:2); He shall give His angels charge over me to keep me in all my ways (Psalm 91:11); He is my Shield and Deliverer (Psalm 18:2), a wall of protective fire about me (Zechariah 2:5), my hedge of protection (Psalm 139:5); God is faithful, He will not allow me to be tested beyond what I can endure, but with every challenge He will provide the resources I need to overcome (1 Corinthians 10:13)!

I believe God my Father has given me the victory in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14); God has commissioned me to rule and to reign in life (Romans 5:17); He has armed me with spiritual armour by which I can stand strong in Him and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10-17; Romans 13:12,14) I am more than a conqueror in Him (Romans 8:37); no weapon formed against me shall prosper (Isaiah 54:17), for greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4)!

I believe God's will for me is good and perfect (Romans 12:2); He will direct me as I plan my way according to His steps (Proverbs 16:9); His path is not burdensome, but rather easy and light in the grace He gives (Matthew 11:30); I find nourishment in being true to His will (John 4:34); I feed on His faithfulness to me (Psalm 37:3), knowing His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:23, 24); He is my Shepherd, I hear His voice and follow His lead (John 10:27), knowing that He leads me to green pastures and beside still waters (Psalm 23:2)!

I believe God my Father has given me all that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3); I am complete in Him (Colossians 2:10); He has put me into a spiritual family in which I can experience the fullness of Christ's life (1 Corinthians 12:12, 18; Ephesians 1:22, 23); I have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16); I am safe in the multitude of counsellors (Proverbs 11:14), knowing that as I ask Him for the wisdom I need, He gives so liberally and without reproach (James 1:5)!

I believe God my Father takes delightful pleasure in me (Psalm 149:4); He rejoices over me with gladness, He quietens me with His love and He dances over me with singing (Zechariah 3:17); I am the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2:8); He knows the number of hairs on my head (Matthew 10:30); He thinks fondly of me (Psalm 139:17, 18) and in fact, His heart is ravished when He looks upon me (Song of Solomon 4:9)!

I believe God my Father has created me to be alive at this time in history (Esther 4:14; Acts 13:36); I am part of the prevailing church Jesus is building, entrusted with advancing His Kingdom (Matthew 16:18, 19); I am a precious child in His family (Ephesians 3:15), a living stone in His temple (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4, 5); a vital member of His body (1 Corinthians 12:12-18); a victorious soldier in His army (Ephesians 6:10-17) and an intimate part of His Bride for whom the Lord will return in glory and power (Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 21:2); thus I redeem the time God has given to me in this life (Ephesians 5:16), knowing that now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2)!

Our Identity in Christ

I AM SECURE IN CHRIST

In Christ...

- I am a child of God** (John 1:12)
- I am a son of God** (Romans 8:14)
- I am forgiven** (Colossians 1:14)
- I am saved** (2 Timothy 1:9)
- I am redeemed** (Colossians 1:14)
- I am justified** (Romans 5:1)
- I am delivered** (Colossians 1:13)
- I am sanctified** (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- I am healed** (1 Peter 2:24)
- I am a new creation** (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- I am the righteousness of God** (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- I am created uniquely and specifically** (Psalm 139:13-16)
- I am a saint** (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- I am accepted in the Beloved** (Ephesians 1:6)
- I am the apple of His eye** (Zechariah 2:8)
- I am in God's heart** (Isaiah 49:15,16)
- I am on God's mind** (Psalm 139:17,8)
- I am adored by God** (Song of Solomon 4:9)
- I am loved by God** (Romans 5:8)
- I am the elect of God** (Colossians 3:12)
- I am a priest to God** (1 Peter 2:5)
- I am a friend of God** (John 15:15)
- I am blessed us with every spiritual blessing** (Ephesians 1:3)
- I am a citizen of God's household** (Ephesians 2:19)
- I am given an inheritance in Him** (Ephesians 1:11)
- I am safe in God's strength** (Psalm 91:9-12)
- I am assured of God's ability to perfect me** (Psalm 138:8)
- I am confident that God will complete His work in me** (Philippians 1:6)

I AM SIGNIFICANT IN CHRIST

In Christ...

- I am the head, not the tail** (Deuteronomy 28:13)
- I am above, not beneath** (Deuteronomy 28:13)
- I am seated in heavenly places** (Ephesians 2:6)
- I am victorious** (1 Corinthians 15:57)
- I am led forth in triumph** (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- I am enabled to reign in life** (Romans 5:17)
- I am an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ** (Romans 8:17)
- I am empowered with all I need for life and godliness** (2 Peter 1:3)
- I am able to do all things by His strength** (Philippians 4:13)
- I am complete** (Colossians 2:10)
- I am an overcomer** (1 John 2:14)
- I am more than a conqueror** (Romans 8:37)
- I am a soldier in the Lord's army** (2 Timothy 2:3)
- I am armed with the armour of God** (Ephesians 6:10-18)
- I am strong in the Lord** (Ephesians 6:10)
- I am a vital member of Christ's body** (Romans 12:4,5)
- I am endowed with the mind of Christ** (1 Corinthians 2:16)
- I am called with a holy calling** (2 Timothy 1:9)
- I am gifted by God to fulfil His purpose for me** (1 Peter 4:10)
- I am a branch on the Vine** (John 15:2)
- I am a steward of God's grace** (1 Peter 4:10)
- I am a servant of the Lord** (2 Timothy 2:24)
- I am an ambassador for Christ** (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- I am a minister of Christ** (Ephesians 4:12)
- I am a fellow worker with God** (1 Corinthians 3:9)
- I am a temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit** (1 Corinthians 6:19,20)
- I am anointed by the Spirit** (2 Corinthians 1:21)
- I am empowered with the Spirit** (Acts 1:8)
- I am a Kingdom enforcer** (Matthew 6:10,33)
- I am an intricate part of God's Great Commission** (Matthew 28:18-20)

Appendix B

“Evaluation Tool”

**“And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free”
(John 8:32)**

In this Appendix, you will find a self-reflection tool to guide you in walking through personal freedom and deliverance.

Personal Evaluation...

Besetting Sins

- Selfishness
- Uncontrolled anger
- Withdrawal/Sulking
- Chronic mood swings
- Inadequacy/Inferiority
- Projection/Irresponsibility
- Bitterness & Unforgiveness
- Intense dislike or hate
- Lustful thoughts & behaviour
- Greed/Materialism
- Jealousy/Envy
- Apathy/Laziness
- Procrastination
- Gossip/Slander
- Arrogance/Pride/Superiority
- Prejudice & racism
- Criticism/Complaining
- Judging/Fault-finding/Perfectionism
- Lying/Dishonesty
- Stealing/Cheating
- Quarrelling/Argumentative
- Irrational thinking & behaviour
- Drunkenness
- Rebellion/Anti-authority
- Other.....

Occult Exposure

- Violent/Horror Movies
- Violent/Occult Games/Books
- Tarot Cards
- Occult Games
- Astrology/Horoscopes
- Fortune Telling
- Palm Reading
- Martial Arts
- Ouija Board
- Glassy Glassy
- Spells or Curses
- Crystals or Pyramids
- Mediums
- Cults
- Mental Telepathy
- Animal Sacrifice
- Sorcery/Witchcraft
- Spirit Guides
- False religions
- Satanism
- Other.....

Fears

- God
- Death
- Devil and demons
- Failure or success
- Intimacy
- Commitment
- Disapproval
- Rejection
- Embarrassment
- Relational conflict
- Financial pressure
- Never getting married
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Death of a loved one
- Victimized by crime
- Pain or illness
- Future
- Going mad
- Becoming homosexual
- Losing one's salvation
- Unpardonable sin
- Various Phobias
- Other.....

Idolatry

- Self
- Spouse
- Children
- Parents
- Boyfriend/Girlfriend
- Friends
- Celebrity
- Food or any substance
- Money/possessions
- Appearance/fitness
- Work
- Ministry
- Traditions
- Approval of people
- Pride
- Ambition
- Control/Power
- Busyness/Activity
- Pleasure/Excitement/Fun
- Hobby
- Other.....

Crisis Experiences

- Wrong teachings/philosophies
- Dishonour of parents
- Parental/Family Bondage
- Cultural/Tribal Bondage
- Disappointment
- Guilt/Shame/Regret
- Substance Abuse
- Sexual immorality & adultery
- Pornography
- Manipulation/Control
- Transference/Soul-Ties/Co-dependence
- Abuse: Verbal, Emotional or Physical
- Severe neglect
- Physical Assault
- Excessive violence
- Abortion
- Pregnancy related problems
- Gluttony, anorexia or bulimia
- Self-mutilation
- Near death experience
- Attempted suicide
- Other.....

Worldly Values

- Independence: faith in self
- Materialism: faith in things
- Humanism: faith in man
- Lawlessness: faith in anarchy
- Rationalism: faith in knowledge
- Hedonism: faith in pleasure
- Patriotism: faith in country
- Atheism: faith in nothing
- Socialism: faith in government
- Existentialism: faith in faith
- Spiritism: faith in fear
- Other.....

Wrong Beliefs About God

- Distant and disinterested
- Uncaring and insensitive
- Absent and distracted
- Passive and cold
- Demanding and stern
- Perfectionist and nit-picking
- Manipulative and controlling
- Impatient and angry
- Mean and cruel
- Unforgiving and condemning
- Other.....

Prayerfully go through the lists above and mark off areas that describe you, your past experiences and current views. We suggest through prayer and fasting, and supported by some close praying friends, you seek the Father's restoration and healing in your life.

Soul Check-Up: The Root & Fruit of our Problems...

Tasting the Fruit

(1) Emotions/Feelings?

- Record the emotions you feel about your situation.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

- Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy emotions.

Example

Unhealthy Emotions

Frustration
(Impatience)
Anxiety
(Fearful apprehension)
Resentment
(Uncontrolled anger)
Guilt/Shame
(Condemnation)
Depression
(Self-pity)

Healthy Emotions

Godly discontentment (Philippians 1:12)
Godly concern (2 Corinthians 11:28)
Godly anger (Ephesians 4:26)
Godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10)
Godly Anguish (Luke 22:44)

(2) Behaviour/Actions?

- Record the actions that caused or complimented these emotions.

.....
.....
.....
.....

- Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy behaviour in the light of God's Word.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Investigating the Root

(1) Goals?

- What “goal” do you think you may be striving for?

I will be fulfilled when I

.....

.....

.....

(2) Basic Assumptions? (Our Belief System)

- What underlying assumptions in you mind do you think may have led to the establishment of this goal?

.....

.....

.....

.....

- Where and when do you think you adopted this assumption?

.....

.....

.....

.....

NOW WHAT?

From the above self-reflection, one can thus embrace the Biblical goal by faith – “I will be fulfilled in God and Him alone; secure in my love relationship with Him and significant in my obedience to His will for me” – and then renew one’s mind to a new belief system based on God’s Word.

**This course is entitled:
Freedom in Christ.**

For other resources please contact us...

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