



Where People Matter



FOUNDATIONS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

February 2011

What you will read inside will really help you for the rest of your life.

Enjoy!



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This programme consists of nine lessons which lay the foundation for you as a new Christian.

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OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

❖ What is repentance?

There is a word that you probably haven't heard before, and it's the word "Repentance." Now it's probably not a word you'd just throw into your everyday conversation with your mates at school or work. But it's an important word that helps us understand how people turn back to God.

Pastor Mark Driscoll has this to say about what repentance is.

"Repentance starts in the mind. It's a change of mind. All of a sudden, Jesus is the centre of your life. You're not the centre of your life. You want to do what pleases God, not what satisfies selfish desires. Repentance is literally turning. It's turning from your face towards sin and your back towards Jesus, to your face towards Jesus and your back towards sin. And it's an ongoing lifestyle. It's a continual growing in grace and Christ-likeness. It's something that continues until Jesus' final kingdom."

Basically, repentance is a change of heart, mind and lifestyle. It literally means 'to have another mind'. When we repent, we make a 180° turn in the direction of our life. Previously we were walking against God and His laws and principles, and through repentance we are now walking with Him. To repent is to turn from sin, and to turn to God.

Acts 3:19 says "So turn to God! Give up your sins, and you will be forgiven."

❖ Find it in the Bible - Repent and Believe

The first word of the Gospel (Good News) is 'repent', and the second is 'believe'.

What was the first thing John the Baptist preached? (**Matthew 3:2**)

"_____ for the kingdom of heaven will soon be here."

Jesus preached (**Matthew 4:17**)

"_____ for the kingdom of heaven will soon be here."

Jesus' followers the disciples preached (**Mark 6:12**)

The Apostles left and started telling everyone to _____.

Paul's message was (**Acts 20:21**)

I told Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) to _____ and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

What does God command all people everywhere to do? (**Acts 17:30**) _____.



❖ What is true Repentance?

True repentance is that wholehearted turning from sin and turning to God. There are some other things that on the surface look like repentance but are not. Make sure you are not mistaking repentance for any of these:

- Repentance is not conviction of sin (our conscience pricking us). Conviction comes before repentance; but not all who are convicted, repent.

Read **Acts 24: 24-25**.

- Repentance is not just being 'sorry'. Tears may or may not accompany repentance, but always repentance is a turning away from sin, to God. Often sorrow is sorrow for being caught out and for the penalty of being caught. Repentance is not sorrow because you got caught and now you have to face the consequences, but rather for being involved in the first place and not wanting to do it again.

Read **2 Corinthians 7:10**.

Repentance is not just turning over a new leaf, is not just turning away from sin. Perhaps the most important part is where you turn to God.

A Parable - Read Luke 15: 11 – 24

Once a man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, "give me my share of the property". So the father divided his property between his two sons. Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. He had spent everything, when a bad famine spread through that whole land. Soon he had nothing to eat.

He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs. He would have been glad to eat what the pigs were eating, but no-one gave him a thing. Finally, he came to his senses and said, "my father's workers have plenty to eat, and here I am starving to death! I will go to my father and say to him 'father, I've sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers.'"

The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was still a long way away, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him. The son said, "father, I've sinned against God in heaven and against you. I'm no longer good enough to be called your son." But his father said to the servants, "hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. Get the best calf and prepare it so we can eat and celebrate".

The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he heard the music and dancing, so he called one of his servants over and asked what was going on. The

servant answered, “your brother has come home safe and sound and your father ordered us to kill the best calf.” The older brother got so angry that he wouldn’t even go into the house. His father came out and begged him to go in, but he said to his father, “for years I’ve worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you’ve never even given me a little goat so that I could give a dinner for my friends. This other son of yours wasted your money on prostitutes. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast”.

His father replied, “my son, you’re always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but now he’s alive. He was lost and has now been found”.

❖ **The Mission of God**

Repentance is about changing your thinking and actions. If it’s just a head thing, just knowledge that doesn’t change your actions, then the Bible calls that kind of faith “dead faith.” Check out **James 2: 15-20**.

❖ **Four Steps To Repentance**

1. Decision

We read in the gospel of Luke that the prodigal son “came to himself” or “to his senses”. For most of us this is the time in our lives we recognise that we need God. Our decision is the beginning of a lifelong walk, or journey, with God. We don’t just pray a prayer, but we turn from our sin and begin to seek God with all our mind, heart, soul and actions. We head for home just like the prodigal son.

Mark 12:30 – *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*

2. Confession

Having made a decision, we need to confess our sins to God. You might feel that God knows our sins already, and that is true, but God says we have to ask for His forgiveness.

Hebrews 4:13 – *“nothing is hidden from God! He sees through everything, and we will have to tell him the truth.”*

In **1 John 1:9** we read *“but if we confess our sins to God He can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away”*. Here we see the need to confess, to receive forgiveness and become clean from all unrighteousness (unrighteousness means the things that we do that are offensive to God).

In **Romans 10:10** it says, *“God will accept you and save you, if you truly believe this and tell it to others.”*



In Luke we saw the prodigal son first confess in his heart, and then he went to his father and confessed with his mouth. We also need to come in humility and confess to our Father in heaven so that we too might be forgiven and come into His blessing.

3. Renunciation (to renounce, or turn our back on sin)

2 Corinthians 4:2 *“we don’t do shameful things that must be kept secret. And we don’t try to fool anyone or twist God’s message around. God is our witness that we speak only the truth, so others will be sure that we can be trusted.”*

Write down the things you know God wants you to renounce (turn your back on).

In Ecclesiastes, sin is called ‘insanity’ and that is a very true description of what sin is. God is against sin because, like a cancer, if left in us to develop, it will totally destroy us. When we turn our back on sin we are closing the door on it, never to walk through that door and down that road again. If you have had involvement in the occult, witchcraft, fortune-telling, Ouija boards, séances, ESP, divining, illicit sex, rebellion towards parents, magic charms or amulets, yoga or martial arts teaching, you need to confess these and ask God to come by His Holy Spirit and deliver you and forgive you.

4. Acceptance

John 8:31 *Jesus told the people who had faith in him, “If you keep on obeying what I have said, you truly are my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”.*

John 15:3 *“You are already clean because of what I have said to you.”*

Acts 2: 38 *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

What an awesome promise! That God would give us His Holy Spirit to help us love him more and follow Jesus every day.



❖ Why Is Baptism So Important?

The Lord Jesus Christ left only two commands for all Christians to keep – Communion and Baptism. Please read this section carefully and look up the scriptures. If you would like to honour God in baptism let Pastor Russell know, or one of the elders, or your home group leader if you have one.

❖ Who should be baptised?

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted His message were baptised.

Acts 16:14/15 A woman... (the) Lord opened her heart ... she was baptised

Question: What are the two important requirements Jesus expects of people **before** they are baptised?

Acts 20:21 _____

Acts 2:38 _____

Because baptism is part of the salvation process, believing children should be baptised when they are old enough to confess their faith.

❖ When should a person be baptised?

Acts 8:36 *“Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptised?”*

Acts 16:33 *“Then immediately he ... (was) baptised”*

Question: Do you think there should be much of a delay after receiving Christ as Saviour and Lord, before obeying Him in water baptism?

Acts 16:31-33 _____

Baptism should be our first act of faith. In the New Testament church there was no such thing as an un-baptised (by immersion) believer. The word ‘to baptise’ comes from the core word ‘baptiso’ which means to plunge, dunk, or immerse.

❖ How should a person be baptised?

Acts 8: 38 “Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water.”

Matthew 3:16 “As soon as Jesus was baptised, He went up out of the water.”

Question: Would infant sprinkling (baptism) be a valid form of baptism, and if not, what would be the reason?

Luke 2:22-23 _____

Luke 3: 21-22 _____

Christening is not biblical baptism, however prayers given at this time are very effective.



❖ **Why Be Baptised?**

Out of conviction

1 Peter 3:21 *“Baptism... (is) the pledge of a good conscience toward God.”*

In obedience

Acts 2:38 *“repent and be baptised every one of you...”*

As part of salvation

Mark 16:16 *“anyone who believes in me and is baptised will be saved”.*

For cleansing

Ephesians 5:26 *“He made the church holy by the power of His word, and He made it pure by washing it with water”.*

As a dedication

Romans 6:11 *“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus”.*

Question: In light of **Romans 6:1-11** write in your own words why you want to be baptised.

❖ **Baptism – A Death**

One of the most powerful facts about water baptism is that it established a definite point at which we “close the door” on the old way of life we led before we became a Christian. What are you closing the door on?

❖ **Baptism – A Resurrection**

Coming out of the water symbolises a heart commitment to lead a new life in Christ, of righteousness and victory, made possible only by the presence and through the power of God’s Holy Spirit. What are you looking forward to in your life with God?



❖ **What happens at your Baptism?**

When you are baptised you will be asked simple questions like:

- Have you chosen to leave your old way of life where you did what you wanted?
- Do you want Jesus to be your leader for the rest of your life?
- You will answer 'yes' and maybe give a short testimony.
- If you have a favourite song you would like us to sing please let us know.



THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). He is not some vague, impersonal force. He is equal in every way with the Father and with the Son. All of the divine attributes ascribed to the Father and the Son are equally ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Bible uses different concepts to describe the Holy Spirit.

Read the following texts and write out the concepts given.

1 Corinthians 3:16 _____

Romans 8: 9 _____

Ephesians 1: 13 _____

John 14: 16-17 *“Then I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will help you and always be with you. The Spirit will show you what is true. The people of this world cannot accept the Spirit, because they don’t see or know him. But you know the Spirit, who is with you and will keep on living in you.”*

What is the chief reason the Holy Spirit came?

Read the following concepts and find out the role of the Holy Spirit:

John 16: 7-11 _____

John 16: 12-15 _____

John 14: 26 _____

Acts 1: 18 _____

Romans 8: 26 _____



❖ THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Baptise is a Greek word meaning to immerse (in this instance to immerse in the Holy Spirit). When a person comes to put their faith in Christ, God promises to give His Holy Spirit to him/her. The term 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' is used in scripture to describe the first experience a new believer has of being immersed, or filled, with the Holy Spirit.

❖ Find it in the Bible – Baptism of the Holy Spirit

John 1: 29-34 *“the next day, John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I told you about when I said “someone else will come. He is greater than I am, because he was alive before I was born”. I didn’t know who he was. But I came to baptise you with water, so that everyone in Israel would see him. I was there and saw the Spirit come down on him like a dove from heaven. And the Spirit stayed on him. Before this I didn’t know who he was. But the one who sent me to baptise you with water had told me, “you will see the Spirit come down and stay on someone. Then you will know that he is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit”. I saw this happen, and I tell you that he is the Son of God”.*

Who is the one who baptises a person with the Spirit? _____

Acts 2: 38-39 Peter said, *“turn back to God! Be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children. It is for everyone our Lord God will choose, no matter where they live”.*

Who did Peter say the promise of the Holy Spirit was for? _____

Does this include you? _____

What are the two conditions Peter said were necessary in order for someone to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?

1. _____
2. _____

(Note that 'baptism' here refers to water baptism and was the normal response made in faith by those who believed.)

In the New Testament we see that God offers the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who meet these two conditions.

Acts 8: 14-17 *“The apostles in Jerusalem heard that some people in Samaria had accepted God’s message, and they sent Peter and John. When the two apostles arrived, they prayed that the people would be given the Holy Spirit. Before this, the Holy Spirit had not been given to anyone in Samaria, though some of them had been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

How did Peter and John pray for these Christians?

In the early church the apostles would check to see if the new believers were baptised in the Spirit. Has this happened to you? The Bible makes it clear that we will know if we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Read the following verses and list the ways we can know:

John 7: 37-39 _____

Acts 10: 44-46 _____

Galatians 5: 22-23 _____

Acts 1: 8 _____

Acts 4: 31 _____

What good gift will God the Father give to all His children who ask Him for it?
(**Luke 11:13**)

❖ THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Make a list of the 9 primary Spiritual gifts found in **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | |

If you have never demonstrated a spiritual gift, you can eagerly ask God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Then ask your care group or the prayer team after the service to lay hands on you so you can receive the Holy Spirit in power and become a normal Christian.

Ephesians 5: 18 “*Don’t destroy yourself by getting drunk, but let the Spirit fill your life*”.

What are we commanded to do? _____

We need to consider what the term ‘being filled with the Spirit’ means. In the Greek version it is written in the ‘present continuous’ tense – i.e. it is meant to be a continuous, ongoing experience. **Ephesians 5:18** uses the illustration of drunkenness. A drunkard is controlled by alcohol, and a Christian who is filled with the Spirit is one who is controlled by the Holy Spirit. A drunkard has to top-up his/her intake of alcohol and likewise, a Christian has to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit.

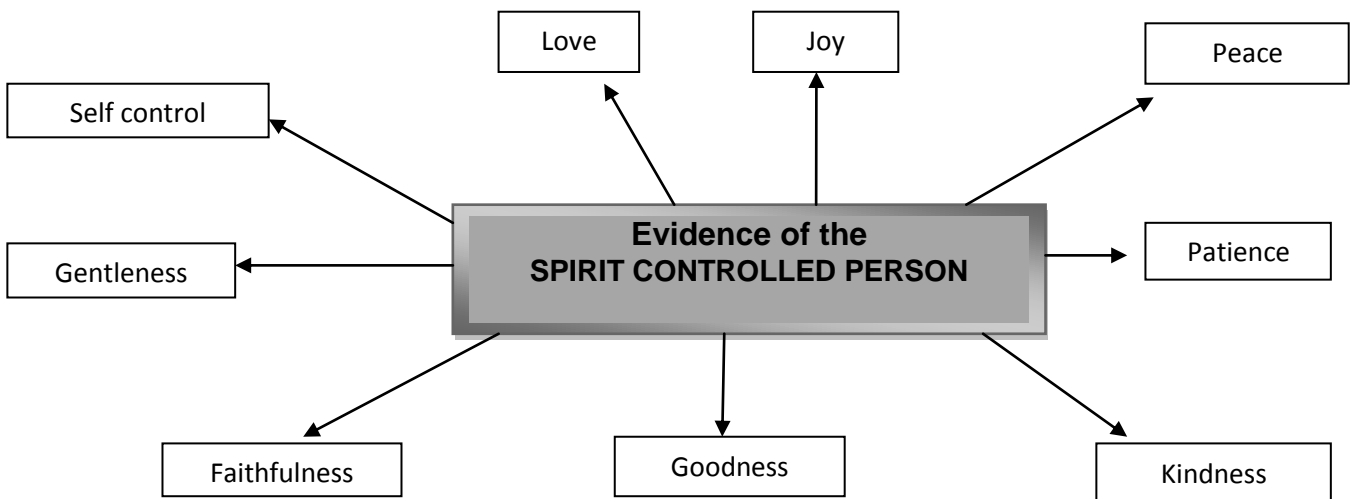
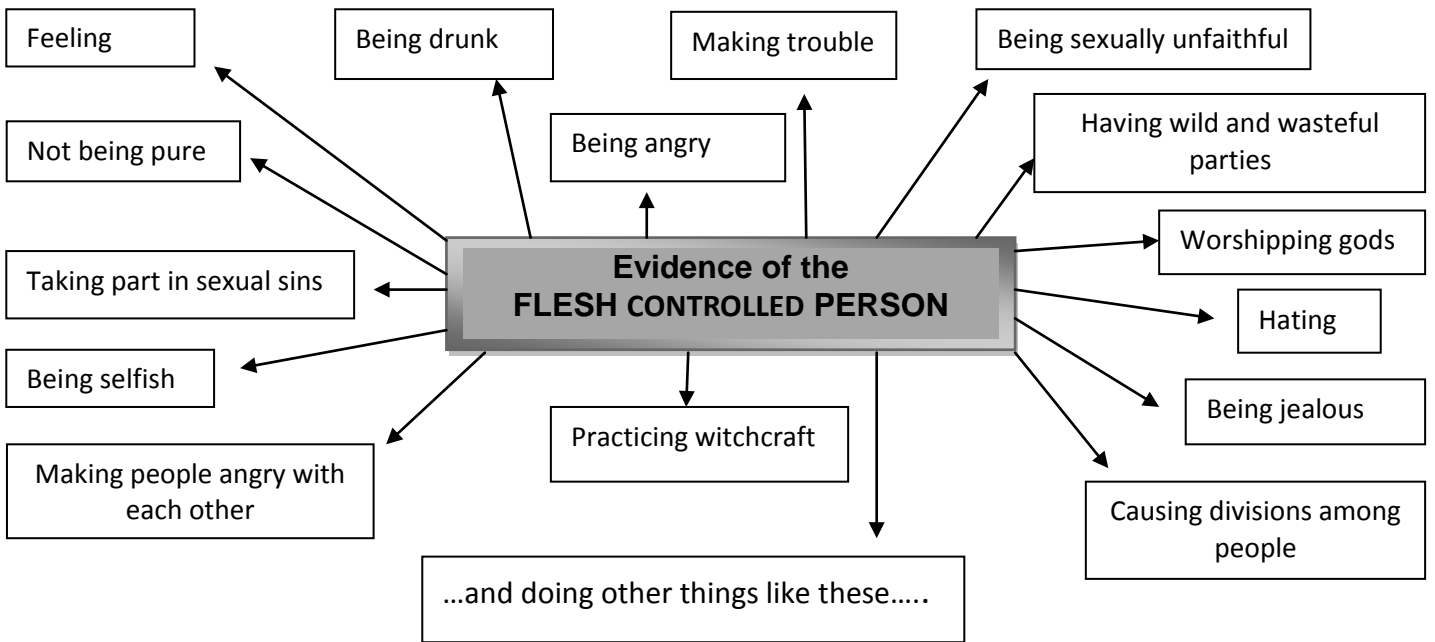
There is one baptism of the Spirit but many fillings.

A self-directed life has self in the driver’s seat with the Spirit in the passenger seat.

**A Spirit directed life has the Spirit in the driver’s seat,
and self in the passenger seat.**

Think carefully about your life. Are you living a Spirit-filled life? Remember that the Spirit-filled life can only be lived when the Holy Spirit is in control. It is foolish to think we can do it by our own efforts. There will be many times in your Christian life when you become aware that you are not living a Spirit-filled life. How can you renew that experience?





ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

You have made the most important decision of your life. That's exciting! But you're probably wondering what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

We have set out this programme to help you understand what happened to you, what to expect, and how to grow in the new life God has given you.

Just as your physical life needs food, air, exercise and rest, so your spiritual life needs certain things to grow and develop too.

Your "food" is the Bible. It makes you strong as you absorb it's truth about the world and about God. Prayer and talking with God is like breathing. You get spiritual exercise as you obey Jesus and put aside your own desires. And "rest" is learning to trust him in every circumstance.

You'll also learn about removing the rubbish from your life by admitting your sins and receiving God's forgiveness on a regular basis. Living things reproduce too, and you'll do that as you tell others about Jesus and how they can have new life.

We'll also talk about the opposition because now that you're on God's side, you've become an enemy of the evil forces. But God loves you very much. He wants to be a loving heavenly father, a protector, guide, friend, boss, comforter and light to you. He's given other people to help you, but best of all, his Holy Spirit lives in you.

2 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 7 and 21 say this:

"when someone becomes a new Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun! For God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God's goodness into us".

You may not feel very different, but let's review what happened to bring you to this new beginning.

Romans 3:23 *"All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory".*

Before you became a Christian you were cut off from God. What separated you from Him? _____

Romans 5: 8 *"But God showed how much He loved us by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful".*

What did Jesus do for you? _____

Colossians 1: 21-22 *"You used to be far from God. Your thoughts made you His enemies, and you did evil things. But His son became a human and died. So God made peace with you,*

and now He lets you stand in His presence as people who are holy and faultless and innocent”.

Acts 3:19 *“So turn to God! Give up your sins and you will be forgiven”.*

Colossians 1: 22b *“But you must stay deeply rooted and firm in your faith. You must not give up the hope you received when you received the good news”.*

CAN YOU BE SURE?

Some people struggle all their lives, never being quite sure of their salvation. John in his letter was concerned with this very question. Let’s read from it.....

1 John

2: 3-6 *When we obey God we are sure that we know Him. But if we claim to know Him and don’t obey Him, we are lying and the truth isn’t in our hearts. We truly love God only when we obey Him as we should, and then we know that we belong to Him. If we say we are His, we must follow the example of Christ.*

5:13 *All of you have faith in the Son of God, and I have written to let you know you have eternal life.*

3: 14 *Our love for each other proves that we have gone from death to life. But if you don’t love each other, you are still under the power of death.*

3: 24 *If we obey god’s commandments, we will stay one in our hearts with Him, and He will stay one with us. The Spirit that He has given us is proof that we are one with Him.*

4: 13 *God has given us His Spirit. That is how we know that we are one with Him, just as He is one with us.*

4: 15 *God stays one with everyone who openly says that Jesus is the Son of God. That’s how we stay one with God*

5: 1 *If we believe that Jesus is truly Christ, we are God’s children.*

5: 11 *God has also said that He gave us eternal life and that this life comes to us from His Son. And so, if we have God’s Son, we have this life. But if we don’t have the Son, we don’t have this life. All of you have faith in the Son of God, and I have written to let you know that you have eternal life.*

QUICK DEFINITIONS

- Christian** Means “Christ in one”. Christ lives in you! He comes to take control of your life.
- Grace** Is the “free gift of God”, given to help you turn to Jesus and to supply you with the power to live for all of your life.
- Obedience** Is saying “yes” to Jesus about every decision, every day.
- Repent** Means “to turn around”. To turn away from a self-centred, self-controlled life.
- Believe** Means “total trust”. Trusting Jesus now and every day.



FINDING FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Introduction

We recommend you do section 4 of this course, with a mature spirit filled friend. Christ has set you free through His victory over sin and death on the cross. However, you may find that you don't experience that freedom immediately. You have to learn to actively take your place in Christ. It is your responsibility to maintain a tight relationship with God. You will find that you don't have daily victory if you fail to claim and maintain your position in Christ.

You don't have to be a helpless victim between two 'superpowers' because God is all powerful ("omnipotent"), always present everywhere ("omnipresent") and all knowing ("omniscient"). Satan is defeated and we are in Christ. However, Satan is a deceiver and will want to keep you feeling defeated. This lesson is designed to help you find true freedom through a whole relationship with Christ.

Remember that as you go through these steps, Satan will try and deceive you into thinking that they will not work, or that God doesn't love you. Knowing the nature of the battle for our minds, you can pray authoritatively to stop any such interference.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I acknowledge your presence in this room and in my life. You are the all powerful, all present and all knowing God. I am dependent upon You, for apart from Christ I can do nothing. I stand in the truth that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the risen Christ and because I am in Christ, I share that authority. I ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit and lead me into all truth. I pray for your complete protection and ask for your guidance. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Declaration - (you may like to do this with your friend) Please note declarations must be read aloud. There is power to defeat demons in your spoken words.

“In the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command Satan and all evil spirits to release (say your name) in order that (your name) can be free to know and choose to do the will of God. As children of God seated with Christ in the heavenlies, we agree that every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ be bound and be gagged to silence. We say to Satan and all his evil workers that you cannot inflict any pain or in any way prevent God's will from being accomplished in (your name)'s life”.

Q. Has there been negative things that have happened to you in your past which you know still handicap/hold you back today? _____

Family History, e.g. religious history of parents and grandparents, home life from childhood through high school, physical or emotional illness in the family, adoption, foster care etc.

Personal History e.g. eating habits, addictions, prescription medications, sleeping patterns and nightmares, sexual, physical, emotional molestation, through life, emotional life, spiritual journeys etc.

Q. When you look at your life now are you aware of any addictive or compulsive behaviour that would not be normal for a Christ follower?

If yes, ask at the church office for time with someone who can help; or ask your friend to go through these questions with you.

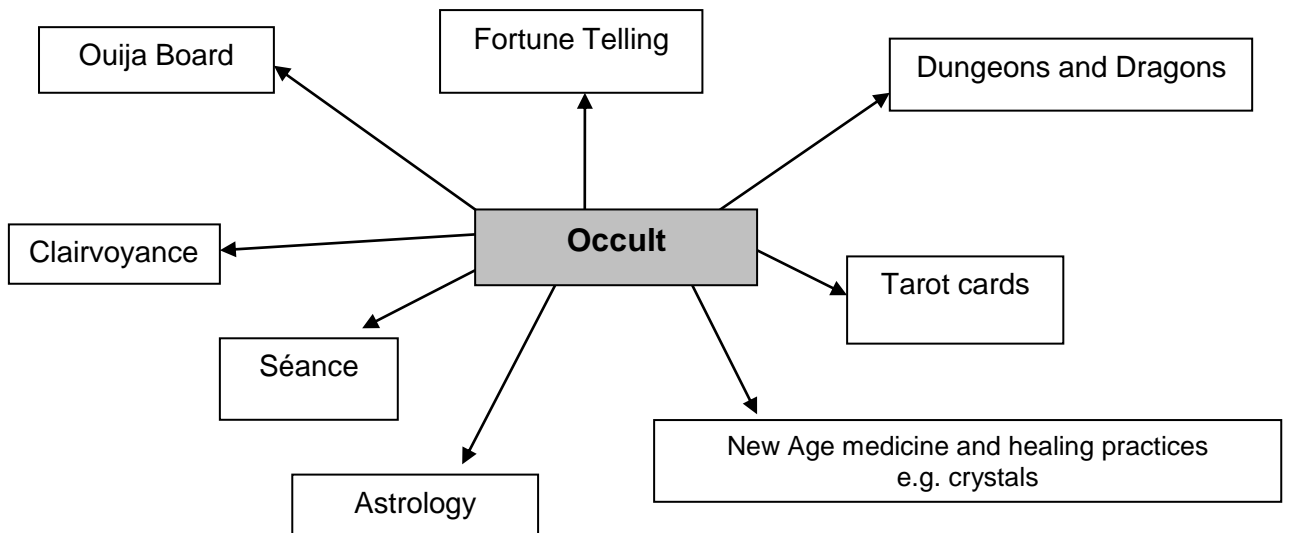
1. Ask the Father where the problem started.
2. Ask Him to expose what you wrongly believed then.
3. Ask Him now for the truth that sets you free.
4. Ask His forgiveness for any sin exposed.
Sin no more.
5. Forgive as God directs you.

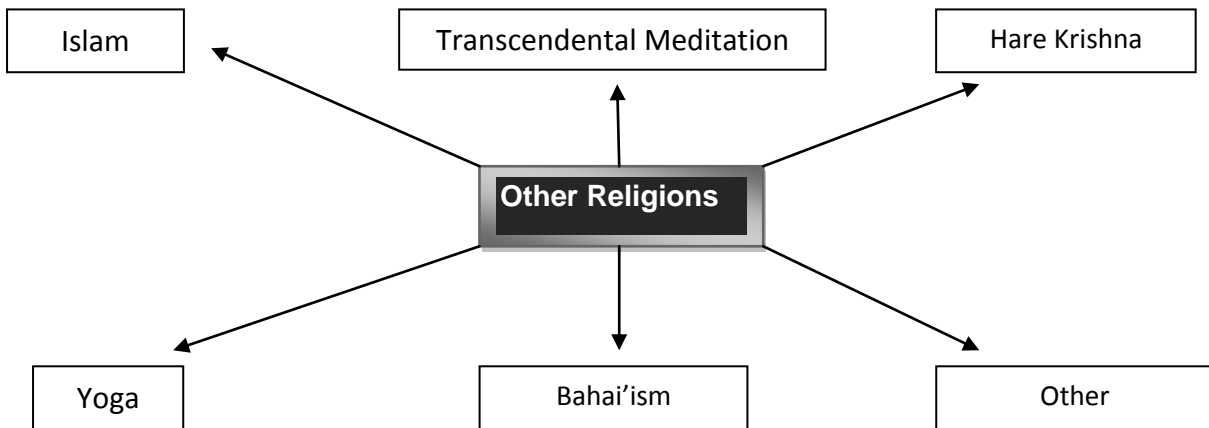
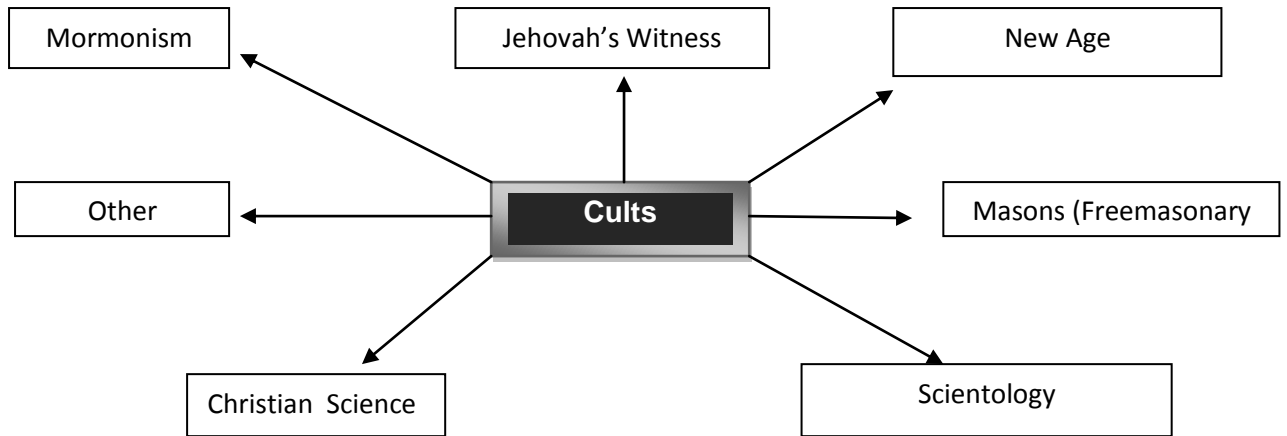
THE SEVEN STEPS

The following are seven steps in order to experience freedom from your past. You will need to address the areas where Satan most commonly takes advantage of you and where strongholds (mindsets) have been built. Remember, Christ has already won the victory for you! Now you must learn to live in that victory.

Step One - Counterfeit Versus Real

The first step to freedom in Christ is to renounce (speak off your life) your previous or current involvement with satanically inspired occult practices and false religions. You need to renounce any activity that denies Jesus Christ, offers guidance through any source other than the absolute authority of the written word of God, or requires secret initiations, ceremonies or covenants. Using the following inventory, carefully check anything in which you were involved. Even if you "innocently" participated in something or observed it, you should write it on your list to renounce just in case you unknowingly gave Satan a foothold (a legal right to influence you). Satan is a legalist!!!





Make a list of the areas of involvement and when you are confident that your list is complete, confess and renounce each involvement by praying aloud the following prayer, repeating it separately for each item on your list:

"Lord, I confess that I have participated in _____. I ask your forgiveness, and I renounce it in the name of Jesus Christ."

Sometime Freemasonry (the most evil of all occults) will require extra prayer.
Ask a church leader for help.

Step Two - Deception Versus Truth

Psalm 51: 6 *Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inner most place.*

Psalm 32: 2 *Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.*

When David lived a lie, he suffered greatly. He finally found freedom by acknowledging the truth.

Ephesians 4: 15 *Love should always make us tell the truth. Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ.*

Ephesians 4: 25 *We are a part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth.*

We are to put aside all pretence and speak the truth in love. A mentally healthy person is one who is in touch with reality and relatively free of anxiety. Both qualities should characterise the Christian who renounces deception and embraces the truth.

Prayer:

"Dear Heavenly Father. I know that You desire truth in the inner self and that facing this truth is the way of liberation. I acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies and that I have deceived myself. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that You, Heavenly Father, will chase away all deceiving spirits because of the shed blood and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith I receive You into my life and I am now seated with Christ in the heavenlies. I acknowledge that I have the responsibility and authority to resist the devil, and when I do, he will run from me. I now ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth. I ask You to "search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

You are now alive in Christ and forgiven! You never have to live a lie or defend yourself. Christ is your defence.

John 8: 32 *You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*

John 8:44 *To sinners Jesus said, "Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies".*

1 John 1:8 *If we say we haven't sinned then we are fooling ourselves, and the truth isn't in our hearts.*



Ephesians 2:6 *God raised us from death to life with Jesus Christ, and He has given us a place beside Christ in heaven.*

John 16:13 *The spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. The spirit doesn't speak on his own. He will tell you only what he has heard from me, and he will let you know what is going to happen.*

Psalm 139: 23,24 *Search me, O 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.*

How have you deceived yourself or attempted to defend yourself according to the following?

Read the following verses and check for areas of self deception.

James 1:22 *Obey God's message. Don't fool yourselves by just listening to it. (Do I know all Biblical truth but think its okay not to live it?)*

James 4:17 *If you don't do what you know is right, you have sinned. (Do I try to justify my sin?)*

1 John 1:8 *If we say we haven't sinned, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth isn't in our hearts. (Do I think I'm a good person?)*

Galatians 6:3 *If you think you are better than others when you really aren't, you are wrong. (Do I consider myself better than others?)*

1 Corinthians 3: 18-19 *Don't fool yourselves. If any of you think you are wise in the things of this world, you will have to become foolish before you can be truly wise. This is because God considers the wisdom of this world to be foolish. It is just as the scriptures say, "God catches the wise when they try to outsmart him." (Am I teachable or proud?)*

Galatians 6:7 *You can't fool God, so don't make a fool of yourself. You will harvest what you plant. (Do I pretend that there won't be consequences for my actions?)*

1 Corinthians 6:9 *Don't you know that evil people won't have a share in the blessings of God's kingdom? Don't fool yourselves. No-one who is immoral or worships idols, or is unfaithful in marriage or is a pervert, or behaves like a homosexual, will share in God's kingdom. Neither will any thief or greedy person, or drunkard or anyone who curses and cheats others. (Do I wrongly believe that I can practice sin and still be saved?)*

1 Corinthians 15:33 *Don't fool yourselves. Bad friends will destroy you. (Do I think I can hang around people who practice evil and think I won't be effected by them?)*

Areas of Self Defence

Read through the list and ask yourself if you recognize these in yourself:

- Denial (conscious or subconscious)



- Fantasy (escape from the real world)
- Emotional insulation (withdrawal to avoid rejection)
- Regression (reverting back to a less threatening time)
- Displacement (taking out frustrations on others)
- Projection (blaming others)
- Rationalisation (defending self through verbal excursion)

Prayer

"Lord, I agree that I have been deceived in the area of _____. Thank you for forgiving me. I commit myself to know and follow your truth. Amen."

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

Faith is the biblical response to the truth, and believing the truth is a choice. When someone says "I want to believe God, but I just can't", they are being deceived. Of course you can believe God. Faith is something you **decide** to do, not something you **feel** like doing. Believing that truth doesn't make it true. It's true therefore we believe it. Everybody believes in something and everybody walks by faith according to what he or she believes. But if what you believe isn't true then how you live (walk by faith) won't be right.

Step 3 - Bitterness Versus Forgiveness

We need to forgive others so that Satan cannot take advantage of us. We are to be merciful just as our heavenly father is merciful. We are to forgive as we have been forgiven.

**2 Corinthians
2:10-11**

I will forgive anyone you forgive. Yes, for your sake and with Christ as my witness, I have forgiven whatever needed to be forgiven. I have done this to keep Satan from getting the better of us. We all know what goes on in his mind.

Luke 6: 36

Have pity on others, just as your father has pity on you.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

Romans 2:4 *You surely don't think much of God's wonderful goodness or of his patience and willingness to put up with you. Don't you know that the reason God is good to you is because he wants you to turn to him?*

Prayer

"Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for the riches of your kindness, goodness and patience. I know that your kindness has led me to turn from sin. I confess that I have not extended the same patience and kindness toward others who have offended me, but instead I have

harboured bitterness and resentment. I pray that during this time of self-examination you would bring to my mind those people I have not forgiven in order that I may do so. I ask this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen."

As names come to mind, make a list of only the names and at the end of the list write "your name". Forgiving yourself is accepting God's cleansing and forgiveness. Also, write "thoughts against God". Thoughts raised against the knowledge of God will usually result in angry feelings toward Him. Technically, we don't forgive God, because He cannot commit any sin. But you need to specifically renounce false expectations and thoughts about God and agree to release any anger you have toward him.

What does it mean to forgive?

Forgiving is not forgetting. Neither is it trusting. Trust needs to be earned. Forgiveness is a choice. It is difficult because it pulls against our concept of justice. Your need to forgive isn't an issue between you and the offender; it's between you and God. If you don't forgive, your walk with the Lord, your health and your relationships will suffer.

Forgiveness requires that we stop trying to get revenge. Forgiving is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin. It is costly. You are going to live with those consequences whether you want to or not; your only choice is whether you will do so in the bitterness of unforgiveness or the freedom of forgiveness. Jesus took the consequences of our sin upon himself. **(1 Corinthians 5:21)**.

How do we forgive?

To forgive we must acknowledge the hurt and the hate. If your forgiveness doesn't visit the emotional core of your life, it will be incomplete. Let God bring the pain to the surface so he can deal with it. This is where the healing takes place.

Don't wait to forgive until you feel like forgiving; you will never get there. As you pray, ask God to bring to mind offending people and experiences you have totally forgotten. Let him do it even if it is painful. Don't rationalise or explain the offender's behaviour. Forgiveness is dealing with your pain and leaving the other person to God.

You are now ready to forgive the people on your list so that you can be free in Christ, those people no longer have any control over you.

Prayer

For each person on your list, pray aloud: "Lord, I forgive (name) for (specifically identify all offences and painful memories or feelings). I choose from this day forward to pray a blessing on them, in Jesus' name. Amen."

Step 4 - Rebellion Versus Submission

We live in a rebellious generation. Many believe it is their right to sit in judgment of those in authority over them. Rebelling against God and his authority gives satan an opportunity to attack. The Lord says, *"follow me. I will not lead you into temptation but I will deliver you from evil"* (**Matthew 6: 13**).



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

Prayer

"Dear Heavenly Father. You have said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and disobedience of leaders is a sin. (1 Samuel 15: 23). I know that in action and attitude I have sinned against you with a rebellious heart. I ask your forgiveness for my rebellion and pray that by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ all ground gained by evil spirits because of my rebelliousness would be cancelled. I pray that you will shed light on all my ways that I may know the full extent of my rebelliousness. I now choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant's heart. Amen".

Being under authority is an act of faith. You are trusting God to work through his established lines of authority. In difficult cases such as continuing abuse at home, further counseling help may be needed. And, in some cases when earthly authorities have abused their position and are requiring disobedience to God or a compromise in your commitment to him, you need to obey God not man.

We are all advised that we should submit to one another as equals in Christ (**Ephesians 5:21**). However, there are specific lines of authority in scripture for the purpose of accomplishing common goals.

Civil Government	Romans 13:1-7 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 1 Peter 2: 13-17
Parents	Ephesians 6:1-3
Husband & wife	Ephesians 5:21-33
Employer	1 Peter 2: 18-23
Church Leaders	Hebrews 13: 17
God	Daniel 9: 5, 9

Examine each area and ask God to forgive you for those times you have not been submissive, and pray the following prayer.

"Lord, I agree I have been rebellious towards (name). Please forgive me for this rebellion. I choose to be submissive and obedient to your word. In Jesus' name. Amen".



FINDING FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Step 5 - Pride Versus Humility

Pride is a killer. Pride says, "I can do it! I can get myself out of this mess without God or anyone else's help". But we can't. We absolutely need God, and we desperately need each other. Paul wrote "we ... worship in the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (**Philippians 3: 3**). Humility is confidence properly placed. We are to be "strong in the Lord, and in strength of his might" (**Ephesians 6: 10**). **James 4: 6-10** and **1 Peter 5: 1-10** reveal the spiritual conflict that follows pride.

Proud people want to be noticed and thanked often and are easily offended. Spiritually mature people are not easily offended and like to bring Him glory. Use the following prayer to express your commitment to live humbly before God.

*"Dear Heavenly Father. You have said that pride goes before a fall. (**Proverbs 16:18**). I confess that I have sinned against you by placing my will before yours, and I have centred my life around myself instead of you. I now renounce the self-life and by doing so cancel all the ground that has been made by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you will guide me so that I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with the humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (**Philippians 2:3**). Enable me through love to serve others and in honour prefer others (**Romans 12: 10**). I ask in the name of Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen".*

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

- Stronger desire to do my will than God's will
- More dependent upon my strengths and resources than God's
- Sometimes believe that my ideas and opinions are better than others
- More concerned about controlling others than developing self-control
- Sometimes consider myself more important than others
- Tendency to think that I have no needs
- Find it difficult to admit that I was wrong
- Tendency to be more of a people-pleaser than a God-pleaser
- Overly concerned about getting the credit I deserve
- Drive to obtain the recognition that comes from degrees, titles, positions
- Often think I am more humble than others
- Other ways that you may have thought more highly of yourself than you should

Prayer

"Lord, I agree I have been prideful in the area of _____. Please forgive me for this pridefulness. I choose to humble myself and place all my confidence in You. Amen".



Step 6 – Habitual Sin Versus Freedom

James 5:16, CEV *"If you have sinned, you should tell each other what you have done. Then you can pray for one another and be healed. The prayer of an innocent person is powerful, and it can help a lot".*

1 John 1: 9, CEV *"But if we confess our sins to God, He can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away".*

Confession is not saying, "I'm sorry", it is saying "I did it".

Pray the following prayer:

"Dear Heavenly Father. You have told us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust. I acknowledge that I have given in to the fleshly lusts that wage war against my soul. I thank you that in Christ my sins are forgiven, but I have transgressed your holy law and given the enemy an opportunity to wage war in my members. I come before your presence to acknowledge these sins and to seek your cleansing that I may be freed from the bondage of sin. I now ask you to reveal to my mind the ways that I have transgressed your moral law and grieved the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen".

Some scriptures for you to go and look up:

1 Peter 2: 11

Romans 6: 12, 13

1 Peter 5: 8

Romans 13: 1:4

James 4: 1

1 John 1: 9

Galatians 5: 19-21

"Christ gives freedom. People's desires make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds. They worship idols, practice witchcraft, hate others, and are hard to get along with. People become jealous, angry and selfish. They not only argue and cause trouble, but they are envious. They get drunk and carry out wild parties and do other evil things as well. I told you before, and I'm telling you again; no-one who does these things will share the blessing in God's kingdom".

It is our responsibility to not allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies by not using our body as an instrument of unrighteousness. If you are struggling with habitual sexual sins (pornography, masturbation, sexual promiscuity) or experiencing sexual difficulty and intimacy in your marriage, pray as follows:

"Lord, I ask you to reveal to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness. In Jesus' precious name I pray, Amen".

As the Lord brings to your mind every sexual use of your body, whether it was done to you (rape, incest or any sexual molestation) or willingly by you, renounce every occasion.

Prayer

"Lord, I renounce (name the specific use of your body) with (name the person) and ask you to break that bond".

Now commit your body to the Lord by praying:

"Lord, I renounce all these uses of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness and by doing so ask you to break all bondages Satan has brought into my life through that involvement. I confess my participation. I now present my body to you as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto you, and I reserve the sexual use of my body only for marriage. I renounce the lie of Satan that my body is not clean, that it is dirty or in any way unacceptable as a result of my past sexual experiences. Lord, I thank you that you have totally cleansed and forgiven me, that you love and accept me unconditionally. Therefore, I can accept myself. And I choose to do so, to accept my body and myself as cleansed. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Step 7 – Cutting Off Generational Sins

The last step to freedom is to renounce the sins of your ancestors and any curses that may have been placed on you. In giving the Ten Commandments God said, *"Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth. Don't bow down and worship idols. I am the Lord your God and I demand all your love. If you reject me, I will punish your families for three or four generations."* (Exodus 20:4-5 CEV).

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

In order to walk free from past influences, read the following declaration and prayer to yourself first so that you know exactly what you are declaring and asking. Then claim your position and protection in Christ by making the declaration verbally and humbling yourself before God in prayer.

Declaration

"I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ and who sits with him in heavenly places I renounce all satanic assignments that are directed toward me and my ministry, and I cancel every curse that satan and his workers have put on me. I announce to satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me (Galatians 3:13) when He died for my sins on the cross. I reject any and every way in which satan may claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased me with His own blood. I reject all other blood sacrifices whereby satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. By the authority that I have in Jesus



Christ, I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ that is in or around me to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father, and to do His will from this day forward."

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR SPECIFIC NEEDS

Substance Abuse

"Lord, I confess that I have misused substances (alcohol, tobacco, food, prescription or street drugs) for the purpose of pleasure, to escape reality, or to cope with difficult situations, resulting in the abuse of my body, the harmful programming of my mind and the quenching of the Holy Spirit. I ask your forgiveness, and I renounce any satanic connection or influence in my life through my misuse of chemicals or food. I cast my anxiety onto Christ who loves me, and I commit myself to no longer yield to substance abuse but to the Holy Spirit. I ask you, heavenly Father, to fill me with your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Ask whoever is guiding you through this course for any other special prayers for special needs, such as homosexuality, abortion, suicidal tendencies, eating disorders or cutting yourself.

After you have confessed all known sin, pray:

"I now confess these sins to you Father and claim through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ my forgiveness and cleansing. I cancel all ground that evil spirits have gained through my willful involvement in sin. I ask this in the wonderful name of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen."

Prayer

"Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You as your child, purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are the Lord of the universe and the Lord of my life. I submit my body to you as an instrument of righteousness, a living sacrifice, that I may glorify You in my body. I now ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit. I commit myself to the renewing of my mind in order to prove that Your will is good, perfect and acceptable for me. All this I do in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Once you have secured your freedom by going through these seven steps, you may find demonic influences attempting to re-enter, days and even months after this. Although you have had victory, this doesn't mean you have won the war. Freedom must be maintained. We call on Jesus, the ultimate authority, and He escorts the enemy out of our lives. Know the truth, stand firm and resist the evil one. Seek out good Christian fellowship and commit yourself to regular times of Bible study and prayer. God loves you and will never forsake you.

1. Seek legitimate Christian fellowship where you can walk in the light and speak the truth in love.
2. Study your Bible daily. Memorise key verses.
3. Take every thought captive to obedience to Christ. Assume responsibility for your thought life.
4. Don't drift away.



5. Don't expect another person to fight your battle for you. Others can help but they can't think, pray, read the Bible or choose the truth for you.
6. Commit yourself to daily prayer.



LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ON A DAILY BASIS

Read the following verses and list the things that we can do:

1 John 1: 7-9 *My dear friends, I am not writing to give you a new commandment. It is the same one that you were first given, and it is the message you heard. But it is really a new commandment, and you know its true meaning, just as Christ does. You can see the darkness fading away and the true light already shining in. If we claim to be in the light and hate someone, we are still in the dark.*

John 7: 37-39 *On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and shouted, "If you are thirsty, come to me and drink! Have faith in me, and you will have life-giving water flowing from deep inside you, just as the scriptures say". Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit, who would be given to everyone that had faith in him. The spirit hadn't yet been given to anyone, since Jesus hadn't yet been given his full glory.*

Luke 11: 13 *As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your Heavenly Father is even more ready to give the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks.*

Galatians 3: 14 *And because of what Jesus Christ has done, the blessing that was promised to Abraham was taken to the gentiles. This happened so that by faith we would be given the promised Holy Spirit.*

The Spirit filled life is an obedient and abiding life. Begin each day by asking God to cleanse your life according to **1 John 1: 19**. Present your body to the Holy Spirit according to **Romans 12: 1-2**, and ask Him to keep you filled with His power.

Time alone with God is a time of personal fellowship with the Lord

Getting to know Jesus Christ better and better should be a top priority for every Christian. When we spend time alone with Him, we get to know Him in a personal, intimate way.

Read Philippians 3: 8 How important was knowing Jesus Christ to Paul?

Time alone with God is when God can speak to you about your own life

If you are like most other people, you're on the run all day long. By the time you wade through your schedule, you hit the sack exhausted. But how often do you sit down just to take an honest look at your life? Do you take time to evaluate where you are going and who you really are? A time alone with God helps you see yourself as He sees you.

He lets you know who you are not, as a Christian. He points out the sins in your life, helps you admit them, and gives you the power to overcome them. God shows you who you are. He helps you discover the gifts he has given you and offers personal guidance so you can become the best person you can possibly be.

Read **Psalm 139: 23-24**, and let these verses become a daily prayer from you to God.

Time alone with God is a time to commit your day to the Lord

Do you ever worry about family relationships, work issues, your busy schedule? A time alone with God provides the opportunity to give all your worries to Him and trust Him to take care of you. You aren't big enough to handle problem. God is!

Luke 9: 23 *"Then Jesus said to all the people, if any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross each day and follow me."*

How often should you commit your life, with all its worries and problems to the Lord?

Proverbs 3: 5-6 *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and he will make your paths straight."*

WHY HAVE TIME ALONE WITH GOD?

God desires your fellowship

You may not think you are important, but God receives pleasure from being with you! Maybe you are feeling that reading the Bible and praying are things you have to do, the 'duties' of a 'good Christian'. No way! Prayer and Bible study are the communication channels between you and God.

Jesus deserves your attention

As you fellowship with Jesus Christ, you soon realise that He had to pay an awesome price to make your relationship with God possible. Jesus was nailed to a splintered Roman cross. He shed His blood. He sacrificed His life. Why? Because there was no other way to bring you and God together, and Jesus loved you enough to pay that price.

Jesus deserves your attention

He is more than worthy of your praise, your love, adoration, and your life. Spending time alone with God allows you to take your eyes off yourself, and focus them on Jesus.

Read **1 Corinthians 6: 20**. What should you do in response to Christ's sacrifice for you?

The Holy Spirit keeps your relationship with Jesus growing

Just because you have become a Christian you are still living in a fallen world and things are not always going to go along sweetly. Many people begin their Christian lives on cloud 9, only to hit the ground with a thud the first time something goes wrong. One main reason for their fall is the failure to develop a daily relationship with Jesus Christ.

Mark 1: 35 *“very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray”.*

Even Jesus, during his time on earth, actively sought fellowship with His father. Because Jesus spent time alone with God regularly, He had the strength to do His father’s will, even when He didn’t feel like it physically or emotionally.

(See **Luke 4: 1-14**). If time alone with God was so desperately needed by Jesus, it should also be essential to you.

LEARNING HOW TO SPEND TIME ALONE WITH GOD

Choose a time

It is important to make a date with the Lord every day. Jesus often met with the Father in the morning (**Mark 1:35**), and his is a good example to follow.

Choose a place

It is usually much easier to communicate to God if you can be alone with Him in a place where you won’t be distracted. Think of a good place for you to meet with the Lord.

Choose to prepare

As you being your time alone with God, your mental attitude is very important.

Jeremiah 29: 13 *You will seek me, and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

PRAYER

Developing a close relationship with God involves many of the same things – spending time together sharing experiences, thoughts, feelings, fears and joys. That’s why prayer is so important. It gives you an opportunity to talk with God, to get to know Him better, and to develop the ability to share everything with Him. Relationships don’t develop through silence. To know God, to become His friend, and for Him to become yours, means communicating with each other.

God has got a hotline!

Dial **Jeremiah 33:3** in your Bible: *“call to me and I will answer you, and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know”.*

In the spiritual realm, prayer is the switch that allows the power of the Holy Spirit to illuminate our lives. Read **Romans 8: 26-29**. What aspects of prayer can you gather from this passage?



THE VALUE OF PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

Think back to a time when you received a letter from a close friend or a special someone. How did you feel when you received the envelope? How long did you wait to read the letter inside? It's puzzling then, to consider that many Christians are interested in knowing what God is saying to them yet neglect to read the letters and messages God has prepared for them. The Bible is God's love letter to all those who trust in Christ. It makes sense then, that we should learn all we can about God's Word, for it is His primary means of speaking to us.

Psalm 119: 105 *"Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path."*

Keeping a record

Here is a way of keeping order in your daily quiet time. You can either photocopy it or write it in a diary.

MY RESPONSE TO MY DAILY BIBLE READING

Date: _____

Bible Passage: _____

Best verse, or verses: _____

What could God be saying to me? _____

My Prayer Response

Evaluation of how I lived yesterday _____

Adoration (something to praise God) _____

Confession (anything from yesterday that needs to be put right) _____

Thanksgiving (answer to prayers) _____

Supplication (concerns I am praying for) _____

Listening (what is God saying to me) _____



UNDERSTANDING THE BODY LIFE

1 John 1: 7 *But if we walk in the Light as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another.*

At the very moment that you became a Christian, you were adopted into the family of God. Now you have all of God’s children as your family too. God loves you with the special love He has for those who love His Son. This family is to praise God together and to help one another; but this is impractical except on a local basis. You can love millions of people in God’s family in only a very general way, yet you can help and be helped by your brothers and sisters in a local church. This is why God has instructed us to join together in local fellowships.

Read **Hebrews 10: 25**. It is dangerous to neglect meeting together because it means you are surrounded by people whose goals are the things of this life. Their goals are here on this earth, while yours are now in heaven. If you spend time only with people who are going through their own way and trying to figure out their own plan and direction for life, you will find it difficult to stand against the tide. Your enthusiasm for Christ can soon become diluted or even obliterated.

The early Christians offer us a model to follow. **Acts 2: 42** – they spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like a family to each other.

List four things that should be part of the corporate life of any local church:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4, _____

Paul writes about the church as though it was a living organism. He calls it ‘a body’.

Whose body are we members of? _____

How have you been positioned in the body? _____

Read **Ephesians 4: 11-16**. What causes growth in the body? _____



GROWING WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

Christianity is a faith that can only be lived out in relationship to other Christians. Around 50 times in the New Testament we are told how to live out our faith in relation to one-another. We are “better” together. There is no New Testament example of a Christian who does not meet with and serve other local Christians! God wants us to live and grow together. We must, of course, come together to worship God and listen to the proclamation of scripture but the corporate worship of the whole fellowship does not lend itself to the development of depth-relationships which are really the substance of Christianity. Relationship with God first, and then our fellow men.

Luke 10: 27 *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself.”*

Jesus gave us two commandments only. What are these two commandments?

1. _____

2. _____

It is difficult to fully obey these commandments across the pews on a Sunday, there are just too many people. A small group however, meeting in a home, allows us to develop depth-relationships. People today live in an impersonal world, alienated from even each others neighbours. Many times, we are just a number, e.g. credit cards etc.

Read **Ephesians 4:3**

Notice that many Christians have been given the gift of unity by the Spirit, which we only have to maintain, we don't have to create it. Within the home “Care” group (or ‘accountability group’) we can begin to see the whole body functioning with each member realising he/she has a part to play and a responsibility to use his/her gift to build up others.

Read **Ephesians 5: 21**

From this we understand that no-one can do his own thing, but needs to be subject to others. We need to have a new honesty in our lives and be prepared even to cry before each other in real brokenness.

That was the Good News – now for the ‘Bad News’....

Many times people will hurt us and in each case we may be completely in the right, but God declares unforgiveness is a sin, and it will eventually damage us, not the person who hurt us. It will develop into bitterness that slowly taints our whole personality, like a cancer in the body.

Read **Matthew 18: 21-35**, and

Hebrews 12: 15

Q. What should we do if someone is sinning or sins against us. _____
_____.

Q. Can we tell someone else before we speak to the person? _____.



Ephesians 4: 31-32 says, *“stop being bitter, angry and mad at each other. Don’t yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.”*

How must we forgive?

Mark 11:25 *“whenever you stand up to pray, you must forgive what others have done to you. Then your father in heaven will forgive your sins.”*

When we pray what should our attitude be to others?

Matthew 6: 14-15 *“if you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your father in heaven will forgive you. But if you don’t forgive others, your father won’t forgive your sins.”*

If we don’t forgive, what is the consequence?

Church Membership is essentially a commitment of a Christian to other local Christians to live the Christian life ‘together’ and to reach out to others ‘together’. If you have been baptized by immersion please grab the pamphlet “How to Join this Team” from the Church foyer.

10 Little Christians

10 little Christians came to church all the time;
one fell out with the preacher, then there were nine.
9 little Christians stayed up late;
one overslept on Sunday, then there were eight.
8 little Christians on their way to heaven;
one took the low road, then there were seven.
7 little Christians, chirping like chicks;
one didn’t like the singing, then there were six.
6 little Christians seemed very much alive;
one took a vacation, then there were five.
5 little Christians pulling for heaven’s shore;
one stopped to rest a while and then there were four.
4 little Christians each as busy as a bee;
one got his feelings hurt, then there were three.
3 little Christians couldn’t decide what to do;
one couldn’t have his way, then there were two.
2 little Christians each won one more
now don’t you see, two and two make four.
4 little Christians worked early and late,
each one brought one, now there were eight.
8 little Christians, if they double as before...
in just seven Sunday’s we’d have one thousand and twenty-four.
In this little jingle there is a lesson true –
You belong either to the building or to the wrecking crew!

Author unknown. Taken from Neil Anderson’s book “Who I am in Christ”.



DISCOVER YOUR PLACE IN HIS BODY

To help you discover where God has placed you in His body and what He wants you to do here are some helpful questions. Fill this in, photocopy it and place a copy of it in a Pastor's pigeon hole.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____ **Work/Mobile** _____

1. Who do you go to for Godly counsel?
2. Please look at the following spiritual gifts. Tick each one that you are sure you function in. Put a ? mark beside any you may have but are unsure. In Mark 16 Jesus said all believers can pray for the sick, cast our demons and speak in tongues etc. However which of the gifts do you move comfortably in? Remember, no believer has all the gifts and everyone has at least one.

- Administration:** The ability to organize people, tasks or events to accomplish ministry effectively and efficiently.
- Craftsmanship:** Ability to design or construct items for ministry.
- Discernment:** Ability to distinguish between truth and error, various motives, or the presence of evil.
- Encouragement:** Ability to present truth so as to strengthen and comfort those who are wavering.
- Faith:** Ability to act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief.
- Giving:** Ability to contribute resources with great cheerfulness and liberality.
- Healing:** Ability to be God's means for moving people toward wholeness.
- Helps (serving):** Ability to joyfully accomplish practical tasks that serve others and support ministry
- Hospitality:** Ability to joyfully create an environment that welcomes others and puts them at ease.
- Intercession:** Ability to consistently and passionately pray on behalf of others.
- Interpretation:** Ability to make known the message given by a person speaking in tongues.
- Knowledge:** Ability to bring crucial truth to the body of Christ through Biblical insight and understanding.
- Leadership:** Ability to cast vision, motivate and direct people to collectively accomplish the purposes of God.
- Mercy:** Ability to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering.
- Miracles:** Ability to authenticate ministry through supernatural actions that glorify Christ.

- __ Prophecy:** Ability to relevantly proclaim truth in a way that exposes sin and prompts conviction and repentance.
- __ Tongues:** Ability to speak or pray in an unknown language.
- __ Wisdom:** Ability to apply spiritual insight to specific issues, often in the midst of conflict or confusion.

Motivational Gifts

- __ Apostleship:** Ability to start and oversee new churches or ministries.
- __ Evangelism:** Ability to effectively communicate the gospel in a compelling way.
- __ Prophet:** People who constantly call the church to righteousness. They have a clear insight into the health of the church and what lies ahead for the church and often for an area or nation.
- __ Shepherding (pastoral):** Ability to nurture and guide people toward spiritual maturity.
- __ Teaching:** Ability to clearly explain God’s truth and inspire growth in Christ-followers.

3. As you have been serving in the body of Christ, have you ever felt that you were doing exactly what God designed you to do? If so, describe the experience.

4. If you could do anything for God (there was no obstacle of time, finance, etc.) what would you do? What is your dream?

5. Is there a people group (or age group) whose well being you find yourself particularly passionate about?

6. It has been said that it is easy to steer a moving car. You can learn what you are going to be best at by giving things a go. Is there an area of ministry in the church that you would like to be trained in?

Note from the Pastor

Friend, thank you for taking the time to go over these questions. You are important to me and this will help me understand you. I want to help you minister where God has called you to minister. Not a place of difficulty and burden, but a place of fruitfulness and fulfillment.



STEWARDSHIP (i.e. Handling finance in a Godly way)

A wise man once said that giving is not God's way of raising finance its God's way of raising children!

Pastor Bill Hybells' once said "If God has got your wallet, he's got your heart."
What do you think he meant? _____

What do these scriptures teach us about finance?

Romans 12:13 _____

Philippians 4:11-13 _____

Philippians 4:6 _____

While most Christians believe that a manageable debt on an appreciating asset is OK debt usually referred to in the Bible as a form of slavery i.e. a person who is in debt is a slave to the lender and you and I know what that feels like.

On page 7b are some steps for getting out of debt which we trust will help. However debt is often associated with an ungrateful heart and a lack of contentment (greed).

When we give to God through the local church we are in fact giving away our greed, our selfishness and trusting God to provide for our needs. Giving is God's way of training our hearts.

Re-write **Luke 12:34** in your own words.

Possibly the verse that best summarises how we are to give in the New Testament is **2 Corinthians 9:6-8**

With what attitudes should we give? _____

What are the two results of those that give generously to the Lord?

- a) _____
- b) _____



As an indicator of how much to give most Jews and Christians historically have given 10% of their net income to the local church. This is not a legal requirement in the New Testament but a principle that God obviously established and honours.

How did God feel when people in the Old Testament didn't give 10% of their finance, grain, fruit, time etc?

Malachi 3:8 _____

Jesus was often cross at the Pharisees (religious leaders of His time) who did the right thing but lacked compassion/ love. In His response to them in **Matthew 23:23** was it His expectation that people should tithe? _____.

We believe that giving is important because Pastor Hybells' was right, that if the Lord has your wallet He has your heart. In fact we love to give and give in committed disciplined way. Most of our family are increasingly giving through automatic payments, some give through the envelope system and some give into the offering bag on Sundays. A form describing how we can give to the Lord can be found in the church foyer entitled 'Honouring God with our Resources'. If you give by AP or through the envelope system you will get a tax receipt in April/ May and can claim up to 1/3 of what you gave back as a rebate.

Information on how in the kingdom this money is used is readily available from our church treasurer.

What kind of people will not lack any good thing? **Psalm 34:10**

STEPS FOR GETTING OUT OF DEBT

“If you are going to get an elephant, do it one bite at a time.”

1. Face your areas of poverty thinking and replace them with reality insights. **Truths.**
2. Set realistic goals to save for.
3. Do a Budget Plan. www.sorted.org.nz
4. Set up two accounts: one for living on
 one for all your bills to be paid out of (as many by AP
 as possible)
5. Approach the people you owe money to and tell them how you are going to pay them. You are in control.
6. Pay off small debts first, while drip-feeding the big ones. This gives a feeling of achievement. You are winning.
7. Restructure debts under one loan or mortgage, in order to pay off various debtors and work with one finance institution.
8. Down-grade your car or home if you simply cannot afford the repayments. Better to live in a simple home without stress, than a castle with anxiety.
9. Cut up the plastic cards.
10. Make positive moves to increase your earning capacity. You may need to get more training, look for a promotion or become self-employed.
11. Find someone who is good with money, e.g. an Uncle or family friend who can advise you on financial decisions.
12. Face up to the task of grieving for the lost hope or desires. Let go the fantasy dreams and get real about what you can expect. Make a commitment to reality.

Poverty Thinking vs. Reality Thinking

“I need this car/clothes to impress others.”

Don't place your value in someone else's hands.

“it's half price this week. Such a good deal.” E.g. \$50.

If that \$50 is not in your budget, it represents a \$50 lost not saved.



But I can have it now if I want it. It's too hard for me to say 'no' to myself."

Patience is something good we all need to learn. If you buy now on credit your 'treat' will become a real burden later (you will be throwing money away on interest. It's worth short-term pain to get long-term gain.

"If I don't buy it for him or her, if I don't feed these visitors (even though I can't afford it) I am scared that they will think I don't love them."

If you are spending money (that you haven't got) on friends and family, paying their bills you are in fact denying them the chance to grow up, to learn about real life. They will become poverty thinkers too.

"I need to get this on credit so that my kids don't miss out."

Money borrowed now means that later the finance company or the bank will get money that could have gone to your children.

Tips to Save You Money

1. If you must have a mortgage take it over 15 years, pay fortnightly, opt for floating interest rate and lump sum payments.
2. Don't buy a new car. They lose half their value in the first four years. Also don't buy a car on hire purchase. Pay Cash.
3. Power savings. If your cylinder is warm get it insulated. Don't use dehumidifiers. Fix drippings hot taps immediately. Turn off what you aren't using.
4. Christmas shopping savings
 - Never touch Crisco's, use New World's plan or other supermarkets.
 - Presents don't have to cost more than \$10.
5. When you buy your groceries keep to a list of needs and to a budgeted figure. Also don't shop when you're hungry.
6. If you smoke or drink excessively get counselling.
7. If you are on a benefit check that you are getting what you are entitled to. (www.winz.govt.nz/manuals and procedures).

MY WORK IS MY MINISTRY

When is a Church not a church?
 When is a minister not a minister?
 When is the Spirit not the Spirit?
 When is a Christian not a Christian?

God wants to be a part of your life 24x7 and what you spend most of your week doing as your 'work' is very important to Him! While our culture would describe work as the service or skill you sell to earn money, God sees things differently. A Biblical definition of work would also include your voluntary service, your parenting of your children and your study. All 'work' is important to God.

What contemporary job titles would you give to God in these situations?

1. In **Genesis 1 and Rev 22** God is seen doing complex planning.
 This is like being a _____.
2. In **Genesis 1** God is described as a maker five times.
 This is like being a _____.
3. Throughout scripture God is seen teaching and training humanity.
 This is like being a _____.

Work is part of God's original plan for people

Look at **Psalm 144:1**. Though King David had a terrible job (fighting wars) where did he say he got his ability from? _____

Your work matters to God

It is much more than a way to earn money to pay bills or to support mission. It's a way of expressing worship to your creator.

Colossians 3:23-24 CEV *"Do your work willingly, as though you were serving the Lord himself, and not just your earthly master. In fact, the Lord Christ is the one you are really serving, and you know He will reward you."*

What would it look like to have this attitude at work?

What would be done differently?



What impact would that have on others?

Your workplace is the place where you can grow spiritually and be involved in ministry and evangelism.

What would happen if every day as you went to work you asked for God's anointing on you?

How many people are you in regular contact with through your 'work'?

These are people God wants you to minister to and to witness to!

Remember your faith not your 'work' (what you do) defines who you are.

A man standing on a train platform was once asked "Who are you?" He replied "I am a Christian, thinly disguised as an accountant."

Don't let work become your idol, but do remember that God has given you particular skills to do work. Enjoy using the skills He has given you, work as unto the Lord Himself, bring His ethics, His healing, His presence into the workplace and you will find that your work (where/how you spend most of your week) will also become an exciting place of ministry!!!

SHARING YOUR FAITH WITH OTHERS

You will never see someone that God does not love, that Christ has not died for. The two great motivations for sharing your faith are a love for God and a genuine love for people. You will feel nervous at first but if you step out in faith you will experience the faithfulness of God and have fun. The **goal of sharing your faith** is never to get a decision for Jesus but a **relative for heaven** long-term. The goal is to make **Disciples** (followers of Christ).

If you try to follow some program or format in sharing your faith chances are you will see little results (people want to know you are real and you genuinely care).

Sharing your faith has to be in a way that is natural for you but it must be verbalised.

Romans 10:17 says that *“No one can have faith without hearing the message about Christ.”*

Read **Luke 8:4-15** The parable of the farmer (us) scattering seeds (God’s message) around the world. It is important to mention appropriately something about God or the church etc at the beginning of any relationship/ encounter. God will give you the words. This is scattering seed. When you see someone show real interest, come back at you with honest questions they may well be good soil and you need to support/ work with what you see God doing in that person. Make time for them. We are not called to work for God but to be available to let Him work through us. We are invited to be co-laborers with Him (Wow). The longer you leave Jesus out of your conversations with people usually that will result in it being harder to speak about Jesus to them later.

The Holy Spirit is always drawing people to Jesus but some will respond and some won’t.

Read **John 3:18-21**. Jesus said there was one major reason why people don’t respond to the good news of salvation. What was it?

Only God knows the heart of a person and how a person will respond so what are we responsible for doing? **Matthew 28:19-20**

Please note that the phrase “Go to the people of all nations” is most clearly understood “as you are going about your business in the world” i.e. as you are going to Pak n Save, as you are going to school, or work.....

The Bible says that we need to always be ready to give an account for our faith. That is to have our testimonies prepared. I.e. in three minutes:

- what was life like before Jesus?
- how did we come to faith?
- what did we do once we believed i.e. (**Acts 2:38**) to become Christians?
- what is life like now with Christ as our leader?

Be INTENTIONAL

Be YOURSELF

BE RELATIONAL.

For a good presentation of the gospel go on line to www.livingwaters.com and view the video clip entitled “The Way of the Master” It’s vital when you present the gospel that you use the Old Testament to convince people they are sinners in need of a saviour before you



tell them God loves them and that Christ died for them. You don't have to share your faith like Ray Comfort does but you need to know these principles in presenting the good news effectively.

There are a huge variety of different ways you can share your faith with others however we want to encourage you to do this along the lines of genuine long-term friendships and according to your own personality and style.

Here are some examples of how people shared their faith in the Bible. Look at each one and decide if this style is one that you could use fairly naturally.

Confrontational style eg Peter in **Acts 2** tells all his listeners what terrible sinners they are to their faces. People with this style of evangelism are very bold, assertive and direct. They don't spend time on small talk.

When Peter preached like this 3,000 people were baptised that day into the kingdom of God. A few have this style of evangelism. What about you?

Intellectual style like Paul in **Acts 17** where he met a group of philosophers in Athens and logically and intelligently and persuasively pointed out to them who Jesus really is. He said "you guys have built a statue to an unknown god, I know who He is, His name is Jesus and this is how you can get to know Him.

People with this style of evangelism are very logical, analytical and often inquisitive. When discussing faith with others they will often ask searching questions.

Some have this style of evangelism. What about you?

Testimonial style In **John 9** we read the account of a blind man who is given sight by Jesus, and he runs around the city telling people about Jesus. When he is confronted by the religious leaders who try to question him about Jesus and Jesus's theology he just says "All I know is I used to be blind and now I can see."

Everyone of us has a stories to tell of our conversion and daily lives with God but some of us find it a lot easier than others.

These people are often good listeners, good story tellers and pretty good communicators. They can relate their life experiences to others in a way that is helpful to them.

Some have this style of evangelism. What about you?

Interpersonal style In **Luke 5** we read the story of Matthew the IRD guy. He's just become a believer in who Jesus is and the first thing that he does is throw a special party. He invites mates to mix with Jesus and he knows that as they rub shoulders and mix, trust and faith will grow in his friends. These people have the capacity to form many friendships and hold them. Some have this style of evangelism. What about you?

Invitational style In **John 4** we read of a woman at a well in Samaria. Jesus had just spoken some things to her that God had told him. When she begins to get who Jesus is she runs back to her village and invites everyone to come and see this man who gets divine revelations from heaven. People with this style of evangelism like to invite others to go with them to a church meeting, social event, course etc. A survey showed that 1 in 4 people would come to church if they were invited personally by a believing friend. Some have this style of evangelism. What about you?

Serving style While no one will be won into the kingdom without words, many people feel motivated and gifted to serve and speak at the same time. Dorcas in **Acts 9** was a lady who loved to make clothes for the poor and loved to help the poor any way she could. Mother Theresa was like her. People who have this style of evangelism like to serve others in a way that draws attention to Jesus. Some have this style of evangelism. What about you?

Which is your most natural style of evangelism? _____

What I would call **prophetic evangelism** can be done by all of us and is a real adventure. That is you learn to listen to God's voice and go to who He directs and say the things He tells you to say.

What did Jesus tell His disciples that they were to do for Him? **Acts 1:8**

When Peter and John were commanded not to speak about Jesus, what two answers did they give?

1. **Acts 4:20** _____
2. **Acts 5:29** _____

After the disciples had prayed and been filled with the Holy Spirit, what did they all do? **Acts 4:31**

Know this for sure, that God wants to use YOU to speak the good news about Jesus to others. You don't have to do this the way anyone else does.

But please witness to your *friends* and *family* then help them become a part of a care group and to complete this foundations course.

God's number one strategy to bringing people into His family is the local church, which is YOU and ME. Begin the adventure.

