

Ranui Baptist Church

“Where People Matter”



Foundations for New Christians

January 2016

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

Enjoy!!!

Introduction

It is our sincerest hope that you will become an established follower of the Lord Jesus as you work through these studies. I recommend that at the end of this course you read “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren (a daily bible study over 40 days) and then “The Relationship Principles of Jesus” – by Tom Holladay.

This course is designed to bring you into a close, purposeful relationship with God quickly, once you have established that Jesus is The Way, The Truth and The Life.

If you haven't reached that point yet can I humbly recommend that you view first:

1. The video on our home page www.ranuibaptist.org.nz. “How to connect to God.” This will give you a practical overview of what the Bible says in 20 minutes.
2. Go to Alpha.org (or our home page)
Click on “Go International” and view Alpha live talks:
 - session 1 “Who is Jesus”
 - session 2 “Why did Jesus die?”

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However, as Ranui Baptist Church is a fellowship of limited means in a very needy community we ask that you retain this introduction page in any copy you make and consider making a donation to Ranui Baptist Church, ASB account 12-3085- 0164947-00.

May you hear His voice, know His freedom, discover His purposes for you and enjoy His company as you work through these studies. You matter to God and to His church. You were meant for this.

Yours faithfully

Pastor Russell Watts

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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.”*

➤ **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?

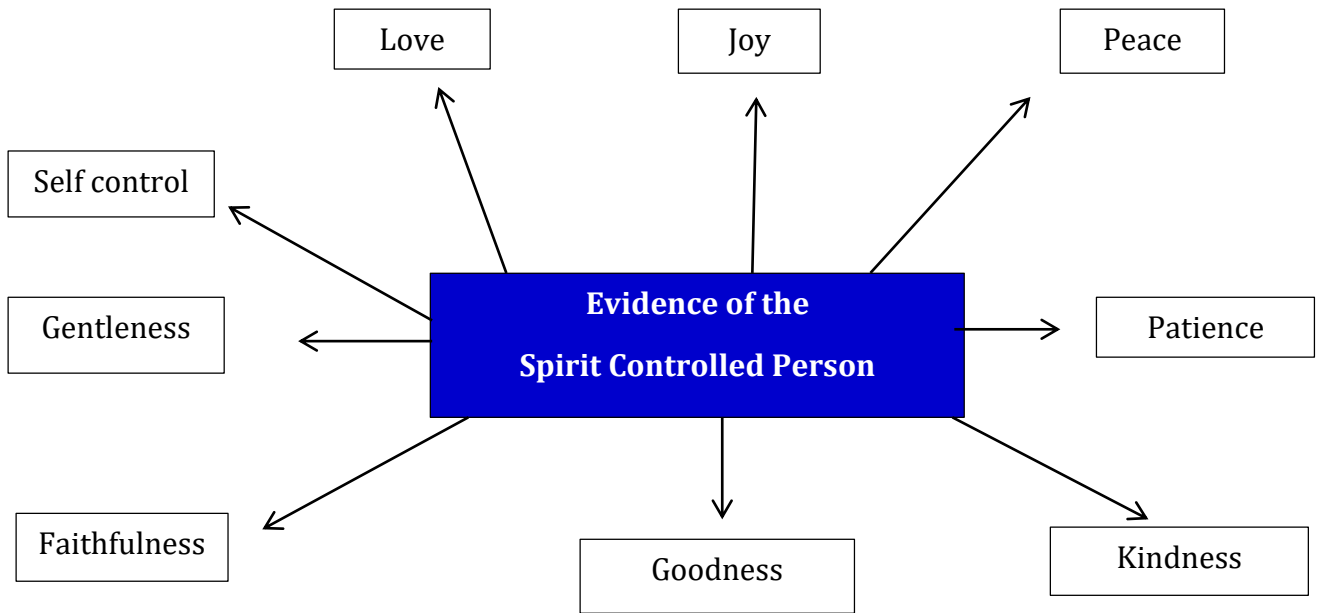
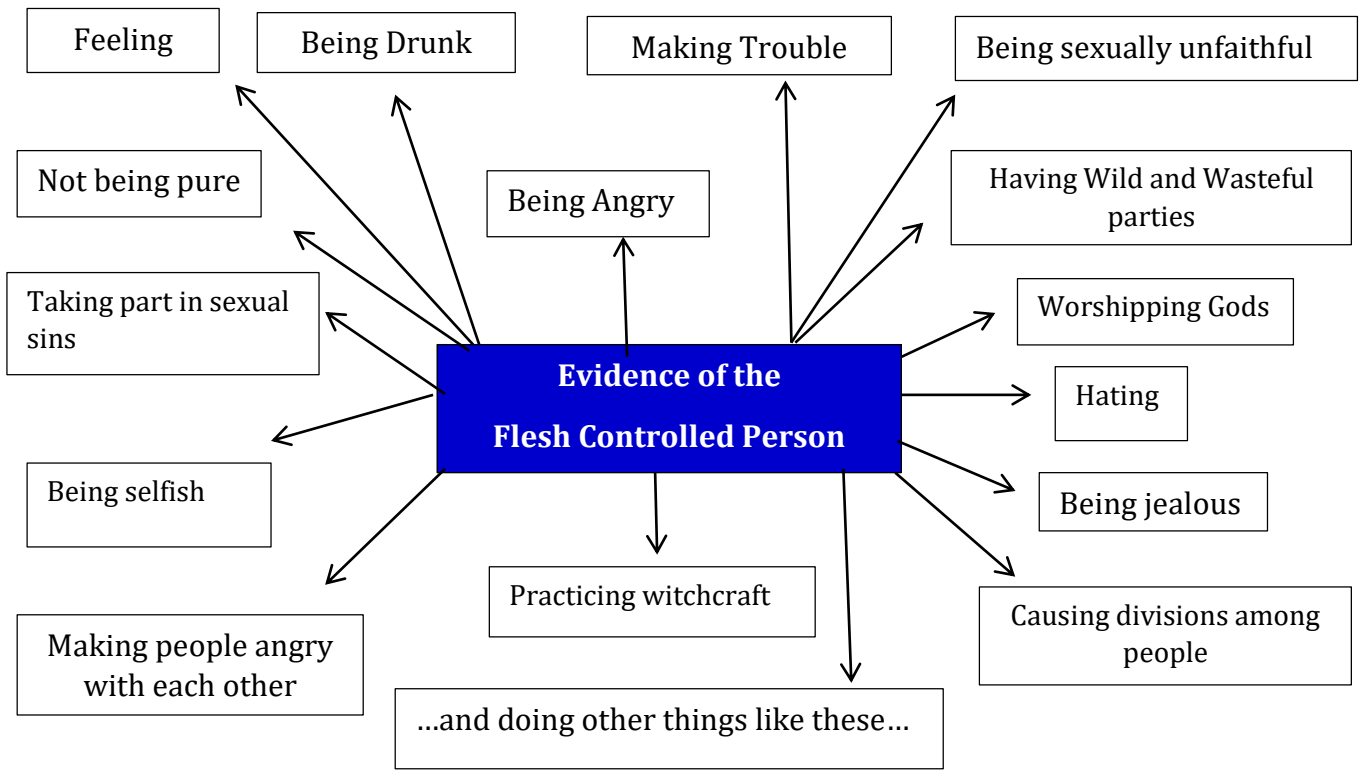
We need to consider what the term ‘being filled with the Spirit’ means. In the Greek version it is written in the ‘present continuous’ tense – i.e. it is meant to be a continuous, ongoing experience. **Ephesians 5:18** uses the illustration of drunkenness. A drunkard is controlled by alcohol, and a Christian 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?



As you ask God to fill you and as people pray for you.

Most commonly you will feel a word or two forming in your mouth (a new prayer language). Make the decision to speak it out by faith and then see what follows. Jesus said **(Mark 16:16)** that all Christians would be able to pray in a new prayer language (praying in God's will for you and your family etc. – God will be helping you pray with His wisdom and insight). This gift opens the door to trusting God to use other gifts as well. Your prayer language can be used any time (usually in a private prayer) and praying in your prayer language will tune you into His presence. This gift is not to be used in a corporate setting. There is another gift of tongues that is used 'in church' and will always be interpreted **(1 Corinthians 14)**.

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 its 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. This 'new life' you now have needs to reproduce, and you'll do that as you tell others about Jesus and how they can have new life in Him.

We'll also talk about the opposition you will face 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.

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF THE GOD-HEAD TRINITY

There are many mysteries in life and understanding the nature of God is one of them. God is so much bigger and more amazing than any of us. He can speak to billions at once and be in many places at once. The biggest mistake that people make when they think of God is that He has to be a bigger version of us. From Genesis to Revelation God is described as One God in Three Persons. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. 'Trinity' is a word that is not found in the Bible but is mankind's best attempt to describe this amazing one God in three person mystery. The closest analogy to that might be water. Water has the same chemical composition H₂O but can be experienced as steam, ice or liquid.

Look up **Genesis 1:26**. Notice the words 'us' and 'we'. These words in the ancient Hebrew are not singular, dual but plural. That is God refers to Himself as 'we' and 'us'.

God is always described in the Bible as One.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says _____

The Father is God 1 Corinthians 8:6 _____

The Son is God John 1:1-5, 14 _____

N.B. One name for Jesus is 'the word'. See also John 10:30-33, John 20:28 etc.

The Holy Spirit is God Acts 5:3-4 _____

More than 60 Bible passages mention the three Persons together, here are two:

Matthew 28:19 *Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

Ephesians 4:4-6 *All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people. We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but He works by using all of us, and He lives in all of us.*

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

God can speak to anyone, of any religion in any situation, any time. King Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer and yet God gave him an elaborate dream. In Numbers 22 God spoke through a donkey. There are people all over the world that can verify that even before they believed in the God of the bible; they had dreams and visions from God or they felt drawn by the Holy Spirit. They had experiences where they were sure that the One true God of the bible was speaking to them.

Jesus said;

John 10:27 CEV *My sheep know my voice, and I know them. They follow me,*

And so we who believe in the Lord have an EXPECTATION that we will hear from God frequently. He is our Shepherd and we are His sheep!

Here are some other verses that promise that we will hear His voice;

Proverbs 3:6 NKJV *In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

John 16:13 CEV *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.*

So even though we know that God can speak to and through anyone, we have an expectation, a hunger, a desire to be hearing his voice all the time. And it's right that we do. I want to give you a very brief overview of how God speaks in the bible then bullet point for you some of the things you can do to help you hear Gods voice on a daily basis.

In the Old Testament God spoke in a number of ways. He spoke face to face to Adam, to Cain, to Noah, Abraham and to Moses. He spoke audibly out of cloud, out of a burning bush, out of a donkey to Balaam, to Elijah in a whisper, to Samuel during the night. God spoke by dreams to Jacob, Abimelech, and Joseph and to many of the prophets. He also spoke through visions to the prophets, to Uzziah the king, to Ezekiel, Samuel and Daniel. Over 100 times in the Old Testament God spoke through angels for example; Hagar, Abraham, Moses, Lot and Zachariah.

God wrote the Ten Commandments on stone tablets and a message to Nebuchadnezzar on a wall. Sometimes He spoke through signs as he did to Gideon through the fleeces and the dream of the enemy soldier.

In the New Testament God uses similar methods to communicate. He spoke through dreams to Mary and Joseph, through a vision to Paul on the road to Damascus and to Peter on the roof. He spoke out loud on the mount of transfiguration, at Jesus' baptism and to Paul. God used angels to speak to Zachariah, to Mary and Philip. The Holy Spirit spoke to the whole church to set apart Paul and Barnabas as missionaries and also told them not to go into Asia on their missionary journeys.

1 Corinthians 12 and 14 tell us that God will give us prophetic words (that comfort, encourage and build us up), words of knowledge (specific supernatural revelations) and words of wisdom (revelations for specific situations).

If you want to hear the voice of God and begin to recognise it, here are some practical suggestions.

1. Fill you mind with the Bible. Not only does this ensure that you can ‘test’ revelations to see if they are from God but reading the bible gets you used to the way God thinks. It sensitizes your spirit to receive revelation from God. People who hear revelations from God easily are always people who spend time reading the Bible.

2. Pray in the Spirit. Praying in your prayer language makes you more spiritually tuned in to the voice of God. Your spirit and Gods Holy Spirit begin to communicate better and as a result your mind is much more open to receiving revelations from God.

3. Learn to ask God the right questions and be willing to obey Him when He answers. Allow Him to quieten your mind. Have a patient and submissive attitude to whatever He is going to tell you.

Ask Him

- Is there any one He wants you to pray for?

- Are there any issues in your life that are concerning Him right now?

- Is there anyone He wants you to speak to?

4. Let God talk to you however He wants to. God has a myriad of ways in which He talks to people. Don’t just think that God isn’t speaking if you don’t hear an audible voice or see a vision.

Sometimes you may ask “God what do you want me to do?” and you have a peace about this option but not about that. It can be that simple.

5. Get your own leading first. God will use other people to confirm what He is saying to you (and it is wise to seek that confirmation on the big decisions of life). But you need that personal revelations directly first. When you personally hear from God a vision and the energy to pursue His leading usually come with it. You alone are accountable to God for the life you lead. He wants to talk to you. Don't ask others what God is saying to them about your situation until you have a revelation yourself first. Often there is a right time to share what God has said to you with others and it is important that you ask Him when it is OK to do so. For those who are just learning to hear God's voice, I suggest that they submit their big revelations to a mature Christian to be checked before they voice these with others.

6. Recognise that God is speaking to you. Don't ever say I cannot hear God's voice. That is to call God a liar because He said my sheep hear my voice and they follow me. Learn to recognise His voice.

7. Surround yourself with people who are experienced at hearing God's voice. I have found that when other people are hearing God's voice through prophecy, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, interpretation of tongues etc it creates a faith atmosphere where it is easier for you to move in those gifts as well. You will move in those gifts more freely. Also other people around you will get the same revelations as you and that will build your confidence that you are hearing God's voice. Prophetic conferences, workshops and prayer meetings are great environments for practicing hearing the voice of God.

The four C'S TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN YOU RECEIVE REVELATIONS;

- A) Challenge.** Very often when God speaks to you it will come with a challenge. He will encourage you to rely on Him in the situation you are facing. He will encourage you to trust him as you step out in faith. He will promise to be with you and to resource you as you go on some faith adventure.
- B) Comfort.** If you are getting a word from God it will always lead you closer to Him, towards greater freedom and intimacy with God.
- C) Conviction.** Often the Holy Spirit will point out an area in your life that He wants you to address. With conviction of sin always comes the promise of forgiveness and the assurance that God is going to help you deal with the problem.
- D) Condemnation.** Is always from Satan. If you get a thought that suggests that you are a right off, unforgiveable, condemned, a hopeless case, you have not heard from God but from the enemy. If that happens quickly resist the thought and replace it with Gods truth's from the bible.

FINDING FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Introduction

We recommend you do this section, 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.

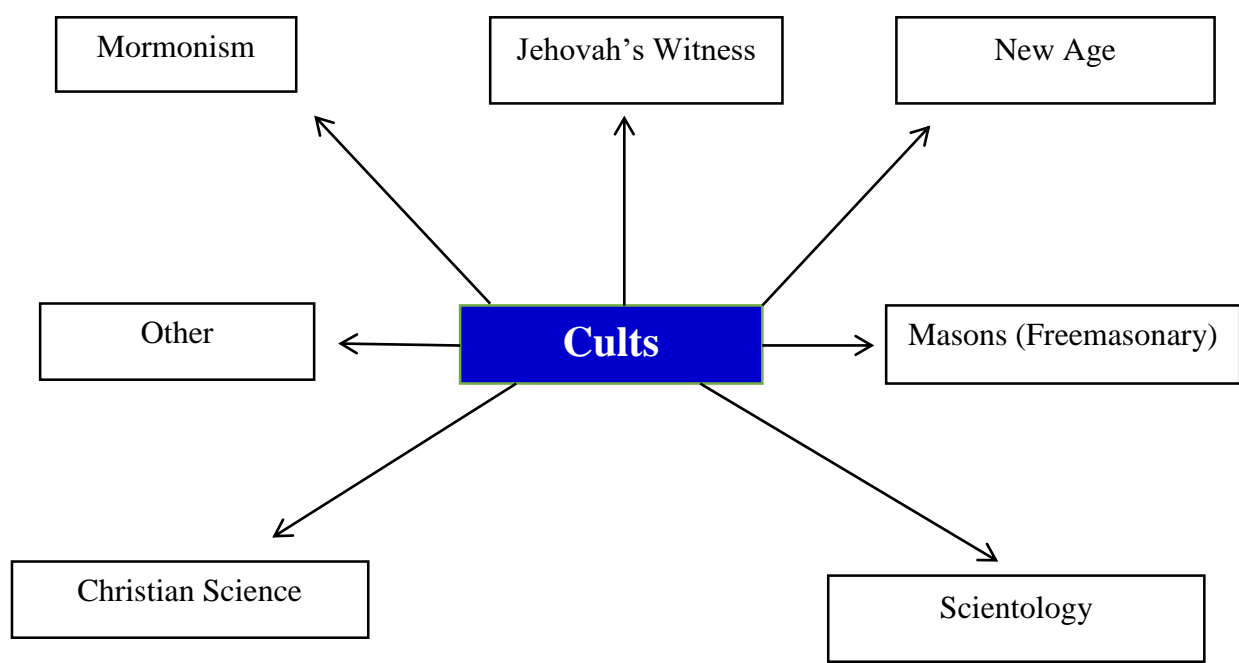
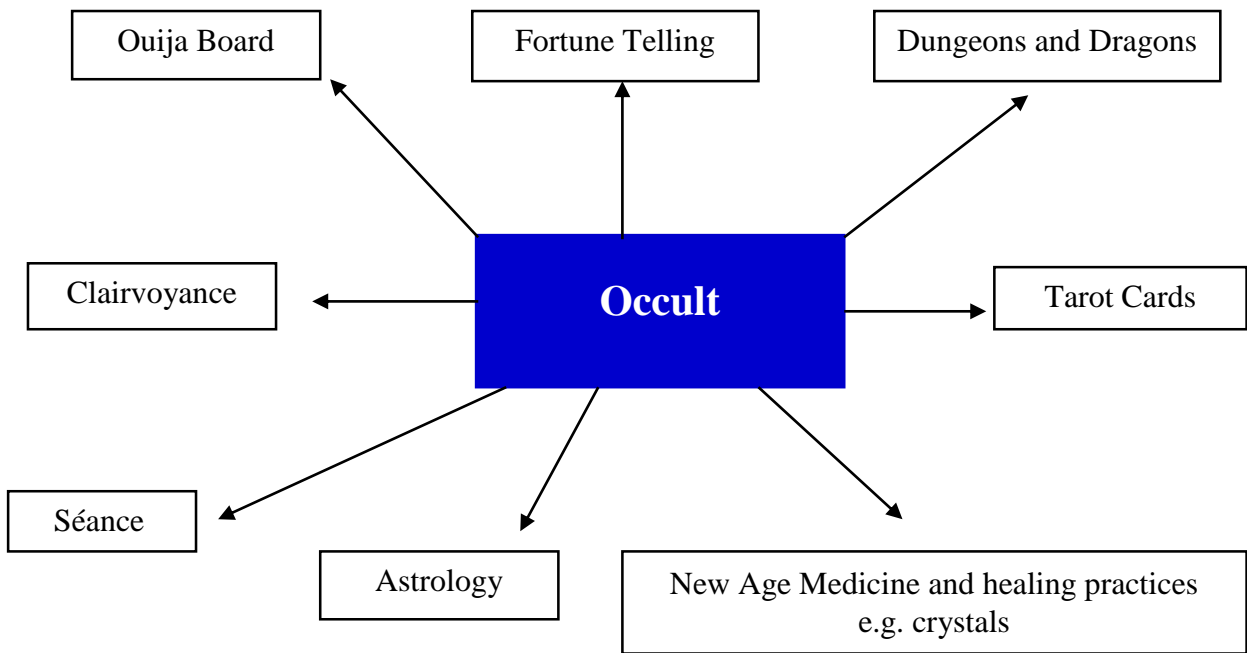
5. Forgive others as God directs you.

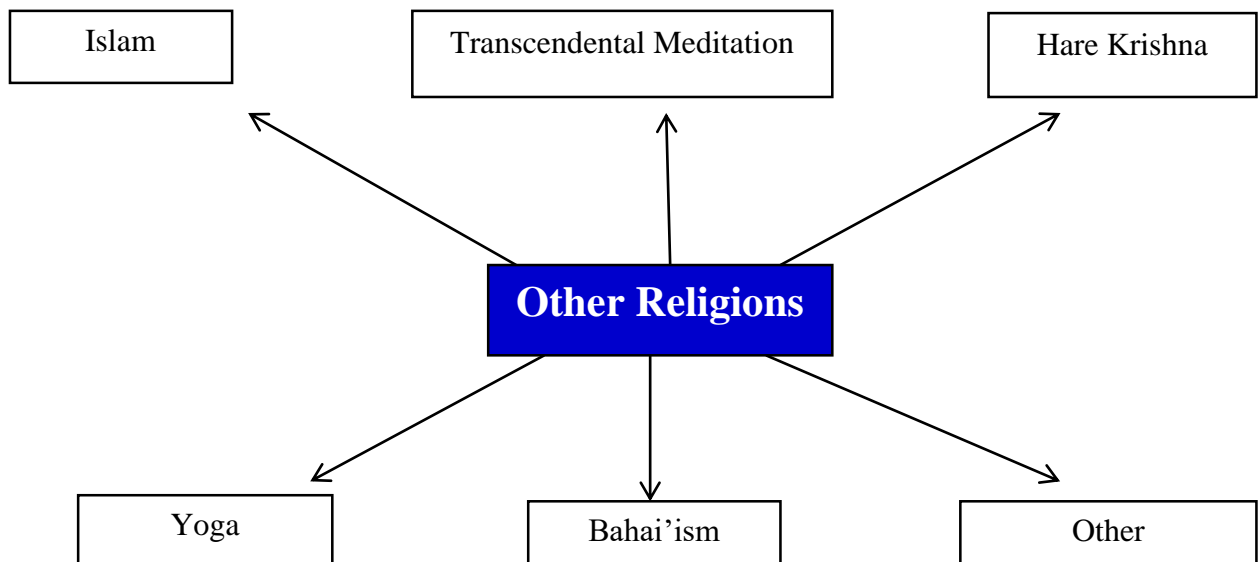
THE SEVEN STEPS

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 (mind-sets) 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 it's 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, an act of will. 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 counselling 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".

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 most times 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 from your new family, the local Church.
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) _____

SHE NEEDS LOVE! HE NEEDS RESPECT!

Dr Emerson Eggerichs; a marriage counsellor of 30 years' experience has written a very practical book "Love and Respect" see also website: www.loveandrespect.com

His proposition is this:

In marriage, a woman's basic need is to feel loved. Whereas a man's basic need is to be respected. A man needs to give unconditional love to his wife and a wife needs to give unconditional respect to her husband.

Ephesians 5:33(CEV)

*So each husband should **love** his wife as much as he loves himself, and each wife should **respect** her husband.*

*Dr Emerson quotes two large surveys that were done amongst American men. In both of these studies large groups of men were asked; What do you need **MOST** from your wife? Love or Respect? In both surveys over 85% of the men said they needed respect the most.*

A man is commanded to love his wife because even though our wives are wired to show love and want to be loved we are not so well wired.

A woman is commanded to respect her husband because even though men are wired around showing respect and being honourable, it doesn't come so naturally for woman.

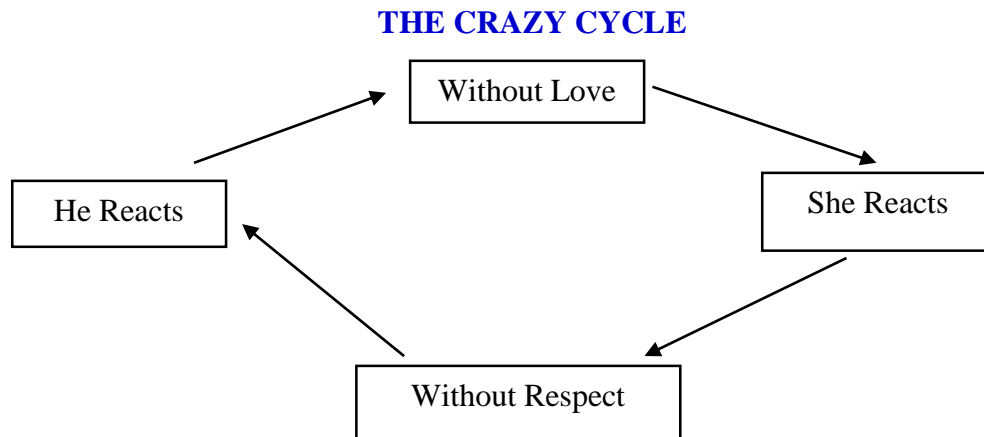
When a husband feels disrespected, it is especially hard to love his wife. When a wife feels unloved, it is especially hard to respect her husband. In fact when a man feels disrespected in a relationship he has a natural tendency to withdraw and to react in ways that feel unloving to his wife. When a woman feels unloved she is likely to give him an ear full, and has a natural tendency to react in ways that feel disrespectful to her husband.

Maybe God gave the command for men to love their wives and wives to respect their husbands for exactly that reason.

To quote Dr Emerson; "When a woman feels unloved a wife's usual approach is to complain and criticise in order to motivate her husband to become more loving. This usually proves about as successful as trying to sell knuckle busters to Mother Teresa." Pg 17

"Every wife ... wants her husband to appreciate how much she loves him, and she yearns to feel more love from him....the best way to love a husband is to show him respect in ways that are meaningful to him. Such respect lets him feel his wife's love for him and ignites in him feelings of love for his wife."

Without love, she reacts without respect. Without respect he reacts without love and the crazy cycle begins.



Dr John Gottman spent 20 years researching marriages that had been happy and together for over 40 years. He found that though these couples had diverse backgrounds, cultures, income levels two things he found in common in all these couples. As they talked together there was “a strong undercurrent of two basic ingredients: Love and Respect.”

“Right or wrong, men interpret their world through the respect grid, and a wife’s softened tone and facial expressions can do more for her marriage than she can imagine.” pg65

I think that communication in marriage is always further complicated by the way that men see things and interpret things through male eyes and woman always see and interpret things through female eyes.

For example when a man says “I’ve got nothing to wear.” He means I can’t find any clean clothes. When a woman says “I’ve got nothing to wear.” She probably means that she doesn’t have any new clothes appropriate to the situation.

When our wives raise their voices and say we have got to get this sorted, often men hear criticism and maybe even contempt.

When men don’t speak or they walk out of the room, which they might be doing because they don’t know what to say or to keep the peace, most woman would interpret that as not caring or even a hostile act.

Dr Eggerichs core message in this book is that God commands men to love their wives unconditionally and He also commands woman to love their husbands unconditionally. Respect and love are not things you need to earn in a Christian marriage like trust may be. He says that they are the basic needs of men and woman and if you choose with God’s help to show respect to your

husband and men if you choose with God's help to show respect to your wife, you will begin to get back what you need most from your spouse. But it's up to you to determine to give to them what they need as a choice you make.

After 30 years of marriage counselling and pastoring Dr Emerson concludes this "When a husband receives unconditional respect from his wife, those fond feelings of affection will return, and he will start giving her the kind of love she has always hoped to receive." Pg 66

I want to suggest to you three things that you can do to break the crazy cycle when it comes up in your marriage;

HOW TO BREAK THE CRAZY CYCLE

1. ASSUME THE BEST OF YOUR SPOUSE.

You continually trust your children to your spouse's care. If they are male they are probably not good communicators of feelings but good providers and protectors and if they are female they are probably good communicators of feelings. But no matter how skilled you each are at finding the right words and expressions you need to decide in your heart; that even if she gets too emotional for your comfort, or even if he doesn't express his feelings as well as you want him to, you both love each other and you both want things to work. If she raises her voice and distorts her face and says some things that make you feel like mud, its usually because she is desperate for your love and to feel connected with you. She may not be going about it the best way, but assume the best of her. And ladies if he is foolish enough to tease you or try to make a joke about the situation that has you are really concerned about, or if he is way to silent; give him the benefit of the doubt, men find it hard to find the right words and many men have been trained to be tough, to not show too much emotion and to walk away from conflicts.

Assume the best of each other, ultimately you both want the marriage to work and the family to be happy.

2. FORGIVE EACH OTHER AND HAVE THOSE LOVE AND RESPECT CONVERSATIONS BEFORE YOU GO TO SLEEP

Jesus warned us not to let the sun go down on our anger. There are so many scriptures in the bible teaching us of our need to be forgiven and our need to forgive others. It takes a mature and strong to initiate reconciliation. It takes real love and respect to consider your spouse's needs and to meet those needs before the day is finished.

Assume the best of each other and forgive one another. Thirdly

3. BE STRONG

Ladies ask yourself this question when you are needed to sort out an issue with your man.

Is what I am saying and how I am saying respectful to my guy?

Men before you respond to your girls ask yourself.

Does my response demonstrate the love that she needs right now?

No sarcasm, no jokes please.

Men, one of the many ways our ladies are not like us is that often their whole sense of happiness is based around their relationship to their husband. If a man is stressed about one area of his life, men have a tendency to compartmentalize that issue and it remains in the mix with the other issues, many of which may be doing well. When a lady feels her marriage has got problems, that colours the whole way they view their lives. Our love has that much impact on them.

So if they raise their voices and say things to us that seem like bullets fired at us, I want to encourage you to man up, take the shots, let them off load and then quickly rush in to say you love them and you are listening. It's important that if you are even slightly wrong you say "I am sorry." Men when you are with your mates or at work and there is a problem usually you express your thoughts then let it go. Woman find it much harder to let it go unless they hear words from you that demonstrate that it is resolved e.g. "I am sorry", "we are OK now".

Please take each other's needs seriously.

Men your ladies want to be close to you, to care about what they are feeling, to try to listen to them – rather than fix them, to continually express your commitment to them, they want problems discussed now, they wanted to be treasured in a variety of ways, they need you to show them that they are your number one priority.

Woman your men want you to appreciate their need to work and achieve, to respect their desire to provide and protect, to try to understand that doing things for you is showing you that they love you, to recognise that their level headed problem solving approach is really a form of male empathy, that when you hang out with them they feel valued, that sex makes them feel like a man and to be rejected for intimacy crushes their self-esteem.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH 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 (the Church Body). 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 with your Church brothers and sisters because this means you will be surrounding yourself with worldly 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 their neighbours. Many times, we feel like we are just a number.

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 we must forgive - **God declares unforgiveness is a sin.** Unforgiveness 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”.

At our church we invite people to serve “where”, “how” and “when” they are called to serve. Please consider filling in this form and returning to the Pastor.

Spiritual Gifts and Passion Questionnaire

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Work/Mobile _____

If you are a brand new family member then there will only be a few questions you can answer. That's fine. It would be worth redoing this questionnaire in 6 months as well.

1. Who do you go to for Godly Counsel?

2. Has there ever been a time when you felt like you were doing exactly what God had designed you to do? If so, please describe the experience.

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

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

5. 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?

Hebrews 6:1-3 describes the **foundations** to Christian faith. i.e. Repentance, faith, water and Holy Spirit baptism, the impartation of Spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands and life after death. Do you have any questions about any of these areas?

Mark 16:16-18 describe spiritual gifts that all Christians have when they have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (even if they don't necessarily use them).

Romans 12:6-8 describes the motivational gifts. Please go through the list below and tick the one or two you believe motivates you to serve.

- Prophecy:** The motivation to reveal the heart and mind of God in a given situation.
Encouraging, comforting and good for building character.
- Serving:** The desire to invest time and effort in meeting the practical needs of others.
- Teaching:** The desire to communicate God's truth in order to give understanding and direction.
- Encouraging:** The desire to encourage and motivate others in their walk with God.
- Giving:** The desire to sacrificially give to meet the needs of others.
- Leading:** The desire to coordinate the efforts of others to accomplish a God-given vision.
- Mercy:** The desire to express the compassion of Jesus towards the hurting and the wounded.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 describes spiritual gifts used in ministry (usually in church meetings). Please put a tick beside any that you feel you have.

___ **Word of Wisdom:** The ability to solve problems skillfully, often with divine and instant insights.

___ **Word of Knowledge:** The ability to know facts about a person or situation which were not learned through the efforts of the natural mind.

___ **Faith:** To discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for the future. You know what God wants to do and will do no matter what the odds.

___ **Healing:** The ability to intervene in a supernatural way as an instrument for the curing of illness and the restoration of health. There are a variety of healing gifts given by God.

___ **Prophecy:** The ability to communicate an immediate message from God to the church.

___ **Distinguishing Spirits:** The ability to know what is happening in the spiritual realm (good or evil).

___ **Tongues:** The ability to hear and give a message for the church in an unknown language.

___ **Interpretation of Tongues:** The divine ability to know what the message in tongues means. Often someone with this gift will hear actual words in English as the tongue is being given or simply get a sense of what is being said.

Ephesians 4:11-13 describes leadership offices. If you have ever had a church/ movement of churches acknowledge one of these senior offices in ministry in your life please tick alongside the office and write also where and when.

___ **Apostles:** Set the church in order so that all the gifts can function properly. They usually move in all the gifts. Train up leaders. Plant churches and have oversight over more than one congregation.

___ **Prophets:** Receive and handle revelation wisely. They give guidance and direction to the church. They usually see things in black and white and (unlike normal Christians who prophecy) they will make the church and individuals aware of sin.

___ **Evangelists/missionaries:** Not only help people become disciples but encourage and train up others to effectively draw men and woman to Jesus. Evangelists often move in the power gifts such as faith, healing and miracles.

___ **Pastors:** He/she gives personal care to the members of the church family. They will have a broad overview of the condition of the flock and a vision from God about where the church should be going.

___ **Teachers:** Give the church and its members' stability through providing a strong foundation of truth from the Word or revelation.

Friend, we thank you for taking the time to go over these questions. You are important to us and we want to respect who and how God has made/gifted you. We only use this questionnaire to help you find your place of ministry; not a place of difficulty or burden but a place of fulfillment and kingdom impact. This questionnaire will not be passed onto anyone else without your permission.

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.

Appendix 2 has 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**

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 **Psalms 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-labourers 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 online 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 e.g. 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."

Every one 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.

Christian Marriage

(Understanding Ephesians 5:21-27 & the kiwi myth of the 50/50 marriage)

You and I will commonly hear someone counsel their friends re marital problems by saying if you both work at it, if you both contribute an equal amount (50/50) of effort you will have a good marriage. If she does her part and he does his then....

There are two problems with this great kiwi theory.

1. Nobody knows how to measure if they have contributed their 50% into the marriage.
2. Everybody thinks they are contributing more than their fair share.

God has a very different model for marriage;

Wives and Husbands Ephesians 5

²¹Honor Christ and put others first. ²²A wife should put her husband first, as she does the Lord. ²³A husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head and the Savior of the church, which is his own body. ²⁴Wives should always put their husbands first, as the church puts Christ first.

²⁵A husband should love his wife as much as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. ²⁶He made the church holy by the power of his word, and he made it pure by washing it with water.

²⁷Christ did this, so that he would have a glorious and holy church, without faults or spots or wrinkles or any other flaws.

Notice verse 21. Put others first. A good marriage is all about serving your spouse and meeting the needs of your spouse.

The word 'head' in verse 23 comes from the Greek word Kephale which means source or origin. Like 'headwaters' of a river and not like 'headmaster.'

Ephesians 3

²⁸Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman. ²⁹So if you belong to Christ, you are now part of Abraham's family, and you will be given what God has promised.

What the Bible is saying is this; wives love your man, support him, respect him, and help him do well.

And men love your wives, care for them tenderly, and help them do well in life even if it means giving up your own life for them.

It's all about service to each other not 50/50 but 100/100, i.e. giving without measuring what you are getting back.

Steps to get 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. I save \$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 latter 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).

How to Break Addictions

Please take the time to work through and apply these 11 steps. God does not want you to be in slavery to anything and permanent change can take place now. As you go through this section pray and record the thoughts that God is making you aware of.

11 Steps to Freedom From Addiction

1. Acknowledge that you have an addiction problem (e.g. porn, drugs, alcohol, smoking, eating, work, etc.)

2. I can deny it if I learn to ‘hate’ it.

“God will deliver you from your enemies, not your friends” – Derek Prince.

Write down 10 reasons why smoking, drugs, porn etc. is your ‘enemy’ and not your ‘friend’.

1. This is not good for my health.

2. This will be harming the health of my children.

3. My addiction costs me \$_____ a year. I would rather put that money towards _____ (something you want, e.g. a holiday).

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

3. Read Galatians 5:19-21 and Ephesians 4:17-24. What are these scriptures saying to you?

4. **Read Matthew 18:8-9.** What does it mean? What would cutting off the point of temptation mean to you practically?

5. **Identify the original hurt or cause of the addiction and ask for God's truth to set you free.**

(a) What is the unbearable feeling/trigger that will cause you to pursue the addiction?

(b) When was the first time you had this feeling?

(c) What was the original lie, the wrong idea you began to believe back then?

(d) What is the truth that God wants to replace that lie with? What does God say about that now?

6. **Retrain your mind to rethink truth daily.** i.e. review the contents of this worksheet daily. What is God saying to you? What positive thoughts/sayings should you fill your mind with?

7. **Establish new boundaries in relationships.** I.e. don't associate with or allow certain people or behaviour into your home. For me this would mean _____

8. **Find genuine internal comfort.** e.g. run, exercise, listen to music.

9. **Understand the process of physical withdrawal.** e.g. It takes 3 days to get nicotine out of the system. (a) Go cold turkey. (b) Get non-nicotine based medication e.g. Nicobrevin (find info@Nicobrevin.com)

10. **Win the battle of the mind. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5 and Philippians 4:8.** Capture every wrong thought the moment it comes to mind and replace it with _____

(something pure, holy and worthy of praise). For me this would be: _____

11. **Record the names of two people who will hold you accountable.**

Name: _____ Ph: _____

Name: _____ Ph: _____

Cads	845-1818/0800787797 outpatient support - Trading Place.
Quit line	0800778778 quit.org.nz patches/gum/lozenges 8 weeks for \$3
Bridge	630-1491
Higher Ground	834-0017
Odessa House	374-4556
Care N.Z. Outreach	276-7193
Wings Trust	815-1631

How to Manager your Anger

“Whenever we are bumped, we’ll spill whatever we’re full of.” – Dave Riddell

Question: What is the most effective way to stop a pot boiling over; to lift off the lid, screw it on tighter or to take the pot off the stove?

(a) Truth coaches:

“Life is not always fair, you do not get to control everything that happens to you but .. you do get to choose your response” – Russell

“You clam up, blow up, or grow up. You can take offence or you can take correction. The choice is entirely yours, each time you get angry.” – Dave Riddell

“People cannot make you angry, it’s your choice based on what you believe about a given situation.” – Russell

Try to identify why you sometimes slip into angry responses:

- a) Is it part of the grief process?
- b) Are you having trouble setting boundaries? E.g. saying ‘no’ then feeling guilty, or saying ‘yes’ and feeling used.
- c) Have you been bottling up feelings, hurts, disappointments and haven’t learnt to vent them in an honest and healthy way?
- d) Do you have unrealistic expectations of yourself or others?
- e) Is it your way of avoiding having to deal with a problem or an unbearable feeling? E.g. you may be too proud to accept correction and so you lash out verbally or physically.
- f) Do you struggle to communicate your thoughts clearly? Negotiate?
- g) Do you feel disrespected and not listened to?
- h) Are you taking on too much and not getting enough time out and sleep?
- i) Do you have a drug or alcohol addiction which leaves you irritable when you come off the drugs?
- j) Irrational fear/ rage which appears to have begun without a clear cause can be caused by the demonic and requires the prayer of faith.
- k) Are you too proud? Does it really matter what people think of you?
- l) Is the anger connected to a past hurt?
- m) Is anger your default rection when you feel hurt?

(b) Truth coaches:

Live with a desire to simply please God.

God made the person you are abusing and putting down in His image.

Your anger is your problem but if left unchecked will damage the lives of a lot of others as well.

Your children will usually tend to copy your ways of dealing with life even if these are negative.

- Proverbs 15:1** *“A kind answer soothes angry feelings, but harsh words stir them up”.*
- James 1:19** *“My dear friends, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak or to get angry.”*
- Ephesians 4:26** *“Don’t get so angry that you sin. Don’t go to bed angry.”*
- Colossians 3:8** *“But now you must stop doing such things. You must quit being angry, hateful and evil. You must no longer say insulting or cruel things about others.”*

It is never okay to yell, push, hit or put down someone else. You are at fault if you do.

If you need to protect someone from a bully or an abusive person do so calmly or involve the authorities.

STEPS TO OVERCOMING ANGER PROBLEMS

1. Identify the cause of your anger and address that problem through actively gaining new skills, beliefs or counselling. *“Lord show me why I am angry and how to get healed and free. It’s my problem.”*
2. Determine to stop the blame game. You alone are responsible for your choices. It may be wise to daily reflect on a ‘truth coach’. Use one of those listed above or write down your own.
3. Identify the build up process to anger i.e. for most people there are physical signs, verbal clues, and behavioral changes before they explode.

Describe the steps in your process:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

4. Remind yourself of your truth coaches at points ‘a’ and ‘b’.

Consider the ‘big picture’ i.e. what will be the consequences on my chosen reaction?

5. Come to an agreement with partner/ spouse/ workmate i.e.

When I give this non-verbal signal e.g. put my hat on the table, put my watch on the TV that means let me take half an hour out doing something physical before we revisit the conversation. Don’t nag or pursue me. I value you too much to talk at this stage but will once I’ve calmed down.