

Steps to Freedom in Christ

By Neil Anderson

It is my deep conviction that the finished work of Jesus Christ and the presence of God in our lives are the only means by which we can resolve our personal and spiritual conflicts. Christ in us is our only hope (Colossians 1:27), and He alone can meet our deepest needs of life: acceptance, identity, security and significance. The discipleship counseling process upon which these steps are based should not be understood as just another counseling technique that we learn. It is an encounter with God. He is the Wonderful Counselor. He is the One who grants repentance that leads to a knowledge of the truth which sets us free (2 Tim 2:25, 26).

The Steps to Freedom in Christ do not set you free. Who sets you free is Christ, and what sets you free is your response to Him in repentance and faith. These steps are just a tool to help you submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7). Then you can start living a fruitful life by abiding in Christ and becoming the person He created you to be. Many Christians will be able to work through these steps on their own and discover the wonderful freedom that Christ purchased for them on the cross. Then they will experience peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, and it shall guard their hearts and their minds (Phil 4:7).

Before You Begin

The chances of that happening and the possibility of maintaining that freedom will be greatly enhanced if you read *Victory over the Darkness* and *The Bondage Breaker*, first. Many Christians in the western world need to understand the reality of the spiritual world and our relationship to it. Some can't read these books or even the Bible with comprehension because of the battle that is going on for their minds. They will need the assistance of others who have been trained. The theology and practical process of the discipleship counseling is given in my book, *Helping Others Find Freedom in Christ*, and the accompanying Training Manual and Study Guide and video Training Program. The book attempts to Biblically integrate the reality of the spiritual and the natural world so we can have a whole answer for a whole person. In doing so, we cannot polarize into psycho-therapeutic ministries that ignore the reality of the spiritual world or attempt some kind of deliverance ministry that ignores developmental issues and human responsibility.

You May Need Help

Ideally, it would be best if everyone had a trusted friend, pastor or counselor who would help them go through this process because it is just applying the wisdom of James 5:16: "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Another person can prayerfully support you by providing objective counsel. I have had the privilege of helping many Christian leaders who could not process this on their own. Many Christian groups all over the world are using this approach in many languages with incredible results because the Lord desires for all to come to repentance, (2 Peter 3:9), and to know the truth that sets us free in Christ (John 8:32)

Appropriating and Maintaining Freedom

Christ has set us free through His victory over sin and death on the cross. However, appropriating our freedom in Christ through repentance and faith and maintaining our life of freedom in Christ are two different issues. It was for freedom that Christ set us free, but we have been warned not to return to a yoke of slavery which is legalism in this context (Galatians 5:1) or to turn our freedom into an opportunity for the flesh (Galatians 5:13). Establishing people free in Christ makes it possible for them to walk by faith according to what God says is true, to live by the power of the Holy Spirit and to not carry out the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). The true Christian life avoids both legalism and license.

If you are not experiencing freedom, it may be because you have not stood firm in the faith or actively taken your place in Christ. It is every Christian's responsibility to do whatever is necessary to maintain a right relationship with God and mankind. Your eternal destiny is not at stake. God will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5), but your daily victory is at stake if you fail to claim and maintain your position in Christ.

Your Position In Christ

You are not a helpless victim caught between two nearly equal but opposite heavenly superpowers. Satan is a deceiver. Only God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (always present) and omniscient (all-knowing). Sometimes the reality of sin and the presence of evil may seem more real than the presence of God, but that's part of Satan's deception. Satan is a defeated foe and we are in Christ. A true knowledge of God and knowing our identity and position in Christ are the greatest determinants of our mental health. A false concept of god, a distorted understanding of who we are as children of God, and the misplaced deification of Satan are the greatest contributors to mental illness.

Many of our illnesses are psychosomatic. When these issues are resolved in Christ, our physical bodies will function better and we will experience greater health. Other problems are clearly physical and we need the services of the medical profession. Please consult your physician for medical advice and the prescribing of medication. We are both spiritual and physical beings who need the services of both the church and the medical profession.

Winning the Battle for Your Mind

The battle is for our minds, which is the control centre of all that we think and do. The opposing thoughts you may experience as you go through these steps can control you only if you believe them. If you are working through these steps alone, don't be deceived by any lying intimidating thoughts. If a trusted pastor or counselor is helping you find your freedom in Christ, he or she must have your cooperation. You must share any thoughts you are having in opposition to what you are attempting to do. As soon as you expose the lie, the power of Satan is broken. The only way that you can lose control in this process is if you pay attention to a deceiving spirit and believe a lie.

You Must Choose

The following procedure is a means of resolving personal and spiritual conflicts which have kept you from experiencing the freedom and victory Christ purchased for you on the cross. Your freedom will be the result of what you choose to believe, confess, forgive, renounce and forsake. No one can do that for you. The battle for your mind can only be won as you personally choose truth. As you go through this process, understand that Satan is under no obligation to obey your thoughts. Only God has complete knowledge of your mind because He is all-knowing. So we can submit to God inwardly but we need to resist the devil by reading aloud each prayer and by verbally renouncing, forgiving, confessing, etc.

This process of re-establishing our freedom in Christ is revealing a complete moral inventory and a rock-solid commitment to truth. It is the first step in the continuing process of discipleship. There is no such thing as instant maturity. It will take you the rest of your life to renew your mind and conform to the image of God. If your problems stem from a source other than those covered in these steps, you may need to seek professional help.

May the Lord grace you with His presence, as you seek His face and help others experience the joy of their salvation.

Neil T. Anderson

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, we acknowledge Your presence in this room and in our lives. You are the only all-knowing, all-powerful, and always present God. We are dependent upon you, for apart from You we can do nothing. We stand in the truth that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the resurrected Christ, and because we are in Christ, we share that authority in order to make disciples and set captives free. We ask You to guide us with Your Holy Spirit, protect us from deception and lead us into all truth. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Declaration

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

Preparation

Before going through the Steps to Freedom, review the events of your life to discern specific areas that might have become pathways for demonic attachment and may need to be addressed.

Family History

- Religious history of parents and grandparents
- Home life from childhood through high school
- History physical or emotional illness in the family
- Adoption, foster care, guardians

Personal History

- Eating habits (bulimia, binge eating, purging, anorexia, compulsive eating)
- Addictions (drugs and alcohol)
- Prescription medications (purpose)
- Sleeping patterns and nightmares
- Sexual, physical or emotional abuse
- Thoughts (obsessive, blasphemous, condemning, distracting, poor concentration)
- Mental interference during church, prayer or Bible study
- Emotions (anger, anxiety, depression, bitterness, fear)
- Spiritual (salvation: when, how and level of assurance)

Now you are ready to begin. The following are seven specific steps to process in order to experience freedom from spiritual bondage. You will address the areas where Satan most commonly takes advantage of us and where strongholds have been built. If your problems stem from a source other than those covered in these steps, you have nothing to lose by going through them. If you are sincere, this process can only strengthen your relationship with God.

STEP 1

Real vs. Counterfeit

The first Step to freedom in Christ is to renounce your previous or current involvement with satanically-inspired occult practices and false cults and religions. You need to renounce any activity or group that denies Jesus Christ, offers guidance through any source other than the absolute authority of the written Word of God or requires secret initiations, ceremonies or covenants. In order to help you assess your spiritual experiences, begin this step by asking God to reveal false guidance and counterfeit religious experiences.

Dear Heavenly Father, I ask you to guard my heart and my mind and reveal to me any and all involvement I have had, either knowingly or unknowingly, with cults or occult practices, false religions or false teachers. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen

Using the following Non-Christian Spiritual Experience Inventory, carefully check anything in which you have been involved. This list is not exhaustive, but it will guide you in identifying non-Christian spiritual experiences. Add any additional involvement you have had. Even if you innocently participated in something or observed it, you should write it on your list to renounce, just in case you unknowingly gave Satan a foothold.

Non-Christian Spiritual Experience Inventory

Please check all that apply

<input type="checkbox"/> Astral-projection <input type="checkbox"/> Ouija board <input type="checkbox"/> Table or body lifting <input type="checkbox"/> Dungeons and Dragons <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking in trance <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic writing <input type="checkbox"/> Magic Eight Ball <input type="checkbox"/> Telepathy <input type="checkbox"/> Using spells or curses <input type="checkbox"/> Seance <input type="checkbox"/> Materialization <input type="checkbox"/> Clairvoyance <input type="checkbox"/> Spirit guides <input type="checkbox"/> Fortune-telling <input type="checkbox"/> Tarot cards <input type="checkbox"/> Palm reading <input type="checkbox"/> Astrology <input type="checkbox"/> Rod/pendulum (dousing) <input type="checkbox"/> Self-hypnosis <input type="checkbox"/> Mind swapping <input type="checkbox"/> Black and white magic <input type="checkbox"/> New Age medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Blood pacts <input type="checkbox"/> Self Mutilation <input type="checkbox"/> Fetishism <input type="checkbox"/> Object worship <input type="checkbox"/> Crystals, charms <input type="checkbox"/> Incubi and succubus <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Christian Science <input type="checkbox"/> Unity Church <input type="checkbox"/> The Way International <input type="checkbox"/> Unification Church <input type="checkbox"/> Mormonism <input type="checkbox"/> Church of the Living Word <input type="checkbox"/> Jehovah's Witnesses <input type="checkbox"/> Children Of God <input type="checkbox"/> Church of New Jerusalem <input type="checkbox"/> Masons <input type="checkbox"/> New Age <input type="checkbox"/> The Forum (EST) <input type="checkbox"/> Spirit worship <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism <input type="checkbox"/> Hare Krishna <input type="checkbox"/> Bahaimism <input type="checkbox"/> Rosicrucianism <input type="checkbox"/> Science of the Mind <input type="checkbox"/> Transcendental Meditation <input type="checkbox"/> Hinduism <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga <input type="checkbox"/> Echankar <input type="checkbox"/> Roy Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Silva Mind Control <input type="checkbox"/> father Divine <input type="checkbox"/> Theosophical Society <input type="checkbox"/> Islam <input type="checkbox"/> Black Muslim <input type="checkbox"/> Religion of martial arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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1. Have you ever been hypnotized, attended a New Age or parapsychology seminar, consulted a medium, spiritist or channeler? Explain.

2. Do you or have you ever had an imaginary friend or spirit guide offering you guidance or companionship?

3. Have you ever heard voices in your mind or had repeating and nagging thoughts condemning you, or that were foreign to what you believe or feel, as if there were a dialogue going on in your head? Explain.

4. What other spiritual experiences have you had that would be considered out of the ordinary?

5. Have you ever made a vow, covenant or pact with any individual or group other than God?
6. Have you been involved in satanic ritual worship in any form? Explain.

When you are confident that your list is complete, confess and renounce each involvement whether active or passive by praying aloud the following prayer, repeating it separately for each item on your list:

Lord, I confess that I have participated in _____, and I renounce _____.
Thank you that in Christ I am forgiven.

If there has been any involvement in satanic ritual or heavy occult activity, you need to state aloud the following special renunciations which apply. Read across the page, renouncing the first item in the column of the Kingdom of Darkness and then affirming the first truth in the column of the Kingdom of Light. Continue down the page in this manner.

All satanic rituals, covenants and assignments must be specifically renounced as the Lord allows you to recall them. Some who have been subjected to satanic ritual abuse may have developed multiple personalities in order to survive. Nevertheless, continue through the Steps to Freedom in order to resolve all that you consciously can. It is important that you resolve the demonic strongholds first. Every personality must resolve his/her issues and agree to come together in Christ. You may need someone who understands spiritual conflict to help you maintain control and not be deceived into false memories. Only Jesus can bind up the broken-hearted, set captives free and make us whole.

Kingdom of Darkness	Kingdom of Light
I renounce ever signing my name over to Satan or having had my name signed over to Satan.	I announce that my name is now written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
I renounce any ceremony where I might have been wed to Satan.	I announce that I am a child of God and a member and part of the body of Christ
I renounce any and all covenants that I made with Satan.	I announce that I am a partaker of the New Covenant with Christ
I renounce all satanic assignments for my life, including duties, marriage and children.	I announce and commit myself to know and do only the will of God and accept only His guidance.
I renounce all spirit guides assigned to me.	I announce and accept only the leading of the Holy Spirit.
I renounce ever giving of my blood in the service of Satan.	I trust only in the shed blood of my Lord Jesus Christ
I renounce ever eating of flesh or drinking of blood for satanic worship.	By faith I take Holy Communion which represents the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ

I renounce any and all guardians and Satanist parents who were assigned to me.	I announce that God is my Father and the Holy Spirit is my Guardian by which I am sealed.
I renounce any baptism in blood or urine whereby I am identified with Satan.	I announce that I have been baptized into Christ Jesus and my identity is now in Christ.
I renounce any and all sacrifices that were made on my behalf by which Satan may claim ownership of me.	I announce that only the sacrifice of Christ has any hold on me. I belong to Him. I have been purchased by the blood of the Lamb.

STEP 2

Deception vs. Truth

Truth is the revelation of God's Word, but we need to acknowledge the truth in the inner self (Psalm 51:6). When David lived a lie, he suffered greatly. When he finally found freedom by acknowledging the truth, he wrote: "Blessed is the man...in whose spirit there is no deceit" (Psalm 32:2). We are to lay aside falsehood and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15,25). A mentally healthy person is one who is in touch with reality and relatively free of anxiety. Both qualities should characterize the Christian who renounces deception and embraces the truth.

Begin this critical step by expressing aloud the following prayer. Don't let the enemy accuse you with thoughts such as: *This isn't going to work or I wish I could believe this, but I can't* or any other lies in opposition to what you are proclaiming. Even if you have difficulty doing so, you need to pray the prayer and read the Doctrinal Affirmation.

Dear Heavenly Father, I know that You desire truth in the inner self and that facing this truth is the way of liberation (John 8:32). I acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies (John 8:44) and that I have deceived myself (1 John 1:8). I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that You, Heavenly Father, will rebuke all deceiving spirits by virtue of the shed blood and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith I have received You into my life and I am now seated with Christ in the spirit realm. (Ephesians 2:6). I acknowledge that I have the responsibility and authority to resist the devil, and when I do, he will flee from me. I now ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth (John 16:13). I ask You to "search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way" (Psalm 139:23,24). In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

You may want to pause at this point to consider some of Satan's deceptive schemes. In addition to false teachers, false prophets and deceiving spirits, you can deceive yourself. Now that you are alive in Christ and forgiven, you never have to live a lie or defend yourself. Christ is your defense. How have you deceived or attempted to defend yourself according to the following: Please check any of the following that apply to you:

Self-Deception

- Hearing God's Word but not doing it (James 1:22; 4:17)
- Saying you have no sin (1 John 1:8)

- Thinking you are something when you aren't (Galatians 6:3)
- Thinking you are wise in your own eyes (1 Corinthians 3:18,19)
- Thinking you will not reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7)
- Thinking the unrighteous will inherit the kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9)
- Thinking you can associate with bad company and not be corrupted (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Self-Defense

(Defending ourselves instead of trusting in Christ)

- Denial (conscious or subconscious refusal to face the truth)
- Fantasy (escaping from the real world)
- Emotions insulation (withdrawing to avoid rejection)
- Regression (reverting back to a less threatening time)
- Displacement (taking out frustrations on others)
- Projection (blaming others)
- Rationalization (making excuses for poor behavior)

For each of those areas that you have checked, pray aloud the following prayer:

Lord, I agree that I have been deceiving myself in the area of _____.
Thank you for forgiving me. I commit myself to know and follow Your truth, amen.

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

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

Historically, the Church has found great value in publicly declaring its beliefs. The Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed have been recited for centuries. Read aloud the following affirmation of faith, and do so again as often as necessary to renew your mind. Experiencing difficulty in reading this affirmation may indicate where you are being deceived and under attack. Boldly affirm your commitment to biblical truth.

Doctrinal Affirmation

I recognize that there is only one true and living God Exodus 20:2,3) who exists as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that He is worthy of all honour, praise and glory as the Creator, Sustainer and Beginning and End of all things. (Rev. 4:11: 5:9, 10; Isaiah 43:1,7,21).

I recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 14).

I believe that God has proven His love for me because when I was still a sinner, Christ died for me (Romans 5:8). I believe that He delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to His kingdom, and in Him I have redemption - the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13,14).

I believe that I am now a child of God (1 John 3:1-3) and that I am seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6). I believe that I was saved by the grace of God through faith, that it was a gift, and not the result of any works on my part (Ephesians 2:8,9).

I choose to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Ephesians 6:10). I put no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3) for the weapons of warfare are not of the flesh (2 Corinthians 10:4). I put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20), and I resolve to stand firm in my faith and resist the evil one.

I believe that apart from Christ I can do nothing (John 15:5), so I declare myself dependent on Him. I choose to abide in Christ in order to bear much fruit and glorify the Lord (John 15:8). I announce to Satan that Jesus is my Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3), and I reject any counterfeit gifts or works of Satan in my life.

STEP 3

Bitterness vs. Forgiveness

We need to forgive others in order to be free from our pasts and to prevent Satan from taking advantage of us (2 Corinthians 2:10, 11). We are to be merciful just as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). We are to go and forgive as we have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:31,32). Ask God to bring to mind the names of those people you need to forgive by expressing the following prayer aloud:

Dear heavenly Father,

I thank You for the riches of Your kindness, forbearance and patience, knowing that Your kindness has led me to repentance (Romans 2:4). I confess that I have not extended that same patience and kindness toward others who have offended me, but instead I have harbored bitterness and resentment. I pray that during this time of self-examination You would bring to my mind those people whom I need to forgive in order that I may do so (Matthew 18:35). I ask this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

As names come to mind, list them on a separate sheet of paper. At the end of your list, write "myself". Forgiving yourself is accepting God's cleansing and forgiveness. Also, write "thoughts against God." Thoughts raised up against the knowledge of God will usually result in angry feelings toward Him. Technically, we don't forgive God because He cannot commit any sin. But we do need to specifically renounce false expectations and thoughts about God and agree to release any anger we have toward Him. Before you pray for these people, stop and consider what forgiveness is, what it is not, what decision you will be making and what the consequences will be. Forgiveness is not forgetting. People who try to forget find they cannot. God says He will remember our sins no more (Hebrews 10:17), but God, being omniscient, cannot forget.

Remember our sins no more means that God will never use the past against us (Psalm 103:12). Forgetting may be the result of forgiveness, but it is never the means of forgiveness. When we bring up the past against others, we are saying we haven't forgiven them.

Forgiveness is a choice, a crisis of the will. Since God requires us to forgive, it is something we can do. However, forgiveness is difficult for us because it pulls against our concept of justice. We want revenge for offenses suffered. However, we are told never to take our own revenge (Romans 12:19). You say, "Why should I let them off the hook?" That is precisely the problem. You are still hooked to them, still bound by your past. You can let them off your hook, but they are never off God's. He will deal with them fairly - something we cannot do.

You say, "You don't understand how much this person hurt me!" But don't you see, they are still hurting you! How do you stop the pain? You don't forgive someone for their sake; you do it for your own sake so you can be free. Your need to forgive isn't an issue between you and the offender; it's between you and God.

Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin. Forgiveness is costly. You pay the price of the evil you forgive. You're going to live with those consequences whether you want to or not; your only choice is whether you will do so in the bitterness of unforgiveness or the freedom of forgiveness. Jesus took the consequences of your sin upon Himself. All true forgiveness is substitutionary because no one really forgives without bearing the consequences of the other person's sin. God the Father "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Where is the justice: It's the cross that makes forgiveness legally and morally right: "For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all" (Romans 6:10).

Decide that you will bear the burdens of their offenses by not using that information against them in the future. This doesn't mean that you tolerate sin. You must set up scriptural boundaries to prevent future abuse. Some may be required to testify for the sake of justice but not for the purpose of seeking revenge from a bitter heart. How do you forgive from your heart? You acknowledge the hurt and the hate. If your forgiveness doesn't visit the emotional core of your life, it will be incomplete. Many feel the pain of interpersonal offenses, but they won't or don't know how to acknowledge it. Let God bring the pain to the surface so He can deal with it. This is where the healing takes place. Don't wait to forgive until you feel like forgiving; you will never get there. Feelings take time to heal after the choice to forgive is made and Satan has lot his place (Ephesians 4:26,27). Freedom is what will be gained, not a feeling.

As you pray, God may bring to mind offending people and experiences you have totally forgotten. Let Him do it, even if it's painful. Remember, you are doing this for your sake. God wants you to be free. Don't rationalize or explain the offender's behavior. Forgiveness is dealing with your pain and leaving the other person to God. Positive feelings will follow in time; freeing you from the past is the critical issue right now. Don't say, "Lord, please help me to forgive" because He is already helping you. Don't say, "Lord, I want to forgive," because you are bypassing the real choice to forgive, which is your responsibility. Focus on each individual until you are sure you have dealt with all the remembered pain - what they did, how they hurt you, how they made you feel: rejected, unloved, unworthy, dirty, etc.

You are now ready to forgive the people on your list so you can be free in Christ, with those people no longer having any control over you. For each person on your list, pray aloud:

Lord, I forgive ----- (person's name) ----- for----- (verbally state every hurt and pain the Lord brings to your mind and how it made you feel).

After you have forgiven every person for every painful memory, then finish this step by praying:

Lord, I release all these people to You, and I release my right to seek revenge. I choose not to hold on to my bitterness and anger, and I ask You to heal my damaged emotions. In Jesus' name, I pray.

STEP 4

Rebellion vs. Submission

We live in rebellious times. Many believe it is their right to sit in judgment of those in authority over them. Rebelling against God and His authority gives Satan an opportunity to attack. As our commanding General, the Lord tells us to get into ranks and follow Him; He will not lead us into temptation, but will deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13). We have two biblical responsibilities regarding authority figures: Pray for them and submit to them. The only time God permits us to disobey earthly leaders is when they required us to do something morally wrong before God or attempt to rule outside the realm of their authority. For this step, pray the following:

Dear Lord, You have said that rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft and insubordination is like iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23). I know that in action and attitude I have sinned against You with a rebellious heart. Thank you for forgiving my rebellion, and I pray that by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ all ground gained by evil spirits because of my rebelliousness will be cancelled. I pray that You will shed light on all my ways that I may know the full extent of my rebelliousness. I now choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant's heart. In the name of Christ Jesus, I pray, Amen.

Being under authority is an act of faith. You are trusting God to work through His established lines of authority. There are times when employers, parents and husbands are violating the laws of civil government which are ordained by God to protect innocent people against abuse. In these cases, you need to appeal to the state for your protection. In many states, the law requires such abuse to be reported. In difficult cases, such as continuing abuse at home, further counseling help may be needed. And, in some cases, when earthly authorities have abused their position and are requiring disobedience to God or a compromise in your commitment to Him, you need to obey God, not man.

We are all admonished to submit to one another as equals in Christ (Ephesians 5:21). However, there are specific lines of authority in Scripture for the purpose of accomplishing common goals:

- Civil government (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-17)
- Parents (Ephesians 6:1-3)
- Husbands (1 Peter 3:1-4) or wives (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:7)
- Employers (1 Peter 3:18-23)
- Church leaders (Hebrews 13:17)
- God (Daniel 9:5,9)

Examine each area and confess those times you have not been submissive by praying:

Lord, I agree I have been rebellious toward _____. I choose to be submissive and obedient to your Word. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

Step 5

Pride vs. Humility

Pride is a killer. Pride says, "I can do it! I can get myself out of this mess without God or anyone else's help. Oh no, we can't! We absolutely need God, and we desperately need each other. Paul wrote: "For it is we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). Humility is confidence properly placed. We are to be "strong in the Lord and in his mighty power (Ephesians 6:10). James 4:6-10 and 1 Peter 5:1-10 reveal that spiritual conflict follows pride. Use the following prayer to express your commitment to live humbly before God:

Dear Heavenly Father, You have said that pride goes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before stumbling (Proverbs 16:18). I confess that I have lived independently and have not denied myself, picked up my cross daily and followed You (Matthew 16:24). In so doing, I have given ground to the enemy in my life. I have believed that I could be successful and live victoriously by my own strength and resources. I now confess that I have sinned against You by placing my will before Yours and by centring my life around myself instead of You. I now renounce the self-life and by so doing cancel all the ground that has been gained in my members by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that You will guide me so that I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (Philippians 2:3). Enable me through love to serve others and in honour prefer others (Romans 12:10). I ask this in the name of Christ Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

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

- Having a stronger desire to do my will than God's will
- Being more dependent upon my strengths and resources than God's
- Too often believing that my ideas and opinions are better than others
- Being more concerned about controlling others than developing self-control
- Sometimes considering myself more important than others
- Having a tendency to think that I have no needs
- Finding it difficult to admit that I was wrong
- Having a tendency to be more of a people-pleaser than a God-pleaser
- Being overly concerned about getting the credit I deserve
- Being driven to obtain the recognition that comes from degrees, titles and positions
- Often thinking I am more humble than others
- Other _____

For each of these that has been true in your life, pray aloud:

Lord, I agree I have been prideful by _____.
I choose to humble myself and place all my confidence in You, amen.

Step 6

Bondage vs. Freedom

The next step to freedom deals with habitual sin. Individuals, who have been caught in the cycle of sinning and confessing, may need to follow the instructions of James 5:16, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Seek out a righteous person who will hold you up in prayer and to whom you can be accountable. Others may only need the assurance of 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (NASB). Confession is not saying "I'm sorry"; it's saying, "I did it." Whether you need the help of others or just the accountability to God, pray the following prayer:

Father, You have told us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust (Romans 13:14). I acknowledge that I have given in to fleshly lusts which wage war against my soul (1 Peter 2:11). I thank You that in Christ my sins are forgiven, but I have transgressed Your holy law and given the enemy an opportunity to wage war in my physical body (Romans 6:12,13); Ephesians 4:27; James 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8). I come before Your presence to acknowledge these sins and to seek Your cleansing (1 John 1:9), that I may be freed from the bondage of sin. I now ask You to reveal to my mind the ways that I have transgressed Your moral law and grieved the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' precious name, I pray, amen.

The deeds of the flesh are numerous. Many of the following issues are from Galatians 5:19-21. Check those that apply to you and any others you have struggled with that the Lord has brought to your mind.

Note: Sexual sins, eating disorders, substance abuse, abortion, suicidal tendencies, perfectionism and fear will be dealt with later in this step.

<input type="checkbox"/> Stealing	<input type="checkbox"/> Complaining	<input type="checkbox"/> Procrastinating
<input type="checkbox"/> Lying	<input type="checkbox"/> Criticizing	<input type="checkbox"/> Swearing
<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Lusting	<input type="checkbox"/> Greediness
<input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheating	<input type="checkbox"/> Laziness
<input type="checkbox"/> Envy	<input type="checkbox"/> Gossiping	<input type="checkbox"/> Divisiveness
<input type="checkbox"/> Outbursts of anger	<input type="checkbox"/> Controlling	<input type="checkbox"/> Gambling

Regarding each of the above, that are checked, pray the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You that my sins are forgiven in Christ, but I have walked by the flesh and have sinned by _____. Thank You for cleansing me of all unrighteousness. I ask that You would enable me to walk by the Spirit and not carry out the desires of the flesh. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

We are exhorted to not allow sin to “reign in our mortal bodies” by not using our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness (Romans 6:12, 13). If you're struggling or have struggled with sexual sins (pornography, lust, sexual promiscuity, etc) or are experiencing sexual difficulty in your marriage, pray as follows:

Lord, I ask You to reveal to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness. Thank you Father. In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

As the Lord brings to your mind sexual sins you've committed, have been committed against you, i.e. rape, incest or other sexual abuse, or willingly by you, renounce each occasion:

Lord, I renounce ___(name the specific misuse of your body) ___ with ___(name the person)___ and ask You to break the bond Satan has brought into my life through that involvement. I confess my participation. I now present my body to You as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to You, and I reserve the sexual use of my body only for marriage. I renounce the lie of Satan that my body is not clean, that it is dirty or in any way unacceptable as result of my past sexual experiences. Lord, I thank You that You have totally cleansed and forgiven me, that You love and accept me unconditionally. Therefore, I can accept myself. And I choose to do so and to accept myself and my body as cleansed. In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

Prayers for Specific Problems

Homosexuality

Lord, I renounce the lie that You have created me or anyone else to be homosexual, and I affirm that You clearly forbid homosexual behavior. I accept myself as a child of God and declare that You created me in my natural gender to worship you. I renounce any bondage of Satan or attachments of evil spirits that have perverted my relationships with others. I announce that I am free to relate to the opposite sex in the way that You intended. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

Abortion

Lord, I confess that I did not assume stewardship of the life You entrusted to me. I choose to accept your forgiveness, and I now commit that child to You for Your care in eternity. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

Suicidal Tendencies

Lord, I renounce suicidal thoughts and any attempts I have made to take my own life or in any way injure myself. I renounce the lie that life is hopeless and that I can find peace and freedom by taking my own life. Satan is a thief and he comes to steal, kill and destroy. I choose to be a good steward of the physical life that You have entrusted to me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Addictions

Lord, I confess that I have used other things (alcohol, tobacco, food, prescription or street drugs, shopping, sex, entertainment, jogging, etc.) to escape reality or to cope with difficult situations and replace the joy of Your Holy Spirit. Lord, in doing so, I have become dependent on these other things rather than relying on you to help me through the life problems I've encountered and have opened a door for demonic interference and attachment in my life. Lord, I now confess this sin and ask for your cleansing power to restore me to wholeness and rely on You rather than things. I cast my anxiety onto Christ who loves me, and I commit myself to no longer yield to substance abuse, but to the Holy Spirit. By the power of Your death and resurrection I now command all demonic spirits to release their hold and attachment on me and to depart from me by the power of the blood of Christ my saviour. I now yield and commit myself to you, Thank you, Jesus, for the victory I now have in You, amen.

Drivenness and Perfectionism

Lord, I renounce the lie that my self-worth is dependent upon my ability to perform. I announce the truth that my identity and sense of worth are found in who I am as Your child. I renounce seeking the approval and acceptance of other people, and I choose to believe that I am already approved and accepted in Christ because of His death and resurrection for me. I choose to believe the truth that I have been saved, not by deeds done in righteousness, but according to Your mercy. I choose to believe that I am no longer under the curse of the law because Christ became a curse for me. I receive the free gift of life in Christ and choose to abide in Him. I renounce striving for perfection by living under the law. By Your grace, Heavenly Father, I choose from this day forward to walk by faith according to what You have said is true by the power of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

Plaguing Fears

Dear Lord, you are my sanctuary. You have not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind. I confess that I have given in to fear to exercise control over my life instead of trusting You. I now renounce all plaguing fears in my life as lies and announce that I trust You, Lord, in all areas of my life. Your Word tells me that You are in control of my life and that all things work together for good in my life as I am one who loves You and am called according to your purpose. Come Holy Spirit and fill me dispelling all darkness. I stand in your truth, Lord and receive your peace and joy, in the powerful name of Jesus, amen.

After you have confessed all known sin, pray:

Dear Lord, as I have now confessed these sins to You, I claim your forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I cancel all ground that evil spirits have gained through my willful involvement in sin. I ask this in the wonderful name of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, amen.

Step 7

Acquiescence vs. Renunciation

Acquiescence is passively giving in or agreeing without consent. The last step to freedom is to renounce the sins of your ancestors and any curses which may have been placed on you. In giving the Ten Commandments, God said: "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me" (Exodus 20:4, 5)

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

Dear Lord, I thank You that I am a new creation in Christ. I desire to obey Your command to honour my mother and my father, but I also acknowledge that my physical heritage has not been perfect. I ask you to reveal to my mind the sins of my ancestors in order to confess renounce and forsake them. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

Now claim your position and protection in Christ by making the following declaration verbally, and then by humbling yourself before God in prayer.

Declaration

I here and now reject and disown all the sins and iniquities of my ancestors, including: (name those that have come to mind). As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce all satanic assignments that are directed towards me, my family and my service to God, and I cancel every every curse that Satan and his workers have put on me. I announce to Satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me (Galatians 3:13) when He died for my sins on the cross.

I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased me with His own blood. I reject all other blood

sacrifices whereby Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. By the authority I have in Jesus Christ, I now command every spiritual enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father to do His will from this day forward.

Prayer

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

Once you have secured your freedom by going through these seven steps, you may find demonic influences attempting reentry, days or even months later. One person shared that she heard a spirit say to her mind, "I'm back," two days after she had been set free. "No, you're not!" she proclaimed aloud. The attack ceased immediately. One victory does not constitute winning the war. Freedom must be maintained. After completing these steps, one jubilant lady asked, "Will I always be like this?" I told her that she would stay free as long as she remained in right relationship with God. "Even if you slip and fall," I encouraged, "you know how to get right with God again."

Aftercare

Freedom must be maintained. You have won a very important battle in an ongoing war. Freedom is yours as long as you keep choosing truth and standing firm in the strength of the Lord. If new memories should surface or if you become aware of lies that you have believed or other non-Christian experiences you've had, renounce them and choose the truth. Some have found it helpful to go through the steps again. As you do, read the instructions carefully.

For your encouragement and further study, read: *Victory over the Darkness* (or the youth version: *Stomping out the Darkness*), *The Bondage Breaker* (adult or youth version) and *Released from Bondage*. If you are a parent, read: *Spiritual Protection for Your Children*. *Walking in the Light* was written to help people understand God's guidance and discern counterfeit guidance. Also, to maintain your freedom we suggest the following:

- Seek legitimate Christian fellowship where you can walk in the light and speak the truth in love.
- Study your Bible daily. Memorize key verses.
- Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Assume responsibility of your thought life, reject the lie, choose the truth and stand firm in your position in Christ.
- Don't drift away! It is very easy to get lazy in your thoughts and revert back to old habits or patterns of thinking.

- Share your struggles openly with a trusted friend. You need at least one friend who will stand with you.
- Don't expect another person to fight your battle for you. Others can help, but they can't think, pray, read the Bible or choose the truth for you.
- Continue to seek your identity and self-worth in Christ.
- Read: Living Free in Christ, and the devotional: Daily in Christ.
- Renew your mind with the truth that your acceptance, security and significance is in Christ by saturating your mind with the following truths.
- Read the entire list of who you are "In Christ" (p.38) and the Doctrinal Affirmation (in Step 2) aloud morning and evening over the next several weeks (and look up the verses referenced).
- Commit yourself to daily prayer. You can pray these suggested prayers often and with confidence:

Daily Prayer

Heavenly Father, I honour You as my sovereign Lord. I acknowledge that You are always present with me. You are the only all-powerful and wise God. You are kind and loving in all Your ways. I love You and thank You that I am united with Christ and spiritually alive in Him. I choose not to love the world, and I crucify the flesh and all its passions. Thank You for the life that I now have in Christ, and I ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit, that I may live my life free from sin. I declare my dependence up you, and I take my stand that I may live my life free from sin. I declare my dependence up on You, and I take my stand against Satan and all his lying ways. I choose to believe the truth and I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope, and I am confident that You will meet my needs as I seek to live a responsible life through Christ who strengthens me.

Cleansing Your Home

After a lifestyle contrary to a life with God, you will probably have many things in your home that give unclean spirits a hold in your home. Items such as articles of non-Christian worship, magazines, books, cds and DVDs that are contrary to a life with Christ. Allow God to direct you to these items, hold them up to God; if you have a negative feeling regarding the item, it must go. You cannot allow articles to remain in your home that will give unclean spirits ground and an opportunity for reentry. This may require the removal of certain equipment like your television. For example, if you have had a problem with watching certain types of programs that will lead you back into a life of sin, and you don't feel strong enough to resist, then get rid of the source. This will also require the actual removal of all spiritually unclean media from media players, hard drives, etc. Clean your home of everything spiritually unclean. Leaving a single article in your home could be the door or ground Satan needs. You are now free in Christ, but do not be deceived, we are at war with Satan. He is powerless because of the death and resurrection of Christ; however, he is a very skilled liar and deceiver. He will tell you that it's ok to keep certain items of your previous lifestyle. He will also tell you that these items cost too much to throw away or that you should sell them or give them away. I once held a special gathering where those that were freed had a huge bonfire and all unclean items were burned. In urban centres this isn't possible, but you must remove them from your home. Make a clear cut from all which contributed to your previous bondage.

After removing all spiritually unclean articles, physical and digital, walk through each room while praying the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, I thank You for this home. I claim this home as a place of spiritual safety and protection from all attacks of the enemy. I command every evil spirit claiming ground in the structures and furnishings of this place, based on the activities of previous occupants, to leave and never return. I renounce all curses and spells utilized against this home. I ask you Heavenly Father, to post guardian angels around my home to guard it from attempts of the enemy to renter and disturb Your purposes for me and my family. I thank You, Lord, for doing this, and pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

When Jesus was confronted by Satan after fasting in the wilderness, he quoted scripture as weapons against the lies of Satan. Remember, the only way Satan can win is when we believe his lies. We also need to be armed for battle, and be assured, future attacks will come, but, just as darkness is dispelled by light, deception is dispelled by the truth. The following scripture verses and passages will prove mighty in your battle against the wiles and schemes of the enemy. Commit them to memory by memorizing two or three or more each week. This will also require maintenance of a weekly recalling of all previously memorized verses.

May God bless you, as you stand firm in your freedom in Christ.

In Christ

John 1:12
 John 15:15
 Romans 5:1
 1 Corinthians 6:17

1 Corinthians 6:20
 Ephesians 1:1
 Ephesians 1:5
 Ephesians 2:18
 Colossians 1:14
 Colossians 2:10

In Christ

Romans 8:1,2
 Romans 8:28
 Romans 8:31-34
 Romans 8:35-39
 2 Corinthians 1:21,22
 Colossians 3:3
 Philippians 1:6

Philippians 3:20
 2 Timothy 1:7

Hebrews 4:16
 1 John 5:18

In Christ

Matthew 5:13,14
 John 15: 1,5
 John 15:16
 Acts 1:8
 1 Corinthians 3:16
 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
 2 Corinthians 6:1
 Ephesians 2:6
 Ephesians 2:10
 Ephesians 3:12
 Philippians 4:13

I Am Accepted

I am a child of God
 I am Christ's friend
 I have been justified in Christ
 I am united with the Lord, and I am one in spirit with Him
 I have been bought with a price and belong to God
 I am a saint
 I have been adopted as God's child
 I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit
 I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins
 I am complete in Christ

I Am Secure

I am free from condemnation
 I am assured that all things work together for good
 I am free from any condemning charges against me
 I cannot be separated from the love of God
 I have been established, anointed and sealed by God
 I am hidden with Christ in God
 I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected
 I am a citizen of heaven
 I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind
 I can find grace and mercy to help in time of need
 I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me

I Am Significant

I am the salt and light of the earth
 I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life
 I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit
 I am a personal witness of Christ
 I am part of God's temple
 I am a minister of reconciliation for God
 I am God's coworker (1Corinthians 3:9)
 I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm
 I am God's workmanship
 I may approach God with freedom and confidence
 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me