

FOUNDATIONS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

Book 2 of 4

I'm baptised! Now what!?



Introduction to book 2/4

This book is for those who have been recently baptised and wanting to know how you can come into a close purposeful relationship with God, quickly; now you have established that Jesus is The Way, The Truth and The Life.

If you haven't reached this point yet, can I humbly recommend that you first:

1. Read our book one of this series "*How You can Connect with God*", which is in the church foyer or online at www.whangareicbc.org.nz/finding-faith/
2. Watch the video on our website www.whangareicbc.org.nz/finding-faith/ "*How to connect to God.*" This will give you a practical overview of what the Bible says, in 20 minutes.
3. Go to Alpha.org
Click on "Watch" and view Episode 2 "Who is Jesus"
4. Go to alltogether.co.nz and take the 10 Day Challenge
5. Bible Project www.thebibleproject.com
The Bible Project creates videos that show the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. The Bible is literary genius and has divine wisdom for the modern world.
6. Questions of Life www.questionsoflife.com Long and short answers to commonly asked questions, and a place to ask your own questions.

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May you hear His voice, know His freedom, discover His purposes for you and enjoy His company, as you work through these studies. You matter to God and to His church. You were meant for this.

Yours faithfully

Pastor Russell Watts





Assurance of salvation

You have made the most important decision of your life and have been baptised! That's exciting! But you're probably wondering what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

We have set out this programme to help you understand what happened to you, what to expect, and how to grow in the new life God has given you.

Just as your physical life needs food, air, exercise and rest, so your spiritual life needs certain things to grow and develop too.

Your "food" is the Bible. It makes you strong as you absorb its truth about the world and about God. Prayer and talking with God is like breathing. You get spiritual exercise as you obey Jesus and put aside your own desires. And "rest" is learning to trust him in every circumstance.

You'll also learn about removing the rubbish from your life by admitting your sins and receiving God's forgiveness on a regular basis. This 'new life' you now have needs to reproduce, and you'll do that as you tell others about Jesus and how they can have new life in Him.

We'll also talk about the opposition you will face because now that you're on God's side, you've become an enemy of the evil forces. But God loves you very much. He wants to be a loving heavenly father, a protector, guide, friend, boss, comforter and light to you. He's given other people to help you, but best of all, his Holy Spirit lives in you.

2 Corinthians 5:7 and 5:21 says:

"When someone becomes a new Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun! For God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us".

You may not feel very different, but let's review what happened to bring you to this new beginning:

Romans 3:23 *“All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory”.*

Before you became a Christian you were cut off from God. What separated you from Him?

Romans 5: 8 *“But God showed how much He loved us, by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful”.*

What did Jesus do for you?

Colossians 1: 21-22

“You used to be far from God. Your thoughts made you His enemies, and you did evil things. But His son became a human and died. So God made peace with you, and now He lets you stand in His presence as people who are holy and faultless and innocent”.

Acts 3:19 *“So turn to God! Give up your sins and you will be forgiven”.*

Colossians 1: 22b

“But you must stay deeply rooted and firm in your faith. You must not give up the hope you received when you received the good news”.

Can you be sure?

Some people struggle all their lives, never being quite sure of their salvation. John, in his letter, was concerned with this very question. Let’s read from it.....



1 John

2: 3-6 *When we obey God we are sure that we know Him. But if we claim to know Him and don't obey Him, we are lying and the truth isn't in our hearts. We truly love God only when we obey Him as we should, and then we know that we belong to Him. If we say we are His, we must follow the example of Christ.*



5:13 *All of you have faith in the Son of God, and I have written to let you know you have eternal life.*

3: 14 *Our love for each other proves that we have gone from death to life. But if you don't love each other, you are still under the power of death.*



3: 24 *If we obey God's commandments, we will stay one in our hearts with Him, and He will stay one with us. The Spirit that He has given us is proof that we are one with Him.*

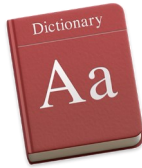
4: 13 *God has given us His Spirit. That is how we know that we are one with Him, just as He is one with us.*

4: 15 *God stays one with everyone who openly says that Jesus is the Son of God. That's how we stay one with God*

5: 1 *If we believe that Jesus is truly Christ, we are God's children.*



5: 11 *God has also said that He gave us eternal life, and that this life comes to us from His Son. And so, if we have God's Son, we have this life. But if we don't have the Son, we don't have this life. All of you have faith in the Son of God, and I have written to let you know that you have eternal life.*



Quick definitions:

Christian Means “Christ in one”. Christ lives in you! He comes to take control of your life.

Grace Is the “free gift of God”; given to help you turn to Jesus and to supply you with the power to live for all your life.

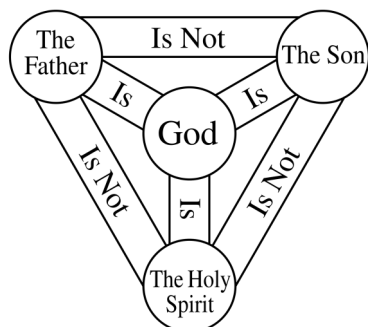
Obedience Is saying “yes” to Jesus about every decision, every day.

Repent Means “to turn around”. To turn away from a self-centred, self-controlled life.

Believe Means “total trust”. Trusting Jesus now and every day.

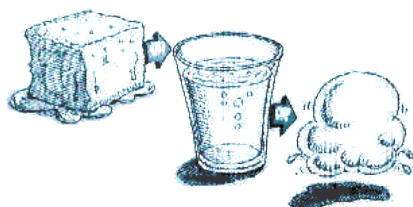


Understanding the nature of the God-Head Trinity



There are many mysteries in life, and understanding the nature of God is one of them. God is so much bigger and more amazing than any of us. He can speak to billions at once and be in many places at once. The biggest mistake that people make, when they think of God, is that He has to be a bigger version of us. From Genesis to Revelation, God is described as One God in Three Persons. God the

Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. 'Trinity' is a word that is not found in the Bible, but is mankind's best attempt to describe this amazing 'one God in three person' mystery. The closest analogy to that might be water. Water has the same chemical composition, H₂O, but can be experienced as steam, ice or liquid.



Look up **Genesis 1:26**. Notice the words 'us' and 'we'. These words, in the ancient Hebrew, are not singular or dual, but plural. That is, God refers to Himself as 'we' and 'us'.

God is always described in the Bible as One.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says

The Father is God (1 Corinthians 8: 6)

The Son is God (*John 1:1-5, 14*)

N.B. One name for Jesus is 'The Word'. See also John 10:30-33, John 20:28 etc.

The Holy Spirit is God (*Acts 5: 3-4*)

More than 60 Bible passages mention the three Persons together. Here are two:

Matthew 28:19 *Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

Ephesians 4:4-6 *All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope, when you were chosen to be God's people. We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but He works by using all of us, and He lives in all of us.*

Hearing God's voice

God can speak to anyone, of any religion, in any situation, at any time. King Nebuchadnezzar was not a believer and yet God gave him an elaborate dream. In Numbers 22, God spoke through a donkey. There are people all over the world who can verify that, even before they believed in the God of the bible, they had dreams and visions from God or they felt drawn by the Holy Spirit. They had experiences where they were sure that the One true God of the Bible was speaking to them.

Jesus said:



John 10:27 CEV

My sheep know my voice, and I know them. They follow me,

And so, we who believe in the Lord, have an **EXPECTATION** that we will hear from God frequently. He is our Shepherd and we are His sheep!

Here are some other verses that promise that we will hear His voice;

Proverbs 3:6 NKJV

In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

John 16:13 CEV

The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. The Spirit doesn't speak on His own. He will tell you only what He has heard from Me, and He will let you know what is going to happen.

So, even though we know that God can speak to, and through anyone, we have an expectation, a hunger, a desire to be hearing His voice all the time. And it's right that we do. I want to give you a very brief overview of how God speaks in the

Bible, then bullet point for you some of the things you can do to help you hear God's voice on a daily basis.

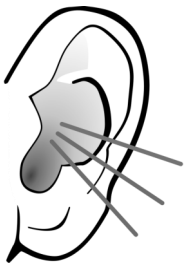
In the Old Testament, God spoke in a number of ways. He spoke face to face to Adam, to Cain, to Noah, Abraham and to Moses. He spoke audibly out of cloud, out of a burning bush and out of a donkey to Balaam. He spoke to Elijah in a whisper, to Samuel during the night and through dreams to Jacob, Abimelech, Joseph and to many of the prophets. He also spoke through visions to the prophets, to Uzziah the king, to Ezekiel, Samuel and Daniel. Over 100 times, God spoke through angels - to Hagar, Abraham, Moses, Lot and Zachariah to name a few.

God wrote the Ten Commandments on stone tablets and wrote a message to Nebuchadnezzar on a wall. Sometimes He spoke through signs, as he did to Gideon, through the fleeces and the dream of the enemy soldier.



In the New Testament, God uses similar methods to communicate. He spoke through dreams to Mary and Joseph, through a vision to Paul, on the road to Damascus, and to Peter on the roof. He spoke out loud on the Mount of Transfiguration, at Jesus' baptism and to Paul. God used angels to speak to Zachariah, to Mary and Philip. The Holy Spirit spoke to the whole church, to set apart Paul and Barnabas as missionaries, and also told them not to go into Asia on their missionary journeys.

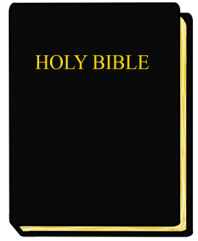
1 Corinthians 12 and 14 tell us that God will give us prophetic words (that comfort, encourage and build us up), words of knowledge (specific supernatural revelations) and words of wisdom (revelations for specific situations).



If you want to hear the voice of God and begin to recognise it, turn over for some practical suggestions:

1. Fill your mind with the Bible.

Not only does this ensure that you can 'test' revelations, to see if they are from God, but reading the Bible gets you used to the way God thinks. It sensitises your spirit to receive revelation from God. People who hear revelations from God easily, are always people who spend time reading the Bible.



2. Pray in the Spirit.

Praying in your prayer language makes you more spiritually tuned in to the voice of God. Your spirit and God's Holy Spirit begin to communicate better, and as a result, your mind is much more open to receiving revelations from God.

3. Learn to ask God the right questions and be willing to obey Him when He answers.

Allow Him to quieten your mind. Have a patient and submissive attitude to whatever He is going to tell you.

Ask Him the following:

Is there anyone You want me to pray for?

Are there any issues in my life which are concerning You right now?

Is there anyone You want me to speak to?

4. Let God talk to you however He wants to.

God has a myriad of ways in which He talks to people. Don't think that God isn't speaking, if you don't hear an audible voice or see a vision. Sometimes you may ask "God what do you want me to do?" and you have a peace about this option, but not about that option. It can be that simple.



5. Get your own leading first.

God will use other people to confirm what He is saying to you (and it is wise to seek that confirmation on the big decisions of life). But you need that personal revelation directly, first. When you personally hear from God, a vision and the energy to pursue His leading, usually come with it. You alone

are accountable to God for the life you lead. He wants to talk to you. Don't ask others what God is saying to them about your situation until you, yourself, have a revelation first. Often, there is a right time to share what God has said to you with others, and it is important that you ask Him when it is OK to do so. For those who are just learning to hear God's voice, I suggest that they submit their big revelations to a mature Christian; to be checked before they voice these with others.

6. Recognise that God is speaking to you.

Don't ever say, "I cannot hear God's voice". That is to call God a liar, because He said "My sheep hear My voice and they follow me". Learn to recognise His voice.

7. Surround yourself with people who are experienced at hearing God's voice.

I have found that when other people are hearing God's voice - through prophecy, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, interpretation of tongues, etc - it creates a faith atmosphere, where it is easier for you to move in those gifts as well. You will move in those gifts more freely. Also, other people around you will get the same revelations as you, and that will build your confidence that you are hearing God's voice. Prophetic conferences, workshops and prayer meetings are great environments for practicing hearing the voice of God.



The four C's to keep in mind, when you receive revelations:

A) **Challenge.**

Very often, when God speaks to you, it will come with a challenge. He will encourage you to rely on Him in the situation you are facing. He will encourage you to trust him as you step out in faith. He will promise to be with you and to resource you, as you go on some faith adventure.



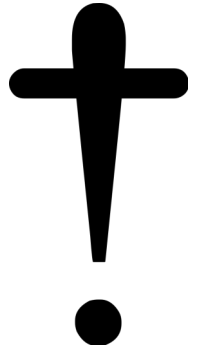
B) **Comfort.**



If you are getting a word from God, it will always lead you closer to Him, towards greater freedom and intimacy with God.

C) **Conviction.**

Often the Holy Spirit will point out an area in your life that He wants you to address. With conviction of sin always comes the promise of forgiveness and the assurance that God is going to help you deal with the problem.



D) **Condemnation.**



Is always from Satan. If you get a thought that suggests that you are a right- off, unforgiveable, condemned, a hopeless case; you have not heard from God, but from the enemy. If that happens, quickly resist the thought and replace it with Gods truths from the Bible.



Finding freedom in Christ

So if **the Son** sets you free,
you will be free **indeed!**

John 8: 36

...wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom

2 Corinthians 3: 17

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We recommend you do this section with a mature Spirit-filled friend. If you are unsure of who would be able to work through this with you, please consider asking your Pastor to help you.

Christ has set you free through His victory over sin and death on the cross. However, you may find that you don't experience that freedom immediately. You have to learn to actively take your place in Christ. It is your responsibility to maintain a tight relationship with God. You will find that you don't have daily victory if you fail to claim and maintain your position in Christ.

You don't have to be a helpless victim between two 'superpowers', because God is all powerful ("omnipotent"), always present everywhere ("omnipresent") and all knowing ("omniscient"). Satan is defeated and we are in Christ. However, Satan is a deceiver and will want to keep you feeling defeated. This lesson is designed to help you find true freedom through a whole relationship with Christ.

Remember that as you go through these steps, Satan will try and deceive you into thinking that they will not work, or that God doesn't love you. Knowing the nature of the battle for our minds, you can pray authoritatively to stop any such interference.

Prayer

*Dear Heavenly Father,
I acknowledge your presence in this room and in my life. You are the all-powerful, all present and all-knowing God. I am dependent upon You, for apart from Christ, I can do nothing. I stand in the truth that, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the risen Christ, and because I am in Christ, I share that authority. I ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit and lead me into all truth. I pray for your complete protection and ask for your guidance.
In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Declaration - (you may like to do this with your friend)

Please note: Declarations must be read aloud. There is power to defeat demons, in your spoken words.

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

Q. Have you had negative things happen to you in your past, which you know still handicap/hold you back today?

(Family History, e.g. Religious history of parents and grandparents, home life from childhood through high school, physical or emotional illness in the family, adoption, foster care etc.

Personal History, e.g. Eating habits, addictions, prescription medications, sleeping patterns and nightmares, sexual, physical, emotional molestation, tough life, emotional life, spiritual journeys etc.)

Q. When you look at your life now, are you aware of any addictive or compulsive behaviour that would not be normal for a Christ follower?

If you answered 'yes', ask at the church office for an appointment with someone who can help; or ask your friend to go through these questions with you.

Ask the Father where the problem started.

Ask Him to expose what you wrongly believed then.

Ask Him now for the truth that sets you free.

Ask His forgiveness for any sin exposed.

Sin no more.

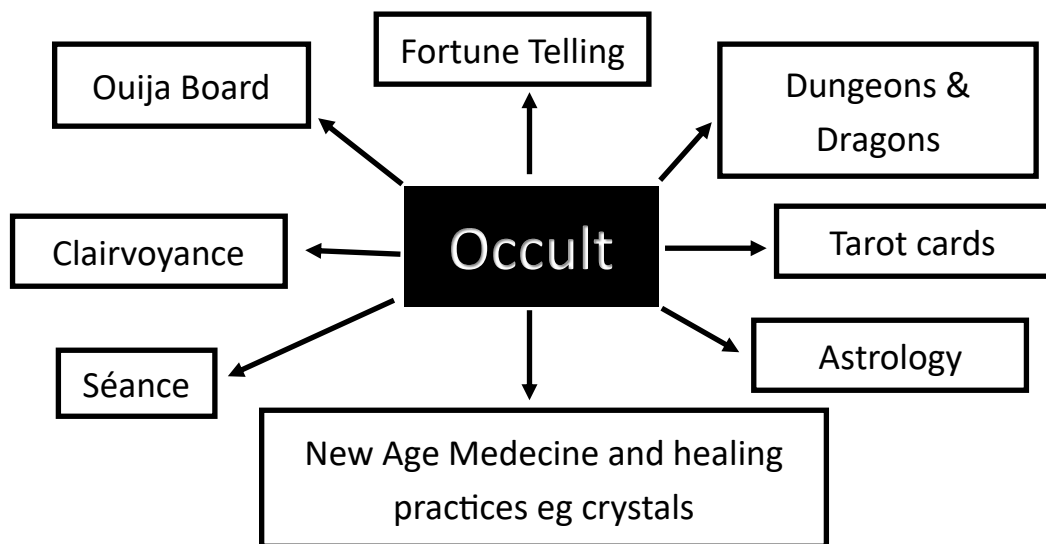
Forgive others as God directs you.

The Seven Steps

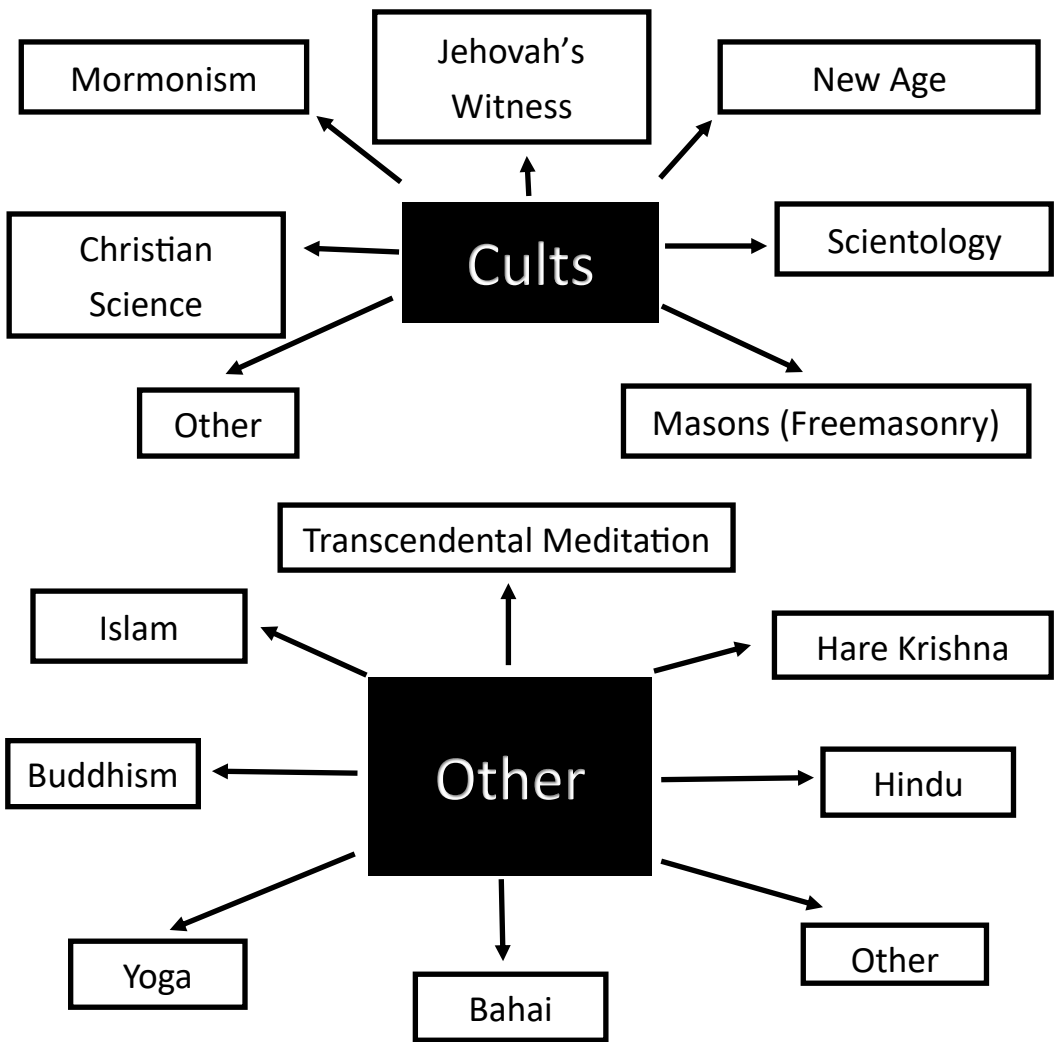
The following are seven steps in order to experience freedom from your past. You will need to address the areas where Satan most commonly takes advantage of you and where strongholds (mind-sets) have been built. Remember, Christ has already won the victory for you! Now you must learn to live in that victory.

Step One: Counterfeit versus real

The first step to freedom in Christ is to renounce (speak off your life) your previous or current involvement with satanically inspired occult practices and false religions. You need to renounce any activity that denies Jesus Christ, offers guidance through any source - other than the absolute authority of the written word of God, or requires secret initiations, ceremonies or covenants. Using the following inventory, carefully check anything in which you were involved. Even if you "innocently" participated in something or observed it, you should write it on



your list to renounce, just in case you unknowingly gave Satan a foothold (a legal right to influence you). Satan is a legalist!



Make a list of the areas of involvement and when you are confident that your list is complete, confess and renounce each involvement by praying aloud the following prayer, repeating it separately for each item on your list:

"Lord, I confess that I have participated in _____. I ask your forgiveness, and I renounce it in the name of Jesus Christ."

Sometimes, Freemasonry (the most evil of all occults), will require extra prayer. Ask a church leader for help.

Step Two: Deception versus truth

Psalm 51: 6 *Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the innermost place.*

Psalm 32: 2 *Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.*

When David lived a lie, he suffered greatly. He finally found freedom by acknowledging the truth.

Ephesians 4: 15 *Love should always make us tell the truth. Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ.*

Ephesians 4: 25 *We are a part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth.*

We are to put aside all pretence and speak the truth in love. A mentally healthy person is one who is in touch with reality and relatively free of anxiety. Both qualities should characterise the Christian who renounces deception and embraces the truth.

Prayer:

"Dear Heavenly Father.

I know that You desire truth in the inner self and that facing this truth is the way of liberation. I acknowledge that I have been deceived by the father of lies and that I have deceived myself. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that You, Heavenly Father, will chase away all deceiving spirits because of the shed blood and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith I receive You into my life and I am now seated with Christ in the

Heavenlies. I acknowledge that I have the responsibility and authority to resist the devil, and when I do, he will run from me. I now ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth. I ask You to "search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen."

You are now alive in Christ and forgiven! You never have to live a lie or defend yourself. Christ is your defence.

John 8: 32 *You will know the truth, and **the truth will set you free.***

John 8:44 *To sinners Jesus said, "Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies".*

1 John 1:8 *If we say we haven't sinned then we are fooling ourselves, and the truth isn't in our hearts.*

Ephesians 2:6 *God raised us from death to life with Jesus Christ, and He has given us a place beside Christ in heaven.*

John 16:13 *The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. The Spirit doesn't speak on His own. He will tell you only what He has heard from me, and He will let you know what is going to happen.*

Psalm 139:23-24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

How have you deceived yourself, or attempted to defend yourself according to

the following?

Read the following verses and check for areas of self-deception.

James 1:22 *Obey God's message. Don't fool yourselves by just listening to it.*

(Do I know all Biblical truth, but think it's okay not to live it?)

James 4:17 *If you don't do what you know is right, you have sinned*

(Do I try to justify my sin?)

1 John 1:8 *If we say we haven't sinned, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth isn't in our hearts.*

(Do I think I'm a good person?)

Galatians 6:3 *If you think you are better than others, when you really aren't, you are wrong.*

(Do I consider myself better than others?)

1 Corinthians 3:18-19 *Don't fool yourselves. If any of you think you are wise in the things of this world, you will have to become foolish before you can truly be wise. This is because God considers the wisdom of this world to be foolish. It is just as the scriptures say, "God catches the wise when they try to outsmart Him."*

(Am I teachable or proud?)

Galatians 6:7 *You can't fool God, so don't make a fool of yourself. You will harvest what you plant.*

(Do I pretend that there won't be consequences for my actions?)

1 Corinthians 6:9

Don't you know that evil people won't have a share in the blessings of God's kingdom? Don't fool yourselves. No-one who is immoral or worships idols, or is unfaithful in marriage or is a pervert, or behaves like a homosexual, will share in God's kingdom. Neither will any thief or greedy person, or drunkard or anyone who curses and cheats others.

(Do I wrongly believe that I can practice sin and still be saved?)

1 Corinthians 15:33 *Don't fool yourselves. Bad friends will destroy you.*

(Do I hang around people who practice evil and think I won't be affected by them?)

Areas of self defence:

Read through the list and ask yourself if you recognise these in yourself:

Denial (*conscious or subconscious*)

Fantasy (*escape from the real world*)

Emotional insulation (*withdrawal to avoid rejection*)

Regression (*reverting back to a less threatening time*)

Displacement (*taking out frustrations on others*)

Projection (*blaming others*)

Rationalisation (*defending self through verbal excursion*)



Prayer

"Lord,

I agree that I have been deceived in the area of _____.

Thank you for forgiving me. I commit myself to know and follow your truth.

Amen."

Choosing the truth may be difficult, if you have been living a lie (been deceived) for many years. You may need to seek professional help, to weed out the defence mechanisms you have depended upon, to survive. The Christian needs only one

defence - Jesus. Knowing that you are forgiven as God's child is what sets you free to face reality and declare your dependence on Him.

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

Step 3 - Bitterness versus forgiveness

We need to forgive others so that Satan cannot take advantage of us. We are to be merciful just as our Heavenly Father is merciful. We are to forgive as we have been forgiven.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

I will forgive anyone you forgive. Yes, for your sake and with Christ as my witness, I have forgiven whatever needed to be forgiven. I have done this to keep Satan from getting the better of us. We all know what goes on in his mind.

Luke 6: 36

Have pity on others, just as your Father has pity on you.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

Romans 2:4

You surely don't think much of God's wonderful goodness or of His patience and willingness to put up with you. Don't you know that the reason God is good to you is because He wants you to turn to Him?

Prayer

"Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank you for the riches of your kindness, goodness and patience. I know that your kindness has led me to turn from sin. I confess that I have not extended the same patience and kindness toward others who have offended me, but instead I have harboured bitterness and resentment. I pray that during this time of self-examination you would bring to my mind those people I have not forgiven in order that I may do so.

I ask this in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen."

As names come to mind, make a list and at the end of the list write "your name". Forgiving yourself is accepting God's cleansing and forgiveness. Also, write "Thoughts against God". Thoughts raised against the knowledge of God will usually result in angry feelings toward Him. Technically, we don't forgive God, because He cannot commit any sin. But you need to specifically renounce false expectations and thoughts about God and agree to release any anger you have toward Him.

_____ (Your name)

What does it mean to forgive?

Forgiving is not forgetting. Neither is it trusting. Trust needs to be earned. Forgiveness is a choice, an act of will. It is difficult because it pulls against our concept of justice. Your need to forgive isn't an issue between you and the offender; it's between you and God. If you don't forgive, your walk with the Lord, your health and your relationships will suffer. Forgiveness requires that we stop trying to get revenge. Forgiving is agreeing to live with the consequences of

another person's sin. It is costly. You are going to live with those consequences whether you want to or not; your only choice is whether you will do so in the bitterness of unforgiveness or the freedom of forgiveness. Jesus took the consequences of our sin upon Himself. (**1 Corinthians 5:21**).

How do we forgive?

To forgive, we must acknowledge the hurt and the hate. If your forgiveness doesn't visit the emotional core of your life, it will be incomplete. Let God bring the pain to the surface so He can deal with it. This is where the healing takes place. Don't wait to forgive until you feel like forgiving; you will never get there. As you pray, ask God to bring to mind offending

people and experiences you have totally forgotten. Let Him do it even if it is painful. Don't rationalise or explain the offender's behaviour.

Forgiveness is dealing with your pain and leaving the other person to God.

You are now ready to forgive the people on your list, so that you can be free in Christ. Those people no longer have any control over you.

Prayer

For each person on your list, pray aloud:

"Lord, I forgive (name) for (specifically identify all offences and painful memories or feelings). I choose from this day forward to pray a blessing on them, in Jesus' name. Amen."

Step 4 - Rebellion versus submission

We live in a rebellious generation. Many believe it is their right to sit in judgment of those in authority over them. Rebelling against God and His authority gives Satan an opportunity to attack. The Lord says, "*Follow me. I will not lead you into temptation but I will deliver you from evil.*" (**Matthew 6: 13**).

We have two biblical responsibilities in regard to authority figures. Pray for them and submit to them. The only time God permits us to disobey earthly leaders is

when they require us to do something morally wrong before God, or attempt to rule outside the realm of their authority.

Prayer

"Dear Heavenly Father.

You have said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and disobedience of leaders is a sin.

(1 Samuel 15: 23). I know that, in action and attitude, I have sinned against you with a rebellious heart. I ask your forgiveness for my rebellion and pray that by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, all ground gained by evil spirits, because of my rebelliousness, would be cancelled. I pray that you will shed light on all my ways, that I may know the full extent of my rebelliousness. I now choose to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant's heart.

Amen".

Being under authority is an act of faith. You are trusting God to work through His established lines of authority. In difficult cases, such as continuing abuse at home, further counselling help may be needed. And, in some cases, when earthly authorities have abused their position and are requiring disobedience to God, or a compromise in your commitment to Him, you need to obey God not man.

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

Civil Government ***Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2: 1-4, 1 Peter 2: 13-17***

Parents ***Ephesians 6:1-3***

Husband & wife ***Ephesians 5:21-33***

Employer ***1 Peter 2: 18-23***

Church Leaders ***Hebrews 13: 17***

God ***Daniel 9: 5, 9***

Examine each area and ask God to forgive you for those times you have not been submissive, and pray the following prayer.



Prayer

"Lord, I agree I have been rebellious towards (name). Please forgive me for this rebellion. I choose to be submissive and obedient to Your word. In Jesus' name. Amen".

Step 5 - Pride versus humility

Pride is a killer. Pride says, "I can do it! I can get myself out of this mess without God, or anyone else's help". But most times we can't. We absolutely need God, and we desperately need each other. Paul wrote "We ... worship in the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (**Philippians 3: 3**). Humility is confidence properly placed. We are to be "Strong in the Lord, and in strength of His might" (**Ephesians 6: 10**).

James 4: 6-10 and **1 Peter 5: 1-10** reveal the spiritual conflict that follows pride.

Proud people want to be noticed, thanked often and are easily offended.

Spiritually mature people are not easily offended and like to bring Him glory. Use the following prayer to express your commitment to live humbly before God.

Prayer

"Dear Heavenly Father.

*You have said that pride goes before a fall. (**Proverbs 16:18**). I confess that I have sinned against you by placing my will before yours, and I have centred my life around myself instead of you. I now renounce the self-life and by doing so cancel all the ground that has been made by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you will guide me so that I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with the humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (**Philippians 2:3**). Enable me through love to serve others and in honour prefer others (**Romans 12: 10**). I ask in the name of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

Amen".

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

Stronger desire to do my will than God's will

More dependent upon my strengths and resources than God's

Sometimes believe that my ideas and opinions are better than others

More concerned about controlling others than developing self-control

Sometimes consider myself more important than others

Tendency to think that I have no needs

Find it difficult to admit that I was wrong

Tendency to be more of a people-pleaser than a God-pleaser

Overly concerned about getting the credit I deserve

Drive to obtain the recognition that comes from degrees, titles, positions

Often think I am more humble than others

Other ways that you may have thought more highly of yourself than you should

Prayer

"Lord,

I agree I have been prideful in the area of _____.

Please forgive me for this pridefulness. I choose to humble myself and place all my confidence in You. Amen".

Step 6 – Habitual sin versus freedom

James 5:16, CEV

"If you have sinned, you should tell each other what you have done. Then you can pray for one another and be healed. The prayer of an innocent person is powerful, and it can help a lot".

1 John 1: 9, CEV

"But if we confess our sins to God, He can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away".

Confession is not saying, "I'm sorry", it is saying "I did it".

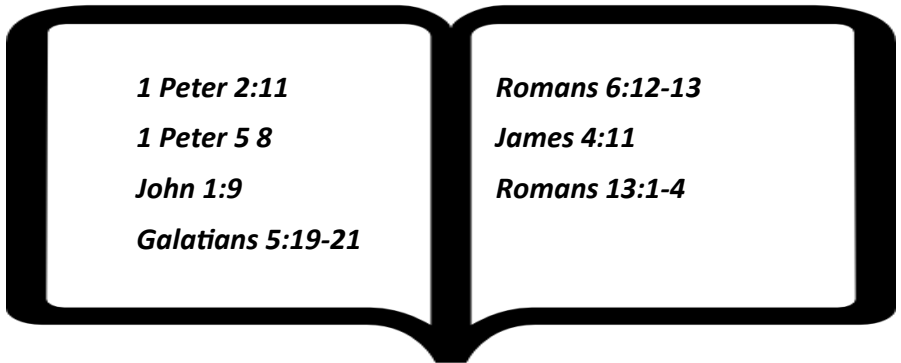
Prayer

"Dear Heavenly Father.

You have told us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, in regard to its lust. I acknowledge that I have given in to the fleshly lusts that wage war against my soul. I thank you that, in Christ, my sins are forgiven, but I have transgressed your holy law and given the enemy an opportunity to wage war in my members. I come before your presence, to acknowledge these sins and to seek your cleansing, that I may be freed from the bondage of sin. I now ask you to reveal to my mind the ways that I have transgressed your moral law and grieved the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' precious name I pray.

Amen".

Some scriptures for you to go and look up:



"Christ gives freedom. People's desires make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds. They worship idols, practice witchcraft, hate others, and are hard to get along with. People become jealous, angry and selfish. They not only argue and cause trouble, but they are envious. They get drunk and carry out wild parties and do other evil things as well. I told you before, and I'm telling you again; no-one who does these things will share the blessing in God's kingdom".

If we use our body as an instrument of unrighteousness, we allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies. It is our responsibility not to do this. If you are struggling with habitual sexual sins (pornography, masturbation, sexual promiscuity) or experiencing sexual difficulty and intimacy in your marriage, pray as follows:

Prayer

"Lord, I ask you to reveal to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness. In Jesus' precious name I pray, Amen".

As the Lord brings to your mind every sexual use of your body, whether it was done to you (rape, incest or any sexual molestation) or willingly by you, renounce every occasion.

Prayer:

"Lord, I renounce (name the specific use of your body) with (name the person) and ask you to break that bond".

Now commit your body to the Lord by praying:

*"Lord,
I renounce all these uses of my body, as an instrument of unrighteousness, and by doing so ask you to break all bondages Satan has brought into my life through that involvement. I confess my participation. I now present my body to you as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto you, and I reserve the sexual use of my body only for marriage. I renounce the lie of Satan that my body is not clean, that it is dirty or in any way unacceptable, as a result of my past sexual experiences. Lord, I thank you that you have totally cleansed and forgiven me, that you love and accept me unconditionally. Therefore, I can accept myself. And I choose to do so, to accept my body and myself as cleansed.*

In Jesus' name, Amen."

Step 7 – Cutting off generational sins

The last step to freedom is to renounce the sins of your ancestors and any curses that may have been placed on you. In giving the Ten Commandments God said,

"Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth. Don't bow down and worship idols. I am the Lord your God and I demand all your love. If you reject me, I will punish your families for three or four generations." (**Exodus 20:4-5 CEV**).

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

In order to walk free from past influences, firstly, read the following declaration and prayer to yourself, so that you know exactly what you are declaring and asking. Then claim your position and protection in Christ by making the declaration verbally and humbling yourself before God in prayer.

Declaration

*"I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ, and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce all satanic assignments that are directed toward me and my ministry, and I cancel every curse that Satan and his workers have put on me. I announce to Satan and all his forces that, Christ became a curse for me (**Galatians 3:13**) when He died for my sins on the cross. I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased me with His own blood. I reject all other blood sacrifices, whereby Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. By the authority that I have in Jesus Christ, I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is in or around me, to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father, and to do His will from this day forward."*

Special Prayer for Specific Needs

Substance Abuse

“Lord, I confess that I have misused substances (alcohol, tobacco, food, prescription or street drugs) for the purpose of pleasure, to escape reality, or to cope with difficult situation;; resulting in the abuse of my body, the harmful programming of my mind and the quenching of the Holy Spirit. I ask your forgiveness, and I renounce any satanic connection or influence in my life through my misuse of chemicals or food. I cast my anxiety onto Christ who loves me, and I commit myself to no longer yield to substance abuse but to the Holy Spirit. I ask you, heavenly Father, to fill me with your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

Ask whoever is guiding you through this course, for any other special prayers for special needs, such as homosexuality, abortion, suicidal tendencies, eating disorders or cutting yourself.

After you have confessed all known sin, pray:

“I now confess these sins to you, Father, and claim my forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I cancel all ground that evil spirits have gained through my wilful involvement in sin. I ask this in the wonderful name of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Prayer

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

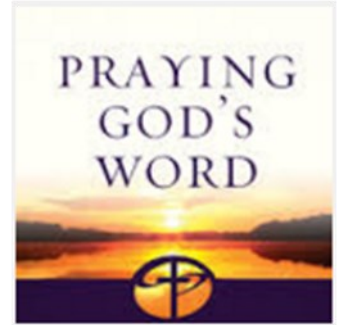
Once you have secured your freedom, by going through these seven steps, you may find demonic influences attempting to re-enter, days and even months after this. Although you have had victory, this doesn't mean you have won the war. Freedom must be maintained. We call on Jesus, the ultimate authority, and He escorts the enemy out of our lives. Know the truth, stand firm and resist the evil one. Seek out good Christian fellowship and commit yourself to regular times of Bible study and prayer. God loves you and will never forsake you.

1. Seek legitimate Christian fellowship where you can walk in the light and speak the truth in love.
2. Study your Bible daily. Memorise key verses.
3. Take every thought captive to obedience to Christ. Assume responsibility for your thought life.
4. Don't drift away from your new family, the local Church.
5. Don't expect another person to fight your battle for you. Others can help but they can't think, pray, read the Bible or choose the truth for you.
6. Commit yourself to daily prayer.

Prayer apps



Centering Prayer by Contemplative Outreach Ltd.



Praying God's Word by Lifeway Christian Resources.

The first set of prayer cards (Theme: Overcoming Unbelief) are free.



PrayerMate - Christian Prayer app.

Well worth getting if you want to develop a regular prayer habit.



Your standard **'Reminders'** app can be a powerful help you remember to pray. You can set it to remind you at certain times and locations.

Whangarei Central Baptist Church

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