

DECLARATION

In the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command Satan and all evil spirits to release their hold on me in order that I can be free to know and choose to do the will of God. As a child of God who is seated with Christ in the heavenly places, I declare that every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ in my presence be bound. Satan and all his demons cannot inflict any pain or in any way prevent God's will from being done in my life today, because I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

STEP ONE

The first step toward experiencing your freedom in Christ is to renounce (verbally reject) all involvement (past or present) with occult, cult, or false religious teachings or practices. Participation in any group that denies that Jesus Christ is Lord and/or elevates any teaching or book to the level of or a level above the Bible must be renounced. In addition, groups that require dark, secret initiations, ceremonies, vows, pacts, or covenants need to be renounced. God does not take lightly false guidance. "As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists... I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among my people" (Leviticus 20:6). Since you don't want the Lord to cut you off, ask Him to guide you as follows:

Dear Heavenly Father, please bring to my mind anything and everything that I have done knowingly or unknowingly that involves occult, cult, or false religious teachings or practices. I want to experience Your freedom by renouncing any and all false guidance. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

The Lord may bring events to your mind that you had forgotten, even experiences you participated in as a game or thought was a joke. You might even have been passively or curiously watching others participate in counterfeit religious practices. The purpose is to renounce all counterfeit spiritual experiences and their beliefs.

To help bring these things to your mind, prayerfully consider the following Non-Christian Spiritual Checklist. Then pray the prayer following the checklist to renounce each activity or group the Lord brings to mind. He may also reveal to you ones that are not on the list. Be especially aware of your need to renounce non-Christian folk religious practices if you have grown up in another culture. It is important that you prayerfully renounce them out loud.

Non-Christian Spiritual Checklist

Check all those that you have participated in:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out of Body Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Witchcraft/Wicca/Sorcery | <input type="checkbox"/> Jehovah's Witness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ouija Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Satanism | <input type="checkbox"/> New Age (Teachings, Medicine) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bloody Mary | <input type="checkbox"/> Palm Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Masons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Games | <input type="checkbox"/> Astrology/Horoscopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Science/Mind Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magic Eight Ball | <input type="checkbox"/> Hypnosis | <input type="checkbox"/> Unification Church (Moonies) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spells or Curses | <input type="checkbox"/> Astral Projection | <input type="checkbox"/> The Forum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telepathy/Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Seances/Mediums/Channelers | <input type="checkbox"/> Church of Scientology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or White Magic | <input type="checkbox"/> Unitarianism/Universalism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trance | <input type="checkbox"/> Blood Pacts | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga (Religion, not the Exercise) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spirit Guides | <input type="checkbox"/> Fetishism/Crystals/Charms | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fortune Telling/Divination | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Spirits | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tarot Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts (Mysticism) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Levitation | | |

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hare Krishna | <input type="checkbox"/> Hinduism | <input type="checkbox"/> False gods: money, sex, power, pleasure, certain people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baha'ism | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism (including Zen) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native American Spirit Worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Muslim | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Islam | <input type="checkbox"/> Rosicrucianism | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: non-Christian religions, cults, movies, music books, video games, comics, fantasy games that glorify Satan that precipitated nightmares or mental battles, and all other questionable spiritual experiences including spiritual visitations and nightmares | | |

Additional questions to help you become aware of counterfeit religious experiences:

1. Do you now have, or have you ever had, an imaginary friend, spirit guide, or “angel” offering you guidance or companionship? If it has a name, renounce it by name.
2. Have you ever heard voices in your head or had repeating, nagging thoughts such as “I’m dumb,” “I’m ugly,” “Nobody loves me,” “I can’t do anything right”—as if there were a conversation going on inside your head? You should renounce paying attention to deceiving spirits.
3. Have you ever been hypnotized, attended a New Age seminar, or consulted a medium or spiritist? You should renounce each experience.
4. Have you ever made a secret vow or pact or inner vow? (i.e., “I will never . . .”) You should renounce such vows and pacts.
5. Have you ever been involved in a satanic ritual or attended a concert in which Satan was the focus? You should renounce such experiences.

Once you have completed your checklist and the questions, confess and renounce every false religious practice, belief, ceremony, vow or pact that you were involved in by praying the following prayer aloud:

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have participated in (specifically name every belief and involvement with all that you have checked on the spiritual checklist), and I renounce them all as counterfeits. I pray that You will fill me with Your Holy Spirit that I may be guided by You. Thank You that in Christ I am forgiven. Amen.

If you have been involved in a false religion, you need to renounce specific beliefs and practices that you have participated in. For instance, if you came out of the Mormon religion, you may need to renounce the secret initiation you had and the ceremonies in baptisms and marriages for the dead in which you participated. If you are unsure whether a previous practice was false or not, but God is bringing it to your remembrance, you can be nearly certain it is something to renounce.

One area that sometimes needs explanation is sexual spirits. Demons may manifest themselves in vivid sexual dreams or fantasies or by a demonic presence in the room that aroused you sexually. Extreme cases will be vile in nature. If you stood against it at the time, there is nothing to renounce. It is no sin to be under attack. If you participated with the sexual spirits, then you need to renounce any involvement and every sexual use of your body as an instrument of unrighteousness.

The “Non-Christian Spiritual Checklist,” is not exhaustive, so when you have finished checking off the items, ask the Lord if there is anything else you have participated in that you should renounce. Let the Holy Spirit bring those items to your mind. Any number of things might surface: books, photos, movies, music, or other materials, religious customs or traditions, praying to idols or angels by name, beliefs such as atheism, agnosticism, hedonism, or pharisaic control groups.

STEP TWO

In Step One you dealt with counterfeit guidance. In Step Two you will determine if you have been deceived. Scripture teaches that Christians can fall away from the faith by paying attention to deceiving spirits.⁶⁴ We can also be deceived by the world, deceive ourselves, and wrongly defend ourselves. We need God's help to determine whether deception has occurred, so ask for God's guidance as follows:

Dear Heavenly Father, You are the truth, and I desire to live by faith according to Your truth. The truth will set me free, but in many ways I have been deceived by the father of lies, the philosophies of this fallen world, and I have deceived myself. I choose to walk in the light, knowing that You love and accept me just as I am. As I consider areas of possible deception, I invite the Spirit of truth to guide me into all truth. Please protect me from all deception as You "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 the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

Prayerfully consider the lists in the three exercises below, using the prayers at the end of each exercise in order to confess any ways you have given in to deception or wrongly defended yourself. You cannot instantly renew your mind, but the process will never get started without acknowledging mental strongholds or defense mechanisms, which are sometimes called mental flesh patterns.

Ways you can be deceived by the world:

- Believing that acquiring money and things will bring lasting happiness. (Matthew 13:22; 1 Timothy 6:10)
- Believing that excessive food and alcohol can relieve my stress and make me happy. (Proverbs 23:19-21)
- Believing that an attractive body and personality will get me what I need. (Proverbs 31:10; 1 Peter 3:3, 4)
- Believing that gratifying sexual lust will bring lasting satisfaction. (Ephesians 4:22; 1 Peter 2:11)
- Believing that I can sin and get away without any negative consequences. (Hebrews 3:12, 13)
- Believing that I need more than what God has given me in Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2-4, 13-15)
- Believing that I can do whatever I want and no one can touch me. (Proverbs 16:18; Obadiah 3; 1 Peter 5:5)
- Believing that unrighteous people who refuse to accept Christ go to heaven anyway. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
- Believing that I can associate with bad company and not become corrupted. (1 Corinthians 15:33, 34)
- Believing that I can read, see, or listen to anything and not be corrupted. (Proverbs 4:23-27; Matthew 5:28)
- Believing that there are no consequences on earth for my sin. (Galatians 6:7, 8)
- Believing that I must gain the approval of certain people in order to be happy. (Galatians 1:10)
- Believing that I must measure up to certain standards in order to feel good about myself. (Galatians 3:2, 3; 5:1)

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have been deceived by (confess the items you checked above). I thank You for Your forgiveness, and I commit myself to believe only Your truth. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Ways to deceive yourself:

- Hearing God's Word but not doing what it says. (James 1:22)
- Saying I have no sin. (1 John 1:8)

- Thinking I am something I'm really not. (Galatians 6:3)
- Thinking I am wise in this worldly age. (1 Corinthians 3:18, 19)
- Thinking I can be truly religious but not bridle my tongue. (James 1:26)
- Thinking that God is the source of my problems. (Lamentations 3)
- Thinking I can live my life without the help of anyone else. (1 Corinthians 12:14-20)

Lord Jesus, *I confess that I have deceived myself by (confess the items checked above). Thank You for Your forgiveness. I commit myself to believe only Your truth. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

Ways to wrongly defend yourself:

- Denial of reality conscious or unconscious
- Fantasy (escaping reality by daydreaming, TV, movies, music, computer, or video games, drugs, alcohol)
- Emotional insulation (withdrawing from people or keeping people at a distance to avoid rejection)
- Regression (reverting back to less threatening times)
- Displaced anger (taking out frustrations on innocent people)
- Projection (attributing to another what you find unacceptable in yourself)
- Rationalization (making excuses for my own poor behavior)
- Lying (protecting self through falsehoods)
- Blaming myself (when not responsible) and others
- Hypocrisy (presenting a false image)

Lord Jesus, *I confess that I have wrongly defended myself by (confess the items checked above). Thank You for Your forgiveness. I trust You to defend and protect me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

STEP THREE

Let me encourage you to ask God who it is that you need to forgive and then I will explain what forgiveness is and how you can do it. In the following prayer, all you are asking for are the names of the people you need to forgive.

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 those who have hurt or offended me. Instead I have held on to my anger, bitterness, and resentment toward them. Please bring to my mind all the people I need to forgive in order that I may do so. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

MAKING THE LIST

When you have finished praying, write down on a piece of paper every name that comes to your mind. About ninety percent of the time, mother and father are mentioned first. The first few names that come to your mind are usually the people who contributed to your greatest source of pain. Some may be tempted to think, "There isn't anybody I need to forgive." That is highly unlikely since we have all suffered at the hands of someone else.

Write down the names that are coming to your mind right now. The Lord wants you to live a liberated life in Him, but you can't if you are bound to the past in bitterness. He has commanded you to forgive for your sake, so He will bring to mind both the people and the events that you are chained to in unforgiveness. Who are the relatives you need to forgive? Teachers? Employers? Friends? Co-workers? Church leaders?"

The two most overlooked names are: "yourself" and "God." In many cases, anger toward self or God is greater than anger toward any other person. The devil capitalizes on our ignorance of God and His ways and on our irresponsibility by pummeling us with thoughts such as, God isn't going to help you. He doesn't love you. How can you be a Christian and do the things you do? Look how weak and helpless you are. People who struggle with such thoughts are angry at themselves and/or God, and are disillusioned by the Christian life.

The concept of "letting go" of anger, guilt, and condemnation toward self is something many have never considered. Those feelings are rooted in our failure to understand God's cleansing and forgiveness. Only God can forgive our sins, which separate us from Him, and He has. But we need to forgive ourselves for our failures, for letting God down, and for hurting others. Otherwise we believe the subtle deception that we must atone for our own sins.

Believers paralyzed by condemnation are being victimized by the accuser of the brethren (Satan), or by their own faulty consciences, rather than the truth of God's grace. The latter is psychological guilt based on years of performance-based living and legalistic religious beliefs. These kinds of people live as though Christ's death was not sufficient to cover their sins. You can hang on the cross if you want to, but it won't do you any good. The Apostle Paul warned us when he said, "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement."⁶⁷

You are not being presumptuous by forgiving yourselves, because you are not accomplishing forgiveness from God. Only God can forgive our sins through His Son. Forgiving ourselves is actually receiving forgiveness from God. Forgiving ourselves is saying in effect, "Lord, I believe that You have forgiven me and cleansed me of my sins. Because of Your great love and grace—not because I deserve it—I choose to no longer condemn myself when You have forgiven me. I receive Your forgiveness and cleansing."

RELEASING BITTERNESS TOWARD GOD

Bitterness toward God is far more common than most people would care to admit. But when they become honest about their anger toward God, another stronghold begins to crumble. They believe God has been unfair and let them down...by failing to answer an important prayer...by allowing them to suffer and not rescuing them...by not endowing them with certain blessings, looks, gifts, abilities, success or, financial security.

Obviously, God doesn't need to be forgiven, because He cannot commit any sin of commission or omission. But we need to destroy "speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God" and take "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."⁶⁸ Satan's scheme is to turn us against God by raising up thoughts against Him. These deceptive thoughts often sound like: God doesn't love me. He isn't going to do anything to help me. They cause us to rebel against His Lordship. Satan is defeated when we release God from our own false expectations and stop blaming Him for our own failures and the failure of the Church to adequately equip the saints so they can live a liberated life in Christ.

People don't always forgive others because of what others did to them; people forgive others for what they think others have done to them. Bitterness isn't always rooted in reality. It is rooted in their perceptions. Some people put their pastor's name on their lists for silly reasons like not answering the phone when they called. But the pastor wasn't home or he would've answered the phone! The pastor didn't do anything wrong, but the person thought he did, so the person needed to forgive him. Roots of bitterness spring up and many are defiled,⁶⁹ because of misunderstandings.

That is why it is not blasphemous to "forgive" God -- because the bitterness is not based in reality but in thoughts raised up against the knowledge of Him. God understands that concept much better than we do because He alone knows the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. The only way to overcome bitterness is to forgive.

When people have worked through their bitterness toward God, they immediately acknowledge the fact that God hasn't done anything wrong. It won't help you to overcome your bitterness toward God by defending Him. First of all, God doesn't need to be defended. Second, forgiveness starts where people are at. Telling others they shouldn't feel the way they do toward God or anyone else is futile. They can't change the way they feel. We've participated in a subtle form of rejection when we won't accept or acknowledge their frustration and pain. If you find "forgiving" God uncomfortable, or if you think it is absolutely wrong, then you might try praying, "Lord, I know You haven't done anything wrong, but I want to repent of the anger I have against You for..." Angry feelings must be dealt with, or it won't do much good to go on, because God is your only hope.

Most people won't submit to God if they are bitter toward Him or think they can't trust Him. I can only tell you from experience that working through the bitterness toward God brings tremendous healing and restoration. Job is a good example of a believer who repented of anger toward God: "Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."⁷⁰ Forgiving others is not a self-righteous activity nor a blaming exercise. It is a humbling and healing experience that faces the hurt and the hate, and then chooses the way of the Cross.

GIVING UP OUR RIGHT TO BLAME

Some people deal with their emotional pain by pointing fingers. "That person violated me" or "I'm suffering because of that person." While that may be true, it doesn't resolve the problem. Blaming someone else can be a cover for your own guilt, or it reveals a heart that is more prone to seek revenge than to forgive.

To place the blame on somebody else can be nothing more than an excuse to stay in the bondage of bitterness. The reason that many still feel the emotional pain from the past is because they haven't forgiven. I can empathize with these people because they have been hurt. But I also care enough to help them realize that bad things happen to good people all the time, and it may happen to them again. I can't guarantee that a woman will not be sexually assaulted, but I can say that God has a means by which that event doesn't have to control her for the rest of her life. Nobody can fix your past, but by the grace of God you can be free from it.

Forgiveness is an act of the will whereby we give up our claim to seek revenge for an offense against us. God could have justifiably exercised His wrath against us and all mankind. Instead, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."⁷¹ Was it difficult for Jesus to accept His Father's will? He said to Peter, James, and John, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death,"⁷² and He cried out, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

The will of our heavenly Father was that Jesus go to the cross, but the grace of God was incredibly evident even in His hour of agony. As Jesus looked down upon those who would crucify Him, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."⁷³ The Cross reveals the cost of forgiveness and the pain of bearing the penalty of someone else's sin. At the Cross, Jesus died once for all the sins of the world.⁷⁴ He paid the penalty for my sins, your sins, and all the sins committed by others against all the people of this world. The victim cries out, "Where is the justice?" It's in the Cross. Forgiving others would be a moral outrage without the Cross.

In the same manner that God has forgiven us, God wants us to forgive others. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."⁷⁵ When you face the reality of forgiving others, know that the grace of God will always enable you to do the will of God.

Many Christians try to forgive over and over again, but still feel hurt and confused. They haven't understood how to forgive from the heart, or they haven't finished all the Steps, and the process isn't complete without doing that. Forgiving from our hearts is part of submitting to God, but it will take the rest of the Steps before they are fully ready to resist the devil. People win a major battle going through this Step, but complete freedom doesn't usually come until the last Step.

GIVE SATAN NO ADVANTAGE

One of the most definitive teachings on forgiveness is in Matthew 18:21-35. Several issues stand out in this passage. First, we are to continue forgiving no matter how many times we have been sinned against. Second, the degree that we have been forgiven by God is far greater than the degree we will ever have to forgive others. Third, repayment is impossible. Fourth, we are to forgive from our hearts or suffer the consequences of being tormented by the accuser of the brethren. If we will not forgive as we have been forgiven, our heavenly Father will hand us over to the torturers (see verses 34&35). That's not because He doesn't love us; that's because He doesn't want us to live in the bondage of bitterness. He wants us to live free and productive lives in Christ. God disciplines those He loves.

Paul warns us about Satan's entrapment when there is unforgiveness: "Whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes [thoughts]."⁷⁶ We are not to sin through anger, because that gives the devil an opportunity as well.⁷⁷

JUSTICE, MERCY, AND GRACE

Consider these simple definitions of justice, mercy and grace as they apply to relationships: Justice is giving people what they deserve. If God were perfectly just in dealing with us, we would all go to hell. God is a just God, and “The wages of sin is death.”⁷⁸

Mercy is not giving people what they deserve. “But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy.”⁷⁹ Justice had to be served, so Jesus took upon Himself the wrath of God. Grace is giving us what we don’t deserve. “For by grace you have been saved through faith.”⁸⁰ Forgiveness and eternal life are free gifts from God.

So the Lord instructs us to, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”⁸¹ We are not to give people what they deserve (be merciful); we are to give them what they don’t deserve (be gracious). We are called to love people, not because they are lovable or deserve to be loved, but because we have become “partakers of the divine nature.”⁸² God loves us because it is His nature to love us. “God is love.”⁸³ “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”⁸⁴ This ability to love one another is possible only by the grace of God, as is the ability to forgive as we have been forgiven.

The most common Greek word in the New Testament translated to forgive basically means to send away or to let go. In forgiving, we send away the devil so he can’t torment us, and we let go of the past so it can no longer have a hold on us. The pain and anger is released as we forgive from our hearts.

WHAT TO AVOID

Two major errors are to be avoided when addressing the issue of forgiveness. The first is more common among counselors. Influenced by secular resources, some counselors teach that forgiveness is a process and tell many that they are not ready to forgive. They tell people they have to go through all the painful memories first and then they will be able to forgive. The problem is they will never get there. Rehearsing the painful memories week after week only deepens the wounds and reinforces the abuse. The implication is that one has to heal in order to forgive, but in actuality, it is the other way around. We forgive in order to heal.

The other error is more common in the Church. The extreme version would sound like this: “You shouldn’t feel that way; you just need to forgive.” They just bypassed forgiveness. We have to forgive from the heart. Forgiveness is a hard choice, which includes: (1) allowing God to surface the names of every offending person and painful memory; (2) agreeing to live with the consequences of the other person’s sin without seeking revenge; and (3) letting God deal with the offending person in His way and in His time.

All forgiveness is efficacious or substitutionary. Christ paid the price for our sins, and we pay the price for those who sinned against us. In a practical sense, forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person’s sins. “But that isn’t fair,” some protest. Of course it isn’t, but we will have to do so anyway. Everybody is living with the consequences of somebody else’s sin. We are all living with the consequences of Adam’s sin. We have the choice to live in the bondage of bitterness or in the freedom of forgiveness.

GETTING TO THE EMOTIONAL CORE

As you pray through your list of names, stay with each individual until you are sure you have dealt with all the remembered pain—what he or she did, how he or she hurt you, how he or she made you feel (rejected, unloved, unworthy, dirty, etc.). This process is important because facing specific issues is what enables you to get to the emotional core, where the damage was done and the healing takes place. Forgiving superficially results in superficial freedom and healing.

Many people have sincerely tried to forgive but weren't able to because they didn't understand the real source of their bitterness and the subsequent lies they have believed about themselves. Feelings of abandonment would fit into this category. Forgiving someone for hurting you may only be dealing with the symptom. You may need to ask yourself, "What specifically happened to me?" "How did I respond at the time?" and "How has it affected me today?" Anger, sadness, and depression are only the emotional consequences of what happened.

Physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse can also severely damage your self-concept. Your identity becomes wrapped around the abuse. A rape victim may feel like a whore, and the emotionally battered person may feel worthless. Forgiving the person for making her feel like a whore or feeling worthless will not get it done. She would need to forgive like this: "I forgive that man who raped me, for forcing me to have sex with him against my will, and for violating my body, which is a temple of God, when I wanted to glorify God in my body. And I renounce the lie that I am a whore or that my body is dirty." (More will be said about this kind of renunciation in Step Six.) Or you may need to pray, "I forgive my mother for saying I will never amount to anything and for constantly putting me down by saying _____ (be specific), because it made me feel _____ (state how it made you feel, i.e. incompetent, inferior, worthless, etc.). I renounce the lies that I have believed about myself. I am not the terrible person my mother said I was; I am a child of God, and I choose to believe what God says about me."

Hurtful experiences in early childhood shape our self-perceptions. It is common to hear people tearfully pray: "Lord, I forgive my father (or mother) for beating me, for never caring about what was happening in my life, for not believing me when I told him about the sexual abuse. I forgive him for what he said and did that caused me to feel dirty, unloved, and worthless." Such negative programming contributes to a distorted sense of self. Forgiving others connects them to a loving Father who sees them as His children, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

Mental strongholds are torn down as people forgive those who have offended them. They have lived under the condemnation of those labels for years. For the liberated Christian, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."⁸⁵ Lies are exposed so they can live according to the truth of who they really are in Christ.

PREPARING YOUR HEARTS

Bitterness is like swallowing poison and hoping the other person will die. It is to the soul what cancer is to the body. If you knew that you had a form of cancer that could be removed by surgery, wouldn't you say to the doctor, "Go for it! Get it all!"? Bitterness, like cancer, affects every part of your being. Forgiving from your heart those who have hurt you is God's way of removing the cancer.

Tragically, this cancer of the soul is a communicable disease that can be spread to others. That is why the Word of God says, "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."⁸⁶ Entire families and churches can be defiled by roots of bitterness. God may bring to mind offending people and experiences you have totally forgotten. Let Him do it even if it is 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 yourself 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 hard-core choice to forgive, which is your responsibility. Stay with 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.).

Are you ready to forgive the people on your list so that you can be free in Christ and so that those people and your past no longer have any control over you? If you are ready, then for each person on your list pray aloud as follows:

Lord, I choose to forgive _____ (name the person) for _____
(what they did or failed to do), which made me feel _____
(share the painful memories).

AS THEY PRAY

One young lady said, "I can't forgive my mother. I hate her!" Now she can! The Lord isn't asking you to like those who have offended you. You can't deny or play with your emotions that way. The Lord wants you to forgive so you can put a stop to the pain you have experienced.

Some are reluctant to forgive others for the wrongs they have done because they think they are judging people by forgiving them. When a young anorexic girl came to her father on the list, she said, "I feel like I need to ask him to forgive me." I told her, "Maybe you do, but that is not what we are dealing with here. We are dealing with your pain."

Sometimes people are torn between feelings of love and loyalty for their parents and the need to face the pain they caused. Forgiving your parents for being something less than perfect is not condemning them. We do not blame our parents for their imperfections; they had parents who were imperfect, too. But facing the truth and forgiving your parents is what stops the cycle of abuse that continues on from one generation to another.

As you work through your list, make sure you stay with each person until you have dealt with every painful memory that God brings to your mind. Many people have tried to shove these painful memories down into their subconscious. Such suppression is considered a conscious denial. Others cannot honestly recall what happened to them. The Lord has allowed that to happen. The pain was too great to deal with at the time, so the Lord has made it possible for them to dissociate. He will reveal it at a later time when there is enough maturity, adequate support, and the means to resolve it. The Lord frequently brings back repressed memories during this process. Some attempt to deal with their pain by denying that anything bad ever happened or by pretending that it didn't really bother them. Denial and cover-up are never God's way.

EMOTIONS VARY

Forgiving from the heart will be an emotional catharsis for many, while others may remain emotionally blocked and unable to feel anything. A missionary lady looked at her list and slowly pushed it away. Then she pulled it back, and then pushed it away again. She said, "My counselor has been trying to get me to cry for three months." I had said nothing about crying. Finally, she took the list and started with the first name. "Lord, I forgive..." and collapsed in tears. Years of emotional pain surfaced as she forgave one person after another.

Some may work through their lists rather stoically. That is because people have different temperaments. Shedding tears is not the only way of expressing grief and pain. Some consciously and deliberately come to terms with their abuses and painfully choose to forgive from their hearts without shedding a tear. However, you may have never identified the true sources of your pain. Ask yourself, "How did that make you feel at the time?" or "When you think about it now, how does it make you feel now?" You may experience a flood of emotions unleashed. Some may forgive without showing any emotion until they come to a particular name, and then the release comes.

FACING THE PAIN AND MOVING ON

The primary objective is to face the truth, acknowledge the pain, forgive the offenders and move on. For many, this may be the first time they have ever acknowledged, understood or faced the root of their pain. Allow yourself to experience the pain and express your emotions. You may have chosen to stuff your feelings and live in denial for the fear of that happening, but that is exactly what must happen. You can't be right with God and not be real.

Some people were taught not to express their emotions, especially negative ones. "Real men don't cry," they have been told, or "Being emotionally expressive is wrong and a sign of weakness." Were you ever told that it was wrong or weak to express your emotions? What happened to you when you were emotionally honest in your home? Do you believe it is wrong to be emotionally honest? To be free in Christ, you must forgive those who trained you and renounce the lies you have been taught concerning your emotional nature. The one who is free in Christ will be emotionally free as well.

One woman had never been able to feel emotional sadness for herself but could weep for others. Her father had molested her when she was a child, and to guard his secret, he threatened her with more harm if she ever cried or told anyone. When this memory surfaced while going through forgiveness, she was encouraged to renounce the lie that she should not feel her own emotions and announce the truth that God created her with the emotional ability to experience joy, sorrow, laughter, and tears. As she did that, a tear began to form in the corner of her eye. Immediately she began to weep, and she continued to sob for some time.

Some people are like bananas -- the peel is removed and all their problems are resolved the first time they go through the Steps. Not everyone, however, can cover their entire past in one session. Some are like onions. The first time through, they will take off the outer layer. They may feel a great sense of joy as though a weight has been lifted. They dealt with all they knew, but they may recall other things in the coming days. Now they will know what to do when painful memories surface or new offenses take place. You must resolve what you do know. If there is more, the Lord will surface it at the right time. When He does, there will always be someone to forgive and/or something to renounce.

DEVELOP AN IDENTITY LIST

As you work through your list, it can be very helpful to make a "before and after" identity chart. Take a clean piece of paper and draw a line down the center of the page. At the top of the left column, write the words "Old Identity." Under that column write down every negative thing you said about yourself or was said about you. At the top of the right column, write "New Identity in Christ." Write down what is really true about yourself in Christ.

Recall the words that describe your beliefs about yourself as a result of abuse. In the left-hand column, record such words as: "dirty," "unloved," "abandoned," "not worth anything" and "can't do anything right." Especially record those words associated with the people of influence in your early years (mother, father, siblings, etc.). Such labels influenced your belief system and behavior patterns.

When you go to a store and buy a can or package of food off the shelf, it has a manufacturer's label describing the contents. As you go through life—the bad experiences, the things done to you, the things said to you, the wrong things you were involved in—Satan is there with paper and pencil writing a label for your life. Now that you are alive in Christ, you are no longer a product of your past; you are a product of the work of Christ on the cross. All the old labels of the world don't describe the contents of who you are anymore. Renounce the lies and choose the truth. Some examples are as follows:

- ❑ For those who have been betrayed by a parent and transferred that mistrust to their heavenly Father: "Lord, I renounce the lies I've believed about You because of the way my earthly father

treated me. I announce the truth that You are not like my earthly father. You are perfectly loving and faithful.”

- ❑ For those who think they are responsible for holding their dysfunctional families together and for being a parent’s emotional support: “Lord, I renounce the lie that I am responsible for being a savior to the people around me or that I must always be responsible for others by being the strong one. Thank you, Lord, that it’s all right for me to be honest about my own need. Thank you that when I am weak, You are strong within me.” (See 2 Corinthians 12:9, TLB.)
- ❑ For those who have been constantly put down by the authority figures in their lives: “Lord, I renounce the lie that I am unworthy and insignificant. I announce the truth that I am your special child and I am precious to You.”
Or “Lord, I renounce the lie that I am a helpless victim as I felt when I was a child. I announce the truth that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (See Philippians 4:13.)

SEEKING FORGIVENESS FROM OTHERS

Some are reluctant to forgive others because they believe they have to go to those people. The prospect of facing their abusers is too traumatic to even consider. To forgive others, you only need to go to God. Don’t confuse the issue of forgiving others with the need to ask for forgiveness, which is called for in Matthew 5:23-26. The Lord requires us to go to others before we go to Him and seek reconciliation if we know that someone has something against us.

The important thing to remember is that if we have hurt someone else, we need to go to that person first before we go to church. But if we have been hurt by others, we need to forgive them by going first to God. Forgiveness must precede reconciliation. Paul wrote, “If possible, so far as it depends upon you, be at peace with all men,”⁸⁷ but it doesn’t always depend upon you. You cannot be reconciled with someone who doesn’t want to be reconciled.

The goal is for you to be free from past abuses and abusers. Reconciliation may come, but only if the abusers will own up to their abusive ways and honestly seek forgiveness. The freedom of the abused is never contingent upon whether the abuser will own up to it. You must be willing to forgive from your heart regardless of what the abusers do. If you make your willingness to forgive others contingent upon them, then you will be controlled by abusers all your life. You may protest, but you don’t know how bad they hurt me. They are still hurting you. Forgiveness is how you stop the pain.

Forgiving others from your heart is a draining experience, but a major conflict has been resolved between you and God. Satan has no right to torment you anymore. It is normal to feel exhausted, but a brief break, a good stretch, a glass of water, and you are ready to go on to the next Step. But before you do, finish this Step with the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, I choose not to hold on to my resentment and bitterness. I relinquish my right to seek and revenge, and I ask You to heal my damaged emotions. Thank You for setting me free from the bondage of bitterness and free from my past experiences. I now ask You to bless those who have hurt me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

STEP FOUR

The Apostle James wrote, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”¹¹⁷ Submitting to God enables us to resist the devil. The prayer that begins this Step is a commitment to forsake rebellion and choose a submissive spirit, as follows:

Dear Heavenly Father, You have said in the Bible that rebellion is the same thing as witchcraft and as bad as idolatry (see 1 Samuel 15:23). I know I have not always been submissive, but instead I have rebelled in my heart against You and against those You have placed in authority over me. I pray that You would show me all the ways I have been rebellious. I choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant’s heart. In Jesus’ precious name I pray. Amen.

AREAS OF REBELLION

As the Lord leads you, prayerfully consider the ways you have been rebellious toward the following lines of authority:

- Civil government including traffic laws, tax laws, attitude toward government officials (See Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-17.)
- Parents, stepparents, or legal guardians (See Ephesians 6:1-3.)
- Teachers, coaches, school officials (See Romans 13:1-4.)
- Employers (past and present) (See 1 Peter 2:18-23.)
- Husband (See 1 Peter 3:1-4.) or Wife (See Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:7.) {Note to husbands: Take a moment and ask the Lord if your lack of love for your wife could be fostering a rebellious spirit within her. If so, confess that now as a violation of Ephesians 5:22, 23.}
- Church leaders (See Hebrews 13:17.)
- God (See Daniel 9:5, 9.)

The following prayer is an opportunity for you to confess your rebellion:

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have been rebellious toward _____ (name or position), by (specially confess what you did or did not do). Thank You for Your forgiveness. I choose to be submissive and obedient to Your Word. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

STEP FIVE

“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”¹³⁵ By acknowledging pride, we are declaring what Satan refused to declare—that we are dependent upon God. By exposing and confessing pride, we are acknowledging our desire to be free from a self-centered and a self-sufficient life. Then we will be free to begin living by the grace of God and deriving our spiritual strengths and identities from God, through Christ. Ask God to guide you with the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, You have said that pride goes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before stumbling. I confess that I have focused on my own needs and desires and not others. I have not always denied myself, picked up my cross daily and followed You. I have relied on my own strength and resources instead of resting in Yours. I have placed my will before Yours and centered my life around myself instead of You. I confess my pride and selfishness and pray that all ground gained in my life by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ would be canceled. I choose to rely upon the Holy Spirit’s power and guidance so that I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. With humility of mind, I choose to regard others as more important than myself. I acknowledge You as my Lord and confess that apart from You I can do nothing of lasting significance. Please examine my heart and show me the specific ways I have lived my life in pride. In the gentle and humble name of Jesus I pray. Amen. (See Proverbs 16:18; Matthew 6:33; 16:24; Romans 12:10; Philippians. 2:3.)

Pray through the list below and use the prayer following to confess any sins of pride the Lord brings to mind.

- Having a stronger desire to do my will than God’s will
- Leaning too much on my own understanding and experience rather than seeking God’s guidance through prayer and His Word
- Relying on my own strengths and resources instead of depending on the power of the Holy Spirit
- Being more concerned about controlling others than in developing self-control
- Being too busy doing “important” and selfish things rather than seeking and doing God’s will
- Having a tendency to think that I have no needs it hard to admit when I am wrong
- Being more concerned about pleasing people than pleasing God
- Being overly concerned about getting the credit I feel I deserve
- Thinking I am more humble, spiritual, religious, or devoted than others
- Being driven to obtain recognition by attaining degrees, titles, and positions
- Often feeling that my needs are more important than another person’s needs
- Considering myself better than others because of my academic, artistic, athletic abilities, and accomplishments
- Having feelings of inferiority appearing as false humility
- Not waiting on God
- Other ways I have thought more highly of myself than I should

For each of the above areas that has been true in your life, pray aloud:

Lord Jesus, I agree I have been proud by (name what you checked above). Thank You for Your forgiveness. I choose to humble myself before You and others. I choose to place all my confidence in You and put not confidence in my flesh. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

STEP SIX

Overcoming habitual sin may require help from a trusted brother or sister in Christ. James 5:16 says, “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” Sometimes the assurance of 1 John 1:9 is enough: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Confession is not saying, I’m sorry. It is openly admitting, I did it. Whether you need help from other people or just the accountability of walking in the light before God, pray the following prayer aloud:

*Dear Heavenly Father, You have told me to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust. I confess that I have given in to fleshly lusts that wage war against my soul. I thank You that in Christ my sins are already forgiven, but I have broken Your holy law and I have allowed sin to wage war in my body. I come to You now to confess and renounce these sins of the flesh so that I might be cleansed and set free from the bondage of sin. Please reveal to my mind all the sins of the flesh I have committed and the ways I have grieved the Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ holy name, I pray. Amen.*¹⁴⁴

The following list contains many sins of the flesh, but a prayerful examination of Mark 7:20-23, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:25-31, and other Scripture passages will help you to be even more thorough. Look over the list below and the Scriptures just listed and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind the ones you need to confess. He may reveal others to you as well. For each one the Lord shows you, pray a prayer of confession from your heart. There is a sample prayer following the list. (Note: Sexual sins, eating disorders, substance abuse, abortion, suicidal tendencies, and perfectionism will be dealt with later in this step.)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing | <input type="checkbox"/> Complaining/Criticism | <input type="checkbox"/> Lustful Thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy/Envy | <input type="checkbox"/> Lustful Actions | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheating | <input type="checkbox"/> Drunkenness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sarcasm | <input type="checkbox"/> Gossip/Slander | <input type="checkbox"/> Greed/
Materialism | <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quarreling/
Fighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathy/Laziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Swearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Others |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Hatred | <input type="checkbox"/> Lying | |

For each item that you checked above, confess to the Lord as follows:

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have sinned against You by (name the sins). Thank You for Your forgiveness and cleansing. I now turn away from these expressions of sin and turn to You, Lord. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I will not carry out the desires of the flesh. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Note: If you are struggling with habitual sin, read *Overcoming Addictive Behavior* (Regal Books, 2003).

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL BONDAGES

The Apostle Paul identifies every child of God with Christ in His life, death, burial, and resurrection in Romans 6. That association is true, because our souls are in union with God, and His life is eternal. We are to continuously choose to believe that we are alive in Christ and dead to sin. There is a law of sin and a law of death and laws cannot be done away with. But they can be overcome by a greater law, which is the law of life in Christ Jesus.¹⁴⁵

So sin is still present and tempting, and physical death is still imminent. But the law of life in Christ Jesus ensures us that we will continue to live spiritually and be forever in the presence of God. And the law of life in Christ Jesus is greater than the law of sin. As long as we live by faith according to what

God says is true and in His power, we will not sin. Paul goes on to say that it is our responsibility not to let sin reign in our mortal body, and he tells us how. “Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”¹⁴⁶

If you commit a sexual sin you use your body as an instrument of unrighteousness and you allow sin to reign in your mortal body. Confession alone will not resolve this. There is one other passage in the Bible that is important for overcoming sexual strongholds as follows:

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, “The two will become one flesh.” But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body (1 Corinthians 6:15-20).

SEXUAL BONDING

Bonding takes place when unholy sex is committed. The person has become one flesh with his or her partner. That is true even in the case of incest or rape. The body is used as an instrument of unrighteousness. The temple is violated. But that isn't fair! Of course it's not fair, and I can't promise that it won't happen to you or anyone else. But I can tell you how to resolve it in Christ so that you don't have to stay in bondage to the sexual abuse. We have observed that if there is voluntary compliance with the sexual abuser, the victim usually will become very sexually active. In cases of rape and incest, a woman will usually shut down sexually, even if she is now married to a Christian husband. Sex is dirty in her mind, and she can't stand to be touched.

We are warned to flee from any form of immorality, because it is a self-destructive sin that we commit against our own bodies. God and Satan both know our weakness to sexual passions. Satan plays on that weakness, but God provides a way of escape.

BREAKING SEXUAL BONDING

For complete repentance, ask the Lord to reveal every sexual use of your body as an instrument of unrighteousness. As the Lord brings each one to mind, renounce every sexual use of your body as an instrument of unrighteousness and ask God to break the bond with that person. Then conclude by presenting your body to the Lord as a living sacrifice. We are urged by the mercies of God to do that.¹⁴⁷ Start by asking the Lord to guide you as follows:

Lord Jesus,** I have allowed sin to reign in my mortal body. I ask You to bring to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness so that I can renounce these sexual sins and break those sinful bondages. In Jesus' name I pray. **Amen.

As the Lord brings to your mind every immoral sexual use of your body, whether it was done to you (rape, incest, sexual molestation) or willingly by you (pornography, masturbation, sexual immorality), renounce every experience as follows:

Lord Jesus,** I renounce (name the sexual experience) with (name). I ask You to break that sinful bond with (name) spiritually, physically and emotionally. **Amen.

After you are finished, commit your body to the Lord by praying:

Lord Jesus, I renounce all these uses of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness, and I admit to any willful participation. I choose to present my physical body to You as an instrument of righteousness, a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to You. I choose to reserve the sexual use of my body for marriage only. I reject the devil's lie that my body is not clean or that it is dirty or in any way unacceptable to You as a result of my past sexual experiences. Lord, thank You that You have cleansed and forgiven me and that You love and accept me just the way I am. Therefore, I choose now to accept myself and my body as clean in Your eyes. In Jesus' name I pray. **Amen.**

PRAYERS FOR SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Pornography

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have looked at sexually suggestive and pornographic material for the purpose of stimulating myself sexually. I have attempted to satisfy my lustful desires and polluted my body, soul, and spirit. Thank You for cleansing me and for Your forgiveness. I renounce any satanic bonds I have allowed in my life through the unrighteous use of my body and mind. Lord, I commit myself to destroy any objects in my possession that I have used for sexual stimulation and to turn away from all media that are associated with my sexual sin. I commit myself to the renewing of my mind and to think pure thoughts. Fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may not carry out the desires of the flesh. In Jesus' name I pray. **Amen.**

Homosexuality

Lord Jesus, I renounce the lie that You have created me or anyone else to be homosexual and I agree that in Your Word You clearly forbid homosexual behavior. I choose to accept myself as a child of God and I thank You that You created me as a man (woman). I renounce all homosexual thoughts, urges, drives, and acts and renounce all ways that Satan has used these things to pervert my relationships. I announce that I am free in Christ to relate to the opposite sex and my own sex in the way that You intended. In Jesus' name I pray. **Amen.**

Abortion

Lord Jesus, I confess that I was not a proper guardian and keeper of the life You entrusted to me, and I confess that I have sinned. Thank You that because of Your forgiveness, I can forgive myself. I commit the child to You for all eternity and believe that he or she is in Your caring hands. In Jesus' name I pray. **Amen.**

Suicidal Tendencies

Lord Jesus, I renounce all suicidal thoughts and any attempts I've 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 comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I choose life in Christ who said He came to give me life and give it abundantly. Thank You for Your forgiveness that allows me to forgive myself. I choose to believe that there is always hope in Christ and that my heavenly Father love me. In Jesus' name, I pray. **Amen.**

Driveness and Perfectionism

Lord Jesus, I renounce the lie that my sense of worth is dependent upon my ability to perform. I announce the truth that my identity and sense of worth is 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 in the power of Your Holy Spirit according to what You have said is true. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Eating Disorders or Self-Mutilation

Lord Jesus, I renounce the lie that my value as a person is dependent upon my appearance or performance. I renounce cutting or abusing myself, vomiting, using laxatives, or starving myself as a means of being in control, altering my appearance, or trying to cleanse myself of evil. I announce that only the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ cleanses me from sin. I realize I have been bought with a price and my body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, belongs to God. Therefore, I choose to glorify God in my body. I renounce the lie that I am evil or that any part of my body is evil. Thank You that You accept me just the way I am in Christ. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Substance Abuse

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have misused substances (alcohol, tobacco, food, prescription or street drugs) for the purpose of pleasure, to escape reality, or to cope with difficult problems. I confess that I have abused my body and programmed my mind in harmful ways. I have quenched the Holy Spirit as well. Thank You for Your forgiveness. I renounce any satanic connection or influence in my life through my misuse of food or chemicals. I cast my anxieties onto Christ who loves me. I commit myself to yield no longer to substance abuse, but instead I choose to allow the Holy Spirit to direct and empower me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

STEP SEVEN

Ask the Lord to reveal your ancestral sins and then renounce them as follows:

Dear Heavenly Father, please reveal to my mind all the sins of my ancestors that have been passed down through family lines. Since I am a new creation in Christ, I want to experience my freedom from those influences and walk in my new identity as a child of God. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Lord, I renounce (Confess all the family sins that God brings to your mind). Amen.

Satan and people may curse us, but it will not have any affect on us unless we believe it. We cannot passively take our place in Christ; we must actively and intentionally choose to submit to God and resist the devil. Then he will flee from us. Complete this final step with the following declaration and prayer:

DECLARATION

I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of God's Son, I declare myself to be free from those harmful influences. I am no longer "in Adam." I am now alive "in Christ." Therefore I am the recipient of the blessings of God upon my life as I choose to love and obey Him. As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce any and all satanic attacks and assignments directed against me and my ministry. Every curse placed on me was broken when Christ became a curse for me by dying on the cross (Galatians 3:13). 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 precious blood. I declare myself to be fully and eternally signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, having submitted to God and by His authority, I now resist the devil, and I command every spiritual enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ to leave my presence. I put on the armor of God, and I stand against Satan's temptations, accusations, and deceptions. From this day forward I will seek to do only the will of my Heavenly Father.

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You as Your child, bought out of slavery to sin 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 a living and holy sacrifice. May You be glorified through my life and body. I now ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I commit myself to the renewing of my mind in order that I may prove that Your will is good, acceptable, and perfect for me. I desire nothing more than to be like You. I pray, believe, and do all this in the wonderful name of Jesus, my Lord and Savior. Amen.