

STEPS TO FREEDOM IN CHRIST

SHORTENED

Galatians 5:1 says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." If you have received Christ as your Savior, He has already set you free through His victory over sin and death on the cross. The question is: Are you living victoriously in Christ's freedom, or are you still living in slavery?

How can you tell if you are living free in Christ? Freedom in Christ is having the desire and power to know, love, worship and obey God. It is the joyful liberty of knowing God's truth in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not a *perfect* life, for that is impossible this side of heaven. But it is a growing, *abundant* life in Christ (see John 10:10)!

If you are not experiencing that kind of freedom, it may be because you have not stood firm in the faith or lived according to who you are *in Christ*. Somehow you have allowed a yoke of slavery to put you back into bondage.

It is your responsibility, however, to do whatever is needed to walk in your freedom in Christ. If you are a Christian already, your eternal life is not at stake, you are safe and secure in Christ. But your daily victory is at stake if you choose not to walk according to the truth.

No matter how tough things might be for you spiritually right now, we've got great news for you! You are not a helpless victim caught in a tug-of-war match between two nearly equal but opposite heavenly superpowers—God and Satan. Only God is all-powerful, always present and all-knowing. Satan was defeated by Christ the Victor at the cross, so don't believe the lie that your situation is hopeless or that you are helpless against the devil's attacks.

Satan knows you have authority over him in Christ, but he doesn't want you to know it. He is a liar and the only way he can have power over you is if you believe his lies.

The battle is for your mind. During this session you may experience nagging thoughts such as, *This isn't going to work* or *God doesn't love me*, etc. Don't believe the devil's lies. If you believe Satan's deceptions, you will really struggle with making it through the Steps to Freedom in Christ.

If you are working through the Steps by yourself, don't pay any attention to accusing or threatening thoughts. If you are working through this with a trusted friend, pastor or counselor (which we heartily encourage), then tell him/her any thoughts you are having that are in opposition to what you are trying to do.

Remember, the only power Satan has over you is the power of the lie. Expose the lie by getting it out in the open; then choose the truth and the power of that lie is broken. In that way you will be able to maintain control during this session.

You must cooperate with the person who is trying to help you by sharing what is going on inside your mind. Also, if you experience any physical discomfort such as headache, nausea, tightness in the throat, etc. don't be alarmed. Just tell the person you are with so that he/she can pray for you. Don't let the devil set the agenda during this time; let the Holy Spirit call the shots.

As believers in Christ, we can pray with authority to stop any interference by Satan. Here is a prayer and declaration to get you going. Read these and all the prayers and declarations aloud.

Opening Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

We know that you are right here in this room with us and that you are present in our lives right now. You are the only all-knowing, all-powerful, and ever-present God. We are completely dependent upon You because without Jesus Christ we can do nothing. We choose to stand in the truth of Your Word and we refuse to believe the devil's lies. We thank You that the risen Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. Father, thank You that because we are in Christ we share His authority in order to make disciples and set captives free. We ask You to protect our minds and bodies during this time. Please fill us with the

Holy Spirit so that He can guide us into all truth. We choose to submit to His guidance alone during this time. Please reveal to our minds everything that You want us to deal with today. We ask for and trust in Your wisdom. We pray all this in faith, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Declaration

In the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ we command Satan and all evil spirits to release their hold on _____(name)_____ in order that _____(name)_____ can be free to know and choose to do the will of God. As children of God, raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places, we agree that every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ be bound. We say to Satan and all his evil workers that you cannot inflict any pain or in any way prevent God's will from being done today in _____(name's)_____ life.

Now you are ready to start going through the Steps to Freedom in Christ. The following seven steps will help you experience freedom from your past. You will address the areas in which Satan commonly takes advantage of believers and where strongholds are often built.

Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ has already purchased your freedom over sin and Satan on the cross. Experiencing that freedom will be the result of what *you* choose to believe, confess, renounce and forgive. No one can do that for you, not even God. The battle for your mind will only be won as you personally choose the truth.

During each Step, it is very important that you submit to God inwardly while resisting the devil outwardly. Do this by prayer and making each declaration *aloud*. The prayers and declarations are all in bold type to remind you to do that.

You will be taking a very thorough inventory of your life in order to make a rock-solid commitment to the truth. If your problems stem from another source not covered in these steps, you will have lost nothing by going through them. If you are open and honest during this time, you will greatly benefit by becoming right with God and close to Him once again.

May the Lord greatly touch your life during this time. He alone can and will give you the grace to make it through. Lean on His strength and wisdom, not on your own. It is crucial that you work through all seven Steps during this session. Take short breaks, as you need them, but don't allow yourself to become discouraged and give up. Remember, the freedom that Christ purchased for all believers on the cross is meant for you!

Step 1 Counterfeit v. Real

The first Step toward experiencing your freedom in Christ is to renounce – verbally reject – all past or present involvement with occult practices, cult teachings and rituals, as well as non-Christian religions. Any group that requires dark, secret initiations, ceremonial promises or pacts should also be renounced. Begin this step by praying aloud:

Dear Heavenly Father:

I ask You to bring to my mind anything and everything I have done knowingly or unknowingly that involves occult, cult or non-Christian teachings or practices. I want to experience Your freedom by renouncing these things right now. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Non-Christian Spiritual Checklist

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ouija Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-body experience
<input type="checkbox"/> Bloody Mary
<input type="checkbox"/> Light-as-a-feather
<input type="checkbox"/> Table lifting
<input type="checkbox"/> Magic Eight Ball
<input type="checkbox"/> Spells or curses
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental telepathy
<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic writing
<input type="checkbox"/> Trances
<input type="checkbox"/> Spirit guides
<input type="checkbox"/> Fortune-telling/divination
<input type="checkbox"/> Tarot cards
<input type="checkbox"/> Levitation
<input type="checkbox"/> Witchcraft/sorcery
<input type="checkbox"/> Satanism
<input type="checkbox"/> Palm reading
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritist/Medium/Channeler
<input type="checkbox"/> Occult or violent video/
computer games. List them: | <input type="checkbox"/> Astrology/horoscopes
<input type="checkbox"/> Hypnosis
<input type="checkbox"/> Seances
<input type="checkbox"/> Black or white magic
<input type="checkbox"/> Dungeons & Dragons (or Magic)
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood pacts or cutting yourself on purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> Objects of worship/crystals/good luck charms
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual spirits
<input type="checkbox"/> Martial arts (mysticism/devotion to sensei)
<input type="checkbox"/> Superstitions
<input type="checkbox"/> New Age
<input type="checkbox"/> Mormonism (Latter Day Saints)
<input type="checkbox"/> Jehovah's Witnesses
<input type="checkbox"/> Masons
<input type="checkbox"/> Secret vow or pacts
<input type="checkbox"/> Satanic ritual/concert
<input type="checkbox"/> Movies, TV shows, music, books,
Or magazines that the Lord is
bringing to your mind (that glorify
Satan). List them: | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Mind Science cults
<input type="checkbox"/> The Way International
<input type="checkbox"/> Unification Church (Moonies)
<input type="checkbox"/> The Forum (EST)
<input type="checkbox"/> Church of the Living Word
<input type="checkbox"/> Children of God/Love
<input type="checkbox"/> Church of Scientology
<input type="checkbox"/> Unitarianism/Universalism
<input type="checkbox"/> Roy Masters
<input type="checkbox"/> Silva Mind Control
<input type="checkbox"/> Transcendental Meditation
<input type="checkbox"/> Yoga
<input type="checkbox"/> Hare Krishna
<input type="checkbox"/> Bahaism
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American spirit
<input type="checkbox"/> Islam
<input type="checkbox"/> Hinduism
<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism (Zen)
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Muslim
<input type="checkbox"/> Rosicrucianism
<input type="checkbox"/> Other non-Christian religions |
|--|---|---|

Lord, I confess that I have participated in _____ . I know that it was evil and offensive in Your sight. Thank You for Your forgiveness. I renounce any and all involvement with _____, and I cancel out any and all ground that the enemy gained in my life through this activity. In Jesus' name, amen.

1. Have you ever seen, heard or felt a spiritual being in your room/house?
2. Do you have recurring nightmares? Specifically renounce any accompanying fear.
3. Do you now have, or have you ever had, an imaginary friend, spirit guide, "alien" or "angel" offering you guidance or companionship? (If it has a name, renounce it by name.)
4. 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*, etc. as if there were a conversation going on inside your head? List any specific nagging thoughts.
5. What other spiritual experiences have you had that would be considered out of the ordinary?

IDOLOTRY

We were created to worship the true and living God. Though we may not bow down to statues, it is easy for people and things of this world to subtly become more important to us than the Lord Himself. The following prayer expresses the commitment of a heart that chooses to "worship the Lord (our) God and serve him only." (Matthew 4:10)

Dear Lord God,

I confess to You that I have not loved You with all my heart and soul and mind (see Matthew 22:37) and as a result I have sinned against You, violating the first and greatest commandment. I repent of and turn away from this idolatry and now choose to return to You, Lord Jesus, as my first love, once again (see Revelation 2:4). Please reveal to my mind now any and all idols in my life. I want to renounce each of them and in so doing cancel out any and all ground Satan may have gained in my life through any idolatry.

In the name of Jesus, the true God, amen.

Notice that most, if not all, of the areas listed below are not evil in themselves; they become idols when they usurp God's rightful place as Lord of our lives.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambition | <input type="checkbox"/> TV/movies/music/other media | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food or any substance | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports or physical fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> Power/control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money/possessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun/pleasure | <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriend/girlfriend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers/games/software | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Popularity/opinion of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial security | <input type="checkbox"/> Appearance/image | <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rock stars/media celebrities/thieves | <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge/being right |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Busyness/activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents | |

In the name of the true and living God, Jesus Christ, I renounce my worship of the false god of _____ . I choose to worship only You, Lord, and ask You, Father, to enable me to keep this area of _____ in its proper place in my life.

Step 2 DECEPTION VS. TRUTH

God's Word is true and we need to accept His trust in the innermost part of our being (see Psalm 51:6). Whether or not we *feel* it is true, we need to believe it is true! Satan is the father of lies (see John 8:44), and he seeks to keep people in bondage through deception (see Revelation 12:9; 2 Timothy 2:26), but it is the truth in Jesus that sets us free (see John 8:32-36).

Dear Heavenly Father,

I know that You want me to know the truth, believe the truth, speak the truth and live in accordance with the truth. Thank You that it is the truth that will set me free. In many ways I have been deceived by Satan, the father of lies, and I have deceived myself as well.

Father, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of His shed blood and resurrection, asking You to rebuke all of Satan's demons that are deceiving me.

I have trusted in Jesus alone to save me, and so I am Your forgiven child. Therefore, since You accept me just as I am in Christ, I can be free to face my sin and not try to hide. I ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth. I ask You to "search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23, 24) In the name of Jesus, Who is the Truth, I pray. Amen.

WAYS YOU CAN BE DECEIVED BY THE WORLD

- Believing that acquiring money and things will bring lasting happiness (see Matthew 13:22; I Timothy 5:10)
- Believing that consuming food and alcohol excessively will make you happy (see Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21).
- Believing that a great body and personality will get you what you want (see Proverbs 31:10; I Peter 3:3, 4)
- Believing that gratifying sexual lust will bring lasting satisfaction (see Ephesians 4:22-24; I Peter 2:11).
- Believing that you can sin and get away with it and not have it affect your heart (see Hebrews 3:12, 13).
- Believing that you need more than what God has given you in Christ (see 2 Corinthians 11:2-4, 13-15).
- Believing that you can do whatever you want and no one can touch you (see Proverbs 16:18, Obadiah 3; 1 Peter 5:5).
- Believing that people can live a life of sin and still go to heaven (see I Corinthians 6:9-11).
- Believing that you can hang around bad company and not become corrupted (see I Corinthians 15:33, 34).
- Believing that there are no consequences on earth for your sin (see Galatians 6:7, 8).
- Believing that you must gain the approval of certain people in order to be happy (see Galatians 1:10).
- Believing that you must measure up to certain standards in order to feel good about yourself (see Galatians 3:2, 3; 3:1).

Lord, I confess that I have been deceived by _____ . I thank You for Your forgiveness and I commit myself to believing only Your truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

WAYS YOU CAN DECEIVE YOURSELF

- Hearing God's Word but not doing what it says (see James 1:22).
- Saying you have no sin (see I John 1:8).
- Thinking you are something you're really not (see Galatians 6:3).
- Thinking you are wise in this world age (see I Corinthians 3:18, 19).
- Thinking you can be truly religious but not bridle your tongue (see James 1:26).

Lord, I confess that I have deceived myself by _____. Thank You for Your forgiveness. I commit myself to believing only Your truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

WAYS YOU CAN WRONGLY DEFEND YOURSELF

- Denial of reality (conscious or unconscious)
- Fantasy (escaping reality through daydreaming, TV, movies, music, computer or video games, etc.)
- Emotional insulation (withdrawing from people or keeping people at a distance to avoid rejection)
- Regression (reverting back to a less threatening time)
- Displaced anger (taking out your frustrations on innocent people)
- Projection (blaming others for your problems)
- Rationalization (making excuses for your own poor behavior)

Lord, I confess that I have defended myself wrongly by _____ . Thank You for Your forgiveness. I now commit myself to trusting in You to defend and protect me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Sometimes we are greatly hindered from walking by faith in our Father God because of lies we have believed about Him. We are to have a healthy fear of God – awe of His holiness, power and presence – but we are not to be afraid of Him. Romans 8:15 says, “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” The following exercise will help break the chains of those lies and enable you to begin to experience that intimate Abba Father relationship with Him.

Work your way down the following lists, one by one, left to right. Begin each one with the statement in bold print at the top of that list. Read through the list *aloud*.

I renounce the lie that my Father God is....	I joyfully accept the truth that my Father God is...
Distant and disinterested.	Intimate and involved (see Psalm 139:18).
Insensitive and uncaring.	Kind and compassionate (see Psalm 103:8-14)
Stern and demanding.	Accepting and filled with joy and love (see Romans 15:7; Zephaniah 3:17).
Passive and cold.	Warm and affectionate (see Isaiah 40:11; Hosea 11:3, 4).
Absent or too busy for me.	Always with me and eager to be with me (see Hebrews 13:5; Jeremiah 31:20; Ezekiel 34:11-16).
Never satisfied with what I do, impatient or angry.	Patient and slow to anger (see Exodus 34:6; 2 Peter 3:9).
Mean, cruel or abusive.	Loving, gentle and protective of me (see Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 42:3; Psalm 18:2).
Trying to take all the fun out of life.	Trustworthy and wants to give me a full life; His will is good, perfect and acceptable for me (see Lamentations 3:22, 23; John 10:10; Romans 12:1, 2).
Controlling or manipulative.	Full of grace and mercy and He gives me freedom to fail (see Hebrews 4:15, 16; Luke 15:11-16).
Condemning or unforgiving.	Tenderhearted and forgiving; His heart and arms are always open to me (see Psalm 130:1-4; Luke 15:17-24).
Nitpicking, exacting or perfectionistic.	Committed to my growth and proud of me as His growing child (see Romans 8:28, 29; Hebrews 12:5-11; 2 Corinthians 7:4).

Fear weakens us, causes us to be self-centered, and clouds our minds so that all we can think about is the thing that frightens us. But fear can only control us if we let it. Pray the following prayer from your heart:

Dear Heavenly Father, I confess to You that I have listened to the devil's roar and have allowed fear to master me. I have not always walked by faith in You but instead have focused on my feelings and circumstances (see 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:7). Thank You for forgiving me for my unbelief! Right now I

renounce the spirit of fear and affirm the truth that You have not given me a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind (see 2 Timothy 1:7). Lord, please reveal to my mind now all the fears that have been controlling me so I can renounce them and be free to walk by faith in You.

I thank You for the freedom You give me to walk by faith and not by fear. In Jesus' powerful name, I pray. Amen.

The following list may help you recognize some of the fears the devil has used to keep you from walking by faith.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of death | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being victimized by crime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of Satan | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of marriage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of failure | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of divorce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of rejection by people | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of going crazy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of disapproval | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of pain/illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of becoming/being homosexual | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of the future |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of financial problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of confrontation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of never getting married | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of special individuals. List them: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of the death of a loved one | <input type="checkbox"/> Other specific fears that come to mind now: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being a hopeless case | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of losing my salvation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of having committed the unpardonable sin | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of not being loved by God | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of never loving or being loved by others | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of embarrassment | |

I renounce the _____ (name of fear) _____ because God has not given me a spirit of fear (see 2 Timothy 1:7). I choose to live by faith in the God who has promised to protect me and meet all my needs as I walk by faith in Him (see Psalm 27:1; Matthew 6:33, 34).

After you have finished renouncing all the specific fears you have allowed to control you, pray the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You that You are trustworthy. I choose to believe You, even when my feelings and circumstances tell me to be fearful. You have told me not to fear, for You are with me; to not anxiously look about me, for You are my God. You will strengthen me, help me and surely uphold me with Your righteous right hand (see Isaiah 41:10). I pray with faith in the name of Jesus my Master. Amen.

For generations, Christians have known the importance of publicly declaring what they believe. Read aloud the following Statements of Truth, thinking about what you are saying. You may find it very helpful to read it daily for several weeks to renew your mind with the truth, and replace any lies you might be believing.

STATEMENTS OF TRUTH

- I recognize that there is only one true and living God (see Exodus 20:2, 3) who exists as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is worthy of all honor, praise and glory as the One who made all things and holds all things together (see Colossians 1:16, 17).
- I recognize that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1:1, 14). I believe that He came to destroy the works of the devil (see I John 3:8), and that He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them (see Colossians 2:15).
- I believe that God has proven His own love for me because when I was still a sinner, Christ died for me (see Romans 5:8). I believe that He has delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to His kingdom, and in Him I have redemption – the forgiveness of sins (see Colossians 1:13, 14).

- I believe that I am now a child of God (see I John 3:1-3) and that I am seated with Christ in the heavenlies (see Ephesians 2:6). I believe that I was saved by the grace of God through faith, and that it was a gift and not a result of any works on my part (see Ephesians 2:8, 9).
- I choose to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (see Ephesians 6:10). I put no confidence in the flesh (see Philippians 3:3), for the weapons of warfare are not of the flesh but are divinely powerful to the destruction of strongholds (see 2 Corinthians 10:4). I put on the full armor of God (see Ephesians 6:10-20). I resolve to stand firm in my faith and resist the evil one.
- I believe that apart from Christ I can do nothing (see John 15:5), so I declare my complete dependence on Him. I choose to abide in Christ in order to bear much fruit and glorify my Father (see John 15:8). I announce to Satan that Jesus is my Lord (see I Corinthians 12:3), and I reject any and all counterfeit gifts or works of Satan in my life.
- I believe that the truth will set me free (see John 8:32) and that Jesus is the truth (see John 14:6). If He sets me free, I will be free indeed (see John 8:36). I recognize that walking in the light is the only path of true fellowship with God and man (see I John 1:3-7). Therefore, I stand against all of Satan's deceptions by taking every thought captive in obedience to Christ (see 2 Corinthians 10:5). I declare that the Bible is the only authoritative standard for truth and life (see 2 Timothy 3:15-17).
- I choose to present my body to God as a living and holy sacrifice (see Romans 12:1) and the members of my body as instruments of righteousness to God (see Romans 6:13). I choose to renew my mind by the living Word of God in order that I may prove that the will of God is good, acceptable and perfect (see Romans 12:2). I put off the old self with its evil practices and put on the new self (see Colossians 3:9, 10). I declare myself to be a new creation in Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).
- By faith, I choose to be filled with the Spirit (see Ephesians 5:18) so that I can be guided into all truth (see John 16:13). I choose to walk by the Spirit so that I will not carry out the desires of the flesh (see Galatians 5:16).
- I renounce all selfish goals and choose the ultimate goal of love (see I Timothy 1:5). I choose to obey the two greatest commandments to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to love my neighbor as myself (see Matthew 22:37-39).
- I believe that the Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (see Matthew 28:18) and that He is the head over all rule and authority. I am complete in Him (see Colossians 2:10). I believe that Satan and his demons are subject to me in Christ since I am a member of Christ's Body (see Ephesians 1:19-23). Therefore, I obey the command to submit to God and resist the devil (see James 4:7), and I command Satan in the name of Jesus Christ to leave my presence.

Step 3
BITTERNESS V. FORGIVENESS

We need to forgive others so Satan cannot take advantage of us (see 2 Corinthians 2:10, 11). We are commanded to get rid of all bitterness in our lives and forgive others as we have been forgiven (see Ephesians 4:31, 32). Ask God to bring to your mind the people you need to forgive by praying the following prayer aloud:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank You for the riches of Your kindness, forbearance and patience toward me, knowing that Your kindness has led me to repentance (see Romans 2:4). I confess that I have not shown that same kindness and patience toward those who have hurt 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 now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

On a separate sheet of paper, list the names of people who come to your mind.

Often we hold things against ourselves as well, punishing ourselves for wrong choices we've made in the past. Write "myself" at the bottom of your list so you can forgive yourself. Forgiving yourself is accepting the truth that God has already forgiven you in Christ. If God forgives you, you can forgive yourself!

Also write "thoughts against God" at the bottom of your list. Obviously God has never done anything wrong so we don't have to forgive Him. Sometimes, however, we harbor angry thoughts against Him because He did not do what we wanted Him to do. Those feelings of anger or resentment against God can become a wall between us and Him so we must let them go.

Before you begin working through the process of forgiving those on your list, take a few minutes to review what forgiveness is and what it is not.

- **Forgiveness is not forgetting.**
- **Forgiveness is a choice, a decision of your will.**
- **Forgiveness is letting the other person off your hook, but they are not off God's hook.**
- **Forgiveness is mainly a matter of obedience to God.**
- **Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin.**
- **Forgiveness is choosing not to hold someone's sin against him or her anymore.**

Now, you are ready to begin. Starting with the first person on your list, make the choice to forgive him or her for every painful memory that comes to your mind. Focus on that individual until you are sure you have dealt with all the remembered pain. Then work your way down the list in the same way.

For every painful memory you have for each person on your list, pray aloud:

"Lord, I choose to forgive ___ (name the person)___ for _____ (say what they did to hurt you)_ even though it made me feel ___ (share the painful feelings)_____.

After you have forgiven each person for all the offenses that come to your mind and after you have honestly expressed how you felt, conclude your forgiveness of that person by praying aloud:

Lord, I choose not to hold any of these things against _____ (name)_____ any longer. I thank You for setting me free from the bondage of my bitterness toward _____ (name)_____. I now ask You to bless _____ (name)_____ in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Step 4 REBELLION V. SUBMISSION

We live in a rebellious age. Many people only obey laws and authorities when it is convenient for them. There is a general lack of respect for those in government, and Christians are often as guilty as the rest of society in fostering a critical, rebellious spirit. Certainly we are not expected to agree with our leaders' policies that are a violation of Scripture, but we are to "honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king" (I Peter 2:17, NASB).

The Bible makes it clear that we have two main responsibilities toward those in authority over us: to pray for them (see I Timothy 2:1, 2) and to submit to them (see Romans 13:1-7). To commit yourself to that godly lifestyle, pray the following prayer aloud from your heart:

Dear Heavenly Father,
You have said in the Bible that rebellion is the same thing as witchcraft and as bad as idolatry (see I Samuel 15:23). I know I have not obeyed You in this area and have rebelled in my heart against You and against those You have placed in authority over me. Thank You for Your forgiveness of my rebellion. By the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that all ground gained by evil spirits in my life due to my rebellion would be canceled. I pray that You would show me all the ways I have been rebellious. I choose now to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant's heart. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.

Being under authority is clearly an act of faith! By submitting, you are trusting God to work through His established lines of authority, even when they are harsh or unkind or when they tell you to do something you don't want to do.

If authorities abuse their position by requiring you to break God's law or compromise your commitment to Him, then you need to obey God rather than man (see Acts 4:19, 20). Be careful though. Don't assume that an authority is violating God's Word just because they are telling you to do something you don't like!

As you prayerfully look over the following list, allow the Lord to show you any *specific* ways in which you have been rebellious to authority. Then, using the prayer of confession that follows the list, specifically confess whatever the Lord brings to your mind.

- Civil government, including traffic laws, tax laws; attitude toward government officials (see Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-4; I Peter 2:13-17).
- Parents, stepparents or legal guardians (see Ephesians 6:1-3).
- Teachers, coaches, school officials (see Romans 13:1-4).
- Employer – past or presents (see I Peter 2:18-23).
- Husband (see I Peter 3:1-5) or wife (see Ephesians 5:21; I 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.
- Church leaders (see Hebrews 13:17).
- God (see Daniel 9:5, 9).

For each way in which the Spirit of God brings to your mind that you have been rebellious, use the following prayer to specifically confess that sin:

Lord,
I confess that I have been rebellious toward _____ by _____ (say what you did specifically) _____. Thank You for forgiving my rebellion. I choose now to be submissive and obedient to Your Word. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Step 5
Pride v. Humility

Pride kills. Pride says, "I don't need God or anyone else's help. I can handle it by myself." Oh no you can't! We absolutely need God and we desperately need each other. The apostle Paul wisely 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, emphasis mine).

That is a good definition of humility: putting no confidence in the flesh, that is, in ourselves; but, rather, being "strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (Ephesians 6:10). Humility, therefore, is confidence properly placed in God.

Use the following prayer to express your commitment to living humbly before God:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have said that pride goes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before a fall (see Proverbs 16:18). I confess that I have been thinking mainly of myself and not of others. I have not denied myself, picked up my cross daily and followed You (See Matthew 16:24). As a result, I have given ground to the devil in my life. I have sinned by believing I could be happy and successful on my own. I confess that I have placed my will before Yours and have centered my life around myself instead of You.

I repent of my pride and selfishness and pray that all ground gained in my members by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ would be canceled. I choose to rely on the Holy Spirit's power and guidance as I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (see Philippians 2:5). And I choose to make You, Lord, the most important of all in my life (see Matthew 6:33).

Please show me now all the specific ways in which I have lived my life in pride. Enable me through love to serve others and in honor to prefer others (see Romans 12:10). I ask all of this in the gentle and humble name of Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

As the Lord brings to your mind areas of pride, use the prayer following the list to guide in your confession.

- 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 abilities rather than depending on the power of the Holy Spirit
- Being more concerned about controlling others than in developing self-control
- Often being too busy doing "important" things to take time to do little things for others
- Having a tendency to think that I have no needs
- Finding it hard to admit when I am wrong
- Being more concerned about pleasing people than pleasing God
- Being 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 or positions
- Often feeling that my needs are more important than another's needs
- Considering myself better than others because of my academic, artistic, or athletic abilities or accomplishments
- Other ways I have thought more highly of myself than I should: _____

Lord, I agree I have been proud in _____ . Thank You for forgiving me for my pride. I choose to humble myself before You and others. I choose to place all my confidence in You and none in my flesh. In Jesus' name, amen.

Pride is the original sin of Lucifer. It sets one person or group against another and divides. Satan's strategy is always to divide and conquer, but God has given us a ministry of reconciliation (see 2 Corinthians 5:19).

Many times we deny that there is prejudice or bigotry in our hearts, yet “nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 4:13). The following is a prayer, asking God to shine His light upon your heart and reveal any areas of prideful prejudice.

Dear Heavenly Father,

I know that You love all people equally and that You do not show favoritism but You accept men from every nation who fear You and do what is right (see Acts 10:34, 35). You do not judge people based on skin color, race, ethnic background, gender, denominational preference or any other worldly matter (see 2 Corinthians 5:16). I confess that I have too often prejudged others or regarded myself as superior because of these things. I have not always been a minister of reconciliation but have been a proud agent of division through my attitudes, words and deeds. I repent of all hateful bigotry and prideful prejudice and I ask You, Lord, to now reveal to my mind all the specific ways in which this form of pride has corrupted my heart and mind. In Jesus’ name, amen.

For each area of racial or ethnic prejudice, gender superiority or denominational bigotry that the Lord brings to mind, pray the following prayer aloud from your heart:

I confess and renounce the prideful sin of prejudice against ____ (name of group) _____. I thank You for Your forgiveness, Lord, and ask now that You would change my heart and make me a loving agent of reconciliation with ____ (name of group) _____. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Step 6
BONDAGE V. FREEDOM

Many times we feel trapped in a vicious cycle of sin-confess-sin-confess that never seems to end. To find freedom we must follow James 4:7, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” We submit to God by confession of sin and repentance (turning away from the sin). We resist the devil by rejecting his lies and walking in the truth.

Sin that has become a habit often requires help from a trusted brother or sister in Christ. James 5:16 says, “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.” Sometimes the assurance of I John 1:9 is enough: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Remember, confession is not saying “I’m sorry,” it is openly admitting, “I did it. Pray the following prayer aloud:

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have told me to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and not to think about how to gratify my sinful desires (see Romans 13:14). I confess that I have given in to sinful desires which wage war against my soul (see I Peter 2:11). I thank You that in Christ my sins are already forgiven, but I have broken Your holy law and given the devil a chance to wage war in my body (see Romans 6:12, 13; James 4:1; I Peter 5:8). I come to You now to confess and renounce these sins of the flesh (see Proverbs 28:13; 2 Corinthians 4:2) so that I might be cleansed and set free from the bondage of sin. Please reveal to my mind now 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.

There are many sins that can control us. The following list contains many of them, but a prayerful examination of Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:25-31; and Mark 7:20-23 will help you to be even more thorough. After reading these three passages, look over the following list and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind the ones you need to confess. He may reveal to you others as well.

Note: Sexual sins, divorce, eating disorders, substance abuse, abortions, suicidal tendencies and perfectionism will be dealt with later in this Step.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing | <input type="checkbox"/> Quarreling/fighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy/envy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complaining/criticism | <input type="checkbox"/> Lustful actions | <input type="checkbox"/> Gossip/slander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathy/laziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Lying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hatred | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Lustful thoughts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drunkenness | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheating | <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greed/materialism | <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____ | |

Lord,

I confess that I have committed the sin of _____. Thank You for Your forgiveness and cleansing. I now turn away from this sin and turn to You, Lord. Strengthen me by Your Holy Spirit to obey You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

It is our responsibility not to allow sin to have control over our bodies. We must not use our bodies or another persons’ body as an instrument of unrighteousness (see Romans 6:12, 13). Sexual immorality is sin against your body, the temple of the Holy Spirit (See I Corinthians 6:18, 9). To find freedom from sexual bondage, begin by praying the following prayer:

Lord, I ask You to bring to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness, so I can renounce these sins right now. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

As the Lord brings to your mind every wrong sexual use of your body, whether it was done to you – rape, incest, sexual molestation – or willingly by you (including pornography, masturbation, sexual immorality), *renounce every occasion:*

Lord, I renounce _____(name the specific use of your body)_____ with _____(name any other person involved)_____ and I ask You to break that sinful bond with _____(name)_____.

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

Lord,

I renounce all these uses of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness and I admit to my willful participation. I choose now to present my eyes, mouth, mind, heart, hands, feet and sexual organs to You as instruments of righteousness. I present my whole body to You as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, and I choose to reserve the sexual use of my body for marriage only (see Hebrews 13:4).

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 totally 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. Amen.

***For special prayers for special needs, see Appendix A**

Step 7
CURSES V. BLESSINGS

The next Step to Freedom is to renounce the sins of your ancestors, as well as any curses that they may have been placed on you by deceived and evil people or groups.

In giving the Ten Commandments, God said, "...for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:4-6).

Demonic or familiar spirits can be passed on from one generation to the next if you don't renounce the sin of your ancestors and claim your new spiritual heritage in Christ. You are not guilty for the sin of any ancestor, but because of their sin, Satan may have gained access to your family.

Ask the Lord to show you specifically what sins are characteristic of your family by praying the following prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, I ask You to reveal to my mind now all the sins of my fathers that are being passed down through family lines. I want to be free from those influences and walk in my new identity as a child of God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As the Lord brings those areas of family sin to your mind, list them. You will be specifically renouncing them later in this Step.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

In order to walk free from the sins of your ancestors and any curses and assignments targeted against you, read the following declaration and pray the following prayer aloud. Remember, you have all authority and protection you need in Christ to take your stand against such activity.

DECLARATION

I here and now reject and disown all of the sins of my ancestors. I specifically renounce the sins of ____ (list here the areas of family sin the Lord revealed to you) ____. As one who has now been delivered from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed down to me from my family. As one who has been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce all satanic assignments that are directed toward me and my ministry. I cancel out 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 when He died for my sins on the cross (See Galatians 3:13). I reject any and every way to which Satan may claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased me with His own blood. I reject all blood sacrifices whereby Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be fully and eternally signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. By the authority I have in Christ, I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus that is influencing me to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father to do His will from this day forward.

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 an instrument of righteousness, a living and holy sacrifice that I may glorify You in my body. I now ask You to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I

commit myself to the renewing of my mind in order to prove that Your will is good, acceptable and perfect for me. All this I pray in the name and authority of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Even after finding freedom in Christ by going through these seven steps, you may still be attacked by demonic influences trying to regain control of your mind hours, days or even weeks later. But you don't have to let them. As you continue to walk in humble submission to God, you can resist the devil and he will flee from you (see James 4:7).

The Devil is attracted to sin like flies are attracted to garbage. Get rid of the garbage and the flies will depart for smellier places. In the same way, walk in the truth, confessing all sin and forgiving those who hurt you, and the devil will have no place in your life to set up shop.

Realize that one victory does not mean the battles are over. Freedom must be maintained. After completing these Steps to Freedom, one happy lady said, "Will I always be like this?" I told her 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."

Appendix A

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Divorce

Lord, I confess to You any part that I played in my divorce (ask the Lord to show you specifics). Thank You for Your forgiveness, and I choose to forgive myself as well. I renounce the lie that my destiny is now in being divorced. I am a child of God, and I reject the lie that says I am a second-class Christian because of the divorce. I reject the lie that says I am worthless, unlovable, and that my life is empty and meaningless. I am complete in Christ, who loves me, just as I am. Lord, I commit the healing of all hurts in my life to You as I have chosen to forgive those who have hurt me. I also place my future into Your hands and trust You to provide the human companionship You created me to need through Your Church and, if it be Your will, through another spouse. I pray all this in the healing name of Jesus, my Savior and Lord and closest friend. Amen.

Homosexuality

Lord, 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 cancel out 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, Amen.

Abortion

Lord, I confess that I was not a proper guardian and keeper of the life You entrusted to me and I admit that as sin. Thank You that because of Your forgiveness I can forgive myself. I recognize the child is in Your caring hands for all eternity. In Jesus' name, amen.

Suicidal Tendencies

Lord, 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 (see John 10:10). Thank You for Your forgiveness which allows me to forgive myself. I choose to believe that there is always hope in Christ. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Driveness 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 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, Amen.

Eating Disorders or Self-Mutilation

Lord, 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 cleansing myself of evil. I announce that only the blood of the Lord Jesus 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, 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 a harmful way. I have quenched the Holy Spirit as well. Thank You for forgiving me. I renounce any satanic connection or influence in my life through any 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, Amen.

After you have confessed all known sin, pray:

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