



Spiritual Disciplines for Physical and Emotional Healing

A Self Help Guide

Spiritual Disciplines for Physical and Emotional Healing

(A Self-Help Manual)

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Spiritual Disciplines for Physical and Emotional Healing

Introduction¹

Why am I writing this book? To outline how to find the source of troubling emotions and then permanently resolve them. I began this search as a result of the many observations of my clients with whom I did nutritional counseling. Some, after following my recommendations, got well and lived symptom free for years. Others followed my recommendations but were continually plagued with the same, or related, or different health problems. This second group, although their health improved in some areas, were chronically ill and challenging to me.

Prov. 24:32 I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw:

What was affecting this second group? It was as if these people were beating themselves up with a bat, and although the nutritional intervention cushioned the blows, in order to help them, I must convince them of this and then show them how to drop the bat. Because life is made stressful or painful by our own paradigm not our circumstances. Dialog with my ‘problem’ clients in this second group confirmed this. The stress of their own thoughts was invisibly but continually eroding their health, creating inflammation, destroying tissue, impairing proper function, inhibiting natural resolution, and, addressing the results of these insults on just a nutritional level, would be short lived. For that person the root cause of their disease was unseen and emotional/spiritual in nature.

Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. ... ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts...

At the same time I began seeking resolution for this same kind of stress in my own life. We all need to find the bat and drop it. This book is about finding AND dropping the bats. Scripture makes this connection clear in many verses.

Prov 14:30 A calm and undisturbed mind and heart are the life and health of the body, but envy, jealousy, and wrath are like rottenness of the bones.²

So what exactly does the Scripture mean by the mind and heart? Clearly calmness therein equates to health. I reluctantly looked into various naturopathic means of addressing emotional stresses. I say ‘reluctantly’ because I did NOT want to do counseling. I went to practitioners who use emotional release techniques, still seeking for myself and others that calmness that is regularly displaced by life’s events. From these experiences a pattern for emotional healing began to evolve. This pain was coming from certain defining moments of my life, usually from childhood. Getting God’s perspective on those moments was producing peace! That was the breakthrough! But often folks could not ‘see’ or ‘hear’ His thoughts or perspective. I had to find ‘why’ and searched the Scripture. For Scripture dissipates ignorance in all aspects of life.

It was during this time that Theophostic principles^{3 4} came across my path. This technique added more to the emerging framework for emotional healing and sent me digging into the Scripture to find out what it says about the part of us we can’t see – our heart, mind, soul, spirit. Lacking

¹ Some folks have issues with Bible references. Consider that the Bible is an ancient mid-eastern text. Most scriptures are given from the King James Version, others from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

² Amplified Version

³ Smith, Ed. *Beyond Tolerable Recovery* Alathia Publishing www.Theophostic.com

⁴ Karl and Charlotte Lehman’s website has also been extremely helpful. www.kclehman.com

professional training in psychology and like disciplines, I felt initially at a disadvantage, but I reasoned that the Scriptures would provide a solid, uncorrupted basis from which to understand what we cannot see that is eroding health.

Matthew 7:8 For everyone who seeks, finds;

I have briefly outlined the results of this study first. Then I will be addressing the core issues of why we hurt inside, and respond the way we do, and how to affect a change. Stress (the ‘bat’) does NOT come from the situation we are in, but rather, how we perceive ourselves in that situation, and this comes from our self-definition. These are core heart matters out of which flow the issues of our lives. First, some analogies.

Spiritual Nutrients... and Toxins... and X-Rays

Later in this book we will develop a framework or picture to help explain some of the workings of our unseen or invisible parts (heart, soul, mind, spirit). Until then, allow me these analogies using the part of us that we CAN see (our physical body) to help our understanding. In nutritional counseling, the absence of an important nutrient is called a ‘nutritional deficiency’. Nutritional deficiencies make us vulnerable to diseases. For example, we know that a vitamin C deficiency often manifests as easy bruising, bleeding gums and vascular inflammation to name a few. Thus a deficiency of vitamin C makes us vulnerable. Likewise, a ‘truth deficiency’ (a.k.a. ignorance) also makes us vulnerable but to spiritual diseases. In Proverbs, a person who conducts himself as one void of knowledge or understanding is called ‘the fool’, and much is written there about his tragic follies. We are vulnerable to follow the path of a fool if we are without truth. But in actuality, we are all drowning in the sea of our own ignorance, and we are unaware of it (Rev 3:17,18). We dispute over whose ignorance is right or wrong, but ignorance is still ignorance. Truth is determined by and contained in God and we need to go to Him to get it.

Not only does a nutrient deficiency make us vulnerable, but also the presence of a toxic substance - the toxic load of the body. Toxins corrupt normal body processes impairing proper function. Sometimes it is quite challenging and uncomfortable to move toxins out of the body. But we are motivated to do this because we know that stagnated toxins cause weight gain and impaired tissue function which can ultimately destroy our life. Toxins have a spiritual parallel called deceit. This deceit corrupts our view of ourselves, of life, and most importantly, of God. It deranges our thinking and affects our actions. For example, if you are deceived that you can fly, this deceit has potential to destroy your life! Our own belief systems contain lies that we have accepted via interpretation of our early experiences that are destructive. These belief statements are ingredients of our ‘self-definition’ such as: “I’m worthless”, “I’m not safe”, “No one cares”, “I’ll never be able to make it”, etc. These are spiritual toxins. In Scriptural terminology, the devil, who planted them, and operates in the realm of lies, uses these big targets of vulnerability through which to send his fiery darts in his mission to destroy us. These vulnerabilities can be removed, and the integrity of our armor re-established with truth by the exercises contained herein. So, both the absence of truth and the presence of deceit make our unseen parts vulnerable to emotional pain, in the same way that nutritional deficiencies and the presence of toxins make our seen or physical parts vulnerable to physical pain. More analogies...

How do we find our vulnerabilities? In the physical realm consider first what X-rays do. They show us where unseen problems may reside within the physical body. In the same way, ‘trials’ show us where problems reside in the unseen aspects of our heart and mind. By the trials of life,

these vulnerabilities (that is the lack of integrity of our unseen armor) are made known to us when we feel anxious, guilty, angry, irritated, depressed, etc. This book is a how-to manual to address these. First, we must be able to hear from God, second, we will find and remove the targets of vulnerability, third, we dispel our common ignorance and replace it with the armor of God's truth. Through this process we experience peace. God's principles always work – but, only when applied. We ignore these principles to our peril as the Proverbs tells us here.

Proverbs 1:20-33

- 20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:***
- 21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,***
- 22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?***
- 23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.***
- 24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;***
- 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:***
- 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;***
- 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.***
- 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:***
- 29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:***
- 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.***
- 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.***
- 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.***
- 33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.***

One response to this passage might be, "I'm such a mess, what's the use of trying?" Well, actually, knowing that we are a 'mess' is the best and only legitimate starting point. (You will never find your way if you think you have it all together.) The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Begin the journey. By the end of the exercises in this book, you will be able to come back to this set of verses a second time and respond with true, unreserved thankfulness.

Psalm 19

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.***
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.***
- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.***
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.***
- 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.***

So, God's patient and persistent attempts to rectify our situation are seen in verses 20-23 of Proverbs 1 above. Life offers many road signs which God calls 'rebukes' (a.k.a. X-rays). When we ignore these little rebukes (or don't know how to handle them), they grow into more serious rebukes and become calamities which grow to the 'catastrophe' level where we finally stop and cry out to God, "My life is a mess. How did I get here? Where is this anxiety/depression/cancer coming from?" Our current miseries are called 'eating the fruit of our own way' (Prov 1:31).

Prov 19:3 A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.

And the answer to "How did I get here?" is ignorance, but the more important question is, "How do I turn my life around?" Begin here.

Direction and Purpose

The steps in this book take us in a specific direction and in a specific order. I encourage you to read the entire book once through before doing any of the exercises. The general direction of our steps is away from alienation and towards reconciliation. Alienation and isolation are Satan's main tools of destruction in the emotional realm. But God initiated the process of identifying alienation and offering its remedy - reconciliation.

Eph 4:18 ¹⁷This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Here we clearly see that a darkened understanding and ignorance (the truth deficiency) has alienated us from God. We will elaborate on 'heart blindness' later in this book.

Col 1:21 ²¹And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

2 Cor 5:18 ¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

My experience has been that following these principles in the order found in this book yields sound results. Our painful thought patterns originated at a defining moment of alienation. And alienation is an ingredient of all our emotional pain. This book shows how to identify and resolve those painful self-defining belief patterns planted long ago.

Caution! Although it seems perhaps unthinkable now, you will find yourself very reluctant to complete some of these exercises with your whole heart. Because we will be dealing with the serious issues of life which spring from our broken heart, we naturally attempt to protect and hide these hurting parts of our heart. We don't want to "go there". For some of us, we've been hurt the same way for so long that we don't know what life would be like to feel different. How would we then act? As we all know, there is often an internal resistance to changing and to taking these important steps. If you feel this resistance as you go through these exercises, I've written Section 4 just for you.

Psalm 19:11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Section 1. Important Concepts

Chapter 1. The Part of Me That You Cannot See

From childhood we have depended on our eyes to comprehend the world around us. Seeing things and seeing how things work often makes more sense to us than reading about how they work. Perhaps that's why most of us avoid reading the owner's manual for the items that we purchase. Seeing the item itself offers sufficient explanation. Although we can rely on our physical senses to tell us about the physical world, to see or comprehend the spiritual realm we need a spiritual manual and spiritual senses. But this realm is eternal.

The work we are going to do in this book is done in the spiritual, unseen realm. It is helpful, though to create a picture or working model of our unseen self or what scripture calls our 'vessel'. By our unseen self, I'm referring to our human spirit, our heart, mind, and soul. A picture is convenient to give a framework to explain what the Scriptures are communicating to us about the unseen realm. This picture is for explanation purposes only, and is not to be construed in any way as a new doctrine on the invisible part of us. It is simply a visual aide or a model to explain what transactions are occurring on our unseen parts, the soul and spirit.

Refer to Figure 1a and let's begin with the part of us that we can see, our physical body. Think of it as our earth suit – a vehicle that allows us to exist in the material creation God has made. It is the one we have studied in our anatomy and physiology textbooks but there's more to us than what is seen. Our composition includes the dust of the earth AND the breath of life. (Gen 2:7)

The Bible also refers to our human spirit (Gk. *pneuma*) which is different than the Holy Spirit and different than what are called unclean spirits. As part of us, our human spirit has specific characteristics and functions. A short list of some characteristics and actions of our human spirit, as given by Scripture, include:

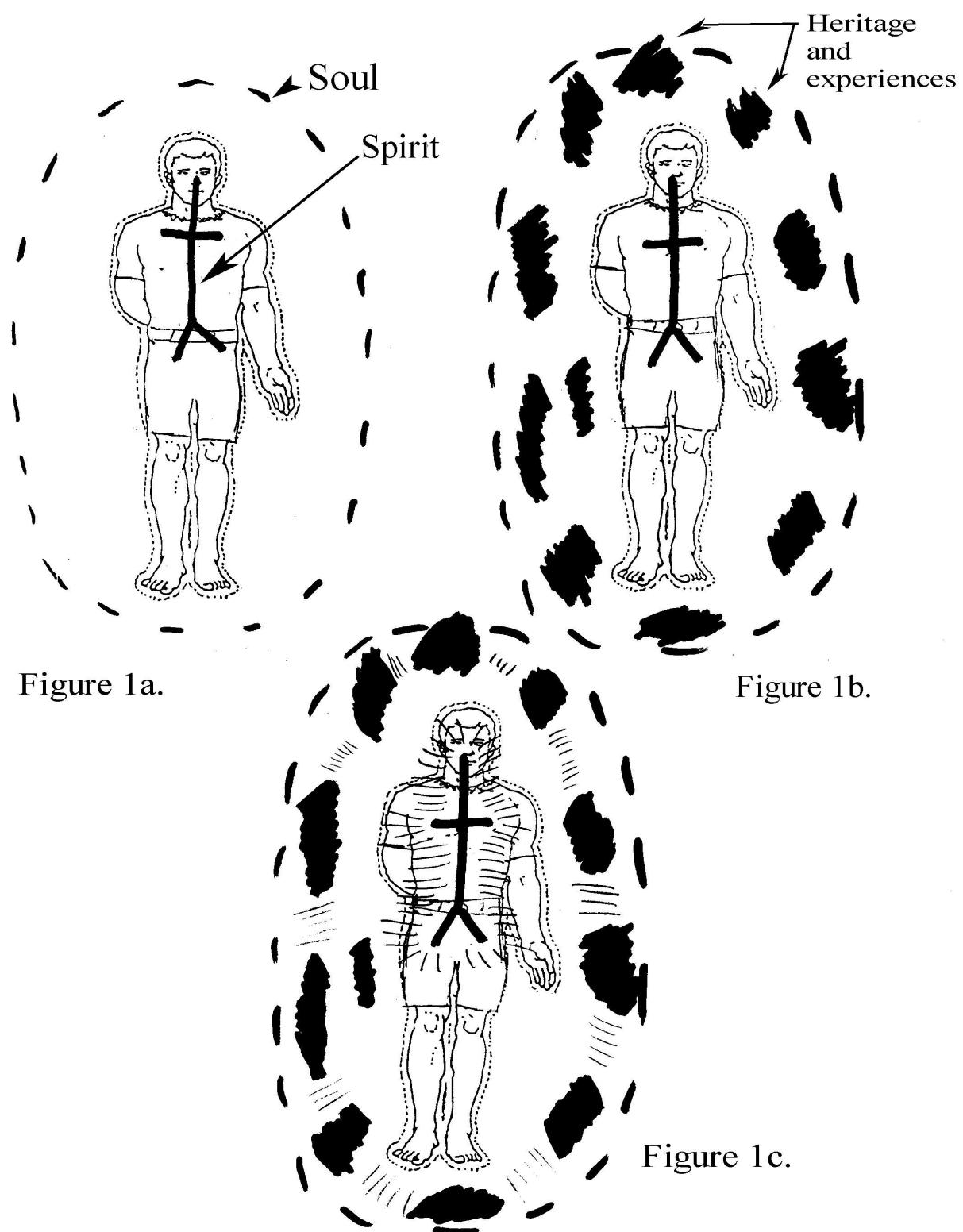
Can be described as poor <i>Matthew 5:3</i>	Can be described as meek (and quiet) <i>1 Peter 3:4</i>
Can have strength <i>Luke 1:80</i>	Can be distinguished/separated from our soul
Can be described as fervent <i>Acts 18:24</i>	<i>Hebrews 4:12</i>
Can be cleansed <i>2 Corinthians 7:1</i>	Can be described as willing or ready <i>Matt. 26:41</i>
Can be described as restless <i>2 Corinthians 2:13</i>	

In our picture of our unseen parts, Figure 1, I will arbitrarily draw the spirit as a stick man inside the physical body using the verse in Proverbs as perhaps a clue.

Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

The spirit is the seat of our intentions – what we are about at our core and how we set our course. One of the first things our spirit senses or perceives about another person is their intention –that is their spirit. God uses our intention (spirit) to illumine everything we are and do.

The Bible also gives many references to our soul (Gk. *psuche*). The soul is also a distinct part of us, invisible and separate from the spirit. It is an eternal part that is associated with life itself. The KJV translates the Greek word *psuche* sometimes as 'life' and sometimes 'soul'.



The scriptures attribute to the soul some of the same characteristics as the mind and as the heart, so for our purposes we will say that the soul is comprised of the mind and heart (which are examined separately in the next 2 chapters). Thus the soul is the seat of our personality, our feelings, our thinking, our heritage and our own history. Good or bad feelings, good or bad thinking, good or bad history/memories - it is the repository of all the experiences from our

'defining moments' making us who we are. It determines how we perceive and interact with the world around us. So, as an interface with the world, I've depicted the soul as the dashed line between us and the world. It is the outer garment we wear, also referred to as our countenance. We have heard the expression "He wears his emotions (or heart) on his sleeve". In a sense our soul is our robe. It is also where our armor goes. It is through the soul that our human spirit acts out its intentions. That is, the spirit expresses itself through the soul. Or, our intentions express themselves through the totality of our previous interactions with the world. So Figure 1b is our pictorial representation of what is not seen of us. Let's use it to explain some concepts.

What might reside within the soul, making us who we are and how we interface with others? Let's begin with the markings of our forefather Adam. He definitely impacted our soul, contributing to our alienated-from-God nature. (He accepted accusation or the dark counsel from the devil that impugned God's intention towards them, leading to the first human alienation.) These markings are represented as darkness on the soul area in Figure 1b. Our ancestors have also had an impact. Our genetic heritage is discussed in Chapter 6. Then, there are the events or 'defining moments' in our own history which impact our personality, adding more darkness on the soul area. From conception, we learned what 'life' was like, and these impressions remain and create our current reality. We accepted various interpretations of life having also received dark counsel - whether we were wanted, safe, important, or could even survive. Early trauma events including surgeries can profoundly affect how we perceive or interface with life around us. Our choices, decisions and responses to present events are rooted in the dark counsel (painful belief statements) we accepted during these historical and defining events. Our soul memories contain the origins of why we are afraid of enclosed spaces, or angered by certain comments, or cry at certain events, or always feel guilty or anxious or depressed. These uncomfortable, and even painful, beliefs are the bat described earlier. How to identify and how to drop the bat are contained in the spiritual exercises of this book.

Where does the 'new birth' fit into this picture? When we come to the point in our life that we realize our alienation from God, and clearly see that our life choices have been offensive to God, and turn to Him for mercy and forgiveness, accepting His Son for the required payment for our sins, we are changed. God's Spirit enters into our spirit at our request, and fuses into our human spirit making us a child of God – a different kind of being. At that moment, we bear within our human spirit (intention), His likeness. God becomes our Heavenly Father. A profound transformation occurs within our spirit. Our intention is affected (since intention resides in the spirit) and we now want to please God our Heavenly Father. (Section 5 of this book elaborates on this process.) This change is represented in Figure 1c as rays of light issuing out of our changed spirit through the soul area to the world around us.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

This process has been called being 'born again' but is literally translated 'born from above' and is a necessary prerequisite for living in eternity with God – with Whom we have intentionally been reconciled in our spirit once and for all. When this happens to you, you know it has changed you. You may look the same but you can feel an invisible shift within.

So now, from within, this change in our spirit shines out through our personality or our soul. But our history doesn't change, our ancestry or heritage doesn't change, and all our experiences that

make us who we are still remain. So within our picture (Figure 1c), the light of the Glory of God in us is dimmed as it expresses itself through our personality. This ‘earthen vessel’ though, is carrying quite a treasure. Now many people report profound changes at this ‘born from above’ moment - in their behavior, their habits and addictions, their health, etc. Lasting changes. However, they will also report that experientially they know much of the old ‘stuff’ (represented by darkness) still remains. You will see that there is a good reason for this.

Now this ‘stuff’ that remains within our soul is eternally inert, in the sense that it has no affect on our eternity. We can choose to live with this painful ‘stuff’ (bats), or to get rid of it. However, as is shown in the picture (Figure 1c.), the profound transaction that has occurred within our human spirit is shrouded by this ‘stuff’. This ‘stuff’ not only creates disease in our physical body but these ‘blemishes’ hide the treasure that God has put in us - the ‘light under the bushel basket’. Remember what our ‘stuff’ is comprised of? It is the collection of dark counsel (or painful belief statements) planted during our defining moments that creates the anxieties and fears, the grief and depression, the anger and rage experienced by all, even the child of God. These things are anchored within the soul as a result of our ancestry, or cemented by our own experiences. We can think of this ‘stuff’ as the ‘law in our members’ as described in Romans.

Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

In our inner human spirit we delight to do God’s will, but as life happens, we observe that there is ‘another law’ in our ‘members’ that acts in opposition to our intention to please God. So we live in this chronic conflict of wanting to please God but watching ourselves react to things that cause anger, fear, depression and anxiety in us. This ‘law of sin’ in our ‘members’ is the result of everything we brought to this moment. Systematic removal of the darkness (or our ‘stuff’) in our members is the process that the Bible calls maturing in Christ or the renewing (maturing) of the mind. And this process is what WE are called to do so that our vessel is one of honor.

2 Tim 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. ²¹ If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Notice the phrase ‘If a man...purge himself from these’. God’s eternal work in us is done, but the remaining work on this vessel is in our hands. So, how do we go about this ‘purging’ process? Where do we start? What issues or ‘stuff’ do we work on first?

The stressful situations of life reveal our stuff, right? By our response to stressful situations we can see what we are made of, (the nature of our ‘stuff’) and what needs to be ‘purged’. Make this observation: During this situation was I calm and peaceful or did the ‘law in my members’ get triggered? Remember calmness equates to health. And if our intention is to work on our vessel so that it maintains calmness instead of anxiety, depression, fear, rage, guilt, etc. we will also enjoy better health. If we have no intention to change, we should check our pedigree as this is not the disposition of the child of God. Section 5 in this book gives a full explanation of becoming God’s child. How to tame our ‘stuff’, the ‘law in our members’, is coming.

Chapter 2. What the Bible Says About the Mind

Psychology and psychiatry have long been employed to help people cope with their ‘stuff’. They have classified and named disorders according to their observations of thousands of people with ‘emotional’ problems and have developed many secular concepts that might cause confusion when doing this work on our ‘vessel’. So let’s invest some time understanding exactly what the Bible says about the mind and the heart. Let’s first examine what the Scripture says about the mind where potential for confusion can enter.

To begin with, the English versions of the Bible (KJV, NIV, etc.), translate several different Greek words as the same English word ‘mind’. Concerned that important insight might be lost, I found each of these Greek words translated as ‘mind’ and grouped the verses containing each of them to see how the scripture would interpret itself. The full survey is beyond the intent of this text but a summary is given below.

The ‘mind’ (Greek word ‘*nous*’) is our fact and observation processing center. It processes what is presented to it. It does not generate any new facts. It just processes what it has already in its memory or experience, or what is sent to it. The job or function of our mind is to ‘connect the dots’ for us – i.e. to use the input it has received, and to examine it in light of other accepted data. Our mind receives its counsel or input from many sources (see below) including the spiritual realm. One important source of input is from our own heart (discussed in the next chapter). A useful analogy is to consider that the mind is a factory that can be considered separately from its raw materials (input), and from the goods it manufactures (output). So whereas the Greek word ‘*nous*’ (mind) can be considered the factory itself, other Greek words constructed from ‘*nous*’ (like *dianoia* which literally means ‘through the mind’) really describe the work or product of the mind – its conclusions or reasonings. An important example of the distinction involves the famous Great Commandment.

Matt 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart (kardia), and with all thy soul (psuche), and with all thy mind (dianoia=reasonings). ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. (Repeated in Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27)

The mind itself doesn’t ‘love’. No place in Scripture is ‘love’ given as a function of the mind (Gk. *nous*). The use of the Greek word ‘*dianoia*’ in this verse makes the point that what comes ‘through the mind’ (*dianoia*) when we think of God should be good and loving conclusions based on previously stored input. Chapter 7 will elaborate on this and its implications.

Other interesting facts about the mind yielded by this survey of the use of the Greek word *nous* are as follows (parentheses are from my study):

The mind is opened by Jesus Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding (Gk. *nous=mind*), that they might understand the scriptures,

One can conjecture that if the mind is ‘opened’, its prior state must have been ‘shut’ and in these cases, one may need to call upon the Lord for this opening to be accomplished. The Greek word used here for ‘open’ is the same used when opening the eyes of the blind and ears of the deaf. Here the disciples’ mind was shut to the correct interpretation of certain Messianic scriptures.

The mind can be shaken *2 Thess 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken (motion produced by winds or storms) in mind (Gk. nous), or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

Note here the multiple inputs given to the mind for processing (*spirit, word, and letter*) which can act as a ‘shaker’ thereof. These are unseen, verbal and written, respectively. One may also conjecture here that the reason that ‘believing’ is not a function of the mind is because of the mind’s ability to be shaken.

The mind is renewable (Gk. maturable) *Rom. 12:2 And be not conformed to this world (age): but be ye transformed (Gk. metamorphoo) by the renewing (cause to grow up=maturing) of your mind (Gk. nous), that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

The mind is not a new mind. It is a ‘matured’ mind that has been ‘transformed’ from its original state by the addition of truth. As we embark on the process described in this book our mind will be matured by the infusion of God’s thoughts! As His thoughts displace our thoughts (at our request), we will look at things much differently – like He does. And this produces peace.

The mind cannot contain/hold God’s peace *Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth (surpasses) all understanding (Gk. nous=mind), shall keep your hearts and minds (Gk. noema=thoughts, products of the mind) through Christ Jesus.*

That is, God’s peace surpasses our mind’s capacity, and His peace acts on the heart and the thoughts our mind produces. This verse takes on a different meaning when the different ‘mind’ words are distinguished.

The corrupt/vain mind lacks truth (a.k.a. a ‘truth deficiency’) *1 Tim. 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, ⁵Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds (Gk. nous), and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

Of note here are all the things that being ‘destitute of the truth’ earns us (envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings). These are disease symptoms caused by a truth deficiency. More about this state is given here...

2 Tim. 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds (Gk. nous), reprobate concerning the faith.

The resistance to the truth can result from the mind’s having accepted some other input which cannot be reconciled with the truth being presented to it. This prior input I call ‘dark counsel’ because it is a deceptive notion, often planted in our mind by the devil at some ‘defining moment’ in our history. He does this so we will ‘resist the truth’ and continue to live in darkness because our mind cannot reconcile the embedded lie with the truth that is being presented. Even more warnings on this topic...

Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity (Gk. mataiotes= devoid of truth and appropriateness) of their mind (Gk. nous), ¹⁸Having the understanding (Gk. dianoia=thoughts) darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance (absence of truth) that is in them.

Figure 1c is a pictorial representation of this ‘darkened understanding’ and resident ignorance (‘ignorance that is in them’ in the soul). This scripture is clear that we live in our darkened

reality. We can only walk in the amount of light or truth that we have collected. Therefore get as much truth as you can to avoid such vanity.

Thus many false inputs and conclusions may create what the Bible describes as a corrupt or defiled mind. Reading God's Word, which is reliable truth helps plant truth within the mind and perhaps dislodge some of these false ideas that have lodged there if we choose to accept it. The mind, if presented with conflicting thoughts (one of which comes from the Scripture) must come to a reconciling thereof. That is why hearing the Scriptures repeatedly by reading or listening to recordings of Scripture greatly benefits the mind.

The most interesting result of this study of the mind is that the Scripture never indicates that thoughts originate from the mind. The mind only connects the thoughts or experiences that are presented to it, creating a reconciling or an understanding which may, or may not be correct. This is a concept that is foreign to our traditional way of thinking that ideas arise in our mind (e.g. the light bulb comes on in the head). In contrast, there are many Scriptures that make it clear that thoughts originate from the heart – our emotional center!! See next chapter.

Two important things to remember: first, the mind does not create thoughts; second, a continual flow of thought input comes to it from the heart and other sources. Based on prior experiences and input, the mind processes new information. Changing the information stored in the mind will enhance its processing. Changing the way the heart thinks also has a profound effect, since out of it 'are the issues of life.' We will look into that next.

Finally, modern psychiatry describes a well-accepted emotional disorder called dissociative identity disorder, or multiple personality disorder. In such a model they describe that an individual has a segmented mind, with each segment acting slightly or widely different than other segments. Some parts of the mind have stored certain trauma memories that are hidden from the other parts of the mind. As a result, under certain triggering circumstances the person will behave slightly differently or greatly differently than what is considered normal for them, or some general norm. This appears as another 'personality'.

A survey of the Bible references to the mind and heart yields a different picture. The Bible never refers to a broken or divided mind (Gk. *nous*). Even the familiar passages in the Book of James (1:8, 4:8) about the double-minded man is correctly translated the double-souled (Gk. *psuche*) man.

James 1:8 A double minded (double-souled) man is unstable in all his ways.

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded (double-souled).

The soul is comprised of the mind+heart. The Bible, as seen in the next chapter, does indicate that the heart is the part of us that breaks or segments. The mind doesn't break, the heart does. Note that the instruction to the double-souled person is to purify their heart. This is the remedy for the observed instability in personality from the broken heart. So let's go on to study the heart.

Prov 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Chapter 3. What the Bible Says About the Heart

If one does a study of what the Scripture says about the heart, a clear picture of its role emerges. This information helps us better understand that part of us that we cannot see, but ‘know’ is there. It is not just the organ pumping in our chest. It is that part of us which the Scripture says ‘believes’ or ‘doubts’, or can be ‘hardened’, or ‘broken’. The broken heart is the target of the exercises in this book. Scripture points out that it is the heart that gets broken and divided (or segmented or dissociated), and needs to be restored, healed, (reconciled or united); not the mind. As we saw in the last chapter, the mind is matured, but the heart needs healing or uniting. A number of Scriptures support this. In the Old Testament we find these verses.

Psalm 86:11 Teach me your way, O LORD , and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

Ezekiel 11:19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

I have seen this exact process happen with some people with whom I have worked. When God spoke to them and healed their broken or segmented heart, He went on to show them that it was now soft – no longer hard. I missed the significance of what they were describing to me until I saw these verses. So the Scripture teaches that it is the heart that is divided. Six times in Psalms David uses the term ‘my whole heart’ and, yet, in the whole Bible the term ‘my whole mind’ never occurs. Why? The heart breaks up or separates when traumatized, the mind does not.

Understanding the workings of our unseen parts is useful for knowing how these parts are ‘healed’. Remember that Jesus was anointed by God to heal the brokenhearted. No one else has been given this role...only the One God anointed for this purpose. And, we all have ‘broken heart disorder,’ and thus we all need to have our broken hearts healed. If we don’t realize that this is our condition, we cannot see our need for His mission. Let me say again that according to Scripture, the heart is in a state of brokenness and this state of broken-heartedness is common to all humankind. All. And it needs to be healed.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

What does that mean? God sent Jesus for this very purpose, so this must be something we sorely need. But how did our heart get broken? And how do we go about getting it healed? Let's understand some heart concepts.

There are 160 occurrences of ‘heart’ (Gk. *kardia*) in the New Testament. Categorizing these references makes this study manageable. I’ve chosen these categories: (1) How the heart is described, (2) What the heart contains, (3) What are the actions of the heart (what it does), and (4) What are the actions on the heart (what is done to it). A very brief summary follows:

How the heart is described

Adjectives are words that describe. Adjectives used for describing the heart in the Scriptures include pure, gentle, humble, honest, good, single, gross (dull of hearing), far from God, not right

in His sight, blind, slow to believe, unbelieving, hard, impenitent, broken, troubled, foolish and uncircumcised. A good concordance or Bible search program can give the specific references.

What the heart contains

The contents (beliefs) of our heart are the focus of this book. Recall the darkness that represented our wounds from past experiences or traumas in Figure 1c. The Bible says the heart contains: good treasure and evil treasure, the Word of the Kingdom, lusts and desires, counsels, secrets, evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, pride, blasphemies, covetousness, wickedness, lasciviousness, an evil eye, foolishness, experiences, thoughts and intents, sorrow and anguish, the Holy Spirit, Christ, God's love, and the people we disciple. Recall Jesus' explanation of why eating with unwashed hands didn't defile a man (refer to Fig 1c)

Mark 7: 20 And he (Jesus) said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ²³All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Actions of the heart (what it does)

Some actions which spring from the heart are such as those listed in Mk 7:20 above. The most important actions of the heart for our purposes are thinking, reasoning and speaking. Since this is unfamiliar to our modern understanding, I give the complete references. Note how the Scripture says that we think and reason in our hearts not our minds.

Matthew 9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? ⁵For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

Mark 2:6 ⁶But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? ⁸And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? (Repeated in Luke 5:22)

Luke 3:15 ¹⁵And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused (reasoned) in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

Another important action of the heart noted many times in Scripture is that our heart speaks to us. The idea that our heart speaks to us may also be an unfamiliar concept. Do we know the voice of our own heart? The Scripture says that it does speak. It is important to grasp this as the exercises in this book require listening to the reality that our own heart expresses or presents to us.

Matt 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; also Luke 12:45

Matt 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Matt 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart;

Rom 10:5 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?

Rev 18:7 How much she (Babylon) hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

What our heart says is a very important indicator of what is inside (Matt 15:18). Often its words slip out of the mouth without restraint. The hurts of our heart just bubble up and out before the mind can stop it. This is what Jesus is pointing out above. David says that in the night,

Ps 77:6 I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

We can do likewise.

Other significant actions of the heart: It forgives, loves, doubts and believes, imagines, conceives, obeys, resolves, purposes, sings, rejoices, errs and condemns. Note that forgiveness is an action of the heart, NOT the ‘will’. More on the importance of this later.

Actions on the heart (what is done to it)

Finally the actions on the heart are easily identified by their passive voice construction. The heart can be hardened, stressed or overburdened, pierced with sorrow or vexation, receive the devil’s input, or other input, be purified, opened, broken, darkened, written on, be searched and tried, be deceived, be veiled, be shined into by God’s glory, be comforted, ruled/kept by peace, be established unblameable, be established by grace, and be affected by covetous practices.

All of these actions on our heart can be thought of in terms of our picture in Figure 1c. The darkened areas of the soul would be where we have been deceived, hardened, pierced with sorrow, accepted the devil’s counsel or services, etc. These create a veil which affect how we view life and they cause emotional pain. By doing the scriptural disciplines outlined in this book our heart will be shined into by God’s glory, comforted, ruled/kept by peace, be established unblameable, purified, and established by grace.

Parable of the Sower

Although there are 160 Scriptures in the New Testament involving the heart (Gk. *kardia*), The Parable of the Sower and the Seed (Matt 13:3, Mark 4:2, and Luke 8:4) gives important insights on how the heart receives things. It is THE foundational parable and THE key to understand all the other parables for Jesus said to His disciples when they asked Him to explain it.

Mark 4:13 Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

If you are not familiar with this parable (reference addresses given above) you need to read them so you will better understand your own heart and the following discussion. It is clear from these passages that when talking about the soil, Jesus is referring to the four basic conditions of the heart – hardened, rocky, weedy or fertile.

Matt 13:18 “Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.

Luke 8:15 But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

The seed is God’s Word to us (a.k.a. truth). This foundational parable is all about getting the truth into our hearts. It points out the obstacles by using the analogy of getting seed into the soil to bear fruit. We likely have all four of these soil conditions in our hearts. But some of us may have more hardened soil, others more rocky soil and others more weedy soil, etc. Refer to the diagram in Figure 2 which depicts this parable.



Figure 2

The different soil types are labeled 1 (hardened), 2 (rocky), 3, (weedy), 4 (good). One would expect this arrangement of the soil/vegetation around the roads of that time and even now. The traveled road was hardened soil, sometimes paved with rocks. Next to the road was rocky soil, containing the discarded and broken pieces of rocks from the road building, or from clearing the adjacent field before planting. Over the years these rocks become covered and mixed within the soil and so the rocks remain hidden under it. Adjacent to that is the weedy soil which bordered the field containing good soil and, for some reason of the topography, was not plowed. Finally, furthest from the road, was the good soil, which had neither weeds nor buried rocks, and obviously received careful attention of the owner for the purpose of the fruit it would bear him.

Hardened Soil = Hardened Heart

Three out of the four soil types can and do receive the seed when the sower scatters it. But the hardened soil does not even receive the seed. It comes to rest on the surface where it can be snatched away. The Bible says that the hearts of Jesus' own disciples were hardened.

Mark 6:52 ⁵²For they (disciples) considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

That is, the truth of what happened with the loaves did not even 'sink in'. It rested on the surface and was snatched away. Other references to a hardened heart are found in Mark 3:4-5, Mark 8:17-18, Rom 2:4-5, and Heb 3:8-15. But how does our heart become so hardened that God's truth (i.e. the seed) bounces off the surface of it?

Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin

This verse does not say that sin hardens the heart, but rather deceit does. Toxic deceit that resists the truth. So basically when we are operating under a paradigm containing a lot of deceit, we not only 'sin' but, more tragically, God's Word can not sink in to transform us out of our sorry paradigm. We experience this all the time. On the mind level we accept what God says but on the heart level we reject it. We know when ideas are not fully embraced by our heart. Lies were planted in our heart during defining moments or trauma events for our destruction so we would reject the truth. Firmly planted deceit rejects the truth. According to this parable, the hardness is

right on the surface, giving the seed no chance to penetrate. Verbal expressions of such hardening deceit would sound like, “God wouldn’t do that for me”, or, “I just can’t trust God that much.” There is a way to address this given in the exercises.

The Rocky Soil

The rocky soil, by contrast, has a covering of soil which can receive the seed. The rocky soil receives the word with gladness. The sun comes up and that seed attempts to grow. But it lacks sufficient moisture (because there was no depth of soil with the hidden rocks underneath) and it withers. This resistance to receiving the truth from the sower is not on the surface like the hardened soil, because the rocky soil receives the word with gladness. The rocks are deeper in the heart, not apparent to anyone, not even us! In contrast to the hardened soil, we feel we can believe the truth, but when it is tested or challenged in a real life situation, it withers. Without deep roots, plants cannot survive the heat. One big clue that we have rocky ground though, is the absence of fruit. Fruit bearing plants don’t grow well on rocky soil. In the Old Testament, soil that didn’t produce fruit was called fallow ground.

Jeremiah 4:3 For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

The instruction given here indicates that we are responsible for breaking this up, i.e. digging up the unseen rocks (deceit) and disposing of them with the intent of being able to support the growth and full maturing of seed. The majority of this book is about getting the rocks out. The rocks need to be brought up to the surface of the soil before they can be removed. Similarly the deceitful thought patterns need to be surfaced. Perhaps a personal example here would be helpful.

I was at a naturopathic conference listening to a presentation on nutrition in a large lecture hall with many other practitioners. As I was listening to the lecture and reading the projected information, this verse just came to me.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

I was a little stunned. The verse kept repeating in my head. It sounded familiar. I knew that I had read it before but was that exactly the way it went? As I thought about it, two things occurred. I was glad to have Scripture pop into my head like that, but yet I thought, “How can anyone know all things? I mean, know ALL things? Maybe I’m confused, and don’t remember that Scripture right...we can’t know ALL things?” When the lecture was over I went back to my room to clear up my ‘misunderstanding’ about ‘know ALL things’. There it was in I Jn 2:20 exactly as I heard it while in the lecture. As I stared at the verse, it occurred to me that it was literally ‘un-believable’. There I sat confronted with the reality that I did not believe, or maybe could not believe what the Bible said. This is a classic case of rocky soil. Neat Scripture (‘received with gladness’) – not believable though (it withered). As I wrestled with the Scripture I felt like Zacharius when the angel told him he would have a son by his aged wife Elizabeth. The struggle in my heart was, “How can these things be?” Here is how I found the ‘rock’.

Since God makes manifest the counsels of the heart (1 Cor. 4:5), I asked Him, (step 1) “What is the counsel (rock) in my own heart that is in the way of my being able to receive and believe this?” Then in the quietness of that moment, as I meditated on the Scripture, up from my own heart spoke, “It’s just too good to be true.” (Remember the heart does speak to us – more on how

to do this later) This belief statement was the hard rock of deceit, under the surface, deep in my heart, opposing the truth in that verse. So I said, (step 2) “Lord, here has come up from my heart this thought that Your Word (I Jn 2:20) to me is just ‘too good to be true’. What do You want me to know about that?” (God speaks to us too.) Without delay came, “Everything I do for you is ‘too good to be true’.” Whoa! I was stunned as I considered what He said. Whoa! Everything He does and has done for me is ‘too good to be true’ – but it is true nonetheless. I spent time meditating on what He said. It was awesome. After digging up and pitching out this rock of unbelief, when I meditated on I John 2:20, no doubt arose anymore. So the deceitful rock of my lie-based reality was surfaced and removed, and no longer prevented the truth of God’s Word to sink in deeper. So somehow on some level, we know all things – I don’t know how I do yet – but that’s God’s assessment and I’m OK with it - now.

Matt 13:6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away.

We all have rocky soil in our heart. We want to believe God’s Word – and maybe we think we do believe it...until the sun comes up.

Weedy Soil

Whereas the obstacles to bearing fruit on the rocky soil lay hidden underneath the surface – deep inside the heart, the obstacles on the weedy soil are above the surface, outside of the heart in full view. These are the cares of this life that choke the seed, so that its fruit does not mature. The weeds grow from the soil, signifying that they grow from our heart, further signifying that they are feeding on our affections. Weeds can suck the life from the soil and the cares of this world suck the affections out of our own heart so we have no love to give, and no fruit can grow. Remember that the world entices us with offers of fulfillment but it never delivers.

Prov 1:19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

Good Soil

Finally, the good soil represents that heart (or piece of our heart) which can receive the truth AND produce fruit from it. The rocks and weeds are removed by the owner and the seed (truth) that is scattered onto this soil bears fruit “thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” We are the stewards of our hearts. But how can we be if we don’t pay attention to it and communicate with it? If we are to walk in peace and bear fruit, the rocks and weeds need to go. Our heart knows where the pain is coming from. As stewards of our own hearts we need to set our intention to clean up our field. We are setting our course to take proper care of our own heart as we would our own garden.

So, assuming equal distribution, it appears from this parable that only 25% (1 out of 4) of the soil bore fruit. If this were your garden, what would you do? In the unseen parts of our heart, the hardness, or the rocks, or the weeds represent spiritual disabilities in the sense that they disable us from bringing forth fruit. Our heart IS our garden, our property. Let’s break up the fallow ground and cultivate it and produce eternal fruit.

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Chapter 4. Fairness and Offenses

As we go through the material in this book, I will suggest that certain ‘defining moments’ in your life be carefully examined for certain disabling elements. And as we do these exercises the following phrase may surface from your heart, “That wasn’t fair. That wasn’t right. That just shouldn’t be.” So let’s address this ‘fairness’ issue early.

No, it isn’t fair that you had an abusive dad, or an alcoholic mom, or that your grandfather was a pervert, or that no one knew how to show love in your family, or that your family was an embarrassment to you, or that your poverty prevented you from having the things your popular friends had in school, or that the award you rightfully earned was given to someone else for some non merit-based reason. But, the perception of unfairness in our lives, although hurtful in its initial realizations, has an important purpose. There are many purposeful things in our lives that we call ‘unfair’ or ‘mistakes’ or ‘accidents’ in our shortsightedness, being unappreciative of the benefit these things have worked in us. Jesus taught that these ‘offenses MUST come’. Yes, they are a MUST of this life. Everyone’s life.

Matt 18:7 Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!

There are things that we all must go through in this life to obtain the treasure that is in it. What treasure?

As I’ve worked through this issue with myself and others it became apparent that the greater the unfairness (offense) in its potential to destroy our life, the greater the blessing in the resolution of that offense. The effect of the truth is to not only melt the perception of unfairness and its intents but also all its effects. So we may have had unfortunate generational curses (of sickness or occult activity) come down to us before we were even born! Let us not allow that to define us, nor allow self-pity to grip us. Our new birth right is to see the truth melt those painful mountains like wax. How else can we know the power of something unless we see what it can overcome or conquer? So if that thought bubbles up from your heart that what has been dealt to you ‘isn’t fair’, the answer is: No it isn’t fair, but I get to see the power of God’s truth in this – like no one else can.

Also consider that the perceived destruction brought to your life will pale into insignificance compared to the life and power that God can bring forth because of it. God’s intentions toward us are good, and for us to get the greater reward for it. And further, if we recall Rev 12:11, an important ingredient in overcoming is the word of our testimony – this is it. Our testimony is how God prevailed in turning our destruction into glory, but we need to apply the truth.

Finally, consider the exchanges God makes in Is 61:3. He gives beauty for ashes, but if you don’t have ashes, there is nothing else you can exchange for beauty. Ashes have purpose.

Luke 4:18 ...he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Chapter 5. Curses and Blessings

Many books address blessings and curses at a much deeper level than what is presented here. But for the purposes of the material contained in this book, a blessing or curse can be thought of as an invisible yet active force associated with a person that attracts either good or bad. Curses and blessings are put in play by words or our thoughts; although they are unseen, their affects are not. A curse pushes us in the direction of alienation from God and its accompanying troubles; a blessing, reconciliation and its accompanying rewards. As a person grows and experiences life, certain themes may become apparent. With operative curses, we may appear to repeatedly attract abuse, or false accusations, or poverty, or sickness, or, on the other hand, with blessings, we more often have good things wind up on our doorstep and seem to be able to receive the blessings God intends. The persistent forceful aspects of blessings and curses are seen in the following verses.

Deut 28:2 ²And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee

Deut 28: 45 ⁴⁵Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed;

The unseen forces of a curse are not irresistible, but rather seem to have a slow persistent eroding effect on our everyday situations. It is often difficult to detect these but as we pray and go through this material, we will learn how to identify them.

Generational curses come as a birthright. These are discussed in Chapter 6. Spoken curses are added as we go through this life and they are discussed in Chapter 12.

Section 1 Summary

These principles have been outlined in Section 1 for healing the broken heart and are as follows:

1. To heal the physical body we must attend to the damaging stress on it produced by the unseen aspects (soul= mind+heart). The soul harbors painful belief statements making us vulnerable, un-armored, truth-deficient and even ‘naked’ (Rev. 3:17) – targets of dark thoughts and their resultant misery. We 'feel' this tissue damage in our body but it originates in the soul.
2. The unseen part of us is comprised of the mind and heart. The heart thinks, reasons AND speaks to us of those painful things we believe. The mind processes information from many sources including the unseen realm.
3. Truth is the transformational remedy which can heal us, provided it can find the good soil within the heart. God is always speaking, but there is about a 25% chance (1 in 4 types of soil received truth and bore fruit) that God’s truth gets in to do us some good. We need to be in a position to receive His truth so we must address our fallow unproductive ground or what are referred to as our spiritual disabilities (the other 75%).
4. Where is this fallow ground? Like X-rays, situations that we consider stressful, are the trials of life that highlight where there is an absence of calmness, where we are vulnerable, and suffering misery from a deficiency of God’s truth. In the next section we look for the most common areas of our fallow, unproductive ground (the hard, rocky, weedy – the other 75%). Then in the last chapters you will see how to find it wherever it is. Let’s tear it up.

Section 2. Hearing from God (...or breaking up our fallow ground so we can hear)

Hearing truth from God is the universal remedy for all that ails us. There is nothing like it. It produces ‘shock and awe’. And if you are thinking, “How can these things be?” I felt the same way. Many claim that they do not hear from God. But God does not speak in our ears – if that is how you were expecting to hear from Him. Of course, God can do anything He wants, but usually people hear Him in their heart area. I would say that we ‘sense’ or ‘know’ what God is saying rather than audibly ‘hear’ Him. Now God has no problem making Himself plainly understood, in fact, GOD IS ALWAYS SPEAKING but the problem resides with our hearing. WE ARE NOT LISTENING. Jesus refers to this spiritual disability when quoting Isaiah 6:9, 10 in the context of explaining the Parable of the Sower and the Seed.

Matt 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross (to make thick, stupid or dull), and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Lest we think only the Pharisees had this problem, hear what he said to his own disciples:

Mark 8:17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? ¹⁸Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

Hardness of heart is a serious problem as important today as 2000 or 4000 years ago. There are many reasons or issues that can create hardness and impair our spiritual hearing. I have observed three common reasons that our spiritual hearing is dulled, making it hard to hear from God: ancestral issues, issues with God himself, and issues with our earthly father. Each of these issues has at its core a broken relationship with attendant anger which needs to be resolved. In the next three chapters we will thoroughly address each of these hindrances to hearing God.

Some folks say they sense/hear things when they pray, but are not sure if what they sense is from God, or from their own mind/heart or even the devil. Look at the results. Does it produce peace? Compassion? Reconciliation? If yes, then we know God has been there. If the words you sense do not resolve the internal conflict or pain, then likely it was not God you were sensing. Sometimes our mind will attempt to calm the emotional storm in our heart with positive thinking or Bible verses that haven't been able to penetrate yet. Just ask the Lord for His wonderful insight and keep seeking.

In the next chapter of this section we will begin practicing our spiritual disciplines. Like the discipline of physical exercise, this can be difficult. As we begin to practice these spiritual disciplines it is prudent to have a journal. As your heart speaks to you (and it will), write it down - uncensored. Remember, out of it are the issues of YOUR life, YOUR reality. These heart sayings are at the core of our emotional pain, anxiety, depression, fear, rage, etc. They were planted during our ‘defining moments’. The discipline of being thorough and capturing every dark and painful thought that bubbles up from our heart will be rewarded. Our goal is to be able to walk through life with uninterrupted peace and calmness which, in terms of Figure 1c, means systematically removing all the darkness in the soul region allowing God to redefine us His way. Then the work that has already been done by the Holy Spirit in our spirit can be manifest. Our journal will not only be a record of cleared issues but of the paradigm changing truth from the God that changes us.

Chapter 6. Ancestral Curses – Reconciling with Our Ancestral Line

The idea that our current situation may be a result of someone else's sins evokes a sense of unfairness (see Chapter 4 to revisit that discussion). However, the Bible indicates that there is a 'visitation' of these sins of others upon us, notably the sins of our fathers and sometimes of our rulers. The common go-to passage on this topic is Exodus 34:7 and is one of the earlier passages related to ancestral curses (besides the passing on of Adam's sin to all humankind).

Exodus 34:7 [God is] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

The scriptural remedy for ancestral curses is found in Daniel's prayer (below) which, significantly, precedes the release of Israel from captivity and the restoration to their homeland. Although there is no record of Daniel's displeasing God in any way, he confesses the fact that Israel's captivity (and his own captivity) is a result of the sins of his ancestors and rulers. Note in the following prayer that Daniel confesses the sins of his ancestors and his rulers as well as his own sins. (The prophets attest to this as THE reason of the captivity of the whole Jewish nation – not just the disobedient. Following this prayer events were set in place for the return to Israel.)

Daniel 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.....

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 O LORD, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Note in verse 13 that to 'turn from our iniquities' is one-half the solution, to 'understand Thy truth' is the other important half. The passing down of the father's sins is not just an Old Testament concept. Turning to the New Testament, we find Jesus specifically connecting our works/deeds/behaviors to that of our fathers.

John 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father.

In other separate accounts, Jesus warns that the passing down of transgressions and their consequences does and will occur.

Luke 11:47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. ⁴⁸ Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. ⁴⁹ Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: ⁵⁰ That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; ⁵¹ From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. (also Matthew 23:29)

On the other hand, Jesus tells us that **not all** calamities result from generational ‘curses’. In the case of the blind man in John 9, Jesus stated that his condition was neither the result of the blind man’s own sin nor his parents’ sin. Jesus was not correcting the widely held and prevailing thought of the Jews that there is an ancestral influence on our conditions, but rather stating that in this particular instance, the blindness was for the demonstration of the power of God.

John 9:1 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. ² His followers asked him, “Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind—his own sin or his parents’ sin?” ³ Jesus answered, “It is not this man’s sin or his parents’ sin that made him be blind. This man was born blind so that God’s power could be shown in him.

To balance this Jesus told the lame man that He healed at the pool of Bethesda, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." (John 5:14). The prevailing thought that there is an ancestral influence on our conduct or actions is also supported by Jesus in the following passage.

Luke 6:22 Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. ²³ Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. ²⁴ But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ²⁵ But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. ²⁶ Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.

And as the first martyr Steven states, at the end of his defense before the High Priest...

Acts 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

The thought might come to mind that Christ redeemed us from the curse. But regarding the role of Christ with respect to curses, we read

Gal 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: ¹⁴ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The curse from which we are delivered via salvation is clearly that of the law – i.e. to fulfill its righteousness through perfect obedience – an impossible task. This verse does not state that ‘Jesus removed all curses’ as some might assume. Are all curses removed from us as we enter the Kingdom of God? Or, are they removed as they are identified? There is likely undiscovered

Scriptural support for one or both of these positions, but experientially, the second has much more weight. The term ‘curse’ itself can be a stumbling block (see Chapter 5). In the broadest sense it may be best described as a persistent ‘negative influence’. So in this sense we bear the negative influence of our ancestors – their thought and conduct patterns which, like Daniel, we should first identify with and then confess.

I have used Daniel’s prayer as a model, in working with people when there seemed to be an inability to hear from God, or when there seemed to surface ancestral patterns (abuse, suicide, depression, anger, etc.). Doing so has resulted in unexpected, profound and positive spiritual experiences as well as a measure of emotional healing. I am at a loss to categorize these results except in the most general terms as, perhaps a lifting of some barrier, spiritual blindness, deafness or dullness. The resulting fruit thereof has been to accelerate healing, and these effects have also been long lasting. Many have reported back to me the positive effects of this discipline on their spiritual walk. There seems to be some spiritual transaction that occurs but it escapes a precise description of the dynamics – for the present, because these things are unseen.

It is important to note here that ancestral issues come down through the father only (Ex 34:7). If they came through the mother, Jesus could not have been a spotless lamb. So look to the patterns you see in yourself, your siblings, your father and his siblings, his father and his siblings, etc. Patterns from the mother are learned by instruction or observation as counsel we received into our heart while young. These will surface in application of these principles discussed in Section 6. Some clues to possible ancestral issues may reside in statements you have heard said in family gatherings: “That whole family has bad tempers.” Or, “That family have had their run-in’s with the law.” Or, “That family have had alcoholics in their family since moonshine days.” Or, “That family always have someone sick with something.” Or, “Someone needs teach that family about fidelity. Ne’er single one of ‘em been faithful to their wives.”

You may be thinking that you have never committed some of the atrocious acts of your ancestors. You never killed anyone, or stolen horses, or robbed a bank. But these are slow and eroding forces. And stop and think, Jesus said anger was the same as murder, and what’s the difference in God’s eyes between stealing a paper clip and stealing a horse or robbing a bank? As you ponder the deeds of your ancestors, you will see that in some measure you may have done the same things.

Exercise: As we begin looking for fallow ground, our assignment for this chapter is to seek God and ask Him to show us what might have come down to us as a result of the actions of our ancestors. These would be patterns you see in yourself, your siblings, your father and his siblings, his father and his siblings, etc. Some of these will be obvious, and others God will need to reveal to us. Devote one page in your journal to list your ‘ancestral issues’. You may revisit it several times. As you seek, God will show you what is contributing to any spiritual deafness or hardness of heart. This may take several days. When you feel the list is complete (or complete enough) let’s identify with each item on the list to the measure you are guilty of the same things and confess them and remove them (Fig. 1c) while doing the Ancestral Prayer below. If you think of something else later, just come back to this same page and apply this spiritual discipline. There is a partial list below to get started. Take your time. Pause and consider each one while making your own list.

Sample Ancestral Strongholds: anger, murder, theft, covetousness, greed, sorcery/witchcraft, wickedness, deceit, evil thoughts (deliberating evil intentions), revenge, adultery/infidelity, fornication, homosexuality, lasciviousness (unbridled lust), self-pity, selfishness, gluttony, jealousy/competitiveness, blasphemy, pride/arrogance, self-righteousness, foolishness, recklessness, judging/criticizing, bitterness, unforgiveness, incest, abuse (physical, emotional), depression, worry/fear, unthankfulness, poverty, failure, sickness and disease, insanity, suicide, being wrongfully accused, taken advantage of, alienation/social isolation/being outcast, pornography, returning evil for good, striving for perfection, hopelessness, self-doubt/insecurity, self-loathing, self-hatred, hatred of men, hatred of women, debility, addictions (eg. alcoholism, food, legal-illegal drug, spending)

Now, with your list in hand, make sure you can identify in some way with each of these curses that you listed. If this is a true generational curse then in some measure you are being affected. So, let's bring these before God and apply the cross. Let's pray deliberately and attentively.

Ancestral Prayer

Lord God Almighty, I identify with and confess these sin(s) of /curses from my ancestors: _____ (review list) _____. I also repent of each of these. I thank You that I can bring these curses to the cross where You washed them away eternally, cleansing and releasing me from these forever. I ask that these curses be removed from my entire being. Lord, I ask that Your intended blessings as my Heavenly Father be manifest in my life. (Lord any special blessings that You want to make me aware of?). Listen.

Then as you meditate on each item on your own list, be quiet before Him and listen and write. Don't be discouraged if you do not sense Him yet. We still have some important work to do. We have just begun thrusting the pick and shovel into the fallow ground. For some of us this is like concrete, but even concrete can be broken up with patient application of the pick ax.

I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that Daniel also confessed the sins of his rulers. If God brings your local or national or cultural or ethnic heritage to mind, pursue this in prayer by listing their sins then identifying with them, confessing them and renouncing them as well. Then meditate with God in the moment and see what truth and insight He may have for you.

Oh yes, and always write what you sense Him saying. Always. These are reality busting truths that show us life from His perspective and bring us calmness and peace. Then go back often and meditate on what He has said. His words are an introduction to a new way of thinking and believing. Changing our painful reality into His peaceful reality requires meditation. Meditating on these seeds waters them and causes them to grow and bear fruit. Remember what the good soil did with the seed?

Luke 8:15 But as for that [seed] in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart.

So hold it fast by frequent meditation.



Chapter 7. God in My Image - Reconciling with God our Heavenly Father

Most of us, down deep, hidden in our broken hearts have a problem with the way God has done things. When asked, most people will say that they are not angry with God or upset with the way He does things. Yet I have found when working with people that we usually find a moment in their life where they really, really were. For example, when you were young maybe you were taken to prayer meetings where the whole church was fervently praying for your favorite Aunt Joan who was on her death bed. You heard church folks ‘prophesy’ that God said that Aunt Joan would survive this terrible disease and God would get all the glory for it. By His stripes Aunt Joan was healed, and every one ‘believed’ that. But Aunt Joan died. “Why?” you might have asked. “God should have just healed her. He could have. Why didn’t He? What kind of God is He anyway? (Not my kind).” Anger at God is also often found in abuse or trauma situations where we say, “Why didn’t God stop that?” Or, “Why did He allow my brother to be shot? What kind of God is He anyway? (Not my kind).” Or maybe when you were small the church kicked out a family member. And you thought, “Why did God do that? What kind of God is He anyway? (Not my kind).” Or think of any bad experience in church or Sunday school or even with any ‘church going’ folk. Was your take away, “If church people act like that, I’m not into that kind of God at all.”? With this subtle thinking we are judging God and thinking we could design Him better.

But under our feelings of disappointment with God and His actions, our heart has said, “I cannot trust that kind of God. He let Aunt Joan die. He excommunicated that family member. He let THAT happen. No way. God blew any chances for my FULL trust when that happened.” So, if that is the case, why would we want to hear from God anyway? And under that is anger at God, and maybe even we have judged God as not being the kind of god He should be. So if you were on God’s board-of-directors, would you have called Him to account for His actions or inactions? This is making God in our image – just like the idols makers of old. We want our God to be of our own design – our kind of god.

Psalm 115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. ⁴ Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. ⁵ They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: ⁶ They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: ⁷ They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. ⁸ They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. (repeated in Psalm 135)

Note in verse 8, that those who make idols ‘are like unto them’. That is, the makers have the characteristics of their idols: they do NOT hear, see, smell, etc. So restated, idol makers cannot see or hear. So, on some level (not physically but spiritually), they have made themselves blind and deaf. So we, having made God in our image, have made ourselves blind and deaf – unable to hear from Him. And then we say He does not speak to US!!!! No, He speaks all the time but we have shut our ears to Him. Jesus points this out here....

Matthew 13:15 ¹⁵For this people's heart is waxed gross (to make thick, stupid or dull), and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

These problems are hidden deep in our hearts because we do not want to admit we have issues with God. Well, it is time to dig up these buried rocks of distrust and deal with them. After all, be honest. If we want to trust God, but down deep we feel He cannot be trusted, we are in serious conflict! This needs to be reconciled.

Paul was writing to those who were already believers exhorting them to be reconciled to God when He wrote...

2 Cor 5:20 .. we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

This is more than “Just let God be God”. It means knowing with unreserved appreciation that what He does and has done is good. Some things that God allowed that we consider ‘bad’ may actually have worked out for our good. As you take the steps to intentionally reconcile with Him this will become clearer.

Perhaps we have blamed God for our crazy parents, poverty, siblings, etc. Maybe we are not sure why we feel that we cannot fully trust God. But likely at some defining point in time we accepted an accusation against God. This is the exact tactic that Eve fell for – that God is the bad guy, who does not have our best interests at heart. So in a sense everyone has their own Adam-and-Eve experience, and the Garden of Eden drama is just continually repeated with different props. The devil plants enmity towards God, accusing God of evil intentions towards us to cause us to choose to isolate ourselves from God for our own good/survival. We take the bait, and alienation is introduced – serious alienation. And He is the One you definitely do not want to be alienated from because He is the only One with the remedies we need. Let’s do the following exercise – which can, and should be done until nothing is brought to mind.

Exercise: We will begin by asking God to show us any time that the thought/accusation entered our heart (and we accepted it) that God did wrong. So each event where we judged God or accepted Satan’s dark counsel needs to be surfaced, examined and replaced with truth. Have your journal ready. Title the top of the page with the event. Each event gets a page. Let’s pray.

Lord, I am fully willing to know any time in my life where I accepted the accusation that You did not do right, or that I could not trust You, or that I got angry at You. I am asking You to bring to light the things hidden in my heart and reveal any dark counsel therein.

Now let your mind quietly drift back over your life and see if He identifies anything. Sometimes it is helpful to present your heart with a fill-in-the-blank statement like, “I feel I cannot trust God because ____”. Take your time. Deep things take a while to surface. The process of finding the fallow ground may take repeated efforts over several weeks, or just a single effort one afternoon. Devote due time to this. It is well worth the persistence.

Now, let’s take the first event. Go back into the event and list all the things that made you angry at Him. Try fill-in-the-blank questions like this phrase and then listen for answers bubbling up from your heart location, “In my heart I’m angry at God here because ____”. Every time your heart bubbles up an accusation, write it in your journal and repeat the phrase again. Dig up all the accusations you accepted about God that made you mad at Him. Be thorough. Be honest. You are not offending or surprising God. He sees how these buried thoughts are hardening your heart, making you blind and deaf. He understands why you have been isolating yourself from Him. The devil has been doing this a long time and to many, many people – not just you. List all your responses to that phrase in your journal.

This next step may be difficult to concept at the beginning. You are now, with list in hand, at the threshold of releasing your anger at God for these perceived offenses. In my experience, when it comes to releasing offenses, not only at God, but at anyone, the one who was deeply hurt (you) is not necessarily ready to do this for a number of reasons – good reasons. So just think about releasing these offenses from your heart regarding the ways that you feel God has wronged you. Can you do it? Pause and listen inside as you try this, “The reason I don't feel safe or right fully releasing these offenses is _____?” Listen inside. Objections may bubble up from the heart. If any part of your broken heart objects, write down the good reasons, and go to Section 4 entitled “Yeah, but...” Then come back to this point. If you feel you are able now to release these offenses, get your list and let's go back into the time framework or defining moment of the offense and pray.

Lord Jesus, it feels like you wronged me when _____(refer to your list of accusations)_____. My understanding of this needs Your insight. But now I acknowledge my _____(anger, ...)_____ towards You because of this. I now am willing to release this offense from my heart realizing that harboring it has not served me well. I ask You to lift this _____anger, etc._____ from me, and reopen my eyes, my ears and my heart. I am willing to exchange my ignorance about this event for your insights. I ask that You come, and enlighten my understanding regarding the truth in this event. I want to be completely reconciled with You.

Now go back into the event in your mind and heart to see what insight you were missing. Ask, Lord what did You want me to know here. Watch and listen. Sense with your heart. What part of reality you were missing. If you go back to the event and still feel upset with God, maybe you missed something. That is, there may be another reason that you were angry with Him. Go back and take your time. Ask Him what you are missing here. The more you do this the better you will get at it.

If, in the future, God shows you other events where you attempted to make God in your image, simply come back here and go through the whole process again. Another good ‘idol’ test is to meditate on the following verse and if it bothers you in any way, ask Him to show you why.

Psalm 115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

As each of these historical events receives the truth from God Himself, you will find it easier and easier to hear His voice and accept His ways and trust Him in the future.

Matt. 11:6 (Jesus speaking) And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

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Chapter 8. Reconciling with our Earthly Father(s)

We tend to relate to God in the way we related to our earthly father(s). As a baby and small child we inherently trusted our parents with our care and survival. If that trust was violated or ignored, our ability to trust others, including God is greatly impacted. Our dad (and mom) modeled authority or powerful figures for us. Our reactions to them often define our reactions to authorities or God Himself. If our earthly father was very strict, our concept of our Heavenly Father is not too different. If it was hard to please our earthly father, then likely we struggle with how to please our Heavenly Father, and others. And if our earthly father did not listen to us, or accept us, or did not seem to care what was going on in our life,...guess what? We have difficulty with the concept that our Heavenly Father accepts us, has time for, or interest in us.

These opinions of our earthly father are cemented by our experiences with him. When he hurt us, abandoned us, embarrassed us, ignored us, yelled at us, or offended us in some hurtful way, our heart was broken. In response we naturally got angry and in defense, we judged him or made some vow to protect ourselves which hardened our heart and thus created more fallow ground. “He’s mean, a pervert, a drunk, really stupid, so cruel”, etc. Then, the sun went down on our wrath, or we ‘slept it off’, allowing the darkness to plant all the damaging interpretations of the event that it could. We gave place to the devil, and of course, he took it.

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:²⁷ Neither give place to the devil.

So what ‘place’ do we have the right to give – except a place of ourselves? (Fig. 1b,c) Now is time to break up this ground and evict any occupants. Some might be thinking, “That was so long ago. It doesn’t need to be drug up again.” Think of it as a festering splinter; a shard of dark isolation; a moment that defined you in a painful way. Some others may think, “I already did that”. But I have found from experience that often a person’s intention drug their heart through a ‘forgiveness’ exercise while the heart was kicking and screaming, ‘NO WAY’. In other words the heart’s objections to forgiving were ignored. Bad idea. It doesn’t work because forgiveness is an act of the heart, not the ‘will’. You must address all the objections of the heart before you can go forward ‘with the whole heart’ (see Sec. 4). Or, if you are still not convinced it will do any good, just try this exercise one time through, with your whole heart, and examine the fruit of it.

Matt 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Also consider that our prosperity is linked to our honoring our father and mother. (see Deut 5:16)

Exercise: This exercise follows the same steps as given in the last chapter. With journal in hand, write down any defining events in your life where you were angry with your dad (natural or step-dad or father figure in the home). Some incidents come to mind immediately, some need God’s uncovering, in which case we ask God where, or when, we were offended. It is best to do these one event at a time. I think you get more insight that way. Just like in a rocky field you can only pitch one rock at a time. Each individual event needs to be surfaced, examined and pitched out of your heart and, best of all, replaced with God’s insight and compassion. Have your journal ready? Let’s pray.

Lord, I am fully willing to know any time in my life where I got angry at my dad, or judged him.
I'm asking you to show me these times that he offended me so I can be reconciled and
exchange my ignorance for Your insight.

Now let your thoughts drift back over your life and see what He identifies. Take your time. When He shows you an event, entitle a new page, let your mind and heart go back into the defining event and list on that page all the things that made you angry at him. Fill in the blank, "I am angry at him (here in this event) because ____." Stay in that moment, listen to your heart as it speaks, and keep writing. Repeat the phrase and fill in the blank. Dig up all the dark and nasty things that were planted in you in that moment that made you mad at him. Remember, we are releasing emotional toxins or poisons so be thorough. Be patient. Be honest. Don't censor what bubbles up. You are not offending or surprising God. He sees how you were hurt, and He has some wonderful beauty for your ashes. Also include how you judged your dad – i.e. your 'dishonoring opinions' of him as a result of that event.

Again we find ourselves at the threshold of potentially releasing an offense and anger at someone who hurt us profoundly. Some people don't feel safe doing this, or, for some good reason, are not OK with this. Perhaps he doesn't deserve to be forgiven, or his offense is too great, or maybe you feel your anger is your only protection from further hurt. As you look at the prospect of fully and completely forgiving him, listen for the answer to this: "I don't feel safe or right forgiving him because ____" If anything surfaces write it and go to Section 4 entitled "Yeah, but..." Otherwise, let's re-enter the historical event with its emotional intensity, and let's pray deliberately and attentively.

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge my _ (Anger...)_ towards __(my dad)_ for _(your list of offenses)_. I choose this day to completely forgive him AND completely release him and these offenses. I also release this _ (Anger, jealousy, bitterness, contempt, resentment, self-pity, entitlement, hatred, vengefulness)_ into Your hands and ask You to lift this/these from me. I need You to deliver me from these hurtful passions and I repent of harboring these feelings against him. I now sever all ties of darkness related to these hurtful passions. I cast off any tormenting spirits of darkness harbored as a result of this.

Lord Jesus, as these toxic emotions leave, I ask that You come in and heal where they have broken my heart. I ask also that You renew my mind with Your truth.

OK, let's re-visit the offense and see what God wanted you to know, that you could not see at that moment.

Lord, what did You want me to know/see as I look at this event?

Look at the offenses. Listen. Write what He says.

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If you still feel after your first time through this Section 2 (Chapters 6, 7 & 8) that you cannot sense what God wants you to know when you ask, repeat the exercises in chapter 7 and 8. This seems to be where the most stubborn fallow ground is located. There may be some very toxic stuff yet to be discovered. Clearing out the issues discussed in Chapters 7 & 8 will help the rest of this book go more easily. Keep seeking. Everyone who seeks, finds (Matt 7:8).

1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Section 3. The Painful Residuals of the Events of our Life

Chapter 9. Guilt

Many of us carry guilt which is evidenced by our motivations. If someone can get you to do something by making you feel guilty, then you are carrying guilt in your heart (Fig 1c.). If you often feel guilty, then you have a ‘guilt target’ painted on you. People like this will do just about anything to avoid those horrible feelings of guilt. Thus, that is how they are motivated. “I am doing this so I don’t feel guilty.” In religious terms, your resultant ‘works’ are ‘dead works’.

Guilt is like a whirlwind in that it keeps us doing the same things that make us feel guilty. We feel trapped in an inescapable cycle. We cannot ask God for His forgiveness because we believe we are going to wind up doing the same thing again and again. The cycle keeps sucking us in, heaping guilt upon guilt and destroying us. And without God’s insight this will remain the case. We need His insight to set us free of this destructive cycle.

Many of us carry guilt because deep inside we feel that we do not deserve to be forgiven for something we did in the past, or something we have been involved in. Or, for some good reason we feel we have committed the unpardonable sin (discussed below). We feel that God just should not or cannot forgive us. Perhaps in our mind we know that God said He would forgive us if we asked...and we asked...so, why don’t we feel forgiven. Why is there still guilt hanging around my neck? What’s the use? It must be the unpardonable sin. And the worst part is that with this guilt around our neck we feel that we cannot approach God at all (Heb 10:22). Then how will we even hear from Him? This guilt is very destructive and must be dealt with until it is all gone.

Exercise: Let’s first explore the barriers to releasing our guilt once and for all. Most people know immediately the historical event(s) where the guilt is coming from. They may not know where their anger began or what is contributing to their anxiety or sorrow, but the origins of guilt are not easily hidden. In case you are the exception, let me explain how to find a source of your guilt. Recall a recent event where you felt guilty, or, were made to feel guilty. Imagine not acting to avoid your guilt feelings. Feel how bad that feels, and ask God to show you where you learned how bad guilt felt. While holding on to the feelings of guilt, scan through your life to find an experience which matches those feelings of guilt. Look for that defining moment.

You need to revisit this incident that is festering the guilt, as painful as it is. With journal in hand, look around this event and listen in your chest for the answer to: “I cannot or should not be completely forgiven for this because ____.” Begin writing whatever comes up from your heart - uncensored. Keep repeating this question. Take your time. Be thorough. Hang with it and keep asking that question until all your really good reasons have bubbled up from your heart and are now in your journal. Now take just the first one and let’s pray. Get a tissue – this is great stuff.

Lord Jesus, here in this event I feel that I cannot or should not be forgiven because _____ (first good reason)_____, is there something You want me to know about that?

Listen what His thoughts are about this. Write them beside your thoughts.

Continue in this manner with all reasons, and with any new ones that come up. Commit your good reasons to Him in all sincerity and ask for His counsel on the matter. We know His thoughts are high above our thoughts, but that does not mean He does not let us in on them. So listen for them. When you have come to the end of your list, and thus have no more reasons that

you cannot fully receive His forgiveness, you are ready for the guilt prayer. Can you exchange your guilt for His forgiveness? If not, go back and find out why. If you ARE ready, let's pray.

Lord Jesus, I sinned against You when I (name what you did). I did this feeling it was wrong. I have hurt You, myself and others, and for this I am very sorry. I am powerless to change this, or rid myself of the shame, and guilt it has produced in my heart. I choose this day to not hide, or cover over, or rationalize what I did, but rather acknowledge it before You. I ask You to cleanse me from this sin on account of the cross of Jesus Christ. I now sever all ties of darkness connected in any way to my sin. I cast off any tormenting spirits of darkness harbored as a result of this. Lord, I ask that You replace my guilt with a realization of Your forgiveness.

Look at what you did. Listen to what He says. Write and date it.

(Luke 7:47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.)

One of the issues that we may encounter as we work on ourselves is ‘parental guilt’. That is, after realizing the potential that parents have in hurting their children, we realize the damage we may have inflicted on our own children. The devil incites parents against children and vice versa. When dealing with this in my own life, and after following the above procedure, I got this insight when listening. “I (God) was the perfect parent to Adam and Eve, yet Satan still incited them against Me.” Whoa. See what I mean? His thoughts are things you never think about. They totally change your perspective and set you free.

The Unpardonable Sin

Many folks that I work with have the thought down in their heart that they have committed this unpardonable sin – not being sure themselves exactly what it is. Here is the Amplified Version of Jesus’ own words.

Mark 3:28 Truly and solemnly I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever abusive and blasphemous things they utter; ²⁹But whoever speaks abusively against or maliciously misrepresents the Holy Spirit can never get forgiveness, but is guilty of and is in the grasp of an everlasting trespass. ³⁰For they persisted in saying, He has an unclean spirit.

If we look at the context of this and see why Jesus said this, we will see that it was because the religious folks kept saying that Jesus was demon possessed, and that His works were wrought by Satan. In the broadest sense the ‘unpardonable sin’ is attributing to Satan the works that are done by God. But know this...if you are concerned that you have committed the unpardonable sin, you haven’t. It is committed by those whose heart is so hardened against God that they maliciously and abusively speak evil of God’s Spirit and don’t care. They are hardened beyond help. People reading this book and caring about their position before God, do not fall into this ‘don’t care’ category. If this discussion has not convinced you, just proceed with the exercises as if you have not committed this unpardonable sin and allow God to adjust your perspective on this.

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Chapter 10. Harboring Judgment

The Bible has much to say about judging. In this chapter I am only addressing the judging of other people (e.g. He is a thief. She is an adulteress.), NOT the judging of ‘matters’ (Stealing is wrong. Adultery is wrong.). After collecting all the New Testament verses that contain the root word translated ‘judge’ and its constructions, I’ve come to the conclusion that our judging other people has a deleterious affect on us and for many reasons given here we should refrain from this dangerous practice. The strongest support for this comes from the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged ²**For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.** ³**And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?** ⁴**Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?** ⁵**Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.**

The main Greek word translated ‘to judge’ is *krino* and its broadest meaning is to compare to a standard. The result is generally a negative assessment in that someone does not measure up to our standard in some way. The Bible commands us not to do this in Matt 7:1 and in other verses discussed below. But folks will bring up the following verse when I present this concept to them:

1 Cor 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Both underlined words here are the Greek word *anakrino* which means ‘examine’, in the sense of ‘asking questions’, ‘to find what something is made of’ not in the sense ‘to compare with a standard’ (Gk. *krino*). So the spiritual person asks questions and examines a matter. This is not comparing with a standard; it is gathering data. So this verse should not be used to justify judging thus contradicting Mt 7:1.

Another problem with committing judgment is indicated by Paul in this admonition.

1 Cor 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

This verse points out that there are ‘hidden things’ we cannot see, and ‘counsels of the hearts’ of which we are unaware. This makes us unqualified judges, period. There is a day of judgment when the Righteous Judge will make His determination. He knows the standard, and the pertinent things to the case that we do not know, plus He knows all the thoughts of all hearts.

So, the first inherent problem which disqualifies us as judges of people is our ignorance – we do not have all the data. Another dangerous aspect of judging is found here in Romans.

Rom 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. ²**But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.** ³**And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?**

So for whatever deed or motivation we judge another person, the Scriptures say we are guilty of the SAME things. We might say that we never beat anyone like our dad beat us, nor did we kill anyone, but in some measure we have done these same kinds of things, as this Scripture points out. So we see that judging others not only exposes the faults of the judge but guarantees us the judgment for the exact same things and in the exact same measure from Matt 7:1 and Rom 2:3.

Another harmful effect of judging people is seen in Matt. 7:5 above. Judging affects our vision. But, once we cast the beam out of our own eye, ‘then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye’. When our beam is cast out, we might find that their mote was simply a reflection of our own beam according to Rom 2:1. So that little mote helped us find our beam. We saw in Chapter 6 how we blind our own selves when we make God in our image. Judging also impairs our vision.

There is yet another damaging aspect of judging others which is very subtle. Judging, or accusing others, puts us on the same team as the ‘accuser of the brethren.’ In other words, when we make accusations, we side with the devil himself against those whom God loves.

Rom 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

So God wants to hold them up all the while we are cutting them down. In fact, the devil’s role as chief alienator is effectively accomplished by feeding us accusations to hold against others.

Judging creates a wall of isolation making US feel all alone. I cannot emphasize this enough, that people who feel alone and depressed have often committed much judgment and in so doing have alienated the world from themselves. This creates intense loneliness. On the other extreme, God’s role is chief reconciler.

2 Cor 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, as ministers of reconciliation we must abandon the habit of judging people. Now many of us were raised in a critical family or church environment. This was just Satan’s work of alienation and isolation within families and churches. Since that is what we observed in our homes, we unknowingly adopted it as part of our conduct, and reaped the fruit of it – isolation.

Sometimes we judge others as a form of defense. It is the only weapon we have, and it gives us a sense of upper-handedness. We not only judge individuals (pastors, presidents, newscasters, drivers, teenagers) but ethnic groups, political parties, and various organizations. The Pharisees were characterized by their judging. They even judged Jesus as being demon possessed.

Finally, I often get asked, “What about people doing things that are blatantly wrong, and God’s Word clearly says so. Shouldn’t those people be judged? What about church discipline?” Well, in the textbook ‘church discipline’ case of Pharisees vs. woman-caught-in-the-very-act, the Pharisees rightly argued that the law of Moses “commanded us, that such should be stoned” (John 8:3). But Jesus countered that the first stone-thrower be without sin. The crowd thinned to two. Then Jesus, Who was qualified to throw a stone, told the woman, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” So Jesus skillfully used the event to help the accusers focus on their own stuff (as in Rom 2:1). Let us go and do likewise. And let us rejoice that those we deem so worthy of judgment are in our church to show us our own faults. (Incidentally at the end of that same chapter (John 8) the religious folks pick up stones to throw at Jesus.)

These are just a few of the Scriptures on judging people but their message is compelling. Don’t do it. Wait for THAT day. And as Abraham said, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen 18:25) And if we feel judgment of another welling up from our own heart, use it skillfully

to see when or where we were guilty of the same things. So if judging blinds us, and isolates us and for all the other reasons given above, it behooves us to release and renounce the judgments we are harboring in our hearts against other people. These things are released by the daily spiritual discipline of repenting thereof and getting God's insight as shown below.

Practicing this discipline gives wonderful insights. God always seems to replace our judgmental thoughts with compassionate thoughts towards the target of our accusations. When we take time to listen to what He says, mercy seems better than judgment, and becomes the fruitful end of our reconciliation. It is in this moment that we realize that we were blinded. That there was something that we did not see or know about the person that we judged, and that we are really no different than they. And when He '*will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts*', we realize why He, and He alone is the Judge of all the earth. We can rest in the counsel of Abraham that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Exercise: This spiritual discipline of releasing judgment and receiving God's insight takes more commitment than it does time. If we were raised in a critical environment or adopted the practice of judging into our lifestyle, this exercise will be the one that is done the most. Let's begin in our journal with the people who are closest to us. It is important to include your parents, spouse and children on this list. These are the ones that the devil has targeted to isolate us from (and them from us). Write their name, and begin listing how you have judged or criticized them, or, any dishonoring opinions you may be holding of them. Ask the Lord to come and reveal the things you have missed. If something surfaces later you can always come back to this page. Now there is always the possibility that you are reluctant to release the judgment of a specific person. You might say, "But it is true, they ARE immature and self-centered." And thus be tempted to not release and renounce the judgment. Would you just see what God says about this? Would you like to know why they are acting this way? Would you be willing to exchange that judgment for mercy? If not, read Section 4 entitled 'Yeah but...'

So with journal in hand and our detailed judgments of our first (maybe closest) person before us. Let's pray slowly and thoughtfully and get some wonderful insight.

Releasing Criticism/Judgment/Fault Finding towards others

Lord Jesus I confess that I criticized, judged and condemned (person/group) for (list of judgments). I see now that I disobeyed You when I accepted these accusations against them, and, that in some measure I am guilty of these same things. I now renounce using these judgments against them, and I am willing to release these judgments of them from my heart. I ask that You release me from any judgments, or condemnation that I've earned as a result of judging and condemning others. I ask that You re-open my eyes that I can see clearly. Lord, I choose to accept and be reconciled with the people You have put in my life, and I ask for Your truth in exchange for my ignorance about this.

Look at the person in your mind's eye that you judged and see what He wants you to know. Write it. Repeat this exercise with others and get all the insight and mercy or compassion you can. The feelings of loneliness and isolation will dissipate proportionately.

Luke 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

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Chapter 11. Anger and Its Variations

Anger is the natural result of a received offense. That is, someone hurts or offends you, and your response is anger. This is natural. God gets angry. Jesus said that these offenses must come. They are part of living in this dark world. However, there seems to be a problem with hanging on to anger too long. We need to get insight and let it go, preferably before the sun goes down. Holding on to the passion of anger seems to open a window of vulnerability in our armor through which the devil's interpretation of the offense/event gets into our heart. That is, during any moment of passion, dark counsel has access to our heart. Dark counsel sounds like, "I'm better off dead", "No one cares about me", "I'll show them", "Dad doesn't know anything", "I'm so stupid", "useless", "slow", "ugly", "incompetent", "not good enough", etc. We soak in these counsels and wear/become them, because we held anger open too long.

Anger has different expressions and intensities. Some will say, "I'm not angry, just frustrated." Frustration is anger with a coating of sadness, but it is still anger. Other emotions are blends with an anger component, such as vengefulness (anger with intent to hurt), jealousy, bitterness (longstanding or ripened anger), contempt (anger+pride), resentment (anger as protection), and hatred. Often missed is the fact that anger is sometimes directed at our own selves. I have observed in working with folks that many people carry self-anger and self-hatred which is exceedingly destructive to our health.

We discussed anger at our earthly fathers previously in Chapter 8. The same principles apply here. Our mother, no doubt, offended us – creating anger, as have our siblings, our relatives, old neighborhood friends, school friends, teachers, church friends, pastors, and the list goes on. Again, anger is a natural response, but, it needs to be released as soon after the event as possible. As the years go by this anger that was buried alive does NOT die, but festers, resurfacing when we encounter similar circumstances. Buried anger is often the root cause of GI tract ailments (stomach and intestines).

These offenses (or 'trespasses' as the Bible calls them) are often hard to release because of the setting in which they occurred. The most serious offenses often occurred when we were small children, helpless, lacking strength to defend ourselves, innocent, and trusting of everyone. Someone took advantage of us, hurting us, taking from us, neglecting us when we were unable to meet our own basic needs. We couldn't stop them, call for help, speak up, or get someone to believe what happened to us. We were powerless. The shock and violation of our trust naturally resulted in anger.

There are many scenarios but one basic theme. Satan incites someone to hurt us, steal from us, violate us or even ignore us. He conceals his involvement, blames God, feeds us many misinterpretations that incite us to wrath and judgment. This results in alienation and isolation. His high value target is to get children to be angry with, judge and condemn, and thus become isolated from their parents. This creates intense loneliness and puts children at risk having been alienated from their God-ordained protectors. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood (mom, dad, etc.), but against unseen dark and evil agencies according to ***Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***

So, although there are many offenders, there is only one enemy.

Exercise: If you have a tendency to be angry, the place to begin healing is the last time you got angry. Really angry. With journal out, go back to that incident and explore it with your heart. I was angry here because __, __, __. Write. Now you need to find where you learned to respond to situations like that in anger. Feel how bad those reasons for anger feel and let's find out.

Lord, I am fully willing to know any time in my life where I got angry for these same reasons, and harbored it in my heart. I'm asking you to show me these times that I was deeply offended so I can resurface the anger and give it to You. I ask that you come and lift the darkness and reveal the counsels in my heart.

Now with those reasons for anger burning in your heart ask it, "I remember feeling this kind of bad when ____." It may take time. Buried things take a while to surface.

When He shows you a person and/or an event, go back into the event with all its feelings and list all the things that made you angry there. Keep in mind that your anger may be directed at your own self. Complete the phrase, "I'm angry (in this event) because __, __, __." Stay in that moment and keep writing. Keep digging. Dig up all the nasty things that were planted in you in that moment and what specifically made you angry. We are releasing emotional toxins so be thorough. Vent to your journal uncensored. Be honest. You are not offending or surprising God. He sees how you were hurt and He has prepared some beauty for your ashes.

Now you are in a position to release this toxic anger, hatred, etc. from your heart. But you must be fully willing to do this with your whole heart. Some people do not feel safe doing this, or, for some good reason are not OK with this. As you look at the prospect of fully and completely forgiving your offender and releasing all your anger, ask – can I do this wholeheartedly? If you have any reluctance (that is OK), put a book mark or sticky note here and visit Section 4.

Now you may be in a better position to release the offenses against you. These occurred in specific historical events. You experienced and received the offense. You are currently wearing it (Fig 1c), and acting according to it. Now it is time to release this and get God's insight. This exercise follows the same steps as given before. Let's pray attentively.

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge my (Anger...) towards (person) for (your list of offenses). I choose this day to completely forgive him/her AND completely release them and these offenses. I also release this (Anger, jealousy, bitterness, contempt, resentment, self-pity, vengefulness, hatred) into Your hands and ask You to lift this/these from me. I need You to deliver me from these hurtful passions and I repent of harboring this against them.

I now sever all ties of darkness related to these hurtful passions. I cast off any tormenting spirits of darkness harbored as a result of this.

Lord Jesus, as these toxic emotions leave, I ask that You come in and heal the damage it has caused in my heart. I ask also that You renew my mind concerning these things by Your truth.

OK, let's re-enter the historical event, see the offenses, look at what you wrote and see what insight God wanted you to know, but that you could not see because of your spiritual blindness at that moment.

Lord What did you want me to know or see here?

Look at the offense. Listen. Write down what He says.

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Chapter 12. Being Cursed or Judged by Others

We discussed the damaging affects on ourselves of judging other people. As you can well accept, judging also hurts the person over which the judgment is audibly spoken. We have all seen this happen. A father says to his son, "What, are you stupid?" Or an angry mother says to her little child, "You are so slow!" Sometimes these are very damaging and life impacting, especially when the child is small and has no evidence to the contrary. "Mom says I'm slow. Dad says I'm stupid." These statements were made in an angry frustrating moment for the parent (likely incited by the devil), and although the parent may not believe it, the child now does. So the labels stuck. Other common sources of curses are teachers and doctors or those who are considered by the child to be in a position of authority. A doctor told one of my children that they "would never be normal", and to my surprise that incident came up in a prayer session. We addressed this through the spiritual discipline below to remove the curse and replaced it with God's blessing.

As children we may have been the brunt of some name calling incidents in school or the neighborhood. We may hear the name calling circulate in our mind or with our speech. We need to find the events where these were planted in our childhood.

Exercise: Usually people don't object to having labels removed from them. Some incidents come to mind immediately, some need God's uncovering, in which case we ask God where, or when, and with what, you were labeled. You may want to be prepared with your journal. Each event warrants a new page. Let's pray.

Lord, I am fully willing to know any time in my life where I was judged or cursed and the label stuck. I'm asking you to show me these times.

You may hear the person's voice calling you that name. Write. Having labels in hand, you will want to take them to the Ultimate Authority on you to see what He says. Before we proceed, be aware that in the historical event, there is often an element of anger at the person judging or cursing or calling you a name. If this is the case, resurface and release the anger in the memory first (Chapter 11). Have tissues? Good stuff is coming your way! Pray slowly and deliberately.

Canceling Criticisms/Curses/Pronouncements/Judgments received from others

Lord Jesus Christ, I regret whatever I did that brought this curse/judgment/name upon me that I am (name or curse). I am powerless to reverse what I did to provoke this, but I ask that You release me from this curse/judgment/name that I received. I ask that this curse/judgment be broken, nullified and removed from my entire being. I thank you that I can take this curse to the cross and be released from it forever. Lord what do I need to know about this?

Think about the judgment/curse. Listen what He says about it. Write what He says about it.

(Luke 6:28 [Jesus speaking] bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.)

You may want to take a moment to bless the person(s) or their memory as commanded here by Jesus.

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Chapter 13. Vows

The word ‘vow’ sometimes seems archaic. It doesn’t come up in ordinary conversation. After all, who would make a vow anyway? The answer is, a desperate, hurt child, in an attempt to protect themselves from further hurt. Picture, for example, a little child observing the hurt that mom and dad are incurring as they argue and fight. In the child’s limited set of experiences they assume that this is what marriage is about, and they make a vow to protect themselves from this kind of hurt that sounds like “I’ll never get married”. Each time the child experiences the pain of the parent’s marital conflict that same vow is reinforced and justified in the child’s mind as a necessary condition for survival. The child is attempting to protect himself from future pain. Children feel helpless to stop what they see happening, and in that helpless moment they find a way to protect themselves behind a vow. As they grow up, they feel less helpless, or escape the abusive situation, or see it end in divorce. They then forget how they bound themselves. When they get married, they experience some inner conflict about the marriage, not realizing the roots of that conflict – they violated their own rule for survival, “I’ll never get married.”

This is a very simple example of how vows (made as helpless children) warp our present relationships/reality. Somehow we are tricked into thinking that binding ourselves in this way can somehow protect us from pain. Some other simple, yet destructive vows sound like...I’ll never trust another man....I’ll never step foot in a church again ...I’ll never forgive her as long as I live ...I’ll never tell anyone about this, etc. Vows are recognizable by the key words ‘always’ or ‘never’ or ‘what ever it takes’ or similar emphatic expressions. Like curses (discussed previously), vows act as a constant eroding undercurrent in our lives. They create internal conflict if we unknowingly violate them. It is in our best interest to be free of these vows that bind us even now. I have also observed as I have worked with people that making a vow to protect ourselves from some kind of situation guarantees that it will repeatedly occur. That is, vows control nothing.

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

As you have been doing these exercises, God may have brought you to specific events in your life over and over again. That is, you are reminded of the same memory and although much of the torment is gone, there is some residual sting. Sometimes this is because a vow was made at that time. In fact, with each of these exercises you may be dealing with the same memory. (That is, you keep turning to the same page in your journal.) As you learn how to take the sting out of this ‘defining moment’ of your life by following Biblical disciplines, you will be encouraged to follow suit in other painful events of your life. A single painful memory/‘defining moment’ will usually have several aspects – vows, anger at self, anger at others, guilt, judgments, curses, etc. The disciplines elaborated here demonstrate the process of removing the spiritual disabilities through which Satan’s torments flow.

Exercise: Now we need to see if we have bound our self with any vows. Sometimes we hear ourselves just saying something like, “I’ll never do that again.” This is a good clue. When do you remember saying that before? Was it the same kind of scenario? You can ask your own heart, “I needed to make a vow like this when _____. ” If nothing comes to mind then we need help. We need Christ to come ‘*who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and*

will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.' Our journal will be helpful in this process. Let's pray.

Lord, I am fully willing to know any time in my life where I bound myself with a vow. I'm asking you to show me these times.

Look for the key words 'always' or 'never' or 'what ever it takes' or 'as long as I live' or 'never again will I'. Write these down.

Now, once identified, we must next determine if they are able to be removed. To do this, ask your heart the question in the memory: "I needed to make this vow because __, __, __". Write what surfaces from deep inside. The reasons you needed to make this vow are as important as the vow itself.

So, in the journal is written the vow, AND the reason(s) we had to make it. Before your heart will release this vow, it has to be assured that there is no longer any need for it, since it is a protective measure. Let's submit the reason for making the vow to the Lord first to get His insight.

Lord, I needed to make this vow because I felt (reasons). What would You have counseled me at that time?

Think about your reason and listen for His thoughts and write them. Keep using the statements above to see if there are any other reasons to keep the vow(s). Once all the reasons for holding on to the vow are addressed, it can be released.

Breaking Sinful Vows/Promises/Agreements

Lord Jesus, I confess making and holding myself in bondage to the vow/agreement that _____. I now choose to renounce this vow/agreement. I also release whatever I've attempted to gain from this vow/agreement. I sever all ties of darkness in any way connected to this vow/agreement. I cast off any tormenting spirits of darkness associated with, or harbored as a result of, this vow/agreement. Lord God, I repent and ask Your total release from this vow/agreement.

Think about the vow and see if there is anything else He wants you to know about this. Write and date.

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Chapter 14. Occult Activity and Other Bonds

Sometimes in our ignorance we do really stupid stuff. One such activity that opens us up to torment is engaging in occult practices, that is, those activities inviting demonic or satanic participation. Think back over your life to see if you ever engaged in any such activity. Devote a page in your journal to it. Think back over the event. If guilt surfaces, go back to Chapter 9 and then return here. Now look at what you did and pray....

Occult Activities

Lord Jesus, with You as my witness I renounce and repent of this occult activity. I confess my ignorance and my change of heart regarding this. Lord Jesus, I ask You to release me from any consequences that I have reaped as a result of this involvement. I renounce any demonic services that I may have accepted that have provided me with any sense of comfort, or control, or protection from pain, or any other service. I announce that The True Lord Jesus Christ is my only Savior, and my Lord, I reaffirm that I belong wholly to Christ and Him alone. I command any and all demons related to this event to separate from me. I invite the Holy Spirit to come into my heart and take their place.

Look at what you did. Listen what He wants you to know about this. Write and date.

Bonds

There are occasions where we join ourselves to others in an emotional way to our own detriment. Either through a strong emotional tie, or through a trauma, or a sexual union out of wedlock, we create an emotional attachment to another person. In some cases there may be an obsession with an individual from the past that creates a haunting effect on us until the emotional tie is broken. This often occurs with celebrities, rock groups or trauma partners. Many people we encounter during our daily lives will remind us in some way of this individual, or this person shows up in dreams and fantasies. If recalling the relationship surfaces any feelings of anger or guilt, revisit those chapters. Before we renounce the emotional bond we ask our heart: I cannot break the emotional tie with this person because _____? Any reason that surfaces should be presented to the Lord in the format done previously. Now look at the person to which emotional ties exist and pray....

Unrighteous Bonds

Lord Jesus, with You as my witness I renounce any unrighteous bonds (emotional or physical) or ties that exist between _____(person/activity)_____ and me as a result of my involvement, or my inappropriately giving my heart away to this person (or activity). I now release this person's (activity's) tie from my heart. I ask Your release from this bondage on account of the cross of Jesus Christ. I now command any evil spirits associated with this bondage to leave and not return. Lord Jesus, I ask that You heal my broken heart and give me an experience of Your release from this bondage.

Look at the person/activity. Listen what He says. Write and date.

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Section 4. Yeah but...I Just Can't Do This...I Just Can't Go There

...I just cannot do this. I just cannot forgive the one who offended me. I cannot release this judgment because it's true. I cannot break this vow or I'll die. We hit barriers when doing this work because the heart is all about protecting itself and rightly so. The Scripture admonishes...

Prov 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

After all who likes to be hurt? Who likes to relive trauma? When someone takes a swing at you, don't you naturally assume a defensive posture? The heart does too. And it stays there, protecting its tender self. And its protective stance is justified. What we do not realize is that our defenses have hardened us, and we are now protecting the very thing that is hurting us – our broken heart.

God sees how we were hurt. He sees the deception that Satan planted that is causing the emotional pain we are feeling. He sees how that deceit has hardened our heart to His truth. God is poised to heal our broken heart but He is waiting for our willingness. Opposing Him is like blocking the fire trucks from our driveway when our house is on fire.

Often we feel it is NOT possible to forgive an offense or release a vow. This is because we have accepted dark counsel from the enemy of our soul. Some examples may illuminate what dark counsel sounds like. I have heard the same reasons many times when working with people “I cannot forgive that person because...

....they don't deserve it”

....I won't be protected”

....they will get off scott free”

....it will condone what he did”

....it would make me a weaker person”

....that means no justice would be done”

....then other people would treat me the same way”

These are all sincere 'guardian' reasons that are bubbling up from the heart that Satan has counseled. We just need to hear from God on these things. Because we have lived with this bad counsel (remember the toxins) for so long, it has come to make perfect sense to us. So we are stuck with this thinking, which is not only hurting us, but preventing the remedy from getting in. Let's submit the counsel that is surfacing from our heart to God and ask Him for His thoughts on the matter.

2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Let's be diligent to sift our thoughts by this criterion. As in my example (Chapter 3) where I found my thinking in opposition to God's truth, (something He was well aware of, and was bringing to my attention) I saw what was bubbling up from my own heart, 'brought it into captivity', and submitted it to Him. The imagination or bad counsel in my heart was that “it's just too good to be true”. His counsel to me was that “Everything I do for you is too good to be true.” And as I pondered salvation, healing and other blessings in my life, I saw my ‘stinkin’ thinkin’ was just that. Somewhere along life I accepted bum counsel that seemed right at my experiential level. In fact, twice in Scripture this verse is found...

Proverbs 14:12 *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* (also Proverbs 16:25)

God desires to deliver us from those ‘ways of death’. So bringing to Him every thought that stands in opposition to His truth will ultimately preserve your life.

Besides His thoughts being beyond our thoughts, His thoughts are also unexpected. Something you just don’t hear mere mortals say. His words can just take your breath away, leave you stunned and speechless and in total awe. They reveal His wonderful character and His compassionate disposition towards you. Now if you are afraid that you won’t hear from God, go back to Section 2 which discusses that. The problem is on our end. We need to address what is causing our hearing problem and break up our fallow ground.

So, in one of the chapters in this book we may have gotten to the point where we could not forgive an offense, release anger or judgment, renounce a vow, etc. We need to examine why. That is, what counsel hidden in our heart prevents us from moving forward on this? We may need God’s help here. Suppose you are having a difficulty forgiving and releasing an offense. (The other difficulties are handled the same way.) Begin with the capturing exercise (2 Cor.10:5).

Capturing Exercise:

Look at the offense. Feel the passion of the moment and answer this question, “I cannot forgive this person because _____. _____. _____. ” Look at the offense and listen to what your heart says. Remember, the heart says stuff, and we need to pay attention. Write down what bubbles up from the inside uncensored. Your reality is framed by these thoughts everyday. Find them out.

If nothing bubbles up ask the Lord to come and reveal the counsel in your heart and repeat the capturing exercise. Do not doubt the reasons that come up for not releasing the offense. Don’t analyze them, or stuff them because they don’t make sense, or are embarrassing, or you see that it violates Scripture. What bubbles up comes from your true heart, and it is what you are dealing with under the surface on a daily basis. Let it rip.... “I can’t forgive this person because _____”

When these nuggets of dark counsel come up from below, ‘capture them’ (write them too) and bring them to the Lord. Now look at the offense in your heart and listen to what your God says.

Lord, I cannot forgive (person) because I feel (reason). Is there something You want me to know about this?

Think about your good reason and listen what He says. Write what He says.

Whenever you get stuck and unable to proceed with releasing toxic counsel use the process given above. **Step one** is to find out the counsel that your heart contains preventing the release of the offense. The real, raw, uncensored thoughts of your heart. **Step two** is to get His thoughts/counsel on the matter. That is, exchange your thoughts for His thoughts. No one has ever been sorry that they did this.

Let me give an example. One lady I was working with was having trouble forgiving her grandfather. I asked her what was in the way. She said, “He doesn’t deserve to be forgiven for what he did to me.” Having heard the situation, I actually agreed with her (that’s why I’m not the Wonderful Counselor). But we both needed to hear His thoughts on the matter. She prayed, “Lord, I can’t forgive my grandfather because I feel he doesn’t deserve it. What do you want me to know about this?” Her face turned from painfully resolute to a sheepish grin. “He (God) said none of us deserve to be forgiven.” We hit another snag on the way to releasing the offense and

she prayed, “Lord, I can’t forgive my grandfather because that would make it OK that he did that to me. What do you want me to know about this?” Again her face softened from resolute to tears. “He said that isn’t so. What he did to me was not right and my anger doesn’t have anything to do with that.” We worked through several other good reasons not to forgive her grandfather, and even when there were no other reasons to not release the anger, forgiving him was still hard. But she went through the ‘releasing anger’ prayer and received a wonderful healing. After that, her ever-present anxiety melted away forever. You can do this too.

Offenses

A study of the different Greek words that are translated ‘forgive’ give valuable insight on the dynamics of offenses. The word most commonly translated ‘forgive’ (Gk. *aphiemi*, 174 occurrences) literally means ‘to go from’ or ‘walk away from’ or ‘leave it’ or ‘let it go’. It first occurs in Mt 3:15, where John the Baptist was offended by the prospect of baptizing Jesus. Jesus said literally ‘forgive’ or ‘let it go’ (Gk. *aphiemi*), in effect asking John not to take the offense, but rather allow it to be so - for good reason. Jesus taught that offenses must come, but we need to duck/dodge them, or just walk away from them, or not take them up, i.e. not ‘take offense’.

The second Greek word most frequently translated ‘forgive’ (Gk. *apoluo*, 89 occurrences) literally means to release or send away something already in your vicinity or possession. It first occurs in Mt 1:19 where Joseph ‘was minded to put her [Mary] away privily’ when she was with child by the Holy Spirit. She was espoused to Joseph so he was going to ‘forgive’ (Gk. *apoluo*) her, or ‘send her away’. This same Greek word is chosen for the action of sending away a wife (as in divorce) or the crowds (after Jesus’ sermons) and even the releasing of Barabas. So this forgiveness applies to something we already own or have captive as our own in some sense. So instead of ducking the offense we took it on and are wearing it. It needs to be released or ‘sent away’.

The third Greek word most frequently translated ‘forgive’ (Gk. *charizomai* 24 occurrences) means to generously restore or return to proper status. It first occurs in Lk 7:21 when Jesus restores sight to the blind man. Significant, huh? When translated ‘forgive’ the context is usually to restore a relationship that was broken or corrupted by a debt. Remember from Chapter 10 that judging not only isolates us and sours relationships, but also makes us blind. As we release this judgment, God restores our sight too, and gives us insight that causes mercy to subdue judgment. This restores the relationship to a proper status on our side.

Recall Figure 1c with the darkness in the soul area. These can be thought of as offenses that we have received by ancestry or personal experience. Removing them falls into the second and third category of forgiveness. In the second category, because we have already received them, are wearing them, and being tormented by them. These need to be ‘forgiven’ in the sense of being released or sent away from us as an act of our will by a ‘releasing’ or ‘forgiveness’ prayer. In the third category, because often a relationship is broken or severed that needs to be ‘forgiven’ in the sense of being graciously restored. When God gives his insight, it brings compassion so that, on your end of the relationship, restoration occurs. You cannot affect their end of the relationship. That is their responsibility although they will sense a change in you.

Proverbs 19:11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

Section 5. Checking Your Eternal Reservations

With the upheaval in the travel industry caused by terrorism and economic pressures, travel agents often advise us to confirm our reservations before our flight. That is good advice, for it does not take that long to confirm our reservations, and it assures us that there is a place for us when we get there. Now, there is no more important reservation to confirm than our eternal one. This does not take long either, and it assures that there is a place in heaven prepared for you for eternity. Consider these words.

Matt 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day (judgment day), Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I (Jesus) profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Jesus actually says that those who do ‘many wonderful works’ can be workers of ‘iniquity’. He clearly indicates that doing good things does NOT get us into heaven. These people who he never knew, were to depart from HIM!!!

The people of Jesus’ day also wanted clarification of the role of good works for eternal life. He told them....

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. ²⁸Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹ Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

So exactly why, and for what, do we need to ‘believe on Him’?

1. Some of our words, actions, choices and thoughts have been a violation of God's commandments and are an offense to Him. Do you fully appreciate this on a personal level? Have you broken any commandment? For example, have you stolen even a little thing? You can not go back and change it. It is forever recorded. All our deeds are recorded.
2. When God opens the record books and sees violations of His commandments, the pre-ordained sentence is banishment from His presence, aka hell. Any violation small or great earns the same sentence. This isn't a party with all your friends. This is lonely eternal torment, worse than any torment you have encountered here on earth. The earned consequences for our offenses.
3. Not only do we have these on our record, but even if we attempt to ‘clean up our act’, we find that we often mess up again. We must truly realize in our heart that we need help. We need to be rescued (delivered, or saved) out of our sorry state before we die. That is why many people intuitively fear death. Deep in their heart they know things with God are not right even though they try to justify matters in their mind - hoping that their 'good works' will count for something.
4. As we acknowledge our sorry state we call out to God, confess our sorry state and ask for mercy. At the same time God has been calling out to us, offering His own Son as the payment for our offenses. Since believing is an action of the heart, we need to accept His Son, Jesus, into our heart as the payment which He has made for our sins. Can you pray this prayer and mean it with your whole heart?

Section 4. Checking Your Eternal Reservations

Lord God, I have not kept Your commandments, in fact, I have violated them over and over again. I feel that I am not even able to keep them now. I am powerless to change myself, or rid myself of the shame, and guilt these violations have produced in my heart.

I realize these things have separated me from You. But I call out to You for mercy. I didn't see You reaching out to me, nor did I understand that You gave Your Son as the payment for my offenses against You. I now accept the payment that You made for me. I now receive that payment, Your Son Jesus, into my heart. I ask that You confirm to me in my heart that I am Your child. And that my eternal fate and reservation is now sealed with You.

Listen.

If this was the first time you realized these principles and prayed this prayer, you may want to date this page. It is the date of your new birth – of your being ‘born from above’. God’s Spirit has entered your spirit and made you a new order of being. You can refer back to Figure 1c to see what has transpired in the part of you that you can not see.

If part of your heart has some objection to praying this prayer, find out what objection is coming up from your heart. Let it speak its counsel. Then, do the capturing exercise in section 4 to hear God's counsel on the matter. You will never be sorry that you did.



Section 6. Daily Application – Why We Count It All Joy

The basic principles of first ‘hearing from God’ and second ‘assimilating His truth’ into our heart have been presented in this book. These Scriptural disciplines of forgiving offenses, breaking curses, releasing anger, etc. facilitate the entrance of God’s truth which not only corrects our reality, dispelling anxiety and depression and bringing calmness to our heart, but also effectively armors us. The spiritual discipline of applying these principles daily is an important part of a peace-filled life while on this earth. Now that we are acquainted with these tools through use, let’s look at when and how to use them. James, in his letter to the saints starts right after his greeting to first encourage them to

James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

His very first goal for the saints was that they aim for ‘*mature and complete, not lacking anything.*’ Now we know that in school a test shows where we may be deficient in understanding the course material. A test of our faith does the same thing. It shows us where we are deficient or ‘*lacking*’ – where we are NOT ‘*mature and complete*’, or as stated before, where there is unfruitful fallow ground. So, if the trials show us this, can we say, ‘Bring them on’? Well, actually we have no control over our trials, only whether we choose to address our painful reality and armor ourselves. But be assured that God carefully designs trials to show us our dross. He does NOT need to know what we are made of. We do. So we can use our tools to address any painful realities that create our spiritual disabilities and work toward this goal.

Trials not only flush out the dross but have the all important potential to ‘bring forth fruit’. If we have thoroughly applied Chapter 7 to our lives, and now see how good-intentioned God is towards us, it is easier to accept that trials are for our good. Does it now make sense that we should stop praying that God remove the trial, heal the disease, bring the finances, change so-and-so, but rather that He would bring forth ALL the fruit that He intends to come forth in us, BY the trial. Amazingly, once ALL the fruit is brought forth, the NEED for the trial goes away. Actually, the trial is no longer ‘trying’, because God will give us His perspective and show us we lack nothing for it.

Let’s walk through this process using a current trial – something that is stressful at this time. Maybe it is a broken relationship, a wayward child, a challenging responsibility, or some monetary or time constraint put upon us. When you think about it, your heart goes, “ugh!” Open to #1 on the back cover of this book. Sit down with your journal, title the page, and write the answers to #1. Keep asking these questions and listen for answers bubbling up from your heart. The more time spent cycling through these #1 questions to flush out the painful beliefs (a.k.a. dross or painful reality), the better the resolution. Let your heart bubble up your painful reality. Lean into the hurt and find out what beliefs are causing the pain by flushing out all the answers to #1. Then see if you can distill from these the appropriate self-definition statements like “I am...helpless, useless, unprepared, too slow, stupid, etc.” Some statements are more like victim statements “Mom didn’t love me” “Dad was always gone” and do not provide as powerful resolution. So with victim statements ask the #1 questions until you find the self-definition statements.

When you have a good idea of what beliefs are making you feel bad, see if you can find the historical context that convinced you that these painful belief statements were true by answering the #2 questions. If a memory surfaces, write that down in your journal (if not see below). Here is where we employ the spiritual disciplines we learned. We need to revisit the memory in all its intensity. Do the #1 beliefs seem true in this memory? Is there any other hurt here? Sit down with journal and write “I’m upset in this memory because __, __, __”. “It makes me feel __, __, __”. “The reason I feel this way is __” “And the worst part about this is __” Let your heart bubble up the hurt. Now let’s see what tools/spiritual disciplines we need to apply before we ask God for His perspective. Follow down the steps on the back cover and carefully examine your heart by asking...

Section 4. Checking Your Eternal Reservations

1. Is there any personal guilt here? If so, "I feel guilty because ___" and go do the guilt prayer (Chap. 9).
2. Is there any anger here? Who is it directed at? God, yourself, others?
If so, do the anger prayer (Chap 7 (God), 8 (earthly father), 11 (yourself, others)).
3. Is there any judging/dishonorable opinions of others? Who? God, yourself, others? (Chap 10)
4. Are there any vows? What did you promise? (Chap 13)
5. Were there any curses spoken over you or any name calling? (Chap 12)
6. Any occult involvement or other bondage? (Chap 14)

Use your tools/spiritual disciplines to release and clean up the darkness in your life (anger, offenses, judgment, etc.) represented by the darkness in Figure 1c. If your tools are a little rusty, go back and review the corresponding chapter or reread the whole book with the particular defining moment in mind. The pain from that event will be waiting for you when you return with your newly honed tools. Dig up and pitch out any offense in the memory as you find it.

Now the best part. Having stripped the memory of the out-workings of bad counsel, we have removed hindrances to seeing and hearing from God. It is time to 'hear' from the Wonderful Counselor. (You may have already heard from Him as you have removed these hindrances because He is so ready to speak to you He may not wait for you to ask.) If not, review your self-definitions (if any) and pray.

Lord, You saw everything that happened here in this memory. What did You want me to know,
or see, or hear, when this happened?

Listen. Write in your journal what He writes on the tablet of your heart. (If you do not 'hear' from God there is usually anger (often at God), but possibly guilt, or a vow, so be diligent to investigate the scene for evidence of such and release all such from your heart prior to asking for His insight.) Often in the process of getting rid of these hindrances His truth and insight redefines us at that time!

Now we have a little work left to do. Go back into the memory and see how it feels now. Usually there is a shift in the intensity of the emotions you felt before He spoke. In intense memories, it is not uncommon to miss something. So do not think this process is not working if the Lord brings you back to the same memory several times. Just seek after what other insight He has for you – or rather - what insight you are now in a position to 'see' and 'hear'.

Suppose when you got to #2 that no memory comes to mind. Then examine the current trial for items 1-6 above. Sometimes in this process our eyes are opened to the contributing historical event(s).

I find it helpful to also write God's redefining statements on 3x5 cards as well as in your journal for the purpose of meditating on them daily. God introduces us to His paradigm but often meditation aligns the mind with God's thinking.

2 Cor 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; ⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Be alert as you work through this process for any toxic emotions, vows/promises or judgments that you might be holding on to. The more you apply these disciplines or tools to yourself, the more peace you will experience through life's trials. If, after diligent and patient application of these disciplines, you feel like you are not making any headway, seek out a person that is skilled in these principles to help you. With some spiritual disabilities we are still able to 'push through the crowd' to Jesus; with others, we need someone to carry us on a blanket and lower us down through a de-thatched roof to His feet.

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Special Situations

Working with Our Children.

There are three important bridges to cross BEFORE helping your own children with these principles. First, it is very important to be familiar with these principles from lots of personal application!! The process will be more natural and you will have more confidence in what you are doing. Second, make sure you have released any anger and judgment towards each child and gotten compassion from God for their situation. Third, if their behaviors cause you to be upset, find the root cause of your own vulnerability. When we deal with our own stuff, it is amazing how their behavior changes!

Children have the same kinds of issues that we do – anxiety (shyness), anger (tantrums), depression (sullenness), etc. They are just closer in time to their inception. To work with your child, just use questions to determine their belief system (see back cover #1). When they are telling you they are afraid simply ask, “What are you thinking that makes you afraid?” “And why is that scary?” and other #1 questions appropriate for their age. Accept whatever they say. Be sympathetic yet neutral. It may sound bazaar but do NOT be shocked (or dismiss it). It is what Satan planted, and it hurts. They are sharing their tender hearts with you. Compassionately say, “Oh, OK, well would you want to hear what Jesus says about this?” (Be prepared with the techniques in Section 4 if they say, “No.” But usually they are open to Him.) Then simply instruct them to listen inside and pray something like, “Lord Jesus, my daughter Millie is frightened with this thought (cite thought). What are Your thoughts about this?”

If they have a problem with rage, you will need to wait until they have quieted down before applying these tools. Follow the same kind of questioning to determine their belief system. Ask, “When such-and-such happened, what were you thinking that made you so angry?” Accept what ever they say without advice, correction or disbelief. Say, “Oh, OK, well would you want to hear what Jesus says about this?” Then “Lord Jesus, my son John is angry because (cite thought). What are Your thoughts about this?”

Suspected Demonic Stronghold

What indicators do we have of demonic harassment? Two of the most consistent indicators I have found are 1) torment (chronic emotional pain – tormenting fears, tormenting rage, tormenting depression (that is not rooted in nutritional deficiency.)) and 2) chronic negativity - negative inner thoughts about God or self (destructive thoughts, or thoughts that impugn God or His motives or disposition toward you) Thoughts like: “God won’t/can’t/isn’t going to help you”, “This won’t work for you”, “You’ve committed the unpardonable sin”, “Just give up and kill yourself”, “What’s the use, you are never going to get better”.

Especially attractive areas for demonic infection are trauma events when you felt you were at death’s door (abuse, accident, surgery). Other common areas include inability to forgive an offense, harboring hatred, vengeance, or personal or ancestral invitation for demonic involvement. This is a very short explanation but using the spiritual disciplines in this book will help you dislodge demons from their perch – the perch of deceit. I picture them as hiding in the darkness of Figure 1c. Removing deceit, hatred, guilt gives them no place to hide. In conjunction with the other tools in this book, use the following prayer.

I renounce any demonic ties that I have accepted that have provided me with any counsel, sense of comfort, or control, or protection from pain, or any other service. I announce that The True Lord Jesus Christ is my only Savior, my Lord, my Wonderful Counselor and I belong wholly to Him. I command any & all demons to separate from me. I invite the Holy Spirit to come, take their place and to shine His light and truth into my heart.

Look and listen for insight.

Resolving Spiritual Vulnerabilities Worksheet

(Make extra copies of this sheet)

*** Remember, we are working in the reality that the heart 'sees'.

1. **Present situation**....makes me feel _____, _____, _____

These feelings tell me _____, _____, _____

And THAT makes me feel like _____, _____, _____

Which I interpreted as _____, _____, _____

Because I believe that _____, _____, _____

2. **Historical event /defining moment** ... (lean into the feelings from #1) I remember first feeling like this when... _____

And here is where I began to believe that _____

And the thought that keeps coming up is _____

And my experience here taught me _____

3. **Resolving spiritual disabilities** (deafness/blindness) Examine event for these elements

In this event, I feel guilty because _____

In this event, I am angry at _____ for _____

I am also angry at _____ for _____

I judged _____ here as being _____

I also judged _____ as being _____

I promised myself (vowed) here that _____

(With these notes above, go to the appropriate chapters to release these and improve your ability to hear from or see God. Pause after each prayer to listen for insights. It may be important to release any judgment prior to releasing any anger, especially in cases of serious offenses.)

4. **Getting God's perspective or truth**....Go back into the event recorded in step 2.

Review the notes written about the event (in step 2.) And ask Him for truth....

Lord, as I went through this painful event, I was surrounded by darkness, and I didn't know Your truth. But now, as I relive this, I ask for Your truth to shine light on this event. What were You wanting me to know here? (Go back into the event. Listen) What I didn't know at that time was _____

Spend time meditating on what He said.

(Sometimes it is helpful to perceive God's presence in the event. We know He was there whether we knew Him then or not. Some folks are better able to perceive his presence - see Him better than to hear Him. It just depends what has been impaired – seeing or hearing.)

5. **Test the results**.... Go back to the present situation that triggered the emotional upset (Step 1.) See if there is a shift in the emotional pain. If the present circumstance still is upsetting, get a new worksheet and repeat this process.

Spend time meditating on what He said.