INTRODUCTION

SHAME:

Psalm 25:3 (NIV)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

The arrows of the Lord are in the heart of the children of adulterers and of the perverted in spirit. (Proverbs 20:29)

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe. (Proverbs 18:10)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

The wickedness of a man’s way overthroweth him: but his soul will live that walketh uprightly. (Proverbs 11:18)

The entrance of a good man is as a sure place: but the coming of the wicked is as a snare. (Proverbs 12:5)

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto wisdom shall be wise. (Proverbs 12:15)

A fool and an unwise man quarrel: but among the children of the righteous is conversation of peace. (Proverbs 13:18)

Joy of heart is a good thing: but to have a foolish man for a friend is death. (Proverbs 18:22)

The fearful people will not stand in thy presence: all the sinners in heart shall flee at thy approach. (Psalm 46:3)

For behold, the day cometh, that shall come as a thief, on whom the father of lights shall shew the brightness of his glory, and shall take away your darkness. (James 5:8)

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever: and this word is true, which is more precious than gold; yea, than fine gold; neither is it可比葡萄树上红梅的。 (Proverbs 8:20, 36)

For the wrath of man shall wax hot as the fire: but the Lord will wholly holiness; and his wrath is as grower. (Psalm 51:7, 11)

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The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:5)

The light of the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the light of the moon into blood, at the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (Zephaniah 1:15)

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SEVERING OUR AFFECTION FOR THE WORLD

Eight core areas of affection help bring to light the truths set forth in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and 1 John 2:15-17. This worksheet is designed to help us move beyond a simplistic understanding of affection and love for the world and to expose the deeper issues of the heart. Check the boxes that apply, then sever the items through the power of the cross, using the 4-R’s (see box on the next page) to eradicate these influences from our lives.

1 John 2:15-17 (NIV)  Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 (NIV)  What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

EIGHT KEY AREAS THAT MUST BE SEVERED

1. **Comfort**
   [avoiding the life of faith; preferring to live out of our five senses.]

   **Characteristics of comfort:**
   - I prefer predictable routines, knowing things ahead of time.
   - I gravitate toward tasks that do not require me to move (out of fear).
   - I require a certain amount of money in the bank in order to feel secure.
   - I am uncomfortable living outside of my five physical senses.
   - I am satisfied to live on other people’s faith and passion.
   - I am indifferent toward evangelism, discipleship, and freedom.
   - I avoid change.
2. **Pleasures**

[excessive focus on escape.]

**Characteristics of pleasures:**
- I have a preoccupation with a hobby.
- My emphasis is on “days off” instead of “days on;” I cannot wait for the weekend.
- Forms of escape occupy my time and energy: movies, food, leisure time, hanging out, naps, games, internet, e-mail.
- I have a lack of passion about work; I seek to avoid it.

3. **Status**

**Characteristics of status:**
- Who I know is very important.
- I prefer the company of people who make me feel important.
- I like to be included in exclusive circles of friends and part of events that are “by invitation only.”
- My reputation with others is more important than my reputation with God.
- I am preoccupied with impressing others.

4. **Royalties / credit**

**Characteristics of royalties/credit:**
- I desire to get credit for what I do.
- I desire recognition.
- I cling to the notion that some or all of my gifting is merited or deserved.
- I have a tendency to be angry with God or leaders when I do not receive the recognition I think I deserve.

5. **“Hollywood Christianity”**

**Characteristics of Hollywood Christianity:**
- I am “still waiting for the perfect moment” to get involved.
- I am “still waiting for the perfect moment” to get baptized, evangelize, intercede, etc.
- I have a greater preoccupation with worldly glitter than with my own spiritual need.
- I want to work in a ministry where my contribution can be easily recognized.

6. **Prestige**

[abundant comfort.]

**Characteristics of prestige:**
- I focus on what I want and need, instead of the needs of others. This includes material possessions.
- I have a unhealthy fantasy of what I will own in the future, where I will live, what I will become.

7. **False image**

[preoccupation with the illusion of ministry, and what we look like.]

**Characteristics of false image:**
- I fail to realize that goodness and success is the work of God’s spirit in me, not my own work.
- I have more confidence in the flesh and in physical appearance than in Jesus.
- My attitudes are reflected in statements such as: “I will do that when I am married.” “I will do that when I lose 30 pounds.” “I will do that when I have a radical spiritual experience.”
- I will move out into calling when the time is right and I am more prepared.

8. **Approval of man**

**Characteristics of approval of man:**
- I seek the approval of others for my decisions when God has already spoken clearly to me.
- I hesitate to obey due to concern about what others might think or say.
- Fear of man replaces fear of the Lord.

### REPENT

of the sin (name it specifically and how we have participated in it).

### RECEIVE

God’s forgiveness and the cleansing, healing power of the blood of Jesus.

### REBUKE

Satan’s influence in and through our lives because of a critical spirit.

### REPLACE

the sin by affirming the truth and walking continuously in the opposite spirit. Memorize and meditate on what is true.
INTRODUCTION

Ecclesiastes 7:8-10 (NASB)  The end of a thing is better than its beginning; the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools. Do not say, “Why were the former days better than these?” For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

The Bible tells us that “anger rests in the bosom of fools.” Beneath anger lies bitterness, and unresolved bitterness creates resentment, anger, and deep emotional and spiritual damage. Paul traced the development of unresolved bitterness in Ephesians 4:31: Bitterness leads to wrath (outbursts of anger), wrath leads to anger (rage; a constant state of anger), anger leads to clamor (making a public scene), clamor is followed by slander (false charges or misrepresentations), and slander leads to malice (inner hatred of the heart). The danger of harboring an attitude of bitterness is that, eventually, it will control you.

Paul warns that bitterness is like a root. The longer it grows, the more difficult it is to dig out. Hebrews 12:15 states that a root of bitterness left to grow brings defilement “to the many.” The root will produce the fruit of anger, ungratefulness, a critical attitude, insensitivity toward others, revenge, mistrust, and depression. Unresolved bitterness is like a highly contagious disease that contaminates and destroys us and others.

The cure for bitterness and anger is forgiveness. In order to resolve bitterness, we must first understand and experience God’s forgiveness of our sin. God chose to focus on His desire to forgive us rather than to hold us accountable for our failures (Isaiah 43:25, 55:7; Psalm 103:12). Forgiveness demands a payment. When someone sins against us and hurts us, our sense of justice demands that a fair payment be made to us for their failure. If that person cannot pay (or chooses not to pay), we either resent the injustice and become bitter and angry, or we exercise forgiveness that leads to peace. Forgiveness is not easy, especially when something has caused great harm. However, as we free the offender through forgiveness, we free ourselves from the effects of destructive attitudes.

The worksheet that follows is designed to help identify areas of unforgiveness, bitterness, or anger that need to be resolved. Keep in mind that one indicator for whether or not true forgiveness has occurred is the ability (through the Holy Spirit) to pray a powerful blessing on the person who hurt us.

SOME SYMPTOMS OF ANGER

- I feel relatively happy, and then I am struck with a sudden mood change.
- I raise my voice (and even yell) to communicate something that I am emphatic about.
- I have an expressed impatience with others that often plays out in exasperation. “Why can’t they understand?”
- I often anticipate another person’s predictable behavior, and I become angry when I see it fulfilled.
I become angry when others “cannot read my mind.” I want others to think just like I think, and to anticipate what I need.

I become angry when I am not recognized for my contribution.

I become angry when I feel that I am disrespected, or when my words are not taken seriously.

I know I am angry because of the language inside my head (cursing of myself or others).

I know I am angry when I do not want to hear what another person has to say.

I get angry when others do not make me a priority.

I get angry when I do not have what I need.

I get angry when people do not do what I say.

I get angry when I cannot control a given situation.

I get angry about suggestions that I have done something wrong.

I get angry when I feel added pressure at work, with finances, with personal responsibilities, and/or my or others’ expectations.

I easily become defensive about myself and about others.

I quickly see faults in others.

I look for opportunities to bring up old, hurtful subjects.

I speak negatively or critically of others.

The phrase “I don’t deserve this” goes through my head frequently.

I say I have forgiven, but I continue to reprocess those subjects in my mind.

I get frustrated about the perceived faults and mistakes of others.

I become impatient easily.

I think my life is harder than others. “I have been given a raw deal.”

Exasperation: Overuse of, or a faulty form of, discipline that left you crushed in spirit or confused about what you did wrong.

Control/Manipulation: Did he use guilt to get you to obey him? Did he emotionally manipulate you?

Absence of spiritual leadership: Did your father stand watch over the spiritual condition of the home?

Neglect: Did your father spend time with you on a consistent basis?

Abandonment: Were you left in front of the TV or left in the care of people other than your parents on a consistent basis?

Rejection: Did your parents want you as a child? Were you accepted by your father?

Passivity: Did your father lead the home? Did your father initiate? Did he allow your mother to do what the Lord expected of her?

Criticism: Was your father critical of you, your abilities, interests, etc.?

Performance-based acceptance and love: Were you rewarded with words of encouragement only when you measured up to what your father expected of you?

Alcohol abuse.

Drug use.

Pornography.

Adultery.

Divorce.

Physical abuse.

Emotional abuse.

Sexual abuse.

The following sins of omission are things that your father did not do. Often these sins are more damaging than sins of commission:

Withheld affection

Withheld blessing

Withheld words of encouragement

Withheld discipline

These areas may lead to a great deal of hurt and bitterness:

Were your brothers or sisters treated in a way that left you bitter?

Was your mother treated by your father in a way that left you bitter?
The items checked on the preceding list must be brought to the cross. A sample prayer is provided below to help guide you through the process. James 5:16 states that as you confess your sin to one another you will be healed. It is essential to have a witness supporting you as you walk through these prayers.

**LORD JESUS, I FORGIVE MY FATHER (STEPFATHER)** for the sin of ______________. (say here all of the sins for which you need to forgive your father and go through it all at one time.) Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me for the sin of unforgiveness toward my father for these sins. Forgive me for bitterness, resentment, and anger toward him. I ask your forgiveness for rebellion against my father, and I now break all curses, negative thoughts, and slander I have spoken against him. I replace those curses now with mighty blessings!

**JESUS, I NOW WANT TO PRAY A BLESSING ON MY FATHER.** (Stand up to pray. Pray forcefully, with all of your heart and strength; raise your voice if you need to and pray with faith.)

I pray that you will:
- bless him with salvation.
- bless him with the same freedom I have found today.
- bless him with a new and soft heart.
- bless his marriage.
- bless his finances and his work.
- bless him with joy, peace, kindness, love, and all of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- bless him with freedom from condemnation and shame. Heal his wounds.
- bless him with a long life and with great health.
- bless him with freedom from all of the schemes and plans of Satan.
  - I declare that I love my father.
  - I declare that my father is your child.
  - I look at him through your eyes, and see his hurt and his pain.
  - I ask in faith that you would pour your Spirit on him. Do it now, Lord! My chains are broken and I stand free before you. Thank you for the power of the cross.

**REBUKE**

Stand up and pray the following prayer with conviction, with all of your heart, and with faith that God will move in a powerful way right now. Pray until you and your group leader sense a release.

**JESUS, I RENOUNCE** a life of anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. I renounce the right to take offense. I give up my right to see justice. I give you my relationship with my father; it is in your hands now. I am not responsible for things that only you can do. I cut that cord now! I rebuke the spirits of:

- Rejection
- Anger
- Unforgiveness
- Sickness
- Abandonment
- Bitterness
- Division
- Control

**REPLACE**

When thoughts of bitterness occur again, rebuke them and stand firm on not taking offense again. If possible, write a short letter to tell your father you love him, and write an honest blessing toward him. Do not criticize him in this letter; simply bless him and let the results rest in the Lord's hands.

---

**BIOLOGICAL MOM/STEPMOM**

Check all boxes that apply and add your own thoughts as needed. This will help you to discover how to extend forgiveness to your mother/stepmother.

Were the following elements present in your relationship?

- **Exasperation:** Overuse of or a faulty form of discipline that left you crushed in spirit or confused about what you did wrong.
- **Control/Manipulation.** Did she use guilt to get you to obey her? Did she emotionally manipulate you?
- **Absence of spiritual leadership:** Did your mother stand watch over the spiritual condition of the home?
- **Neglect:** Did your mother spend time with you on a consistent basis?
- **Abandonment:** Were you left in front of the TV or left in the care of people other than your parents on a consistent basis?
- **Rejection:** Did your parents want you as a child? Were you accepted by your mother?
- **Passivity:** Did your mother lead the home? Did your mother initiate? Did she allow your father to do what the Lord expected of him?
- **Criticism:** Was your mother critical of you, your abilities, your interests, etc.?
The items checked on the preceding list must be brought to the cross. A sample prayer is provided below to help guide you through the process. James 5:16 states that as you confess your sins to one another you will be healed. It is essential to have a witness who supports you as you walk through these prayers.

**LORD JESUS, I FORGIVE MY MOTHER (STEP-MOTHER) for**

(say here all of the sins for which you need to forgive your mother and go through it all at one time.) Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me for the sin of unforgiveness toward my mother because of these sins. Forgive me for bitterness, resentment, and anger toward my mother. I ask your forgiveness for rebellion against my mother, and I now break all curses, negative thoughts, or slander I have spoken against her. I replace those curses now with mighty blessings!

**JESUS, I NOW PRAY A BLESSING ON MY MOTHER.** (Stand up to pray. Pray forcefully, with all of your heart and strength; raise your voice if need be and pray with faith.)

I pray that you will:

- bless her with salvation.
- bless her with the same freedom I have found today.
- bless her with a new and soft heart.
- bless her marriage.
- bless her finances and his work.
- bless her with joy, peace, kindness, love, and all of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
- bless her with freedom from condemnation and shame. Heal her wounds.
- bless her with a long life and with great health.
- bless her with freedom from all of the schemes and plans of Satan.
  - I declare that I love my mother.
  - I declare that my mother is your child.
  - I look at her through your eyes, and see her hurt and her pain.
  - I ask in faith that you would pour your Spirit on her. Do it now, Lord! My chains are broken and I stand free before you. Thank you for the power of the cross.

**REBUKE**

Stand up and pray the following prayer with conviction, with all of your heart, and with faith that God will move in a powerful way right now. Pray until you and your group leader sense a release.

**JESUS, I RENOUNCE** a life of anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. I renounce the right to take offense. I give up my right to see justice. I give you my relationship with my mother; it is in your hands now. I am not responsible for things that only you can do. I cut that cord now! I rebuke the spirits of:

- Rejection
- Anger
- Unforgiveness
- Sickness
- Abandonment
- Bitterness
- Division
- Control

**REPLACE**

When thoughts of bitterness occur again, rebuke them and stand firm on not taking offense again. If possible, write a short letter to tell your mother you love her, and write an honest blessing toward her. Do not criticize her in this letter; simply bless her and let the results rest in the Lord’s hands.
SIBLINGS AND FRIENDS

Look for areas in which you may not have forgiven people:

- Rejection: Write down names here, as we need to be specific.

- Jealousy.
- Competition.
- Betrayal.

LORD JESUS, I ASK YOU TO FORGIVE ME for all unforgiveness, anger, and bitterness that I have held toward ___________. I forgive them for rejection, betrayal, and _______________ (any other specific instances that come to mind). I break all curses that I have spoken against them, and I replace those now with great blessings. I no longer take offense; I am free of all bitterness and anger. I bless them! (Declare at least ten different blessings).

GIRLFIENDS AND BOYFRIENDS

- Rejection.
- Betrayal.

WHAT IS A SOUL TIE?

Soul ties are formed when relationships depart from Biblical guidelines in one or more areas, resulting in an unhealthy connection between people. The relationship has stepped outside of the truth of God’s Word. In many cases, the sin of “fear of man” enters these relationships. The result is confusion.

For example, you may try to convince a person that a relationship is damaging and causes the rest of the family to suffer from the consequences of that damage. Examples to consider are many, but a few are included below:

1. Unhealthy and codependent relationships with family members. The following thoughts plague you: “What would happen if I did not call every day to check in?” “What would happen if I actually confronted the person with truth?”
2. Involvement with friendships that cause you to stumble on a consistent basis with various sins, but you are afraid to truly speak your convictions because you fear rejection.
3. You receive council from several people regarding a relationship that has an adverse effect on you, but you are not able to see it yourself. An example could be a married woman’s relationship with her mother. Where decisions are made based primarily on what her mother believes versus the married woman’s husband. “We have to go over there or my mom will be so upset.” “If we do not go on vacation with them they will be devastated.” “We had better send a gift or a card or we will never hear the end of it.”
4. You struggle with the ability to confront someone in a godly manner. For example, the Lord asks you to confront a person with God’s truth, but out of fear you avoid it and will not speak the truth.
5. Avoidance of speaking the truth is a key symptom of a soul tie.

The term soul tie has to do with a sinful priority system in which the enemy is entrenched. Remember the simplicity of following Jesus: Hear and obey what the Scriptures teach immediately. Do so with joy, and a thankful heart. With issues of spiritual health, the first thought in your mind is, “What would Jesus have me do?” and not, “What will this other person think if I obey the Lord?” If the latter is true, fear of people takes the place of the fear of God.

Proverbs 9:10 (NIV) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Psalm 118:6 (NKJV) The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

When you function in the fear of people versus the Lord, you will always live in deception.

A soul tie can be formed as a result of physical intimacy outside of marriage, which is a false union between two people. Along with the sin of premarital sex that needs to be confessed, soul ties need to be severed through the power of the blood of Jesus. Because a sexual union outside of marriage is not created in godly love, it leaves residual hatred toward the other person. God says that our love for another is to be pure, but that cannot be secured outside of the covering of the marriage relationship. Hatred born out of this violation can also turn into self-hatred, rejection, and distrust of others.

Common attributes of a soul tie are:

1. Seeking the approval of another person above God’s approval. This prevents us from obeying God, because we may be fearful of what someone will think.
2. Living in another person’s mind; desiring approval, attention, or recognition from that person.
3. Living in a state of confusion with regard to another person. You may be unable to make a simple decision of obedience because of the weight given to the opinions of another person.
4. You care more about what another person thinks than what the Lord thinks.
**Sample prayer** for a soul tie that is **not part of sexual sin**:

Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me for the sin of fear of man in regard to my relationship with __________. I have placed this relationship as a greater priority than obedience to you. I lived making decisions based on what they think versus what the Scripture teaches. Forgive me for indecision, confusion, and all rebellion.

I rebuke in Jesus' name all confusion, fear, rebellion, resistance ("I don’t want to deal with it."), and all anger or passivity related to this soul tie.

**Sample prayer** for a soul tie that formed **because of sexual sin**:

Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me for the sin of sex outside of marriage. I ask forgiveness for rebellion and the disregard that was shown towards this other person. I walk away from these sins, and through the powerful name of Jesus Christ, I break the union that was forged between me and __________. I command everything that came in through these sins to go to the feet of Jesus: Hatred, self-hatred, rejection, rebellion, anger and fear must go to the feet of Jesus. (Remember that you need to move in God’s authority and power as you rebuke the enemy.)

---

**Are there any other specific instances the Lord brings to your mind?**

- __________
- __________
- __________
- __________

**SAMPLE PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, I forgive __________ for the sin or rejection and betrayal (or other things that come to mind). I ask your forgiveness now for how I treated them (confess whatever sins the Lord brings to your attention). I ask your forgiveness now for all unforgiveness I held toward them, and for all anger and resentment. I cut all soul ties by the blood of Jesus. By the blood of Jesus Christ I break all words that cursed instead of blessed, and I now bless them with:

- Salvation.
- Filling of your Holy Spirit.
- Unconditional love in a rich marriage and family life.
- Complete freedom.
- Healthy friendships.
- Financial provision.
- A wonderful church to attend.

**REBUKE**

Jesus, I now renounce a life of anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. I renounce the right to take offense. I give up my right to see justice. I give you these relationships, and they are in your hands now. I am not responsible for things only you can do. I cut that cord now. Satan, I rebuke you and all of your spirits of:

- Rejection
- Anger
- Unforgiveness
- Sickness
- Abandonment
- Bitterness
- Division
- Control

---

**COACHES AND TEACHERS**

- __________
- __________
- __________
- __________

**ANYONE ELSE THE SPIRIT BRINGS TO MIND**

- __________
- __________
- __________
- __________
As you work through the following section, do not limit yourself only to what is on this page. There may be other incidents or items that need to be taken to the cross. As you go through this, it will be extremely helpful for you to mark the boxes next to things for which you need to forgive your husband/wife, and things for which you need to ask his/her forgiveness.

**SPouse/Ex Spouse**

Are the following elements present in your relationship or in past relationships? These are sins of commission (committed against another person):
- Unfaithfulness or betrayal.
- Control/Manipulation.
- Absence of spiritual leadership: Did your husband stand watch over the spiritual condition of the home?
- Neglect.
- Abandonment.
- Rejection.
- Passivity.
- Criticism.
- Performance-based acceptance and love.
- Lies.
- Alcohol abuse.
- Drug use.
- Pornography.
- Adultery.
- Divorce.
- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.

The following sins of omission are things that your husband or wife did not do. Often these sins are more damaging than sins of commission:

- Withholding affection.
- Withholding blessing.
- Withholding words of encouragement.

The items checked on the list above need to be brought to the cross. A sample prayer is provided to help guide you through the process. Remember, James 5:16 tells us that as we confess our sins to one another we will be healed. It is essential that you have a witness to support you as you walk through these prayers.

**Lord Jesus, I forgive my husband/wife** for the sin of __________________________. (List here all of the sins for which you need to forgive your husband/wife, and pray through each one separately). Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me for the sin of un forgiveness toward my husband/wife for these sins. Forgive me for bitterness, resentment, and anger toward my husband/wife. I ask your forgiveness for rebellion toward my husband/wife, and I now break all curses, negative thoughts, or slander I have spoken against him/her. I replace those curses now with mighty blessings!

**Jesus, I want to pray a blessing on my husband/wife**
(Stand up to pray this prayer. Pray forcefully, with all of your heart and strength; raise your voice if you need to and pray with faith). Jesus, I pray that you will:

- Bless him/her with salvation.
- Bless him/her with the same freedom I found today.
- Bless him/her with a new and soft heart.
- Bless his/her marriage.
- Bless his/her finances and work.
- Bless him/her with joy, peace, kindness, love, and all of the fruit of the Spirit.
- Bless him/her so that he/she will be free of condemnation and shame. Heal his/her wounds.
- Bless him/her with a long life and great health.
- Bless him/her with freedom from all of the schemes and plans of Satan.
  - I declare that I love my husband/wife.
  - I declare that my husband/wife is your child.
  - I look at him/her through your eyes, and see his/her hurt and pain.
  - I ask in faith that you pour your fire on him/her. Do it now, Lord!

**Rebuke**

Stand up and pray the following prayer with conviction, with all of your heart, and with faith that God will move in a powerful way right now. Pray until you and your group leader sense a release.

Jesus, I now renounce a life of anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. I renounce the right to take offense. I give up my right to see justice. I give you this relationship with my husband/wife, and it is in your hands now. I am not responsible for things that only you can do. I cut that cord now! I rebuke the spirits of:

- Rejection
- Anger
- Bitterness
- Unforgiveness
- Division
- Sickness
- Control

**My chains are broken and I stand free before you. Thank you Lord for the power of the cross!**
WHAT IS TRUE BEAUTY?

The Lord has said, “Beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (1 Peter 3:3-4  NIV).

The key elements of the body image stronghold are:

1. The deception that our purpose and identity lie in our appearance.
2. The lie that our beauty is in our outward appearance.

IDENTIFYING THE BATTLE

Many of us (both men and women) have battled with issues related to body image. If we have not gained complete victory in the past, we need to repent of the resulting hopelessness. Unbelief and hopelessness are revealed in these types of thoughts:

- “I will never be completely free of this issue.”
- “This is something I will always battle.”
- “I am overly empathetic with my brother/sisters in Christ regarding their freedom from this.”

I repent of:

- Believing the lie that the “magazine cover model” image is beautiful or manly.
- Believing the lie that I need to look “perfect” at all times.
- Wearing a mask to cover up the pain I feel inside.
- Denying the truth of what Scripture says about beauty.
- Worshipping myself (thinking about myself more than I think about the Lord).
- Believing the lie that the media knows or portrays what is beautiful.

Self-pity is part of this stronghold. We focus inward and believe the lies of the enemy, when the Lord wants us to focus outward and believe His truth.

I repent of:

- Believing the lie that the Lord did not create me perfectly.
- Believing that I will never defeat this sin.
- Believing that I will never feel loved and accepted.
- Thinking this is harder for me than for anyone else.
- Pride that comes from being self-focused.
- Believing lies that I am dirty or evil.
Many of us feel God treated us unjustly because of the way He created us. We are not grateful for what He has given us.

**I repent of:**

- Bitterness toward God for the way He created me.
- Bitterness toward men for being created to be attracted to women's appearance (or vice versa).
- Bitterness toward “beautiful” women (or handsome men).
- Being ungrateful to God for what He gave me.

We have believed in a false purpose when our true purpose is to be children of God (John 1:12).

**I repent of:**

- Believing the lie that my worth and value lie in my appearance.
- Believing that my appearance will establish my identity.
- Believing that my appearance will give me joy and prosperity.
- Believing the lie that I have to “look beautiful” in the world’s eyes in order for my dreams to be fulfilled.

Many of us have been treated unjustly and have experienced rejection. The Lord has power to heal even the most painful words and memories. He tells us, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15, NIV).

**I repent of:**

- All bitterness toward those who have rejected me.
- All bitterness toward those who have spoken word curses to me or about me. I bless them in Jesus’ name.

When we are hurt or experience rejection, we often react in rebellion. The Lord tells us that rebellion is “as the sin of witchcraft” (1 Samuel 15:23, NKJV). Part of rebellion is denying its power as a stronghold in our lives.

**I repent of:**

- Denying that this is a stronghold in my life (I see it but I will not admit it).
- Being unteachable about gaining freedom (I get defensive, angry, etc., when presented with the topic).
- Not receiving God's teaching about this issue.
- Not caring for my body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. This could result in any of the following:
  - Neglecting exercise.
  - Excessive exercise.
  - Neglecting to eat and/or starving myself.
  - Overeating for comfort and/or binging
  - Binging and purging.
  - The use of laxatives for weight loss.

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<tr>
<th>REPENT</th>
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<td>Jesus, I ask your forgiveness for every way this has affected my relationship with you and with others. I ask forgiveness for resisting the truth of who you say I am. I ask forgiveness for every way I have been angry at you for how I was created. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked, and for any sins that come to mind associated with each category.) I ask forgiveness for ______________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of fear in my life.</td>
<td>Lord, I receive your forgiveness. I receive your sacrifice on the cross. Lord, you paid the price for my sin. You paid the price for my freedom. I receive full freedom from this issue.</td>
<td>The blood of Jesus Christ covers these sins. In the name of Jesus, I rebuke the enemy and the hold he has had on me. I cut this generational cord in Jesus’ name. I rebuke the enemy’s hold on me in Jesus’ name.</td>
<td>I replace the deception of the enemy with the truth of the Word of God: I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139 I am a stranger and alien to this world. 1 Peter 2:11 I am complete in Christ. Colossians 2:10 I am free from condemnation. Romans 8:1-2 I cannot be separated from the love of God. Romans 8:35-39 I am a temple of God. 1 Corinthians 3:16 I am God’s workmanship, created for good works. Ephesians 2:10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT

☑ Do not give in to passivity! If you find yourself taking a second glance in the mirror or thinking a condemning thought, repent out loud immediately! Go through the 4-R’s and believe in faith that the Lord has set you free. Do not receive the lie that the enemy is speaking to you!

☑ Go home and write out the scriptures at the end of the 4-R’s prayer on page 10. Tape them on to your mirrors at home. Memorize them! Fight the enemy with the Word of God.

☑ Thank God continually for what He has given you (your health, friends, intelligence, creativity, imagination, skills, interests, opportunities, etc.).

☑ Eat healthy foods and exercise. These disciplines are helpful when under submission to the Holy Spirit. We are called to treat our bodies as a temple of the Holy Spirit. If you exercise with unhealthy motives, ask someone to exercise with you, and pray before you start. Rebuke the enemy from trying to twist the good thing that the Lord has given to you.

☑ After a condemning thought comes to you and you have gone through the 4-R’s, pray for a sister or brother who struggles with the same issue.

☑ Throw away magazines with pictures of “beautiful” people. Do not look at them again!

NOTES:
Self-condemnation plagues the people of God, weighing us down with a burden that God clearly does not want us to carry. Paul tells us in Romans 8:1 that, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (NKJV).

Colossians 1:21-23 (NKJV) And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

It is important to understand the difference between a godly sorrow and a worldly sorrow. Paul speaks to this:

2 Corinthians 7:8-11 (NIV) For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication!

Paul wrote an intensely convicting letter to the church at Corinth, and it did produce a sorrow accompanied by great conviction. While worldly sorrow brings only death, this godly sorrow led to life change. As believers we must understand and walk in the joy of conviction, which leads to life change as we obey what the Lord shows us.

Condemnation insists on self-blame even after a sin is confessed and forgiven. Condemnation results when we allow a sin to remain secret and unconfessed, which in turn stems from our rebellion against God. In a very real way, we are telling God, “I know You have forgiven me, but I will not accept your grace.”

This worksheet is designed to help us recognize where self-condemnation has jurisdiction in our lives.

**EXAMINING SIX CATEGORIES OF CONDEMNATION**

Check all the boxes that apply to you:

1. I am unwilling to forgive myself.

   - Even though the Lord has forgiven me, I may be unwilling to forgive myself, or even unwilling to ask Him for forgiveness. This unwillingness may result from an issue I have not yet addressed openly and honestly before the Lord.

   This can develop into a martyr complex, in which a person carries his or her own guilt, and refuses to release it fully.
to the Lord. It is also a form of stubbornness, because the person operates in rebellion against receiving God’s full forgiveness. A false identity is built on the basis of condemnation. As a result, they may struggle mightily with self-pity and swing between self-condemnation and pride.

An unwillingness to forgive myself can play out in five distinct ways:

- I function with a low level of sorrow and self-pity, and have become accustomed to this as part of my identity. For example, others may often ask, “What is wrong with you?” or “Are you okay?”
- This form of condemnation expresses itself in a heavy (often uncommunicated) preoccupation with myself.
- It makes me want to avoid those who challenge me about thinking this way. Instead, I seek out those who will sympathize with this sin.
- Condemnation is a launching pad for conversation with others. In response to a question about how I am doing, I might answer, “I am having a very hard time.” This is a key in recognizing the extent to which I have become self-absorbed.
- Condemnation can also lead me to announce, “I am doing GREAT.” However, as I talk with others, I get lost in my own world, and the familiar talk in my head causes me to shut down. It is a picture of my inability to listen and hear what others are saying. I cannot track with them because I live in my own world.”

2. I fear disappointing others.

- I live in a constant and chronic state of fear that I will disappoint someone. At the same time, I secretly battle uncontrolled thoughts of self-condemnation. On the surface it appears as if I am handling everything perfectly, and I take pride in this appearance; on the inside, however, I live with deep self-condemnation.

A fear of disappointing others can show up in four patterns:

- I often set unrealistic expectations. I desire to exceed the expectations that others have put on me, and I even raise those expectations, because it is part of how I define personal success. However, because I am unable to meet my own expectations I condemn myself.
- I often go above and beyond the call of duty in order to offset my own thoughts of self-condemnation.
- I easily revert to worldly expectations instead of listening and hearing afresh from the Lord about what I am to do.
- I often draw the attention of others to my own sense of failure. This seems to help ease the pain of self-condemnation.

3. I view weakness as failure.

- I deny that I struggle because I regard weakness as failure, and failure leads to condemnation. Weakness disqualifies me from walking in what God has for me. I must be perfect.

A distorted view of weakness produces four observable patterns:

- When truth is presented and I have not lived by it, I do not readily admit that fact. For example, if someone comes and shares with me a truth about living in victory, but I have lived all day in defeat, I will act as if I was living in that truth all day.
- I keep myself distant from people, and tend toward isolation and independence. This way I can keep others from knowing how often I am defeated.
- I often dread being around others, and certain people seem to activate my sense of inadequacy/inferiority, which triggers feelings of self-condemnation. I usually deny, however, that I avoid people for these reasons.
- I often seek out prayer in the hope that something will ease my self-pity. I prefer endless exhortation and encouragement to true repentance.

4. I compare myself to others (especially to those in leadership roles).

- Part of my position as a shepherd is to lead and develop others. However, I feel personally responsible when they fail. I frequently find myself comparing my work and my ministry against what I see others doing, and I always fall short, leading to self-condemnation.

5. Doubting.

- I often entertain a seed of doubt, which opens the door to confusion about where I need to focus my time and energy. This makes it difficult to concentrate, and leads me to condemn myself in whatever I try to do.
A willingness to entertain doubts leads to three patterns:

- I argue or disagree with the Lord over my daily agenda. I know what the Lord has asked me to do, but there are so many other good things I can add to this. I have my own agenda, and I determine what is acceptable. As a result, I live condemned because of an agenda the Lord never gave me, but one I determined to give myself.

- Self-imposed religious goals load me up with obligations. I judge myself by a checklist of religious activities (prayer, Bible study, memorization, serving, and giving). I focus on the checklist of things that I have determined equal a life “lived for the Lord.” These are not goals the Lord has given me, but goals and criteria I set for myself.

**Example:** A mom with four young children. All day long she has loved her kids, encouraged them, and walked in godly character. At the end of the day, after cleaning up dinner and tucking her kids into bed, she has a few minutes to read and pray. She feels that she should be able to read six chapters and spend significant time interceding before going to sleep. When she is unable to do either, she ends up going to bed feeling like she failed, even though her day was submitted to the Lord.

- I rarely feel like I have studied enough, prayed enough, witnessed enough, taught enough, or led enough, to step into my calling.

6. Hating myself.

Self-condemnation is reinforced and secured by feelings of self-hatred and defeat, as seen in these five patterns:

- Chronic self-talk reminds me of how incapable, insignificant, or inadequate I am.
- Self-deprecating thoughts latch onto false labels and unbelief, even in the things the Lord has declared over me.
- Self-condemning thoughts that create a defense, or a line of logic, arguing with blessings from others and with statements of truth.
- I tend to be dismissive of authority because I do not want to be held to a standard that others achieve. This is one of the ways I think of myself as an exception.
- I earn my way into the good graces of those in authority through various acts of service in order to offset my rebellion and self-condemnation.

**SCRIPTURES TO STRENGTHEN**

*Romans 8:1-2 (NIV)* Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

*Psalm 34:22 (NIV)* The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

*John 3:17-18 (NIV)* For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

*John 5:24 (NIV)* I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

*Romans 5:16-18 (NIV)* Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.
Romans 8:34 (NIV)  Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Psalm 103:12 (NIV)  . . . as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Psalm 51:17 (NIV)  The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Isaiah 57:15 (NIV)  For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Isaiah 66:2 (NIV)  Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD. This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

repent

Jesus, I have allowed condemnation to mark my life, my relationship with you, and my relationship with others. I ask forgiveness for rejecting you, and denying Your word. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked as well as any sins that come to mind associated with each category.) I ask forgiveness for ____________________________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of condemnation in my life.

receive

(The act of receiving God’s forgiveness is especially important for those who walk in condemnation. you must fight the tendency to continue walking in this pattern, which would be condemning yourself for walking in condemnation.) Lord, I receive your forgiveness. I receive the cleansing wash of your blood. I agree that your sacrifice on the cross is the only sacrifice that brings forgiveness of sin. I stand on the truth of scripture that my sins are forgiven. I stand on the truth of scripture that I am removed from my sin as far as the east is from the west. I agree with the Word of God, which says you dwell with those who have a contrite and repentant heart.

rebut

In Jesus’ name and authority, I rebuke every spirit of condemnation and command you to the feet of Jesus. Every deceiving spirit, I rebuke you in Jesus’ name, I command you to be silent and to go to the feet of Jesus. I rebuke every spirit which was given a foothold in my life due to the stronghold of condemnation. I command you all to the feet of Jesus.

replace

Lord, I ask that You would renew my mind and thoughts. I replace every thought and pattern of condemnation with the truth of who God is, and what He says about me.
RECOGNIZING CONTROL

Control can become so integrated into a personality that we may not be able to detect any element of it. It can hide so deep within us that we may be unable to distinguish between our true, God-given personality, and the stronghold of control. Our sense of identity and our emotions can be completely submerged in the stronghold of control. There are few, if any, emotions related to control; feelings typically come when we feel out of control and that we must, therefore, take control. The process by which control establishes itself can be extremely subtle. We may be unable to determine when or where it became a driving force, thinking that it simply developed as a part of our personality.

1. Control is rooted in fear, and it manifests itself in selfishness and insecurity. Our attempts to exercise control over others can twist God’s blessing and desire for us into control and manipulation. Examples include:

- Communicating disapproval (verbally or non-verbally) with the aim of changing people.
- Not telling the whole truth; telling only what I think will serve my purposes.
- Speaking and acting with hidden motives in order to put myself in a better light or to fulfill my own desires.
- Exercising authority (genuine or perceived) in a shrewd or devious manner in order to influence others for personal gain.

2. The following characteristics are frequently used to describe those dominated by a controlling spirit:

- Controlling.
- Manipulative.
- Disobedient.
- Resistant.
- Direct.
- Overbearing.
- Influential.

CONTROL:

[verb] 2a: to exercise restraining or directing influence over: REGULATE  b: to have power over: RULE. 1

Control is based in fear that God does not have control over our lives. Therefore, it is our responsibility to determine and do what is best.
I usually know best.
I cover my tracks when I sin.
I want to do things for others, because I believe I can do it better than they can.
I have a hard time accepting the opinions of others.
I have a hard time accepting others’ insights into my life.
I always have an answer to justify my stance or my situation.
I am afraid of being wrong, so I push a subject until others give up and relent.
I get upset when things do not go my way.
I feel threatened when others have the same gifting or talents I have.
I want to be the best and sometimes put others down so I look better.
I try to take control of situations when I am uncomfortable or when things are not going my way.
I am upset by group activities in which others do not perform to my standards.
I feel it is my responsibility to help others understand and “get better.”
I think of myself first when I am with the opposite sex.
I am available when it is convenient for me.
I do or say things so that my needs will be met first (mental, physical, or emotional).
As long as I am satisfied, everything is fine.
I feel like others try to control me.
I try to get others to do for me what I can do for myself.
I feel obligated to help others even when they do not ask.
I frequently feel rejected by others.
I think that others should work around my schedule.
I try to get others to hang out with me even when they do not seem to have time.
I sometimes make others feel guilty in order to get my way.
I have my life planned out.
I have an unhealthy need for security; I want to be assured that I have a job, spouse, friends, and physical comforts (home electronics, sports equipment, furniture, clothes, nice car, etc.).
I am concerned about my reputation and act in various ways to enhance it.
REPENT
Lord, I repent of the sin of control and manipulation. I confess right now that I have allowed it to become part of my life. I call it sin. I confess wanting control over others and my own life. I break control in every area by confessing with my mouth, and turning in the opposite direction. (Go back through the lists above and confess each one to the Lord as sin.)

RECEIVE
Lord, I receive your forgiveness for the sin of control in my life. I receive your love for me. I accept the plan you have for me, and the freedom that comes with it. Thank you for your sovereign hand on my life. I no longer hinder you with my selfish motives.

REBUKE
I rebuke and bind the lies of the enemy right now. Satan, your attack on my life in the area of control is broken. I refuse to believe that God does not have control over every situation. By the blood and name of Jesus Christ, I rebuke, separate, and destroy that part of my personality that is demonically influenced by a spiritual attack of control. As far as the east is from the west, control is removed from my life.

REPLACE
I replace the deception of the enemy with the truths of the Word of God in the area of control.

WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT

We must accept the fact that Jesus Christ loves us, and has secured the victory for our lives. We must face our fears aggressively, and obey the word of God.

Romans 12:2 (NIV) Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The opposite of control is serving. We must affirm God’s love for everyone and ask Him to deepen our understanding that freedom comes in considering others as better than ourselves.

Our own plans and thinking are not God’s best!

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Let the Lord be your protector and provider.

Psalm 23:1-4 (NIV) The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

John 15:7 (NIV) If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

(ENDBOOK)

**Job 16:4-5 (NLT)** I could say the same things if you were in my place. I could spout off my criticisms against you and shake my head at you. But that’s not what I would do. I would speak in a way that helps you. I would try to take away your grief.

A critical spirit always regards people and circumstances from a negative point of view. It is impatient, irritable, unforgiving, unbending, and ungrateful toward others. Its treatment of others is characterized by a lack of gratitude, unwillingness to forgive, anger, hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, insubordination, and rejection.

**THE WORK OF A CRITICAL SPIRIT**

- It creates a negative, sour, judgmental, and repressive atmosphere.

- It points out the weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, and inconsistencies of others with an intent to tear them down instead of building them up.

- It criticizes family, friends, co-workers, and members of the church family without bringing solutions, encouragement, or positive motivation.

- It quenches vision, creativity, unity, and teamwork.

- It reinforces patterns of impatience, intolerance, and rigidity.

- It demoralizes people and creates a platform for rejection. (Children are especially vulnerable to this influence, and may pick up rejection that remains with them the rest of their lives.)

**RECOGNIZING A CRITICAL SPIRIT**

- I am impatient with others’ weaknesses.
- I am hard on my children and/or my spouse.
- I am much more likely to be rigid and unyielding than flexible and considerate.
- I am intolerant of people who are different from me or who fail to measure up to my standards.
- I have high expectations of other people, ministries, organizations, businesses and institutions. I feel and/or demonstrate anger when those expectations are not met.
- I tend to carry grudges, and I harbor resentment when I am wronged.
- I take it on myself to feel offended for others if I feel they have been wronged.
- I retaliate against people who have offended me or with whom I disagree. I use cutting words when I talk with them, or I talk behind their backs. I avoid them.
- I feel a need to draw attention to the shortcomings of others (family and friends, members of my small group or my church) in the hope of convincing others of my point of view.
I think less of people if their standards differ from mine on issues of Christian liberty.

I cannot honor, fellowship with, or minister freely with other Christians whose theological views, worship styles, or ministry practices are different from mine.

I resist change. I have difficulty considering new ideas and new ways of doing things.

I will be vigilant in guarding both my marriage and my children against any critical spirits in our midst.

I will make it a high priority to work to preserve unity in my family, with my friends, in my church, with other Christians, and with all the people God brings into my life.

THE ROOTS OF A CRITICAL SPIRIT

Sometimes a critical spirit results from growing up in a culture or environment where criticism flowed from people held captive by pride and arrogance, or those living as victims. In such instances, a critical spirit likely has a generational root. It is necessary to sever the generational bondage before applying the 4-R’s (at end of this document).

In other instances, people become critical in response to an offense or because of a decision to live in response to an injustice against them. It is important to identify the root cause so that they can grant forgiveness and blessing to the offending person or situation. The 4-R’s should then be applied.

WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT

I must cultivate the following virtues of forbearing grace—the opposite of a critical spirit—in my life:

I will be patient and forbearing with the weaknesses of others.

I will guard myself against speaking harshly or critically to my spouse and my children.

I will not take or carry offenses for myself or for others.

When there is a need to discuss differences, I will communicate in humility and speak the truth in love.

I will offer my opinions only when asked or under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

I will trust God to lead those in authority over me, give them my support and cooperation, and extend unlimited grace to them as needed.

I will lead others in an understanding and patient manner.

I will look for practical ways to compensate for the weaknesses of others.

When someone accuses or criticizes me, I will respond with humility and an open mind. I will not respond defensively.

When I feel I am being attacked personally by someone, I will choose to look at the situation through spiritual eyes; I will be alert for schemes of the enemy.

I will be vigilant in guarding both my marriage and my children against any critical spirits in our midst.

I will make it a high priority to work to preserve unity in my family, with my friends, in my church, with other Christians, and with all the people God brings into my life.

SCRIPTURES TO STRENGTHEN

Job 16:4-5 (NLT)  I could say the same things if you were in my place. I could spout off my criticisms against you and shake my head at you. But that's not what I would do. I would speak in a way that helps you. I would try to take away your grief.

Proverbs 17:9 (NIV)  He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

Matthew 7:1-2 (NIV)  Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
Matthew 7:3-5 (NIV) Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Luke 6:37 (NIV) Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Romans 14:10-13 (NIV) You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: “As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.” So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.

Romans 15:1 (NIV) We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Galatians 6:1-4 (NIV) Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else.

Colossians 3:13-14 (NIV) Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

James 2:12-13 (NIV) Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

James 4:11-12 (NIV) Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

We must confess and repent of any and all attitudes and actions related to a critical spirit. We must rebuke and renounce the lies and influences surrounding it. We must replace it with a spirit of forbearing grace by continually renewing our minds with God’s Word. We also must faithfully seek, receive, and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to walk continuously in the truth. Use this worksheet as a guide, and walk through the 4-R’s:

| REPENT | Lord, I repent of the sin of being critical. I confess right now that I have allowed it to become a part of my life. I call it sin. I break this critical spirit by confessing with my mouth, and turning in the opposite direction. (Go back through the lists above and confess each one to the Lord as sin.) |
| RECEIVE | Lord, I receive your forgiveness for this sin. I receive your love for me. I accept that plan you have for me, and the freedom that comes with it. |
| REBUKE | I rebuke and bind the lies of the enemy right now. Satan, your attack on my life in the area of criticism is broken. As far as the east is from the west, criticism is removed from my life. |
| REPLACE | I replace the spirit of fear with the forbearing grace of Christ. I will choose actively to bless those around me radically with the love and support of Jesus Christ. |

NOTES:
Most of us do not realize how deeply fear is rooted in our every day life. The nature of fear is to 
*deceive*. The Scriptures make it very clear that the Lord wants us to be free from 
fear. Freedom from fear is gained as we:

1. Allow the power of the Holy Spirit to uncover the presence of fear in our lives.
2. Bring fears to the cross through repentance and affirming God’s truth.
3. Commit to take action to move in the opposite spirit.

**WHERE DOES FEAR COME FROM?**

1. It is not from God.

   2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV)  *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

2. It is a result of a lack of faith.

   Matthew 14:30-31 (NIV)  *But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said. “Why did you doubt?”*
EXAMPLES OF LIVING IN FEAR
Check all the boxes that apply to you:

1. Fear of punishment: Little peace, hope, faith, or joy.
   
   1 John 4:18 (NKJV) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment.
   
   □ My prayer times and Bible reading are motivated by fear.
   □ My relationship with Jesus is performance-based.
   □ I fear failing God.
   □ I fear punishment from God.

   Forms of punishment I fear:
   □ Withholding of financial blessing.
   □ Withholding of true love and forgiveness.
   □ God will ask me to suffer unnaturally.
   □ God withholding Himself, ignoring me, not listening (as though I must earn His attention as with earthly relationships).

2. Fear of man (insecurity).

   Proverbs 29:25 (NIV) Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

   Isaiah 51:7 (NIV) Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have my law in your hearts: Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults.

   □ I fear what other people think about me.
   □ I fear (imagined) what others say about me.
   □ I fear being rejected by those close to me.
   □ I fear people in authority.
   □ I fear communicating publicly.
   □ I fear confrontation.
   □ I fear being held accountable.

3. Fear becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

   Fear of failure often plays right into the hands of the enemy. Fear can work against your faith, sometimes helping to bring about the failure you fear. How often are people instructed by God or His agents: “Do not be afraid!” You are to fear nothing.

   Judges 7:3 (NIV) . . . announce now to the people, “Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

   □ I fear falling back into sin.
   □ I fear that I will not be freed from habitual sins or addictions.
   □ I fear I will never get married.
   □ I fear failing in marriage.
   □ I fear that I will get divorced.
   □ I fear intimacy and being seen for who I really am.
   □ I fear my children will not “turn out.”
   □ I fear not succeeding in a good career.
   □ I fear disappointing my parents or others I respect.

4. Fear of your past becoming known (and the possible ramifications).

   Isaiah 54:4 (NIV) Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.

   □ I fear suffering shame from my past.
   □ I fear that my past may disgrace me, or hinder or stop God’s work in my life.
   □ I fear God’s punishment for my past.
   □ I fear confessing a struggle with sexual sin (promiscuity, pornography, homosexuality, adultery) and what others may think if I confess that struggle.
   □ I fear confessing shame and guilt from having had an abortion.
   □ I fear that I may not be healed from scars or wounds that occurred in my past.
   □ I fear that I will be found out for “who I really am.”

5. Sudden unnatural fears are always from Satan.

   Proverbs 3:24-25 (NIV) . . . when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked.

   □ Hopelessness.
   □ Oppressive fears.
   □ Fear of death.
   □ Fear of sickness.
   □ Fear of spouse, parents, or children dying.
   □ Fear of a lack of provision.
   □ Fear of losing my job.
   □ Fear of chaotic world events.
**WHAT STEPS ARE NEEDED TO DESTROY FEAR?**

1. Decisions must be made to hate the sin of fear with holy violence. You must understand that fear grieves God’s heart, for it denies the reality of His awesome provision and protection.

2. Confess all specific areas of sin.

3. Ask God to reveal any areas and root issues that are still unknown to you.

4. Renounce fear in the name of Jesus, and rebuke the enemy in the name of Jesus and by the blood of Jesus. Firmly command the enemy to go, and stand in faith in the battle.

5. You must now move “in the opposite spirit,” in the opposite direction of your fears. It is not enough to confess your fears; now we must face them aggressively, and obey the Word of God.

**FREEDOM FROM THE GRIP OF FEAR**

**Jeremiah 17:8 (NIV)** He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

**Psalm 27:1 (NIV)** The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?

**Psalm 46:1-2 (NIV)** God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea . . .

**Romans 8:15 (NIV)** 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.”

**Joshua 1:9  (NIV)** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

**Isaiah 41:13  (NIV)** For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, “Do not fear; I will help you.”

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<td>Jesus, I have allowed fear to mark my life and my walk with you. I ask forgiveness for every way fear has affected my life, and the lives of those around me. I ask forgiveness for every way I have resisted you, denied your commands, and denied your character due to fear. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked, as well as any sins that come to mind associated with each category). I ask forgiveness for _______________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of fear in my life.</td>
<td>Jesus, I receive your forgiveness. I no longer fear that I am condemned by you, Jesus. I am washed by your blood, Jesus, and you loved me enough to sacrifice yourself for me.</td>
<td>In Jesus’ name and authority, I rebuke every spirit of fear and command you to the feet of Jesus. In Jesus’ name I rebuke every spirit that was given a foothold in my life due to fear. In the name of Jesus, every deceiving and lying spirit go to the feet of Jesus.</td>
<td>I replace the spirit of fear with the truth of who God is and who He created me to be.</td>
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(ENDNOTES)

Psalm 43:5 (NIV)  Why am I discouraged?  Why so sad?  I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOPELESSNESS

- Seeing no possibility to solve or overcome a problem.
- Having no expectation of a favorable outcome.
- Despairing and despondent.

RECOGNIZING SYMPTOMS OF HOPELESSNESS

Check the boxes that apply to you:

1. Passivity adds to the weight of hopelessness.
   - I have a hard time spending time with the Lord.
   - I have the thought go through my head during the day, “What good would it do anyway?”
   - I do not initiate conversations with friends, family members, or co-workers.
   - I expect others to approach me and meet me where I am.
   - I do not believe I am needed, so I do not even try.
   - I do not confess the sin in my life, because I do not believe it would do any good.
   - I do not have a passion for the things of God (evangelism, prayer, ministry, the Bible).
   - I “allow” a lot of things to take place in my life.
   - To me, the idea of hope is a long shot.
   - I lack motivation in the majority of things done for the Lord or in life.
   - I feel that sin will always run me, so why even try.

2. Self-pity and introspection are at the center of hopelessness.
   - I find most of my thoughts are about me and what I can do.
   - I surround myself with a lot of people who struggle with self-pity as well.
   - I like to throw myself parties . . . self-pity parties.
   - When I am honest, I do not have a lot of real friends.
   - I place high expectations on other people.

3. Victimization and hopelessness go hand in hand.
   - I cannot do anything about my situation because it is always in the hands of someone else.
   - I feel that I am “locked in” to life as I know it, because of what someone else has done to me.
   - I do not feel free to share friends with other people, because I believe that there will always be someone more beautiful, intelligent, fun, etc. who will steal them away.
   - I feel protective and am tight-fisted with possessions or relationships for fear that someone will steal them from me.
   - I do not feel free to share in a group because I feel like my ideas and comments would either be pounded down or discounted.
I am unable to step out confidently in faith to break new ground.

I am never really sure of myself.

I play life “safe” rather than risk what little resources (confidence) I have.

I resent others when the Lord lifts them up because I feel that life has not been fair to me.

I live a passive life . . . I live under the mindset that it is always someone else who makes things happen and leads the charge.

4. A lack of thankfulness creates openings for hopelessness to come in.

I have a hard time thinking of things to thank the Lord for.

I cannot remember the last time I truly thanked the Lord for all of His provision in my life.

I get locked down when I go to pray and thank the Lord.

I have no hope, so why should I give thanks.

I sometimes wonder if I will ever get out of this hopeless cycle.

I repent of the sin of hopelessness, and I decide to apply the blood of Jesus to it. I will fight the enemy by the power of Jesus Christ, and I declare that I have power over this sin by His blood. I hand over this sin of hopelessness to you, Jesus, and I turn my back on it. I want nothing more to do with hopelessness!

I receive your forgiveness for this sin. I receive your measure of hope for my life and the joy that is found in and through you. I receive for myself your promises and the fullness of your life, death, and resurrection. Thank You, Jesus, for the forgiveness of my sin.

I rebuke the enemy and all feelings and thoughts of hopelessness that come from him in the name of Jesus. I rebuke everything that was given ground because of my hopelessness. I rebuke all the lies of the enemy now in the name of Jesus. I rebuke hopelessness in the name of Jesus Christ, and I send you to His feet for Him to deal with you.

I replace the lies of the enemy with the truth of who you are, and what your word says about me. Lord, I replace this sin with the hope given in your Word.

SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS TO STAND ON

Jesus Christ gives us every reason to hope and great hope is found only in Him. “Let us fix our eyes on the author and perfector of our faith” and see what He can and will do to set us free.

You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your Word (from Psalm 119:114).

I know that because I hope in you, you will renew my strength, and I will soar on wings like eagles. I will run and not grow weary, I will walk and not be faint (from Isaiah 40:31).

And I will not be disappointed (from Isaiah 49:23; Romans 5:5).

You are the God of hope, and you will fill me with joy and peace. I will overflow with hope by your Holy Spirit—and because of hope—you will give me boldness (from Romans 15:13; 2 Corinthians 3:12).
DIAGNOSING INDEPENDENCE AND ISOLATION

Check the boxes that apply to you:

1. **Self-sufficiency.** For a person walking in independence and pride, the goal is to be self-sufficient. They may preach a desire to function as a team and may even know that working as a team is what the Lord wants. However, the desire to achieve and be successful overrides the ability to function in a true team.

- I have a hard time accepting grace from people, and even God. In my heart, I want to earn his favor.
- While saying all the right things about interdependence, we do not walk it out.
- I am not involved in any team ministry.
- I have worked hard to become self-sufficient.
- Whenever I have been assigned to a team I end up working by myself.
- I am not attracted to interdependence.
- I find it easier to be independent.
- I find it difficult to ask for help.
- I find it difficult to share my heart or my deepest feelings.
- My desire to be successful is greater than my desire to be part of a team.
- Most of what I have achieved has been on my own.
- I am self-employed.
- I have a job that enables me to function independently.

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**INDEPENDENCE AND ISOLATION**

INDEPENDENT: [adjective] 1: not dependent, not subject to control by others, self governing, not affiliated with a larger controlling unit, not requiring or relying on something else.

ISOLATE: [verb] 1: to set apart from others; also: QUARANTINE 2: to select from among others; especially: To separate from another substance so as to obtain pure or in a free state. 3: INSULATE.
2. Fear of failure. For a person walking in independence and pride, trusting others is extremely difficult. They might fail, which would be a reflection on them. Unrealistic and high expectations come from this fear of failure.

- I do not like being in the position of depending on others because they might fail.
- When I do delegate, I put huge expectations on others to make sure they get it right.
- I go to extreme lengths to prove myself out of fear of failing those around me.
- I strive for perfection, so I expect the same from those I disciple, my spouse, my children, and others.
- If I run into a problem, my first response would be to work harder rather than ask for help.
- I have never relied on anyone else.
- I could not (for many reasons) rely on my parents.
- One (or both) of my parents were not available for me.
- I live with significant fear in my life.
- If I performed well, my parents showed love for me; if I did not, love was withheld.
- My parents are over-achievers.
- I am very competitive.
- I get angry if something goes wrong.

3. Lack of true friendship. This person is not willing to trust anyone. They are not willing to be weak, broken, or transparent with anyone.

- I will help someone else but I will not let someone else help me.
- I am not willing to trust most people.
- I work very hard to prove that I am not weak.
- No one in my life knows my true identity.
- I do not have many deep friendships.
- I do not initiate sharing personal things.
- I very rarely share my weaknesses with others.
- I do not ask other Christians if they see anything in my life (marriage, kids, friends, etc.).
- I am always trying to prove that others were wrong about me.
- I want to prove to others that I should be trusted and loved.

4. An unwillingness to function in team (be part of the body). This person rejects any help or insight that might show their weaknesses and expose the fact that they have needs.

- I think I do not need anyone’s help.
- I feel inferior when someone helps me.
- I struggle with inferiority more than anyone would suspect.
- If I cannot do it by myself, I do not want to do it.
- I feel like I have nothing to offer the team.
- I withhold blessing from others.
- I have a lot of tension in my life.
- I feel like there are many things in my life that are all going at the same time.
- I feel like my life is very difficult, and that no one else can relate.
- I often feel overwhelmed.
- Performance is the main way that I know how to receive love.
- I would join or serve in ministry, but the timing never works out.
- If I start helping in one area, then they will want me to do more.
- My spouse complains that I do not have time for my family.
- It is hard for me to appreciate the strengths and gifts of others because they only heighten my own inferiority.
- A word of correction causes me to shut down and brings anger toward myself and others. Correction points out that I am not perfect, and I am trying very hard to be perfect.
- If I am given more work I become overwhelmed and angry instead of being grateful and excited; New work just means more things to balance and to try and perfect.
5. **Lack of seeking the Lord.** Think of a pastor preparing a message who is deceived into believing that he must do it all alone. He does not consult the Lord. He studies the Word, but does not go to the Lord for fresh insight.

- I do not consult the Lord about my job or career decisions.
- I do not consult the Lord about my personal life, or about certain areas of my life.
- I do not consult the Lord about my marriage, my family, or my parenting.
- I do not consult the Lord in my ministry.
- I feel like I have to do it myself; the Lord cannot help me with this.
- I feel like the Lord needs me to “make it happen.”
- I do not honestly believe that “the Lord would provide;” that is why I need to earn everything myself.
- I do not honestly believe that the Lord would speak; that is why I make all of my decisions myself.
- I am afraid or unwilling to hear what the Lord would say.
- I am not willing to hear and act on what the Lord has to say.

6. **Identity based on striving and performance**

- I receive admiration and being perceived as successful as love.
- I must meet my own standard in order to approve of myself.
- I have a constant need to go over and above others’ expectations of me.
- My job is my identity.
- If the Lord asked me to leave my job and follow him, I do not know if I could.
- I am a perfectionist.
- I have been accused of being a perfectionist.
- If one of these definitions doesn’t apply to me perfectly, I will not check the box.
- If I am not in charge or making a significant contribution, then I am apathetic toward the whole project.
- I am apathetic toward the accomplishments of others.
- I want to impress people.
- I have to receive the credit I deserve or I get angry and critical.
- I cannot allow someone else to receive credit for my work.
- I tend to lack gratitude; after all, I have earned everything.
- Measurable accomplishments are important to me; numbers matter.

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**THE BODY MUST MOVE TOGETHER IN UNITY**

God is serious about unity and interdependence, if the enemy gains this foothold in you the whole body suffers.

1 Corinthians 12:21–26 (NIV) *The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I do not need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV) *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

Romans 12:4-5 (NIV) *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*
ACTION STEPS FOR RELEASE

☐ When I am spiritually blocked, I will ask for help.
☐ I determine to share more of my heart.
☐ I will radically thank people when they help me. I will say from my heart, “I couldn’t have done it without you!”
☐ I will cry out to the Lord for help, instead of just trying harder. I know only God can save me!
☐ I will thank the Lord when I make a mistake. He is going to teach me through my mistakes. His grace is sufficient for me!
☐ I will seek the Lord daily with my schedule. Develop a heart that is willing to hear what He has to say.

☐ I will share my weaknesses openly with others.
☐ I will consistently ask brothers/sisters what they see in my life or in my marriage.
☐ I will seek the Lord about how I can serve my friends and family.
☐ I will be slow to speak and quick to LISTEN.
☐ I do not need to have all the right answers or be perfect in all areas.
☐ I will freely receive God’s gift of grace! It cannot be earned, so no need to try earning it.

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<td>Jesus, I have allowed isolation, independence, and self-sufficiency to mark my life. I ask forgiveness for walking in these sins. I ask forgiveness for every way it has affected my relationship with you. I ask forgiveness for every way I have allowed this to affect my relationship with others. I see it and call it sin. Lord Jesus, I ask forgiveness for my sin of isolation and independence. I confess I have sinned against you and your body of believers. I receive your forgiveness. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked, as well as any sins that come to mind that are associated with each category.) I ask forgiveness for ___________________. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns forged by these sins in my life.</td>
<td>Jesus, I receive your forgiveness and the cleansing wash of your blood. Lord, I ask that through the power of your Spirit’s work in me, grace and peace will be mine in abundance through my knowledge of you. Your divine power gives me everything I need for life and godliness. Let me rejoice in Jesus who called me by His glory and goodness.</td>
<td>Jesus, I receive your forgiveness and the cleansing wash of your blood. Lord, I ask that through the power of your Spirit’s work in me, grace and peace will be mine in abundance through my knowledge of you. Your divine power gives me everything I need for life and godliness. Let me rejoice in Jesus who called me by His glory and goodness.</td>
<td>In the name of Jesus Christ, I resist and rebuke any effort of the enemy to create a stronghold of isolation in my life. I renounce the lie that I have nothing to offer the body. I also repent of and renounce the following behavioral and emotional symptoms of independence in my life: _________________________________.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REPLACE</td>
<td>Lord, renew my heart, mind, emotions and will through the truth of your Word and the empowering of your Holy Spirit. I replace the spirits of isolation and independence and any of its symptoms with Your Holy spirit of unity and interdependence. Let the fruit of your Spirit be evidenced in the relationships in my life by the following new behaviors: ___________________________________________________.</td>
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RECOGNIZING INFERIORITY

1. Inferiority is rooted in lies and labels from the enemy, who opposes us from birth.

2. Inferiority is rooted in being overly conscious of ourselves, and coming up short when compared to others.

3. People struggling with inferiority often have significant struggles with envy, anger, and coveting. We can feel that we do not belong and often get short-changed (self pity). We can nearly always see how others are greater, or more significant, than we are—in everything. We cannot see our own value. We believe the Lord does not see us or smile upon us, and we reject the promise that He has a purpose for us. We find no joy in the fact that He has chosen us. We live with buried anger toward people in our past who rejected us or made us feel like we were second-class. We are often critical of these people because they made us feel inferior. Anger rises up and shows itself in many diverse ways. We must address inferiority at many levels in order to root it out of our lives.

Check all boxes that apply to you:

- I am nobody from nowhere.
- I am ugly and weak and despised.
- I have nothing to give to anyone.
- “I can’t” or “I’m nothing” are frequent thoughts or even actual phrases I speak out loud.
- You do not want to speak to me because you are superior to me.
- I look down when I walk by people.
- I do not say “hi” to people, because no one knows me and it seems that nobody cares.
- I am shy (or I am often labeled “shy”), because I have nothing to say to others.
- Everyone in my family, including me, is a nobody.
- I do not see any “good” in who the Lord created me to be ( ingratitude).
- I dislike myself.
- I am not a “real” man or woman; I am not a person of strength and toughness.
Inferiority breeds a heightened awareness of self:

- I am almost always self-conscious and internally focused.
- I often compare myself to others.
- I find myself wondering what others think about me, which leads to a deep sense of insecurity.

Inferiority sees to it that we always fall short in the comparison game with others:

- I constantly compare myself to others, and I usually fall short.
- I fear speaking to people who I regard as superior to me.
- I covet the gifts of others (boy/girlfriends, jobs, positions, friends, possessions).
- I am jealous of what other people look like, how they act, and how they speak.
- I only build friendships with those I regard as my equals or who I regard as inferior to me.

Inferiority breeds fear and the avoidance of healthy, God-given challenges intended to bring new growth:

- I am relieved when “the other person” is chosen for an assignment.
- I am fearful or anxious of being responsible for tasks because I believe I will probably fail.
- I prefer to remain hidden and anonymous, and to be passed over for assignments.
- I want to be given easy assignments I can accomplish with my natural abilities.
- I only choose to do things familiar to me.
- I only speak to people with whom I am familiar.
- I avoid risks (praying out loud, speaking in front of people).
- I am desperately afraid of failing, so I play it safe.
- I prefer being alone because it is safer, easier, and less work.
- I am unable or feel unfit to share the gospel with others (“it’s someone else’s job”).
- If forced to engage in a risk-taking activity, I am eager for it to be over, or become tired and weary.
- I do not find joy in the Lord’s challenges.

Inferiority rests on heavy unbelief about our authority and our God-given place in the body of Christ:

- The Lord does not take my prayers seriously.
- It is hard for me to believe that God has chosen me for a significant purpose.
- I believe I am insignificant to the Lord.
- When a pastor speaks about being a “warrior for Christ,” they are not talking to me.
- I feel like no one knows me or sees me.
- The Lord does not speak to me.
- I often question God’s presence in my life.
- I do not believe I have any authority or spiritual “punch;” everything I do is weak.
- I cannot see my destiny (even when someone tries to tell me), or how I will be used to advance the Kingdom.

Inferiority finds comfort in self-pity:

- I blame others for not seeing anything good in me.
- My parents were not very encouraging to me, so that is why I do not believe in myself.
- “These are just my character traits – God made me this way!”
- I am a victim of a hard life.

Inferiority breeds criticism of others who are different from us:

- I am critical of others because I could not or would not do things “that way.”
- I am critical of others when they challenge me because I do not believe it is possible for me to change.
- I am critical of others because I believe that they think they are superior to me.

Inferiority causes us to withhold blessing from others:

- I withhold blessing from others because I have nothing to give.
- I withhold blessing from others because my thoughts/encouragements about others do not really matter to them.
- I withhold blessing from others because I do not want them to pass me up (I am threatened and insecure).

Lies and deceptions:

- False humility: I have nothing to give; you are better than me.
- False peace: I would like things to be easy or comfortable.
- The Lord does not extend His hand of authority over me when I move or speak.
- No one cares about me or sees me.
- Being gifted in service or intercession/prayer (or anything behind-the-scenes) is less significant than being gifted in teaching or leadership.
- False measurement of truth: Comparing myself to others is a good measurement of my worth.
- I can never win this battle.
- I must fight the battle in my own strength; it is up to me, and not the Lord.
REPENT
Jesus, I ask forgiveness for every way inferiority has affected my life and the lives of those around me. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked as well as any sins that come to mind that are associated with each category.) I ask forgiveness for ______________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of inferiority in my life.

RECEIVE
Jesus, I receive your promised forgiveness. I receive the promise that you will renew my mind and heart into your image.

REBUKE
In Jesus’ name and authority, I rebuke you, spirit of inferiority. I rebuke every spirit that has been given a foothold in my life due to the stronghold of inferiority. Every spirit of anger, jealousy, competition, self-pity, unbelief, rebellion, and every deceiving spirit must go to the feet of Jesus. With the authority I have in Jesus, I command in Jesus’ name every spirit that would lie to me about who God is and what He says about me to go to the feet of Jesus.

REPLACE
I replace the deceptions of the enemy with the truth of who God is and what He says about me.

GOD’S PROMISES
- I will not covet what others have (Exodus 20:17).
- I am chosen by God to do good works that He has prepared for me to do (Ephesians 2:10).
- I am strong and I do not fear, for my God will come and save me (Isaiah 35:4).
- I am the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14).
- I am a spirit-empowered witness of Christ (Acts 1:8).
- I am God’s workmanship (Ephesians 2:10).
- I am highly favored by God and He is with me (Luke 1:28).
- I am a mighty warrior and the Lord is with me (Judges 6:12).

WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT
- The secret is to take our eyes off ourselves and turn to the Lord. Allow Him to define us, to clothe us in righteousness, to seat us with Him in heaven, and to bestow gifts upon us.
- We must destroy the lie that we have to be somebody “great” and “known.” Many people struggling with inferiority suffer because the world does not acknowledge their value. But the Lord calls us all to be servants and take the lowest seat; His definition of greatness is completely different from the world’s definition. Allow the Lord to raise you up! Desire to be a fully-functioning member of the body of Christ rather than being “known.” The real secret is to find our identity in Christ, and discover His purpose for us in His body, the Church. Whether He has made us a hand or a foot, an eye or an ear, we can be grateful for our place in the body and assured that we are needed for its health, strength, and ability to function fully.
- Renounce the desire to be a body part other than what God has intended us to be. Eagerly seek the Lord about how we are to function, then DO IT. Joy comes from seeing the larger team—the Church—the bride of Christ, perform at full capacity! The Church cannot function at its maximum strength unless I have taken my place in it and am operating at full capacity.
- Joy does not come from being recognized as an individual, but from seeing the magnificent beauty of His whole Church knitted together and working properly.

(ENDNOTES)
INGRATITUDE

**THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF INGRATITUDE**

1 Corinthians 10:6-10 (NIV)  *Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.” We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.”*

This text is one of warning, giving us insight into the rationale of God’s judgment on a people. This Old Testament account of Israel’s wilderness wanderings are for our example. The account gives us a great indication of what not to give ourselves over to. For our purposes we will focus on verses nine and ten. Take note that idolatry and sexual orgies are put right in line with murmuring. God takes this so seriously, that He sent his angel of death to destroy the grumblers. This changes our nonchalant perspective of this sin does it not?

How did grumbling play out in this account? There was murmuring against God’s provision (vs. 9) and against God’s leadership (vs. 10). In Numbers 21, they despised the food God provided and the lack of water, they grumbled and were killed by snakes. In Numbers 16 they murmured against God’s leadership, which ushered in the angel of death. Do any of this murmuring sound familiar? Especially in our consumer culture, we make an art of grumbling. No service or product is ever good enough. Defiance of leadership is celebrated! Questioning authority is championed as the highest form of enlightenment! It seems the human race has not changed much since Old Testament times. And the church is no different than the world in this matter.

Ingratitude blasphemes God. By living in ingratitude and grumbling, we deny Christ by our actions. We forfeit the very foundation of evangelism. Who will ask us about the hope that lies within us, if we live grumbling and sour faced? We live among a depressed, discouraged and grumbling people. What sets us apart from the world if we portray discouragement? When we live in this fashion, we say to the world around us through our actions and words, “I serve a God who doesn’t care for me, provide for me or protect me,

**+definition+**

**INGRATITUDE:** [noun] thanklessness, disloyalty, ungratefulness, callousness, boorishness, lack of appreciation, inconsiderateness, thoughtlessness.
in fact I am miserable.” Doesn’t sound incredibly attractive does it! One of the major reasons the Church seems to be afraid of evangelism directly stems from ingratitude. We must have apologetics to counter our own countenance. We have to convince people we are really happy. “Really I am content (big fake smile), I am filled with peace, I swear.” But our lives and countenance show our underbelly of ingratitude.

THE RESULT OF INGRATITUDE

1. Breeds discontent.
2. Tolerates and cultivates selfishness.
3. Promotes values of this world’s system.
4. Puts us in disobedience to God’s express command to be thankful (rebellion).
5. Provokes murmuring and complaining (rebellion).
7. Opens the door to receive and nurture offenses.
8. Creates an environment that cultivates victimization.
9. Fosters an attitude that God, life, and everyone owes us.
10. Provokes God’s discipline, and repels the emphasized presence of God.

SIGNS OF INGRATITUDE

Check all the boxes that apply to you:

- I tend to be critical of others.
- I am very conscious of what I do not have, in terms of material possessions, position, appearance, health, relationships, and spiritual gifts.
- I am jealous and envious of others in these areas.
- I spend time dreaming of ways to make more money, increase my possessions, or improve my position.
- I complain to others about my personal situation.
- I express aloud my dissatisfaction with my circumstances, my family and friends, my church, etc.
- I think I have been unfairly treated; I deserve better.
- I am fearful for my marriage, my children, my finances, my security, and the future.
- I think that if only my spouse were more __________, I could be more ________________.
- I believe that if my circumstances were ____________, I could be more ________________.

THE COMMITMENT TO LIVE IN THANKSGIVING

☐ I will live above my circumstances with a peaceful and contented spirit.
☐ I will live within the means God has provided for me.
☐ I will not complain to my spouse, my friends, my coworkers, or my church family.
☐ I will learn to look for—and find—good in all things, all people, all circumstances, so that I have a thankful heart (Philippians 4).
☐ I will not live with a victimized, “poor me” attitude.
☐ I will learn to appreciate and use my abilities and spiritual gifts to their fullest.
☐ I will not focus on what I do not have, or what I cannot do, but rather on what I do have, and what I can do.
☐ I will daily express praise and thanksgiving to God for His goodness to me.
☐ I will respond to discouragement and fear with thanksgiving and praise.
☐ I will not look at my spouse (or anyone else) through the lens of ingratitude for what he or she is not, but through the lens of a thankful spirit for what he or she is.
☐ I desire God’s emphasized presence in my life to be increased; therefore, I will increasingly cultivate an atmosphere of thanksgiving in my life.
UNDERSTANDING INJUSTICE

As the freedom process begins, the issue of injustice arises frequently. As a more complete picture emerges about what occurred in our past, injustice typically shows itself in buried anger or deep sorrow over the past. When partial understanding is replaced with full revelation, full forgiveness can then be granted to all who caused suffering or rejected us. The past is now released. The right to understand is relinquished.

Injustice is best defined as unmerited harm that came in the form of rejection or suffering. We realize that we did nothing to deserve the treatment that was given, and no recourse can be sought. In other words, the circumstances are in the past and can never be changed.

The story of Joseph’s life is a key teaching example. He was rejected and hated by his brothers, sold into slavery, and imprisoned—he had done nothing to deserve such wicked treatment. Like us, Joseph needed to let go of the past and receive God’s healing. This release is described in Genesis:

Genesis 41:51-52 (NLT)  Joseph named his older son Manasseh, for he said, “God has made me forget all my troubles and the family of my father.” Joseph named his second son Ephraim, for he said, “God has made me fruitful in this land of my suffering.”

Manasseh means “to forget.” ¹ For many of us, it is hurtful to remember our injustices, so forgetting is a positive event. ²

Kol is the Hebrew word for “all” and it means: all, the whole, any, each, every, anything, totality, everything.³ The total or the whole of the hardship and misery that was part of Joseph’s life was forgotten.

Amal is the Hebrew word for trouble, and it means: trouble, misery, i.e., that which is an unpleasant, hard, distressing experience, as a figurative extension of hard, toiling work.⁴ When used as a noun, amal relates to the unpleasant factors of work and toil.⁵ Other words that help us relate to the effect of injustices are: labor, toil, trouble, mischief, sorrow, travail, pain, grievance, iniquity, misery, painful, perverseness, wearisome, or wickedness.

Joseph named his second son Ephraim, for he said, “God has made me fruitful in this land of my suffering.” Ephraim means: “I shall be doubly fruitful.”⁶ This name speaks of the restoration that occurred in Joseph’s life. It speaks of the hope of God’s restoration and healing that comes as we continue to live in obedience to Him, and forgive those who have harmed us.

The word suffering in verse 52 is used in several different ways:
1. It is used to describe what someone does to his enemy. It describes the discomfort Sarah inflicted upon Hagar (Genesis 16:6) and what the lawless do to the defenseless (Exodus 22:22).

2. It speaks of the pain inflicted on Joseph’s ankles by the fetters (Psalm 105:18). It sets forth what Egypt did to Israel (Exodus 1:11–12; more than just slavery).

3. In Numbers 24:24 it describes the physical pain brought by war. It is used for what God does to his enemies (Deuteronomy 26:6).

God uses affliction to prompt repentance; for example, the purpose of the wilderness wandering was to humble Israel (Deuteronomy 8:23). This is a recurring theme in Scripture. God was not the author of the suffering in Joseph’s life, but the Lord used the training that came because of it: Joseph’s godly character was developed. This can be the result of injustice in our lives, if we allow the Lord to do His work. We must resolve (through the forgiving and healing work of the cross) that injustice will not cultivate anger, bitterness, sorrow, hopelessness, inferiority, control, passivity, etc., in our hearts. The enemy uses injustice to forge patterns of sin in our lives, but in Christ we can be restored and hope can triumph!

PRACTICAL STEPS TO CLOSING THE DOOR ON INJUSTICE

- Review the worksheet on the following page and check all the boxes that apply to you.

- Go back through the list with a prayer partner. Spend as much time on each checked box as necessary to walk through forgiveness and to release any possible anger toward the Lord over the specific injustice. The enemy is a master at blaming his evil works on God. Ask God to show you how the injustice has impacted your entire life. Then you can see the full effect of the injustice, and how to be released from its power.

- It is critical that your prayer partner(s) does not simply witness your prayer time, but that he or she ask provoking questions about each box to help walk you through the tension and emotions that arise as you pray through the specific injustice(s). In the days to come, you will begin to recognize patterns of behavior that were forged in your life due to the injustice.

- Release the right to understand why this injustice had to happen to you. This is a key step. You no longer need to know. You must believe the Lord will bring great things from it.

- When you have completed a category take the time, and with great force and faith, command the specific schemes to the feet of Jesus. Examples include hopelessness, sorrow, anger, bitterness, self-hatred, shame, control, passivity, unbelief, inferiority, etc.

- Pray to be healed right there on the spot in the power of Jesus name!

The following insight from the story of Joseph helps illustrate the power of freedom from injustices: when Joseph saw his brothers, the pain of the injustice and the effects were healed! We know this because revenge was not in his heart!

Genesis 50:19-20 (NLT) But Joseph told them, “Do not be afraid of me. Am I God, to judge and punish you? As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil. He brought me to the high position I have today so I could save the lives of many people.”

- As you release your past, ask the Lord to exchange it for a “Mannaseh” and “Ephraim.” This means asking the Lord for healing of all the pain and declaring that it is a new day. Declare to the Lord your acceptance of what has happened, and—like Joseph—to express great faith that whatever Satan meant for harm, God is now going to use for double fruitfulness.

(ENDNOTES)

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
This worksheet is in no way comprehensive. It serves as a tool to help you ask questions so that the injustices can surface and then be healed. Cry out for God's Spirit to help you in this process.

**CATEGORY 1: EARLY TRAUMA, ACCIDENTS, INJURIES, AND DEATH**

- What did this practically mean for you and for your family?
- How did this affect you emotionally?
- What are the long standing repercussions?

**CATEGORY 2: FAMILY**

- Is there divorce in your family?
- Did the parent maintain a nurturing relationship with you?
- To what frequency did you see your parents?
- What was your mom's and dad's attitude towards one another? (To see two parents demonstrate truth and love to one another is our greatest model. When this is missing, we never really know God's best for our lives which is an injustice.)
- Do you have a parent who has broken contact with you? Or whose communication with you is infrequent? (Your parents do not need to be divorced for this to be true.)
- Were your parents workaholics and how do this effect you?
- Were you left alone for extended periods of time?
- Were there expectations put on you that were not age appropriate. (i.e. meal preparation, laundry, watching over smaller siblings...etc.)
- Did your mom or dad show favoritism toward you or one of your siblings?
- How did this influence your relationship with both your sibling(s) and your parents?
- What was withheld from you that was given to them?
- Did your life in any way revolve around another family member's illness or condition?

Some of our injustices are strong sins that are passed down from one generation to another.

- Why do I have to struggle with the same thing that one of my parents does?
- Are there any areas that you have had breakthrough in that were a long-standing family issue?
- Was it common for any family members (i.e. mom or dad) to communicate through yelling?
- Were you personally yelled at?

- Was yelling an acceptable form of communication in your family?
- Did your mom and dad argue frequently?
- Do you recall any abusive events?

**Siblings**

- Did any of your brothers and sisters function in full-out rebellion? How did this influence the family dynamic? How did it affect you?

**Sibling Rivalry**

- Were you openly compared with a brother or a sister?
- Were there different rules for you than there were for your sibling(s)?

**CATEGORY 3: ABUSE**

**Drugs, alcohol and pornography**

- Did your mom or dad abuse alcohol?
- Pornography?
- Drugs?
- How did this pattern affect the other spouse?
- What typical childhood experiences did you miss out on because of this?
- As a result of their habit(s), did they condone the development of the same kinds of behaviors in you?
- Or if they did not condone it, was nothing mentioned due to the hypocrisy that they would have felt? How did this affect you?
- Were you put into a situation where you were embarrassed because of their behavior?
- Did the reputation of your family (as a result of the abuse) bring you public shame and embarrassment?

**Sexual Abuse**

- What were the circumstances of your abuse?
- Was it a one-time offense?
- Was it a repeated offense with a relative, neighbor, or family friend?
- Did it require you to live in an environment in which you were continually vulnerable?
- Do you know or suspect that your mom or someone else knew of the abuse and did nothing? Or denied it?
- Did this lead to other sexual relationships that were destructive in your life?
- Do you still battle this area in your mind today?
- Did it have any effect on your sexual orientation?
- Did you battle sexual thoughts or become sexually aware prior to God's design as a result of this?
**Abuse of discipline**

- Did either parent discipline in an abusive or violent way? Out of extreme anger?
- Were you shoved, slapped, and/or yelled at in your face?
- Were expectations inconsistent?
- Were forms of emotional manipulation used to control you?
- Was guilt consistently used to manipulate your emotions?

**CATEGORY 4 - ILLNESS**

- Have you personally had long standing illness or a handicap?
- How does your life differ from the average healthy person?
- What were you forced to forfeit as a result of this?
- How did this situation bring embarrassment or cause humiliation?
- What were or are the aspects of your life that you could not or cannot control as a result of the illness or handicap?
- How has your family responded?
- How did your friends respond?
- How did it affect your other relationships?
- What feelings of rejection have you experienced?
- Has the misunderstanding of your situation by others caused loneliness, isolation and or anger?
- Do you feel that you are an undue burden on someone else as a result of this?
- Does life present more than you can practically manage from day to day? (This leaves you vulnerable to letting people down and being misunderstood by other people)

**CATEGORY 5 - MAJOR LIFE CHANGE**

- Did your family ever make a major move?
- Did you leave behind close friends and family?
- Were you received and embraced in your new town or city? Schools?
- Did you face suspicion and rejection?
- Did you ever switch churches?
- Were you ever involved in a church split?
- Did either of these affect you, your family, and your relationships directly?

**CATEGORY 6 - STABILITY OF FAMILY**

- Did a parent ever remarry, and a step-parent move in?
- What were the circumstances surrounding this major change?
- Did your step-parent have children? Did you get along with your step-siblings?
- Were there two sets of rules employed in your household?
- Was there love, acceptance, and trust in these new relationships?
- How did injustice come from this change? (There are multitudes of ways this type of change can affect you).
- Did you live in a single parent home?
- How did the absence of the other parent influence your life on a day-to-day level?
- Did you hear that you were wanted, or did you perceive that you were a burden?

**CATEGORY 7 - ISSUES OF REJECTION**

(Area’s of race, social class, physical features, height, weight, intellect, poverty, coordination, physical ability, etc.)

- Is there something physical, or in your personality that predominantly stands out? Physical features?
- Height?
- Weight?
- Color of skin?
- Intellect?
- Have you been unfairly treated or labeled because of these characteristics? Stereotyped?
- How has this led to rejection?
- As a result, how have you become defensive?
- Were you teased in your family about something you did not like about yourself?
- Did this area ever lead to major disappointment in your life?
- Were you ever unfairly treated by an authority figure (i.e. teacher, pastor, other parents) because they have misjudged you?
- Were you given the same opportunities as those around you?
CATEGORY 8 - WITHHOLDING

- Were you recognized for your successes and accomplishments?
- By both parents?
- By instructors?
- By coaches?
- Or was the recognition quickly robbed from you and overshadowed by someone else’s greater successes?
- Or by someone else in your family needing special attention either because of their misbehavior or special needs?
- Were your achievements celebrated?
- Or did they never measure up to the standards of those in authority over your life?
- Did either parent predominantly focus on what you could do better versus what you just did well? Or speak to the effort that you put out regardless of the actual result?
- Did expectations change? Were the standards communicated clearly and when you thought you achieved them the bar was raised?
- Did your parents plan excitedly for your future?
- Did they support your desires and dreams?
- Did they speak destiny into you on a regular basis?
- Did they practically take steps to plan for your education?
- Did your parents cultivate a positive relationship between you and your siblings? Or were those relationships hurtful and destructive?

CATEGORY 9 - RELATIONSHIPS/MARRIAGE

- When you got married you had no idea that your husband (or wife) had an anger problem. Addictions?
- Were there major things that were hidden in the dating relationship that were immediately shown once you were married? (i.e. control, anger, etc).
- Does your spouse have needs that are never met or fulfilled?
- Does your spouse have deep patterns of laziness or passivity in regard to work?
- Does your spouse mismanage money or did they bring large debt into the marriage?
- Does your spouse have roving eyes? Openly flirtatious?
- Chronic and repeated lust problems or addictions to pornography?
- Were there major previous relationships that directly affect your current relationship?
- Adultery?

- Did you marry into a dysfunctional family or a family that rejected you?
- Did your spouse misrepresent his or her commitment to Christ?
- Is your spouse hardened and/or unteachable toward the Lord?
- Did you have a significant relationship that preceded marriage (or a previous marriage)?
- Were you ever misled in their intentions toward you (in these former relationships)?
- Were you promised things that he or she never had any intention of fulfilling?
- Were you ever coerced or pressured into a physical relationship?
- How did this change your relationship and your view of yourself?

CATEGORY 10 - ABORTION

- Have you ever had an abortion?
- Were you pressured into having an abortion?
- Did you have children and give them up to adoption?
- Did you ever want to be pregnant and could not? Infertility problems?

CATEGORY 11 - BETRAYAL

- Did you ever have an intimate friendship or relationship where there was an immediate change in feelings toward you?
- How do you still function in behaviors that were a result of this betrayal? (i.e. trust, fear of intimacy, self-confidence, physical attractiveness, labels, independence, bitterness, anger, control, etc).
INSECURITY

INSECURITY:
[adjective]  1: not confident or sure: UNCERTAIN.
2: not adequately guarded or sustained : UNSAFE
3: not firmly fastened or fixed : SHAKY
4a: not highly stable or well-adjusted.
4b: deficient in assurance: beset by fear and anxiety.  

Check all the boxes that apply to you:

PHASE 1: DISCOVERING AN UNHEALTHY SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

1. To find ourselves means losing ourselves in Christ. 
   Note the following key diagnostic signs of insecurity:
   
   □ I spend time wondering what others think of me.
   □ I spend time wondering what others say about me (even if just imagined).
   □ I live in my own world.

2. Part of diagnosing insecurity is understanding the many masks we wear when we are insecure. Masks function as false identities; when we wear a mask we are like the actor who reads lines in a play. The mask is like a role that a person plays. Consider the following masks:
   
   □ Overconfidence: I do not want to appear like I do not have an answer because it makes me look weak.
   □ Super spirituality: A superficial overuse of spiritual language without actual fruit.
   □ Everything is always fine: I am not hurting. I am not wounded. Nothing is ever wrong.
   □ The critic: I justify my criticism of others out of my need to put down those I perceive as a threat to me.
   □ The role: I am the “jock,” the “man of force,” the “perfect host,” the “one who always gets it done.”
   □ The victim: My life is worse than anyone else’s, so I cannot follow the Lord like others.
   □ Perfectionism: I select great qualities from people I admire in the world and build a mask comprised of those qualities. I then add on qualities we admire from people in ministry, and build a mask comprised of those qualities.
   □ Unique characteristics: I am not like other people, I have unique problems, interests, or issues.
PHASE 2: DEEPER REVELATION OF OUR NEED FOR APPROVAL COMES AS WE IDENTIFY PATTERNS IN OUR LIVES.

- Speaking defeat; it is often characterized by pessimism.
- “I can’t” are words that often exist in my thoughts and speech.
- Building or defending my case; interrupting with my own stories.
- Pride and independence. I strive to prove my worth to those around me. Lack of true teachability is often part of this pattern. I only seek out wise counsel from others in a crisis.
- Shifting blame and dismissing people. I am convinced that problems are nearly always caused by others (boss, spouse, roommate, friends, etc).

PHASE 3: RECOGNIZING HOW WE ARE CRITICAL OF OTHERS IDENTIFIES OUR INSECURITY.

- How do I speak about others when I am alone with my spouse?
- How do I speak about others behind closed doors with my friends and/or roommates?
- Do I live in exasperation? Do people constantly let me down by what they do or fail to do?
- Do I go to bed at peace with myself? With my marriage? The insecure person has a lack of peace; life is generally marked by striving.

STEPS TO RESOLVE INSECURITY

STEP 1: SEVER ALL GENERATIONAL HOLDS.
(For a review on severing generational patterns see the Freedom Class Manual.)

STEP 2: SEVER ALL “SOUL TIES” WITH OTHERS.
(go to section in this manual on Soul-ties for more information). Continuing to operate in bondage to soul ties only fuels our insecurity. Soul ties are formed when relationships depart from biblical guidelines in one or more areas, resulting in an unhealthy connectedness between people. Physical and/or emotional intimacy (usually sexual sin) can enslave us to other sins, most notably the fear of man.

Common attributes of the fear of man include:
- Seeking the approval of another person over God’s approval. This prevents us from obeying God because we fear what someone with whom we have a close relationship will think.
- Living in another person’s mind; desiring approval, attention, or recognition from them.
- Living in confusion with regard to another person. We may be unable to make a simple decision of obedience because we give too much consideration to the opinions of another person.

STEP 3: DECIDE TO HATE INSECURITY.
Attempts to rely on false security are sin. Recognizing insecurity is a mighty work of God’s Spirit, but it is only half of the battle. Hating the sin with all of our heart is the only road to certain victory. Follow the 4-R’s (next page) for each item you checked above, and determine to live in a place of repentance.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY ROOTS OF YOUR INSECURITY.
Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the sources of your insecurity. Some common roots include:
- Rejection.
- Verbal comparisons about us (in other words, we have been compared against others by significant people in our lives).
- Blessings from significant people withheld.

STEP 5: TAKE STRONG ACTION STEPS TOWARD CHANGE.
- Feed on the Word of God—increase our “truth intake.”
- Speak the truth, and speak with faith according to the Word of God.
- Pray for a change of heart and mind.
REPENT
Jesus, I ask forgiveness for every way insecurity has affected my life and the lives of those around me. I ask forgiveness for every pattern of insecurity in my life. I see the affect it has had on my life, my relationship with you, and my relationships with others. I call it sin. I ask forgiveness for walking in false identities, which are deceptions and rebellion against who you created me to be. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked and any sins that come to mind that are associated with each category.) I ask forgiveness for ____________________________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of insecurity in my life.

REBUKE
In the name and authority of Jesus Christ, I rebuke every deceiving spirit of insecurity. I rebuke every spirit that has been given a foothold in my life due to this stronghold of insecurity. I rebuke every spirit that deceives me about how others see me, and especially how you, Lord, see me. I rebuke every spirit that is trying to deceive me about the faithfulness of God. In Jesus’ name and authority, I tell you all to be silent and to go to the feet of Jesus.

RECEIVE
Jesus, I receive your forgiveness and the cleansing wash of your blood. I stand secure in your forgiveness and grace.

REPLACE
I replace every feeling of insecurity with the sure promise of security in the Lord. I lay aside every false identity for my true identity in Christ Jesus.

SCRIPTURES TO STAND ON

Deuteronomy 33:12 (NIV)  About Benjamin he said: “Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders.”

Job 11:18 (NIV)  You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety.

Luke 12:4-6 (NIV)  “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.”

Isaiah 51:6-8 (NIV)  Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. “Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have my law in your hearts: Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults. For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations.”

Isaiah 57:11 (NIV)  “Whom have you so dreaded and feared that you have been false to me, and have neither remembered me nor pondered this in your hearts? Is it not because I have long been silent that you do not fear me?

WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT

☑ Continue to walk aggressively against the enemy! Whenever faced with circumstances or thoughts of insecurity, stop and pray through the 4-R’s with conviction and boldness! Rebuke the lies of the enemy until they are gone. Use Scripture—it is your sword!

☑ Step out of your comfort zone. Initiate a conversation with someone you do not know. Pray about getting more involved in church ministry.

☑ Continue to pray affirmation: “I am loved by God!” “I am anointed!” “His spirit does live in me!” “He has called me to a great purpose!”

☑ Lay aside personal and selfish ambitions and ask the Lord what He has for you.
Galatians 5:19-21 (NLT) When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

James 4:2 (NIV) You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

THE CORE OF JEALOUSY AND COVETOUSNESS

Check all the boxes that apply to you:

1. Covetousness says, “I want something that you have.”
   - Buried or outward anger that is actually anger toward God over what I do not possess.
   - Preoccupation with the accumulation of “things.” There is a sense of entitlement that “I deserve to live a certain way,” or “I deserve to present myself in a certain way,” or “I deserve certain things.”
   - My life is marked by discontentment because of a preoccupation with a coveted position, role, or gift.

2. Unresolved hurts in my own life can develop into jealousy or disdain toward others.
   - I rise up around others who appear to have a loving and fulfilling marriage and friendship, or perceivably satisfying relationships.
   - I am angry and resentful toward those I perceive as withholding from me.
   - I diminish or push-away those who I am jealous toward.

Jealous:
1a: intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness. b: disposed to suspect rivalry or unfaithfulness. 2: hostile toward a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage. 3: vigilant in guarding a possession

Covetous:
1: marked by inordinate desire for wealth or possessions or for another’s possessions. 2: having a craving for possession <covetous of power>.

+definition+

Jealous:
1a: intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness. b: disposed to suspect rivalry or unfaithfulness. 2: hostile toward a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage. 3: vigilant in guarding a possession

Covetous:
1: marked by inordinate desire for wealth or possessions or for another’s possessions. 2: having a craving for possession <covetous of power>.
3. **Ingratitude and areas of entitlements.**
- I feel that I am getting a raw deal. “I should have what others have.”
- I get angry over being inconvenienced.
- I possess a timeline of opportunities that I feel I merit.
- I have a hard time thanking God for what He has done in my life. Thanksgiving plays a small role in my life.

4. **Pride is at the core of jealousy and covetousness.**
- I believe I deserve what other people have.
- I have a tendency to prove that I am better than others around me.
- I mentally build a case about why I am better than others.
- I do not believe what the Lord says about me so I covet other’s gifting.
- With my actions and words I make others feel less so I can elevate myself.
- I spend a lot of time thinking about myself and what I deserve.

5. **Unbelief is at the core of jealousy and covetousness.**
- I do not believe what the written Word says about me.
- My identity and value are in what I do or can accomplish.
- I want what others have because I do not believe the Lord has my highest good in mind.
- I need to accomplish things for myself because the Lord will not come through for me.
- I compare the way I look to the way others look.
- I want other’s material possessions; because I do not believe the Lord will take care of me.
- I have a hard time believing that the Lord loves me, wants the best for me, and will provide for my every need.
- I pray for myself most often and have a hard time praying/thinking about others.

6. **Inferiority is at the core of jealousy and covetousness.**
- I am jealous of what other people look like and how they act.
- I constantly compare myself to others, usually falling short.
- I find myself saying, “I’ll never be like ________.”

- I get angry or feel deflated when I do not get what I want.
- I have a hard time when other people are blessed.
- When I am truthful with myself, I do not like it when the Lord elevates one of my peers.
- I am out to prove how I am worthy of praise.
- My own feelings of insignificance/inferiority are elevated by what someone else has (i.e. their possessions).

6. **Specific forms of jealousy and covetousness that need to be destroyed.**
- Jealousy of another’s appearance.
- Jealousy of another’s spiritual gifting.
- Coveting another’s material possessions.
- Coveting another’s relationships.
- Coveting another’s occupation.
- Jealousy in friendships; wanting to be another’s most significant friend.
- Jealousy directed toward other women regarding their husband/boyfriend.
- Jealousy directed toward other men regarding their wife/girlfriend.
- Jealousy of the Lord’s blessing in another person’s life.
- Jealousy toward a sibling or relative.
### REPENT

Lord, I ask you to forgive me for the sin of jealousy and covetousness. I call these things sin, Lord, and I hate them. I repent of jealousy and covetousness right now. I hand them to you and turn from them now. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked, as well as any sins that come to mind that are associated with each category.) I ask forgiveness for ______________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of jealousy and covetousness in my life.

### REBUKE

Right now, Satan, the Lord rebukes you. I command you to flee in the name of Jesus Christ. I reject your lies and how you have schemed against me for so long. I will not listen to these lies any longer. You are defeated and have no right to hold onto me. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord rebukes you now! You must go!

### RECEIVE

Lord Jesus, I receive your forgiveness for the sin of jealousy and covetousness. Your Word says that when I confess my sins, you are faithful and just to forgive my sins and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Thank you, Lord, for your forgiving power and love for me.

### REPLACE

I stand in agreement with the word of God. I agree with who God is and what He says about me.

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### DECLARE YOUR TRUE IDENTITY

**I am complete in Christ:**

*Romans 8:28 (NIV)* . . . and you are complete through your union with Christ. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe.

**I am assured that all things work together for good:**

*Romans 8:28 (NIV)* And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

**I have been chosen and appointed by God to bear fruit:**

*John 15:16 (NIV)* You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.

**I am a temple of God:**

*1 Corinthians 3:16 (NIV)* Do not you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

**We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ:**

*Ephesians 1:3 (NIV)* How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ.

**We are God’s Masterpiece:**

*Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)* For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

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**I am satisfied, fulfilled, full of joy, and free:**

*Galatians 5:1 (NIV)* So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and do not get tied up again in slavery to the law.

### WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT

- Every time I am tempted with jealous or coveting thoughts, I will move in the opposite spirit by praying a blessing on the person toward whom those thoughts were directed. Pray that the Lord will pour His blessings and His anointing on them. Pray that the Lord will expand his or her territory.
- I can celebrate others’ successes with them.
- Push others into their calling with encouraging words and actions.
- The successes of others add to my joy.
- I rejoice in God’s creation and His unique design of other individuals.
- Instead of holding a jealous thoughts toward another, I will choose to encourage him or her with affirming words.
PASSIVITY

Passivity can cause us to grow in our Christian life at a snail’s pace. Not only will it hinder our growth, but it can literally cause us to move backward in our development. This is why our enemy wants passivity to remain hidden. We will have a powerful breakthrough in our life if we bring it out into the open! Passivity must be destroyed with force in the Christian life!

PASSIVITY: It is the opposite of initiation. Passivity makes us move slowly and resists change and transformation. A good picture of passivity is the slowness of a turtle or sloth.

RECOGNIZING PASSIVITY

James 4:17 (NIV) Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.

Proverbs 20:4 (NIV) A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.

Proverbs 10:4 (NIV) Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

Hebrews 6:11-12 (NIV) We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Passivity is not from the Lord, and is a form of rebellion:

- It is the void left where action should be occurring.
- God calls us out of passivity. He calls us to be active in our faith, in building relationships, in service, and in every area of our lives.

Acts 20:34-35 (NLT) You know that these hands of mine have worked to pay my own way, and I have even supplied the needs of those who were with me. And I have been a constant example of how you can help the poor by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (NLT) Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. All athletes practice strict self-control. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

Colossians 3:23 (NLT) Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

2 Timothy 2:6-7 (NLT) Hardworking farmers are the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. Think about what I am saying. The Lord will give you understanding in all these things.
CHECK ALL THE BOXES THAT APPLY TO YOU:

1. **Passivity is a lack of initiation.**
   - I walk in passivity when I fail to initiate conversations with others, always waiting for someone to come to me.
   - I am passive in building relationships.
   - I do not call others.
   - I do not call people back when they call me (at least not right away).
   - I do not initiate activities with others.
   - At church or social gatherings, I tend to hang back until someone comes to talk to me.
   - I do not affirm others; I withhold words of blessing.
   - I do not protect others.
   - I do not initiate growth in my relationship with the Lord.
   - I cannot seem to motivate myself to read, pray, or worship.
   - I feel no urgency or hunger in my relationship with God; I feel blocked (literally “locked down”) when I consider spending time with Him.
   - I feel content with where I am spiritually.
   - I want to grow in the Lord, and I know what to do, but I do not do it.
   - I know I need someone to pray with me for freedom in some areas, but I never get around to asking for help.
   - Conversations with others about God do not push or motivate me.
   - I do not initiate in serving others because I figure someone else will do it.
   - I do not believe I can change the way I am.
   - I often let others do what I could do myself.

2. **Passivity is a form of independence and leads to isolation.**
   - I resist interdependence.
   - I do not ask for help from the church body.
   - I do not offer help/service to others in the church body.
   - I see myself as more of a “private” Christian; I am reserved and keep to myself.
   - I am critical of the way things are done in my church, and I have doubts about the leadership (I can see many flaws); it seems best for me to keep some distance and not get too involved.
   - I tend to observe the activities of others (socially or in ministry); I rarely feel motivated or worthy to participate.
   - I feel like I do not need anyone else.
   - I feel unworthy to be in relationship with others.

3. **Passivity is a form of resistance and rebellion.**
   - I resist God’s forgiveness by not taking the authority Jesus has given me over my sin.
   - I resist obedience to the Lord by allowing sin to remain in my life.
   - I do not seek the place of repentance.
   - I have become familiar with, and indifferent toward, sin in my life.
   - I do not believe it would do any good to take authority over the enemy, so I rarely pray.
   - I resist receiving the Lord’s gifts.
   - I do not believe that God will give me supernatural gifts and use them through me.
   - I am not sure that spiritual gifts are authentic or for today; I want to keep a safe distance from them.
   - I expect that others may receive spiritual gifts, but not me.
   - I resist leadership positions, because I do not want that much responsibility or pressure.
   - I do not like to do what everyone else does; I am my own person.
   - It is not like me to get “more involved,” and I do not want to be pressured to do so.
   - It is not like me to be a leader or to be assertive.
   - “If [that person] would just shut-up and let some others talk/lead/initiate once in a while, then maybe I would get involved (critical, judgmental spirit).

4. **Passivity allows self-pity to remain.**
   - I am familiar with feelings like fear and rejection, so I tend to believe that I will always struggle in these areas.
   - I am comfortable with the way I am.
   - I am a victim; I do not know how not to be a victim.
   - Others are wrong to push me to become someone I am not.
   - I blame others for the way that I am.

5. **Passivity is about being too comfortable.**
   - I allow myself to be comfortable with where I am spiritually. I am alright with my walk with God right now.
   - I allow myself to be comfortable with where I am emotionally. I have always struggled with depression, insecurity, shyness, fear, loneliness, etc. This is the way things are, so why should I worry about it and try to find a “cure?”
   - I allow myself to be comfortable with where I am physically. I do not care what others think of my appearance. It is too bad if they do not like what they see; I do not need them anyway.
6. Passivity perpetuate lies and deceptions.
   - This is part of my personality.
   - I am not meant to step out and initiate or I would really feel like it.
   - I will be a failure if I try to initiate.
   - It is just not me!
   - There is nothing wrong with me, so I do not need to seek change or freedom.
   - At least there is some comfort in self-pity and being a victim.
   - I do not need anyone to tell me how to act!

   Passivity is a spirit that wants to keep your mouth shut and your influence held captive. It does not want you to rise up! It does not want you to pray and discover the authority that Jesus has given you! It does not want you to radically bless those around you!

   Jesus wants you to discover the wonderful gift of repentance as it is described in Scripture. We are surely remorseful for our sin, but the Lord has won the battle and paid the price. Jesus wants you to discover that repentance can be a joy!

   After you are done repenting, rebuke the enemy and pray the following Scriptures out loud. We are declaring from deep within us the opposite of passivity.

   READ THIS BEFORE YOU PRAY

   It is important to realize that we are praying spiritual warfare prayers! A spiritual warfare prayer can often be loud and forceful; wars are not fought in silence. Is there such a thing as a silent battleship? Do you know of a tank that fires its weapons in silence? Can a bomb be detonated without an explosion? This is why part of the “basic training” of this class is learning to pray spiritual warfare prayers.

   Remember, your greatest weapon in this battle is repentance; the deeper the repentance, the greater the advancement. Shouting or jumping will never destroy a stronghold. However, true repentance combined with using your authority in Jesus Christ will always overcome a stronghold. Strongholds are not built overnight, and this is why we need to learn how to pray and obey! You probably checked a few boxes on the worksheet, and now we are going to practice praying authoritative prayers.

   WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT

   - Initiate conversations, activities, etc. with others. Go to them—do not wait for them to come to you.
   - Even when you do not “feel like it,” take authority over sin patterns such as self-pity and victimization. Do not allow sin to remain. You have authority—use it!
   - Doing things when you really do not feel like it is the whole point of walking in the opposite spirit. Here is the lie: If you do not feel like it, you do not have to do anything. Do what you know to do—whether you feel like it or not!
   - Go out of your way to bless people.
   - Begin to cry out to God for a greater hunger to grow spiritually.

   REPENT

   Lord Jesus, I ask forgiveness for patterns of passivity in my life. I see how it has affected me and those around me. I call it sin. Passivity is not from you! (Go back and confess each specific box you checked). I repent of every way that passivity has been in my life, and I commit to breaking the patterns of passivity in my life, right now!

   RECEIVE

   Lord Jesus, I now receive Your forgiveness for walking in passivity. I accept your offering of cleansing from this sin and I believe that I am forgiven! I no longer resist your healing, but I freely accept it.

   REBUKE

   I rebuke you, passivity, for attacking me with lies about my true nature and calling, causing me to be passive in many areas of my life! I come against you by the authority of Jesus Christ within me, and I command you to flee right now! You are a liar and I will no longer listen to you and your deceptions about me! I put you under my feet, according to the Word of God, and I crush you and the influence you have had in my life.

   REPLACE

   I replace the spirit of passivity with the truth of who God is and who He created me to be.
THEMES OF SCRIPTURE TO DECLARE

“I will walk after the Lord my God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; I shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”
from Deuteronomy 13:4

“I am the salt and light of the earth!”
from Matthew 5:13-14

“I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit!”
from John 15:16

“I am God’s co-worker!”
from 2 Corinthians 6:1

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”
from Philippians 4:13

“I am established, anointed and sealed by God!”
from 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

“I have not been given a spirit of timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline.”
from 2 Timothy 1:7

“I am not lazy, but I imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised!”
from Hebrews 6:11-12

NOTES:
PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

**Proverbs 11:2 (NIV)**  When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

**IDENTIFYING PRIDE AND ARROGANCE**

Check all boxes that apply to you:

- I live mostly for my own benefit.
- I regard myself as more important than others.
- I think and act selfishly.
- I create strife, division and chaos.
- I gossip and tear down others.
- I look at others with jealousy.
- I take offense easily and quickly.
- I become angry when my “rights” are violated.
- I view myself above others; I will not “lower” myself to serve others.
- I display a “my way is the only way” attitude.
- I find it difficult to bend or to be flexible.
- I lean toward defensiveness and even combativeness.
- The forceful control and manipulation of other people (I shut others down with forceful use of words).
- I desire to compete in arenas that have winners and losers. I am not drawn to “nameless and faceless” assignments. I want some of the recognition or “glory” for the assignment.
- I posture or position myself so that my gifts, possessions, strengths, and abilities are accentuated.
- Everyone else’s sins are worse than mine. (Leads to denial of the gravity of my own sins.)
- I have a distaste for receiving instructions.
- I have an inward desire to see other people fail. I secretly enjoy the failures of others.
- Refusal to function in certain tasks that are “beneath” me.
- I find it easy to see the shortcomings and sins of others, but often I cannot see my own.
- I am critical of the positions, blessings, and gifts of others.
- I want others to know how wonderful I am, and I drop frequent hints—some subtle, some not so subtle—in praise of myself.
- I am willing to gossip and tear down others so I will look better than them.

**+definition+**

**PRIDE:**
[noun] Inordinate self-esteem : CONCEIT.

**ARROGANCE:**
[noun] An attitude of superiority manifested in an overbearing manner or in presumptuous claims or assumptions.¹
I am unwilling to “give in” for the sake of others.

I find it easy to follow my own advice, my own direction, and my own wisdom.

I find it hard to receive and accept “godly advice, wisdom, and correction” from others.

I see myself as my own leader and authority.

I am self-sufficient; I do not need others - and sometimes I do not need God.

I tend to get involved in arguments and conflicts.

I consider myself “independent.”

I often refer to my own “Christian” activities, “religious background”, or “spiritual life” as a benchmark for others.

**THE LESSON OF UZZIAH**

2 Chronicles 26 tells of the life of Uzziah, who became king of Judah at the age of sixteen and ruled for fifty-two years. He sat under the spiritual mentoring of the prophet Jeremiah, and followed Jeremiah’s counsel. King Uzziah led Judah to many great conquests, strengthened the walls of Jerusalem, built cisterns, and caused the land to prosper.

2 Chronicles 26:3 (NIV) As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success.

The connection seems very clear. Uzziah relied on the Lord for direction, help and strength. He humbled himself even though he was a king. God is not impressed with titles that humans bestow on each other. God was then—and still is—more concerned about our ability to understand that we can do NOTHING without Him. Our foolish plans, our weak strength, and our inability to see the future continually point to our need to depend on the Lord.

As Uzziah’s story continues, his army became extraordinarily powerful and possessed the most current technology. The surrounding armies feared them.

2 Chronicles 26:15 (NIV) His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful.

Notice the turning point for Uzziah:

2 Chronicles 26:16 (NIV) But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God.

In his pride, Uzziah placed himself above God’s established authorities (the priests). He went into the temple and presented his own offerings before God - something only the priests were allowed to do. Pride convinced him that he was above everyone else and answered to no one; he was the king, after all, and could do whatever he wanted.

Notice God’s strong response to Uzziah’s pride and arrogance. Eighty courageous priests confronted him in the temple as he offered incense to the Lord. His reaction? “He flew into a rage and while raging the Lord struck him with leprosy” (2 Chronicles 26:19). The chapter closes with Uzziah clinging to pride right up to the sad and difficult end of his life.

2 Chronicles 26:21 (NIV) King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house, leprous and excluded from the temple of the Lord. Jotham, his son, had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

What did Uzziah’s pride and arrogance do for him? It brought God’s judgment, separation from the house of God, separation from those he loved, and greatly reduced the scope and length of his reign as king. Uzziah became a prisoner to his own pride and arrogance.

Compare Uzziah’s life, eventually destroyed by pride, with the life of Moses, who Scripture describes as “very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3). Moses always came to the Lord on behalf of the people of Israel, but could see himself for who and what he was in God’s eyes. He was always willing to confess his own sinfulness and his need for God.

**THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT—HUMILITY**

All of us would like God to pour out His blessing and favor on us. Consider that “God sets Himself up against the proud, but He shows favor to the humble” (James 4:6, NLT). What does this verse mean?

Resist means “withstand; oppose; fend off; stand firm against, withstand the action of, oppose actively; work against.” Imagine God resisting those of us who continue in a spirit of pride and arrogance. No wonder our lives lack power and the favor of God!

Now look at what God does for the humble of heart and mind. Favor means to “approve, support, endorse; regard or treat with special advantages, special privileges, preferred treatment.” Wow! We all want to receive the favor of the Lord!

Gerry Fry, author of “In Pursuit of His Glory” defines humility as:

a. Willingness to be known for who we really are.

b. Total dependence on God’s sufficiency.

c. Complete submission to the Lordship of Christ.

d. Absolute obedience to the Word and truth of God.
WALKING IN HUMILITY

☐ I will view myself as a servant to everyone.
☐ I will grow in the character of Christ.
☐ I will look for opportunities to see others lifted up.
☐ I will see myself in accord with the ways God sees me.
☐ I will acknowledge my shortcomings and sins in the presence of others so I can be encouraged in my walk with the Lord.

☒ I will acknowledge that all that I am, all that I have, and all that I do, comes to me from the Lord. I can take no claim for myself.
☒ I will pray consistently for God to reveal any pride or arrogance that may be hidden in my life.
☒ I will understand that my only hope is in complete dependence on God and obedience to Him. Pounded down or discounted.

We must conduct a serious campaign against pride and arrogance. Use the following 4-R’s as a guide:

| REPENT | Jesus, I ask forgiveness for the sin of pride and arrogance. I ask forgiveness for every way it has affected my relationship with you and others. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked as well as any sins that come to mind associated with each category.) I ask forgiveness for __________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, and commit myself to breaking the patterns of pride and arrogance in my life. |
| RECEIVE | I receive your forgiveness, Jesus. I receive the empowering work of the Holy Spirit to live in the truth of humility. I will continue to seek it and depend on it at all times to walk in the spirit of Christ. |
| REBUKE | In Jesus’ name and authority, I rebuke every spirit of pride/arrogance in my life and command you to the feet of Jesus. In Jesus’ name, I rebuke every spirit that was given a foothold in my life due to pride. In the name of Jesus, every deceiving and lying spirit must go to the feet of Jesus. |
| REPLACE | I replace the sins of pride and arrogance by walking in the opposite spirit—humility. (This occurs as we affirm the truth, renew our minds in it continually, and memorize and meditate on what the scriptures say about it.) |

SCRIPTURES TO REFLECT ON

Psalm 18:27 (NIV)  You rescue those who are humble, but you humiliate the proud.
Psalm 25:9 (NIV)  He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.
Proverbs 8:13 (NIV)  To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.
Proverbs 13:10 (NIV)  Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.
Proverbs 16:18 (NIV)  Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.
Proverbs 29:23 (NIV)  Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor.
Mark 7:21-23 (NIV)  For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you and make you unacceptable to God.”

James 3:14 (NIV)  But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

2 Peter 2:18-19 (NIV)  For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.
Rebellion is ingrained in the heart of humanity. This fact is easily recognizable throughout biblical and secular history. Since our fall in the garden, we have continually rebelled against our Creator as a people, having the strong desire of placing ourselves as the ultimate authority. At its worst, a heart of rebellion denies the goodness, provision, and existence of God.

The theme of rebellion runs through the Bible from start to finish. Humankind, left to its own devices, will turn to other gods—to all kinds of depravity, sin, and self-worship. No one is above this tendency. Even God’s own chosen people continually turned to other gods throughout their recorded biblical history. God repeatedly sent prophets to warn of coming judgment and exile if repentance did not ensue. The New Testament also gives warnings regarding rebellion, and many early believers fell away as a result of their rebellion against Christ and the early church leaders.

The result of rebellion is, ultimately, death. The fruit of rebellion can be closely aligned to the kingdom of Satan. He has been rebelling against God since the beginning. As the father of lies, his kingdom has these three fruits: theft, murder, and destruction. Whenever we align ourselves with the kingdom of rebellion, we will eventually reap its fruit. This theme recurs in Scripture and in history year after year.
As believers in Jesus Christ, we no longer need to be slaves to rebellion. We have been given the living hope of Christ, and we are commissioned to be His ambassadors. In order to be an effective witness for His namesake, we cannot live in a continual pattern of rebellion. It is common to hear in Christian circles, “I feel stuck,” or, “I feel like I am in a rut.” Many times the advised remedy is to change our job, take a vacation, buy something new, or simply try harder. But very rarely would we ask the question, “Have I done what God has asked me to do?” It would seldom cross our minds that our own hearts could be the problem.

In our western Christian culture, rebellion is seen as something that “sinners” do. To us, rebellion is drugs, sex, and rock ‘n’ roll; rebellion is occult activity; rebellion is overt sin. In the Christian life, however, rebellion can be defined very simply: it is not obeying God. When rebellion is defined in such a fashion, we can no longer align rebellion just with “overt” sinful activity. As we will find in this study, overt sin is not so much the problem because it can be seen clearly and dealt with immediately. Where we fall short most is in the category of “hearing and obeying.” Immediate obedience is often our area of greatest spiritual deficiency.

We must clearly and practically learn how we can begin to hear and obey God. “Hearing and obeying” is a practical way of describing the biblical principle of immediate obedience. God is not just interested in religious activity, but in a heart of radical obedience that acts upon guidance from the word of God without qualification or complaint.

Our focus will be primarily on “will of man” issues. This means we can, through our own thoughts and actions, promote or oppose obedience. For fear of legalism, self-control is a fruit of the spirit that has “lost popularity” in Christian circles. This is not to say that our sheer will can accomplish what God has called us to do (it takes Holy Spirit empowerment), but it is an essential ingredient. We must agree with God for His purposes and power to be released. We must actively seek out every area in which we have said, “No,” to God, and realign our actions with His truth.

To help us through this process we will, together, “deconstruct” rebellion. There are many ways we can biblically attack this subject. For our purposes, we will study rebellion in terms of “phases.” This is an effective way to explore the subject because it shows a natural progression out of rebellion and the different phases that comprise it. Again, this is not comprehensive; it is simply a tool to help us identify and uproot underlying themes.
THE FOUR PHASES OF BREAKTHROUGH

For our purposes, the four phases of this teaching are as follows:

1. **REBELLIOUS**
   In this phase people are stuck in a cycle of sin that they are currently unwilling to break. To be in rebellion is to live in opposition to the authority and word of God. Rebellion is a condition of either open or subtle hostility and/or disobedience toward God.

   *James 4:7b (NIV)*  Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

2. **ENTITLED**
   These individuals have had a breakthrough in the area of rebellion. Certain areas of their lives are submitted to Jesus. They have even denied themselves old sin patterns and have worked to remove overt rebellion from their lives. But progress is slow and they are still unwilling to submit in many areas. They pick and choose in which areas they will obey God. They still live with many “entitlements.” They look at the cost of following Jesus and are unwilling to give up certain aspects of life to Christ.

   *Matthew 10:38-39 (NKJV)*  And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

3. **OVERCOMING**
   In this phase, all known entitlements have been surrendered to Jesus. Individuals in this phase actively looking for any blind spots that might hinder their progress in obeying God. This person is focused on quickly destroying all patterns that were built on entitlements.

   There are still obstacles and dangers along the way, but their heart is to follow Jesus, no matter the cost. They still have areas of struggle, but are actively seeking to overcome these hindrances. In our illustration, this is regarded as “aggressively breaking patterns.”

   *1 John 5:4 (NKJV)*  For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

   *Romans 12:2 (NKJV)*  Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

4. **HEARING AND OBEYING**
   Hearing and obeying is the phase in which all of the people in Hebrews 11 lived, and it is the reason they are listed in the celebrated “Hall of Faith.”

   *Hebrews 11:32-34 (NLT)*  Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight.
Satan’s kingdom was founded on rebellion, and it wars against the kingdom of God. When Christians live in rebellion, they are in agreement with Satan in his opposition to Jesus. In this way they bring honor to Satan and his kingdom through their hearts of rebellion. Sinful actions flow out of a wrong heart. Saul purposely rebelled against the command of God, even though Samuel told him that obedience was the sacrifice the Lord desired.

Instead of obedience, pride leads us directly to independence. It causes us to “rebel” against God and His authority. Satan started a heavenly rebellion against God and His authority. Isaiah 14 makes it clear that Satan was given a free will and exercised it five times, stating, “I will” against the established authority of God. God responded to Satan and those with him by hurling them out of heaven to earth (Isaiah 14:13-14).

Like Satan, we are also given free will, the ability to choose our own way. Like Satan, we too can rebel against God, or we can choose to submit to His established authority. God does not toy with rebellion. As the above verses state, rebellion is witchcraft, iniquity, and idolatry.

Not only do we need to know what rebellion is, we need to understand how it functions in our human will. There are several reasons why understanding rebellion is so important. First, we want to get it out of our lives! Second, we need to grow in discernment, rightly judging between good and evil. Lastly, rebellion disconnects us from God and shuts down our ability to hear His voice! Living a life in Christ is to live like Christ. His will was completely submitted to His Father.

Jesus commands all who know Him to live a life consistent with His character, bearing the fruits of righteousness. Jesus always lived and carried out His ministry according to the will of the Father. He followed, at all times, the Father’s direction, will, and authority. Even in near death, Jesus was heard saying, “Not My will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

Take a look at how rebellion expresses itself practically. Do you recognize these symptoms in your own life?

Rebellion expresses itself in:

- Speech that is critical of those in authority.
- A person’s life being ruled by their own opinions and convictions.
- Anger as a result of not receiving “deserved” treatment.
- Relationships that lack depth.
- Significant relationships marked by control, manipulation, power struggles.
- Division and manipulation.
- Blaming everyone else for one’s lack of fruit when the real issue is rebellion.
- Caring only for self, not for the benefit of others.
- Passive resistance to particular people in authority or to any established authority structure.
- Thoughts or efforts to discredit those in authority.

 dilemma and solution: How can one overcome rebellion in their own life?

SIDEBAR

"It is hard for you to kick against the goads . . . ." 

Acts 26:14 (NIV) We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ’Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

“In the first century, oxen were used to till the soil. In order to better manage the ox the farmer would position a wooden shaft in such a manner that, when necessary, he would use to exert pressure on the ox, to press the end of the shaft into the flesh of the ox. Sometimes the ox would kick out at the goad or prick and when that happened the goad would be pressed deeper into the animal’s flesh as a result of his rebellion.” 2
Here are some common fruits of a person functioning in rebellion:

- Loss and ruin.
- Broken families and relationships.
- Immaturity—strongholds of sin still fully in place.
- Rewarding themselves out of impatience (like picking an unripe apple off the tree). Seizing opportunities for ourselves rather than waiting for God to hand them to us.

The following characteristics typically mark a person who is living in rebellion:

1. They function in confusion.
   In fact, they may state repeatedly that they are confused when others are able to hear the same information clearly and move forward in obedience. In many instances, they believe that their circumstances are different from everyone else’s and that the truth of God’s Word does not apply to them in the same manner.

2. They have disregarded previous instruction:
   Confusion has resulted from a disregard of God’s direction and conviction. God might have spoken about a matter (selfishness, passivity), but obedience was delayed or ignored. This disobedience may not have been blatant, but the measuring rod is the fruit in their lives. If a marriage is involved, the relationship may be characterized by inner confusion, turmoil, and tension; disobedience has caused the marriage itself to be “stuck.” We may believe that “if I only knew what to do, I would be fine,” when in fact we already know what to do, but refuse to do it. (A clear understanding of James 1 sheds light on the process of confusion).

3. They ignore repeated counsel from credible sources.
   They have received plenty of council, advice, and prayer, yet refuse to put into practice anything they have learned. For example, someone who struggles with unbelief and receives helpful input does not need more information on unbelief; they simply need to eradicate it. In other words, the Lord has spoken to them many times on this issue, but there is no breakthrough or change.

4. There is minimal application of truth.
   Significant growth occurs when outside counsel or help is obtained, but it is short-lived. Though the individual or couple may express a desire to grow, the old patterns reemerge very quickly. Biblical instruction is also resisted. A person may listen (and take notes), but genuine application of truth is short-lived.

The fruit of rebellion is seen and defined throughout Scripture:

The word “rebellion” often appears in the Bible in conjunction with the words listed below. It is essential to understand this, as these actions mark those who function in rebellion.

- “stubborn” (Deuteronomy 21:18, 20; Jeremiah 5:23; Psalm 78:8).
- “hurt, grieve” (Isaiah 63:10; Psalm 78:40).
- “refuse” (Isaiah 1:20; Nehemiah 9:17).
- “transgress” (Lamentations 3:42).
- “scorn” (Psalm 107:11).
- “sin” (Psalm 78:17).
- “test” (Psalm 78:56).
- “rebel” (Nehemiah 9:26).
- “reject” and “to profane” (Ezekiel 20:13).
- “press” and “arrogance, presumption” (1 Samuel 15:23).

Moving out of the rebellious phase requires true repentance with accompanying honest changes of the heart evident through actions. If we recognize that we are living in rebellion, help is available. But it is vital to understand that moving out of rebellion requires a very sober approach to life change.
Matthew 10:38-39 (NKJV) And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Romans 8:6 (NKJV) For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Entitlements always stop our growth. When we hang onto entitlements, we are telling the Lord, “I want to go the slow way,” or, “I choose the 20-year growth plan.” Our actions suggest that we are challenging the Lord to “come and break me.”

At its core, entitlements are another form of rebellion. The Lord desires to build endurance and self-control in our lives so that we can enter into our destiny and purpose. The Lord designs life circumstances for a distinct purpose—He wants to thoroughly exercise areas that need development. When we hold onto entitlements, we tell the Lord that we are unwilling to bear the weight of any testing. The spiritual weight room is totally prepped to enter and grow quickly, but if we are unwilling to use it we hinder our growth.

Entitlements mean that we put limits on what God can ask of us. We are essentially saying, “Yes Lord, but.” These hidden rights must be rooted out if we are to be empty vessels for His use.

Here are some basic entitlements that will drag our process of growth out for decades:

- I have the right to say, “No,” to God.
- I grow best when everything I want is in order; if those things are absent, I cannot grow.
- I have the right to express my feelings, especially if I determine I have been treated wrongly or rewarded inadequately.
- I have the right to use my time in whatever way I choose.

What would happen if the Lord’s plan was to build love and compassion for others, a mouth that speaks blessing at all times, and infuse initiation and discipline into our lives? This takes perseverance and character that is built out of training and testing.

What basic entitlements stunt our growth or eliminate it altogether?

- I have the right to choose who I will talk to.
- I have the right to be critical.
- I need to have a position that is visible.
- When it comes to self-discipline, I choose when to reward myself.
- I will do what is asked of me as soon as other conditions are met.

It is easy to see how just a few entitlements stop growth. Do you see how they eliminate our ability to move into God’s calling? Does this illuminate what Jesus said in Matthew 10?

What characterizes the life of those living according to entitlements?

1. Refusal to change in certain areas of life. (We might consider these people to be “stiff-necked” or unwilling to bend. Keep in mind that resistance in a few simple areas can shut down growth, completely.)

2. Jesus is seated on the throne, but seated right next to Him is “the self” pressing for its own way.

3. The presence of rebellion virtually ensures that self-deception and confusion will also be present. Some common traits of self-deception include:
   - Searching for ways or people to reinforce our negative behaviors or disobedience.
   - Hardening of the heart as we lose sight of the holiness of God.
   - Isolation and independence (breeding grounds for self-deception).
   - Willingness to let others take the blame for our shortcomings.

The next section will help to practically identify specific areas of entitlements that could hinder our growth in Christ. It takes a flint-like resolution to overcome entitlements, and that is what the next phase is all about!
1 John 5:4 (NKJV)  For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV)  Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21 (NKJV)
He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches:
To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.
He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.
And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.
He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

This phase can best be described as “aggressively breaking patterns.” In this phase, all known entitlements are actively surrendered to Jesus, and any blind spots are sought after aggressively. We want to focus on quickly destroying all patterns that are built on entitlements.

We want to aggressively break patterns and be characterized by:
- A foundational desire to please God. Christ is on the throne.
- Living intentionally to please God.
- We are teachable and open to correction.

- We have an ability to recover and move on after stumbling. “I will not give up on breaking this pattern.”
- A firm biblical understanding of and submission to authority.
- Brokenness that enables us to recognize and genuinely confess sin.
- Refusal to protest or claim innocence about areas of sin.

Principles that must be in place to break patterns:
- Clear understanding of how deeply we are committed to our entitlements. Revelation is needed to expose the sin(s) behind each entitlement.
- Realization that we do not just fall out of patterns; we must walk out of them deliberately.
- Recognition that sin patterns reinforce other sin patterns.
- There is no room for “special circumstances” or negotiation.
PRACTICAL STEPS TO HELP US OVERCOME ENTITLEMENTS

This next section is simply a “repentance catalyst.” It is meant to draw our attention to entitlements we may never have thought of otherwise. Obviously, the Spirit of God is our ultimate “repentance catalyst,” but use this practical tool to help in the process. This is where we get to act! This is where we get to put into practice the actual process of overcoming . . .

[THE HEART OF THE OVERCOMER]

Philippians 2:5-8 (NKJV) Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

A bond servant [doulos in greek “doo-los”] is one who gives himself up to another’s will, whose service is used by Christ to extend and advance His cause among men—one devoted to another to the disregard of one’s own interests. 3 Jesus considered Himself “of no reputation” and poured Himself out for us. He had no entitlements. We are called to do the same. We are to lay down our entitlements and the actions formed from them in order to live as Christ did.

Our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Though He was God, He did not demand and cling to His rights as God. He made Himself nothing; He took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form He obediently humbled Himself even further by dying a criminal’s death on a cross.

We are only “owed” one thing in this life: death. When we consider this truth, all of our rights are trashed. Everything we have been given is a gift from God. We are entitled to nothing. And so as we go after breaking entitlement patterns, we must come with an attitude of humility and thanksgiving. Our salvation is the gift of all gifts! We must not be concerned with our version of “fairness,” but with obeying God. All else leads to bitterness, struggles, and discontentment.

We can be deceived into believing it will always take huge amounts of prayer to break these patterns. In fact, we need only to receive the revelation, come up with some action steps, and then break the back of the entitlement. ACTION is the key to breaking these patterns.

Before we begin to identify entitlements and exceptions in the next sections we must, humble ourself before the Lord and ask Him for revelation on how these play out in our lives. We need to tell Him that we will attack these areas with all our strength. To do this, we need to move into a disposition of repentance, actively seeking to turn back to the Lord. As we go through these lists, remember the focus is not on checking boxes, but about our desire to run after Christ wholeheartedly.
[12 KEY ENTITLEMENTS]

Use the following 12 categories to help identify entitlements and “rights” in your own life.
This is not a comprehensive list, but a good overview.

1. **Time**
The entitlement of time addresses any “right” to control circumstances that dictate when things happen. This entitlement would say things need to happen according to “my” timetable—when it is convenient. This directly conflicts with the Lord’s desire for us to relinquish our time completely to Him. “All of me for the sake of others” is the heart cry of a servant.

2. **Comforts**
Comfort entitlements are all about the flesh. They are things that we want desperately but do not necessarily need. They can include certain types of food, entertainment, material goods, etc. The key is to identify the confusion between what we “need” and what we “want” for our own comfort and ease.

3. **Appearance**
Appearance entitlements are rights we have to looking a certain way. Once we physically look a certain way or have certain clothes, then we can move forward. The focus is on the outward approval of people, rather than from the Spirit of God. This entitlement can produce many excuses for childish spending behaviors.

4. **Personal Attention and Recognition**
At its root, this entitlement says, “Look at what I’ve done, and pat me on the back.” This entitlement demands that others notice my service, and acknowledge that I am wonderful for doing my job. I become angry when my acts of service are not acknowledged by anyone.

5. **Money**
Money entitlements create great expectations of a certain standard of living, often based upon social standing and a false identity. (I minister to businessmen; therefore I must have this kind of car or house.) Needs take a back seat to wants (closely tied to comfort entitlements).

6. **Service**
Picking and choosing whether or not to serve, and the where and how of service. This is not based on the Lord’s direction, but on one’s own likes or dislikes. It puts limits on what the Lord can ask of us. This entitlement keeps us from being flexible and filled with joy in service. Instead, we say, “I have a certain job description, and that’s not my job.”

7. **Inquiring of the Lord**
Making decisions based on our own understanding rather than asking the Lord. We are essentially saying we do not want to know what the Lord will say. “I know we need a new car, because ours is old, so I will buy a new one. I don’t need to ask the Lord about that.” In truth, we are afraid that He will tell us to wait or to forget it. So we hold onto the wheel in certain areas and are simply not asking the Lord. It is a form of rebellion that limits our freedom, restricting Christ’s lordship.

8. **Energy and Stamina**
This entitlement is a refusal to obey the Lord if it falls outside our perceived physical or emotional limitations. So if the Lord asks us to do something when we are tired or sick, we automatically exempt ourselves from obedience. This entitlement asserts that we can only operate when we are at “our best.” We do not want to have to strain and overcome feelings of fatigue because it is easier not to. The Lord, however, enables the willing person, whether or not they are “at their best.” This entitlement puts the flesh squarely in front of the Spirit.

9. **Perfection from others**
When our obedience depends upon the obedience of others, we have fallen for the trap of another entitlement. Waiting for others to perform perfectly, before we will do our part, is nothing more than rebellion. An example could be “I will keep the house clean as soon as you stop being such a slob.”

10. **Selective Obedience**
This is holding rights to whom we will respond to. This is selective obedience based upon who is asking. If a favorite pastor asks us to do something, we will gladly do it. However, if a spouse or “lower level” leader asks something of us we then get to decide if we feel like doing it. This directly conflicts with the scriptural mandate to consider others better than ourselves.

11. **Emotions**
“But this is how I feel!” This entitlement sees emotion as a legitimate defense against obedience. Emotion typically prevents us from repenting of sin because we “feel” something that makes sin acceptable. “I know I am angry right now, but it is because I feel so unloved by you!” Emotions are not an excuse for sin. Just because we feel a certain emotion does not give us the right to sin.

12. **Reward**
This entitlement asks for compensation for obedience, as if simple obedience was beyond the call of duty. Rewards come in many forms—praise, thank-you notes, gifts, food, vacation, extra sleep time—and the demand for such rewards is emphasized in our culture. But the Lord cannot ask us to do things based on our need for a thank you. There is only one heartfelt response: “Sir, yes, sir!”
Here is a sample prayer of repentance as the Lord reveals Himself:

**REPENT:** Lord Jesus, I ask your forgiveness for the sin of holding on to __________________________ (name the specific entitlement). I repent of all the ways I have allowed this entitlement to be a part of my life. I repent of every way I have used it as an excuse to resist you, Lord. I repent of my anger toward you and others when I felt this entitlement was not met. I see how it has affected me and others around me. I name this entitlement (as well as the resistance and anger that rose up out of it) as sin. As you laid down all of your rights, so I lay down my rights.

**RECEIVE:** Jesus, I now receive your forgiveness for the sin of holding on to this entitlement. I accept your offering of cleansing from this sin, and I agree with you.

**REBUKE:** In Jesus’ Name, I rebuke every deceiving spirit that would lie to me and say the Lord is not good and faithful toward me. I rebuke every spirit of anger, resistance, self-pity, and false comfort that has been given ground by my holding on to this entitlement. I rebuke you with the authority of Jesus Christ, and I command you to flee right now.

**REPLACE:** Seek the Lord about ways to replace each entitlement with an action or attitude that will help you to walk in the opposite spirit of the entitlement.

[“RIGHTS” I HOLD THAT NEED TO BE RELINQUISHED]

- Right to know what will happen and maintain control when I feel overwhelmed.
- Right to keep my property to myself and not let others borrow my things.
- Right to excuse myself because: I’m too tired; I don’t feel well; I have too much to do; I don’t have what I need to do a good job; I’m not in the mood; I’m not ready yet; I’m not gifted in that area; I have too many responsibilities; I’m not a leader.
- Right to hold a visible position.
- Right to receive recognition for what I am supposed to do.
- Right to be bitter when my efforts are not recognized.
- Right to get along with and be loved by everyone.
- Right to protect myself from others getting into my personal life and confronting me on sin issues.
- Right to indulge in complaining, insubordination, backbiting, and gossip when I am at work.
- Right to try to engineer change in others’ lives—making them in my own image—rather than wait for the Lord to reveal and implement His plans.
- Right to protect myself and live my life independently.
- Right to hold on to sorrow.
- Right to be ashamed about certain things.
- Right to understand. Things must be very clear or spelled out (instead of moving in faith).
- Right to remain in one place longer than necessary (form of comfort: “I am not ready”).
- Right to know what others know.
- Right to be correct—“Don’t tell me that I am wrong” (defensiveness).
- Right to do it my way.
- Right to be angry about the process (throw hands down and say, “I wasn’t finished yet”).
- Right to control timing.
- Right to remain hidden.
- Right to avoid responsibility regarding a subject by saying, “I don’t know.”
- Right to be paid in full—receive a reward for what I do.
- Right to be fearful about certain things.
- Right to be obedient without suffering.
- Right to maintain a certain distance in relationships.
- Right to decide for myself (control the decision, be in charge).
- Right to say, “No,” to the Lord when He gives conviction or direction.
- Right to shrink back and say, “That is not who I am” (hiding from responsibility).
- Right to believe in some people but not others.
- Right to be complacent.
- Right to be critical or superior of others.
- Right to be indirect and not confront.
Right to take it easy (comfort).
Right to explain myself; make a defense.
Right to have certain conditions met before I follow through; “I won’t do that until . . .”
Right to position/status/title/role.
Right to have people think highly of me or respect me.
Right to have the best of everything (comfort); right to a certain standard of living.
Right to receive special treatment.
Right to be understood completely.
Right to be completely prepared for everything.
Right to move at my own pace (control).
Right to use gifts as I think they should be used. “I have a college degree; thus, I have a right to a college degree job.”
Right to be anonymous and hidden; refuse responsibility.
Right to declare certain things as off limits for me; setting my own boundaries with such things as relationships and use of my time.
Right to be carefully handled; treated gently.
Right to my feelings and emotions (fear, anxiety).
Right to have my demands met: “If you ask me to do this, then you must give me what I want first.”
Right to dominate.
Right to select whether, how, when, and who I will serve.
Right to shift blame when something goes wrong.
Right to withhold and give up on certain things due to anger.
Right to insist. Hit my head against a wall: “But I AM doing this right!” (This is defensiveness.)
Right to know more about something than someone else.
Right to lead but not to be led.
Right to say what I feel.
Right to have what others have (seat of jealousy).
Right to retribution. Not expressed overtly (“I will not talk to you”), but subtly or secretly wanting others to “get what they deserve;” giving a cold look; ignoring; withholding; devising some sophisticated punishment.
Right to be treated fairly at all times (according to what I believe is fair).
Right to be loved the way I need to be loved. “Did you read my need list?”
Right to have certain people initiate with me.
Right to control: “You are about to push me over the edge.”
Right to get what I ask for.
Right to time by myself; time for me; time to be pampered.
Right to decide without seeking the Lord.
Right to my emotions (self-pity, etc.).
Right to choose who I will serve.
Right to my time: to be lazy, to not join in, to put a fence or boundaries around myself.
Right to be with a perfect man or woman.
Right to be self-focused (always think about myself and activities that revolve around me).
Right to be rewarded for sacrifice: “I have given up certain things, so I have a right to be blessed with certain things.”
Right for my opinions to be heard.
Right to do what I want to do, even at the expense of other people.
Right for downfalls and mistakes to be excused, because I am working so hard.
Right for breakthrough to happen according to my timetable.
Right to be defensive about wounds and walk in immature patterns.
Right to reward myself by spending money.
Right to be encouraged in areas of breakthrough.
Right to be discontent with others’ development.
Right to be impatient.
Right to be bitter and resentful because of another’s resistance.
Right to be listened to even though I do not have proven character.
Right to complain and vent.
Right to have my sinful lifestyle be excused.
Right to be understood because of specific challenges in my life.
Right to rest. For example: a man who comes home from work and lies down; then wife comes home and does all the work.
Right to have unbelief regarding what the Lord has said about me.
Right to hesitate in leadership, in obedience, etc.
Right to be led by emotion.
Right to financial comfort.
Right to be supported and affirmed. Right to take offense when I am not supported.
Right to withdraw when I am uncomfortable.
Right to insecurity; I question and fear what leaders and authorities think of me.
Right to be called on, to have an inside track on what is happening.
Right to withhold blessing from others, unless they are directly under my influence or leadership.
Right to alter my convictions according to what others do (specifically others in leadership).
Right to allow anger to rise up against those in rebellion.
Right to control my finances and do what I want with money. I consult the Lord on some things, but not on everything.
Right to be served.
Right to be left alone and to close people out.
ENTITLEMENT PATTERNS

Our entitlements form actions and patterns in our lives that need to be broken. Here are some that might be active:

1. **Selective listening.**
   This pattern helps us to justify our decision not to repent because of past wounds or hurts. Commonly expressed as an, “I’ve already heard this,” attitude, it restricts others’ access to certain areas of my life. It may also seek to limit those areas in which I willingly permit the Lord to work.

   Examples of the selective listening pattern:
   - Refusing words of encouragement and love from others. “I need to prove that I deserve this love.”
   - Requiring others to meet a set of unrealistic expectations. “I’ll listen to you when you prove that you love me.”
   - Cherry picking. I believe I need only certain portions of a teaching or discipleship time.
   - Discounting. In response to a word of counsel or truth, I say, “Oh, I’ve already tried that.” If I am honest, I value my own experience above the truth of God.
   - Filtering. When given a corrective word and an encouraging word at the same time, I cling only to the encouraging word. I may regard the corrective word as unnecessary and set it aside.
   - Blocking. I react to past wounding by declaring certain areas of my life “off limits” to others.
   - Ignoring. Even though I ask for counsel, I refuse to act on the counsel given to me.
   - Screening. I may decide that I will receive counsel only from certain leader and from no one else.

2. **Victimization and self-pity.**
   This pattern emphasizes the hurts and wounds of the past over present-day victory. I get locked in this pattern and become moody, unpredictable, and shaken by the circumstances in my life.

   Examples of the victimization and self-pity pattern:
   - Hurts and wounds from the past overshadow present circumstances.
   - I can come unglued when given an assignment, a blessing, or an encouraging word.
   - Fall under condemnation at even the slightest word of correction:  “That’s true . . . I never do anything right.”
   - Absence of joy.
   - Assume rejection and lack of appreciation from peers and leaders.
   - Sink into self-pity when others do not initiate with me.
   - Wallow in negativity when something bad happens.
   - Focus on difficulty and likelihood of failure:  “It’s just so hard.”

3. **Inadequacy.**
   Patterns of inadequacy reinforce my belief that I do not “have what it takes.” These patterns are demonstrated in statements such as:
   - “I can’t do this, because of that.”
   - “I am critical of others who do things that I should be doing.”
   - “I really wouldn’t be of much help.”
   - “I’d like to do that, but…”
Remember Moses fighting with the Lord about his lack of eloquent speech and ability? Hebrews 11 tells us Moses was well-educated and had eloquent speech. The Lord is the one who equips us. He will always see to it that we are more than adequate for the work He asks us to do.

Each of us has our own list of what we “cannot” do. We work hard to avoid situations the Lord wants to use to train us. We can try to cover up our “cannot, will not” areas by being proud, competitive, or critical. People stuck in patterns of inadequacy usually have a list of ways that God has been unfair to them.

4. Control.
When we live in patterns of control, we say through our actions that we know better than God. Even though the Lord may be leading clearly in a certain direction, we are not convinced that He will take care of us, or that He has a workable plan. There are almost always more details than we are able to manage, so patterns of control frequently lead to exasperation.

Examples of the control pattern:
- I live in a constant time crunch; always busy; convinced there are not enough hours in a day to complete tasks.
- I am anxious and jumpy.
- I have a strong drive to know all of the details, or have a complete plan in place before taking action.
- I disagree with the Lord about the pace of things in my life, and the means by which He goes about His business.
- I micromanage finances.
- Anger or exasperation pop up when things do not go according to my plan.

5. Giving up.
“I’m through with fighting fear in my life. It shouldn’t be this hard.” How often—or how easily—do we give up on areas of sanctification in our lives? In this pattern we can think everything should go easily. (Thankfully, Jesus did not think this way!)

Examples of the pattern of giving up:
- I bail out if I do not feel like I am getting the recognition I deserve.
- I steer clear of things that require me to work hard, to invest my time, and to invest my energy.
- When a decision needs to be made, and discipline is required to finish a task, I turn away.
- I give up quickly if I do not connect with others, or if things do not “flow.”
- I set a course to move in a new direction (“I’m going to be the servant of all in my house”). A week goes by, and I get discouraged. I allow myself to fall into the deception that it is not worthwhile to press through, so I give up.
- I remove myself from relationships or situations if I feel that others are taking advantage of me. (This robs us of opportunities to be broken).
- I think I am “just” procrastinating when I have actually given up.
- I defend certain areas of my life against others looking too closely or challenging me on things I should (or should not) be doing. I think I have an excuse for giving up: “I have tried so hard on that area. You just don’t understand.” (The Lord is trying to show you that this is the exact area in which He wants to train you!)
IDENTIFYING EXCEPTIONS

Living in exceptions means that we believe that what applies to other people does not apply to us. Sometimes we act as if we have a “special arrangement” with the Lord excusing us from Biblical obedience. Christians who function as “exceptions” typically live frustrated lives and bear little fruit, often viewing others as the source of their failure. It is essential to understand, however, that the real issue is the obstruction of God’s authority. It is not a matter of more favorable circumstances (“If only I had better disciples;” “If only I had a better wife/husband;” “If only had a better teacher”) but a matter of obedience. Biblical obedience releases God’s authority in our lives, and hell cannot stop the Lord’s power.

This kind of rebellion is usually buried deep but flows with the power of an underground river. On the surface it may not look like rebellion, but the deception brought into play through “exception” is fully operational at the heart level.

The following characteristics give a good starting place to identify rebellion expressed through exception:

   a. Do I excuse myself from certain biblical standards?
      - Ignoring sins of the tongue: “I slip up from time to time, it is no big deal.”
      - Discounting biblical mandates by saying they do not apply to me.
      - Run biblical instructions through my own personal filters: “Well, that was for them . . . it doesn’t apply to me.”
      - Work ethic: “I already do so much, I don’t have to work a full day.”
   b. Do I feel I merit special treatment from others?
      - Can only be confronted at a perfect time and place.
      - Deserve favored treatment: “I work so hard, why can’t they just recognize that?”
      - If someone wrongs me they must treat me with “extra care.”

2. Living life as though I am more wounded than anyone else.
   - My circumstances are more difficult, so I always have an “out.”
   - I cannot maintain an outward focus because my life is full of more pain than others.
   - Continuing to live out circumstances of a trauma long after the trauma ends.
   - What I am going through allows me to vent, complain, criticize others, or be lax in the discipline of Christian living.
   - I may excuse myself from growing in Christ like others because they have more time and discipline than I do.
   - I can take offense because I have been wronged.
When people offend me, I have the right to refuse to serve them.

I can simmer for days, but others must forgive me immediately.

3. “Extenuating circumstances” do not allow me to obey.

I believe that my circumstances are so unique that I do not need to:

- Be outgoing and interested in others.
- Bless or encourage others.
- Demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit produced in a disciplined life.
- Take initiative.
- Stay committed; I will say I will be somewhere but back out at the last minute because “I am more busy” than everyone else.
- Let my “yes be yes and no be no.” My time integrity with others is loose, yet I hold others to a standard that I do not keep; I expect others to show up on time and do what they said they would, but I am an exception.

4. I use certain excuses to avoid giving my all for God.

- “I am just not that type of person.”
- “I don’t need accountability.”
- “I don’t need to be interdependent.”
- “I don’t need to serve.”
- “I am past being discipled.”

(ENDNOTES)

DIRECTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

The Rejection, Unforgiveness, and Anger worksheets are to be used together in the following ways:

1. Read and study the material on the stronghold of rejection.
2. Then read and study the material on the stronghold of unforgiveness.
3. Once both of these studies are complete, use the Anger Worksheet to actually walk through the practical steps of addressing those issues uncovered by reading and studying the material on rejection and unforgiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Romans 5:4b-5 (NLT) Our confident expectation of salvation will not disappoint us. For we know how dearly God loves us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

We belong to a society that values winning and worships winners. We live in a world system that chooses favorites and rejects seconds. We learn, nearly from birth, that the most popular, the most attractive, and the most talented are “in.” Those who do not fit that description (most of us) are “out.” And so, even before a specific action or attitude presents itself, the stage has been set for each of us to live life battling rejection.

Rejection is foundational to many strongholds, sins, and dysfunctions. This is because rejection affects our entire personality. It not only tears down an individual, but it infiltrates all relationships: marriage, family, ministry, work, and friends. The stage for rejection has already been set by the world system, which we know to be under the direction of Satan himself, the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10). We yearn for love and acceptance, but instead receive rejection. We learn to believe the lies forced on us about our own value, our own significance, and the love of God, who is our Heavenly Father.

However, if we are in Christ, we do not need to be held captive to the way the world thinks. We are not of this world (Ephesians 2:12-13; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11). We have not been rejected; we have been ACCEPTED (Romans 15:7). There is NOTHING that can separate us from the love of our Father (Romans 8:38-39). We must not agree with the lies of the world any longer! Instead, we must face those lies squarely, identify what they are and where they come from, and utterly destroy them with the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God.
ROOTS OF REJECTION

- Absentee fathers or mothers.
- Lack of bonding with parents.
- Parents’ divorce.
- Not being wanted as a child; “wrong” gender; blamed for your parent’s problems.
- Adoption.
- Competition with brothers and sisters.
- Various forms of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual).
- Parents’ addictions.
- Shame of a family member; because someone in your family did something it brought rejection from others. An alcoholic parent could be an example.
- Constant fighting or strife.
- Unjust discipline.
- Parents’ disinterest in a child’s activities.
- Various means and degrees of neglect/abandonment.
- Having or contributing toward an abortion.
- Mistreating another person.
- Addictions.
- Living with a physical defect or handicap.
- Discontent with one’s appearance.
- Sense of failure or inadequacy; lack of confidence in abilities.
- Infidelity of a spouse.
- Divorce.
- Breaking off of an engagement or other significant relationship.
- Loss of valued employment.
- Betrayal by a close friend.
- Unexpected, premature death of a loved one.
- Spiritual abuse, hurt, or betrayal in a church.

FRUITS OF REJECTION (emotional responses)

Check all the boxes that apply to you:

1. Nervousness.
   - I talk over others; interrupting. I fear not being heard or understood.
   - I experience nervous physical activity, including inability to rest without activity.
   - I am impatient with my personal growth and the growth of others.

2. Pursuing Comfort.
   - Lust.
   - Procrastination.
   - I delay taking responsibility. I delay discipline.
   - I live for “the weekend” or for sport.

3. Social Awkwardness
   - I am fearful and nervous in social situations.
   - I gravitate toward those who are shy or inadequate.
   - I communicate with others in guarded and general terms.
   - I leave times with others wishing I had spoken or behaved differently.

4. Inability to accept self.
   - I am constantly preoccupied and discouraged over my appearance.
   - I am discouraged over my personal weaknesses.
   - I am unable to fully appreciate what God has created me to be and do.
   - I either downplay or boast in my abilities.
   - I am unable to truly acknowledge or celebrate others’ victories.
   - I am jealous, and I envy the desirable qualities of others.
   - I am extremely hard on myself.
   - I become angry at the thought of past rejection, then blame myself.

5. Critical attitude toward others.
   - I do not fully trust others.
   - I hold others and their motivation suspect.
   - I am immediately skeptical of new people; they must prove themselves.
   - I focus on others’ weaknesses.
   - I have a “wait and see” attitude about others’ ability to change.

6. What is wrong with me?
   - I feel that there is something innately wrong with me.
   - I hate myself because of past rejection.
   - I must be what people say because I keep getting rejected.

7. Isolation.
   - I am not a “people person.”
   - I feel like I would be better off alone.
   - I have a strong desire to get time alone.
   - Interaction with others is stressful for me.
8. Loneliness.
- I experience sorrow and depression over being alone.
- I believe that no one will ever accept me for who I am.
- I fear that I will never have meaningful long-term relationships.

- I often say, “If I only had _____ then I would be ______.”
- I focus on material possessions for satisfaction.
- I search for satisfaction through others’ approval.
- I am concerned with position, or place in life.
- I feel if I tried harder, then people would accept me.
- I believe that if life was “perfect” then the sting of rejection would leave.

10. Self-Pity.
- I believe that I am not loved by anyone, even God.
- Everyone is disappointed with me, even God.
- I feel that I just can’t get it together.

11. Defensiveness.
- If others don’t like me that’s their problem.
- I blame others for my state of mind.
- I see correction as an attack, and react harshly.

- I react with apathy toward physical or verbal abuse.
- I feel like I can never do anything right, so why try?
- I feel like I have crossed the line; so what does it matter anymore?
- I am unable or refuse to have emotion.
- I give up on areas of personal holiness (drugs, drinking, sexual relationships).

RECOGNIZING REJECTION
- I usually interpret things that could be either positive or negative as negative.
- I receive what others say to me through a lens of rejection.
- I am assaulted with paralyzing thoughts such as, “I can’t do that!” “How would that appear to _______?” “What would _______ think?”
- I second-guess what I have said or done and I have negative thoughts about what others must think about me as a result.
- I find it difficult to freely reach out and exercise my spiritual gifts.
- I often try to do too much or go from activity to activity, job to job, or ministry to ministry, striving to earn favor and acceptance from God and/or others.
- I find it difficult to accept praise and encouragement freely from others or to demonstrate love and affection.
- I do not believe people when they pay me a compliment.
- I have a tendency to doubt, to question, or to mistrust authority.
- I tend to be skeptical and unbelieving.
- People could describe me as harsh.
- I struggle to control foul language and abusive speech, especially when I am angry.
- When confronted about something, my immediate reaction is defensive or even defiant.
- I do not share my testimony or the Gospel, with the unsaved.
- I am afraid that I, or my loved ones, have not been chosen by God for salvation.
- I need to control my family in order for them to be safe, to succeed, and so they will love and appreciate me.
- I am possessive in relationships.
- I have a low estimation of my own appearance, my abilities, and my adequacy to succeed in life and ministry.
- I am prone to depression.
- I am often fearful and anxious about things, such as how people regard me or my children, how my efforts (or another’s) will turn out, and how I will be provided for and protected, etc.
- I need to be needed, so I continually place myself in situations where I feel others cannot get along without my help, my presence, my abilities, my ministry, etc.
- I am inhibited in honestly sharing my deepest feelings with others, even with those who are close to me.
- I am afraid that if I am vulnerable with my wife, I will appear weak and lose my place of authority and respect in her eyes.
- I am afraid that if I am vulnerable with my husband, he will take advantage of me and exploit my weaknesses.
- I am both critical and envious at the same time toward others who are more confident, who are able to express themselves freely, or who have more friendships and opportunities than I think I do.
- I am competitive and ambitious. I think that if people will not love me at least they will admire me.
- I find comfort in isolation; others might consider me a “loner.”
FALSE REJECTION

The rejection issues noted prior have their roots in reality; the offenses that created the sense of rejection really did happen. Two forms of rejection that are not based in reality are perceived rejection and feared rejection. These are pure demonic lies that convince a person that rejection is present, or pending, when it is not. This can paralyze us in life, strip us of joy, and compel us to always be on guard against what others may be thinking.

GOD’S “COPING MECHANISM”

When we are faced with the fear of rejection, the temptation is to fall back on coping mechanisms we may have employed for most—if not all—of our lives. These can include anything we have learned to use or to do to comfort ourselves in the face of rejection or other hurts. We should recognize our coping mechanisms as false comforts. Like a placebo, they trick us into thinking we have dealt with the symptoms of our pain, when in truth, they do nothing to solve the problem.

Steps to take:

1. Grant forgiveness and extend blessings to people who have hurt or rejected you (real or perceived). Do the same toward situations and environments from which hurt and rejection continue to flow. Remember that Satan wants to stimulate bitterness, resentment, and anger in you. Our refusal to forgive becomes a cancer that defiles not only us, but also many around us. This is why the Scriptures repeatedly address the issue of granting forgiveness.

Matthew 6:12, 14-15 (NIV)  Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

2. Be confident of God’s great, unconditional and infinite love for you. God did not make a mistake when He made you! His great love is demonstrated through Jesus’ death on the cross and through His continual faithfulness and devotion to you. As you reject and demolish any strongholds and demonic lies of rejection, replace them with the truth of God’s great love for you.

1 John 3:1 (NIV)  How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

3. Live in these truths. This means acting on faith, not feelings! It means behaving lovingly and confidently even when we fear people will reject us: parents, friends, children, co-workers, neighbors, and church family. It means forgiving and moving forward, even if people do reject us.

1 John 4:15-18 (NIV)  If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.
WALKING IN THE TRUTH

To walk out of rejection you must immerse yourself in the truth of God’s word about who you really are. You need to think about how much He loves you, accepts you, and demonstrates His faithfulness to you. Do not accept the lies of the enemy, perhaps planted into your mind and reinforced since childhood, that you are unloved, unaccepted, unworthy, and rejected.

Speak these truths out loud from your heart:

- I will treat other people according to the truth of God’s word, not on the basis of my own fears, hurts, and insecurities. I will forgive, I will extend blessing, and I will freely love and accept others.
- I will offer encouragement, blessing, and affection to others.
- I will express my thoughts and feelings to others honestly, without fear of rejection.
- I will no longer resort to rebellion to express my anger over feeling rejected.
- I will no longer try to “do” for others so they will love and accept me. I will minister with my spiritual gifts according to the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.
- I will not fear weakness and vulnerability with my spouse. I will trust God to support me.
- I will not be critical of those who I feel have rejected me, or those who I regard as walking in greater freedom, acceptance, or confidence than me.
- I will form attitudes, initiate actions, and speak words that will comfort and encourage others.
- I will not seek comfort in self-pity or isolation.
- I will be myself, enjoying and becoming more comfortable with how God made me.
- I will share my faith in Jesus Christ whenever and with whomever, the Holy Spirit gives opportunity.

SCRIPTURES TO LIVE BY

Psalm 13:1, 5-6 (NIV)  How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has been so good to me.

Psalm 27:1, 10 (NIV) The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

Psalm 48:9 (NIV) Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.

Psalm 66:20 (NIV) Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!

Psalm 147:3 (NIV) He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Isaiah 41:9-10 (NIV) I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, “You are my servant;” I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 53:3-5 (NIV) He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 54:10 (NIV) “Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Lamentations 3:22 (NIV) Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Romans 5:8 (NIV) But God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will rejoice over you with singing.

Romans 8:38-39 (NIV) For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 1:4-6 (NIV) For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Ephesians 2:4-7 (NIV) But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:17b-19 (NIV) And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

1 Peter 2:4-7 (NIV) As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone …”

1 John 3:1 (NIV) How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 4:9-10 (NIV) This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

BREAKING INTO FREEDOM FROM REJECTION

In the past, when you were hurt or fearful, you gave in to your natural, self-defensive coping mechanisms instead of turning to the Lord to comfort and defend you. This was sin—and an open invitation to the enemy of our souls. The apostle Paul wrote that he had learned to “put no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3). Can you say the same? That is walking in freedom!

The opposite of depending on our own coping mechanisms (false comforts) is faith. Faith is believing God—that He is who He says He is, that He will do what He says He will do, and that you are who He says you are.

- He is sovereign.
- He is love.
- He is just.
- He is wise.
- He will comfort.
- He will defend.
- He will protect.
- He will provide.
- You are His much-loved child.
- You are filled with the Holy Spirit.
- You have the authority of Jesus Christ.
- You have nothing to fear.

DESTROYING FALSE COMFORT

When new (or old) hurts, insecurities, fears, and difficulties arise, do not succumb to an automatic reaction to turn back to old false comforts. Look at the attack through spiritual eyes, and see it for what it is. What is the enemy’s scheme? What false comfort am I tempted to seek? Do not forget:

- False comforts are thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors that help us cope with emotional pain. They are not based on truth, and are not of God’s Holy Spirit.
- False comforts can be material, emotional, physical, or spiritual.
- False comforts are really a form of idolatry (Isaiah 30:1-13; 31:1-9; 1 Corinthians 10:1-14; 1 John 5:18-21).
- When faced with temptation (such as fear of rejection), you will be presented with two options: 1) God’s comfort (requires faith, obedience, courage, and truth) or 2) false comfort (which is the most natural reaction).
- When you choose God’s comfort (i.e., forgiving and blessing), you operate with increased levels of faith, authority, and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Identify and grant forgiveness and blessing to any offender(s), real or perceived. This may take you all the way back to your childhood! The Holy Spirit will not overwhelm you; He will bring to mind only what you need for the moment.
DO NOT FORGET THESE:

☑ REPENT and ask forgiveness of any and all attitudes and actions associated with rejection.

☑ RECEIVE forgiveness from the Lord. Receive the infilling and empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Seek it and depend on it at all times; determine not to settle for false comforts! Receive the work that God has done and is doing in you (and live in it) in faith!

☑ REBUKE and renounce the lies and influences related to rejection.

☑ REPLACE lies with truth, confidence, and security in God’s love for you, continually renewing your mind with His word and in His spirit.

NOTES:
MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL . . .

Matthew 19:18-19 (NIV) Jesus replied, “Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,” and “love your neighbor as yourself.”

CHARACTERS OF SELF-HATRED

• Feelings of inner anger, frustration, and disgust with myself.
• Feeling that something is wrong with me.
• Feeling like I have been taken advantage of or violated.
• Leads to similar feelings (anger, frustration, disgust) toward others.

What does the New Testament say about anger and hatred?

Matthew 5:21-25 (NIV) You have heard that is was said to the people long ago, “Do not murder,” and “anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.” But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment . . . Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

The Amplified Bible translates the word “anger” in this passage as resentment, hatred, enmity, or bitterness of heart.

Matthew 5:22b (AMP) And whoever speaks contemptuously and insultingly to his brother shall be liable and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, “You cursed fool!” (‘You empty-headed idiot!’) shall be liable to and unable to escape the hell of fire.

RECOGNIZING SELF-HATRED

Check all the boxes that apply to you:

1. Self curses: Reliving past and present mistakes.
   - I have trouble distinguishing myself from my sin; my sin defines me as a person.
   - I live with a low level of pain and sorrow at all times because of things I have done in the past.
   - When I make a mistake or a poor judgment call, my mind churns with thoughts like, “What an idiot!” “That was a stupid thing to say...” “I should have known better.” I find it difficult to put it aside and move on.
   - Because of mistakes I have made in the past, I find myself locked down when it comes to making decisions; I fear it will be the wrong decision and will hurt more than help.

2. Form of self-loathing that applies to everything I have about myself.
   - I am very uncomfortable being the center of attention, and will do almost anything to avoid it.
When I look in the mirror, all I see are my flaws. I find it difficult to accept compliments. I disqualify and discount them in my head by saying, “They really do not mean it, because I know it’s not true.” I have difficulty seeing my gifts and strengths and do not believe that others would be blessed by them. I often feel as though I am a burden to others. I will not ask for help because I fear I might bother people. I am often silent in crowds because I feel like I am boring and do not make sense when I talk. At least people will think I am smart if I keep my mouth shut! I will not give myself away to others.

3. Self-blame: My present situation causes me to turn on myself.

I readily accept the blame for things with which I have had nothing to do with. I find myself apologizing often in conversations. After completing an assigned task or speaking out, I beat myself up with all the things I wish I had said. I replay situations over and over in my head. “Why did I say that?” “I failed to do what was asked of me,” or “I could have done it better.” Regret and shame reign uppermost in my thoughts. When someone unexpectedly wants to talk with me, I immediately suspect that I have done something wrong. I do not understand why people want to spend time with me.

4. Denial: Things I deny, defend, or hate about myself.

I am very hard on myself and hold myself to high standards. I do this to others as well. I have a hard time forgiving myself and others. I quickly take offense for myself, or for others when I see them get hurt. I take everything said personally as criticism, rejection, or failing, even though it usually is not directed toward me. I have trouble seeing myself inside the circle and belonging. I see myself outside the circle, not wanted or needed. If I am invited in, I tend to resist until I am ‘persuaded’ that others really want me. I find myself blaming others and wallowing in victimization and self-pity. I often look for hidden motives in what people say and do; I find it easy to think about things in a paranoid manner. For example, “What do they really mean? What are they really trying to say?” When I am around people, I find myself in a strange tension between wanting to hide in a corner while also desiring acceptance and recognition.

5. Self-destructive: Hatred expressed inwardly or outwardly.

I often think everyone would be better off and there would not be any problems if I were not here. If my sin is exposed, I feel as though I will disintegrate, so I have to keep it together. “I already hate what is inside me. And if they know it, they will hate me too.” It is too painful to look honestly at myself; instead I will focus on finding faults, blaming and criticizing. It is hard for me to have grace on others (to give them the benefit of the doubt). “Won’t someone love me?” “I’ll do anything to get attention.” “If I can’t get someone to love me, I might as well disappear.” Thoughts like these plague me. No one will accept me, so I’ll reject them before they reject me. It is safer to withdraw into isolation than be around people. But once I am with people, my brain goes around and around in endless, negative self-talk, replaying conversations, and beating myself up. I end up defeated, confused, depressed, and angry at myself and others. Even though I know what I am doing to myself is not healthy, I still persist with eating disorders, addictions, sleep deprivation, etc. To tell the truth, I really do not care about myself.


I can believe God’s promises for others, but not for me. When I read the Bible, I focus on God’s warnings and judgment rather than on His grace, mercy, compassion, and love. When I think of God looking at me, I think He is frowning and frustrated with me. I find it difficult to believe He really has used, is using, or will use me in advancing His kingdom here on earth.
Heavenly Father, I ask your forgiveness for my sin of hating what you love—namely, me! Lord Jesus, I ask forgiveness for sinning against you, and saying in my heart that what you did on the cross for me was not enough. I have crossed my arms and refused to receive the love you shower on me every minute of every day. I ask forgiveness for comforting myself with the lies of darkness and death instead of running to you and allowing you to breathe your life of love and light into my life. Holy Spirit, I confess my sin against you. I have grieved you by closing my ears to your voice and running my life according to my emotions rather than trusting myself to your wisdom and limitless power. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked and for any other sins that come to mind in association with each category.) I also ask forgiveness for the following ways self-hatred has played out in my life through my emotions and actions: _______________________. Now I turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of self-hatred in my life.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I rebuke every effort of the enemy to create a stronghold of self-hatred in my life. I rebuke every spirit that was given a foothold in my life due to the stronghold of self-hatred. I renounce the lie that I am unlovable.

Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your forgiveness, and I receive it fully. Lord, I ask that through the power of Your Spirit’s work in me, grace and peace will be mine in abundance through my knowledge of You and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your divine power has given me everything I need for life and godliness. I rejoice in the One who called me by His glory and goodness.

Lord, renew my heart, mind, emotions, and will through the truth of your Word and empowerment of your Holy Spirit. I replace the spirit of self-hatred and all of its symptoms with your Holy Spirit of power, love and discipline. Let the fruit of Your Spirit be evidenced in the relationships in my life by the following new behaviors:______________________________.

Meditate on the Scriptures listed below, inserting your name into each verse. Then ask the following questions:

1. How much love does God have?
2. How does God feel about me?
3. What is God doing for me right now?
4. What are God’s promises for me in the future?
5. How is God describing me in His Word?
6. What is God instructing me to do?

Write out the answers, including the text of the appropriate verses.

- John 3:16
- Psalm 36:5-10
- Psalm 37:18-40
- Psalm 42:8
- Psalm 138:1-8
- 1 John 4:7-21
- Ephesians 3:14-19
- Colossians 3:12-17
- Romans 8:1-19
- 1 Corinthians 13

In light of these truths, ponder these questions:

1. In what or who do I put my trust and hope?
2. Whose identity do I bear? How do I know this?
3. How important am I to God?
RECOGNIZING SHAME

1. **Shame is not from God.**
   Psalm 25:3 (NIV)  *No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame . . .*

2. **Shame is a result of sin.**
   Proverbs 13:18 (NIV)  *He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame.*

   Jeremiah 8:9 (NIV)  *The wise will be put to shame . . . since they have rejected the word of the Lord.*

   Genesis 3:6-7 (NLT)  *The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise!*  *So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too. At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves.*

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Check all the boxes that apply to you:

1. **Shame causes us to develop shallow and guarded relationships.**
   - I am afraid others might find out about this sin.
   - I have trouble forming trusting relationships because I guard against getting “too personal” with others.
   - I am very fearful that others can see my ugly sin; this causes me to fear getting close to anyone, including God.
   - I live in constant fear that others will reject me if this sin is discovered.

2. **Shame results in a continuous battle with self-condemnation.**
   - I struggle with inferiority.
   - I tend to think negatively about myself, and I battle negative thoughts about myself continuously.
   - When I compare myself to others, I almost always “lose” in the comparison.
   - I beat myself up continually because of my past.

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**+definition+**

**SHAME:**
[noun] 1a: a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety. 1b: the susceptibility to such emotion. 2: a condition of humiliating disgrace or disrepute. 1
3. Shame brings deep feelings of guilt and unworthiness; this, in turn, leads to self-hatred.
   - I feel dirty, ruined; like damaged goods.
   - I have trouble finding intimacy with God because I feel so far from Him.
   - I seem unable to forgive myself.
   - I feel that I could never marry a godly man/woman because he/she might find out about this sin and reject me.
   - I do not believe I can lead others because this sin has made me unworthy.
   - I hate myself. I do not blame others for not wanting to be friends with me; I do not deserve their friendship anyway.

4. Shame brings constant reminders of this sin.
   - I cannot stop thinking about this!
   - I constantly fight off disturbing memories of my shameful experience(s).
   - I have disturbing dreams and visions about this sin.

5. Shame robs us of the joy of forgiveness and blocks the Lord's healing.
   - I do not feel I can be forgiven for this sin.
   - It is hard for me to believe that God can forgive even this.
   - I cannot tell anyone about this, including God, because it is so shameful.

6. Deceptions and lies.
   - No one else has ever committed a sin as bad as this one.
   - I cannot tell anyone about this sin because they will reject me.
   - I will never be clean.
   - I will never be able to have deep relationships with others because I must make sure they never learn the truth about this sin.
   - This pattern of shame will always be a part of my life. There will never be lasting victory. I will fall right back into this pattern.

AREAS OF SHAME
(Some areas where shame can be hidden.)

1. Regret.
   - “I can’t believe I did that.”
   - My mind is consumed with a specific event.
   - I cringe at the thought of a specific act.

2. Failure.
   - Failed jobs.
   - Failed marriage(s).
   - Failed entrepreneurial work.
   - Failed education.
   - Failed relationship with children.
   - Failed relationship with parents.

3. Personal embarrassment over:
   - Social standing.
   - Personal state of my children.
   - What I have achieved in life.
   - The behavior of my spouse.
   - Watching alcoholic or drug addicted parents embarrass themselves.
   - Where I have come from; my background.

4. Defeat over:
   - Hidden addiction(s).
   - Unconfessed sin(s).
   - A stronghold I do not have victory over.
   - Unconfessed affair(s).
   - Unconfessed abortion(s).
   - Unconfessed abuse(s) of which you were either a perpetrator or a victim.

GODLY SORROW VS. REGRET

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV) Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

REMEMBER:

Condemnation is not of God. It is a tool of the enemy. It says, “There is no light at the end of the tunnel.” Condemnation, or “worldly sorrow,” leads to regret and death.

Godly sorrow or remorse, leads to repentance and life. It is the instruction and correction of a loving father who knows what is best for you.
SHAME RELATED TO SINFUL CHOICES

1. Drug use.
The Greek word pharmakeia (/far·mak·i·ah/) has three biblical occurrences. The King James Version translates it as “sorcery” twice, and “witchcraft” once: 1. The use or the administering of drugs. 2. Poisoning. 3. Sorcery, magical arts; often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it. ²

Steps to take:
1. Ask the Lord to forgive you for each type of drug you have used. It is important to speak the name of the drug out loud so that all the hidden shame can be eradicated.
2. Ask the Lord to forgive the activities that you participated in while you were on each drug.
3. If you sold drugs, ask the Lord to forgive you.
4. Ask the Lord to forgive you for witchcraft.
5. Receive His forgiveness.

2. Rebellion and witchcraft.
The Scriptures reveal that there is a close association between rebellion and witchcraft. The following verse demonstrates this for us:

1 Samuel 15:23 (NKJV) For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry

Rebellion: Rebellion is defined as “opposition to one in authority or dominance.” ³ Rebellion can exist in attitudes, words, and actions and can manifest in diverse forms. It can be aggressive or passive; it is expressed through defiance and/or disobedience; it is demonstrated through insubordination or insurrection.

God says that it is as witchcraft because Satan’s kingdom is built on rebellion. He led an insurrection against God and His authority, but it was a colossal failure. Satan and the angels who followed him were overcome and sentenced to intense eternal judgment.

Sometimes extremely shameful activity comes out of the sin of rebellion. Lives are filled with regret, guilt, self-hatred, sorrow, and shame as a result of rebellious choices.

Formal Witchcraft: Formal witchcraft is an increasing part of the culture in Western Civilization. There is a growing interest in witchcraft related books, movies, and games. But even beyond these forms of “entertainment” there is a larger population participating in more sophisticated activities such as Wicca, or even the deep witchcraft activities of rituals, incantations, hexes, etc. Witchcraft has long been practiced openly in the African, Asian, and Latin American cultures.

Many lives are destroyed and, as a result, many individuals will war with shame from involvement in formal witchcraft.

Witchcraft includes direct experimentation and involvement in the occult, including participation in false religions, demonic forms of entertainment including horror movies, demonic games (and the rituals associated with them), and demonic video/computer games.

Deuteronomy 18:9-14 (NIV) When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so.

Romans 16:19 (NLT) But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to see clearly what is right and to stay innocent of any wrong.
Steps to take:
1. Ask the Lord to forgive you for the sin of rebellion and witchcraft.
2. Ask the Lord to forgive you for each specific activity in which you participated.
3. Renounce all curses/words that agreed with Satan’s kingdom.
4. Remove accursed objects you have been associated with:
   2 Corinthians 6:17 (NIV) “Therefore come out from them and be separate,” says the Lord. “Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”
   Deuteronomy 7:25-26 (NASB) The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it come under the ban; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is something banned.

Steps to take:
   a. Throw away or destroy the objects: games, music, articles, books, movies, etc., that are in agreement with Satan’s kingdom.
   b. Ask the Lord to forgive all idolatry and sever all curses associated with the item. Sever all words that you may have sung to music that was in agreement with Satan’s kingdom (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

3. Sexual Sin
   Because sexual sin affects our own body, you open yourself up to shame and self condemnation. It is common to have a difficult time forgiving yourself for sexual sin. Secret habits and or addictions are just that—secret. These forms are designed by the enemy to not only satisfy lusts, but to create shameful isolation.

   James 5:16 (NIV) Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
   1 Corinthians 6:14-20 (NIV) The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who unites himself

Areas of sexual sin to ask forgiveness for:
1. Fornication (sex prior to marriage).
2. Pornography.
3. Childhood experimentation (acts that were done while growing up).
4. Fantasy.
5. Any other acts of sexual sin.
6. Sever all soul ties with any person that you had sex with prior to marriage. (Soul ties are referenced in the Anger worksheet in the homework section.)

Note: Shame will keep its hold on us as long as we are afraid to specifically name the sins that brought shame. Before proceeding through the 4 R’s, confess each area to one person. Do not hold anything back. Make sure men confess to men and women confess to women. Because self-hatred is often a part of shame, ask God’s forgiveness for self-hatred. When you have taken these steps, move on to the 4-R’s. (Remember, the deeper the repentance, the greater the freedom!)

WALKING IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT

☐ Meditate on the promises of God about perfect forgiveness. This will weaken the lies that accuse you of being “unclean.” They will be a source of comfort, as well as a reminder of your true standing before the Lord.

☐ Set your sights high: You are worthy of deep and lasting relationships, including a healthy marriage to a wonderful man/woman of God!
**REPENT**

Lord Jesus, I ask for your forgiveness for shame. I repent of all the ways I have allowed shame to be a part of my life. I see how it has affected me and others around me. I name it as sin. Shame is not from you! (Go back through the boxes you checked and ask God to forgive you in each area.)

**RECEIVE**

Lord Jesus, I now receive your forgiveness for carrying shame. I accept your offering of cleansing from this sin and I say that I am forgiven! I no longer resist Your healing; instead, I choose to accept it freely.

**REBUKE**

I rebuke you, Satan, for attacking me with thoughts of shame, disgrace, and unworthiness! I come against you by the authority of Jesus Christ, and I command you to flee right now! You are a liar, and I will no longer listen to you and your deceptions about me! According to the Word of God, I put you under my feet right now and I crush you and the influence you have had in my life.

**REPLACE**

I replace the deception of the enemy with the truth of Scripture. I make these declarations based on the Word of God with zeal!

- “I, who trust in Him, will never be put to shame” (Romans 9:33).
- “My hope is in You so I will never be put to shame” (Psalm 25:3).
- “If I humble myself and pray and seek Your face and turn from my wicked ways, then You will hear from heaven and will forgive my sin and will heal me” (2 Chronicles 7:14).
- “I look to You and I am radiant; my face is never covered with shame” (Psalm 34:5).
- “You will give me a new heart and put a new spirit in me; You will remove my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).
- “Therefore there is now no condemnation for me, for I am in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).
- “I will praise the name of the Lord my God, who has worked wonders for me; never again will I be ashamed” (Joel 2:26).
- “I am God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for me to do” (Ephesians 2:10).
- “I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins” (Colossians 1:14).

**NOTES:**

Unbelief seems harmless enough to most Christians. It is just an innocent flaw—right? We consider this sin to be more of a matter of practicality, caution, or prudence. In fact, unbelief fearfully, stubbornly, and rebelliously doubts the Word, work, and the character of God. It expresses those doubts in both word and action. It asserts that we have a better gauge on reality than God does. It gives preeminence to our own assumptions, presuppositions, prejudices, and fears.

Consider some of the characteristics of unbelief:

- Decides what God can and cannot do, what He will or will not do, and how He does or does not operate.
- Finds its own methods for accomplishing God's business, both personally and corporately.
- Looks inward instead of upward. As Jim Cymbala writes in *Fresh Faith*, “Unbelief talks to itself instead of talking to God.”

Rather than seeking the Lord and acting in faith according to His character and promises, we depend on our own understanding, our own methods, and our own strength for life and ministry. This tendency toward unbelief often is rooted in fear, pride, rebellion, or other sin areas:

- When motivated by fear, unbelief may manifest itself in self-protective coping mechanisms, similar to those encountered when dealing with insecurity and inferiority.
- When stemming from pride or rebellion, unbelief can be masked as realism, intellectualism, or practicality.
- More often than not, unbelief is cloaked in a critical, religious spirit, as in the case of the Pharisees in Jesus’ day.

Even though it may be deeply hidden, unbelief never goes unseen or unnoticed. The scriptures make it clear that God counts unbelief as a grave sin, and He deals with it forcefully.

Large faith believes God—and acts accordingly! Large faith renders nothing impossible with God, and has the potential to move mountains, Jesus said. Without it, as we are reminded in Hebrews 11:6, it is absolutely impossible to please God.

- Unbelief fears God doesn’t—FAITH BELIEVES GOD DOES!
- Unbelief fears God can’t—FAITH BELIEVES GOD CAN!
- Unbelief fears God won’t—FAITH BELIEVES GOD WILL!

**FRUITS OF UNBELIEF**

- Obstructs God’s presence and power in our lives.
- Opens the door to taking offense, especially toward God, and many times toward those who are living in obedience to God.
- Nurtures a root of skepticism.
• Hinders prayer.
• Leads to instability.
• Feeds a critical attitude.
• Desensitizes God’s people to the Holy Spirit, and to spiritual things.
• Poisons others.
• Fosters arrogance and pride.
• Undercuts people’s regard for God’s Word and His character.
• Holds up my own standard as the correct standard, even placing it ahead of the Lord’s standard.
• Brings discouragement to others, and dampens their faith.
• Incurs God’s anger and disfavor.
• Hinders the release and the activity of the Holy Spirit.

RECOGNIZING UNBELIEF

I find myself being disappointed—even offended—that God doesn’t seem to work as I believe He should, or to answer my prayers in the way I’d like.

When I hear of others’ experiences of God’s presence, power, or answered prayer, I am skeptical. My usual first reaction is to try to analyze or disprove their claim.

I try to pass off a critical spirit as being a Berean spirit (“spiritually discerning” and “protecting”).

I am critical of the direction and methods of church and ministry leaders.

I tend to be suspicious of others.

I wonder why the Holy Spirit doesn’t seem to talk to me or use me as powerfully as He uses others.

I doubt that God really speaks to or uses others as they claim, because I don’t see Him speaking to me or using me in those ways.

I tend to be self-sufficient and independent from others. If I’m honest about it, I tend to be self-sufficient and independent from God.

I first perceive people and situations as “impossible,” rather than “possible with God.”

I am not confident that I have spiritual authority through Jesus Christ.

I am not motivated to pray consistently, and I have little interest in intercessory or spiritual warfare prayer.

Prayer is usually a last resort for me. I try to figure things out or work them out for myself first. My actions would indicate I believe that God helps those who help themselves.

I succumb to habitual behaviors and addictions (coping mechanisms) to comfort me when I feel discouraged, afraid, hopeless, hurt, etc.

I think my situation, my sins, my fears, my marriage, my spiritual life, my ________________ (you fill in the blank!) will never change.

I panic when I receive bad or distressing news, or even the suggestion that something bad or distressing may occur.

I tend to be worried, fearful, and anxious about many things.

I fear that my children, or other family members, will never be saved.

I try to control people, situations, and even God, because I am afraid to let go and trust Him to care for them, to lead them, to protect them, to save them, etc.

I am skeptical of the present-day supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

I fear taking the risk of praying and ministering boldly with others in areas like healing or spiritual freedom.

I fear stepping out in faith in response to confirmed revelation God has given to me or to others in the body of Christ.

Visible circumstances have a stronger influence on me than do the written Word, spoken words, or the character of God.

SCRIPTURES ABOUT UNBELIEF AND FAITH

Psalm 78:19-22 (NIV) They spoke against God, saying, “Can God spread a table in the desert? When he struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly. But can he also give us food? Can he supply meat for his people?” When the Lord heard them, he was very angry; his fire broke out against Jacob, and his wrath rose against Israel, for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance.

Psalm 106:21-26 (NIV) They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. So he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them. Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise. They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the Lord. So he swore to them with uplifted hand that he would make them fall in the desert.”

Matthew 6:28-34 (NIV) “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall
we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matthew 8:5-10 (NIV) When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering.” Jesus said to him, “I will go and heal him.” The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, “I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.”

Matthew 13:58 (NIV) And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Matthew 21:22 (NIV) “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

Mark 16:12-14 (NIV) Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either. Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

Luke 18:8 (NIV) “However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Luke 24:10-12a (NIV) It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb.

John 14:12 (NIV) I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Romans 1:17 (NIV) For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Romans 4:18-21, Galatians 3:9 (NIV) Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised (and) those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (NIV) My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV) We live by faith, not by sight.

Galatians 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 5:6 (NIV) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Ephesians 6:13,16 (NIV) Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. . . . take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Hebrews 3:12 (NIV) See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV) Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

James 1:6-8 (NIV) But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.

REPENTING OF UNBELIEF AND WALKING IN FAITH

✓ I will renounce fear and doubt, then replace it with faith and confidence in the Word, the character, and the power of God.
✓ I will not live only by what I see and understand with my natural senses; I will live according to the Word and the revealed promises of God.
✓ I will always seek to honor Him and not to dishonor Him or those who seek to walk in obedience and in large faith.
I will ask the Lord daily to increase my faith.
I will spend more time in the Word, so I can know God's work, character, and promises more fully.
I will learn to hear His voice and to act on it.
I will not live in rebellion by fearing the natural consequences of obedience to God.
I will not hide an unbelieving, critical spirit under the guise of being practical, prudent, or “Berean.”
I will wait for God to fulfill His promises. I will not rely on my own schemes, false comforts, or coping mechanisms.
I will step out boldly in faith to minister in ways like Jesus ministered.
I will live and minister confidently in the spiritual authority that is mine through Jesus Christ.
I will live above my emotions and circumstances, trusting fully in God to provide for, to protect, and to empower me.
I will not fear or rebel against the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.
I will cultivate a large faith culture with those around me, beginning with my family, and including my ministry, my church family, and my friends.

DESTROYING UNBELIEF & FEAR

As we grow in our willingness and ability to hear God’s voice and carry out “Jesus-type” ministry, we are challenged to face areas in which we may have little or no previous experience. We look at our own physical, psychological, and emotional resources and realize they are inadequate for the demands of life, ministry, and spiritual battle. We begin to see the enormous gap between what we can do in our own strength (natural), and what we can do in the power of the Holy Spirit (supernatural). That gap is bridged when we look not at our own hands and our own inadequacies, but when we step out in faith to do what Jesus said we would do, should do, and could do! Every time we take these steps of faith and something supernatural happens, our faith—and our confidence—is reinforced. As faith grows, fear is diminished!

Don’t Forget This!

We pray against unbelief, first for ourselves, and then for our family, our ministries, and our church families at large. We can use the following “4 R’s” to guide us:

- Repent of the sins of fear and unbelief; name it specifically and confess—specifically—how it has been evidenced in our life. Receive God’s forgiveness.
- Receive the infilling and empowering work of the Holy Spirit to live in the truth. Seek it and depend on it at all times to walk in the spirit of Christ. This is crucial. Receive the work that God has done and is doing in us (and live in it) in faith!
- Rebuke Satan’s influence in and through our life, because of our unbelief, and renounce the lies surrounding unbelief.
- Replace the sin of unbelief by walking in the opposite spirit (i.e., large faith). This occurs as we affirm the truth, renew our minds in it continually, and memorize and meditate on it.

INSIGHTS TO GROWING IN LARGE FAITH

Faith is all about trusting God, not only in His sovereignty and power, but also in His goodness, His patience, His faithfulness, His wisdom, His unfailing love, and His perfect timing. The foundation of faith is not built on our own ability to manufacture it, but on our willingness to receive it and act on it. Great faith always produces great obedience!

How do we grow in faith? First of all, we have to recognize that faith is not based on our own human capacities, our understanding, or our experiences. It is based on the infinite power and depth of the Word and character of God. Genuine faith has great confidence in God’s Word, His character, and His power; genuine faith does not rely on man’s wisdom, human resources, present conditions, or natural evidence. Abraham was a man of great faith:

Romans 4:19-21 (NIV)  Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead - since he was about a hundred years old - and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Sure enough, God held to His promise: He honored His Word and His character, and He came through for Abraham.
A SOBERING ACCOUNT FROM NUMBERS 13

Numbers 13 sheds light on the serious consequences of unbelief. Following a powerful and miraculous deliverance from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites approached the much-anticipated Promised Land. But instead of entering the land with boldness and faith, they panicked. Deuteronomy 1:22 explains that the people came up with the idea of spying out the land, even though God Himself had already scoped it out on their behalf. God’s word about the land was not good enough for them—they wanted to see it for themselves first.

What they saw both awed and frightened them: it stirred up doubt and insecurity; it caused division and rebellion. They decided to trust in what they could see and understand with their natural senses, rather than in God’s divine revelation. This then caused them to bring ruin on themselves. Only Joshua and Caleb brought back a good report. They saw the same things as the other spies with their physical eyes, but they saw things differently with their spiritual eyes. They looked at the land through the lens of God’s promises, His faithfulness, and His power. They looked in faith, not in fear.

The people, however, decided to place more confidence in the report of the practical-sounding spies than in the word of God. As a result, they missed out on the blessings of the Promised Land, and spent the rest of their lives wandering in the wilderness. May it not be so with us! This example of the folly of unbelief is cited elsewhere in Scripture as a warning to God’s people. Let’s take it to heart!

Hebrews 3:7-14 (NIV)  So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

Do we believe He will come through for us?

When we walk in large faith, we do not fear and we do not doubt. We realize that inadequate human resources and overwhelming natural circumstances are of no consequence to God. He may use them to test our faith, to strengthen our dependence on Him, and to teach us to fight spiritual battles, but God is never limited by them. And when we act and live in faith, we are not limited by inadequate human resources or natural circumstances, either. We are strengthened for life and ministry instead. We are able to step out boldly and confidently according to God’s objective Word, and His subjective revelatory words (that have been tested and validated as given by Him).

This is what the apostle Paul referred to when he told Timothy: “I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.” 1 Timothy 1:18-19 (NIV).

Believing God requires both faith and trust. Our faith knows that God is willing and able to fulfill what He says He will do. Trust places us squarely in line with that knowledge, and commits us to walk in it, before we see it happen with our natural eyes. Faith knows that God’s hands can sustain and secure us; trust jumps into those hands. Faith and trust are distinct but interlocking components of believing God.

Are we willing to trust what we don’t know? Probably not. That’s why the Scripture says that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). It’s much easier to trust something or someone we know intimately. Do we know God’s Word? His promises? His character? His power? His perfect timing?

The hardest part of faith often involves simply learning to wait. Troubles arise when we jump in to start fixing problems ourselves, which invariably makes things worse. In fact, we can end up complicating matters so that it takes God longer to straighten them out, than it would have to wait quietly for Him in the first place.

God’s timing is often a mystery to us, and can sometimes be a source of frustration. But we must not give up, and we must not try to arrange our own solutions. We must stand firm, believing and waiting for God. And we can be assured that we are not alone as we patiently wait for His answer—in His time. We join the great host of saints through the ages whose faith was tested and purified by waiting for God.
DIRECTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

The Unforgiveness, Rejection, and Anger worksheets are to be used together in the following ways:
1. Read and study the material on the stronghold of rejection; this was done earlier in this section.
2. Then read and study the material on the stronghold of unforgiveness.
3. Once both of these studies are complete, use the anger worksheet to actually work through the process of granting and receiving forgiveness. The anger worksheet is designed to walk you through the practical steps of addressing those issues you have uncovered by reading and studying the material on rejection and unforgiveness. Do this as your homework assignment for this week.

Strongholds. Unforgiveness lays the foundation for such destructive behavioral patterns as self-protection and self-preservation.

The opposite of unforgiveness is forgiveness. Forgiveness is the very foundation of God’s kingdom and the very nature of God Himself. Loosed from the bondage that unforgiveness brings, we can begin to heal and the very love of God can begin to flow through us to others.

DIAGNOSING UNFORGIVENESS

- I find myself holding grudges.
- I retreat into isolation from others.
- I erupt in anger, or I boil inside.
- I think of ways to get even with others who have hurt me.
- I bury the wrongs done to me without really addressing them.
- I pity myself.
- I carry bitterness and anger against those who have offended me or willfully wronged me.
- Instead of stating the truth, I make excuses for those who have hurt or wronged me.
- I often feel sorry for myself.
- On occasion, I think I’m some kind of martyr.
- I feel like nobody has had it as bad as me.
- When I get around someone who has hurt me I want to completely ignore them.

Ephesians 4:32 (NASB)  And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

One of the most powerful weapons of the enemy against mankind is unforgiveness. We live with unhealed wounds as a result of unforgiveness. It produces fruits of bitterness, anger, and rage, and can even lead to murder. It is also an easy way for us to allow the enemy to build strongholds. Unforgiveness lays the foundation for such destructive behavioral patterns as self-protection and self-preservation.

The opposite of unforgiveness is forgiveness. Forgiveness is the very foundation of God’s kingdom and the very nature of God Himself. Loosed from the bondage that unforgiveness brings, we can begin to heal and the very love of God can begin to flow through us to others.
I insulate and protect myself behind a wall of defensiveness.
I do not trust others.
I just cannot forgive (usually means I will not forgive).
I am angry with God for allowing bad things to happen to me.
I act like nothing happened instead of confronting issues that have hurt me.

How do I know if I have a grudge with a person?
I cannot get over my past. I have fake conversations with them in my head.
I avoid them at all costs, or when I do see them I wish I could hide.
I compare myself to them. I dismiss them.
I am constantly looking for ammunition to gossip about this person's life. They did it to me; now I get to do it to them!

THE KEY TO FORGIVENESS: RELEASING A DEBT

Forgiveness is necessary when we have been violated in one way or another. There is a debt to pay before reconciliation or restoration can take place. The debt might be emotional, relational, financial, or physical; it might be the result of a betrayal, or related to our reputation. Regardless of the situation, a debt is owed to us.

In order to forgive, we must determine that we will pay the debt, and thereby release the offender (or the offending situation) from their obligation to us. We will not expect the offender (or the offending situation) to settle the debt: We are willing to pay the cost. This is exactly what Jesus did when He released us from having to pay the debt for the sins and violations we commit against Him.

Imagine living with one of your hands tied by a strong cord (the debt against you) to a big wheelbarrow full of sand (violation against you). You have to push that thing around with you everywhere you go. How easy would that be? Yet this is a reasonable picture of the spiritual burden unforgiveness imposes. Forgiving means taking a sword (our willingness to forgive because of the love, grace, mercy, and shed blood of Jesus Christ) and severing that cord, dropping the load of debt, and leaving it behind. What a relief! Entrust yourself, and the offender/offending situation, to God, while you literally cut loose the load of unforgiveness toward the debt and debtor you have been carrying. You are free!

SUMMARIZING THE GRACE OF FORGIVENESS

Unforgiveness destroys the person who carries it, and eventually destroys others. Unforgiveness is one of the cornerstones of Satan's kingdom, and it opens the door to a host of other evils.

Forgiveness, on the other hand, streams from God's own heart. The ability to forgive is based on a love that is not from the world. Jesus often talked about forgiveness with His disciples; He knew it was essential for them, and us, to learn and put into practice. Jesus is our supreme example: He had every right and reason to withhold forgiveness, yet instead, He chose to offer it freely.

The Lord's Prayer teaches us to forgive. In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus said that if we will not forgive others, God will not forgive us. Read that again. The Lord uses some strong language, and there does not appear to be any way around it. Either we forgive others and the Lord forgives us, or we do not forgive others and the Lord does not forgive us! This is a good reason for us to examine our own hearts with great care.

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. Forgiveness does not condone the wrong or hurtful action. Forgiveness grows out of love and flows out of humility (knowing that we have hurt others and we need forgiveness as well). We are to forgive and release the offender(s) and the offense(s) to God, who alone is the ultimate judge for all of us.

WALKING IN THE TRUST OF FORGIVENESS

Affirm these truth statements out loud in the class:
☑ I will forgive others, just as God has forgiven me.
☑ I will choose to confront issues with forgiveness instead of holding resentment in my heart.
☑ I will offer forgiveness to the perpetrator(s), and leave the rest to God.
☑ I will grow more and more in understanding that the hurts of my past never escaped the eyes of the Lord.
☑ I will not let Satan keep me in the bondage of unforgiveness.
☑ I will forgive others regardless of their response to me.
☑ I will allow others to see God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness at work in me!
☑ I know and understand that forgiveness brings freedom and release from my past and present hurts.
DO NOT FORGET THESE:

We must conduct a serious campaign against unforgiveness. The following “4-R’s” will help guide you. You must:

- **REPENT** of the sin of unforgiveness. Confess (be specific) any and all attitudes and actions of living with unforgiveness and unhealed wounds.
- **RECEIVE** the Lord’s forgiveness for this sin. Receive the infilling and empowering work of the Holy Spirit to walk as Christ did. We must at all times depend on and receive that work in faith.
- **REBUKE** the enemy’s influence surrounding unhealed wounds and renounce his lies causing you to hang onto unforgiveness. Grant forgiveness and blessing wherever necessary.
- **REPLACE** unforgiveness with a spirit of forgiveness by continually renewing your mind in Christ’s law.

**SCRIPTURES ON FORGIVENESS**

**Psalm 25:7** (NLT) Forgive the rebellious sins of my youth; look instead through the eyes of your unfailing love, for you are merciful, O Lord.

**Psalm 25:11** (NLT) For the honor of your name, O Lord, forgive my many, many sins.

**Psalm 65:3** (NLT) Though our hearts are filled with sins, you forgive them all.

**Psalm 79:9** (NLT) Help us, O God of our salvation! Help us for the honor of Your name. Oh, save us and forgive our sins for the sake of Your name.

**Psalm 103:3** (NLT) He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

**Psalm 130:4** (NLT) But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you.

**Matthew 18:21-35** (NLT) Then Peter came to Him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?” “No!” Jesus replied. “Seventy times seven! For this reason, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn’t pay, so the king ordered that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt. But the man fell down before the king and begged him, ‘Oh, sir, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ Then the king was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and jailed until the debt could be paid in full. When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him what had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ Then the angry king sent the man to prison until he had paid every penny. That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters in your heart.”

**Mark 11:25-26** (NLT) “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

**Luke 23:32-34** (NLT) Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified Him, along with the criminals—one on His right, the other on His left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up His clothes by casting lots.

**Ephesians 1:7** (NLT) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.

**Ephesians 2:4-5** (NLT) But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s special favor that you have been saved!)

**Ephesians 4:32** (NLT) Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Colossians 3:13** (NLT) You must make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

**James 2:13** (NLT) For there will be no mercy for you if you have not been merciful to others. But if you have been merciful, then God’s mercy toward you will win out over his judgment against you.

**1 John 1:9** (NLT) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
Corrie Ten Boom and her beloved sister were prisoners in Ravensbruck, where they saw, and were subjected to, the atrocities of the Holocaust. The following episode occurred shortly after the end of World War II and Corrie’s release from the concentration camp. It is a courageous account of forgiveness!

It was in a church in Munich that I saw him—a balding, heavy-set man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the basement room where I had just spoken, moving along the rows of wooden chairs to the door at the rear. It was 1947, and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.

The solemn faces stared back at me, not quite daring to believe. There were never questions after a talk in Germany in 1947. People stood up in silence, in silence collected their wraps, in silence left the room.

And that’s when I saw him working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: that huge room with its hard overhead lights; the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister’s frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment of skin. Betsie, how thin you were!

The place was Ravensbruck, and the man who was making his way forward had been a guard—one of the most cruel guards. I would recognize him anywhere.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: “A fine message, Fraulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!”

Corrie Ten Boom

Now I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook, rather than take that hand. He could not remember me of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women? But I remembered him, and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face to face with one of my captors, and my blood seemed to freeze.

“You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk,” he was saying. “I was a guard there.” No, he did not remember me.

“But since that time I became a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein”—again the hand came out—“will you forgive me?”

I stood there—I, whose sins had again and again needed to be forgiven—and I could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow, terrible death simply for the asking?

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there—hand held out—but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it—I knew that. The message was that God forgives those who have injured us. I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience.

Since the end of the war I had a home in Holland for the victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.

And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too.
Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. “Jesus, help me!” I prayed silently. “I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.”

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm and sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart.”

For a moment we grasped each others’ hands—the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then. But even so, I realized it was not my love. I had tried, and did not have the power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit transforming me in God’s love.

“I’m still Learning to Forgive,” by Corrie Ten Boom is reprinted with permission from Guideposts magazine. Copyright © 1972 by Guideposts, Carmel, New York 10512. All rights reserved.

Joseph’s life is a classic example of the power of forgiveness and unforgiveness. The story begins with the birth of Joseph, son of Jacob and his wife Rachel. Joseph had a big problem: Even though he was the youngest of eleven brothers, he was his father’s favorite, “because he was the son of his old age” (Genesis 37:3).

Unfortunately for Joseph, his father Jacob did not conceal the fact that Joseph was his favorite. Jacob made a very beautiful and special coat for Joseph. It was a garment of honor, something usually given only to the firstborn son. When the coat was presented to Joseph, his half-brothers began to hate him.

Joseph also had dreams. In his youthful indiscretion and pride, he readily shared the dreams with his brothers. There was only one problem: the dreams portrayed the brothers being subordinate to Joseph, and bowing down before him! The brothers’ hearts were filled with unforgiveness and hatred, not only toward Joseph, but also toward their father Jacob, and they began to think of ways to get rid of the younger and favored brother.

Jacob sent the brothers to find new pasture for the family flocks. After they had been away for some time, he sent Joseph with provisions for them. Unforgiveness and bitterness had now had several years to develop and were about to produce their evil fruit.

*Genesis 37:18-20 (NIV)* When Joseph’s brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance and made plans to kill him. “Here comes that dreamer!” they exclaimed. “Come on, let’s kill him and throw him into a deep pit. We can tell our father that a wild animal has eaten him. Then we’ll see what becomes of all his dreams!”

Joseph arrived in their camp with provisions from home. He was happy and excited to see his brothers, and he could not expect that they would take action against him in a way that would change his life forever. Joseph’s brothers threw him into the pit, but his brother Reuben convinced them to spare Joseph’s life, which they did. When they spotted a band of Ishmaelite traders, they pulled Joseph out of the pit, removed his robe, and sold him to the traders for twenty pieces of silver. Off to Egypt went Joseph, as a slave.
The story gets uglier. The brothers took Joseph’s coat, soaked it in blood, and tore it to shreds to make it appear that a wild animal had attacked Joseph. The brothers took the coat back to their father and lied to him, saying that Joseph had been killed. Imagine Jacob’s grief! Worse yet, and more to the point, imagine the unforgiveness and bitterness which caused Joseph’s own brothers to even contemplate killing him. Even when they saw the grief of their father, the brothers showed no remorse, nor did they express any concern for their little brother.

So what about Joseph? He was torn from his family, his land, and everything familiar to him. He was bound and tied behind the camels, wondering what he had done to deserve this treatment, thinking of his father’s sorrow, and not knowing if he would live or die.

Joseph was sold on the slave block to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s officer (as a house slave). Joseph found favor in Potiphar’s house and eventually became head slave over his household. However, Potiphar’s wife unjustly accused Joseph of rape so he was thrown into prison even though he was innocent.

If anyone had reasons for unforgiveness, it was Joseph. He had every “right” to be bitter and angry, filled with rage, self-pity, resentment, etc.

Joseph had come to understand that God was aware of his trials, had a purpose for them, and would use all that he had gone through. How about you? Do you see and understand that God is aware of and understands all you go through? That understanding was an essential ingredient in Joseph’s ability to choose to forgive!
CHARACTERISTICS OF A VICTIM’S MENTALITY

Check all the boxes that apply to you:

- I cannot do anything about my situation, because it’s always in the hands of someone else.
- I feel I am “locked in” to my life as I know it because of what others have done to me.
- I do not feel free to share my friends with others, because I fear that someone smarter, more interesting, more successful, etc., will steal them away.
- I feel protective or tight-fisted with things and relationships because I worry that someone may steal them from me.
- I do not share in groups because I feel that my ideas or comments would either be discounted or ridiculed.
- I am unable to step out confidently in faith to break new ground.
- I am never really sure of myself.
- I have committed to playing life “safe,” rather than taking risks with the few resources (confidence) I have.
- I resent others when the Lord lifts them up because I feel that life has not been fair to me.
- I live a passive life with the mindset that someone else always makes things happen and leads the charge.
- I point the finger at others, often blaming them for things that have gone wrong in my life.
- I do not like to take responsibility for my life, preferring to live on encouragement from others (and if I do not get that, I passively resent them).
- I often harbor bitterness toward others and am quietly critical of them.
- I am defeated quickly by circumstances.
- I live under a heavy weight of condemnation.
- I am plagued by thoughts like, “I am going to mess it up anyway, so why try?”
- I believe God has abandoned me for someone else who has it “more together.”
- I live in a constant state of doubt about God’s love for me, and I find it difficult to imagine that He has a glorious plan for me.
- I am often highly critical and judgmental of myself.

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Deeply rooted in passivity; it blames others for what has happened; it often creates deep condemnation and bitterness. (Related terms: defeat, self-pity, hopelessness.)

+definition+

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Deceptions and lies:

- This is how God created me, I cannot change.
- I do not need anyone else telling me how to act.
- At least there is some comfort in self-pity.
- I will never change, so why try?

God has not created any of His children to be victims, or to live in defeat as though God has deserted us. We recognize that bad things can and do happen to His people. Yet, we also affirm that nothing is beyond the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse completely:

Romans 8:37-39 (NIV)  No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death cannot, and life cannot. The angels cannot, and the demons cannot. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell cannot keep God’s love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

DESTRUCTION OF VICTIMIZATION

- Find others who are following the Lord and will hold you accountable.
- The opposite of victimization is ministering. Look for opportunities to serve others on a weekly basis.
REPENT

Jesus, I have allowed victimization to mark my life, my relationship with you, and my relationship with others. I ask forgiveness for rejecting you and denying your word. (Specifically ask forgiveness for each box you checked, as well as any sins that come to mind associated with each box.) I ask forgiveness for__________________________________. I see it and call it sin. I now turn in repentance, committing myself to breaking the patterns of victimization in my life.

RECEIVE

Lord, I receive your forgiveness for walking in victimization. I receive your forgiveness for denying your power, and your love for me. I receive the truth that in you I am victorious, and that you came so that I might have abundant life.

REBUKE

In Jesus name and authority, I rebuke every spirit of condemnation and command you to the feet of Jesus. Every deceiving spirit, I rebuke you in the name of Jesus. I command you to be silent, and to go to the feet of Jesus. I rebuke every spirit, which was given a foothold in my life.

REPLACE

I replace the patterns and lies of victimization that have played out in my life, with the truth of who you are and who you say I am.

ASSURANCE FOR THE SAINTS

- **Election**
  Psalm 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:4

- **Redemption**
  Job 19:25

- **Adoption**
  Romans 8:16; 1 John 3:2

- **Salvation**
  Isaiah 12:2

- **Eternal Life**
  1 John 5:13

- **Unalienable Love of God**
  Romans 8:38-39

- **Union with God and Christ**
  1 Corinthians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 5:30; 1 John 2:5, 4:13

- **Peace with God by Christ**
  Romans 5:1

- **Preservation**
  Psalm 3:6; Psalm 8; Psalm 27:3-5; Psalm 46:1-3

- **Answers to Prayer**
  1 John 3:22; 5:14-15

- **Comfort in Affliction**
  Psalm 73:26; Luke 4:18; 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 16-18

- **Continuance in Grace**
  Philippians 1:6

- **Support in Death**
  Psalm 23:4

- **A Glorious Resurrection**
  Job 19:26; Psalm 17:15; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2

- **A Kingdom**
  Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 5:10

- **A Crown**
  2 Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12

- **Saints Give Diligence to Attain**
  2 Peter 1:10-11

- **Strive to Maintain**
  Hebrews 3:14, 18

- **Confident Hope in God Restores Promised Victory**
  Psalm 42:11; 1 John 4:4; Romans 8:37; Psalm 32:7
  (New Living Translation emphasizes victory)