

Prayer Resolution Workshop

*Resolving issues that hinder us from meaningful relationships,
a satisfying life and effective ministry.*

*Prayer Resolution Methods and Theory of
Richard D. Smith and Connie L. Smith*

This version of the Prayer Resolution Workshop has been created by Michael R. Banker as a derivative work. Content has been edited, deleted, expanded, or added, to make the workshop more relevant and understandable in East Asia based on 10 years of experience in a Chinese context without changing the methods, theory or underlying principles.

Copyright © 1995 by Richard D. Smith Copyright © 2000, 2008, 2012 Richard D. Smith & Connie L. Smith All Rights Reserved

All rights reserved. No part of this material may be reproduced without the written permission of the author.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible: New International Versions. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society.

Scripture identified **GNB** are from the Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version (TEV), Copyright © 1966, 1971, 1976 by the American Bible Society.

Scripture identified **NAS** are from the New American Standard Bible. Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, by the Lockman Foundation.

In essence, any events related here are true. However, names have been changed and some details have been slightly altered to protect the privacy of the persons involved.

www.cross-resources.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1 - Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Giving and Receiving Forgiveness.....	
Reconciliation.....	

PART 2 - Death Sins

The Death Laws.....	
Consequences of Sexual Sin.....	
Rebellion and Rebellious Authority.....	
Cursed by Association and Participation.....	

PART 3 - Destructive Beliefs

Words of Power.....	
Living by Foundational Lies.....	
Worthiness.....	

PART 4 - Being a Safe Helper

God's Role.....	
God's Approach.....	
Participants.....	
Heart of a Safe Helper.....	
Prayer Resolution Techniques.....	
Is the Hurting One Ready or Not?.....	
Session Guidelines.....	
Personal History.....	
Session Pattern	
Dealing with Family.....	
Prayer Resolution Books	

PART 1

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

Giving and Receiving Forgiveness

Agnes was a counselor to Christian missionaries in the Middle East. She had been cruelly gang raped as a teenager. Through other counselors she had extended forgiveness but was still in pain and relived the incident in her mind regularly along with all the shame, anger and defilement. She struggled and asked daily, 'Why hasn't God freed me? Why doesn't He care?'

Her Safe Helper, Richard, prayed for help to determine the core of the problem and the thought came to him that forgiveness was the issue. So he asked, "On what basis did you forgive them?"

Agnes said, "on the same basis that Jesus did on the cross; 'Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing'."

The men that raped Agnes knew what they were doing, they plotted and waited and maybe even enjoyed it and if they had a chance they may even do it again.

Agnes became angrier and angrier and so when it was time to accuse and forgive them it was very hard.

Only when we accept that a terrible wrong has been done to us and the offender is totally without excuse can we extend true healing forgiveness.

We can best forgive when we begin to really feel the emotions that occurred at that time. Our feelings validate our perceived injustice. These emotions are under the surface affecting our lives now.

HOLINESS AND JUSTICE

God is Holy AND God is Just AND God is Love.

All three of these elements of His character must be maintained without violating the others. So when His holiness is violated, His sense of justice must be satisfied. But justice must be satisfied in such a way that it does not compromise His holiness.

If God forgives us just because he loves us, he violates his holiness and justice. Sin must be paid for. If God forgives us just because he understands our weaknesses and excuses us, he violates his holiness and justice. Again sin must be paid for.

Forgiveness is based on the premise that the "wages of sin is death" and that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." God is able to forgive us because Jesus' blood has been shed for us, payment has been made when we have become His children . Under the New Covenant Jesus' blood pays for all our sin .

God loved us and wanted to have fellowship with us, but sin prohibited that from happening . God wanted to forgive us our sin, but was unable to do so until payment was made. The shed blood of Jesus Christ made the payment! Now God was able to extend forgiveness to us by applying that payment to our sin, to our debt.

God chose to forgive us because he loves us AND was able to forgive us because payment was made.

Although we do not deserve forgiveness God chooses to show mercy to us and allows Christ's sacrifice to cover the debt we owe. Mercy is that God accepts Christ's blood instead of our own for payment of our debt.

God's standard, then, forms the basis by which we can forgive the awful deeds that are done against us and also those awful deeds that we do to others. In other words, God forgives us because Jesus paid for our sin. We are made in the image of God, so we don't have to forgive them just because we love them, or just because we understand them, or just because it happened a long time ago. We can forgive others because God will make sure the debt they owe us is paid, either by Jesus' death or by their own death.

God has told us that vengeance is His to do and He will indeed see that justice is done.

PERCEPTION

We accuse for what we perceive is wrong NOT what is wrong. Our thoughts and our emotions create what seems very real to us. Even if I mistakenly judged the offender, I must still forgive for the wrong committed against me as I perceive it. If that perception is a false judgment or accusation or a misunderstanding then afterwards the Holy Spirit can convict me and I can confess and ask God for forgiveness.

Often, when we perceive we've been wronged, we get angry. We are told to "Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger" . This means that feeling angry is not a sin but acting in angry is sin or holding on to our anger is a sin. When we hang on to anger it becomes hatred or bitterness which is sin.

We are warned elsewhere not to remain in a state of anger. Feeling angry is not sin, but complaining about them to others behind their back, gossip, slander, seeking revenge, refusing to stop judging them and hand them over to God to judge is sin. When the Holy Spirit convicts us about our words or actions or thoughts, we need to confess and ask for forgiveness from God for our part.

Sometimes anger is accumulated due to unforgiveness and results in an act of rage. The response is not in proportion to the incident that just happened. This is sin because our anger is directed to the wrong person or we have held on to the anger toward them.

Example - Mother-Child Argument

We were in the car with our 8-year old son, going to church for a prayer meeting. My wife and son had an argument in the car, and when we arrived, we were not ready for a prayer meeting. My son was hurt and my wife was really angry. I told her that I was going to help him forgive her.

Discussion

So, I took my son to the side so we could talk privately and asked him if he was hurt, and he shook his head yes and tears came down. I asked him who hurt him and he pointed at his mom. I asked him what she did that hurt him so badly and he told me.

Child's Prayer of Forgiveness

I told him that when he weeps, his Heavenly Father weeps with him and encouraged him to **tell Him what she did**, so he prayed, telling his Heavenly Father exactly what she did that hurt him.

When he finished praying, I told him he had a very difficult decision to make, he had to **decide whether to forgive his mom or not to forgive her**. I said that I knew he loved his mom, but from his tears I could see that he was also very hurt. I asked him to think about why he might forgive her. I told him that if he trusted his Heavenly Father to deal with his mom for him and if he believed that he would be satisfied with what He did, then he should forgive her. He prayed and forgave her, asking Him to deal with her for him.

After he forgave her, I asked him if he felt that he had done anything wrong toward his mom. More tears came down and he shook his head yes. So, I encouraged him to pray and **tell his Heavenly Father specifically what he did that hurt her** so much. So, he prayed.

Then, I told him to pray and **ask his Heavenly Father to forgive him**. He prayed.

Witnessing Prayer

When he had finished his prayers, I added my prayer to his, saying I was a witness to his decision to forgive his mom today for this incident, and thanked our Heavenly Father for dealing with his mom for him. I also said I was a witness to his heartfelt confession and that he asked our Heavenly Father to forgive him. I thanked our Heavenly Father for forgiving him as he said he would in the Bible. He felt peace when we were all done.

Reconciliation

After his prayer and my prayer were done, I asked if there was anything he thought he should do and he said he should apologize to his mom. I told him that I didn't know if she would apologize to him, but he said he should apologize anyway because he should take responsibility for his actions by apologizing.

Mom's Prayer of Forgiveness

His mom was really angry, he had treated her so disrespectfully. She cooked for him, cleaned his clothes, helped him with homework, comforted him, encouraged him and still he treated her so badly. It was hard for her to pray at that moment but after awhile she did.

She knew she had to accuse him for the things he had done to her, but questioned herself if it was fair to accuse a child before God. But she decided that when she needed to forgive, she must still accuse no matter who the person was, even her own child. She was able trust to her Heavenly Father to do perfect justice for her. He loved her son more than she did. Point-by-point, **she accused her son before her Heavenly Father** for the wrongs he had done against her in the car.

At first, she struggled to forgive him, but then **she decided to forgive him**, trusting her Heavenly Father enough to believe that He would do justice for her. His justice would always be fair.

After she forgave her son, she was amazed, she realized that she had hurt him. Before she forgave him, she was blinded to her own part. So, **she confessed her sin** to her Heavenly Father.

Then **she asked God to forgive her**. She felt peace when she was done.

Reconciliation

She also wanted to apologize to him because it was the right thing to do.

So, they apologized to each other, hugged and cried some more.

Resolution

Our son had threatened to run away because of this incident, but after the prayer of forgiveness, he never threatened to run away again. It was resolved.

From this example we can see that the Prayer of Forgiveness has four basic steps:

1. Accuse in Prayer
2. Forgive in Prayer
3. Confess in Prayer
4. Ask for forgiveness in Prayer

As the safe helper to the hurting one (my son):

- I talked with him only until he knew what to pray.
- I respected his perspective of what happened, both his emotions and memories, and didn't try to correct them, dismiss them, or minimize them.
- I didn't defend, or excuse the wrongdoer or minimize what she did
- I encouraged him to pray to his Heavenly Father
- I encouraged him to be clear and specific, not general, when he prayed.
- I made it clear that forgiving her meant he was trusting God to deal with her.
- I didn't pressure him to confess, his own conscience and the Holy Spirit did that.
- I also didn't assume he was innocent, I just asked him if there was anything he did that was wrong.
- As a witness, I added my prayer, clearly stating what he had done and what God had done in response.

As the hurting one:

- His tears confirmed that he was deeply hurt and needs to accuse the wrongdoer and also confirmed he was sorry for what he'd done so he needs to pray.
- His own conscience and the Holy Spirit convicted him, not me.
- He decided as an act of his own uncoerced will to do each step.

Forgiveness is not Reconciliation

It only takes one person to forgive, but it takes two people to reconcile.

You can always forgive, but you can't always reconcile.

It may not be safe or wise to reconcile.

If they don't want to reconcile then you can't be reconciled. That's why the Bible says to be at peace **as far as you are able**, because sometimes we are not able to be at peace.

ORDER OF FORGIVENESS

There are four basic parts:

1. Accuse in Prayer
2. Forgive in Prayer
3. Confess in Prayer
4. Ask for forgiveness in Prayer

Accuse in Prayer

We are told to “forgive one another.” In order to forgive, we must clearly state what debts are owed.

We pray, knowing He wants me to be healed from this offense.

We bring the offender before our heavenly Father.

We see the offense, hurt, wound, sin through God’s eyes.

We tell the Father point by point, what I perceive the offender did to me.

We tell our Father honestly without holding back, how I do or did feel.

Our words may be condemning when we accuse, but unlike Satan we choose to give up our judgment when we forgive and recognize that it is God’s place to judge not ours. We accuse to forgive them, but Satan accuses them to condemn them.

We need to be specific enough that it appeals to your sense of justice.

We pray to God as Father, the way Jesus taught us in the Lord’s Prayer.

We need to accuse all those people involved, the “greater circle.” Start from the outside, those with a smaller part, and work toward the middle, those with a bigger part in the offense.

Forgive in Prayer

Let's start with a basic definition of Forgiveness:

*Forgiveness is trusting God enough to believe that
He will see that justice is done on MY behalf
according to His standard and I will be satisfied.*

The wounded one is the one hurt and God is the one doing justice. The wounded one must believe that God will do justice for him or else he cannot forgive the one who has wounded him, he cannot trust God to deal with it. God is just and if the wounded one believes this, then his sense of justice will be satisfied, even though God may not do justice the way he would or when he would. It means that the wounded one trusts God because of His character.

SO WHAT WOULD IT FEEL LIKE TO TRULY FORGIVE SOMEONE?

When we truly forgive:

- I don't hold a grudge
- I don't demand payment
- I don't need to talk about them behind their back
- I don't carry a burden anymore
- I don't need anything from them not even an apology
- I no longer bear witness against them

When I choose to forgive

- I am trusting God to see payment is made
- I permit God to decide who will pay for this
- I give up insisting that the offender die for the offense
- I am willing to let Christ's blood pay for this if they believe

If you excuse their behavior you aren't really accusing them. We let God decide if they knew what they were doing was wrong or not.

It is only when we accept that we perceive a terrible wrong has been done to us and that the offender is without excuse can we extend true healing forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a choice, but it must be from the heart or it doesn't count. God is not under any obligation to respond to an insincere statement of forgiveness.

When someone hurts us, it's like being stabbed with a knife. Often we pray and ask God to take away the pain and he does, but the pain comes back because the Knife is still there. When we forgive, we are removing the knife. When the knife has been removed, healing can start. There will be a scar, we won't forget that we've been hurt, but scars don't hurt. It is not enough to ask God to take away the pain we need to take away the knife by accusing and forgiving in prayer, letting God do justice for us.

WHEN WOUNDED ONE IS NOT READY TO FORGIVE

You may choose to NOT forgive. You may not be ready, the pain is still too raw, you just want to carry the pain longer, live with the shame and hurt etc. Many people choose to not forgive for a time. But God did not design you to carry it. He wants to do justice for you, but He will not get in the way of your freewill. You may choose to forgive when you get tired of carrying this huge burden.

WHEN WOUNDED ONE CHOOSES NEVER TO FORGIVE

BUT some people choose to NEVER forgive, what happens then?

If you choose unforgiveness, God will not remove the hurt and you will continue to demand payment yourself. You will be choosing a tortured life .

People tend to "do" justice either too harshly or not enough. Only God does perfect justice. God will do justice for you, but you may not get to see justice done, nor do you get to tell God how to do justice. God may or may not do justice in their life time, justice may not come until they die.

To choose to allow justice to be done by God is really putting our faith to the test. We must decide if our God is really "big" enough to handle this issue for us. Having God carry this burden and do justice for us helps us to have a better relationship with God.

Confess in Prayer

Sometimes we have no part in the offense, we are the **victim** and have nothing to confess. At other times we are the **perpetrator** and there is nothing to accuse. Usually, however we are a **participant**, and we need to both forgive and confess. We may even begin as a victim and then become a willing participant.

Until we extend forgiveness we may even be blind to our own part.

What is the difference between judging someone and forgiving them?

We are told to not judge people. Judging them puts you in God's position. We want to truly forgive them and give them to God to do vengeance and we step out of the role of judge by forgiving them.

What does the Lord's Prayer say about forgiveness and confession?

"Forgive us our trespasses AS we forgive those who trespass against us"

Which comes first according to this verse, extending forgiveness or receiving forgiveness?

We need to forgive others so God can forgive us in the same manner.

How do I want to be judged and by whom?

I want to be judged by a righteous judge and to be judged by the perfect righteous judge I need to hand over all my accusations to God so He will then judge me in the same manner for this incident or issue.

Forgiving others first will help us to see our sins. It is our God-given conscience and the Holy Spirit that brings conviction to us of our part. He tells us we have done something wrong. Sometimes we may need another person's wisdom and discernment to help us see what it is that we have done to the other person and God and how it is sin.

Confession must be from the heart. We must regret and have remorse for our wrongdoing, resolve in our heart to turn away from doing it or again, and remove it from our thoughts. When we confess we are abandoning this wrongdoing and God is our witness. God does not have to respond to an insincere prayer.

Don't blame others for your response. Blaming makes someone else responsible for my response (my actions or my words) and excuses me from any responsibility. The devil made me do it, my child made me angry, Accusing someone makes **them** responsible for **their** own actions and words, but blaming someone makes **them** responsible for **my** actions and words. I alone am responsible for my actions and words.

Ask For Forgiveness in Prayer

Confession is not the same as asking for forgiveness.

We need to come to God with a contrite spirit and ask His forgiveness.

But why would God forgive you? Your sin is paid for by Christ's blood when you are a believer. God chooses to forgive us because He loves us, but he is able to forgive us because it is paid for.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING SO BAD THAT YOU CAN'T FORGIVE YOURSELF? WHAT THEN?

We need to ask ourselves:

Who pays for this sin?

- Do we have a higher standard than God? Is Christ's blood enough?
- Are we going to live our lives beating up ourselves and not receive God's forgiveness?
- Are we going to start trying to "earn" forgiveness that is given freely by believing in Christ?
- Who rejoices when we are trapped in world of our not forgiving ourselves?

Choose to forgive yourself and let Christ's blood cover your sin by accepting his forgiveness and thank God for this payment!

Summary of the Prayer of Forgiveness:

1. Understand the issue or incident clearly
2. Accuse without excusing the wrong
3. Forgive
4. Confess without excusing yourself
5. Ask for forgiveness
6. Forgive yourself

Witnessing Prayer

Optional steps:

- Emotions given to God

Forgiveness issues often involve strong emotions. If recalling the memory stirs up these emotions, we can ask God to take them away because they are not needed any more and only harm us now.

- Memories put under the control of the Holy Spirit

We can also ask God to put the memory under the control of the Holy Spirit, so it only comes up if God has some good purpose for it.

- Familial bonds restored or broken completely

Once forgiveness in prayer has been extended and received, we can ask God to strengthen the familial bond or in break the bond completely if it's still not safe. (Matthew 18:15-20)

- Lies (destructive beliefs) arising out of the sin confronted

Sometimes Satan uses the sin of others to affect our beliefs. For example, a father almost beats his child to death and Satan says to the child "no one loves you, you're unloveable." In this case, it is not enough to extend forgiveness, we must also resolve the lie.

- Occult issues or sexual issues arising out of the sin confronted

Sometimes the forgiveness issue includes ties and defilement from occult or sexual sin activities that must also be resolved.

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation may be seen as part of a process in healing a relationship gone wrong, typically as the result of one party putting an end to a relationship of peace and goodwill and substituting a relationship of enmity.

Forgiving comes before any possibility for reconciliation. Until we have forgiven, all we can do is react in various harmful ways. We ignore what happened and pretend it did not happen. We can keep the pain alive by re-enacting the events in our minds and thus further embed the pain, hurt and anger. Both of these options only harm us. With forgiveness comes the possibility of reconciliation but we must consider if it is possible, prudent and even safe to do so.

Scriptural Insights

In Colossians 1:21, 22 (NIV), reconciled refers to a change produced in the personal character of the sinner who ceases to be an enemy to God because of his wrongdoings (sin). and gives God his full trust and love.

In 2 Corinthians 5:20 the apostle beseeches the Corinthians to be "reconciled to God", i.e to lay aside their enmity.

Romans 5:10 refers not to any change in our disposition toward God, but to God himself as the party reconciled. Romans 5:11 teaches the same truth. From God we have received "the reconciliation," i.e., he has conferred on us the token of his friendship.

So also 2 Corinthians 5:18,19 reconciliation originates with God, and is possible because of the removal of his wrath toward us as sinners.

In Ephesians. 2:16 it is clear that the apostle does not refer to the winning back of the sinner in love and allegiance to God, but to the restoration of God's favor. This is possible by his justice being satisfied, so that he can, in consistency with his own nature, be favorable toward sinners. While his justice demands the punishment of sinners, the death of Christ satisfies justice, and so reconciles God to us. This reconciliation makes God our friend and enables him to pardon and save us.

Real Reconciliation

In general, reconciliation can be seen as acknowledging and dealing with the past. That means acknowledging the hurt, losses and suffering of the past. It provides the means for justice, healing, restitution, and restoration— including asking forgiveness, if necessary, and steps aimed at putting right the wrong. Reconciliation requires that people acknowledge their own roles in the conflict of the past, accepting and learning from them in a constructive way so as to guarantee non-repetition.

The story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) is a good example of the process of real reconciliation:

- Wronged: Joseph's brother Judah and his brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt and then told their father Jacob that he was killed by wild animals.
- Unforgiveness: Joseph forgot his past (41:51) until his brothers arrived 20 years later. When Joseph sees his brothers (42) he hasn't forgiven them:
 - speaks harshly, falsely accuses them, swears an oath against them in Pharaoh's name
 - puts them in prison, threatens their lives, lords his power over them
- Acknowledges Loss: Joseph acknowledges the great loss caused by their sin, weeping on five occasions; sees brothers, sees Benjamin, reveals his identity, sees father, receives brothers' message from Jacob..
- Acknowledge Wrong: The brothers acknowledged their wrongdoing:
 - unknowingly acknowledged it when overheard in 42:21-23
 - indirectly acknowledged it through their message in 50:15-18.
 - directly acknowledged it when they fell down before him (50:18)
- Forgiveness: Three incidents clearly show Joseph forgave them:
 - when the brothers were in prison, Joseph changed his attitude and actions because he "fears God" (42:18)
 - when they return with Benjamin, he lets them leave without any further punishment (44:17).
 - after his father's death, he says "Am I God?" in response to the question whether he would kill them (50:19), showing he trusts God for justice.
- Reconciliation: Reconciliation was a process:
 - when they first met, Joseph didn't trust them, so he hid his identity (42:7) and used a translator though he could understand them (42:23)
 - then he tested their words to see if they were truthful (42:20), but kept a hostage to make sure they returned (42:19)
 - after they returned, he tested their protection of Benjamin (44)
 - when Judah, who sold him, protects his brother (44:33), Joseph reconciles (45:15), providing for all his brothers and their families even after Jacob's death (50:21).
 -

Reconciliation is a choice not an obligation, but God himself as the example we want to follow if possible. He has sought ways to be reconciled to us and as his children, we want to be reconciled to those around us. As the ideal we want to see reconciliation as a possibility and a process. But even God himself isn't reconciled with everyone. He wants to be reconciled, but they must turn toward him and away from their enmity.

It is a Possibility

When we forgive we open a door to reconciliation but we do not have to go through the door. We can erroneously think that forgiving means:

- • Now we must be reconciled to them.
- • We must now trust them.
- • We must relate to them in the future.

Reconciliation cannot take place if the others continue to deny or excuse their behavior or if they redefine their actions as minor. A one-time offense that is quite different from a pattern of offense. Also much depends on the nature of the betrayal or wrongdoing. For example, molestation is a major factor, stealing is another and stealing over time yet another.

Reconciliation does not mean automatic trust nor can trust be restored easily; it can be a slow process. The offenders words are not enough; we will need to see changed attitudes and actions over time.

It takes two for reconciliation to take place so we must see clear evidence that the others are trying to do their part. If we are unsure of their actions then we need to consider why. Do we feel they are faking it? Do we feel their actions are merely superficial and short term? If we do not trust their sincerity then the process of reconciliation is not going to happen.

It is a Process

Reconciliation is a process in a relationship where an atmosphere of enmity is changed to one of peace and goodwill. In other words, enemies become friends. Forgiveness is a choice, to trust is a process. To really trust another, we must feel confident that he will not harm or betray us again. Such confidence only comes with time.

The intensity of our feelings toward others, or lack of feelings, can help or hinder. The closer emotionally we are to those who wronged us, the more intense will be our sense of betrayal. The rift can be two-sided reflection of a flawed relationship to begin with.

We can forgive another without confronting them but reconciliation differs from forgiveness in that it is conditioned by the attitude and action of the other person, the one who wronged us or whom we wronged.

It is two-sided:

It takes two or more to be reconciled. The one seeking reconciliation must be willing to take the chance of being hurt. Reconciliation is always possible if both parties accept full responsibility for their actions and do not try to explain them away. If they are trying to change their harmful behavior and are willing to listen to constructive criticism then both must help and not hinder by anticipating the worst.

There might be hesitation:

Sometimes we can hesitate to seek reconciliation because we have been part of the problem. This in no way lessens their wrongdoing but at times we may have aggravated the situation by our own actions and attitudes. Sometimes, we must ask for forgiveness from others for the process of reconciliation to take place.

We do not want to be pressured toward a quick reconciliation. Quick forgiveness and reconciliation can be superficial. We need to give ourselves time to absorb what happened and what it has done to us. On the other hand, we do not want to use time as a means of resisting reconciliation. Delay can be a form of payback.

There might be good reasons to hesitate. We might doubt their sincerity, for example, if the others continue to wrong us in the same way or if they continually ask forgiveness but are not changing. On the other hand, there is a danger in waiting too long before reconciliation is initiated because friends can become strangers over time and even a family member can mentally write off another member as dead.

We should consider some ground rules for reconciliation, depending on the situation: there might be a need for restitution, going to drug rehabilitation, holding down a job and so on. Just talk is not enough.

Reconciliation is a process, which takes time. In the process there can be lapses so we do not want to write others off. It takes approximately 20 days, for good patterns to take hold and bad patterns to die. They may hurt us again. If they are aware when it happens and have regret then our job is to acknowledge what they did one more time and forgive. Depending on the nature of the wrong, small lapses might well occur and yet be part of the process toward reconciliation.

Even if the offending person has been the enemy, Jesus said that we should pray for those who despitefully use us (Luke 6:27-30). Hard as that is, our attitude toward others can change when we pray for them and seek their good and out of that can come the possibility for reconciliation.

It Can Be Resisted

It takes two to have reconciliation happen; sometime all we can do is to let go of the goal of reconciliation in order to get on with life. If the other is unwilling then we step back and give the other space. More than that, we need to give up the sense of obligation to reconcile and stop expending emotion energy to make it happen.

We cannot make people accept us or love us. Even if we have done our part, and sought forgiveness for what we did, there might still be a wall between us.

It Can Be Limited

At times, all we can hope for is limited reconciliation. We guided a family through Prayer Resolution: mother, father, and daughter. The father had made a sexual advance on his daughter. It went no further than a touch but was instantly rejected by the daughter. It did not stop there, however, because the daughter no longer trusted her father. In addition, when the mother learned of it, she started to doubt her husbands behavior and actions around all their children. The father confessed his sin and received forgiveness. His wife and daughter forgave him but that was only a limited reconciliation. Repentant as the father is, there will always be a certain distance between him and his daughter, he will never again have the full trust of his wife or his daughter.

Reconciliation has taken place but that moment in time still hangs around in the background. Now all touch is suspect. He will never get back what he lost and his daughter will never fully get back the father she had.

We cannot fix every relationship; all we can do is take responsibility for our parts. When sin happens there are often long term consequences and some wrongs make it impossible to restore past relationships.

In another case, a couple divorced. Both were angry at the other. After each was separately guided in Prayer Resolution, they both came to realize that the marriage should never have taken place. In a sense, it was a marriage of friends rather than of lovers.

They forgave one another and were reconciled. They became friends once again but were always careful to not misunderstand the depth and kind of affection they felt for one another.

It can be Selective

There can be selective reconciliation in the sense that forgiveness and reconciliation can take place but the relationship is narrowly defined.

For example, one woman had a great deal of anger and bitterness towards her former husband. She accused him before God and extended forgiveness. Part of her forgiveness process was to break the spiritual tie between her and her former husband since she was now legally divorced and he was already remarried.

She did not, however, break the spiritual tie between her and him as the parents of their two boys. Divorced or not, he was still their father--but no longer her husband.

In the past, whenever her ex-husband came to pick up the boys, she would open the door and feel anger. After she had forgiven him, in his role as husband, she heard him arrive to get the boys, opened the door and her anger was gone! He was the father of her children and she felt no animosity toward him any longer. He sensed the difference in her attitude without saying anything and as time went on they became friendly— but not friends.

It Can Be Unwise

Sometimes we need to choose separation and forgo reconciliation for the sake of our own welfare. But first we need to consider what the benefits are if we do not reconcile. For example, if the other is an abuser, then being apart might give us the peace and safety we need.

A woman, with her two children, left her husband because he was physically abusive. She went to her church for counsel and they told her to return and be submissive to her husband. That guidance was unwise. Reconciliation is not possible or prudent when we have to be unsafe and endangered, nor is it possible at the cost of our identity--being who we are.

When safety is a concern then there is a place for a restraining order. There are situations where even a restraining order is not enough and the person (often a wife) has to move to another location or state.

A Final Comment

Sometimes we can overlook another's actions and not let it go farther. There is such a thing as being so thin-skinned that we are offended at the slighted action. On the other hand, we can be so thick-skinned that we never notice the harm we are bringing to others. We want to be slow to anger, quick to forgive—in right ways—outward focused, looking out for the welfare of the other. Sometimes that means overlooking a fault; sometimes it means confrontation. Knowing when to do one or the other is a question of wisdom!

The heavenly Father is pleased when reconciliation takes place and there is peace but never at our expense or well-being, nor for that matter, at the expense of the well-being of the other. Reconciliation should be a win-win arrangement.

PART 2

DEATH SINS

THE DEATH LAWS

If anyone should cause one of these little ones to lose his faith in me, it would be better for that person to have a large millstone tied around his neck and be drowned in the deep sea. How terrible for the world that there are things that make people lose their faith! Such things will always happen — but how terrible for the one who causes them! (Matt 18: 6-7, GNB)

In the Old Testament there were certain sins that were not automatically covered by the atonement sacrifice, nor by the daily sacrifices, instead, death was the penalty for the wrongdoer:

Adultery (Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22)
Animal Cohabitation (Lev. 20:15-16)
Blasphemy (Lev. 24:11-16)
False prophecy (Deut. 18:20)
Fornication (Deut 22:13-21)
Hitting or cursing a parent (Lev. 20:9, Exod 21:15-17)
Homosexuality (Lev. 20:13)
Idolatry (Lev. 20:1-5, Deut. 13; 17:2-5)
Incestuous relationships (Lev. 20:11-12, 14)
Kidnapping (Deut. 24:7)
Murder (Deut. 19:11-13)
Prostitution—by the daughter of a priest (Lev. 19:29)
Rape (Deut. 22:23-27)
Sabbath profaning (Exod 31:14)
Sodomy (Lev. 20:13)
Sorcery (Exodus 22:18, Lev. 20:6)

Notice that these sins fall into three main categories:

- Sins against the body (Sexual, etc)
- Sins against established order (Rebellion)
- Sins against God (Idolatry)

Another example is bastards, Ammonites and Moabites could not even offer any sacrifices because they could not be "included among the Lord's people" until the tenth generation. (Deut 23:2-3)

Implications

Maybe certain sins have more force and power than others and needed special treatment to be fully voided under the Old Testament.

Maybe these sins need to be treated in a special and specific way before God under the New Testament.

Christ paid for these sins, but because the wrongdoer had to be sacrificed in these cases, maybe these sins need to be specifically presented to God in prayer to fully experience forgiveness, cleansing, and release—the breaking of the power of these sins.

It's true, "Sin is sin" and "There is no such thing as a minor sin," and any sin can stand between us and a holy God, but certain sins once committed, set in motion a series of events much bigger than the act itself.

Christ's sacrifice provided more than salvation; it also provided for release from the effect of sin on a day-to-day basis.

While we are saved when we come to Christ, we often find that even though the burden of sin has been lifted, the consequences of sin are still there. We continue to carry the scars of living in a sinful culture and continue in the patterns and habits of the past.

For restoration and new life we need more than forgiveness, we need to have the power of God break the ongoing consequences of those sins.

CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL SIN

Sexual sin, as defined by Jesus, begins in the mind. Sexual sin can take place even though there has been no physical touch.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28).

Flirting, speaking, looking, holding hands, hugging, kissing, fondling, laying together fully clothed, fantasizing and intercourse are a few of the behaviors that are a part of the sexual act. God gave sex as a blessing to married couples only, so all sexual acts done outside of marriage are sexual sin.

Standards for sexual purity as with other social standards are often defined by the culture and sometimes also defined by the individual. As long as these standards do not violate any Scripture, even though we as the counselor may not see any wrong in the action, we must treat a violation of the standard as a valid defiling act for the person. This means a full accusing, confessing, breaking of bonds and cleansing from defilement must be done for each sexual sin.

There are physical, emotional and spiritual consequences whenever sexual sin occurs. A spiritual tie is created when sexual union occurs.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make ten members of a prostitute? May it never be! 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 with the Lord is one with him in spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:15-17)

Genesis 2:24 and 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 imply that something happens spiritually. Although we become connected to someone physically through sex, we know that in reality we cannot become one physical body — our cells do not intermix to make one hybrid body. We can only become one with them spiritually. When Paul says we are united as members of Jesus body, he is referring to our becoming one with Jesus spiritually. So, Paul is making it clear that we can't become one spiritually with a prostitute AND become one with Christ. The prostitute's body is for immorality, but Christ's body is for righteousness. We can also see from this passage that there is spiritual bond not just a physical connection whenever there is a sexual union.

If the partners are married, this spiritual connection is a good thing; if not, then it becomes an issue that must be dealt with before the oneness of marriage can take place. Feelings of dirtiness, unworthiness, shame and guilt are natural consequences of sexual sin whether we are the victim, the perpetrator, or the partner. So far, in our experience, we have not seen the effects of sexual sin resolved through vague or general prayer. Neither becoming a believer nor the passing of time affects the on-going power of the consequences.

People often think that general confession is sufficient for subsequent forgiveness, cleansing, and the breaking or creating of ties. However, we have not because we ask not. In the following case study we will see that a general confession handles little.

BONDS

Example: Lani

Before becoming a Christian, Lani was engaged to Charles and had chosen to keep her virginity until she was married. One night after taking drugs and drinking she passed out. When she awoke the next morning she realized that Charles had raped her. She broke off the engagement.

After that, Lani dated several men and was sexually active with seven of them. After she became a Christian, she stopped her promiscuous behavior. As part of her preparation as a missionary, she received counseling. At that time she confessed her sexual past and in general terms, asked for forgiveness. Later she met and married Rob. Rob was vaguely aware of her sexual history but did not think about it because all of it happened before she was saved.

Ten years and two children later Lani and Rob were missionaries overseas, when Rob came to us in great distress feeling that Lani was distant, withdrawn and as he put it, she was not fully his. Lani was distressed because she did not know how to bridge this gap in their relationship. Could we be of any help?

As a matter of fact, we could. This is basically what we had Lani do:

- We asked Rob to not be a part of this, so he volunteered to watch the children.
- We took a quick chronological history from Lani where we found, among some other very real problem areas, the sexual history recorded above.
- In working with the sexual history, she dealt with each man, individually by name, starting with the first.
- With Charles, the first man, Lani was a victim of rape, not a willing partner, but she did have to confess her drugs and drinking and ask forgiveness for having put herself in a vulnerable situation. She accused and forgave Charles for the betrayal and rape. Sexually, she had nothing to confess. Emotionally she felt shamed and defiled.

- With the other men Lani lived out her state of defilement and was a very willing partner. So each of these men had to be dealt with.
- Lani accused and forgave each one without excusing them in any way.

Previously, she had forgiven them in obedience to God's command without understanding the full implications of what they had done so there was incomplete forgiveness given.

- With each one she confessed and asked forgiveness for her part and did not excuse herself at all
- Lani asked God to break the bonds with each man that were created when she committed fornication with him. She asked her Heavenly Father to break the bonds with each man from three perspectives:
 - Spiritual: That God would break the spiritual oneness that was created through sexual sin — no sense of claim or ownership.
 - Physical: That the particular man's touch would no longer be special in a good or bad way — return the man to neutral.
 - Emotional: That there would no longer be any emotional attachment or attraction to that particular man — in either positive or negative ways.
- Lani asked God to give her spiritual cleansing from the defilement that was created through sexual sin with each man.
- Each man was dealt with as a complete prayer before going on to the next. After each prayer the Prayer Resolution team leader prayed a Witnessing Prayer which included a declaration of what God had done — based on Lani's forgiving these men and on her confession, she was forgiven (I John 1:9), the bonds were broken and she was cleansed
-

In Lani's and Rob's case, when the issues had been resolved, we brought them together and asked God to re-unite them as husband and wife, as now there were no other people in the way of their 'being one' in marriage.

Dealing with any issue is not simply a static experience. There were some interesting things going on:

- Throughout the session, Lani was sitting down but she later told us that she felt that she was standing before God the entire time.
- She saw herself as a ball or a blimp with ropes hanging down. Each time the team leader declared that the bonds were broken with a man, she saw the ball with one less string. She said that each time this happened it was as if a weight was lifted. As she became lighter and lighter she felt she was floating
- For years Lani had had a recurring nightmare. She would find herself in a room with Rob on the other side of the room. She would try to cross over to him but a man was in the center of the room stopping her. She now realized that the man in her dream was Charles, the fiancé who had raped her. After Prayer Resolution, the nightmare did not recur.

God will break the bond, but only if we agree, only if we are willing to give up this special relationship. We have claimed each other as sexual beings. This person is no longer just one of the bunch, neutral. They are now in a special category, a unique group. Sometimes we say or think things like "he's mine," "she's mine".

When this bond is formed, it is like two sheets of paper that have been glued together. If they break off the relationship, it is like tearing those two sheets apart and there is a part of one sheet on the other sheet. It can be very painful and very messy.

DEFILEMENT

After her rape Lani believed that she was damaged goods — she felt dirty, defiled, shamed and worthless. Living this out she then had sex with almost every man she dated. Her dream of standing before her bridegroom whole and pure died with that rape. It was over ten years into her marriage that she was finally able to unite as one in purity with her husband.

Time after time, after men and women have prayed with us to the Heavenly Father and handled all the sexual issues in their lives they have said, "For the first time, I really feel clean!"

In bringing resolution, there is a distinction between a victim and a partner:

- • The victim needs cleansing but not forgiveness
- • The partner needs both cleansing and forgiveness

In Prayer Resolution, when dealing with the issue of sexual sin, even for the victim, we must always deal with the bonds and the defilement. While there are not a lot of Scriptures to directly back up either this idea of defilement or bonds, there is enough evidence found both in Scripture and in life to cause us to hold strongly to these ideas.

Many choose to sin — there is no trickery or force involved! They are active partners. Others are passive partners, defiled by allowing another to go beyond the standard of purity and some are true victims.

DISTORTION IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness [have sexual relations]; I am the Lord. (Leviticus 18:6, NAS)

God's purpose in creation was that we could have a relationship with him that he likened to a family. Redemption took place so that this family could be established. The family and the family dynamics are very close to the heart of God. Therefore, the basic purpose of Scripture is to present principles for the foundation and day-to-day functioning of family to create the grounds for stability within the family, both the nuclear family and the extended family. When these principles and rules are violated then the family, which is the very core of society, is distorted and in disarray, the very structure of society becomes shaky and begins to crumble. It is within the family that we learn to appreciate the privileges, responsibilities and obligations that come with membership. When the family unit is not wholesome then our very identity as people of worth can be warped. In addition, our view and expectation of God can be distorted since we tend to expect from God the same things we have received from our parents; if they cannot be trusted then neither can we trust God.

There are certain natural relationships, such as a parent or sibling, and other ceremonial relationships, such as marriage and adoption that we all can have, or potentially have, within a nuclear family. The extended family is made up of those related by blood, such as grandparent or through marriage, such as in-laws. When any part of the family is compromised by sexual sin, the entire family structure is compromised because incest distorts family relationships.

PRE-MARRIAGE

Sexual acts between partners prior to marriage are called fornication. Often in Scripture, when the word adultery occurs, it also means fornication.

PLEDGED (ENGAGED)

Unmarried people fall into two categories, those unpledged and those pledged in marriage. (In modern terms, we would use the term engaged.)

But if out in the country a man happens to meet a girl pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die. (Deuteronomy 22:25)

The point is that the girl is helpless, her power is not enough and there is no one to help her in this situation, so she is an innocent victim, but Scripture also says,

If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of the town and stone them to death — the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. (Deuteronomy 22:23-24)

The point here is that the girl is not helpless in this situation so she is also guilty because she did nothing.

There are four issues that need consideration:

1. The man sinned, he violated the pact made between the virgin and her betrothed
2. A pledged woman is considered to already be a virgin wife
3. Therefore, sexual activity with a pledged (engaged) woman is the sin of adultery
4. If she was helpless in the situation, then he also sinned by raping her.

UNPLEDGED (NOT ENGAGED)

On the other hand, sexual activity between unpledged people not only created the necessity for marriage in that culture, but once married, divorce was prohibited (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).

"If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered, then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days.(Deuteronomy 22:28,29)

It is clear from this passage that he sinned against her and her father by seizing her and lying with her. She was no longer a virgin, so in her culture she was no longer available to marry any other man. Therefore this man would acknowledge his sin by paying the father a fine and providing her a home for the rest of his life, marrying her and never divorcing her. Seizing her was a violation, so it is implied that he will not seize her again, though she might choose to have sex with him in order to have children. He doesn't gain the right to marry her by seizing and lying with her, but he gains the responsibility if the father demands it.

It is also reasonable in that culture to apply these same principles to engaged couples that lie together before marriage. He should pay her father for violating her, for she has no proof of her virginity on her wedding night. He also gives up any right to break off the engagement and should support her for the rest of his life because she is no longer available to marry anyone else.

In some cultures, maybe a man will marry a woman even if she isn't a virgin, or she can provide herself a home, so she has more choices and doesn't have to marry the man that seized her, but the sex outside marriage is still wrong, is still sin.

Many of the married couples that come to us have had some form of pre-marital sex together. They have given all kinds of reasons and excuses as to why this was OK:

- • we were engaged and going to get married
- • we never had intercourse so therefore we did not commit sin
- • even though we were laying together and we both had sexual release, we did not take our clothes off.

Contrary to much of the thinking out there, subsequent marriage does not nullify or make right the pre-marriage sexual relations by those who are now husband and wife. Nor does marriage nullify the ties created with the wife's or husband's former sexual partners. There will continue to be a special bond between those who were involved in sexual activity until God intervenes.

Implication Now:

We live under the New Covenant, so we don't stone people to death for sin, but all sexual sin must be dealt with beginning with prayer but then also resolving any consequences.

Neither love nor planning to marry justifies sexual activity before marriage

Release and purity need to be received from God so that all unholy bonds are broken before the holy marriage bond can be created

Pre-marital counseling must include resolution for sexual issues: forgiveness, bonds broken and cleansing

MARRIAGE

The rite of passage into marriage creates that special relationship between a man and a woman that we call husband and wife. According to Scripture, in marriage they become one (Mark 10:7-8, NAS). Jesus said that it was God who makes the marriage oneness, so marriage should not be taken lightly.

Distortion comes when the marriage partners enter the marriage not being pure. The Scriptures only talk of the woman not being a virgin as an issue (for divorce) at the very beginning of the marriage, but nowhere does Scripture indicate the man should not be a virgin as well.

The assumption is that a man and woman come into the marriage with purity. Casual sexual activity before marriage is forbidden (Deuteronomy 22:13-15, 20-21). Once a man and woman become one flesh there are no allowances for sexual relations with any one else (Deuteronomy 22:22).

Adultery is an act of ultimate betrayal and is of such magnitude, power and force that it was punishable by death and was also legitimate grounds for divorce. Adultery really does distort all family relationships.

The Implications Now:

Marriage does not nullify past sexual history

If the marriage partners enter the marriage impure having committed fornication or adultery, then the marriage will not be founded in purity and unity until those past sexual sins are dealt with

As long as there are still other sexual partners either spiritually or physically in their mind or life, there can never be the oneness God intended, nor the intimacy that he intended between the marriage partners

Adultery distorts all family relationships

Although there was no sacrifice that could pay for adultery in the Law, Christ's fulfillment of the Law not only paid for the sin of adultery but also provided a way for bonds to be broken and cleansing to be given-thus providing a way for reconciliation of the marriage to take place

For example, at the front of the church on the right side stands the groom and next to him stands his three previous girlfriends. On the left side stands the bride and next to her stands her two previous boyfriends. Spiritually, this is the picture if they haven't broken those previous bonds

CHILDREN

One of the natural relationships that come out of a marriage is parenthood. A child is born and the special father-child and mother-child relationship is created.

Bastard: There is an importance to marry and to having offspring within wedlock (Deuteronomy 23:2, NAS). Distortion comes with the consequences of illegitimate birth (when the child has been conceived before marriage) in the Old Testament because the resulting child — and ten generations there after — are barred from entering the assembly of the Lord.

The Implications Now:

A believer, under a curse of illegitimacy (Deuteronomy 23:2), must acknowledge and forgive their parents' sin in prayer and ask for release and cleansing from the curse. Christ's death has provided everything we need to resolve this curse, we just need to pray.

The child of an illegitimate union is the victim, but bears the consequences for the parents actions

Molestation/Incest:

Children are very precious to God and he has entrusted them to the care of parents. He has even said that if a man does anything to cause a child to falter in trusting him that the anger of God would be so stirred up that it would be better for that man that a millstone be tied about his neck and he be cast into the deepest sea.

Molestation of a child by anyone robs that child of his or her innocence, produces sexual feelings that he or she does not know what to do with, and is one of the leading causes for runaways, promiscuity, sexual identity crises and homosexuality. The statistics are appallingly high for the occurrence of childhood sexual abuse in many forms.

Most of the time the child grows up to feel helpless, worthless, unlovable and confused.

*Do not have intercourse with the daughter or granddaughter of a woman with whom you have had intercourse; they may be related to you, and that would be incest.
(Leviticus 18:17, GNB)*

When a child is molested by a parent, an additional betrayal takes place that creates defilement and a distortion of the normal relationship between adult and child. When it is felt by the child that the non-offending parent knew about the other parent's abuse but did not protect them, then there is a double betrayal.

Example: Betty

As a pre-teen, Betty was molested by her father. The result was that she felt dirty and unworthy. Later in life she became a Christian and a missionary. The results of her molestation could be seen in that she constantly apologized for taking up time (lack of self worth), she focused almost exclusively on Jesus (distrust of an earthly father becomes distrust of the Heavenly Father) and she lived out the life of a humble servant of God (not a daughter who could be loved for herself but a servant who could only hope for approval for a job well done).

People who have rejected or been betrayed by their fathers on earth carry over that severing of relationships to God the Father. When a parent sins against a child, God is the ultimate loser since the child ceases to trust Him, as well as the parent.

Betty was the victim of her father's perverse desires but she felt that she was at fault. Even years later, she felt defiled. She lived and acted out her state of uncleanness and eventually went into premeditated degrading sexual sin. Even after repentance, she had to leave her ministry.

Betty's situation illustrates the need for several transactions to happen:

- • She needs to accuse and forgive the father
- • The unholy father-daughter bond needs to be broken (unnatural and defiled)
- • She needs spiritual cleansing as a victim
- • She needs to accept her father (or ask God to fully break the bond)
- • The father-daughter bond needs to be recreated (natural & normal)

It is also interesting to note that even when all of this was resolved and Betty was free and cleansed, at least one consequence remained — she was not allowed to return to her former ministry.

The Implications Now:

- • The parent-child relationship comes with very clear guidelines as to proper elements in that relationship
- • Sex in any form is not one of the elements in a parent-child relationship
- • When sex becomes an element in the parent-child relationship, the child's whole world becomes distorted
- • While the Heavenly Father resolves all the issues, sometimes some of the consequences remain, but he gives grace and strength to live victoriously with the consequences.

BROTHER AND SISTER RELATIONSHIPS

Do not have intercourse with your sister or your stepsister, whether or not she was brought up in the same house with you. Do not have intercourse with a half sister, she, too, is your sister. (Leviticus 18:9, 11)

Example: Barry

From the time the children were young, whenever his mother was gone, Barry's father would have a party and he and the sons and daughters would commit incest. This behavior was so terrible that when the mother finally found out about it, she could not handle it and committed suicide. These activities created sexual defilement and bonds for all the members of the family. The brother-sister bonds were distorted, as well as the father-children bonds. The bonds changed from the natural to the unnatural as lover-lover. Besides these relational distortions, these incestuous orgies opened a door to the Kingdom of Darkness and several members of the family were later involved in witchcraft and other occult practices.

Later, Barry became a Christian and married. During Barry's marriage he continued to have incest with one of his sisters — in fact, when he and his wife of two years came to us for help, the marriage still had not been consummated, they still had not had sexual intercourse. Incestuous activities had become so commonplace to Barry it took a lot of work on the part of the Holy Spirit for Barry to even judge the behavior as wrong or sinful. We are happy to report that when all of this was resolved Barry and his wife did consummate their marriage, lived a normal life and when last we heard, were in training for full-time ministry.

The Implications Now:

- • Sexual relations between siblings destroy the natural sibling bonds
- • Illegitimate new bonds of lover-lover are created between siblings
- • Incest creates confusion in all the roles in a family
- • Incest creates confusion in all relationships in the family and outside
- • Habitual deviant, perverse and sinful sexual practices open the door to the Kingdom of Darkness

EXTENDED FAMILY

Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; both of you would be held responsible. (Leviticus 20: 19, GNB)

Notice that the aunts are in focus in the above verse. Actually, the text in Leviticus goes on and includes all members of the extended family. Interestingly, it is the male members who are the aggressors, are mostly in focus in the prohibitions; so sexual purity (the man remaining a virgin) is just as much in focus for the man as for the woman.

Leviticus 18 gives a very comprehensive listing of those relationships within which sexual activity is prohibited.

The Implications Now:

- • Sexual relations within even the extended family cause great confusion of roles
- • The family, even in its extension, is governed by principles and rules that when broken or distorted cause great confusion and consequences
-

SEXUAL SINS OF THE MIND

When a man looks at a woman with lust, he is experiencing the sin of adultery in his heart.

You have heard that it is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; but I say to you that everyone that looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

FANTASY

We are responsible for what is in our heart. When we allow ourselves to fantasize romantically about someone, to imagine being together with them, to imagine physical, emotional, or sexual intimacy, we have experienced that person in our heart. If they are not your husband (or wife), then you have stumbled, you have sinned, you have committed adultery in your heart.

Fantasy; book character, internet friend, internet spouse, phone sex, movie star, music star, TV star, book hero, colleague, neighbor, coveting someone else's husband or wife, your hero, fireman, teammate, ex-girlfriend, ex-boyfriend

LUST

We are responsible for looking and to stop looking:

If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. (Matthew 5:29)

So which eye is causing the trouble? Pluck out that eye. Though God doesn't want you to maim your body, he doesn't accept your excuse either.

Lust; real women/men, porn magazines/videos/internet sites, some other magazines/movies/catalogs/internet sites, strip shows, peep shows, some KTV bars, peeping tom, exposing oneself

In general, men are more sexually aroused by images and women are more sexually aroused by words. So, often a romance novel is more seducing than an image to a woman. If a story or some words arouse sexual desires in you then this is also porn.

TOUCH

We are also responsible for touching and to stop touching:

*If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go to hell.
(Matthew 5:30)*

Which hand do you masturbate with when you lust after this woman in your mind? Cut off that hand. Though God doesn't want you to maim your body, he doesn't accept your excuse either.

Masturbation that involves lust is sin.

Touch; erotic sexual services including masturbation in massage parlors, KTV centers, hotels, from escorts or prostitutes,

We are to be holy as He is holy! God would not command us to do something that we can't do, so we have the capacity to become more and more holy. We have his Word and His Holy Spirit to help us.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY FOR I AM HOLY." (1 Peter 1;14-16)

TEMPTATION

If you have been seduced by an image or some writing, then in prayer accuse and forgive those who created the temptation. But if you entered into the temptation, then you are not innocent. God still holds you responsible for your thoughts and actions, so confess your sin, ask Him to forgive you, give up your sexual claim on that man or woman, ask God to break the bond you made with him or her in your mind and to cleanse you in your heart and soul. Just because he or she tempted you does not mean that you must sin. You can choose not to enter into the temptation. Maybe you did not search for this image or text, it just popped up on your computer screen. Do you continue to look and begin to fantasize about him or her? Stop yourself quickly, then pray, accusing him or her and the one who sent that image to your screen and then hand them over to God. Confess that you didn't delete it immediately but let yourself lust after him or her, ask God to forgive you.

Maybe you believe that you cannot control yourself. But you are made in His image, you are one of His sons, and His Spirit is with you, so this belief is a lie. Ask Him to forgive you for believing a lie, reject the lie, and ask Him to break it's power and if you have the faith of a mustard seed, then ask Him to show you the truth in a way that you will remember. Satan does not have more power than God!

Some common lies:

"I can't control my thoughts."

"I'm too weak."

"I can't help it."

COVETING

A man sexually aroused by specific porn images he may start comparing his wife to the woman in the image and become dissatisfied with her. He might also ask her to wear the same clothes or perform the same acts as the woman in the image. The images that satisfy him today become less satisfying over time. If she refuses to comply because she doesn't feel comfortable with being compared or feels degraded by doing what he says, he may become more and more dissatisfied with her.

The problem here is that he was not supposed to see those images in the first place and now he is comparing his wife to the woman in the images. Sex is for a husband and a wife only and there are not supposed to be any observers. He is supposed to delight in his wife not covet another man's wife. In a similar way, she may start to compare her husband to the man in the romance novel emotionally and physically. She is supposed to delight in her husband not covet another woman's husband.

*You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife...
(Exodus 20:17a)*

Of course comparisons can also be made between a spouse and ex-girlfriends or boyfriends as seen in this example.

EXAMPLE

Joe related to several women before he was married.

As we talked about those women in his life, he insisted that they had no affect what so ever in his current marriage.

So, I asked him "how does she compare in bed?" and he began to tell me.

I stopped him before he could answer and told him that God never intended that he compare his wife to other women, that these expectations lead to dissatisfaction and rob him and his wife of intimacy and joy.

He has defiled the wedding bed by making that comparison.

SUMMARY

Even though there is no physical relationship with a character in a romance novel or a woman in a porn image or video, they have experienced sexual sin physically, emotionally and spiritually. They need to go through the full process of accusing, forgiving, confessing, asking for forgiveness, giving up their claim to getting their sexual satisfaction from the woman in the image or man in book, asking God to break the bonds and to cleanse them from their sin. They also need to ask God to bind up the emotions tied to those images even if they were pleasurable feelings so the images have no power any longer.

If they continue using porn after they have gone through this process, there may be destructive beliefs or even spiritual forces that need to be dealt with also. Whenever there are compulsive or addictive behaviors this is a possibility. They may also have a rebellious attitude, turning away from God, ignoring their own conscience and even the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

SOME COMMON SEXUAL SINS

Fantasy & Imagination

Rape

Fornication

Homosexuality

Incest (including emotional incest)

Adultery/Infidelity (including emotional adultery)

Lust of the eye

Masturbation

Pedophilia

Pornography (some catalogs and magazines, porno magazines, some soap operas, some books, some romance novels, some movies, photos and videos, some internet websites, strip joints, some massage parlor services)

Voyeurism

SUMMARY OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SEXUAL SIN

There are consequences to breaking the pre-marriage pledge, willingly or unwillingly, and terrible consequences for the resulting offspring

There must be purity before marriage — sexual sin was grounds for nullifying the marriage

The marriage vow must be kept or there is a betrayal of trust and the oneness of the husband-wife relationship is compromised

There must be purity between members of the family — other than between husband and wife, sex is not an element in any other familial relationship

Sexual relations between people make them 'one' spiritually

Sexual sin keeps the participants unsettled with continued guilt, under the consequences and power of the sin and with feelings of uncleanness and unworthiness.

Prayer of Forgiveness

1. 1. Understand the issue or incident clearly; the perceived facts, the words spoken, the feelings.
1. 2. Accuse without excusing the wrong (if pertinent)
1. 3. Forgive (if pertinent, Give up right to accuse. Give up right to be a witness)
1. 4. Confess without excusing yourself (if pertinent)
1. 5. Ask for forgiveness (if pertinent)
1. 6. Forgive self (if pertinent)
1. 7. Give harmful emotions and memories to God to put under control of the Holy Spirit.

Resolving Unholy Sexual Bonds & Spiritual Defilement

1. 1. Reject the **claim** they made on you as a sexual being and declare that you make no claim on them.
1. 2. Ask your heavenly Father to break the unholy **bond** that was formed.
1. 3. Ask your heavenly Father to cleanse you from the spiritual **defilement**.

Witnessing Prayer

Other things pertinent to specific situations:

- Familial bonds restored or broken completely
- Words of Power, Lies, Worthiness need to be confronted
- Occult issues arising out of the sin confronted
- Rebellious and Authority issues arising out of the sin

AUTHORITY ISSUES AND REBELLION ISSUES

In the Old Testament the term for rebellion is 'marah'. It means to rebel, to be contemptuous. The Septuagint translated this as 'to reject, not to recognize. Often the word is coupled with being stubborn and stiff-necked. The prophet Samuel told King Saul that his rebellion was the same as the sin of witchcraft and idolatry. Ultimately, it is the attitude, "I will be as God!"

A rebellious attitude often leads to sexual sin and occult sin. Extreme rebellion leads to murder, sexual perversion of every kind, mutilating one's body, and even child sacrifice. A rebellious attitude rejects all that is holy and rejects God's creation, our body and the bodies of others.

King Saul, in I Samuel 15, is an example of an act of rebellion by an authority:

- He knew that what he was doing was wrong
- He redefined his actions as good
- He tried to excuse his actions
- He blamed his actions on others
- He did not repent

God said of Saul that "he had turned back from following me" which shows Saul deliberately turned away. Another rendering says, "he has cast off God's governing.

Sometimes our rebellion is for gain and fame like Saul. More often it is a premeditated-decision that violates our own conscience and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We knew it is wrong but decided before the moment to do it anyway. James talks about being tempted by our desires-- in other words, the decision to sin comes from within us not from outside us. Rebellion is an attitude first and actions second. A disobedient act may or may not have a rebellious attitude.

The one under authority might rebel against their authority, but the authority themselves might also rebel against God in how they perform their duties.

Rebellion against God is often a subconscious attitude that God doesn't care about me and he will not do what's right for me. When I tell God what I want or when I want it, or how I want it done, and He doesn't follow my plan, I may become frustrated. With each frustration or disappointment, I may take one more step away from trusting God and his authority in my life until I just ignore God.

There are two aspects to rebellion:

- Those who rebel in sin on their own initiative, by choice
- Those who respond in rebellion to someone else's actions

Wives and Submission:

HUSBAND AND WIFE RESPONSIBILITIES

Men are supposed to love their wives like their own body, even when it is difficult.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, (Ephesians 5:28-29, NASB)

Wives can make it really difficult for their husbands to love them like their own body by being irresponsible, untrustworthy, or dangerous.

Wives are supposed to respect (submit to) their husbands even when it is difficult, submitting out of obedience to the Lord.

Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:33, NASB)

Husbands can make it really difficult for their wife to respect (submit to) them by being irresponsible, untrustworthy or dangerous.

God will not praise a husband who glories in his power over his wife. He made the husband the head of the house because God holds him more responsible for their well-being, not so he could Lord power over his wife. God does not delight in a husband that uses his position to maximize his own comfort and leisure.

Sometimes the husband rebels against God's authority and is so irresponsible, untrustworthy or dangerous that we can say he has stopped being a husband and their marriage certificate is meaningless. Sometimes the wife stops being a wife.

Though hard, often the marriage can become meaningful again, if both the wife and the husband are willing to reconcile, to accept their responsibilities again and to stop their harmful behaviors toward each other. Sometimes the wife or the husband or both are unwilling to reconcile, to stop their harmful behaviors.

HUSBAND AND WIFE TEMPTATIONS

After the fall, God told Adam and Eve that life wasn't going to be easy anymore, Adam would sweat when he worked and there would be thorns and thistles. Eve would have greater pain in childbirth and be ruled by her husband.

Sometimes, the sons of Adam want to escape the curse, by avoiding responsibilities and sometimes the daughters of Eve want to escape the curse, by ruling over their husbands. But God made the husband the head of the family and so he holds the man responsible for the well being of the family and asked Eve to submit (respect) to Adam. So maybe, the hardest job in the world is to be a husband. Maybe there is only one job harder and that is to be a wife.

Being disrespectful, irresponsible, untrustworthy or dangerous makes both roles much more difficult.

HUSBAND AND WIFE DECISIONMAKING

Husbands if you make major decisions without knowing what your wife thinks, can you say you love her like your own body ? If you always do it your way and never her way, can you say you love her like your own body ?

Wives, if you constantly pressure your husband to do things your way or belittle him, can you say you respect (submit to) him? If you never voice your own opinion and just agree with him without telling him your thoughts and feelings, how can he know the needs of his wife and family?

Wives, when you disagree with her husband, you need to express your view in a respectful manner. Husbands you need to listen and ask her questions so you understand. Wives, if he still plans to go his way, appeal again in a respectful manner. Husbands you need to listen to her appeal and try to understand. Wives, if he still insists, let him go his own way, He is the head and it is his decision and you are not responsible, though you may suffer from his choice. So maybe the hardest job in the world is to be a wife.

Implications:

The wife and the husband need to extend forgiveness and receive forgiveness through prayer in their own personal sessions.

The wife and the husband each need to accept responsibility for their role

After forgiveness is finished they may need to meet together to work on other issues such as communication as part of the reconciliation process.

Parents and Children:

One of the most important Old Testament Laws focused on the parent-child relationship.

Children are to honor their parents (Exodus 20: 12).

Everyone in China knows that children should honor their parents because Confucius said it also. It is a very important law and a rebellious or disobedient son was to be stoned (Deuteronomy 21: 18, 21). The assumption for stoning the son was that the parent was righteous! (Another example of this is the Pharisees were also not righteous, so none could not cast the first stone against the prostitute in John 8.)

Distortion in the relationship comes when the parents are untrustworthy or irresponsible in their relationship with their child. Sometimes the parents sin through commission (i.e., physical and verbal abuse) or through omission (i.e., without or not expressed love and affirmation). The child reflects the parents attitude and behavior. It receives false messages that he or she is not worth the love and attention denied and reflects the message that the parents don't deserve respect or honor.

For example, a five year old boy is being raised by his grandparents. The grandparents left the little boy with his parents for a day. The parents went to a park and sold their son to a man who didn't have a son and divided the money. It took the police 18 months to recover the boy and return him to his grandparents. The parents were imprisoned and fined. The father declared "I am his father. I can do whatever I want to him." The grandparents are his parents because they assumed the responsibility. The birth parents only contributed an egg and sperm and are not his parents.

God expects a father and a mother to use their authority and power carefully

Fathers, do not exasperate [provoke to anger] your children, that they may not lose heart. (Colossians 3:21 NAS)

Paul warns parents, "do not provoke your children to anger. "

This means that parents are not to use their authority in such an unfair, unjust way that the children seem to have no other choice but to rebel in response. If the children do respond in rebellion, they are guilty but the parents, as 'provokers', become a part of the 'greater circle'. We have dealt with people who have, in response to the parent's attitude and behavior, rebelled even in the womb. **What makes this type of rebellion difficult to recognize is that often it is a response against injustice and a way of protecting one's self.**

As parents we need to be careful not to habitually provoke our child's anger or cause them to lose heart by constantly criticizing their mistakes, teasing them, comparing them to others, ignoring their needs or feeling or thoughts, belittling them with words, degrading them with harsh or excessive or inappropriate beatings, showing favor to others but not to them, threatening instead of protecting them, judging their person instead of their behavior, or ignoring their hopes, desires and dreams when making decisions for their lives. We should bless them with our words and actions, celebrate their existence not just point out their weaknesses, treat them with dignity and respect. Progress stops when they lose heart and they may even end their life.

When a parent violates the trust of a child there are often deep and long lasting effects, as the following case shows:

Example - Philip is a husband and father in his late twenties. He had a father who was a strong disciplinarian and did not show affection. He tended to humiliate his children.

When Philip was seven years old, he was in the hospital with scarlet fever for two weeks. When the day for discharge came Philip was dressed and packed and waiting for his parents to come. He waited many hours and the nurses assured him that his parents were just delayed. At the end of the day the hospital phoned his parents and he learned that they had forgotten to pick him up.

Results of Betrayal:

Out of this betrayal Philip felt unloved, unwanted and worthless. These feelings affected his life, even as an adult.

The Implications Now:

Children are eventually responsible for what they do regardless of what their parents did to them.

Children must hold their parents responsible, acknowledge what they did or said, or should have done or said, by accusing and forgiving them in prayer. If they don't, then they are agreeing with the behavior of their parents and are accepting this pattern for themselves as present or future parents.

It may be difficult to accuse parents in prayer for their wrongs against us because it may seem disrespectful. But when God says to honor our parents, he means to honor them from our heart, not just with our face, so we need to tell God what they did so we can forgive them and then we will be able to honor them from our heart for whatever good they did do. Our parents are made in God's image too, so they deserve our respect not our pity, so we need to hold them accountable for both the good and bad they have done. They are not good or evil people, they are just people that did some good things and some bad things. There are no perfect parents.

A rebellious attitude toward authority is expressed in many ways, such as ignoring, subtle disobedience, doing things "my way," causing dissension or outright, 'thumbing the nose' type rebellion.

Situations where rebellion occurs: between husband and wife, between parents and child, between employee and employer, between citizen and government. In all these situations there can be abuse on the part of the one which results in the response of anger, distrust, rejection and rebellion by the other.

The resulting sins are two-fold:

- Rejecting and rebelling against the offending authority
- Transferring that rejection and rebelling to all authority without regard to whether it is deserved or not.

Both must be dealt with!

There are Godly options for dealing with disappointment, injustice, abuse and betrayal. However, causing dissension, backbiting, slandering and rebellion are not options for God's children.

STEPS TO RESOLVING THE EFFECTS OF REBELLION AND TRANSFER

Deal with the original offending authority

- 1.1. Understand issues clearly (each offense individually)
- 1.2. Accuse - if pertinent
- 1.3. Forgive - if pertinent
- 1.4. Confess
- 1.5. Ask forgiveness

Deal with the pattern of unjust transfer

- 1.1. Acknowledge pattern, how it was carried out, damage done
- 1.2. Confess
- 1.3. Ask forgiveness
- 2.4. Reject the pattern
5. Ask God to break the power of the pattern in my life
6. Ask God to help you discern and judge the behaviors of each person separately
7. Ask God to help you find new and more healthy ways of dealing with abuse and injustice.

Witnessing Prayer

Other things pertinent to specific situations:

- Emotions given to God
- Memories put under the control of the Holy Spirit
- Familial bonds restored or broken completely
- Words of Power, Lies, Worthiness need to be confronted
- Occult issues arising out of the sin confronted
-

CURSED

THROUGH ASSOCIATION OR PARTICIPATION

The Scriptures indicate that certain people, just through kinship, are under a curse or cannot receive God's blessing. Their ancestors committed certain types of sin. These sins can have long lasting effects, even for generations. The following groups of people and things are affected:

People Born out of Wedlock

The effects last up to ten generations:

No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. (Deuteronomy 23:2) * of illegitimate birth (NAS)*

The Implication Now:

An illegitimate child needs a special prayer in giving the child release from the effects of the parent's sin.

People Born of Certain Races

The effects for the Ammonites and Moabites last up to ten generations:

No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. (Deuteronomy 23:3)

The effects for the Edomites and Egyptians last up to three generations:

Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not abhor an Egyptian, because you lived as an alien in his country. The third generation of children born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 23:7-8)

The Implication Now:

The offspring of a people may bear the results of its people's sin. For example: The Germans for attempted genocide of Jews, Slavs, Gypsies and others in WWII; the Turks for attempted genocide of the Armenians; the American slaughter of certain Indian tribes.

People Living in the Presence of an Accursed Object

Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction.
(Deuteronomy 7:26)

The Implication Now:

Just possessing statues of Buddha, crystals, artifacts from tribes, etc.—if occult related, been blessed or dedicated in some way to the Kingdom of Darkness—can give openings to Satan and bring God's wrath, even to the believer.

People Participating in the Occult

Sorceress, Mediums or Spiritists are to be stoned:

Do not allow a sorceress to live. (Exodus 22:18)

A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their heads. (Leviticus 20:27)

People who turn to mediums and spiritists become defiled

Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:31; see also 20:6)

IN DEUTERONOMY 18, WE SEE THAT SEEKING SPIRITUAL POWER OR SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE FROM ANYWHERE OTHER THAN GOD HIMSELF IS DETESTABLE TO GOD.

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

According to Deuteronomy 18, the following practices are detestable to God and we are forbidden from doing them:

1. DIVINATION OR SORCERY

Some examples:

- her father was a priest in a Taoist temple. He was the medium for the temple spirit and spoke to the other priests and people.
- the fortuneteller told her that "she would marry young, but divorce quickly and live single the rest of her life." Her hope is in God. Divining is detestable to God.
- he searched the Book of Changes (I Ching) to decide what he should do today. Based on the date and time of his birth, and today's date, the book said it was unsafe for him to go outside today, so he stayed home. Divining is detestable to God.
- the Buddhist monk does a special ceremony, so the dead person goes to paradise instead of hell. Divining is detestable to God.
- the family consults a Feng Shui expert to decide how to place the grave and consults the HuangLi almanac to decide when the coffin can be taken outside. Divining is detestable to God.
- the business is doing poorly, so they consult a Feng Shui master who tells them to place a large stone near the front door to block their enemies force. Divining is detestable to God.
- she was sick and the Qi master said he could heal her. He moved his hands slowly above her body, never touching her, forming her life force (Qi).

2. INTERPRETING OMENS

Some examples:

- she believed it was the year of the widow; it went from winter to summer without any spring. She believed "if I marry in the year of the widow, my husband will die young." Omens like this are detestable to God.
- he lied about the year he was born because her parents wouldn't allow them to marry otherwise. When the parents found out the lie they pressure them strongly to divorce because they were incompatible.
- when their son was born, they went to the temple and received an auspicious name from the Lama and their name was written in a book in the temple.
- a Daoist priest told the mother that when her child was born, there would be a black spot in the white of her eye which meant that she belonged to the temple. When she was born, there was a black dot and everyone believed the priest's words. Divining is detestable to God. She is God's child now.

3. ENGAGING IN WITCHCRAFT

- One example, she was very sick and the medicine didn't help, so she went to a witch, who told her to add a strand of her daughter's hair to the potion and to drink it at midnight. The witch promised to call back her daughter's soul. Witchcraft is detestable to God.

4. CONSULTING THE DEAD

Some examples:

- the father spoke to the dead ancestors, invited a spirit to enter him, then spoke in the grandfather's voice to the rest of the family. Spiritists and consulting the dead are detestable to God.
- his mother was upset because he wouldn't bow down before the ancestors, offer them food, and burn money. She believed the ancestor's spirits would cut off their family line in response. Consulting the dead is detestable to God.

5. CASTING SPELLS (SPIRITUAL WORDS OF POWER)

Some suspect activities are:

WATCHING OCCULT MOVIES AND TELEVISION SHOWS

Watching occult movies and television shows can affect us, usually by affecting our beliefs about spirits, demons, angels and God. Usually, we become fearful as a result.

Some examples:

- some Chinese people believe that if a person dies violently, their spirit remains at that place looking for someone to torment, so they avoid these defiled places. Many of them got this belief from watching a famous television show in the 1980s.

Strangely, on rare occasion, TV or movies can have a good effect:

- a man saw a priest in an occult movie cast out a demon. He was amazed and sought to have power over the demons he saw in his village like that priest. He became a Christian.

PRACTICING YOGA

The positions in Yoga are used as worship by Hindus and refer to names of Hindu gods. Some teachers use these positions as exercise only, but some include also Hindu meditation and study, so be careful. If you join a class and it makes you spiritually uncomfortable, you should not attend. If you are not sure, pray and ask God "is this ok?" In a similar way, in China Tai Qi is usually just exercise whereas Qi Gong is clearly spiritual.

PRACTICING MARTIAL ARTS

There are many forms of martial arts. Some classes are taught as exercise only, but others include spiritual forces. If you join a class and it makes you spiritually uncomfortable, you should not attend. If you are not sure, pray and ask God "is this ok?"

- For example, one brother was a very high level Gongfu student. He could break a plate of glass with the flick of his finger. After he became a believer, he asked God if a spirit gave him this power and God said yes. So, he quit practicing Gongfu and renounced this power he received from that spirit and asked God's forgiveness.

CERTAIN ESP ACTIVITIES

ESP can have many different meanings to different people.

- For example, a pastor was driving to work and suddenly he felt he must return home quickly. When he arrives, his house is on fire, so he rushes into the house and saves his children. His premonition was not from his senses, so some people might call this ESP, though he himself credits God for warning him.

ACUPUNCTURE/ACUPRESSURE

Acupuncture is based on the concept of Qi, an invisible life force that cannot be measured and there is no clear physical explanation of how it works, so maybe it is spiritual. Unlike shaping Qi without touching the body which must be a supernatural effect, acupuncture and acupressure both touch the body which might be natural instead. If it makes you spiritually uncomfortable, you should not use it. If you are not sure, pray and ask God "is this ok?"

REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology maps every part of the body to a place on the ear or foot. The idea is that by treating a place on the ear, you can affect another part of the body. There is no clear physical explanation for why this mapping works, so maybe it is spiritual. If it makes you spiritually uncomfortable, you should not use it. If you are not sure, pray and ask God "is this ok?"

The Implication Now:

Anyone who practices or has practiced occult activities is under an indictment or curse, even as believers, unless specifically dealt with before God.

If it violates your conscience or you feel convicted by the Holy Spirit you should not do it:

*Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.
(James 4:17, NASB)*

Locations that are Defiled

The ground is defiled and the land is under a curse.

Murder defiles the land, and except by the death of the murderer there is no way to perform the ritual of purification for the land where a man has been murdered.
(Numbers 35:33, GNB)

Some examples:

- her mother was murdered violently in her home. She cleaned up all the blood. In prayer, she forgave the murderer, trusting her heavenly Father, but she could not live there anymore, it was very uncomfortable. She went with some sisters in Christ and prayed together and asked God to cleanse the house from spiritual defilement. She is no longer uncomfortable living there.

The Implication Now:

There is a place in today's world for rites of cleansing over profane ground and, on the positive side, the blessing of the ground.

ELEMENTS OF RESOLVING THE EFFECTS OF OCCULT INVOLVEMENT

The hurting one is the one who offers prayers of resolution. After all, Christ made it possible to come directly to the Father and the Holy Spirit lives within the hurting one. It is the hurting one who has the problem and has free access to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. Often he or she must be helped to know what to pray, but he or she is perfectly able to pray their own prayers to their own Heavenly Father.

Steps to Resolving the Effects of Occult Involvement

1. 1. Understand issues clearly (each offense individually)
1. 2. Accuse – if pertinent
1. 3. Forgive – if pertinent
1. 4. Confess – if pertinent
1. 5. Ask forgiveness – if pertinent
1. 6. Renounce allegiance/bond made to Kingdom of Darkness
1. 7. Ask God to nullify the allegiance
1. 8. Ask for cleansing from occult defilement
1. 9. Pronounce allegiance to Kingdom of God

Witnessing Prayer

Other things pertinent to specific situations:

- • Emotions given to God
- • Memories put under the control of the Holy Spirit
- • Familial bonds restored or broken completely
- • Judgments and Lies need to be confronted
- • Sexual issues arising out of the sin confronted

It follows then, that in the case of renouncing and getting rid of spiritual forces that the hurting one has all power and authority to do so.

As a child of God, he or she has power and authority over the Evil One. It takes a believer equipped with the power and authority of Jesus to command an evil spirit to leave. A non-believer has neither the power nor the authority to command spirits, therefore the believer must cast the spirit out of the non-believer. However, if a believer is being demonized to whatever degree, he or she has the power and authority to take a stand against the evil spirit and command it to go in the name of Jesus. In fact, until the believer makes that stand himself, no one else can cast it out of him either.

Steps to Dealing with Spiritual Forces

1. Uncovering the presence

- a. a) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if there is a spiritual force present
- a. b) Command the spiritual force to reveal itself
- a. c) Forbid the spiritual force to manifest its power

2. Command the presence to leave in Jesus' name

- a. a) If resistant, go back and deal with footholds (sins, lies, etc.)
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal source of resistance; the actions or sins that feed and give power to the evil spirit or force
 - Pray and let God resolve it
- a. b) Reject the spiritual force
- b. c) Command it to go in Jesus' name

PART 3

DESTRUCTIVE BELIEFS

WORDS OF POWER

CHAINED THROUGH WORDS OF POWER

This is such an important issue that I have to write an entire book covering the different aspects of words of power. Words of power are those words, spoken or implied by someone in a power position in our lives. They may be manifested as judgments, labels, vows, dedications, curses or blessings. These words have great power, are a force in our lives, so we need to know how to get free from their effect.

Vows

Numbers chapter 30 gives the standards for making and breaking vows. There's nothing in scripture that indicates that words of power such as these are no longer valid because we are in the age of grace.

It is neither godly nor ungodly to make vows: but if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. (Deuteronomy 23:22)

The focus is on fulfilling a vow once made and on who can take responsibility for breaking a vow.

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to make a vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)

For example, a mature man must not break a vow.

When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said. (Numbers 30:2)

Thus when David promised to go to Africa as a missionary but later became a pastor in the city church, he is still obligated to fulfill his vow or seek forgiveness and release.

A young lady can make a vow but her father can nullify it. But, if her father says nothing then she must fulfill her vow.

When a young woman still living in her father's house makes a vow to the Lord or obligates herself by a pledge and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligates herself will stand. (Numbers 30:3-4)

During a meeting Mary vowed to hitchhike to Seattle and witness for Jesus along the way. She also vowed that she would do so trusting God to supply all her needs and to protect her. Her father heard what she had done and forbade her to go. If he had said nothing then his silence would have been consent.

Also, a wife can make a vow but her husband can nullify it.

But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the Lord will release her. (Numbers 30:8)

Her husband may confirm or nullify any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself. (Numbers 30:13)

Edith promised God that she would read three chapters a day from the Bible first thing in the morning, no matter what, whether she was sick or her children needed her etc. But when her husband Bill heard this he told her this was not a wise thing to promise and so he prayed and released her from her vow.

On the other hand, a widow or mature single woman or divorced woman must fulfill her vow.

Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her. (Numbers 30:9)

Numbers 30:3 mentions a young woman still living in her father's house. This implies that a young woman not living with her father would be in the same category as a widow or divorced woman. In other words, this verse applies to any woman who has charge of her own life.

Jesus said not to make vows:

Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, you shall not make false vows, but but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord. But I say to you, make no oath at all. (Matthew 5:33-34a)

We do make careless vows and when we do, God holds us accountable!

Examples:

- Judy grew up in Malaysia and became a Christian. One night she was aroused by a man touching her and almost gave in to his approach. Judy vowed that she would never again allow her emotions to control her. A few years later she married Tim and found that she could not respond to her husband's advances. She couldn't understand why!
- Joe was beat up and humiliated by a bully in front of his schoolmates and he cried. Joe made an impractical vow to be tough and to never again show his gentle nature. A few years later he became a husband and father and found that the only emotions he expressed were those of anger and harshness.

Vows versus Declarations

If we make vows we are responsible carry them out or bear the consequences or to ask for forgiveness and release.

When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said. (Numbers 30:2)

If you make about to the Lord your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. (Deuteronomy 23:21)

People often make unconscious vows unaware that God holds them accountable for their every word. When we say it, "I'll never be like....," we set in motion forces that can govern our lives and only God can shut down the source of power that has been released.

For example, Joe said to himself, "I will never be poor like my father. I'll make \$1 million before I am 30 or die trying. From that day forward he was a driven man who sacrificed his children, his wife and life for his dream.

Others can make a declaration, a strong statement, about us and we accept it as true and live out their 'verdict' of us.

For example, Jane says to her daughter, "you are a no good tramp, you will never amount to anything." Her daughter, who has done nothing up to now, begins to sleep around and considers welfare is all she will ever get or deserve.

Declarations

People can characterize us in certain ways, both positive and negative. If these people are significant in our lives we can accept and live out their judgments.

Examples:

- One day Frank was sitting in the front room near the kitchen door. He heard his brother come in the back door into the kitchen and tell his parents he had made a girl pregnant. This mother said, "I expected this a Frank but not of you." Up to that time Frank had not slept with a girl but from that time on he lived out his mother's picture of him, sleeping with every girl he dated, married twice, each time because he made the girl pregnant, and was unfaithful in both marriages.
- Nancy's teacher met with her parents and explained that their daughter was slow and should be placed in special education. Her parents assume the teacher was correct and placed her in special education school. Nancy also accepted this evaluation and spent the next years fulfilling it. Even in college she was on probation. Later, during a study abroad program her performance showed that this declaration about her was wrong and she was released during prayer counseling. Nancy went back to college, got her BA and later a nursing degree and is now a missionary.
- Don was called dumb and fat by his older sister and a liar by his teacher. The teacher went to his parents and said that their son was a slow learner and should be in special education so they sent him to a school for retarded and crippled children. As a man Don dressed in a sloppy fashion, always gave in during disagreements and had a hard time looking people in the eyes. Once he recognized and rejected these value judgments about himself, he began to dress neater. He went on to graduate school.

Blessings and Curses

Blessings and curses are powerful tools that can create or destroy. Blessings are words and statements that lead to encouragement, affirmation, hope and life. Curses are those words and statements that lead to despair, destruction and death.

James talks of the tongue as a fire and says that "from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing" (James 3:10 NAS). When we make a strong statement of intent - a vow - God and we ourselves hold us responsible to carry out that vow. When others make a strong statement about us, and we accept it, this creates a force that can enslave us and limit our freedom. Until we are released, we are under its power and will live it out.

In the story of Balaam (Numbers 22-24), God goes to great lengths to keep the curse from being uttered and to turn the curse into a blessing. Words work in the heavens in ways we do not comprehend!

Fathers have the right to bless their children (Genesis 27-28 and 48-50).

Note: when we do not receive a blessing then we assume it is because we do not deserve one. Often the sin of omission is that our parents did not actively speak out affirmation and blessing.

Jesus blessed the little children. (Mark 10:13-16).

Jesus cursed the fig tree by declaration (Matthew 21:18-22).

Blessings and curses are real. Once made, only God can nullify the power unleashed. It would appear that whether we have been blessed or cursed, the results continue even after we have become Christians.

Steps to resolving the effects of words of power

1. 1. Understand issues clearly (each offense individually)
2. 2. Accuse (if pertinent)
3. 3. Forgive (if pertinent)
 - a. a. Give up the right to accuse any longer
 - b. b. Give up the right to be a witness
1. 4. Confess
2. 5. Ask for forgiveness
3. 6. Reject the vow, judgment, dedication or curse
4. 7. Ask God to break the power of these
 - a. a. Vow: Ask God for release from the obligation to fulfill it
 - a. c. Judgment: Ask God for freedom to be who I am
 - b. d. Dedication: Ask a true freedom of life's choices
 - c. e. Curse: Ask God for freedom to be blessed

Witnessing prayer

Other things pertinent to specific situations:

- Emotions given to God
- Memories put under the control of the Holy Spirit
- Familial bonds restore the broken completely
- Occult issues arising out of the Sin confronted
- Sexual issues arising out of the Sin confronted
- Lies rejected, power broken and truth given

LIVING BY FOUNDATIONAL LIES

With our senses we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. Our mind then takes what we have sensed and gives it meaning, using our thoughts we explain the world around us. These thoughts control how we perceive the world and without these thoughts, we don't know what to expect, or what to assume, or how to respond.

For example, when I see with my eyes a zebra-striped crosswalk, my mind tells me what to expect, because I grew up in America my mind says, "it's safe to cross the street here when the light is green," and so I act on this thought by confidently stepping off the curb into the crosswalk. (In America, if a car comes into the crosswalk when a pedestrian is there, the police can fine the driver \$500!)

But maybe you also see the zebra-striped crosswalk and your mind tells you to expect something different, "it's not safe to cross the street here, but I have no other choice, so be careful," and so you step off the curb, but very cautiously.

Though we see the same thing, we have different expectations and behaviors because our thoughts are different. People around us help us create the proper assumptions and expectations about life in the place we live.

We also learn to determine right from wrong and to distinguish truth from lies from the people around us. We have learned lessons from them and accepted them as true. We must be careful to define truth according to Scripture not our own culture. The less distortion in our perception of reality the more normal and rational will be our expectations.

Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts. Never say anything that isn't true. Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words. (Proverbs 4:23-24, GNB)

We have many thoughts, but not all thoughts have equal power over us. Some thoughts are only in our mind. But some thoughts have more power and are in our heart because we believe and feel they are true. We only act on those in our heart, those we believe and feel are true.

Examples:

- From a sermon, she knows in her mind that "the husband is the head of the home and God has asked the wife to respect her husband," but she believes in her heart that "her husband is worthless," and treats him badly from her heart.
- An American pastor preaches from his mind that "homosexuality is sin," but he has homosexual sex because he acts from what he believes in his heart not from what he knows in his mind.

Some beliefs don't affect us or others that much:

I think I look great in blue
I think noodles are better than rice

Some are foundational lies (destructive beliefs), form the basis for living:

I don't deserve to live
I am garbage
All people are out to harm me
Love always comes with a price tag

Each person must explain the world that is around them, then acts on that explanation. For example, they will behave one way if they perceive God as distant, stern and unpredictable, and they will behave another way if they perceive God as loving, concerned, unchangeable. Our explanations of life with all its ups and downs are based on these right or wrong perceptions.

For example, in John 9 Jesus was asked, "Why is this man a cripple? Because he or his parents sinned and this is God's punishment?" (A wrong perception of reason-result!).

MEANINGS OF WORDS

Sometimes when we talk with someone in a session, the conversation gets more and more confusing. Maybe we are using the same words, but some of those words have different meanings. Every person assigns meaning to words by describing the word based on their own personal experience in life.

- Jenny's definition is "Safe is having my mother's arms around me" because that is what her mom did when she was scared.
- Sharon's definition is "Marriage is war" because her parents yelled, cursed, and beat each other daily.
- Beth's definition is "Marriage is a blessing" because her parents were kind, respectful and caring toward each other.
- John's definition is "Long and skinny things like belts and scarves are used to kill people," because his brother strangled his grandmother with a belt in the bed next to him.
- Eric's definition is "God as Father is someone you can never please," because Eric's own father was always watching him with an expectation that he would be disappointed.
- Joy's definition is "I know my father loves me because he had sex with me." But her definition of a father's love is not true, does not agree with Scripture.

We cannot assume that everyone defines a term in the same way we do. If we are confused, we need to ask them to give us some examples. We can understand their definition through these examples.

If we are to pray intelligently and effectively we must have God's perception of reality (the facts of a situation), his standard (not the world's standard) and his meaning behind the words, not ours.

STEPS TO RESOLVING FOUNDATIONAL LIES

First we must identify the lie. Then we can pray:

Prayer of Forgiveness

- 1.
2. 2. Forgive
3. 3. Confess - I am the only one responsible for my beliefs or my disbeliefs. Don't excuse yourself by blaming others for what you have believed. Believing a lie is a sin because it originates in the Father of Lies and it brings a lot of pain into my life and the life of others
4. 4. Ask Forgiveness
- 5.
6. **Prayer to Resolve the Lie**
- 7.
8. 1. Reject – I must take my stand against this lie
1. 2. Ask God to break the power this lie has had in my life. I don't have to do this alone
2. 3. Ask for a truth – Now that the lie is broken I need a principle by which to live, so I ask God, who is the source of truth, to give me a truth. Of course he wants to give me truth, I am his child and he is my heavenly Father.
 - a. I wait for the truth—it may come in any number of ways: picture, verse, song, statement, a memory, etc.
 - a. The truth will be particular for me
 - b. The truth will be universal
 - c. Whatever comes up talk about with the Safe Others to identify the kernel truth
1. 4. Acknowledge the truth
2. 5. Accept the truth—my part, I take my stand—"Lord, I believe,"
3. 6. Ask God to bind the truth to me—"help thou my unbelief."

Witnessing Prayer

Other things pertinent to specific situations:

- Emotions given to God
- Memories put under the control of the Holy Spirit
- Familial bonds restored or broken completely
- Occult issues arising out of the sin confronted
- Sexual issues arising out of the sin confronted

Example

As long as he could remember he believed, "Everyone is precious, except me." He prayed and asked God where this belief came from and God brought to his mind an incident when he was just six years old. He had gotten lost and when his father found him, he beat him very violently while his mother sat and watched in fear.

Prayer of Forgiveness - by the Hurting One

1. So, in prayer he **accused** his father for beating him and his mother for not protecting him. Together they gave him the message that he wasn't precious.
2. Then in prayer, he **forgave** them, trusting his Heavenly Father to do justice for him. Because he God was doing justice for him, he no longer needed to accuse them in his heart and to make them pay for what they had done with his bad attitude and hurtful absence.
3. He took responsibility for accepting their message that he wasn't precious, so he **confessed** in prayer that he alone was responsible for letting this lie into his heart.
4. He **asked for forgiveness** from his Heavenly Father.

Prayer to Resolve the Lie - by the Hurting One

1. He **rejected** the lie, "Everyone is precious, except me."
2. He asked his Heavenly Father to **break the power** of the lie.
3. He asked his Heavenly Father for something to replace the lie, he **asked for truth** that he could use to live.
4. Soon after he asked for truth, he saw a picture of a young boy in shorts but no shirt and covered in dirt. He was sitting in the shade of a tree. The safe helper asked "what does it mean?" He said this little boy is not me, but he is precious even though he is dirty. Then the picture changed, it became a photo of him that his grandma had taken on her farm, and he was sitting in the shade of a tree in shorts but no shirt and covered in dirt. The safe helper asked him what this photo meant and he said, **"I am precious too."**
5. He **accepted** the truth, "I am precious too."
6. He asked his Heavenly Father to **bind this truth** to his heart, so he would never forget it.

Witnessing Prayer - by the Safe Helper

The Safe Helper prayed, "He was right to bring this hurt to you, Heavenly Father. I am a witness that today he accused and forgave his mother and father for what they did and for the message they sent that he was not precious. Thank you for doing justice for him. I am also a witness that he confessed accepting the lie, 'everyone is precious, except him,' and asked your forgiveness. Thank you for forgiving him, Christ's blood is enough to pay for this sin. Father, he also rejected the lie. Thank you for breaking it's power and giving him the truth

through this photo that 'I am precious too.' Thank for binding this to his heart. I pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen."

IDENTIFY THE LIE

You have to identify the lie before you can deal with it.

Sometimes the hurting one speaks out the lie as they describe an incident. For example, instead of saying "these people weren't safe," they say "everyone is out to harm me." Another example, instead of saying "these two men were evil," she says "all men are evil."

- a. Sometimes there is a pattern (or a cycle) to the hurting one's behaviors or responses that is destructive. Often you can find the pattern or cycle by reviewing the incidents where they extended and received forgiveness in prayer. Behind that destructive behavior or pattern or cycle there is a destructive belief (lie). We can then ask the hurting one what their heart said when they were behaving this way. If they don't know, they can pray and ask their Heavenly Father what their heart says.
- b.
- c. Sometimes a belief was true before, but is not true anymore, so it is a lie now. For example, an elderly woman believes she might starve because when she was a child she almost did starve, but now reality has changed, there is an abundance of food where she lives.
- d.
- e. Some beliefs were never true, so it has always been a lie. For example, her mother criticized and beat her harshly as a child, so she believed she is unloveable. Jesus was treated badly, but he is precious and so are you because you are made in God's image.

RESOLVE THE LIE

Truth will not push aside foundational lies. *Unless the lie is rejected and the power of the lie broken*, we create a **dual system** that allows truth and untruth to exist side by side. This is why people can teach about a topic, do a good job, yet not accept and live it out for themselves.

Examples

Pam taught many new converts to trust in God as Father and to pray to him but she could only address her own prayers to Jesus. When her father molested her she no longer trusted any father—on earth or in heaven.

Some days Joy knows without a doubt "God loves me," but other days she is convinced "No one loves me, not even God." The lie and the truth both exist in her.

Sometimes a person asks for a truth, but they receive another lie instead. For example, they believed "I am worthless" and when they asked for truth they

heard "I am not worth spending time with." The first lie is more general, like a mother lie, and the second lie is more specific, like its child. Just resolve the child lie first and then go back and resolve the mother lie.

RECEIVE THE TRUTH

In Scripture, God gave truth in many different ways.

Examples

- God spoke to Isaiah and Jeremiah with visions and words. They did not have to guess the meaning, God told them clearly and he doesn't want you to guess either. The prophets reasoned with God and you can also reason in your prayers.
- When Jesus called Peter, he used a fisherman's way to speak to him. Jesus told Peter to throw out his net and when he did, the net was so full that he he couldn't pull it into the boat. Peter knew this was a miracle and Jesus was not an ordinary man. Jesus used that moment to call Peter saying "come and I will make you a fisher of men."
-

So, God can also speak to you in a way that you can understand, in a very personal way.

If you are only open to receive truth in the forms of Scripture, then that's how God will give you the truth. You may already know the verse, but if God gives it to when you ask for truth, then there will be something new about it for you. It will touch your heart.

Sometimes the hurting one is afraid, saying "maybe God won't answer me when I ask." But "maybe God will answer you," so they should simply ask.

Sometimes the hurting one doesn't receive something during the session, but receives it later instead. God is the Father of Truth, so he wants his children to know the truth and usually they receive it during the session. They need to be open to receive it directly from God and not just search their mind for the answer instead.

Sometimes the hurting one filters what they see, or hear, or think or remember. For example, a minute after Rose asked for a truth, I asked what she heard or thought and she said "I received nothing." When I asked her if her mind was totally blank, she said yes, except....., so she was filtering her thoughts, instead of just telling me her thoughts. The truth was in the thought she had filtered out. So, safe helpers need to gently check.

NEW BEHAVIORS

We start putting off old behaviors when we reject the lie and we start putting on new behaviors when we accept the truth (Ephesians 4:22-24). The behavior and habit patterns that come out of a foundational lie will continue to have 'twangs

of life' for a time like a chicken with it's head cut off. It normally takes 30 days and sometimes even more to break an old habit or create a new one.

During this time, we need to partner with the Holy Spirit:

- We must review and affirm the truth
- We must make a conscious determined choice to follow truth;
"I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws" (Ps 119:30).
- We must desire the truth, not just rationally, but with feeling;
"I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (Ps 40:8).
- We must nourish the truth through the Scriptures;
"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Ps 119:11).
- We must reaffirm that we rejected the lie if it comes ups again

We must work in partnership with the Holy Spirit as God answers our prayers. It is not our job to work it all out, nor to make it happen, but rather we are to partner with the Holy Spirit as God works it out. We must not take over God's job (and get in his way) but we do want to feed and nourish the truth and starve and neglect the false.

WORTHINESS

Often we hear that we are 'sinners saved by grace,' or 'I have found my worth in You.' Before we were saved, we were lost sinners; now that we are saved we are saved sinners-true? NO! We WERE sinners and we ARE saved but we are NOT sinners anymore. We do not live in fear of God's wrath like sinners do. And sinners cry out for salvation, but we don't cry out again today because God has already given us salvation. Whatever we were before, we are NOT the same now. When we believe, a change begins, our status changes, and it is blasphemous to deny God's transforming power because Jesus died to save us and to transform us.

If I do sin as a Christian, my status doesn't change back to sinner. God doesn't now say 'there is a sinner,' but instead says 'there is my son or daughter who sinned,' and He is grieved by our sin. Thus my approach to God becomes a very different one! I approach him as a daughter or a son, not as a sinner, so I come boldly into his presence, I do not have to 'crawl'!

'Worm Theology' puts the believer in a very hopeless state. There is not much peace with God because fear is in the way. The constant fear that when I sin, I again become a sinner, and have to face an angry God who impatiently waits for my perfection. (how do I reach perfection? I have to do more: Be more in the Word, more prayer, more spiritual of this and that ... to satisfy God.) There is no positiveness, no light. It creates low self-esteem in the believer and inevitably there is only one way to go: the way back down into the wormhole.

We need to see ourselves in the way that God himself sees us. We stand before God as sons and daughters. Like the prodigal son, when we turned back, God also ran to us, he delights in us and he took away our shame by putting sandals on our feet and restored our honor and authority by putting a robe on our back and a ring on our finger.

We are totally depraved, unable to save ourselves, but Jesus did not die for valueless, worthless, garbage. God created man as precious and worth dying for.

GOD'S IMAGE-BEARERS

God's purpose in creating us was that he could have fellowship with us. In a sense God was needy! If we as God's creation are to have fellowship with the Almighty Creator God then we have to possess certain parts and qualities. Believers and non-believers alike would have those God-given parts and qualities; there is no difference in our creation. Everybody is fully equipped to relate to God!

Some of Our God-Given Parts:

- **Ability and desire to communicate** - Every person is able to speak to and hear from God. We are precious enough to spend time with because he spends time with us!
- **Will** - God allows us to chose whether we communicate. We see in the garden that after Adam and Eve sinned, they hid and did not communicate, but later they did.
- **Intellect** - God gave us a mind, so we can process and reason. God reasoned with Abraham and Moses.
- **Emotions** - Our emotions are given to us by God and are part of communication.
- **Eternal** - God is eternal and he intends for us to be eternal. Because of sin we all die, but because of faith in Christ we can all live eternally.
- **Intuition** - There are things that we know that no one has taught us. Our intuition is from God.
- • **Sense of Justice** - We have a sense of right and wrong and what is just.
-

Some of Our God-Given Qualities:

- **Uniqueness** - God made each one unique and delights in each one without comparing one to another. No one like you will ever walk this earth again!
- **Lovable-ness** - God is love and created us to have fellowship with us, so of course he made us lovable. Every person is able to both give and receive love and deserves love because God loves us.
- **Worthiness** - Every person is deserving of respect and dignity; rich or poor, sick or well, educated or not, villager or city dweller, citizen or foreigner, man or woman, adult or child, handicapped or fully-capable.
- **Intimacy** - Every person is able to have a close relationship with God and others like David.
- **Capability to live life** - Every person is able to live his life within the limits that God has set. God would be unfair to expect us to live life but make us incapable!
- **Enjoyment** - Every person is able to be a joy and receive joy from others.
- **Ability to give and receive** - We are able to receive blessings from others NOT just to bless others.
- **Capability for holiness** - God has commanded us to be holy as he is holy. We have the capability to grow in holiness, to become more and more like him. We don't have grow more dark and more sinful. Our holiness will never be enough for us to enter heaven without Jesus' help.

Our Value

We are often told that the only worth or value we have is found in Jesus! But:

- • Christ did not die to make me more worthy or more valuable.
- • Nor did he die to change my entity, identity or being.
- • Being saved does not make him love me, accept me or approve of me more
- • Christ died for my sin because he already loved me! Did I deserve it? No, but that is a different point.
- • Salvation puts me into God's family, which creates the basis of having a relationship to him. It pleases him because that's what He has created me for.

Our Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem is Satan's deadliest weapon that he has to use against us! We need to view ourselves and esteem ourselves the way that God himself does.

- • It wrecks our relationships to God and to people
- • It sabotages us in our ministry and service
- • It creates hopelessness and fear
- • It puts down everything that God has given us

People with low self-esteem are very inward focused, always wondering about themselves, overly concerned with what others might think of them, extremely self-centered, with the world revolving around them and with constant need for praise.

Healthy self-esteem is essential if we want to be a good wife, husband, parent, daughter, son, friend, and certainly if we want to walk in the fullness of life and receive what God wants to give us!

A HEALTHY SELF IMAGE

There are three essential ingredients for a healthy self image:

- • A Sense of Belonging
- • A Sense of Worth
- • A Sense of Being Competent

BELONGING

A sense of belonging says that I have a sense of being loved and am loving, that there is a place or space here on earth among the human race that is uniquely mine.

I am beloved, I am acceptable and I am approvable of. I do not need to fight for, beg for or perform for this. These things are mine simply because I am me. And because I have them, I can acknowledge them in others on the same basis.

If I feel unwanted or rejected I will seldom, if ever, have a sense of belonging, without some kind of resolution. Until then there will be a general sense of loss, rejection, abandonment, and isolation from the entire human race.

This sense of belonging gives me my sense of security of place in the world .

- • I am wanted and desirable
- • I am acceptable
- • I am approvable
- • I belong here as a full participant
- • I am enjoyable
- • I am loveable
- • I have my own legitimate place in this world
- • I am unique

WORTH

A sense of worth and value says that I have a sense of my own uniqueness, specialness, preciousness, and valuableness. It says that because of my worth I can accept responsibility for all my own actions, both good ones and bad ones.

If I am worthy to receive the praise, blessings and satisfaction of making good and right decisions, then I am also worthy enough to bear the judgment or punishment, live with the consequences and learn from the bad or wrong decisions. Because I am worthy I am deserving of honor and respect.

I am valid, therefore my ideas are valid enough to be expressed and to be heard, and my opinions are valid enough to be expressed and to be heard. My emotions, fears, temperament, and basic motivations are valid.

Your ideas may be different than mine. I might be able to poke holes in and defeat your idea, but it is still a valid idea because it is yours and you are a valid person. As a person of worth, respect, and validity myself, I am now free to deal with you also as a person of worth, respect, and validity. My conflict is with your idea, not with you.

My being or character is apart from my behavior. The goal is to get rid of atrocious behavior, not to get rid of me; to free me up so that I can act out of who I really am, the way God made me, not the way my experience made me.

I have worth simply because God has given it to me. I do not have to work for it, perform for it, earn it, prove it, or pay for it; it is mine already! My worth has already been established by God himself, I can freely give unconditional love because I have no need to prove my own self-worth.

- I matter
- I am valuable
- I am worthwhile
- I am precious
- I am unique
- I am valid
- I am worth spending time with
- I am deserving of respect both by myself and by others

COMPETENCE

A sense of competence says that I am capable of living life. I have the ability to make good decisions and the right choices. I am able to deal with whatever life brings me.

It is a sense of competence that allows me to turn to God to help me, strengthen me, and guide me. When I cannot do something or there is something I do not know, I am competent enough to find out or find the right person to help me. Competence allows me to accept advice, help and support.

Competence allows me to know myself - to acknowledge both my strengths and my weaknesses. I have the skills of decision making, consistency, and self-discipline not only to cope with life but to live it victoriously.

Competence gives me the strength of character to stand tall on my own. I do not have to raise myself up by stepping on someone else, or to put them in the wrong, in order to be right myself.

There is no need to fear new tasks, nor any need to seek out new ways of proving myself competent. There is no need to despair over past deeds done or to be debilitated over what to do now, nor to dread what will happen tomorrow.

Competence is the feeling of independence and the acceptance of the responsibility and privilege that comes with it.

- I am capable
- I can handle life
- I am independent
- I can and I do make good decisions

LIVING OUT A HEALTHY SELF IMAGE

A sense of competence, worthiness and belonging allows me:

- to own my wrong
- to accept criticism
- to lose an argument
- to own my mistake
- to own my bad or poor decision
- to ask for and receive help
- to say, "I'm sorry"

I can do this without fear because I am aware that I am not my behavior, because I know I can change my behavior if I chose.

I live out my self-esteem by being able:

- to set boundaries,
- to assume responsibilities,
- to deal with the privileges
- to be accountable for my actions and attitudes

A healthy self-image/esteem allows me to:

- • face each day with assurance and optimism
- • be affirming, encouraging, uplifting, to both myself and to others
- • find satisfaction and fulfillment from within
- • set reasonable goals and fulfill them
- • be more outward focused rather than inward
- • see life as a challenge rather than an insurmountable difficulty
- • make decisions based on assumptions that are true
- • establish healthy relationships with other people

Self-esteem is not pride at the expense of others; it never detracts or takes away; it always adds to or builds up. Self-esteem is simply seeing ourselves as God sees us, in a realistic way and accepting and believing that.

God did not alter my spiritual state in order to love me. He did not do his work of redemption in order to make me worthy to be loved. He did this purely and simply because I was already precious and of worth and greatly loved.

God commands us to "love your neighbor as yourself." We must love our self, we must esteem ourself, we must see ourself as God himself sees us. If our love for ourself is distorted, our love for others will be distorted also.

SOME INDICATIONS OF UNHEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

Everyone needs a sense of belonging, sense of worth, and sense of competence. If they are lacking in any of these, then they will have an unhealthy view of themselves. From experience working with people, the following behaviors and attitudes may indicate low self-esteem. They only know they feel comfortable when they behave this way and very uncomfortable if they don't.

Controlling: Need to be in control. Need to control others. I may use anger, tears, manipulation, bullying or anything else I find that works.

For example, the daughter wants to go to college A but the mother wants her to go to college B, so the mother refuses to eat for four days and when it doesn't work, the mother threatens to kill herself and blames the daughter for her own choices not to eat and to try to kill herself. This mom doesn't feel secure unless she controls the decision.

As long as I am in control then others will not find out just how inadequate I am.

Critical/Shaming: Critical of self. Critical of others. Comparison with others is always done and perceived as a negative. Comparison is a way of making one better than another.

For example, the husband criticizes everything his wife does. She doesn't wash the dishes properly, she doesn't cook or clean well, she can't even buy the right cucumbers, the stems are too long! He is superior to her in every way.

He perceives his wife as bad or lacking or weak, which allows him to perceive himself as good or sufficient or strong. He has to be superior otherwise he doesn't feel comfortable.

For example, a mother constantly compares her daughter to another child in front of her face and praises the other child and shames her each time. The mother is trying to motivate the child to perform better and the child does work harder, but the child also feels rejected by her mom and hides herself. After working harder and still not getting mom's praise, she tries to poison herself.

Although the mom justified her criticism, she still wronged her daughter and damaged the relationship.

For example, the wife asked her husband to describe his previous girlfriends in detail and he did. She then compared herself to each one and she felt they were all better than her. She had the wrong color hair, wore the wrong clothes, was too short, and even kissed poorly. After this discussion, every time her husband talked to another woman she went into a jealous rage.

The husband shared the details and the wife compared herself. The relationship was damaged due to her poor self-esteem.

Consuming: Saps the emotions and strength from others. I am lacking and so I need a part of the other person to be whole. Very dependent and debilitated.

Judgmental: Judges self and others not by some higher standard but from a self-formed standard that can never be reached. Self and everybody else always falls short because the standard always moves out of reach.

Depression: Seeing oneself as a failure and/or victim. Feelings of hopelessness, withdrawing, unable to get started, self-deprecation and self-pity all play a part in depression that is related to low self-esteem.

Disrespectful: I am not OK and therefore you cannot be OK. That is a given. I must be OK if I am to survive and so by making you not OK it makes me OK. You are not worth anything. This behavior always leaves the other person feeling belittled, worthless and insecure.

Angry: I am angry that my worth has never been validated. This consumes me to the point that the reaction to each frustration is anger

Need for Constant Affirmation and Approval: Cannot affirm self. Seeks approval from others. Always trying to ascertain and second guess what the other person will do or say so that it can be done approvingly. Does not have their own opinions, ideas or thoughts, adopting the other person's instead. If I can just do, think, feel, and be what you want me to do or be, then you will approve of me. Then I will be approved of - then I will be OK.

For example, a woman invited her teacher to their home and asked what he'd like to drink and he politely refused three times, but she continued to ask three more times until the teacher agreed to drink something. She was very uncomfortable unless she could do something, so she repeated this process again and again in many different situations, trying to please her teacher to receive his praise.

Always Right: I must always win. There are no differences of opinion, only right or wrong ones. Winning and being right are the same. If I am to win then you must lose, because we both cannot be right or winners. Winning and being right are tied to my worth. As long as I win/am right then I am worthy. This person is right even when they are wrong!

Performance Oriented: Always struggling for acceptance and approval. Work and worth are tied together. Value is based on how well I succeed.

For example, her parents wanted a son and told her every day they didn't want her. After her brother was born, they ate in the dining room and she ate alone in the kitchen. Her mother said the only way they would accept her was if she did well on the college entrance test, got a good job after graduation and gave them lots of money. She studied hard but on the day of the test she broke down. When her mother heard what happened she kicked her again and again.

For example, every day his parents put lots pressure on him to study well and criticized him strongly for every mistake, telling him he was a burden because it cost money to go to school and he didn't do well. At 14 years old, he wrote a note to his parents apologizing to them, saying he didn't want to be a burden anymore and drowned himself.

Poor Decision Making: Does not make sound judgments. Does not make wise judgments. Often just does not perceive self as being capable of making good decisions. Confusion.

Lack of Confidence: Never speaks out. My thoughts are not worth sharing. I cannot do it. Victim mentality.

Can't Take Risks: If I fail, then I am a failure, so they never take risks.

Braggart: Needs to make self look good. Loud, boisterous draws attention to self. Self denigration is back handed bragging: "I'm worse than anybody else."

For example, every semester a dad bragged that his daughter was the top student again. But one semester she wasn't number one and her dad said he was "embarrassed to tell his colleagues." The daughter felt hurt because her father was disappointed. She hides herself now, doesn't share herself anymore, so her parents can't put her on display anymore.

Never Says "I'm Sorry:" Does not take responsibility for their behavior. Always someone else's fault. To admit an error, mistake or bad deed or words shows weakness. Weakness is not tolerated.

Perfectionist: A perfectionist is very uncomfortable unless it is perfect, so they are uncomfortable most of the time. Intolerant of any flaws of any kind. Doesn't accept themselves or others unless they look perfect, or perform perfectly. May even feel justified to abuse others or themselves out of self-hatred.

Overachiever: Must prove their value or competence by doing something truly extraordinary. Often sets unreasonable goals to prove their value or competence.

For example, a ten year old boy was stood in front of the whole class and the teacher shamed him, announcing that they should not be like this boy in any way. He vowed to prove that teacher wrong by doing something impossible. His business has failed five times because he can't set reasonable goals.

Bully: Gets a sense of power and respect from bullying others. He can't be ignored anymore feels valued, capable, respected

For example, a young boy couldn't go to school, his parents couldn't afford it. He collected recycle and people often made fun of him. He joined a gang and he learned to extort money from people who were late paying off their debts. He was very successful, he owned four houses and five cars. No one dares to look down on him now.

Sexual Deviant: Doesn't value himself or others. Coerces others into degrading behaviors and uses violence. Puts down God's greatest creation, mankind.

Some Others: Anorexia, underachiever, coward, rebel, fearful, paranoia, abuser, sex offender, incompetent leaders or teachers, emotionally shutting down or isolating.

Common Attitudes:

- I am unlovable
- I am unacceptable
- I am worthless
- I owe for my existence (must earn my place)
- I cannot do anything right (a failure)
- I am helpless (a victim)

SOURCES OF SELF-ESTEEM

1. 1. OUTER WORLD - our experience of life up until the present
2. 2. INNER WORLD - our physical, emotional and spiritual equipment
3. 3. SPIRITUAL WORLD - GOD and SATAN

THE OUTER WORLD

The front line of where self-esteem comes from is our parents! They are the front line in the development of our world view. If healthy development takes place, there's a good chance of good responses to the other two sources.

We came into this world acceptable, lovable, valid, competent, etc.... and with the ability to give and receive love. We come, so to speak, with our arms wide open, ready to embrace and be embraced by the whole human race. When this does not happen, most particularly by our parents, confusion arises concerning -the definition of love and acceptance:

What is real love?

I believe that the way I am treated is love (LIE!) I confuse my parent's conditional love and non-acceptance with real love, so I act upon the same false definition of love.

What is wrong with me?

Something must be wrong with me; I need to change. I am not OK! (LIE!)

We decide who we are from our earliest system of relationships! Those relationships start with our womb time and birth, move on to infancy, childhood and teen years. As said, our parents are the first line of defense! Decisive is how we were loved and cared for, and the language of relationships that we learned as we were growing up.

How we perceive our Outer World depends on;

- • How we were treated
- • How we were trained
- • How we saw those close to us relate to people
- • How parents related to other people
- • How our parents viewed us

Unfortunately, we have imperfect parents, and with that imperfect parenting (conditional love means conditional acceptance, conditional approval, etc.) we are imperfect.

As children, we usually believe we are only acceptable, loveable, valuable, and competent if our parents say we are by their words and actions. If they are never satisfied with us, if we never meet their expectations, if we don't give them enough face with others by our behavior and performance, we might think we don't belong, aren't valuable, or are incapable of living life. We are programmed for low self-esteem! It makes it very hard for us to accept the truth that we are loved and accepted by God, competent and of worth.

In this outer world, others include parental surrogates, relatives, and teachers, siblings, close family friends, close friends, spouses. This includes everything that happens to us by those outside ourselves.

THE INNER WORLD

God holds me ultimately responsible for my Inner World:

- choices
- judgments
- decisions
- beliefs
- attitudes
- actions
- words
- responses

God holds me responsible for what he gave me:

- • Senses, nerves, and a brain
- • Capacity to learn
- • Ability to register and respond to the world around me
- • Abilities, talents and gifts
- • Handicaps and physical deformities

And God does not hold me responsible for what he didn't give me. For example, a man in a wheel chair that can't walk is not responsible to walk, but his mind and hands work, so he is responsible to use them and he deserves respect and dignity like everyone else. I am able to live my life within the boundaries that God has set.

It is in the Inner Realm that we make our own choices. We perceive that mom does not give unconditional love, and we make the judgment that mom does not love and accept us. Our response: anger, hurt, feeling rejected, etc.--our response is legitimate! What is wrong is to carry judgment, anger and hurt until it becomes hatred (wishing someone dead) and/or bitterness.

Accepting the truth is done in the mind.
Believing the truth is done in the heart!

If the messages of the Outer World are negative, it makes it very hard for us to accept ourselves as loveable, acceptable, worthy and competent. It is in this Inner World that we make our own Personal Appraisal. If we cannot accept the truth about ourselves, then it matters very little what parents, God, the rest of the world believes about us. We are locked into the prison of our misbelief.

SPIRITUAL WORLD

People will come for help and their understanding of the spiritual world may be incorrect. As Safe Helpers, we need to have a clear view ourselves.

The universe is divided up into two areas of influences: God's and Satan's. As far as we know, Satan's influence is restricted to Earth. Living within this dichotomy is humankind.

Humankind

We inherited a sin nature from Adam. We did not enter life morally neutral! There's a big wall called 'sin' between us and God and all other relationships. It is sin that has allowed Satan to have a certain claim on us before we were saved and, at times, even after.

At redemption we were given a new nature which turns the tables--we now have a tendency toward good and a predisposition towards right. When we live in partnership with the Holy Spirit, it is much easier to make right choices for righteous living.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that we are merely victims or puppets. We partner with God as we make choices that determine who we are and what we are becoming.

In our work with people, we have rarely seen people attain healing without taking care of their own wrong responses and the need to be forgiven. So, not only the offender needs to be taken care of but each of us needs to deal with ourselves and our responses as well.

Satan

In this dichotomy of the universe, humankind is the prize to be won and Satan does all he can to win, fairly or otherwise.

The Scriptures refer to Satan as 'the prince of this world' and 'the evil one'. The first term implies that he has a certain (temporal) power or authority that God has given him until the king returns. The second term tells us his basic nature and what he does with his power. As a Christian, we are in a war with Satan, but the only power Satan has over us as Christians is what we give him as we open the door through unrighteousness.

Satan is a:

- • Liar (Jn.8:44)
- • Deceiver (Rev. 12:9)
- • Accuser (Rev. 12:10)
- • Blinder of our minds (II Cor. 4:4)

In all of Satan's roles, he uses feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, and self-belittling to defeat us and to prevent us from realizing our full potential! Some of the areas in which he works are lies, bad labels, and other mistruths or wrong assumptions, such as feelings of guilt and fear; confusion and the inability to see the truth. Satan uses feelings of self-hate (self-loathing) in all four roles.

He is the deceiver! Satan does not put a feeling or sense of inferiority into us. He uses against us the wrongdoings of other people who hurt us and our responses to those wrongdoings. Feelings of low self-esteem came by believing a lie that was presented to us.

Satan cannot possess God's people (in the full sense of the word) but he will use everything possible to make us miserable and ineffective! He does not make us weak; we do, by believing a lie. He cannot put one step into our lives that we don't allow him to make! The devil didn't make us do it, we did by believing his lie. Why do so many believers blame God NOT Satan for tempting us with these lies?

Some of his common lies:

- • God's love for me is arbitrary
- • I don't have the right for things in life
- • Life is a burden that needs to be coped with
- • If there are no difficulties in my life, God has withdrawn his love from me
- • God does love, care about and has blessings for others but it doesn't apply to me

God

While Satan and his kingdom are one part of the dichotomy in the universe, God and his Kingdom are the other. Scripture says that Satan is the prince of this world but it also says that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. So through the death and resurrection of Christ we can have forgiveness, adoption into God's family (and out of the Kingdom of Darkness) and victory over Satan. God has provided, through Christ all that we need to live victorious lives.

If we are to have victory in life and be able to withstand the wiles of the Devil then we must follow God's plan.

God and His Word

Many Christians have made God's word the fourth member of the godhead. That is a distortion of what the word of God is!

The Word is not a charm

The power of God's word does not lie in the words but in He who spoke the words. The mere words or form do not have power; it is the meaning (the message) and the Messenger who gave us that message that is in focus. We trust and believe in the speaker and thereby trust, believe and accept the words. Then God is able to release His power.

- Repeating the verse, like it is a kind of mantra, is not a trigger for it to work.
- Carrying the Word wherever we go, just to feel safe is to use it as a fetish.
- Reading the Word as a feeling-safe guarantee for the day is also the wrong motivation.

Memorizing Scripture? Yes. The Holy Spirit needs something to work with! But to make it a part of us, we need to (1) accept it, (2) believe it and (3) live it out-not just be able to quote it as a talisman.

We live in the most amazing time in history. During this time, we not only have have God's precious Word, we also personally have the Holy Spirit writing his Word on our hearts. (Jeremiah 31:33)

As in any communication, a piece taken out of context of either the part or the whole tends to distort the message. Therefore building truth, or our world view, on an isolated passage often gets us into trouble. We must weigh each passage in the light of the immediate context, the broader context, the principles of the whole of Scripture and the character of God.

God is not a magician

God does not make the consequences of sin or wrongdoings magically disappear. When we sin there are always consequences, sometimes only for a few hours or days, sometimes for months, years or even a lifetime. Consequences are part of our natural world. God can release us from the bondage of that sin, the associated feelings, etc. but he does not magically take away the consequences. Yet, he can carry us through giving us the strength and grace to live victoriously within the consequences.

We relate to God and his Word out of our human experience and perspective

When we read, as in any form of communication, we decode the message out of our inner attitudes, experience, and knowledge. We can read the same words as the other fellow, talk about those words and truths using the same vocabulary as the other fellow, and yet each of us will receive and decode very different messages.

One sees passages in the Bible as condemning and always negative, someone else sees the same passages as freeing and encouraging, Two very differently developed Inner & Outer Worlds of those persons. One may feel condemned and burdened, the other forgiven and free, both from the same passage. One may feel love and protection and care, the other rejection and insecurity and neglect.

While we believe with all our hearts that the Bible is the Word of God and that in it we will find truth and that it has the power of a double edged sword: that it is in fact, God's communication to us, it is still read and decoded through very human minds.

God brings resolution

- • As a Father
- • According to his character
- • According to his standard and protocol
- • Through effective prayer

SUMMARY

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed." (II Timothy 3:16-17, GNB)

He is Truth, he is always faithful, merciful and just. He never changes! All that is included in his Word is truth.

When we relate to God we relate to him out of our humanness. The attitude and feelings that we have toward our earthly father will be the same attitude and feelings we have toward our Heavenly Father, unless there is some sort of resolution at the spiritual level.

This resolution usually comes through resolving the hurt and emotional damage done by a less than perfect parent. This is not to say that we can always blame the parent but it is to say that if we hold something against that parent and perceive that he is not to be trusted, or that he didn't love or accept me unconditionally, or that he is judgmental, intolerant, angry, or abusive then we must resolve those things before we can be free to relate to God freely.

REBUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Once we can rid ourselves of lies, labels, and other misinformation we are then free to accept the truths; and the acceptance of truth shall set us free - to decode and receive the true message that God desires to communicate to us. It is out of these truths that God is able to have input in the development of our self-esteem.

RESOLVING AN UNHEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

There are certain necessary steps in confronting falsehoods and accepting truths. Just hearing the truth will not automatically push away the false, nor will it affect our belief system which, in turn, affects our behavior and feelings.

1. Recognition

- • I need to clearly understand what the lies, misunderstandings or wrong labels are
- • As each one comes to light, I acknowledge what I have accepted wrongly in order to reject it as a decision of my will
- • I acknowledge the lie

2. Forgive

- • I determine who gave me the message of the lie and the circumstances
- • I forgive the person and deal with the circumstances
- • I ask for forgiveness for my believing and living out the lie - I am totally responsible for believing the lie

3. Reject the Lie

- • I reject the lie
- • I take my stand against it

4. Ask God to Break its Power

I ask God to break the power that lie has had in my life

5. Ask for the Truth

- • I ask the Father what the Truth is that is to replace the lie
- • I wait for God's truth for me

6. Accept the Truth

I accept the truth and ask God to bind it to me so that I can live it out

Truth comes from God's Word but a damaged person cannot always perceive the lie or the truth for themselves even if they can do so for others. They need safe others to help them along the path to truth. This takes time!

A specific lie needs to be countered with a specific truth. Out of one lie comes other little ones, each must be found and done away with and replaced with truth.

When the hurting one asks for truth, verses or truth in some other form may also come to the Safe Helper, but we are trying to help the hurting one develop their own intimate relationship with their Heavenly Father, so don't share them right away. Be patient, let the hurting one have time to hear from God themselves and then share your verses or truth afterwards.

It normally takes 20 days or more to break an old habit or create a new one.

During this time, we need to partner with the Holy Spirit:

- We must review and affirm the truth
- We must make a conscious determined choice to follow truth;

"I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws" (Ps 119:30).

- We must desire the truth, not just rationally, but with feeling;

"I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (Ps 40:8).

- We must nourish the truth through the Scriptures;

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Ps 119:11).

- - We must reaffirm that we rejected the lie if it comes ups again
- We can also help rebuild our self-esteem by:
 - - Accept praise, thanks, or compliments with a 'thank you.'
 - Treat yourself and others with respect and dignity.
 - Affirm you are as a created being and a redeemed child of God.
 - Focus on positive passages. The condemning ones no longer apply to you as a child of God.
 - Affirm yourself for trying even if the result is not all you hoped.
 - Affirm that your behavior does not define who you are.
 - Remind yourself that you are not a helpless victim when disagreeable things happen. You have choices.

It is now your responsibility to build-up our own self-esteem. This is not something God is going to zap you with without some effort on your part. Yes, it would have been so much easier if your parents had done their job properly and have affirmed you in your self-esteem. But they didn't; you've dealt with that. Now you must get on with the job - it is something only you can do. With God's help you will become more and more attuned with truth and will begin to see the reality of your belongingness, worthiness, and competence.

PART 1

BEING A SAFE HELPER

In PR, we call the one who needs help the Hurting One and the ones who are helping them Safe Helpers. As believers, we are all human, so at times we are the Hurting One and receive help, but we are also all part of the priesthood, so at other times we are a Safe Helper giving help. Maybe people come to you for help, but you don't know what to do. This course will show you how to be more helpful.

God's Role in Resolution

God is either a passive bystander OR an active participant.

Passively including Him is:

- just opening and closing in prayer.
- telling the wounded one to "just give the problem to the Lord."
- putting a cross or a picture of Jesus on the wall
- telling the wounded one to "just read the Word and memorize Scripture more."

Passively including Him means:

- we are sufficient in ourselves
- our reasoning is all we need to understand
- our will power is all the power we need to change
- our standard for right or wrong apart from him is sufficient

But we are not sufficient in ourselves to bring resolution:

- our reason is not enough
- our beliefs are not enough
- our feelings are not enough
- our standard is not enough

Actively including Him is:

- partnering with God during the session
- praying in specific ways throughout the session
- expecting healing from God in response to our prayer
- asking God to reveal what needs to be known and to help us to understand

The Approach

We need the proper setting and perspective when we come into God's presence:

- involve the entire Godhead; Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- proper respect for sin, its power and its consequences
- proper respect for the cost of sin
- proper respect for our role as a safe other, as part of the priesthood.

God does not automatically **hear or answer** our prayer unless we ask according to his will, on his terms and standards.

God does **hear and answer** our prayers when we approach him on his terms and standards.

- he can restore what we have lost
- often we have to live with consequences of sin however

The Prayer Resolution Participants

There are many participants in a Prayer Resolution session:

- The Heavenly Father
- The Son
- The Holy Spirit
- The Hurting One
- Safe Helper(s)
- Satan

The Heavenly Father

Without God the Father's involvement, there is no real and permanent healing.

It is his response to prayer that brings the resolution, the healing.

We come to him as his child.

We come to him with our wounds, the reality of the sins committed against us and the humbling truth of our own part.

Victims of parental betrayal are often reluctant to pray to God the Father.

If they haven't rejected God entirely, they transfer their trust to Jesus only, praying to him exclusively instead.

When they continually pray to Jesus only, they may be acknowledging that their parent, usually their father, has betrayed them.

Their thinking is distorted, they have pushed aside God the Father.

God the Father did not send his Son to replace him.

Each part of the Trinity has their part.

They are unconsciously transferring their distrust from their parent to their heavenly Father.

It is very important that the Hurting One pray to their heavenly Father.

We gently teach them this and correct them when they pray.

The Hurting One approaches their heavenly Father as a son or daughter with the expectation that the Father is concerned and able and willing to answer.

- He will heal them
- He will forgive them
- He will do justice on their behalf

The Son

We can approach God the Father with confidence and boldness because of Jesus.

Because of Jesus we have the right to claim the Father's attention.

Jesus' blood paid for our sin.

Because our sin is paid for in full, we can come into our heavenly Father's holy presence.

Because of his blood, we have been adopted as sons and daughters.

It is by his authority and position that we can approach the Father with such confidence.

As our High Priest, Christ is present when we go to the Father in prayer.

"For where two or three have gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt 18:20, NAS)

Jesus' presence adds power to our prayers.

We must acknowledge and accept the authority that is ours in Christ.

We must also acknowledge the responsibility we have to use that power wisely.

Jesus assured us that the Father will accept our agreement as Jesus' own.

This authority includes binding (prohibiting) or loosening (permitting). (Matt 18:18-19)

This authority also includes the power of agreement. (Matt 18:19).

There could not be any resolution without his suffering, death, and resurrection, without his position as our High Priest, without his authority and power.

The Holy Spirit

Jesus said it was better that he go away, so that the Holy Spirit could come.

In PR Sessions, we want to acknowledge and accept the presence of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit does not take over the session, we must choose to work in partnership.

Jesus gave the the Holy Spirit many titles

- counselor
- teacher
- comforter
- helper
- guide(John16:13)
- spirit of truth

When we allow the Holy Spirit to actively guide us in the session, the Holy Spirit:

- helps us see where the wounds have come from
- helps us see what needs to be done
- helps us see the truth, the reality, of the situations
- reveals hidden things
- reveals sin that has been done
- reveals hurts that have been ignored
- reveals damaging emotions

The Holy Spirit is with us in an active way when we pray (Rom 8:26-27).

Christ's authority and power is real.

We have been given that power and authority in Christ.

Our power and authority must be controlled from above.

We must put the session under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit must be involved in the process or something will be missed and healing will not be complete or take place at all.

We live in the most amazing time in history. During this time, we not only have God's precious Word, we also personally have the Holy Spirit writing his Word on our hearts. (Jeremiah 31:33)

Safe Helpers

We act as Safe Helpers to wounded ones when we meet with them.

As Safe Helpers we fulfill our role as priests in the priesthood of believers.

Jesus' has consecrated us as priests:

- Jesus is our High Priest (Heb 3)
- We are a priesthood of believers (Heb 3, 1Peter 2:9)
- We are anointed with the Holy Spirit

Our Role as Priests in the Age of Grace is to:

- Bear one another's burdens
- Confess to one another
- Facilitate their prayers
- Help them see sin as their heavenly Father sees it
- Monitor the prayers to see that they are clear and accurate
- Ensure forgiveness has truly happened
- Insure confession is repentant, remorseful
- Witness their confessions and accusations
- Build them up
- Bring perspective and help clarify the issue
- Validate sin has occurred and payment is required
- Declare forgiveness
- Add our authority and power to the Hurting One's prayers

NOTES

1. we are accountable before God for what we agree with and witness as a safe helper
2. we should not bear witness for what we do not understand
 - a. tongues or foreign languages must be interpreted
 - b. ambiguous or unclear words must be clarified

The Hurting One

Must be a believer or become a believer at the beginning of the process.

A child of God is hurting, they are the Hurting One.

The Safe Other(s) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit takes the Hurting One through the experiences that have caused their pain and created their bondage.

The Hurting One must be willing to:

- discover the source of their inner pains.
- learn to extend forgiveness and mercy.
- learn to confess and receive forgiveness
- increase their faith in their heavenly Father.
- receive the wholeness and healing from God.

The Hurting One approaches God as their Father through prayer with the expectation that the Father is concerned and able and willing to answer.

Each person is unique.

Each person processes a little differently.

- Some process very quickly, some process very slowly.
- Some process by talking.
- Some process by thinking silently.
- Respect their uniqueness and adapt to them.

It is a privilege to be invited into their private inner world.

- Be respectful and careful while being truthful.
- They are precious, made in God's image.

Occasionally, when they will not take responsibility for their part, you may have to confront them.

You risk breaking their trust when you do confront them, so make sure to pray first.

Satan

The world is under the control of the Evil One (1 Jn 5:19).

We are interfering with his control, his plan when we help restore a brother or sister.

We must remember we are opposing the Kingdom of Darkness.

We should expect active opposition from him.

We must ask God to put a hedge of protection around us, our families and our properties.

Satan has power but in Christ Jesus we have more.

Satan is always a potential presence.

He will attempt to interfere even during the session.

He will succeed, if we let him in.

We are called to be rescuers:

“I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” (Acts 26:17b-18)

We must operate out of the authority and position we have in Christ.

The Heart of a Safe Helper

COMPASSIONATE

The safe helper needs to care about the one they are helping.

And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. (Mark 2:3-4)

Do you have this kind of heart for the one who has asked you for help?

Once the hurting one is restored, they have the compassion and patience to help others. Sin is never God's plan, but through the Holy Spirit, God can use even the sin we have experienced to help restore others. (Romans 8:28).

NON-JUDGMENTAL

As safe helpers, we judge behaviors, but we do not judge the person. God judges the person not us. We do not condemn people, we judge behaviors.

Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. (Matthew 7:1-2)

I want God to judge me and measure me as a person. So then I have to let God be the judge of all other people and let Him measure them also. I do not pronounce judgement or condemnation on any person.

I only judge my behaviors and others' behaviors, not their person. I must judge between sinful and righteous behaviors in order to walk in righteousness. Paul is clearly judging behavior, a man that was sleeping with his father's wife, when he said:

For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. (1 Corinthians 5:3)

Paul acknowledges he has been wronged but he doesn't seek revenge and clearly leaves the judgement of the person up to God:

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. (2 Timothy 4:14-15)

PATIENT AND GENTLE

When Job's friends first arrived they were patient:

Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great. (Job 2:13)

As safe helpers we also need to be patient like this.

Later, even though Job's friends were not aware of any sin in Job, they judged him and tried to force him to confess sin even though he felt no guilt or conviction. This was Job's response:

For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; So that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty. (Job 6:14)

God rebuked Job's friends for what they did, so as safe helpers, we must not try to force confessions like Job's friends did.

Confession is the hurting one's response to conviction from the Holy Spirit and their own conscience.

in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, (Romans 2:15, NASB)

By listening and asking questions, safe helpers can help the hurting one recall the words, actions, feelings, responses and the effects.

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. (Galatians 6:1, NASB)

SAFE

As safe helpers our goal is to help the hurting one, not to show we have power over them. God does not delight when those caring for his sheep look down on them:

Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. (Ezekiel 34:4)

As safe helpers, if God assigns us to care for them and if we care for them carefully, they will not be afraid us, nor will they run away from us:

I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:4)

As safe helpers, we help the hurting one hear God's voice not our voice or some other voice.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers. (John 10:1-5)

As safe helpers, we must not share the things the hurting one has told us with anyone else without their permission. If we do, it is not safe for the hurting one to tell us what happened.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

The hurting one is our neighbor, so when we tell others without their permission, we have been a false witness to them by breaking our promise.

PRAYER RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

The Safe Helper Responds with Empathy

The hurting one shares the problem, issue or incident. Sometimes the safe helper affirms what the hurting one is feeling or thinking. This gives hope to the hurting one because the safe helper is carrying the burden together with them, but it doesn't resolve it. God resolves in response to prayer.

Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

The Safe Helper Responds with Analysis

The hurting one shares their problem or issue or incident. Sometimes the safe helper helps the hurting one analyze it by talking about the background and relationships. Just understanding it more clearly will not by itself resolve it though. God resolves in response to prayer, but the things to include in their prayer may become more clear from the analysis.

The Hurting One Directs the Discussion

The safe helper sometimes may just let the hurting one talk about the problem, the issue or the incident without directing the discussion. As the hurting one speaks it out, the things to include in their prayer may become more clear. Unless the safe helpers are sensitive to the Holy Spirit as the hurting one speaks, the prayers in the session may not be complete using this approach, leaving something still unresolved.

The Safe Helper Directs the Discussion

The safe helper sometimes may direct the discussion about the problem, the issue or the incident. It can be very efficient, but the hurting one may feel that the safe helper isn't listening to them or isn't understanding them very well or sometimes may even feel judged. It is more important to be thorough than to be efficient. God resolves in response to prayer and sometimes being directive can help the hurting one see more clearly what to include in their prayer.

The Safe Helper Confronts the Hurting One

Sometimes, the safe helper may need to confront the hurting one because they are unwilling to do their part in the session; look for the source of their inner pains, learn how to extend forgiveness and mercy, or learn how to confess and receive forgiveness, or even unwilling to receive wholeness and healing from God.

Once you build trust and they see your love for them, they may be more willing to let you confront them about their behavior. As the Safe Helper, in the session you can suggest talking about their behavior or attitude, but it is not your job to make them feel convicted or guilty about their behavior. Their conscience and the Holy Spirit should do this, not you.

Don't use Scripture to try to force them to change. Instead, suggest Scripture might apply and respect them enough to discuss it with them. When you feel like teaching them, ask a question instead unless they ask you a question directly. Be patient and gentle.

If you confront them forcefully, it may break the trust they have in you and they may stop meeting with you, or listening to you as a safe helper. You have lost the opportunity to help.

Whenever you feel like confronting the hurting one, pray and ask God first, so you don't confront them just out of frustration. God resolves in response to prayer, but confronting them can sometimes help the hurting one know what to pray.

Though we need to confront sometimes, we are to have a pattern of gentleness:

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

So, forceful confrontation is not often used.

What is the best approach?

As a safe helper, you may be very comfortable with some of these approaches and not as comfortable with others. The hurting one may also have preferences. Each method has its strength and weakness, so you need to be willing to use the method that best fits a specific problem, incident, or issue with a specific hurting one. You need to learn to use all these methods not just the ones you are most comfortable with if you are going to be most effective.

6. Is the Hurting One Ready or not?

Are they ready?

Not everyone is ready to face their problems yet. Not everyone is ready to share their story with a safe helper yet. Not everyone is ready to take the time to resolve their problems yet. It took time to make these problems and it will take time to resolve them. When the problems becomes important enough, then they will take the time and openly share because the pain is too much to bear.

- Do they think they need **help**?

Maybe everyone else thinks they need help, but they don't agree. You can't help someone that doesn't think they have a problem or need help. They are not ready yet.

- Do they really **want** to do this?

They need to be open with their safe helper. They need to build trust in their safe helper as they do sessions. Talking about their problems only brings temporary relief. They need to pray to their Heavenly Father, so he can resolve their pain. Maybe they just enjoy talking and the attention they receive in the session, but they need to be willing to also seek healing from God through prayer or their problems won't be resolved.

- Do they **believe**?

They need to have a relationship with the God of the Bible in order to pray to him, so they need to already be a believer or need to become a believer before sessions begin. If the sessions don't seem to be effective, ask them how they became a believer. Sometimes they say they are a believer because their husband is Christian or because they go to church, so you may need to explain to them how to become a believer and what it means. (Note: There also can be other reasons why the session is not effective.)

Are you the one?

- Did they **ask** or did you solicit?

It is better if they come to you and ask for help than if you go to them and offer help. If they come to you, then it means that they think you are safe and helpful, but if you go to them it is not as clear. If you go to them and offer, then ask them to pray about it and text you if they want to meet.

- Do they think you can **help**?
- Do they think God has **sent** them to you?

God can match hurting ones with safe helpers, so both should pray. They should both have a sense that God is putting them together.

- Do they **trust** you?
- Do they think you're **non-judgmental**?
- Do you **care** about them?
- Are your motives **pure**?

If you as a safe helper have a romantic interest in the hurting one, then you are not the one to help them. You cannot be a boyfriend or girlfriend and also a safe helper. Don't add to their confusion or pain.

- Is it **appropriate**?

My wife had a problem and I offered to help, but she refused. I offered again and she refused again. The third time I offered, she strongly said "No, you are the problem I need to deal with." So, sometimes we are not the right person to help them. It's hard to be a safe helper to those close to us. Generally, it is better to let someone else help them, not you. If you want to help a relative or close friend, pray and ask God first. Don't help unless God gives you a clear answer.

**JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE IS HURTING,
DOESN'T MEAN YOU ARE THE ONE TO HELP THEM.**

Session Guidelines

Prayer Resolution sessions are typically 2-3 hours. Ideally, they are open-ended.

Once we open up a box (an issue or an incident) in a session we try to finish it the same day if possible. Details are important, so it takes time.

- We must be careful not to cut-off the session prematurely:
- If we stop before we have finished praying, the box is still open.
- We carry the burden with the wounded one as long as the issue is still open.
- If the incident or issue is not finished that day we need to pray and ask God to cover them until we can finish.

Every person processes differently:

- Most hurting ones want to meet just once per week.
- Some prefer to work more frequently, even every day.
- The safe helpers need to adjust their schedule to the hurting one as much as possible
- If we are going to take their needs seriously, then we need to give them time.
- It is better not to start than to start and not give them time.
- We have found that as safe helpers, if we are working with them intensively, generally it is best to work 4 days maximum and then take a break.
- Most people are done in weeks or months, not years.
- Based on our experience to date 30-60 hours is typical.

Sessions are often very intense and exhausting for the hurting one. Listening, discussing and praying in a session is also tiring for the safe helpers. Each safe helper is different, so we have found that they can do 3-8 sessions on a weekly basis. Some are able to do more sessions for a week or two, but then need to rest for a longer time.

The priests in the Old Testament were not allowed to serve in the temple every day of the year. When they finished their time in the temple, they went home to their families and rested. Like these priests, God does not ask us as safe helpers to serve all the time without rest. We all need to respect the safe helper's limits and God's command to rest one day each week as a Sabbath.

Generally Between Sessions:

- No homework
- No reading self-help books
- Rest
- Leave room for the Holy Spirit

Ideally, both a man and a woman work together as safe helpers with a wounded one.

- Men and women each provide different perspectives.
- With some incidents or issues it may be more healing to hear it from a man.
- With other incidents or issues it may be more healing to hear it from a woman.

We don't recommend a man work with a woman alone or a woman alone with a man.

- It is too easy for an inappropriate bond to form due to the intimacy of the discussions.
- It is better to be too careful than to risk creating an unhealthy bond.
- You may be the first person in their life that has treated them kindly, that makes you very attractive.

Personal History

We best understand the hurting one's issues in the context of their whole life.

1. Write down basic information:

- birthplace
- parents names, their work
- brothers & sisters
- places lived
- schools attended
- religious background and training
- job

2. Divide their life into **segments** based on their experience. For example.

- raised at grandma's home 0-5 years
- lived with both parents until divorce at 10 years
- lived with mom and grandma 11-13 years
- lived at boarding school in the city 14-18 years
- lived in college dorm 18-23 years etc

Use the segments that they use in their mind to divide their life.

3. For each segment, ask if anything **sexual** happened. For example:

- at 5 years, her uncle tried to touch her when she was sitting on his lap
- at 7 years, her cousin tried to touch her she was sleeping in the same bed
- at 10 years, she saw her father in bed with another woman
- at 13 years, a man tried to rape her but she screamed and he left
- at 18 years, she got drunk, her boyfriend raped her when she passed out.
- at 23 years, she lived with her boyfriend. Later they married.

4. For each segment, ask if anything spiritual happened, if they or their relatives participated in forbidden **spiritual** activities, had spiritual objects, had spiritual abilities, or had spirits. For example:

- her parents received her name from a fortune teller
- at 9 years she was sick and her mother took her to a shaman
- at 12 years, her gramma took her to the fortune teller
- at 14 years, one night there was something in the corner of her room

5. For each segment, ask if they were aware of any reason why God would remove his blessing or **curse** their family or curse their group of people.

For example:

- she's illegitimate, they weren't husband and wife when she was born
- her grandfather was part of a group that massacred the men, women and children of a peaceful people to take their land
- her great grandmother and grandmother were both powerful shamans

6. For each segment, ask if any **authorities** were ever unfair, too harsh, not caring enough, unjust. Also ask if they rebelled in response. For example:

- at 3 years, she was crying and her father kicked her across the floor
- at 5 years, her parents took her away from grandma and hit her for crying
- at 9 years, a teacher shamed her for letting the class bully copy her paper
- at 10 years, her parents divorced and she never saw her father again
- her mother was always critical and often beat her harshly without reason
- at 16 years, she tried to kill herself, after mom told her to leave

7. For each segment, ask if there were any **Words of Power**; vows, curses, dedications, judgements, labels. For example:

- at 15 years, she vowed "I will never get married"
- at 17 years, she made a vow to become a member of a Christian cult
- her mother said she was a "fat ugly goat"
- her father often said "you're stupid like your mother."
- her father also said "no man will ever marry you."

We need to be sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit as we ask questions.

The Safe Helper must maintain strong control while taking the personal history. If the emotions of the hurting one start to come out, then don't ask more questions about that until you do a session for that issue.

Using the Personal History

Generally, in sessions we completely go through one topic, resolving each key incident or each relationship in the order they happened before going to the next topic. This is a very common order for the topics:

- Sexual Sin
- Rebellion and Authority
- Cursed

Generally, sexual sin is easy to deal with and the hurting one easily experiences God's response to prayer, so it is a good place to start. Sometimes you might need to start somewhere else.

Usually, we deal with the cursed topic at the very end because all the sins that are footholds for spiritual forces should already be resolved.

Words of Power often come out as you resolve incidents, issues, or relationships related to these three topics. You can resolve the words of power as they come up.

You can also deal with Lies and Worthiness issues at the end of each one of these three topics if the hurting one is ready. Sometimes the Lie or Worthiness issue is tied to several of these topics, so the hurting one may be more comfortable waiting until all the topics are finished before they deal with lies and worthiness issues.

Session Pattern

1. Opening Prayer - the Safe Helper prays

We come to our **Father** boldly and with great confidence, as sons and daughters, and ask for healing and forgiveness.

We recognize **Jesus'** presence where two or three gather together in His name and welcome the authority and power he brings to bear.

We recognize that the **Holy Spirit** abides in us as sons and daughters, seek his direction and insights, his revelations and convictions, and we put ourselves under his authority.

We state our **purpose**: to do all things according to our Father's will for His glory and His honor and His pleasure.

We recognize that **Satan** never sleeps and seeks to destroy us and ask the Father to provide a hedge of protection around us, our loved ones and properties especially during the session.

2. Discussion of an Incident or Issue

- What happened?
- Why did it hurt?
- Who caused the hurt?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did you respond?
- Who else contributed to the hurt? (greater circle)

NOTES

1. The discussion is very important but not sufficient.
2. Unless it leads to prayer, all it does is stir up all the hurt.
3. God's response to the prayer brings the healing.

3. Prayer of Resolution - the Hurting One prays

The Safe Helper guides the Hurting One to pray about the incident or issue using the prayer that fits

- **Sexual Sin**
- **Words of Power**
- **Rebellion and Rebellious Authority**
- **Cursed by Association & Participation**
- **Destructive Beliefs (Lies)**

4. Witnessing Prayer - the Safe Helper prays

After each incident or issue, the Safe Helper adds their prayer as a witness.

For example

"Heavenly Father, we are in agreement with this prayer. We know they were hurt by them and we know they forgave them from the heart. Thank you for doing justice for them. We also know their confession was sincere and made with remorse, so we know you have forgiven this son or daughter because Jesus blood paid for this sin. Thank you Father "

5. Closing Prayer - the Safe Helper prays

At the end of the session, the Safe Helper closes in prayer.

For example,

"Thank you Father for all that you have accomplished in this precious one on this day. We recognize that Satan never sleeps and seeks to destroy us and ask the Father to provide a hedge of protection around us, our loved ones and properties until we meet again. We ask you Holy Spirit to continue your ministry until we meet again. We ask you Father to give this precious one a sense of peace, security and good rest until we meet again."

6. Covering Prayer

If the Safe Helper doesn't have time to deal with the issue completely, then they need to pray and over the Hurting One and ask God to cover the unfinished pieces.

For example,

"We ask you Father to prevent Satan from using these unfinished issues in any way to cause turmoil or trouble until you resolve them. "

7. Prayer of Release - the Safe Helper prays

When the sessions are done and your role as a Safe Helper ends, ask God to restore you to being just a brother or sister in Christ. The hurting one has trusted you and put themselves under your authority in these sessions. If we do not release the person, then they will feel responsible to us for their life decisions. Our job is to build independence not dependence. Once released, you can ask the question "how are you doing?" just as a brother or sister in Christ not as their safe other.

For example,

"Heavenly Father, we have been in a position of authority as safe helpers for this person. We have finished our sessions and so ask that you release us from that authority. We ask that you restore us to a proper relationship, now that this role is finished."

The hurting one can also pray and ask God to release their safe helpers.

DEALING WITH FAMILY

Whenever we are able to deal with all of someone's life in prayer the parents must be considered. Regardless of good parents or bad, the child is a reflection of them and has adopted their behavioral patterns and attitudes. Even if the child has rejected the parents, he still has remnants of their patterns within himself.

The term child is used here but recognize that the "child" in our sessions can be 70 years old! We want to take the person back to the time he or she lived at home and was dependent on a mother and father. We will likely relate differently to our parents now as adults than we did as young children. It was as younger children that we were shaped and have formed our view of the world and ourselves.

The scriptures tell us to honor our mother and father. It is not dishonoring to either one when we evaluate their *performance* in the light of their position and how they were responsible or not as parents. We must hold them accountable for their actions. If we do not actively reject their unhealthy modeling then we, by inaction, condone such behavior and allow it for others and ourselves. God honors us by seeing we have the worth to be accountable for our own actions. We can honor our parents by seeing they have the worth to be accountable for their actions. It is both respectful and honoring to hold people accountable.

Each parent must be considered separately for several reasons. There is a difference between males and females and it makes a difference if the child is male or female. Also there is a question of status and role (position and performance): a father's behavior is different from a mother's behavior in a number of ways depending on being in or out of the home and with whom they relate to within the home. Also, it is obvious that mothers have a very different role in our lives than do fathers. That is why God gave us both.

As we view the parent model, *it is important to stay within the home-staying years*. Often the relationship changes later in life for various reasons. In one case, the father became a Christian; in another the parent mellowed, as he/she got older. Keep in mind that it is during the early years that the model is observed and experienced and these have shaped the child's worldview, for good or bad. *Better behavior by the parent now does not erase the effects of bad/unhealthy behavior early on.*

The Father

Even in dealing with one parent, it is too big a picture to consider unless we break it down. So we look at the father's position and performance in three different roles of the entity called "father:" (1) father as a man, (2) father as a husband, (3) father as a father.

We start at a distance from the child so we first look at how he performed/modeled as a man, then how he performed/modeled as a husband and lastly and more personal, how he performed in his relationship as father to the child.

We might think it is more *efficient* to deal with the father as a whole. However, we have found that it is too much to deal with the whole; often it is even too confusing.

Take the father who is seen to relate to the outsider as good, upright, a man to be admired, a man of God, but at home is judgmental, mean, and controlling. It is simply more *effective* to deal with just one role at a time even though it might seem to take time. Each is important as the child begins to be able to differentiate each role and evaluate with sorrow or joy over a father's model and its effect on the child's life.

Father as a man

This has to do with how he relates with others, not his immediate family.

How would the child have defined what a man is, based on his father's behavior? *The only way we can get the child to begin to see the model his father gave him is to ask questions— and, as safe others, we must maintain the focus on only one part/role of the entity at a time!* Remember that an effective Safe Other is one who learns how to ask questions that 'prime the pump,' so to speak.

Is a man friendly, kind to others, opinionated, proud to be masculine? Does a man dress well or sloppy? Is a man hard working, careful? Does a man ever admit fault or show weakness? Can a man, based on his father's model, show compassion or cry? Did others like and respect your father? What did he do to get or not get respect? Is a man a leader? Is a man interested in spiritual things?

These are just some items to consider as we help the child see his father, in his role as a man. We don't need to go through a list, as above, but these give you an idea of how to help the child draw a clearer picture of what he saw modeled.

We then need to see how this man definition differs from that of a wholesome man or a man as God might define him. If his father was a bully, does the child want to accept that behavior and attitude for himself as a man? Or if the child is a female, does she want this type of man in her life as a husband, for example, or as the father of her children?

Resolution comes as we lead the child in accusing and forgiving his father for his poor modeling as a man. Or if the model was a good one to thank God for the model of man the father gave. The child, male or female, evaluates his/her own definition of a man that has come out of the father's model. If the child does not condemn the wrong/unhealthy behavior he/she is, in effect, condoning it and allowing such behavior for himself/herself. Sin is involved because of the harmful effects father's model has had on the son/daughter.

In most cases, we are not talking about a totally evil man but we want the child to be able to accept the good/healthy performance and reject the bad. Once this is done the child can reject that part of the model that was bad/unhealthy and ask God to break its power in his/her life.

Once accusing and forgiving has taken place then the child has to consider how he/she has lived out this model in his/her own life? This creates the ground for confession and receiving forgiveness. For instance, by accepting the father's model of a man a judgment might be made that all men are like this, thus placing a judgment on men who do not deserve it.

The father as husband

This role of the entity focuses on defining a husband based on father's behavior toward his wife (the child's mother).

Based on father's behavior is a husband kind to his wife? Considerate, show affection physically, with words, gestures? Does a husband show appreciation to the wife? Is a husband helpful, controlling, respectful? Is a husband fearful of his wife. How does the husband define "submission," if that is an issue? Does he allow the wife to have opinions, can she disagree with him safely? Would the wife say her husband was a blessing? Is the husband a provider? Is he trustworthy, faithful? Or is he a dangerous angry husband?

These just give you an idea of the type of things to ask.

The daughter may expect this same behavior from the man she marries. She may hesitate to marry or go into marriage with a distorted view of the husband's role. On the other hand, we have personally observed two generations where the husband model was wholesome and, we expect that this same model will carry on into the third generation.

It is not enough to accuse and forgive the poor modeling; the child must also reject those unhealthy parts of the model as something the/she wants in his/her life.

Father as father

This relationship is the most emotionally charged one for the child.

The safe others must ask the questions to bring out all that is there. Often, when a parent does not show love often the poor model is not one of "doing" but one of "not doing." When omission brings harm or a wrong message then it is sin.

Possible questions: As your father modeled it, is a father affectionate? Is he loving? How is this shown? Is a father fair? Is he affirming? How? Is a father verbally abusive? Physically abusive? If there were brothers or sisters, did he show favoritism? Is a father spiritual? Was he interested in your schooling.

Because of father, was your home safe? Was he unpredictable? Does a father ever say he is sorry or does he show tender emotions? Did the father ever call you names or make negative statements about or to you? (Words of power)

One question, later, to ask is, "If God had been in control of your father's life so he was the perfect father, what would he have done differently?"

Based on your father's model, how has this affected your behavior toward your children? (or) How has his model affected your expectation for your husband as a father? How has your father's model affected your definition and expectations about your heavenly Father? (Jesus-only focus, for example.)

One way dealing with this role of father as father is that it is much more personal. Here we can now deal with all that father did to me as a child. So it is, in effect, two issues—the model of a father and how father treated me. When dealing with how father modeled a man, we might have to accuse him of hypocrisy; or to deal with the terrible anger we might have towards him for how he, as a husband, treated his wife, our mother—how he treated me as his son/daughter will probably have far deeper wounds and consequences with which to deal.

The Mother

We look at the entity called mother from three perspectives/roles: (1) Mother as woman, (2) mother as wife and (3) mother as mother.

Anything, particularly concerning the process that we talked about concerning the father we could repeat here and vice versa.

Mother as woman

The focus is on how she presents herself outside the home or to others besides her family.

How would the child define what a woman is based on her behavior? Is a woman proud of being a female? Does she dress well or not? Is she friendly and outgoing? Do people like being around her? Confide in her? Is a woman caring and compassionate to others. Does a woman have opinions and does she express them? Opinionated? Dogmatic? Does a woman, as modeled by your mother, display her emotions easily?

Based on mother's model as a woman, would you say she felt blessed or cursed being a woman? Is there a disadvantage to being a woman, as she modeled it?

Mother as wife

This is how the child would define the role of the wife based on his/her mother's performance as she related to her husband, the child's father.

Does a wife receive appreciation for what she does? Is there an expectation that she will do all of the cooking, housework, and other work around the home, and also work outside the home?

Can a wife voice her opinion? Do a man and wife fight a lot? What is the wife's place as opposed to the husband's place: she cooks and washes dishes, etc.; he does the lawn and washes the car and so on.

Is it a burden being a wife? Is it a blessing to be a wife or is it all just duty? Can a wife expand and use her talents outside the home? Can the wife make independent decisions when it comes to buying things? Is a wife submissive and, if so, in what ways? Is a wife a partner with her husband?

Does a wife nag? Is she normally happy with life? Is she affectionate and does she show it to her husband? Is she physical—hugs, etc.?

Based on your mother's model as a wife, would you (as a daughter) want to be a wife? Based on her as a model, would you (as a son) want a wife who behaves as she does?

Mother as mother

Is a mother affectionate to her child? Does she show her love physically and verbally? Is a mother fair in disciplining? Is a mother gentle, kind? Does a mother pay attention to you or is she too busy? Does a mother affirm her child? Is a mother help with schoolwork, attend functions, etc.

Does mother make the home safe or unsafe—how? Is mother predictable? Moody, angry, self-absorbed? Does mother do special things for her child? Does she protect the child? Does she see the child is dressed, fed, etc. (We know of several situations where the child went to school hungry and didn't have lunch or lunch money either. Also where the child was so dirty that the teacher and other students noticed.)

Did the mother ever call you names, good or bad? Did she ever make statements about you or to you, good or bad? (Words of power)

The child needs to accuse the mother for any bad modeling and also he/she needs to reject that bad model in his/her own life.

The heavenly Father is both father and mother to his children. Based on your mother's model as a mother, how has this affected your view of God as being gentle, kind and nurturing?

Insights

The prayer session will have a place for accusing and forgiving, as well as a place for rejecting and asking God to break the power of the unhealthy modeling in the child's life. There can also be a place for praise and acceptance of the good model.

Confession will come in as the child recognizes the ways he/she has lived out the model in harmful ways. Asking forgiveness implies that with forgiveness there is repentance and rejection of that model.

The prayer session must always be in three complete sections by status and role (position and performance): man/woman, husband/wife, father/mother. Though one parent may be "better" than the other, it is important to acknowledge and pray about the sins of both. You may be so angry at the "bad" parent that you forget that the "good" parent did any wrong!

Sexual issues should always be handled first, after that dealing with parent issues whenever appropriate in the Prayer Resolution sessions.

Siblings and Others

When it comes to brothers and sisters, the older one is most significant: the elder brother or sister. The issue is that their role should be that of protector and, to a point, role models whenever the parents are being irresponsible.

Aunts, uncles, grandparents might need to be dealt with in prayer. If they are significant as models in the life of the hurting one, they need to be viewed with the same three-fold focus as the parents .

Prayer Resolution Books

by Richard D. Smith of Cross Resources

Paper Books (www.cross-resources.org)

Freedom from Words of Power: Breaking the Chains of Harmful Declarations, Vows and Lies. Bland, VA: CM Publications, 2000.

Forgiveness: An Act. of Mercy and a Key to Answered Prayer. Chandler, AZ: CR Publications, 2007.

The Narrow Road to Forgiveness: Resolution-based Forgiveness. Chandler, AZ: CR Publications, 2008.

Cleansing: Resolving the Consequences of Sexual Sin, Laguna Niguel, CA: Guidelines, 1991.

A Journey to Wholeness: Intimately Involving God in Prayer for Resolution and Healing. Bland, VA: CM Publications, 2005.

Freedom from Dark Forces: A Model for Spiritual Warfare, Chandler, AZ: CR Publications, 2007.

Kindle Books:

Resolution: Forgiveness: An Act of Mercy and a Key to Answered Prayer. Richard D. Smith. Kindle Edition

Resolution: Cleansing: Resolving the Consequences of Sexual Sin. Richard D. Smith. Kindle Edition

Resolution: Freedom from Words of Power: Breaking the Chains of Harmful Declarations, Vows and Lies. Richard D. Smith. Kindle Edition

Resolution: Forgiveness: The Path to Divorce Recovery. Richard D. Smith. Kindle Edition

The End.