

Praise for *Freedom Tools* from pastors

“*Freedom Tools* is both practical and profound. It does a masterful job of taking a potentially complex subject and bringing it into everyone’s reach.”

Bill Johnson, senior leader, Bethel Church, Redding, California;
author, *When Heaven Invades Earth* and *Face to Face with God*

“*Freedom Tools* gave me a biblical manual for helping people experience freedom. God is receiving glory as more healing is taking place, more people are using their gifts and talents and more are guarding their freedom and reaching out in love to others.”

Kirk Freeman, lead pastor, CrossBridge Community Church,
San Antonio, Texas

“Freedom Prayer is one of the sharpest tools in our toolbox, cutting through the fog of ministry philosophies and helping us lead people quickly to the heart of their loving Father.”

Brad Bowen, lead pastor, Heritage Church,
Moultrie, Georgia

“Freedom Prayer is solidly based on the Gospel and biblical teaching while being immensely practical. Like few tools available to the Body of Christ, it has helped our leaders walk in increased freedom while we help many know the truth that sets them free.”

David McQueen, senior pastor, Beltway Park
Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas

“Finally, a good, simple and gentle approach. I encourage you to try Freedom Prayer and partner with God to bring people to a place of freedom in Christ!”

Michael Swecker, pastor of Prayer and Freedom Ministries,
Hosanna! Church, Lakeville, Minnesota

“Salvation needs to reach body, soul and spirit. In order for this to happen, we often need the help of others who listen to the Holy Spirit with us, asking Him to reveal those forgotten shadowy or even darkened places of the past. Often these are childhood wounds in our soul or spirit, wounds afflicting our young hearts with no accompanying path to wholeness.

“Andy knows about those things. So do I. That’s why I shout with him, ‘Yes, freedom! In every part of me!’ So don’t just read this book; live with it and with the Holy Spirit. Gather the right people alongside you to be sure you really get free.”

Don Finto, author, *Your People Shall Be My People*;
pastor emeritus, Belmont Church, Nashville;
founder and director emeritus, Caleb Company

Praise for *Freedom Tools* from mental health professionals

“After forty years in medicine and fifteen years doing inner healing prayer ministry, I can recommend any combination of prayer ministry, professional counseling or psychiatric care when needed. But for many people a ministry like Freedom Prayer is the best place to start. I have seen dozens of folks completely healed, and I am most impressed with the team at Freedom Resource.”

Stephen Mory, M.D., assistant clinical professor of psychiatry,
Vanderbilt University; psychiatrist, Mental Health Cooperative
and Davidson County Jails

“Freedom Prayer has been invaluable to me as a counselor. I have seen it be effective in a ministry setting and in counseling sessions. I trust folks who go to Freedom Prayer will be listened to, prayed for and encouraged. The work often results in an individual strengthening his or her relationship with Christ.”

Wendy Barnes, LPC, San Antonio

“Through the partnership of truths from the world of psychology and those from the world of inner healing, we can see powerful healing and transformation. I believe that by integrating the two, we will see more people restored to wholeness and live abundant lives as they heal their connection with God and are restored body, soul and spirit.”

Margaret Nagib, Timberline Knolls Clinical Development Institute

“Professional counseling and prayer ministries work hand in hand as essential partners to facilitate inner healing in wounded lives. Working together we can maximize the freedom, recovery and renewing of all those in need.”

Dr. Mark Jones, LMFT director, Liberty Alliance

“My practice has shifted to a place of bringing others to freedom using tools that quickly get to the root of the issue. I have ‘worked myself out of a job’ in exponential ways, and it is my great thrill to see others encounter His power and love that delivers and transforms.”

Amy Black, LPC, Abilene, Texas

Praise for *Freedom Tools* from other leaders

“A great need has long existed for someone to reduce inner healing to simpler, everyday language and tools. Our friend Andy Reese has done that admirably in his book *Freedom Tools*. I heartily recommend using it to help laypeople minister to each other.”

John Loren Sandford, co-founder, Elijah House Ministries

“This powerful book gives you the *Freedom Tools* you need to demolish the adversary’s obstacles to freedom and prosperity. Use them and you, too, can experience the super-abundant life that God desires for you!”

C. Peter Wagner, chancellor, Wagner Leadership Institute

“*Freedom Tools* offers piercing insights with keen discernment to empower the reader to be set free at last. This book will be a great tool for your spiritual warfare arsenal.”

James W. Goll, founder, Encounters Network,
Prayer Storm and GET eSchool;
author, *The Lifestyle of a Prophet*,
Praying for Israel’s Destiny and many more

“I am convinced that most Christians fail to become dynamic and effective ambassadors for Christ because they carry with them heavy loads of emotional baggage. *Freedom Tools* provides a way to help you ‘travel light’ by unpacking those bags and leaving them behind. This book will change lives—maybe even yours.”

Rich Stearns, president, World Vision U.S.

“This is ministry from the heart and by the Spirit—so simple and natural that you’ll ask yourself, ‘Why didn’t I know this before?’ *Freedom Tools* should be a required text in any program that equips the saints to do the ministry of the Church.”

David Kyle Foster, founder and executive director,
Mastering Life Ministries; author, *Love Hunger*

FREEDOM
TOOLS

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FREEDOM TOOLS

*For
Overcoming
Life's Tough
Problems*

REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION

ANDY REESE *and*
JENNIFER BARNETT



Chosen

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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© 2008, 2015 by Andrew J. Reese and Jennifer R. Barnett

Published by Chosen Books
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

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The Library of Congress has cataloged the original edition as follows:
Reese, Andrew.

Freedom tools : for overcoming life's tough problems / Andy Reese.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8007-9438-5 (pbk.)

1. Sin—Christianity. I. Title.

BV4625.R44 2008

248.86—dc22

2007049218

ISBN 978-0-8007-9625-9

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Scripture quotations identified NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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Cover design by Dual Identity

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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*To Susan: You are my best friend
and most gentle Freedom Prayer partner ever.
Let's grow old together!—A.R.*

*To Cory, who humbly pedals this bicycle built
for two and grins while I steer and take the sharp corners,
all the while tickled that I have no idea where
I am going. Good thing you have the directions
and love me like no other.—J.B.*

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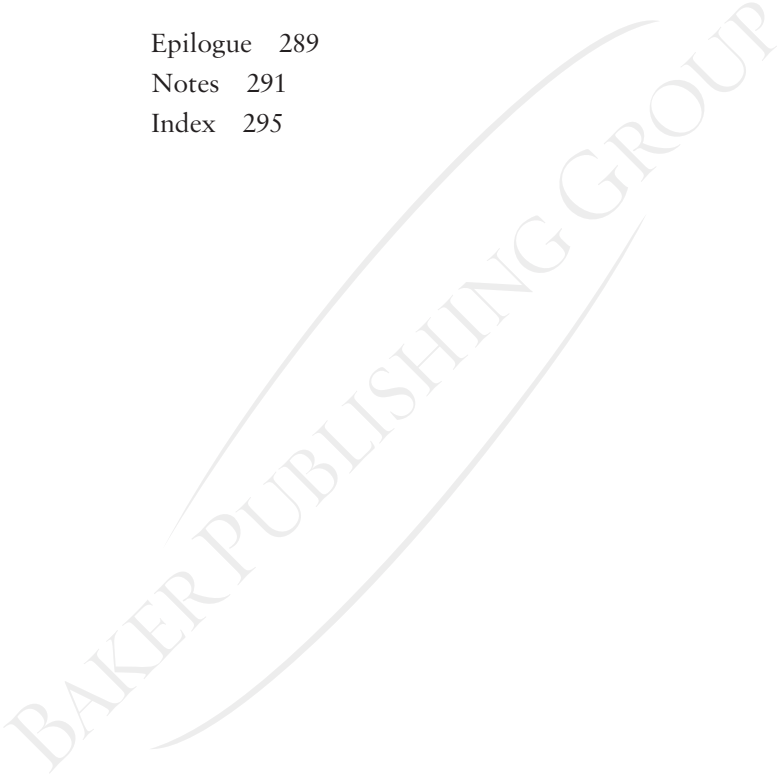
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Foreword

My good friend Andy Reese and I were both raised in Minnesota and both worked as engineers. We then followed somewhat different paths but seem to have come to similar places so many years later. I took the professional track into ministry and adopted an evangelical mind-set. I diligently searched the Scriptures to understand truth and tried to faithfully teach it to the best of my ability. I did so as a youth pastor, college pastor, associate pastor, senior pastor and seminary professor. Along the way, my western rationalism and naturalism were being seriously challenged, and my ability to impart information was not bringing about the transformation that Scripture seemed to offer.

God led me through some life-changing events that enabled me to discover who I am in Christ and opened my eyes to the reality of the spiritual world. My ministry transitioned from a knowledge encounter with Scripture to a personal encounter with God. Now when I have the privilege to help another individual, I do so with the understanding that God is always present and there in a role that only He can play in the other person's life. I cannot set a captive free and bring emotional healing to the brokenhearted, but He can—and He wants to. In fact, that is why Jesus came. To get to where I am today, God had to orchestrate a period of brokenness in my own life. In doing so, He brought me to the end of my resources so I could discover His. Until that time I had no idea how much

my stoic, self-sufficient Norwegian background was my greatest obstacle to my sufficiency in Christ.

Andy's roots are much more mixed—raised Catholic, saved at a Billy Graham crusade and being part of several different churches (Baptist, Presbyterian, nondenominational military and charismatic) as he moved a number of times. He eventually followed a fairly conservative charismatic path. I don't know how his brilliant engineering mind became so emotionally laden, but I have seen that touch of Jesus in our conversations as he recounted stories of God encounters. We had different heroes of faith growing up, but we learned to choose those who most resembled Christ.

Now our ministries have a huge overlap. We are both dependent upon the presence of God, and we both want to see God's people come alive and free in Christ. And we both believe firmly that ministry is based on what Jesus did for us and what He taught to us. The Word and the Spirit are the same "in Christ," but it took a lot of maturing on both our parts to get there.

I have watched the growth of prayer and inner healing ministries with both interest and concern. Naturally, I was curious how these various ministries were different from the purpose of our ministry, which is to equip the church worldwide, enabling them to establish their people, marriages and ministries alive and free in Christ through genuine repentance and faith in God.

I have had many conversations with leaders of the inner healing movement and found both concerns and many very positive aspects in line with the changes that God had been bringing in me. Most troubling about the various approaches to inner healing were the apparent lack of repentance and assumption of personal responsibility for failings, the sometimes inappropriate use of prophetic guidance and the seeming subjectivity of the sessions, which were too often driven by the leaders. I was about ready to disregard it entirely until I met Andy Reese. For the last eight years we have been meeting periodically, and the initial playful bantering grew into an iron-sharpens-iron friendship. I endorsed the first edition

of this book even though I felt there were things I would like to add to it. This second edition of the book has brought together emphases and foundations that will certainly help those from a more traditional background grasp and use the material. It is a book I can wholeheartedly endorse.

I encourage our staff to read this insightful book and be equipped with Andy's and Jennifer's *Freedom Tools*. The larger the tool kit, the more effective we become. We all come from different origins, but our destiny is the same. To get there, we need to loosen our grip on our natural heritages, religious traditions, spiritual clichés and scripted answers and strengthen our grip on our spiritual heritage, which is the same for all those who are alive and free in Christ. In Christ we are neither Jew nor Gentile, Pentecostal nor evangelical, orthodox nor Catholic. We are children of God.

What I desire, and what Andy and Jennifer desire, is for all of God's children to be loved, accepted, affirmed, set free from their past and cared for in a godly way. I believe *Freedom Tools* will help equip Church leaders to do that, and it will be a valuable contribution to the inner healing and prayer healing ministries that are growing around the world. Before and while reading this book, ask Jesus to show you what He wants you to get out of it. It just might change your life.

Dr. Neil T. Anderson,
founder and president emeritus,
Freedom in Christ Ministries,
www.ficinternational.org

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Preface

It has been seven years since the first edition of *Freedom Tools*, and those years have seen literally thousands of testimonies of love shared, sin broken, pain healed and God encountered. No exaggeration. This stuff really works. But it should: It is all right there in Scripture. “It was for freedom that Christ set us free” (Galatians 5:1).
For freedom.

Freedom Tools is a very practical, illustrated guide to applying the finished work of Christ to the very unfinished work of sanctification within us all. It is the process of walking out biblical commands such as restoring one another, bearing another’s burden, confessing sins to another and putting to death the deeds of the flesh by the Holy Spirit. It is about how to be an effective and engaged first responder in chance conversations, in scheduled meetings and with your friends and family when you need much more than a lecture or a self-help book. It has found ready application on every continent, except maybe Antarctica, and in every denomination and nondenominational ministry. Oh, the stories we hear of what God does when room is made for Him to speak and restore.

If all we hear is accurate, most people read this book in the first place because friends or family gave them the copy they themselves had been reading, saying, “You should read this—I’ll get another one!”

It is time for the second edition. We have learned a lot and want to share it with you. This kind of ministry is evolving rapidly from something that happens in a “session” into a vital part of making disciples, living life together, and creating a healing and healthy church culture. That is why Jen is co-author in this edition. She has practical and wide-ranging experience in bringing these amazing truths and powerful change agents safely and in a biblically honoring way to churches, small groups, marriages and families. She is among the very best I know. And my wife and I have watched her and her husband minister for over twenty years across multiple states and among many groups. Freedom follows them around. They are the real deal!

We hope this book encourages you to go for it, personally, in relationships and small groups, as a church and especially outside the church. There is no substitute for trying these things out for yourself and on yourself in an honest and humble way.

If you do, you will find that your conversations will be forever changed, your relationships forever deepened. It will become a lifestyle, a way of relating. You will feel “armed and dangerous” to the dark kingdom, competent to genuinely help others. Most importantly, your awe of a living and loving Papa God will expand with each encounter.

You will be hooked!

We started down this path years ago, and after seeing many people improved, healed and restored, we have no regrets . . . none.

We think you won’t, either.

Acknowledgments

It is probably not a good idea to include an acknowledgments page—surely we will forget someone dear, someone we relied on. But God will not.

Freedom Prayer ministry is both original ideas and insights, and an aggregation and organization of the revelation, insight and experience of many others, borne out of desperation to find freedom and help others find it, too. We each push our puzzle pieces to the middle and, in so doing, see God's picture emerge.

We have been privileged to cross paths and spend time with many of the pioneers and leaders in this movement: John Sandford, Ed Smith, Betsy and Chester Kylstra, Peter Horrobin, Pablo Bottari, Tom Hawkins, Dawna DeSilva, David Kyle Foster and especially our friend Neil Anderson. You have taught us much.

To the Freedom Prayer team at CrossBridge, who are the most beautiful friends and family, full of grace and truth: Thank you for being brave night watchmen (and women) on the wall and for walking humbly with God and one another. You spur us on! To Kirk, thank you for providing well-watered soil for freedom to flourish. To Lex and Jeannie, we are grateful for your skilled hands and the way you tend a harvest. Something beautiful grew. . . .

To the Freedom Prayer teams in San Antonio, large and small—we love walking in unity with you. This big extended family is vital, a visual example of the Lord's greater work both in the Church and as He reaches the lost and hurting.

Acknowledgments

To our life partners, Susan and Cory, words are not enough . . . not nearly enough!

To our intercessors who pray for us and to whom belong the spoils—you are only not known on earth.

To our ministry partners at The Freedom Resource, thank you!

In particular, to the Freedom Prayer teams around the world who work tirelessly in hidden ways; keeping confidences; bearing burdens, long nights, selfless love—you vulnerable men and women of whom the world is not worthy, who know the deep satisfaction and the unabashed awe of God that only comrades in spiritual arms can know. Thank you.

Thank you to Jane Campbell and her staff at Chosen Books for their wonderful godly professionalism, and to Catherine Cooker, our ever-patient, ever-encouraging editor.

And to you . . . whoever you are, wherever you may be . . . for taking these bits of grace, adding yours and moving on ahead of us. We salute you. We thank you. We will meet you at the finish line!

chapter

1

POLITE SOCIETY

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. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:1–2

Dear Lord, I pray that You make me into the kind of person my psychiatrist has medicated me to be.

Bumper sticker prayer

I do not believe in a fate that falls on men however they act. But I do believe in a fate that falls on men unless they act.

G. K. Chesterton

When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Isaiah 59:19 NKJV

Woo-hoo, Mr. Reese, God answers prayer!”

Amy’s happy voice floated up to me from the beach trail far below. She and another young woman were walking arm in arm, with red eyes and sweet smiles.

Almost a decade ago I, Andy, was sitting four floors above a Florida beach, working on the opening chapters of the first edition of this book and playing chaperone on a trip of high school seniors. Only the night before I had spoken to the class about taking our last opportunity together to have healing conversations with their classmates, and about how to do that. These two, politely distant for two years after some blowup, believed me, and most especially, they believed God. After a thirty-minute beach walk full of confessing, forgiving and blessing, it was gone . . . forever.

This book is about rapid and radical life change.

We each want a life that is good and noble and exciting and glorious, but we sometimes experience the kind that is darkly deflated, befouled by nagging moral failure, marked by a sense of harassment, emotional constraint, lonely abandonment, painful regret and gnawing hopelessness. That is the kind of fate that seems to be pandemic today—something like a spiritual-emotional bird flu.

But there is a revolution going on. Have you noticed? It is spreading like wildfire among churches of all kinds. God is raising up a standard. Maybe the call is out to get His Bride ready—ironing out the wrinkles, cleansing the spots.

This book is about that revolution, a revolution that makes it possible to counter the pandemic: to steer a course toward emotional and spiritual wholeness, and to help others do so, too—your children, spouse, friends, co-workers, even strangers in chance encounters.

There are a lot of good home remedies out there. Some are good for the body and some for the soul. This book is about the soul kind. It is about a set of understandings and techniques—God’s tools laid out here and there in Scripture—woven together into an effective approach to emotional first aid.

We decided to call it Freedom Prayer, because, simply, that is what it is. We talk with each other and with God about finding freedom. Right then, right there.

Freedom Prayer is a very flexible tool belt on which to hang good approaches and techniques, more of which are being developed all the time. In this book you will learn how to be an effective first responder on a scene that seems littered with emotional and spiritual fender benders and a few wrecks; how to practice the kinds of friendships that are really, really good for each other; how to be a true counterterrorist against the schemes of dark forces; and, most importantly, how to find and enjoy the warm smile and embrace of Papa God.

You will learn key foundations that guide a freedom culture and ministry and how to use key techniques God has placed in His Word to help bring freedom and healing to hurt and trapped people. Inner change is at the heart of transformation, and more than anything else this book is about that. These techniques are moving from outside the church and individual ministry sessions to inside the church, integrated with a healing and discipleship culture being established in the church—probably like it was meant to be from the start.

Polite Society

A Sunday school teacher from a large church told me of an incident that left him shaken and distraught. He spoke to a woman after class about how he always enjoyed her husband’s keen insights and thoughts about the morning’s topic and wondered where he was that morning. She thanked him, and in an icily quiet voice she

told him that that morning her husband had announced to her and the children that he was leaving them for another woman. In tears this teacher, a brilliant attorney, said to me, “What will happen is that she will just quietly slip away, another family falling through the courteous cracks of our well-mannered church. We all knew that they were in trouble. He was in a small group of men. But no one around them, myself included, knew what to say or do. We figured someone was helping. I guess no one was. It seems like no one ever is. What should I do about it? *What?*”

Polite society is killing us.

We all have “stuff,” and that stuff diminishes living and destroys lives. It pops up and bursts out at the most inconvenient times. It tarnishes us and hurts those we most love. Many of us have thrown in the towel and declared a stalemate over it. In this day, when the number of babies born out of wedlock is gaining on those born to two-parent families and divorces may outnumber marriages, people need honest, sane, wise and skilled friends. If you know how to deal with stuff, it is a seller’s market.

Despite this enormous and growing necessity, in most families, relationships and churches today, there is almost no milieu, no framework for recognizing and confessing sins and effectively dealing with them; for seeing wounding and having the confidence to help; for stepping into a situation and effectively bringing about healing change. We tend to hide our personal stuff, avoid it in others and quietly shun the person who wants to be vulnerable and ask for help.

When some desperate soul confesses a deep need or personal helplessness, normally an awkward silence precedes a somewhat embarrassed and fumbling “I’m sure it will get better” or “I’ll be thinking about you.” We think, *They really need to talk to somebody . . . somebody else.* Maybe they are too fragile, and we are too clumsy. We wistfully hope they find help. We slide away, embarrassed at our own inept and weak response, knowing that tomorrow we could *be* them.

Maybe we *are* them, and secretly we vow to hold on another day. And we tolerate and cope, some days better than others, some people more adept at survival than others.

And should we be of a persuasion to believe there is a supernatural component, that we have a spiritual enemy, then we are really in trouble. Or maybe really scared.

The wisest man ever to live, Solomon, says, “The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but as for a broken spirit who can bear it?” (Proverbs 18:14). Our inner health makes all the difference. With strong and healthy hearts we can withstand and contain the fallout from weakness and infirmity. We can deal with adversity and stress. But we simply cannot bear up under an inescapable internal ache, emptiness, guilt and shame. That kind of inexorable burden weighs us down, harries us without relief.

We cannot stand it.

Yet most of the church—small group leaders, elders, “laypeople” and sometimes even pastors—feel mostly inadequate to say or do much of anything, even when invited. Most of what we know about helping hurting people we saw on afternoon talk shows or evening reality-based exhibitions of human misery and stupidity. We are intimidated by people’s problems, so we want to consign them to the overwhelmed professional ministerial and counseling system. It has to get very bad to actually go for help. And so it *does* get very bad.

This situation is not God’s plan. This is not “abundant life.”

He tells us to confess our sins one to another and pray for one another that we might be healed. He urges us to gently reprove and restore when we see one overtaken in sin, and to bind up the brokenhearted. He says that bringing dark things to the light is the only way to walk in true communion. He says that if we partner with God’s Spirit to put to death dark deeds, we will live. He says our path will grow brighter and brighter, from glory to glory. (See James 5:16; Galatians 6:1; Isaiah 61:1; 1 John 1:7; Proverbs 4:18; Romans 8:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18.)

God calls us to the place where we, as individuals, can partner with Him and each other in dealing with the pervasive sin and wounding around and within us. He desires that we not leave each other in a place of “tolerable desperation,” coping with tormenting internal issues or dull emotional aches, and call it good enough.

We are all in this together. Together with each other. Together with God.

But how?

God has a plan. It is His ancient plan to perfect His Bride, and it is still unfolding. He is behind it. He is actively bringing it about in the earth today.

Keep reading.

First Aid

Humans can seem so complex that being helpful appears a daunting task.

The other day I took another cruise through the latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the American Psychiatric Association’s official diagnostic book. I felt myself stepping into a parallel universe of techno-talk and multiplied treatment modalities. Complex and arcane language dominates—and perhaps *must* dominate—for mental health professionals to communicate with exactitude. It is certainly intimidating. Is *everything* a disease, syndrome or disorder? Does everything require multiple counseling sessions or mood-altering drugs?

Emotional needs are, in many ways, like medical needs. Ninety percent of the need is satisfied by home-based, lay-administered first aid and over-the-counter medicine. Illnesses are seldom cancer, rarely require open-heart surgery and are usually not life threatening. And when something *is* life threatening, would you not be glad some friend caught it early enough and with enough insight to refer you to professional help?

It takes eight years plus to become a competent physician. But it takes only a few hours to learn basic CPR, only a day to learn first aid basics—bleeding, breathing, heartbeat.

A Band-Aid is *just* what we need if the problem is a cut.

Much of what we encounter in people are just emotional scratches, relational burns, behavioral headaches, minor dark infections, sprained morals or stubbed egos. Most of us are not a millimeter from meltdown or an inch from insanity. And when someone is? We can help spot it and learn where to refer. That is a valuable and good thing, too.

In the real world, we are in desperate need for first responders, those trained in basic first aid for the soul who can respond naturally and effectively as a lifestyle. With simple instruction and a little practice, we find we *are* competent to help another find relief and freedom. I do not have to be an emotional open-heart surgeon—most people do not need that.

Prayer as Basic First Aid

It is the responsibility, and within the latent capability, of every believer to be competent to help and encourage friends and family—to be able to perform first aid for the soul, to be the first line of defense against darkness. Paul says it best: “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another” (Romans 15:14).

That is the idea: brethren (that is, people in relationship) full of and motivated by goodness and love, holding the right tools, empowered and led by God, able to gently admonish, encourage and help set free.

For lack of a better term, we call this basic first aid for the soul “Freedom Prayer” ministry. We find using this title eases concern and fosters focus on the biblical framework for prayer ministry. Using this framework, thousands have found increased peace and

freedom and experienced the freshness of encounters with a loving, living God: learning how to walk out the scriptural injunctions to care for, encourage and even reprove each other. Some encounters are very dramatic, some gentle and peaceful. All occur in an informal, confidential, honoring, one-on-one or small-group setting—friend with friend.

This is not counseling—counseling is the purview of trained professionals, not first responders. This is about a couple of friends, maybe a church leader and a member, going together before God to get help in time of need. It is about watching God free individuals through prayer from the effects of wounding and sin and delivering people from the snares and presence of demonic influence. It is done in overt, moment-by-moment partnership with God, who leads us into truth as He reveals lies believed in the past and present and their points of access, and removes them; establishes healing, blessing and obedience in their place; and restores individuals to relationship with Papa God and a more fruitful and fulfilling walk.

Our objective is to help you build your skills and ministry in your setting, not join an organization or hierarchy. There is no single training manual, certification process or proponent church or ministry. Freedom Prayer makes the best use of tools and approaches developed by us or others and modified for your use to fit your DNA. No one is a Freedom Prayer “professional”—though many have had years of training and experience in Christian ministry. Some are psychiatrists, some are certified counselors who use the tools on a daily basis, and most of us are just compassionate knuckleheads.

You can fit in just fine.

Biblical, Reasonable and Effective?

Right about now, before we get too far into things, you might have an important question to ask: Is this thing you are talking about, this Freedom Prayer, biblical, reasonable and effective? That is a fair question. Let’s tackle it head-on.

Is It Biblical?

We are instructed throughout Scripture to shepherd sheep effectively. Many years ago, as church leaders and elders, we realized we did not know how to do this very well. That bothered us.

Clearly the terms *inner healing* or *Freedom Prayer* themselves are not found in Scripture. But even on a surface level we see that the concept, like pieces of a puzzle, is everywhere:

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

Matthew 9:36–38

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. Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:1–2

Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

James 5:16

Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 NKJV

Paul and James command and invite us to confess to one another, to restore one another, to bear one another’s burdens and to help one another be free. They speak of spiritual warfare as occurring

within strongholds in the mind. We can help one another because we are “spiritual”—that is, able to minister in partnership with the Spirit of God, and in a spirit of gentleness and humility. We know we each must rely on others to help us get free. All have sinned, been wounded, become entangled.

There are many other references to the various aspects of this ministry:

- healing the brokenhearted and setting free the oppressed (Luke 4:18)
- taking authority over the demonic and casting out demons (Mark 16:17)
- speaking prophetic encouragement (1 Thessalonians 5:20)
- putting to death the deeds of the flesh by the leading of the Spirit (Romans 8:13–14)
- forgiving (Ephesians 4:32)
- bearing one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- snatching people from destruction (Jude 23)
- reproving and correcting (2 Timothy 4:2)
- setting free the oppressed (Luke 4:18)
- comforting the afflicted with what God has shown us (2 Corinthians 1:4)
- confessing sins to another and receiving prayer from them (James 5:16)
- putting on godly armor and battling spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:10–12)
- taking thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- renouncing past sinful practices (2 Corinthians 4:2)
- pursuing freedom (Galatians 5:1)
- growing up in all things into Christ by speaking truth (Ephesians 4:15)

Once assembled, these puzzle pieces need a name. Inner healing is a name. Freedom Prayer is a name. We like it because it summarizes what we do—we pray and we seek biblical freedom together before God . . . Freedom Prayer.

We can honestly ask what these things, all these verses assembled together, look like in real life—at a coffee shop, in a mall, in a church office or down front at the altar on a Sunday morning. If we consider each of these verses and many more (for example, all the “one another” verses), both alone and then together, a ministry—and more than that, a lifestyle and culture—emerges, one that is both commanded and compelling. Many have said things like, “This is logical, practical, accessible . . . it makes sense!”

Is the work of Christ not finished? Why then do we need this? That, too, is a fairly common question. But any pastor who has served longer than about a week can tell you that while Christ’s work is finished, his own is far from it—even Paul said as much. After completing his magnum opus on the many-faceted work of Christ in Romans 1–8, and including the Jews in chapters 9–11, he begins chapter 12 with this statement: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (verse 2).

The tense of the verbs indicates intimate progressive habits of transformation. This is the ministry of taking the *finished* work of Christ and applying it to the *unfinished* work of sanctification within each of us—the work of becoming Christlike. It is part of what making disciples is all about.

Is It Reasonable?

There may be many ways to respond to the question of reasonability. Perhaps the best is to compare and contrast it with current counseling practice and ask counselors themselves to comment.

You should understand that Freedom Prayer is *not* counseling—it is prayer ministry. Freedom Prayer derives from scriptural principles and pastoral experience, while professional counseling is grounded in deductions from the behavioral sciences. Through Freedom Prayer, prayer-filled encounters with Christ are the change mechanism instead of therapist-mediated or psychological theory-derived activities.

Nonetheless there seems to be a growing recognition of the importance of explicitly including a client's spiritual-religious beliefs and practices within the therapeutic structure:

Psychologists are ethically obliged to be respectful and attentive to the cultural diversity of their clients, and religion and spirituality contribute to our personal and social identities. Emerging research is showing that spiritually integrated approaches to treatment are as effective as other treatments. There is, in short, good scientifically based reason to be more sensitive to religion and spirituality in clinical practice.¹

Recent surveys indicate the majority of mental health patients (83 percent) felt there was a relationship between mental and religious health, though it was discussed in only 30 percent of cases.² In researching this subject, Saunders, Miller and Bright³ reported that therapist reluctance is understandable due to lack of training, concerns about undue influence, and a range of sometimes dubious advice and examples. For clients with religious beliefs, however, the authors recommend that spiritually conscious approaches (being respectful and sensitive to the salience of spirituality to the issues at hand) should at a minimum be present, and they note that integrated approaches (focusing on a client's spiritual-religious beliefs and practices without a view to changing or transforming them) are becoming common among therapists.

Perhaps the best recommendation concerning Freedom Prayer can be offered by mental health professionals in counseling and therapy themselves:

After forty years in medicine and fifteen years doing inner healing prayer ministry, I can recommend any combination of prayer ministry, professional counseling or psychiatric care when needed. But for many people a ministry like Freedom Prayer is the best place to start. I have seen dozens of folks completely healed in these types of ministries, and I am most impressed with the team at the Freedom Resource.

Stephen Mory, M.D., assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at Vanderbilt and psychiatrist for the Mental Health Cooperative and Davidson County Jails

Professional counseling and prayer ministries work hand in hand as essential partners to facilitate inner healing in wounded lives. Working together we can maximize the freedom, recovery and renewing of all those in need.

Dr. Mark Jones, LMFT,
director of Liberty Alliance

As I, a licensed therapist, have been trained in Freedom Prayer through The Freedom Resource, my practice has shifted to a place of bringing others to freedom using tools that quickly get to the root of the issue. Even in the sessions where a client just wants to talk through a situation, the Inviting Jesus tool is the most powerful way to receive His wisdom and guide them into hearing His voice for themselves. I have “worked myself out of a job” in exponential ways, and it is my great thrill to see others encounter His power and love that delivers and transforms.

Amy Black, LPC, Abilene, Texas

Is It Effective?

Any subject such as this will have strong supporters and some detractors. As practitioners of Freedom Prayer, we could give you many examples and arguments as to why it is great, effective and

needs to be in every church! We might say, “Sit with us for a week in ministry sessions and conversations and see if you don’t agree.” But we are, admittedly, a bit biased.

The better approach is probably to let a few pastors of large and growing churches give their unedited commentary on what Freedom Prayer has meant for their people. We warned them they might get some calls. “Bring it” was one response.

What started as a refreshing complement to ministry, Freedom Prayer has become a way of life as we minister to hundreds of people. The principles have proven invaluable in our daily interactions and small group gatherings. Freedom Prayer is one of the sharpest tools in our toolbox, cutting through the fog of ministry philosophies and helping us lead people quickly to the heart of their loving Father.

Brad Bowen, lead pastor of
Heritage Church, Moultrie, Georgia

I’d been successful at developing an outside team of licensed professional counselors to whom I could send people, but these counselors and I both saw a ministry need that traditional Christian counseling wasn’t reaching. We knew there was more freedom to be had, but as leaders responsible for others, we needed a biblical construct to develop an effective ministry within our church. Freedom Tools and its reliance on Scripture gave me a biblical manual for helping people experience freedom. It helped us standardize an approach to training people to pray with others for the sake of overcoming sin, strongholds and debilitating lies. It took a number of months, but slowly a team began to form. Our ministry team started with two people, then grew into a team of eight. We now have a seasoned team of over thirty members. Over time—and carefully—we trained more people and our capacity to minister expanded. This

month alone our team will minister to over thirty people through our Freedom Prayer Ministry. This happens month after month. What a relief this is to me personally! But more importantly, God is receiving glory as more healing is taking place, more people are using their gifts and talents and more are guarding their freedom and reaching out in love to others.

Kirk Freeman, lead pastor of
CrossBridge Community Church,
San Antonio, Texas

Like many of us in ministry, I've witnessed a variety of approaches to inner healing, including the cumbersome, the bad and the ugly. That being said, this old Lutheran became delighted as he learned about and tried Freedom Prayer. Finally, a good, simple and gentle approach to this kind of care. Our leadership team and staff at both Hosanna! campuses are fully on board and delighted with the simple effectiveness of this ministry. As a community tool, we interact with a couple of family therapist centers that make referrals to us for this type of help. I would encourage you to try Freedom Prayer and partner with God to bring people to a place of freedom in Christ, so that they are empowered to live out their destinies in His Kingdom!

Michael Swecker, pastor of Prayer
and Freedom Ministries,
Hosanna!, Lakeville and Shakopee, Minnesota

Freedom Prayer is solidly based on the Gospel and biblical teaching while being immensely practical. Like few tools available to the Body of Christ, it has helped our leaders walk in increased freedom while we help many know the truth that sets them free.

David McQueen, senior pastor,
Beltway Park Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas

Book Objectives and Organization

Our objectives in this book are to give a sound basis and clear understanding for giving spiritual first aid, and to make you familiar with various tools and techniques.

Our goal is to *impart* to you an expectation that God will use you both to set others free and to pass on what you are learning.

We do this in four parts:

- *Part 1: The Ten Foundations*—These ten key truths are embedded in our DNA and are the core principles for how we help one other. Do not skip them. Having the foundations without mastering the tools will still work. But we cannot stress this strongly enough: Having the tools without the foundations is disastrous.
- *Part 2: Getting Started*—Using biblical principles, we combine a simple five-phase process we call the “Fruit Loop” with five different kinds of issues we face (condensed to “WESUD”). It helps keep us on track and chasing only fat rabbits. You can minister with only these steps and basic core techniques. It is a good place to start.
- *Part 3: More Advanced Tools*—We have borrowed, modified and even developed some tools as powerful shortcuts to quickly get at the key issues of WESUD.
- *Part 4: Application in Church and Life*—Using the experiences of many strong Freedom Prayer ministries, we derive principles and approaches that will help you create both a more formal church-based ministry and a culture and lifestyle of freedom.

Obligatory Disclaimer

We understand that this book will raise as many questions as it answers. As we stated earlier, humans can be very complex. But

it seems God often deals simply and wisely with that complexity. This book is not a treatise designed to convince anyone. It is a brief instruction manual, put together because of the great need out there for a first line of defense against demonic intrusion, pain, entanglement, lies and sin. We do not try to answer every question and objection raised about the foundations of, root doctrines for and use of tools in Freedom Prayer—though those answers do exist.

This book is a good start.

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Part One

The Ten Foundations

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chapter

2

Two Foundations about God

The devil is a better theologian than any of us but is a devil still.

A. W. Tozer

I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3

Sacred cows make the best hamburger.

Mark Twain

Betsy looked very small sitting on our living room couch. She is twenty years old. But tonight she was eight all over again—and all, all alone.

“I’m sorry I’m falling apart. I needed someone to talk to. I hate to take up your evening. Is that okay?” she wept.

“Of course! You are worth a thousand nights!” My wife held her. We waited. We sensed Papa God gently enter the room. It was time.

She shared; we listened. Years before, Betsy’s mother had died of cancer, a cruel and untimely death. Betsy was bereft, abandoned, cast adrift. To comfort her, I suppose, she was told, “I guess God needed your mom more than you did.” *Not possible*, she thought. *How can that be? No! . . . Yes? Oh no . . .* She was struck momentarily senseless by this revelation, the only explanation offered to explain her suffering. It sounded logical, true and even believable. After all, an adult said it.

On the inside, the voice that hissed to Eve in the Garden whispered once again to the naïve eight-year-old in the first-person singular: *I cannot trust God; He’s not safe. He’s unknowable and unapproachable*. The old, old story written again on a tender and trusting human heart. She swallowed numbing pain—who can question *God*? And on the inside the confusion seeped in, walls went up. The result? *Never again will I trust this God*.

She cried. We cried, too.

There is more to her story, of course, and to our conversation, but in the end, after gentle Jesus had spoken powerfully to her and she was peaceful, and the Kleenex box was empty, I asked her a simple question: “Betsy, what would it mean if God was not the one who took your mother? What would it mean if Papa God grieved with you—if He hurt, too?”

She paused, as if deep inner places were being polled for input. I will never forget her answer.

“It would mean . . . it would mean . . . *everything*.”

The Problem of Pain and Blame

The plane crashed on takeoff. Wrong runway. Everyone was killed but the copilot. He exclaimed from his hospital bed to a news reporter, “Why would God do this to me?” His mother, sitting at his bedside, answered, “Honey, it wasn’t God. It just happened. That’s all.”

That scenario plays out all the time, everywhere: “Why would God?” versus “Maybe God didn’t.” There is a battle raging for the hearts of men, and it focuses right here. Why are things the way they are? Why do bad things happen? Why is there evil? What is God’s role, and, by implication, who is God . . . really?

There are *no* easy answers. None.

But when we look around it seems like something strange is going on. Someone is getting framed. Today, among God’s children, many have come to think that perhaps God may be the ultimate author of sickness, torment and destruction. Maybe His purpose is to “teach us a lesson” or to “build character” or to “bring about a mysterious ultimate good.”

He takes away young mothers to teach eight-year-olds lessons.

“Okay,” we say, “if He is not the triggerman of torment, then He is the acquiescing force behind the triggerman—uninterested, uninvolved, busy with China.” He hung an “Out to Lunch” sign on the universe and went . . . away. His mysterious ways are higher than ours and not to be questioned. We will understand one day.

Looking over our experiences with hundreds of people, we find that this thought process often produces a wall between an empty, confused or aching human being and the only source of help he or she desperately needs. For Betsy, the thinking went something like this: *Since I never know when I will get an open hand or a backhand*

from this mysterious and capricious God, I will keep my distance. I'll keep my mouth shut and hide. A crust forms around the heart that knows it badly needs daddy and that God is certainly not he.

This “mysterious God” dynamic may be an understandable inference from prayers that are not answered and ministry that appears to be of no avail. It may be the natural deduction of a child who has experienced neither the warmth of a loving earthly father nor the truth of a loving Abba.

It is easy to accept such theoretical theological explanations of evil if there is “insufficient appreciation for the radicality of evil in the world.”¹ But when we look into children’s faces and see the horrific scars on these innocent victims of evil, it is much harder to explain things away in terms of a God who is in control but mysterious. When we have to ascribe to God such horrors, cruelty and demonic insanity, the two ideas do not sit so comfortably in the heart and conscience. If God were to be tried in a court of law, and the things attributed to Him were the testimony, He would be locked away forever . . . even given the death penalty. Maybe crucified.

What would it mean if that reasoning were flawed?

Fatally flawed?

Maybe everything.

A Different Understanding

We live instead with a very simple, maybe naïve, understanding. It is our first and most important foundation:

Foundation #1

God is good. Satan is bad.

It seems, at least in a plain reading, that the early Church, those closest to the Source, did not have the same debate and confusion about sickness, sin and torment that modern man has developed.

The question of why bad things happen to good people never seemed to be one of hot theological debate. They saw they were at war. Sometimes there were casualties . . . even eternal ones. They prayed when people were sick . . . and often saw healing. They believed in, encountered and cast out demons . . . and sometimes still did not get everything settled. But they expected demons to flee.

They confessed and forgave, healed the brokenhearted, comforted the afflicted and did all they knew to bring people to a place of health and wholeness—even if some did not fully receive it at that instant, or ever. It was not intellectually complex or confusing. Other things may have been in flux and formation, but not that. The enemy was clear. It was a battle, a war—with victory for the good guys clearly anticipated. They seemed to understand that it was possible to *know* God even when you cannot fully *explain* Him. And they turned the world upside down (see Acts 17:6).

1. **God is good. Satan is bad.**
2. Your freedom is God's will.
3. We have hidden enemies.
4. Issues are not random.
5. There is always a reason.
6. Prisoners and captives.
7. Partners with God.
8. A culture of honor.
9. Apply God's solutions.
10. An event and a process.

Bad Choices and Dark Enemies

We will not solve the sovereignty versus free will debate here. Will not even try. But in thousands of ministry sessions it is clear that we have a lot of freedom to do dumb things, painful things and even fatal things.

The late William Sloane Coffin, social activist and chaplain of Yale University, addressed that issue in an interview with Terry Gross on the radio program *Fresh Air*, speaking about the death of his own son in a tragic car accident:

People have some very goofy ideas about how the will of God operates—"I guess it was the will of God . . ."—as if it is the will

of God that anybody gets blown up, that anybody gets shot. God was not behind the wheel—my son was. God’s heart was the first of all hearts to break. God was not in the event. He was in the response to the event.

What is hard for people is that we really do have free will. You have to have freedom if love is to be the name of the game. And if we have free will we are free to do both good and bad things—free to kill, free to love. To blame God for what people do with their freedom is not fair, except in the same way that you would blame an adult if you saw a child smash an expensive watch. It is your fault for giving the child the watch in the first place. Now, you can blame God for giving us human freedom. Maybe we’re not ready for it, maybe we can’t handle it.²

We have the freedom to make bad decisions, bad choices. God does not seem to violate that freedom even while He is being sovereign. He does not want robots. He respects us too much to dominate us. Though He knows man is made to walk in relationship, not independence, He lets us choose. And humankind started by making a very bad choice, one leading to war (see Ephesians 6:12).

In a warfare worldview we expect bad things to happen to good people, maybe *especially* to good people. We anticipate that “in the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33 NKJV). A warfare understanding means that we accept the idea that there are angels and demons, that they are real, autonomous agents and that they impact human affairs for better or worse. They, too, have free will, and some, unprovoked, chose to rebel.

Humans, devils, God and angels. This can cause some confusion.

For example, people often hear, at the tail end of some terrible ordeal, sickness or suffering, that the person feels stronger, knows God better, had a change of heart about something important, etc. And, having heard it, we think to ourselves, *See what good thing came out of this. It must have been from God.* And we are confused. We mistake outcome for origin. Because the outcome

is good, we think the origin is, too. And so we distort God. Maybe the outcome is good because God comes to the rescue of His children.

He is a better chess player than Satan.

We wish there were easy answers to each and every situation. We believe there *are* answers in every situation, and increasingly we come to understand them. I (Andy) remember spending time with a young woman who had been horribly abused. I asked her where God was when it happened, and she was quite emphatic about two things: the abuser had free will and used it to abuse her, and in some way God limited the abuser's right, protected her (in this case through dissociation) and provided both grace and strength for her to endure it, escape some of it and recover stronger than ever in the end.

She understood what many do not: We children of Adam made a choice long ago, a choice to follow the evil one and give authority over this world to him (John 15:19; Galatians 1:4; 1 John 4:4; 5:19). It is an evil age, and we are still paying on that note.

I think there is one simple way to gain right focus—watch Jesus.

Jesus Is the Last Word

Jesus is the best picture of God ever taken. Hebrews makes it very clear:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son. . . . He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.

Hebrews 1:1–3

Jesus Himself says, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

We should question anything we think we know about God that cannot be observed in the ways and words of Jesus.

Jesus is God's best, highest, consummate and most accurate expression of the essence of God's character. God's purposes, His gentle yet firm ways among needy men and women, are to be observed in Jesus. His reaction to demonic intrusion is an exact representation of His Father's. Jesus' response to those caught shamefully in sin is precisely His Father's. The ways of Jesus among brokenhearted men and women unerringly express His Father's heart. His attitude and action toward disease are His Father's. His reaction to hypocritical religiosity, to burdening men with rules and false teaching and to money changers in the Temple exactly mirrors His Father's intense anger.

And Jesus makes one thing *very* clear, *very* simple: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Seems simple enough.

It is not God if it clearly looks and smells like stealing, killing or destroying. It is probably God if it looks and feels like life—lavish, abundant and free.

So what *was* it like with Jesus? What did it feel like? Look like?

When we look at Him, we never once see Him attributing to God untimely death, demonic oppression, hardship, human torment, misery, torture, murder or sin. He constantly portrays the Father as good and welcoming to the lost, entangled, wounded and repentant (see Luke 15).

We see Him conquering, forgiving, removing, healing, comforting and confronting. He is filled with compassion, moved with compassion, overflowing with compassion. We see Him engaging evil—demonic and human. He cut short every funeral He attended—because in the world people die outside of the will of the Father. Jesus' response is what the Father's heart is . . . exactly.

And we should take it very personally.

What about You?

We may agree that God is good and at work to heal the world. But when the eyes of the Lord turn to us, we may tend to shy away. We may feel like our internal issue is hopeless—it is “just the way I am” or “my cross to bear.” We may feel like we will never be able to get past some unbearable wound. Like a bad back or trick knee, we learn to live with it. We may think our failure is beyond forgiveness.

That is a big fat lie!

Jesus came for two main purposes: “You know that He appeared in order to take away sins. . . . The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:5, 8).

Regardless of your life circumstances, know this: Freedom is God’s will—*your* freedom specifically is God’s will (John 8:34–36). That is our second foundation.

Foundation #2

Your freedom is God’s will.

Everything in your life that is not part of God’s purpose for you is fair game for removal. The same death on the cross that purchased our sin purchased our freedom (Isaiah 53:4; Luke 4:18). We can be very sure that when we are about working with Jesus as He frees people from sin and the demonic, as seen above in the verses from 1 John, we are moving directly in line with God’s clearly stated will.

The truth is, we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:3–5). Predestined. He began, and will complete, the good work in me

1. God is good. Satan is bad.
- 2. Your freedom is God’s will.**
3. We have hidden enemies.
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8. A culture of honor.
9. Apply God’s solutions.
10. An event and a process.

(Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12). He authored and will perfect (Hebrews 12:2). He works to will and do inside me (Philippians 2:12–13). It is a done deal in His eyes. He completed the work of your freedom when He died and was resurrected, and now you are God’s child, His type, His possession. And His is the only opinion that counts!

A friend once told me, “God has this unreasonable and consistent habit of coming to us from our destiny, not our history.” God sees the finished product and is not at all discouraged. He can call Gideon a “valiant warrior” even while he is hiding in a wine press (Judges 6:11–12). He can call Saul to be Paul even in the midst of his persecuting the new sect called The Way (Acts 9:1). He chooses knuckleheads to be His beloved sons and daughters, and for greatness.

Maybe He has no better option.

Close Your Eyes

You, the one whose hairs are all numbered (Matthew 10:30). The one whose thoughts are all known before you even think them and whose life was carefully considered before your birth (Psalm 139:16). The one whom the Father thinks about more times each day than there are grains of sand on the seashore (Psalm 139:17–18).

That one.

You . . . are His favorite.

He wants to spoil you.

If you could, we wish you would close your eyes and just listen. Maybe you can do that and still read. Everything you are about to read is straight from Scripture, straight from the heart of Papa God. It is but a brief enumeration of the overwhelming evidence of Papa God’s love for you. “How do I love thee?” He says. “Let me count the ways.” If you imagine God the Father as distant, angry, even abusive, let Him change your mind about His goodness. Let Him convince you.

My Child . . .

*You may not know me, but I know
everything about you. Psalm 139:1*

*I know when you sit down and when
you rise up. Psalm 139:2*

I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3

*Even the very hairs on your head are
numbered. Matthew 10:29–31*

For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27

*In me you live and move and have
your being. Acts 17:28*

For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28

*I knew you even before you were
conceived. Jeremiah 1:4–5*

*I chose you when I planned
creation. Ephesians 1:11–12*

*You were not a mistake, for all your days are
written in my book. Psalm 139:15–16*

*I determined the exact time of your birth
and where you would live. Acts 17:26*

*You are fearfully and wonderfully
made. Psalm 139:14*

*I knit you together in your mother's
womb. Psalm 139:13*

*And brought you forth on the day
you were born. Psalm 71:6*

*I have been misrepresented by those
who don't know me. John 8:41–44*

The Ten Foundations

I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1

Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1

I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11

For I am the perfect Father. Matthew 5:48

Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17

For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31–33

My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3

My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17–18

And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17

I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40

For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5

I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41

And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3

If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29

*Delight in me and I will give you the
desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4*

For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13

*I am able to do more for you than you
could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20*

*For I am your greatest encourager.
2 Thessalonians 2:16–17*

*I am also the Father who comforts you in
all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3–4*

*When you are brokenhearted, I am
close to you. Psalm 34:18*

*As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried
you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11*

*One day I will wipe away every tear
from your eyes. Revelation 21:3–4*

*And I'll take away all the pain you have
suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3–4*

*I am your Father, and I love you even as
I love my Son, Jesus. John 17:23*

*For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed.
John 17:26*

*He is the exact representation
of my being. Hebrews 1:3*

*He came to demonstrate that I am for
you, not against you. Romans 8:31*

*And to tell you that I am not counting
your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18–19*

*Jesus died so that you and I could be
reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18–19*

The Ten Foundations

*His death was the ultimate expression
of my love for you. 1 John 4:10*

*I gave up everything I loved that I might
gain your love. Romans 8:31–32*

*If you receive the gift of my Son, Jesus,
you receive me. 1 John 2:23*

*And nothing will ever separate you from
my love again. Romans 8:38–39*

*Come home and I'll throw the biggest
party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7*

*I have always been Father, and will
always be Father. Ephesians 3:14–15*

I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11–32

Love, Your Dad, Almighty God³

chapter

3

Two Foundations about Our Enemy

No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:14

There is nothing more exhilarating than to be shot at without result.

Winston Churchill

Every journey has a secret destination of which the traveler is unaware.

Martin Buber

It was all hush and mahogany.

I was efficiently ushered into the presence of the pastor of a very large and important church.

I was all jitters and politeness.

All my human moral support had called and canceled fifteen minutes earlier. I sometimes hate not being controlling anymore!

He was a gray-haired, quietly imposing, wizened man, the head of a great religious corporation. He had years and years of ministerial experience on me, that was for sure. He smiled warmly and I liked him immediately, but that did not keep my hands from shaking just a little. He came around his large desk and led me to ornate couches in a sitting area.

He had heard of our prayer ministry a few weeks earlier when the daughter of one of his elders experienced a miraculous turnaround from “suicidal and depressed” to “glowing and happy” seemingly overnight. It was an unusually amazing transformation even for those of us who feel like we are on a steady diet of “amazing.” He wanted to see and question someone about what had happened, and by process of elimination—or desertion—I was selected.

“Now, I know that demons are in the Bible, so they are real,” he said. “You don’t have to convince me of that. But that girl was a real exception. We don’t have many like that in our church.”

This is when I pray that deeply theological ministry prayer, “Help, God!” And then a thought came . . .

Recognizing Evil around Us

There is an interesting verse in the gospel of Mark about Jesus. Like a lot of scriptural passages, it does not seem strange or

thought provoking until you close your eyes and really think it through.

“And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons” (Mark 1:39).

So here it is: Saturday night at your friendly neighborhood synagogue. The men are sitting around reciting Torah . . . and He is casting out demons.

Now, my campfire-horror-story-based idea of this picture would be one with dark scary music and a spooky room full of sinister-looking people floating about in a Fu Manchu—mustached threatening manner, with twisting heads, chilling shrieks and green slime. Synagogue must have been something else.

But that is not the way it was at all.

Who were these people? Was the synagogue filled with screaming, frothing people chasing each other with knives and bad masks? Hardly. They were just normal people . . . farmers, shepherds, carpenters, housewives, traders, weavers . . . just Eli, Seth, Mary and Josiah types. They would be considered “normal” moral church people in any society. Yet they were somehow under the influence of demons.

And today?

They are the guys next door and our cousins. They are our brothers-in-law . . . and they are us. Stock traders, small business owners, factory workers, insurance salesmen, housewives, store clerks, carpenters, engineers—Kip, Henry, Susan and Ralph types. Yet . . .

Jesus and His disciples dealt with demons as a matter of course. We have it on the authority of every early Christian writer who refers to the subject at all that in the first centuries, Christians were able by the power of Christ to deliver demoniacs (or *energumens*), and their success was appealed to by the early apologists as a strong argument for the divine origin of Christianity. For example, church father Tertullian (AD 155–230), in the 23rd chapter of *The Apology*, illustrates the early Church’s prevailing conviction and practice. Speaking of demons masquerading as gods, he addresses the pagans of his time:

Let a person be brought before your tribunals who is plainly under demoniacal possession. The wicked spirit, bidden speak by the followers of Christ, will as readily make the truthful confession that he is a demon as elsewhere he has falsely asserted that he is a god.

Was Jesus just ignorant or unaware that this was purely a psychological phenomenon? Was He just pandering to the primitive people of His time?

Careful.

This is a touchy subject. The first question we are always asked is, “So, is the movie *The Exorcist* true?” Which we ignore. The second question is the telling one. “Can someone”—or “I”—“really be ‘demon possessed’?”

Much of Christians’ confusion in answering “the question” stems from an unfortunate translation in the King James Version, in which some were said to be “possessed” by a demon. “So,” the argument goes, “if I belong to Christ, then how can I be possessed by another?” The Greek word translated “possessed,” as numerous better-spoken authors have explained, is either *daimonizomai*, which carries a meaning of “demonized” without the ownership overtone, or *echo*, meaning several different things, notably “with, accompanied by or gripped by.” So we can be influenced without being owned, nudged without being overwhelmed, controlled without knowing it.

It may even feel just like . . . well, like us—only maybe us on a bad day on steroids.

So let us keep that one in mind: “influenced without being owned.” Maybe we just rent out a room or grant an easement.

Demonic Influence

Back to the story line.

“Well, Dr. Harold,” I said, with some growing inkling of inspiration, “look at this verse.”

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

2 Timothy 2:24–26

“How would a person look to you, this one whom Scripture says has been held captive by the devil to do his will?” He read the verse in context, pondered a minute, then looked me straight in the eye with a smile playing around the corners of his mouth. “*That* would be my elder board!” He then quickly indicated that he was officially kidding.

This Scripture, written to a young pastor about the kind of people he would encounter in his church, says that sometimes when he encountered people who were unusually and uncontrollably divisive, argumentative, critical, blind to their own faults or opinionated, he might not be dealing with just them. There may be a sort of puppet master at work behind the scenes. This Scripture indicates that it may be, at least partially, demonic in origin.

If we are Bible readers or Sunday school goers, we may be familiar with the more extreme biblical examples of demons showing up and being cast out: Legion and the madman, the demon that caused epileptic fits and the spirit of divination (Mark 5:9; Matthew 17:15–18; Acts 16:16–18). But Scripture abounds with less obvious examples of demonic influence and partial control, and in almost every case it is written to Christians describing a “Christian” phenomenon.

Imagine how Peter the one-time fisherman felt when *he* was in this situation—on the receiving end. He has just called Jesus “the Messiah,” and he receives the highest praise and promise of all time: “I will build My Church on *this* rock.” So, maybe figuring he is *the man*, he continues to direct Jesus, telling Him He certainly cannot

now go and die: “What about that church we are going to build?” Jesus looks and speaks right through him to the puppet master: “Get behind me, Satan” (Matthew 16:23). Jesus called it what it was.

One of my favorites, sure to cause fidgeting among Bible majors, is this: “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). What might a “doctrine of demons” look like? Have you encountered one? Are they always obvious, dark and cultic? I am not sure. They were not always easy to distinguish in Paul’s time.

Pondering? Here is one more, though Scripture is full of additional examples:¹ “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity” (Ephesians 4:26–27).

The word *opportunity* is the Greek work *topos*, from which we get *topography*. It means lost ground or territory within us. How might a person appear who *has* let the sun go down on his or her anger, raging inside against a harsh and critical father, every night for a decade? We might experience them as sarcastic, wounded, angry, bitter, withdrawn, biting or sour. They have lost control of territory within themselves. And God says it is, in part, demonic in origin.

Like the Jews in the synagogue long ago, unless it is an obvious out-of-control manifestation, we almost never attribute what is happening to the demonic realm. And it is almost *never* obvious. That is the first foundation about the dark side, and our third foundation overall.

Foundation #3

We have hidden enemies.

Dr. Harold broke in. “That would be half my church [smile]. Okay, you’ve got me on the bus. Now, what do you suggest we should do about it here in our church? How would you introduce these ideas?”

I opened my mouth for my standard spiel, then—long pause. We both stared out the window at the lineup of Mercedes-Benzes

and BMWs in the parking lot. Were these soccer moms and their children harassed by demons? Did they know it? Was that idea even remotely within the realm of consideration? He looked at me with a weary smile and said, “Our county, those people out there, has the highest per capita income and also the highest divorce rate in the state. Says something, doesn’t it? But how do we turn the *Queen Mary*, hmmm?” We stared some more. It is not easy bucking the system . . . even when it is killing us.

1. God is good. Satan is bad.
2. Your freedom is God’s will.
- 3. We have hidden enemies.**
4. Issues are not random.
5. There is always a reason.
6. Prisoners and captives.
7. Partners with God.
8. A culture of honor.
9. Apply God’s solutions.
10. An event and a process.

Hidden enemies like to stay hidden. And they masquerade as our own thoughts in our own voice. Here is a typical example:

It was our ministry night here in San Antonio. Our team had just watched as Nancy plowed through forgiveness of her father—it was a beautiful sight to witness. Yet, when she approached Papa God to hear Him, she suddenly shook her head and said, “I feel condemned. I can’t do it.” I asked, “How do you feel condemned? Is it an emotion? Is it from God?”

She suddenly sat straight up in her chair.

“It is saying, ‘You slut’—that is NOT God—shut your mouth, you can’t say that to me anymore!”

She looked at us. “That was what I was feeling for so long, but now it suddenly has words—and they are not my words any longer.”

When really investigated in light of the truth, this one had words, it had a voice and, when exposed, it had to go. And it did. Nancy was liberated.

We will discuss more about our dark enemy in chapter 12, but first let’s expose an amazing fact of our lives that serves as ground zero in this dark world—our next foundation.

Wheel of Misfortune?

Christ said, “In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33 NKJV). The word for *tribulation* means “stress.” You *will* have stress. It is a promise. You will have pressure, strain, anxiety, tension and hassle in your life. No exemptions. When you are going in the right direction, you will meet the enemy head-on. Those meetings are not random. They have a specific diabolical purpose. Let me illustrate.

It made no sense to me.

When Dave, my first aid ministry partner that day, and I first met Ben an hour earlier, I had gotten a fleeting impression on my inner screen of an old Vincent van Gogh painting—you know, the one with his ear bandaged and all the bright swirling colors. *How absurd is that? Andy, you need to concentrate, this kid is looking to you for help. Focus, focus, focus.*

We began to talk together. After a short time we had worked through a few issues in Ben’s life: some sexual failings, some old soul ties. Tears were shed. Forgiveness was spoken. Real relief came when he finally unburdened himself and felt God’s forgiveness. Some new freedom was gained. Great! Find the doors, close the doors, do Kingdom business.

Some days, forgiveness *is* the issue. Some days, confessed sin *is* the focus.

But not today.

In my gut I felt we were not at the core. We were clearing away branches. There was something deeper hidden just below our senses, but what?

I know Papa God elbowed some angel in heaven’s throne room and said, “Think I can’t use a knucklehead? Watch this!” My heart pounded a little, a sure sign of impending vulnerability on my part.

When I am weak, He is strong. When I am dead, He is invincible.

So I said it. “This is probably a silly question, but does ‘van Gogh’ mean anything to you?”

You always find the fruit out on a limb . . . where it feels a little unsafe.

A smile crept into the corners of Dave's mouth. He is always up for an adventure. Ben's eyes widened in surprise, then with a bad poker face, he said, "Why would you ask that?"

"Well, the picture with his ear bandaged popped into my mind earlier, but really, I have no clue." No sense being dishonest—I did not have a clue, and to pretend otherwise is the surest way to failure, nicely robed in religion.

God's presence seemed to slip quietly into the room. A long, silent moment, a quivering lip, quickly averted eyes, arms wrapped around a suddenly painful heart. Then a tear slowly slipped down his cheek and into his scraggly beard.

My partner passed me a quick note affirming the direction we were going . . . just what I needed. I began to probe with gentle questions, on spiritual tiptoes, one ear on the inner flow of God, one on Ben's answers.

"Funny . . . I just pasted a picture by van Gogh into my journal yesterday. I don't know why," Ben wondered. "In fact, last summer I drove to Washington, D.C., and slept in my car to see a van Gogh exhibit. It sort of scares me. Strange you should ask about that . . . way strange."

"What exactly scares you?" "Jesus, will You help him to see it?" "How does it feel?" "How true does this sound to that little boy . . . ?" "What would it mean if . . . ?" "Let yourself just drift back to a time when you first felt that . . ." "Jesus, will You show him when . . . ?"²

"Well . . . I feel like my life is on sort of a downward spiral, and there is nothing I can do about it. Like I am on a slide, and at the end something terrible or violent will happen. It gives me nightmares. I write about it in my journal and try to draw it. It's like the things I want to do with my life will never happen. It really depresses me. It's hopeless, inevitable, failure, just . . ." His voice trailed off.

Almost suddenly, as if sunlight pierced through the clouds, the foggy veil of deceit began to lift, and the chessboard battle over Ben's life was exposed. Van Gogh met a tragic, driven, artsy end. Insanity and confusion reigned in his last days, and in his eventual suicide. But the side of van Gogh few know was his early strong and rugged love for the oppressed, and his desire to be an evangelist. Darkness pulled him under, and the rest of his life was a slow descent into that evil even while his artistic ability flourished.

In an instant God had drawn the battle lines and the victory plan and conveyed it all in a simple fleeting picture. And, when gently mentioned, even in hopeful ignorance, that picture coming from a stranger challenged both Ben's feelings that God was distantly unconcerned and his own lack of any hope for change. What a setup. How powerful is our God, our Wonderful Counselor, our Partner!

Ben sat up and looked me in the eye.

"What's going on?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. Let's see, okay?"

"Sure . . . why not?"

Ben's true destiny, set before the world's foundation, was just the opposite of the evil intention of his and God's enemy. A year or two earlier Ben had hitchhiked across a dangerous foreign frontier to serve displaced refugees, braving mountain roads and bandits. He had always gone after the ragged poor where only the rugged child of God could thrive. He was drawn to it, made for it. Oppression of the poor or helpless incensed him.

Fueled by anger and rebellion against a perceived distant father, a doorway of deception opened. Masquerading as unalterable truth, the lies anchored in pain propped up a whole false house of cards, all carefully placed, sounding true but full of treachery: God was weak, it seemed, or worse, uninterested, and the inner world of his soul was a dark and hopeless place—maybe better to leave it now.

We asked Jesus what He thought about that, and He spoke to Ben: "You're My mountain climber. I trust you in tough places. We're roped together so you won't fall."

“Is that just me thinking those words?” Ben asked.

“Do *you* think it was just you?”³

“No. That is the *last* thing I would have thought!”

“Me either. Do they sound true to you?”

“Oh, yes!”

Then he saw it. A “violent end” like that of van Gogh’s was *not* inevitable! Fear of personal and unavoidable catastrophe was *not* in control. He *did* have a future and a hope . . . even a wonderful destiny. *That* was what was inevitable. We shared a Scripture or two. He saw it clearly, and it brought out the fight in him.

Forgiveness for a distant and unconcerned father was given freely. The lie was renounced. Papa God is not at all like that. The power of the enemy of Providence was broken. The command to leave was given. Ben himself spoke it with a strong voice.

We spoke truth along with destiny blessing. Dave began to speak to him about purpose in his life, and you could see Ben’s spirit swelling like a sponge, soaking in warm, wonderful truth. He saw it. He is a rugged servant warrior, the other side of van Gogh. Lots of tears, a few big yawns, a little shake and . . . the first fruits of freedom. He felt a dark weight leave him. “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men (1 Corinthians 1:25). God’s unusual ways and gentle, nondirective words were allowed to flow through knuckleheaded kids who knew they had little to give but lots to offer if they would risk foolishness.

I told him, “Ben, you still have the opportunity to think that old way, but no longer the obligation; your choice.”

Ben walked away that day with a new purpose in life, believing something different. How it worked out in daily life? I frankly do not fully know. Good thing Ben was now connected with God and saw Him in a new light. He knew who he was, and it resonated deep within him.

Hope was back.

Ben is a picture of what we see all the time: one young man, two plans for his life—one a dark fate, one a bright destiny. There is much more here than meets the eye.

The Blueprint of a Man

God has made wonderful provision for man's identity, destiny and purpose.

As to identity in Christ, in Romans 3 through 8 the Bible says Papa God paid off our past debt, pays our monthly note, saves us from both sin and the impossible requirements of the law, separates our behavior from our identity, gives us His Spirit as a guide and helper, adopts us into His eternal family, promises us a new, impressive body, restores hope and tells us nothing can separate us from His unreasonable, tenacious love!

There is no substitute for knowing who we are in Christ and who He is in us and becoming disciples of His—practitioners of Christianity, not just “attenders” of it. If we each had a firm heart grasp on our identity in Christ, and His in us, then many of our issues would simply lose power over us. Some of the best material on that is the work of Neil T. Anderson and his seven steps.⁴ He is a great friend of this ministry and we of his.

Scripture also indicates that each one who is His child has a regal and wonderful destiny—we are to be like Him, with Him, sharing all His possessions. That is settled . . . forever (see Romans 8:29, Ephesians 1:5 and 1:11).

With those two bookends of identity and destiny holding up the borders of our lives, we can pursue our God-given purposes. Why am I on this earth? God indicates to us that He has designed each person with a specially purposed life, with numbered days, with specific equipping or gifting and with unique works prepared for him or her to co-accomplish with God (see Psalm 139:16; John 5:19; Romans 12:3; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 10:24).

Ephesians 2:10 says about all I ever need to know about purpose. We are each “His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” I am uniquely crafted, and the work I am to do is uniquely prepared for me.

Papa God nudges you, sometimes in advance, sometimes right at that instant, and says, “Hey, I’m about to do something fun . . . want to come?” And when you say yes, almost always at a bit of risk to your comfort zone, you experience His presence and friendship. Doing it *together* is His highest pleasure.

You do not have to try out or interview for these nudge moments. You were made for them.

You are it.

The works are hidden *for* you, not *from* you. You will find them. And when you do, you will find life and purpose.

There is much more at stake beneath the surface of this plan and way of God than simply finding your “call.” You are part of an unseen plan of God, one of intergalactic conquest! If you look back carefully, you will begin to connect the dots and see His nudges are not random. It is a careful plan and blueprint to grow you into, well, *yourself*. Paul calls it “from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he says that you carry something of the essence of God that is unique to you. It is called your *metron* in the Greek, your “measure of God” (used three times; see Ephesians 4:7, 11–16). One person seemingly exudes His gentleness, another His laughter and humor, another His mercy and so on. Ben exhibited His rugged “go anywhere, pay any price” love. When left to himself, he naturally gravitated toward assignments and activities that took him there. It gave him a sense of fullness and of adventure.

When each of us operates within our *metron*, the Bible says that Jesus’ body will “measure” up to the fullness of Christ. Millions of fully functional mini-Jesus men and women, delivered on earth

with some assembly required to be fully Jesus. That is God’s plan for conquest.

And our enemy detests the whole idea.

The Evil Plan

The devil hates God. Let’s face it.

Negotiations will not solve the conflict. It is a never-ending, diabolical, seething, jealous rage. There is no treaty or truce.

You and your *metron* (God in you) represent a risk to Satan’s hold on part of planet earth—your part. His assault is *not* random. It is not just some chance “wheel of misfortune.” On the contrary, the aggressive and singular objective of hell’s forces is to find an approach that will somehow neutralize (at least) and totally pervert and destroy (at most) the place of intended glory in a man or woman. He attempts to pervert and destroy the very aspect of each person that is planned for displaying the grace and glory of God to the rest of the world: the *metron* of Jesus in you—your gifting and calling. That was the pattern we saw in Ben. It was not random.

And if he can add torment, harassment, injustice, pain and wounding—all the better. That is our fourth foundation overall, and the second foundation about the evil one.

1. God is good. Satan is bad.
2. Your freedom is God’s will.
3. We have hidden enemies.
- 4. Issues are not random.**
5. There is always a reason.
6. Prisoners and captives.
7. Partners with God.
8. A culture of honor.
9. Apply God’s solutions.
10. An event and a process.

Foundation #4

Issues are not random.

When exposed, his dark plan unravels quickly. When we train teams about this foundation, we sometimes talk in terms of “tights.” If you have ever had or seen a little girl on Sunday morning at church, there is at least one in the crowd with a hole in her nice white tights. Good chance she

has my last name. The tear got there in the everyday of life, but once it is there, it is hard to not pick at it. All it takes is one good thread exposed and you can literally pull the entire tight leg to shreds—in moments, whittled away to a pile of string on the ground by the pull of one loose thread.

Likewise, in a prayer time, the Lord can take one seemingly random “loose” thread from the enemy and show how a lifetime of hurts has been woven together for targeted destruction. The Lord can tug on the loose thread, and everything that is connected to a hurt or lie can fall to pieces on the ground. No more overwhelming mountain to hurdle. It is often very woven together and stealthily crafted—but it is easily unwound by Father God.

Once you attune yourself to it, it is apparent everywhere. Look around. Start close to home. It is generational, it is pervasive and it is deadly effective. Look at the examples below and notice the loose thread.

A Few Examples

Fred—the Daring Leader

Fred was designed by God to have a strong practical capability and daring leadership. He was meant to be the one everyone turned to when they needed practical know-how. But Fred’s father was so belittling that Fred deeply believed he was worthless and inept. And as he believed in his heart, so it flowed out into his world. He was unsure, timid and failing. Evil’s scheme was to beat Fred into cowering submission when young, thus assuring his incapacitation as a man. His tactic was to bring authorities into his life who were harsh and judging. Mistakes were painful experiences. Fred believed that, in the world in which he lived, to try and fail resulted in great pain . . . and he seemed to fail at everything. So why try?

But God had other plans.

When Fred truly saw what had happened, and when God spoke to him about his strengths, Fred actually got angry, and we began to see a strong tenacity rise up in him. Today he is well on his way to becoming what he is called to be: capable, trusted, dependable, loving. He is the go-to guy for many in his congregation.

Monica—the Listener to God

Monica was strongly “prophetic.” In the New Age she would be an Indigo Child—seeing deeply, restless about society, hearing with two sets of ears and double-sighted. Even as a young girl she would see and say things that seemed almost otherworldly . . . if you believed in that sort of thing.

Which Monica’s parents certainly did not.

She told her parents she saw angels. Her parents laughed uncomfortably at her “fantasy.” When she persisted, they subtly shut her up and quietly shut her down. They then practiced benign neglect in Monica’s spiritual upbringing. She slowly starved. While a teenager, her church let her know that she was out of bounds, and somehow “wrong,” as a woman trying to speak up.

Monica was badly wounded, and she eventually developed a condescending attitude toward authority, a biting way and an angry path. She went in circles. Her insights allowed her to see motives and hearts. Yet her pain and anger caused her to judge everyone around her, and so she was inevitably judged in return. She was the master at cynically pointing out sin and inconsistency, but she failed at seeing God’s good plan for the revelatory insight she was given and at cooperating with a gentle Papa to bring about healing and change. She had no grid in which to put tender and enthusiastic encouragement. If Satan cannot directly stop the gifting and calling, he will pervert them.

God did an end run around Monica’s well-developed defenses, carefully constructed to protect the sensitive little girl within. The prayer team began to weep uncontrollably over Monica. She melted

and cried with them, sobbing over the hurting and confused little girl she knew still cowered inside. Her defenses gave up their hard job.

God began to nurture and father her, to call out her best, to teach her that someone with insight like hers can work with God to bring about the *intention*, not simply the *information*; that *relation* is as important as *revelation*. She confessed and repented. She gave up the lie that she was mistrusted and different, and that she needed to act out of wounding. Papa spoke wonderfully to her as we watched in awe. She forgave her parents and pastors. Monica grew and softened rapidly.

Bill—Gentle and Strong

Bill was a lover.

He was gentle, sensitive and musical. His father was not. That was a big problem for both of them. Sports were not on Bill's agenda. Sunday afternoons were a hellish struggle between the Final Four and the string quartet. Misunderstood and rejected, Bill ended up crushed, abandoned and broken. He turned to pornography for relief and other sexual behavior at odds with God's best. He listened to dark music, composed morbidly sad songs and wrote murky poetry. He contemplated suicide. The enemy hates the artistic ones most of all, for they most fully express Lucifer's old job: worship (see Ezekiel 28:11–19).

God spoke to Bill in a tender way: *You are My son. I love to cuddle with you and to make up "silly story songs" with you.* It was wording Bill's father had used when he was very young and they lay together in bed after Bill was tucked in. How God dissolved his heart then. "He knows . . . He knows." His eyes filled with tears of wonder. "God really knows and understands me, doesn't He?"

Bill knew then he was okay; that he was strong, and that macho was not the way he expressed his strength; that meekness was strength under control and that Jesus was proud of him. We

watched as Bill and God cried together, sobbing and shaking. That night Papa pulled the cork on the bottled-up poison of hatred, and much of the pain drained out. Forgiveness and removing of judgment about Dad brought a flood of tears and longing. And we held him for a long time, Papa soothing his heart while we prayed. Confession of sin brought more tears of shame, and Papa let him know He understood and did not condemn him . . . not even a little. He gave it to Jesus in exchange for purity. It is not about sin . . . it never is in the end.

Bill is now walking out the new freedom he has found and is blossoming in art and music, writing a children's musical . . . filled with silly story songs.

Application in Your World

Every person has his or her unique story . . . Ben, Fred, Monica, Bill . . . you. We often come to see the hidden pattern of evil and the intent of good. It is not random, and it is normally hidden. Almost invariably, it takes the form of a “double bind,” a catch-22, where God's intended purpose is crushed (for more tender gifts) or perverted (for more forceful gifts); the person feels trapped and miserable where they are, but any escape seems impossible or fearful. We can expose the hidden plan of the evil one, nullify the bad and call forth the good, helping to instill vision and focus and put the fight back into the warrior.

Perhaps even now you can see some of the pattern of resistance and the evil structures that have been arrayed against you. You have a hidden enemy. But do not be dismayed—as you will discover shortly, you have a not-so-hidden ally.

My child, listen to me . . . Papa loves you. Think about that one. Reread chapter 2. Climb up on His lap, lean your head against His chest, hear His heartbeat, sigh and rest. You have an exciting walk with Him. And it is never too late to take His hand and say, “Yes, You bet I want to come!”

chapter

4

Two Foundations about Us

All human beings should try to learn before they die what they are running from, and to, and why.

James Thurber

The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts.

Charles Darwin

We see the world not as it is but as we are.

Stephen Covey

Ignorance is voluntary misfortune.

Nicholas Ling

Sir Isaac Newton was right.

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. In the lives of men there are some obvious natural, logical and psychological causes and effects. But there is also another dynamic, one that bursts into the world of men, fueled by that other world where God and devils dwell. Here is one of my favorite examples.

It is the third year of famine in Israel. People are suffering.

David asks God what is going on. Maybe it took that long to decide it was not *just* a bad year or two . . . or three. When David asks God, He gives a strange answer. He says the famine is caused by the previous king's recent poor treatment of the Gibeonites. Saul broke an ill-advised covenant made with a dishonest tribe by Joshua four hundred years earlier (see 2 Samuel 21:1; Joshua 9).

Four hundred years!

That is almost twice as old as the United States.

Gracious, how was David supposed to know *that*!

The fact that Joshua never asked God about making the covenant in the first place does not seem to enter at all into the cause-effect dynamic. The fact that David and the people of Israel did not remember the covenant or notice Saul's mistreatment was also not a factor in easing their suffering—God remembered, and so did Satan. A covenant had been made, a vow spoken. Until it was honored the famine would continue.

Here is another one.

Simon (a.k.a. Peter) is warned that Satan has demanded to sift him like wheat. Jesus' response is to pray for him that he does not give up (Luke 22:31–32). Why did Jesus not simply protect Simon? The whole dynamic seems strange until you begin to think about Simon's previous behavior and make some inferences. The demanded

sifting might have been something he brought on himself—a door of dark invitation opened by his arrogant pride in judging everyone else’s cowardice and disputing for the prime spot in the Kingdom (Matthew 26:33; Luke 22:24). Simon finally repents after a servant girl calls his blustering bluff, and he is restored by Jesus to his destiny call and the premier position he is now qualified to handle after all. In the way Peter judged, he was himself tested and found wanting (Matthew 7:1–2). Judas Iscariot, too, was tested in his weak area—thief and betrayal—and failed (John 12:6; Matthew 27:3–6).

Jesus tells the crippled man who had been sitting at the pool of Bethesda for 38 years to sin no more “so that nothing worse happens to you” (John 5:14). What happened 38 years earlier?

In the world of men there is a tendency (some say a law) toward sowing and reaping, cause and effect. It is portrayed throughout Scripture. You see it as the result of both individual decisions and group choices, of self-inflicted torment and of that perpetrated by another. A reaction is caused by an action. An *ongoing* reaction remains because the action has not been dealt with and still churns out its poison. It is part and parcel of this world—you will have tribulation. And it all started somewhere. That is the first foundation about us.

Foundation #5

There is always a reason.

The pain, failure, hindrance, sin or demonic torment in a person’s life had a source, a beginning point, an origin. It may not have been the person’s doing at all, but that of someone against them. But there *was* a cause to bring about the effect, an action that brought the painful or harmful reaction.

1. God is good. Satan is bad.
2. Your freedom is God’s will.
3. We have hidden enemies.
4. Issues are not random.
- 5. There is always a reason.**
6. Prisoners and captives.
7. Partners with God.
8. A culture of honor.
9. Apply God’s solutions.
10. An event and a process.

Paul explains it succinctly:

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:7–8

This propensity is somehow woven into the fabric of God’s created universe. It is not, as some would have it, a totally impersonal balancing of the forces of yin and yang, or a mechanistic reexperiencing of good and bad karma repaid in a later life. It is not just the “Law of Attraction” as portrayed in *The Secret*.

But *all* truth is God’s truth, and this tendency is real nonetheless. Sin has consequences (Colossians 3:25). Righteousness has rewards (Mark 10:30; Colossians 3:23–24; 1 Timothy 5:24–25). There are both current-world *and* next-world results of our choices and beliefs, for good and for bad (1 Corinthians 3:13–15).

God’s original plan for men and women was that everyone would reap the blessed fruit of past generations and pass along a multiplied blessing to our children. Age to age, generation to generation, multiplied, ever-increasing, never-ending blessing.

Then we gave it away in Eden.

In the world we will have tribulation, pressure, issues, pains, hurts and failures. Each of us is subject to fallout from these things. We are each culpable and each victimized, each swept up to a greater or lesser extent by the forces at play around and within us. We are each acting out the natural/supernatural consequences of the “there is always a reason” principle.

Time, by itself, never heals wounds, never erases sin, never eliminates the cause and never casts out the demonic. It only makes us forget what it is that put us in prison in the first place, and what is killing us. We become inured to the low level of existence, used to the pain. We go “three years with famine” in our own land,

unaware of the cause-effect dynamic playing itself out. It is bottled in ignorance, lies and forgetfulness—but it stays fresh until exposed to the light.

Cause and Effect in the Real World

Here are some examples of cause and effect that are commonly experienced. Every one of the examples is real; only the names have been changed.

- Fred cannot relate to authority due to a brutal father.
- Mary is afraid to ride in a car due to an accident as a young girl.
- Betty felt she could not measure up to her mother's expectations and quit trying, becoming a rebel.
- Dave feels a sense of resistance in relationships and hindrance in his career due to his unforgiveness toward his father.
- Ralph hopes his dad suffers like he suffered—judging him without knowing his dad was abused as a child. But he feels others judge him and are avoiding him.
- Barry is a habitual liar and never seems to find a place to land in life.
- George cannot relate sexually to his wife due to the pornography he indulges in.
- Guilt haunts Betty due to a sexual fling she had while on a trip. It has caused her marriage to fail.
- Tim is afraid of failure and constantly reads more and more to try to insure he knows more than those around him.
- Bob's retirement account is his safety net, and he is constantly anxious about the market.
- Megan is controlled by her mother's expectations, and this illicit soul tie has ruined her marriage.

- Kendra frequented a fortune-teller and now experiences whispering voices and night terrors.
- Cary constantly says he cannot control himself, and his negative self-speak plays itself out in his life.
- Ken joined an organization that required him to repeat curses concerning his family and his life. Now those vows are manifested in his children.
- Debbie's mother was not married when she got pregnant and was terribly anxious throughout the pregnancy. Debbie has trouble with her nerves and seems "high strung" and unable to cope with life.

Prisoners and Captives

In looking at the examples above you may have noticed something, and that something is the second foundation about us. You might have reacted to some of the examples by saying, "Oh, that poor person," and to others, "Well, they seemed to get what they deserved." Setting aside for a moment the fact that we cannot unerringly make such omniscient judgments, it does seem true that there are basically two kinds of issues—those we bring on ourselves and those that others perpetrate on us.

In Luke 4:18 Jesus quotes this about Himself:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners.

Isaiah 61:1

Liberty to captives, freedom to prisoners. This distinction is important to freedom:

- *Captives* have been captured in war through no fault of their own. They are held in bondage due to wounding and the

resultant false or unfruitful beliefs. Their surface behavior can be confusing, sinful or full of issues that must be dealt with. But their sin is a reaction to wounding.

- *Prisoners* are held in prison because they have done something to deserve it. They are held until they are freed. Most prisoners are in a self-made prison of sin, self-binding actions (such as vows or covenants) or unforgiveness (Matthew 18:34–35). They hold the key to freedom and can reverse the results of their actions.

This is the second foundation about us.

Foundation #6

Prisoners and captives.

At our core we were created to need God's love and presence. As in the picture in figure 1, God's plan is to have protective boundaries around the heart of every child, just as our physical skin protects our bodies. Parents, grandparents and others are intended to work with God to protect us when we are young. It is God's intent that they leave us a godly legacy and help bring us into His presence and our purpose and destiny in Him. We were meant to be safe and blessed.

As we age we take on more and more personal responsibility under God. We develop our own covering of godly protection by believing truth, in proper relationship with friends and family and under proper authority. God meets that inner need through His wonderful fatherly presence and that of Jesus and the Holy Spirit (John 14:23).

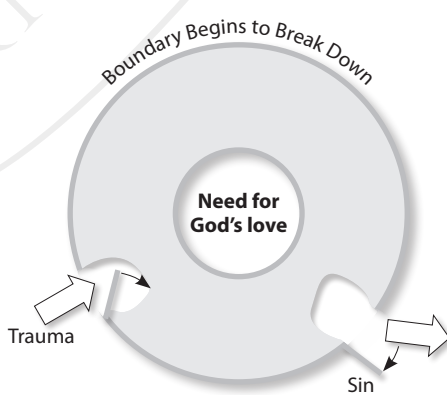
1. God is good. Satan is bad.
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4. Issues are not random.
5. There is always a reason.
- 6. Prisoners and captives.**
7. Partners with God.
8. A culture of honor.
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10. An event and a process.

Figure 1



But we live in a fallen world. At specific times, sin or trauma attempt to break those boundaries (see figure 2). Temptation and resulting sin *invite* (the door swings out, making prisoners); trauma and wounding *invade* (the door swings in, making captives). Generational issues or ungodly foundational lies can be passed on to us. Wounding of our spirits can occur even in the womb.

Figure 2

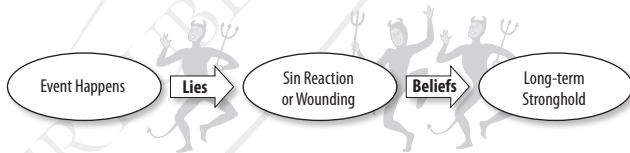


Sin, falling short of God's best for you, manifests in thoughts, desires and behaviors that are in opposition to God. When we are very young, our own sin is not the issue as much as invasion—the

sin of others against us. Bad things happen to us, and we are hurt and confused. It feels wrong to our childlike spirits, and we seek resolution and relief. In so doing we often create an inner reality, or belief paradigm, out of the few things we already know and what we are now presented with. Our minds are amazingly adept at creating a plausible explanation for the “reality” we perceive around us, and in finding ways to cope with that world. The mind finds resolution for the heart’s confusion. This is the pathway to captivity.

If our God-appointed protections are doing their job, this process is nipped in the bud by an alert parent. When we are young, our parents work with God to build foundations of truth within us, and we can, even early on, choose truth over lies. When the protections fail, however, the dynamic shown in figure 3 begins to take place.

Figure 3



If the demonic is present, it will offer devious lies and false comforts to explain and resolve what is happening. A young child does not have much perspective, so even seemingly minor events can have a big impact on them, especially when events are explained by demonically inspired lies. Our consideration of these lies causes us to react in fearful, self-protective or sinful ways. Repeated and strengthened, these form beliefs within us. The strengthening or intertwining of multiple false beliefs, perhaps spurred by demons, creates a darkly defended stronghold within us.

When we are young children, most of the time, the fact that we are presented with a choice, good or bad, dark or light, is very subtle and hidden. In many situations a child, in reality,

has little obvious choice because the “truth and love” alternative may be scarcely present or perceived. The demonic offers comfort, protection or the fulfillment of some other felt need. Or it terrorizes and intimidates into submission. It is not fair, but it happens.

As very young children we create core beliefs about ourselves, others, our environment and God. Core lies form, too. These lies are held at the deepest emotional and subconscious level—in the heart. They then propel reactions, actions and decisions (Proverbs 4:23). Core lies often center around two key areas: victimization and rejection.¹ We ask, “Is the world safe?” and “Am I acceptable?” Almost everybody has dealt with some form of these two.²

Victimization

- Powerlessness: “I am a helpless victim of others and can’t protect myself.”
- Fear: “The world and people in it are not safe for me.”
- Personal tainting: “I am scarred and ruined forever by what has happened.”
- Hopelessness: “It is terrible and will never get better.”
- Confusion: “I cannot find peace and understanding in my world.”

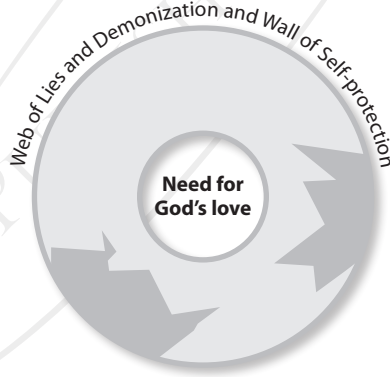
Rejection

- Shame: “I am sinful and dirty and deserve punishment.”
- Rejection: “The ones I need reject me because I am not worth loving.”
- Identity invalidation: “Who I am is not right nor worth paying attention to.”
- Disaffirmation: “I am worthless, unattractive and stupid. I deserve to be ignored.”
- Abandonment: “Those I love and need will abandon me.”

As we mature we become responsible for decisions we make, and sin becomes possible. We may be predisposed to making sinful choices due to the foundations that have been laid. If we choose truth, by ourselves or with help, then healing results, the doors are shut and we move on—strengthened and maturing in our ability to respond appropriately to negative experiences. The previous lies are eventually overcome by truth.

Left to themselves, however, believed lies and wounded reactions begin to dominate and constrain parts of us—as shown in figure 4. Often aided and abetted by demons, they create a false barrier against pain—one of self-protection, deception and limitation. Within that wall, darkness begins to grow.

Figure 4



As *prisoners*, we continue to seek the pleasure of a sinful habit or addiction, believing that the sin gives us what we need—thus becoming more and more controlled and warped to serve it. We move into ever-deeper bondage, transitioning from suggestion or situation to impression, to oppression, to obsession. Along the way we lose more and more freedom, spiritual lucidity and rationality. The dark goal is destruction.

As *captives* we can respond to wounding aggressively (anger, rage, bitterness, outbursts and even murder) or passively (self-pity,

withdrawal, self-hatred and even suicide). Sometimes our responses are only marginally controllable. Some behaviors are designed to protect us from our pain or provide a solution to it: addictions, ritualized actions, anorexia, homosexuality, etc. They are pain-management coping mechanisms. Other behaviors are the direct result or consequence of the pain and sin: phobias, panic reactions, etc.

We then try to arrange our lives either in reaction to or avoidance of these painful areas—thus becoming more and more bound and isolated, and less and less in control. Defense and coping mechanisms—stylized ways of acting and relating—can form and begin to limit our freedom. In some cases mild dissociation is the protection of choice. In more severe cases dissociation can mean survival, leading to more complex issues generally beyond the scope of first responder training.

This web of deception, sin and wounding, created over time in an unsuspecting life, is called a “stronghold.” It may feel like it has a stronger hold on you than God in that area. It feels hopeless and unchangeable. A person may be normal in most other ways, but when this area is touched or encountered, we see unusually strong and inappropriate reactions. It is an echo of what has happened in the past. We have walked into a minefield of old pain and anger. It seems to have a life and energy of its own. The enemy may use that place to exert temptation and deception, to plant thoughts and desires.

Inside, we still have a need for God’s love and presence.

We may come into experiences of love and salvation and find respite for periods of time. We may marry and have children and lead normal lives. But the ability to cope with the inner turmoil often starts to break down later in life. We may begin to grow aware of constraints in our lives, quirks and flaws in our personalities and behavior, things we take for granted but in actuality do not square with the Bible or the practices of well-adjusted people around us. Neither God nor the enemy will leave us static, but they act with opposite intent. Things begin to happen. Perhaps a crisis comes

about and we grow desperate. Maybe a friend confronts us or a spouse wants to go to counseling. An understanding emerges that “something is really wrong inside me.”

A person confronted this way begins to look for help and a good friend to talk to as the first line of defense, the first responder.

Maybe it is you.

Application in Your World

To close this chapter, let me reiterate these two foundational principles boldly and without equivocation. *Everything* that you have done or has been done against you that has stealing, killing and destroying intrinsic to its nature is not from God and is fair game to be gotten rid of. It had a source and origin apart from God’s foundational plan for you. It is not God’s intent for a harmful issue to dominate you—either as a prisoner or as a captive. He knows the reason or cause. He is willing to help you find it and to begin experiencing freedom in that area.

If the discussion above seems daunting, remember this: Your role as a first responder is *not* to try to unravel and sort out all the tangles of someone’s life. That is God’s job. Your role is simply to partner with God in the one thing He brings to light.

It is time to turn the corner and talk about God’s solution to this quandary. So saddle up—let’s learn how to become partners with God.

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chapter

5

Two Foundations about Being a First Responder

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:9

Pray as if everything depended upon God, and work as if everything depended upon man.

Francis Cardinal Spellman

There are three stages in the work of God: impossible, difficult, done.

James Hudson Taylor

We love the part in *The Lion King* when the hyenas are about to devour the two cubs that had strayed into their territory. In desperation the lion cub Simba rears back to roar, and this powerful, hair-raising bellow booms forth. Only it is not Simba but Mufasa, the lion king—standing behind Simba—who does it all. We feel like that many times when ministering to someone—as does anyone who knows that in the end, it is God who does the heavy lifting. It seems to be God’s way if we will let Him.

Look at the life of any God-chosen biblical individual and you will see a common thread: Abraham (Genesis 15:1), Jacob (Genesis 31:3), Moses (Exodus 3:12), Joshua (Joshua 1:5), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:8), Isaiah (Isaiah 41:10), David (Psalm 23:4), Solomon (1 Chronicles 28:20), the disciples (Mark 16:20), early Christians (Acts 11:21) and . . . us forever (Matthew 28:20). God has an interest or desire, and He calls a person to partner with Him to carry it out. And His final answer to any doubting or fearful question about His calling of every person into any kind of ministry situation is not “You will be great” or “Look how handsome you are,” but “I’ll be with you.” God rarely sends a person. He typically says, “I am going to do such and such a thing. . . . Want to come?”

Paul says we are “co-workers” with God, who causes the growth (1 Corinthians 3:9 NIV). That refers to us. And that is the first important foundation about how we minister.

Foundation #7

Partners with God.

Being in intimate partnership with the infinite, omniscient, omnipresent creator of the universe can be stretching!

God is not human. He says to us, “You and I are incompatible . . . and I don’t change.”¹ His ways are way, way above ours, and He enjoys making foolish the wisdom of the world (Isaiah 55:8–9; 1 Corinthians 1:20–25). That does not mean we do not study, work, pray and think hard. But it *does* mean that, in the end, our weight comes down on trusting God—not training, experience or technique—and on agreeing to be stretched.

That is a narrow road to walk. It is never either/or. The ditch on one side is reliance on training and technique. “God gave us our brains and the Word and we operate out of that.”

Operating that way leads to results that are limited to my skill and knowledge. That is best left for trained counselors who *have* skill and knowledge. Why do I need God? People encounter me and my good suggestions, my lists and steps, but what they hunger for is an encounter with God.

In the other ditch is some sort of “woo-woo” hyperspirituality bordering on Christian voodoo and, frankly, lots of nonsense. We make crazy, unverifiable, unbiblical pronouncements couched in prophetic jargon, say a few prayers and send someone off hopeful but often destined for disappointment.

When we find the sweet spot in the middle as co-laborers, God is willing to enter into a partnership with us even when we are not perfectly suited to Him and His ways. He will find ways to work through almost any good-hearted and prepared individual who has true compassion for the person in need and is willing to listen and obey. Among our teams and individuals who experience this kind of ministry, it is a given that we are all just taking notes on the Holy Spirit. We refer almost all questions to Jesus.

Jesus walked this way.

1. God is good. Satan is bad.
2. Your freedom is God’s will.
3. We have hidden enemies.
4. Issues are not random.
5. There is always a reason.
6. Prisoners and captives.
- 7. Partners with God.**
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He said only what He currently heard the Father saying, did what He currently saw the Father doing. This pleased the Father (John 5:19, among other verses). That is very different from reliance on a carefully rehearsed five-step process—though the five-step process given in this book may be the framework in which you operate. Thus, my primary preparation is to spend time knowing God and His voice. Secondarily I read, study, learn, watch, ask, cogitate and meditate. If it was good enough for the Son of God . . .

So how do we do that?

Voices and Screens

Some think it is presumption to expect God to speak to you in a ministry setting. We think it is presumption not to. We *anticipate* God will speak. We *expect* we will listen. The key to understanding our constraining and painful issues and the most direct route to freedom is almost always found within that world.

This can feel intimidating to us . . . all of us. It is actually not hard, but rather natural and intuitive to most people, even nonbelievers. If you are now a believer in Jesus, think of how you became one: When you were a rebellious and confused sinner, you heard God clearly enough to decide to turn to Him. How much more, now that you are His dear child, do you hear His voice? He even unequivocally declares that fact (John 10:1–5).

Many have dismissed the whole idea of this inner spiritual world as “spiritual babble” or shied away from it as too dangerous and subjective. Some in more charismatic circles throw around phrases like “God said . . .” or “That man is so prophetic” in a way that causes others to shy away from the whole idea. Others have plunged into it in total naïveté, not realizing the potential dangers in unbounded and unguided openness.

There is a safe way to navigate the spiritual world, and finding the balance between these two mind-sets is crucial to ministering healing and freedom in spirit and in truth.

As Jesus stated clearly, we can trust God to protect us and guide us as we faithfully and honestly call on Him:

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Luke 11:9–13

The fact is, we all rely on hearing God. Every pastor, no matter the background or denomination, wants to be breathed into, or “inspired.” Every Christian, no matter how immature, wants God to “help” him in his endeavors. So the only real disagreement in this discussion comes when we seek to understand just how specific and pointed that communication can be. Andy once argued with a seminary graduate with a Ph.D. about this for five hours. His position was that God gave us minds, and we should use them to analyze the Word and then teach it. At the end he stated he needed to go pray for insight and inspiration for his upcoming sermon. They both stopped and smiled. “God gotcha.”

It can be explained in terms of three voices and three screens.

Jesus, referring to the Holy Spirit, said that out of our inner being will flow rivers of living water (John 7:38). Continuous and natural, not forced. We can learn to honor and place weight on the flow of God and discern between

- our own minds—derived from stored information, more analytical and soulish;
- the voice of the enemy—harsh, manipulative, dark and intimidating; and

- God’s voice along with that of our spirits—alive, fresh, weighty, unexpected, full of energy, revelatory and insightful.²

Those voices come to our attention through one of three internal “flat-screen televisions” of input that come into the mind, will and emotions (our souls) and to which we can choose to pay attention³ (see figure 5):

- *Senses and drives*—This screen monitors body function and external sensory input. Its voice says, “I’m hungry” or “Look at that red balloon!”
- *Memory and analysis*—This screen monitors output from our minds and draws on our memories. We can be asked to recall a favorite birthday present and immediately a picture of the gift appears on that screen. It is also the screen on which the results of internal analysis are played out. We need to balance our checkbook, and the ability to do math (along with some painful memories of algebra!) is displayed on that screen.
- *Imagination and impression*—This screen creates images of things never previously experienced but suggested by others or requested by the soul. Someone could say, “Imagine yourself on the moon,” and you could instantly be there. Just as quickly you could transport yourself to the top of Mount Everest in your mind’s eye. It is also the channel of much inspiration and the flow of intuitive creativity. It monitors input bubbling up from our spirits in the form of impressions, pictures, words, thoughts, feelings, etc. These images and thoughts can be very real, in the sense that they are a communication from God. Many of the pictures in the Psalms seem written to play on this screen; the parables of Jesus and the pictures He spoke of also light up this screen. Perhaps the whole of the book of Revelation played on this screen for John the Revelator.

Figure 5



God can speak on any one of those screens. In fact, they all flow together to some extent; this differentiation is just for understanding. For example, He uses external things, touching them with significance and bringing them to our notice on the screen of senses and drives—people, books, objects, nature, “coincidences,” memories, bodily sensations, etc.

He brings to mind (the screen of memory and analysis) a specific memory that, stored for years, suddenly has “sauce” on it. Each person is different and relates uniquely to God in infinite variation. But in every case, for something to carry weight or significance, it still must have His light shined on it and catch our attention.

In many people God chooses and uses the screen of imagination and impression because it can often be the most flexible and amenable for His input. He speaks to us in a form superior to actual written or oral speech. He, from our spirits, causes a “flow” to rise from within us.

God’s answers are wiser than our questions.

We rarely get only what we expect. Often God’s answers bring about a transformation of heart, not a transfer of information. The rich young ruler asks Jesus a theological question, and He gives a heart-targeted reply addressing the man’s real issue of insecurity and riches-based idolatry (Luke 18:18–27). The woman at the well wants to know where is the best place to worship, and Jesus tells her it is within her spirit—and then addresses her real heart need (John 4:19–24).

Sometimes His answers point to issues of destiny, identity, purpose, belief or relations. Sometimes the answers are so deep and yet so simple that they compel people to greater faith, making them

desperate for freedom, and stir up desire for intimacy with the One who communicated His love in such a telling way. Sometimes God's communications are symbolic, leading to deeper revelation, amazing self-insight and tears or even humor. Papa or Jesus often says things with a knowing, kind and even wry smile. We have seen God cover shame and guilt with gentle warm humor.

But we can miss it.

We can misinterpret His voice. That is okay. That is where humility and compassion come in handy. That is why we, as ministers, offer only pictures or thoughts that come on *our* screens as suggestions or questions (“Does van Gogh mean anything to you?”), and only when we sense permission to do so.

In our ministry settings, we often ask individuals to close their eyes in order to allow undistracted inner focus on the screens, to be still, and to report what they are “seeing, hearing or sensing.” We ask God if He has input on specific questions and concerns, or we ask if He would like to do, say, indicate or show something. We anticipate an answer, but it is totally okay if we sense nothing.

We *never* use guided imagery, where we set the stage and demand Jesus appear on it. We never make Jesus or anyone *do* anything—we always ask. We often just stop and say something like, “God, we are not sure what to do here; would You help us?” It is a little disconcerting at first to the people being ministered to. Then they normally start to enjoy it, knowing we are in this together and they can relax.

We can, for example, lead in the following ways:

- “Jesus, is there anything You want to show John that he believed about that event?”
- “God, would You help John get a picture of the wall that he feels might separate him from Your love or from relationship with others?”
- “Jesus, we’re stuck. What are we missing? Will You help us?”
- “Papa, John is having trouble forgiving his dad right now. Will You help us?”

- “John, you know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Let’s ask God if there is anything in that temple that doesn’t belong there . . . okay?”
- “John, are you having trouble letting God’s love into this part of you? Let’s ask Jesus if He would show us why.”

To those who are more exclusively dependent on scientific psychodynamics or more traditional cognitive counseling approaches, this may seem overly subjective or even childish. We really respect and need those highly trained and experienced ones. But this is not counseling—it is two or three people coming together to ask God for His wisdom and counsel—partners with God.

We have found God to be an ever-present help in time of need. Is that overly subjective or phenomenological? Well, only so far as the scientific method cannot ascertain what is happening. But to the person receiving the pictures, senses, impressions or words from God, it is more real than anything else—and it has amazing power to set free and heal. It speaks directly to the heart.

It never contradicts the Word . . . ever. And it is often a verse.

Here are some good and probably bad examples of this approach.

Proper use of memory, imagination and visualization	Improper use of memory, imagination and visualization
Letting God indicate if there is a memory that will give insight or other assistance in repenting, forgiving, knowing truth and letting go of wounding.	Always assuming that healing is found in the past, in a forgotten or suppressed memory or wounding inflicted by another.
Realizing, through God’s leading, that our sin was partially a response to wounding and pain.	Blaming another for the sin in our lives, avoiding the need for us to forgive and repent.
Holding a memory with an “open hand,” knowing we do not always remember accurately.	Forcing recall and interpretation of details, planting thoughts and ideas, suggesting motives of others.
Asking God if He would be willing to show us something in a memory or if He has anything He would like to tell us.	Planting suggestions about what God “might want to do” or say. Telling God what to say or do.

Proper use of memory, imagination and visualization	Improper use of memory, imagination and visualization
Using imagination as a vehicle to focus thought and listening for and to God.	Using imagination as a vehicle to create false memories or experiences, or as a way to force “Jesus” to show up.
Remembering that confession of and repentance from sin are central to biblical restoration and sanctification.	Reducing the impact of forgiveness and confession to a sidelight of ministry.

Get the difference?

Knowing that we are partners with God is key. It humbles and encourages at the same time. Now we will move to the second foundation about ministry: creating a culture of honor.

A Culture of Honor

We love reading testimonies of our ministry sessions. We like the ones that talk of powerful transformation, new light and freedom. But the ones we love the most are ones like these:

- “I witnessed the love and compassion of God through men who were willing to listen and pray with me.”
- “I am more aware of and secure in Jesus’ love for me. He is always with me in an intimate way. I have encouraged all my friends to do this.”
- “I always knew God loved me. But now I know He likes me! What a difference that makes!”
- “My daughter is not the same woman. Ten years of abuse had devastated her life. The gentleness of the women was amazing. My little girl is back. Thank You, Jesus!”
- “I had joy throughout the day and peace inside after my session. Fantastic!”

That is the heart of our Papa. Paul says:

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Colossians 3:12–13

When someone says they felt honored, that they experienced kindness, gentleness, real love and compassion—some for the first time—that floats our boat.

When someone is vulnerable in our presence, confessing sin, weakness and the most intimate details of their failings, our response must be one of gentle understanding and true compassion (see 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 6:1; Philippians 2:1–2; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:25; 1 Peter 3:15; James 3:13). This ministry is meant to be safe. It is confidential. We do not “kiss and tell.” It is loving. It takes its time. It is one-on-one, face-to-face, relational. People need to tell their stories, to have a voice.

This is the second foundation about our ministry culture.

Foundation #8

A culture of honor.

Practically speaking, we ask permission to touch, to minister, to lead in prayer. Sometimes in an informal home-ministry setting, we even pause and make popcorn. We stop and laugh. We know that the problem is the problem, the person is not the problem—and they know it, too. They know that we, God and they are all on one side of the table, and the issues—sin, wounding and everything else—are on the other side. God is not mad at them; He is having a good day.

1. God is good. Satan is bad.
2. Your freedom is God’s will.
3. We have hidden enemies.
4. Issues are not random.
5. There is always a reason.
6. Prisoners and captives.
7. Partners with God.
- 8. A culture of honor.**
9. Apply God’s solutions.
10. An event and a process.

Do not misunderstand. We can be very direct. There is no place for false compassion and sinful compromise. But we are gentle and understanding, knowing we will only go to a place the person himself is willing to go. That is why this ministry often finds its most effective expression in a small group or friends network context, or within a church.

Honoring God's Leading and Honoring People

We honor two things above all: the ways and flow of God, and vulnerable, hurting people.

There are two verses that seem to balance one another and sum up our approach to both honoring God's flow and vulnerable people:

Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:19–22

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:29–30

Do not quench and do not grieve.

We sometimes ask those we teach at conferences if they are “prophetic.” Lots of nervous smiles. Then we ask, “Do you believe that God has nice things to say and wise questions to ask, and He sometimes wants to use another to say them?” Almost everyone says yes. It is natural and attractive . . . why not?

But those questions ask the same thing, just in different words.

There is sometimes much to despise in what people today call “prophecy.” Even the word has taken on connotations that cause many to simply step away—no matter how scriptural the word is.

In reality “prophecy” is just listening for God’s voice and trying honorably and faithfully to convey it. It is for the purpose of forth-telling, not foretelling. As Scripture says, it is simply God’s way to use people in one another’s lives for strengthening, encouraging and comforting (1 Corinthians 14:3 NIV).

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul strongly supports prophecy among church members. He says we should be zealous for it. But He does not describe it as “On Wednesday next thou shalt meet a tall dark stranger, sayeth the Lord.” Nope. No King James required—no deep voice, and no dates, mates or babies. In 1 Corinthians 14:3, He simply says to speak to each other in three naturally supernatural ways:

Edification—The Greek word *oikodome* means building up the family house, encouraging and making it stronger. It is all about strengthening relationships, growing ligament bonds of love and encouraging consistent fellowship.

Exhortation—*Paraklesis* is like running alongside someone who may be tiring out and calling, “You can make it! I will run with you, don’t give up—the finish line is right around the corner.” The Holy Spirit is called the *paraklete* in John 14:16, 15:26 and 16:7. It is being a helper, aid and encourager. In ancient times it was used of the best friend of the marathon runner who stepped into the race at the home stretch to pace the tired runner.

Consolation—*Paramuthia* means speaking sweet things of love and tenderness, of care and of comfort, into the ear. It is pouring warm oil on a wound and saying, “I am with you, my friend.”

Often the best use of our prophetic gifting is to more effectively lead and facilitate the session. Very often the key to unlocking a root cause, indicating purpose, releasing someone from a demonic stronghold or putting an exclamation mark on a time together is an insight from God. That is the upside. It is hard to grieve and quench when we are humbly pursuing God and honoring people.

The downside is that it is easy to grieve and quench through self-will. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by blurting out any old thing that crosses your mind, but say only that which is suited for building another person up. Do not quench the Holy Spirit by despising the idea that God might be speaking through people to you or through you to others. Test and consider things carefully. Hold fast to the good. Let the other go without criticism. Correction can come later. Following those two rules makes all the difference: Do not grieve, do not quench—on both the sending and receiving end.

Here are some good and bad examples:

Good	Not so good
I feel like I am seeing a picture from third grade. Does that ring a bell at all?	Something happened to you in third grade.
Can I ask you about your past and present sexual experience?	You have a demon of lust.
Can I share with you a picture the Lord gave me at the beginning of our session? I think it will encourage you.	Before we start, I want to tell you what your problems are.
Can I help you connect the dots about what, to me, God seems to be saying about a part of who you are?	You are supposed to be a preacher.
Can you see that this action seems to be a root for some of your current issues?	That sin is where it all began.
Wow! It seems to me that God has been talking today about that relationship. What are you hearing Him say?	God says that you are to break that relationship off.
I get this picture of you like a balloon rising into the sky. Does that register with you?	You are a balloon rising into the sky.
Let's ask Jesus what He has to say about that, okay?	That's sin—no way!

Get the difference?

Andy and a friend were recently with someone who was very broken by a lifetime of sexual sin.

And we witnessed something amazing.

Mickey thought God was disgusted with him. We had showed him in Scripture that this is not so, and we prayed for him. He renounced, forgave and removed judgment, and we rebuked the enemy who clearly had a hold on him. He had trouble believing that God would talk to him—even when what he was hearing and sensing seemed to be powerful and insightful. He had lots of regret.

At the end, Terry, a frontline first responder and buddy of ours, said (with some inner trembling), “Mickey, I think God wants to give you a parting gift. Listen for a second and see if He wants to say anything to you.”

After a bit of coaxing just to speak out the silly thoughts he heard, he said, “Well, I hear the word *significance*.” Terry smiled and held up his notepad for Mickey to see. Written in large block letters was the *very* word—*significance*. And underneath it were written three things about Mickey and his intended significance. Mickey looked puzzled at first, then stunned, and then his mouth dropped open. A tear ran down his cheek. Then he buried his face in his hands and sobbed—the neglected little boy who lost his significance with his father just found it afresh. That miracle, small and hidden in a church back room, changed him, and it convinced him that God is both real and loving.

Let’s end with a quick summary. Scripture is clear about who is in charge, in the driver’s seat, Captain of the vessel. This ministry is God’s doing. We are the flight attendants making the passengers feel comfortable and safe.

Honor God.

Honor people.

Listen carefully with one ear in both worlds.

Smile.

Be nice.

Use breath mints!

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chapter

6

Two Foundations about Tools and Process

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

Have thy tools ready. God will find thee work.

Charles Kingsley

One only needs two tools in life: WD-40 to make things go, and duct tape to make them stop.

G. Weilacher

There is nothing so powerful as truth—and often nothing so strange.

Daniel Webster

There are lots of things in your garage that could be used to pound in a nail. At the top of a ladder, rather than going all the way down to get my dropped hammer, I have tried screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers and even a belt buckle. Hammers work best.

We need tools, you and I—when broken down on the side of the highway, when standing at the top of the ladder or in the midst of a friend’s mini-crisis. It is nice to have the right tools handy and the know-how to use them. We believe that having and knowing how to use tools for helping each other, *really* helping, should be a part of every believer’s basic training—sort of “Friends 101.”

God has specific tools for specific purposes. There seems to be a way to accomplish certain things in His Kingdom. There is a time for, and an approach to, every issue we face. The wrong approach will go nowhere. You cannot repent of a demon and you cannot cast out the flesh. Trying to help a friend before the friend or God is ready is like picking and eating unripe fruit. You can do it, but it is not worth the effort.

Believe us, we have tried.

That is our first foundation about process.

Foundation #9

Apply God’s solutions.

If God’s solutions were hard or complex, then we would all be lost. In our experience, His solutions are few and simple, depend on honest, humble hearts, require that we listen to Him in the midst of ministry and rely on faith in His power and willingness to help us.

Two key points we want to make about our tools: Many of them, maybe all of them, involve speaking words, and many of them rely on intuition and perception and not on logic alone.

Mere Words

At the outset it is important to grasp that our words are powerful—when they are an expression of our heart’s intent, our will, our agreement and our faith. To give an example, from God’s perspective, if a young couple were to have sex even ten minutes prior to marriage, it would fall under God’s proscriptions against fornication; negative consequences would be realized later on. Just ten minutes after the ceremony, though, God says, “Read the Song of Solomon for a few ideas and go have fun, with My blessing.” What changed?

They spoke mere words. They stood in agreement. They made a vow. And everything changed.

God says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21).¹ Death and life are in the tongue’s power. What are repentance, forgiveness, vows, lies, agreements, covenants and promises if not mere words? Words, when spoken from the heart, are binding, powerful and life changing. They have the power to create and tear down. They are the stuff of the Kingdom of God—and of the kingdom of darkness.

God says that He has given us specific weapons to destroy binding strongholds, and from His perspective (the *only* one that matters) they are mighty. And they normally consist of “mere words.” Our translation of the literal meaning of 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 is as follows:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war using soulish or fleshy weapons, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but

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2. Your freedom is God’s will.
3. We have hidden enemies.
4. Issues are not random.
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8. A culture of honor.
- 9. Apply God’s solutions.**
10. An event and a process.

mighty through God for the demolition of strongly held places within us that we do not control. We are throwing down false speculation, imaginings and every high place that exalts itself against knowing God, and we are taking every perception, thought and mental device captive and placing it into listening submission to Christ.

In Freedom Prayer ministry, one of the things we do is lead people to undo bad deals they have made and to agree with God about better things: to forgive, to bless, to renounce. The power of some of the tools discussed in subsequent chapters lies in their ability to put us in the emotional or revelational place in which we are eager to make such godly and well-conceived statements. They gently open us up so we are more than ready to undo bad covenants we have made in the past. They assist us in being willing to draw on the ability to cancel debt owed through what Jesus has accomplished. Many of the techniques in this book are merely ways of framing our words to effectively agree with God and His Word and call on Him to enforce our agreement against the kingdom of darkness.

In addition to effectively using words, our tools are based on both rational thought and simple inner perceptions. The deepest motivations, wounds and constraints within us are largely based not on logic but on a far deeper intuition, a gut feeling. They are often hard to access through logical questioning and reasoning. Even when we can explain our inner drives, we cannot always easily deal with them from the place of cognitive understanding. In the therapeutic world this has led to sometimes strange-sounding counseling techniques for getting around the brain barriers (e.g., primal scream, transactional analysis, regression analysis, hypnosis, etc.).

In her book *Becoming Real*, noted *Today* show psychiatrist Dr. Gail Saltz states,

One of the reasons I have written this book is that in this day and age of advancing psychopharmacology and the various cognitive therapies, we have lost sight of the existence and the power of the unconscious. It's been a trend to focus on our chemistry or biology

or on therapies that are about what's going on in our conscious mind and how we can alter them. I have nothing against these therapies—they can be extremely useful—and I'm a believer in medication for the right people at the right time and under the right therapeutic conditions. But I also know how tremendously powerful the unconscious mind is. In some ways, it is more powerful than our conscious mind because we don't easily see the tendrils it shoots out and the stories it creates. We don't see how those stories make us think, behave, and feel in certain ways. When we dismiss or diminish the power of the unconscious, it is like operating with our hands tied behind our backs.²

She goes on to say that it is the stories we tell ourselves that influence our behavior—our internal heart dialogue. In ministry partnered with God, we are often able to move quickly to these inner heart stories. Not only does God know the totality of the heart, He also knows the lies (beliefs) we have told ourselves and were told and the key to unlocking the prisons we are in. He can, in a moment, show us what direction to take, what to declare, what to speak and what to say. Often false beliefs were laid into us pictorially, and the surest way to replace them is to let God and the inner spirit of the person direct us—bringing pictures, inner visions, stories.

We met with a young woman who was hypercritical of herself and her family, hypervigilant to pounce on any perceived misstep. It drove everyone crazy, even her. She hated herself for that. But she could not explain why she felt that compulsion. Very quickly in prayer she was shown a time at age six when she deeply disappointed her beloved father through her own misbehavior. In sobs she described his hurt look and her own inner vow that she would never, ever, ever do that again. Her heart was wounded and closed in that area; it said, "Never will I make that mistake again, never will I do something or fail to do something that will disappoint someone whose love I need." When she chose to forgive her six-year-old self and asked Jesus for the truth, she heard all about how a little girl makes mistakes but that her tender heart was precious

to Jesus. She sobbed tears of relief, saying, “How could I not know that is where it all came from . . . how could I?”

It is said of Jesus, “All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable” (Matthew 13:34).

There are lots of reasons speakers, and rabbis like Jesus, use stories, but one big one is that stories connect at a level far deeper than information alone—lists and steps and ten things to know about *fill in the blank*. Stories connect with the imagination and the heart, and they stimulate life and creativity . . . and healing. They can more easily go just as deep as the wounding and pain and shame.

That is why the approaches we use tend to be visual and often story- or memory-related. We sometimes call them “tools” in the same way those in the counseling world might³—it is simply shorthand for our biblical application of the truth and grace of God. The more cognitive instruction we do give is used in conjunction with these tools to help explain them, to bring biblical truth, to amplify what is felt or seen or to give practical application of something realized or experienced.

Tools Road Map

Here is a quick summary, sort of a road map, of the tools we describe in parts 2 and 3 of this book.

Part 2 (“Getting Started”) contains the basics of what we call Freedom Prayer ministry—a good starting point before learning the more advanced tools of part 3. We will introduce three basic concepts and put them together in chapter 8. All have fun names to make them easy to remember!

1. *WESUD*—We use WESUD as an organizing framework for ministry, because it helps us see what kinds of things we might be dealing with: Wounding, Entanglements, Sin, Ungodly beliefs or Demons. When you sit down with someone, after

you order your double latte, you start by thinking, *WESUD—what are we dealing with here?*

2. *The Fruit Loop*—In a typical ministry session we use WESUD with a five-step process called the “Fruit Loop.” It is designed to keep us on track and on time for dinner. When we encounter someone who is hurting, we keep in mind the steps of the Fruit Loop to walk them through ministry: Fruit, Root, Boot, Loot and Scoot. (We will give more details on these later.)
3. *Doing Kingdom Business*—When dealing with WESUD, there are a number of actions we can take, such as forgiving, renouncing, repenting, declaring, etc. We call these actions “Doing Kingdom Business” (DKB). Renouncing is doing Kingdom business. Forgiving is doing Kingdom business. No action is the exclusive property of one of the WESUD buckets.

In part 3 (“More Advanced Tools”) we have borrowed, modified and developed tools that accelerate and improve our ability to deal with the issues that emerge. Some of the more common ones are discussed in this book:

1. *The Four Doors* (chapter 9)—This tool is a way to organize things. Its primary focus is probing key areas of sin that show up in a person’s life, finding the root(s) and dealing with them. It is a great thing to do once with a couple of good friends—like getting a thorough physical exam.
2. *The Father Ladder* (chapter 10)—This tool has as its primary focus the establishment or restoration of relationship with Father God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We do this by dealing with earthly familial relationship issues and letting God bring a present picture of Himself to the person.
3. *Inviting Jesus* (chapter 11)—The Inviting Jesus tool is primarily focused on healing emotional wounding. It is based on the idea that we have been wounded in the past, and our

beliefs about that wounding have an impact on our lives today. Jesus does most of the revealing, and logic takes a subservient, though important, role.

4. *Dealing with Demons* (chapter 12)—This is the chapter you will rarely need to use. Usually the demonic is commanded to leave as part of normal ministry, and there is little problem, no resistance and no manifestation. It just happens. But when we encounter the demonic in a way that demands more focused attention, we have a set of biblical techniques and understandings to help us.

Process

You grow and change into the likeness of God over time. If God were to drop on you everything that needs transformation for you to be like Him, to live eternally with Him in comfort (His, yours *and* your eternal neighbor's), you might be discouraged.

But He knows He has time, and He is in it for the long haul with each of us. He is committed. It is a natural and organic process—with a sure ending.

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. . . . Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Philippians 1:6; 2:12–13

God thinks you are okay and finds you attractive even while things are taking time.

We are all a little like a balloon rising naturally to its designed altitude. We are supernaturally intended to grow, expand, rise and mature. But each balloon is tied to the ground by one or more cords of different lengths. These cords are the constraints caused by the categories of issues framed in WESUD.

They limit us, stop our rise, keep us stunted and diminish our capacity for purpose fulfillment. We rise naturally until the shortest cord is stretched tight. Then we are caught up short—short of destiny, short of God-inspired desire. In God, the cords are rarely lack of talent or even opportunity—they are character based. A person may *rise* to great heights based on personal anointing, charisma and talent, but they will *stay* there only because of godly character. So it becomes a temporary ascendancy—our fifteen minutes of fame. Then we crash.

When a cord is cut, through prayer ministry, we find we rise rapidly to the next point where we are again caught up short. God can change something in our lives in an instant. Freedom and relief can be immediate. We grow and consolidate the gains, changing our minds and habits in line with the new truth and freedom. Then we come up short again. Then we repeat the process. God calls it going “from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). We call it our last foundation.

Foundation #10

An event and a process.

This is God’s wonderful hand in your life. It is a sure thing in His eyes. We go along and something comes up. We deal with it in a godly way and keep going. We are caught short by something else. If we see it as an opportunity for growth and change—for transformation—then we count the cost, pay the price, take the steps and move on. Freedom Prayer is the event. Walking with God and others in growing discipleship is the process. That is why we do not use exhaustive checklists of every possible issue. We are after what God is presently pointing toward, and only that. When we

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attempt to deal with something that is not in God's cross hairs, our ministry is less effective or lasting. Unripe fruit is inedible. Unripe issues are unchangeable.

What would a church, a group of friends, a cell group, a family, a marriage, a—well, you get the picture—what would it look like if we all agreed that we would partner with each other in this wonderful ascendancy toward God's plan for us, His calling and righteous living? What would it feel like if I knew I could go, with confident assurance, to a friend or mate with my issue (or they could call me on something without my getting defensive) and we could agree together to go after something that is attached to me—wounding, entanglement, sin, ungodly beliefs or demons? What would it feel like to be able to do so as a matter of course, as a matter of life, as a habit?

I am thinking it would be heaven on earth. I am thinking it would polish up that Bride and make her spotlessly presentable to her Groom—our Jesus!



Part Two

Getting Started

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chapter

7

Key Elements

So [Jesus] said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.'"

Luke 19:12–13

In theory, theory and practice are the same. In practice, they are not.

Albert Einstein

Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away.

Philip Dick

Never ruin an apology with an excuse.

Kimberly Johnson

A simple way to organize our thinking for first responder Freedom Prayer ministry is to consider (1) the kinds of issues we deal with, (2) the typical steps we take to walk out freedom and healing and (3) specific actions we may take in the midst of those steps. As summarized in chapter 6, the kinds of issues are organized into WESUD, the steps are arranged as the Fruit Loop and the specific actions we take all fit into Doing Kingdom Business. Let's walk through these in that order, and in the following chapter put them together.

It is important to say at the outset that initially this seems a bit complex, later it seems easy to remember and later still you forget it again but really do not need it. It is a bit like training wheels. They are put up in the garage attic long before you hit the open road for a long bike ride. So do not get overly anxious. With the basics down and a good heart, things seem to work pretty well.

WESUD

Jesus, the consummate rabbi, shared most of His really good stuff almost exclusively in stories (parables—see Matthew 13:34). Story-telling reveals knowledge without the mistake of overly defining it. It allows great depth while maintaining simplicity. This allows the Holy Spirit to take one story and interpret it for each person and need.

Jesus told us stories about how He ministers and how we should, too. In Luke 15 the scribes and Pharisees gripe about Jesus ministering to sinners (as if there were any other kind of ministry!). In answer to them Jesus “told them this parable” (a singular noun,

even though it contained four separate stories). His answer to how He ministers was hidden for us to find. Read the stories yourself and meditate on them. Think symbolically and ask yourself questions like these: Who is the problem character, and how does that character get in trouble? What does that problem represent in real life—how would you name it? Who represents God, and why did Jesus choose that specific entity? What is the solution to the problem, and why is that exactly the right thing? What dysfunctional things does the minister *not* do? What's up with the party?

The four stories are the lost coin, the lost sheep, the Prodigal Son and his older brother. When you think of these entities as different kinds of issues in a person, they come to nuanced life with layers of applications and understandings, equal parts prisoner- and captive-based problems. If you read them you will see a set of actors, amazing parallels and subtle differences. Here are our interpretations. Add your own insights to them.

The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8–10): Wounding

In the parable of the lost coin, the coin was lost through no fault of its own. In life coins (people) might be lost for many reasons: Maybe a coin was considered worthless—dropped and never picked up again or even missed; maybe it was abandoned or neglected; maybe it was the victim of purposeful abuse; maybe it is even a single event interpreted by the coin as traumatic. The act of being lost is traumatic to a lost person and normally leaves a wound, memories, resulting scars and a warped interpretation of what happened that incorporates the core lies discussed in chapter 4. Where the lost coin ends up is dark, unseen and probably filthy or unclean. People meander past, unwilling to stoop and pick it up. Maybe you can see yourself in this parable and bring your own description to what it means to be a lost coin.

But the coin's imprint indicates both its value and the image of the King. It is made of a precious metal and has intrinsic value apart

from all else. That truth is the target of the attack. The main issue is not what has happened to the coin, although often terrible, but what the coin *believes* about what has happened—the lie.

God, as a woman (gently nurturing like the Holy Spirit), lights a lamp (brings revelation of truth), sweeps the house clean (removes the filth and pain), finds the coin (shows it is worth the effort) and rejoices over it with friends and neighbors (gives affirmation and restoration).

The primary ministry approach toward a lost coin (wounding) is to *release* wound-based lies compassionately and gently. It is to (1) help the person define his pain and the lies he believes, (2) help him hear truth and release the lies, (3) help him speak forgiveness to another and ensure he knows he is also forgiven if he responded in sinful ways and (4) bless and affirm.

The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4–7): Entanglement

The sheep in Jesus' parable wandered from the flock, perhaps through a combination of ignorance, naïve rebellion or enticed curiosity. It gets lost and for some reason cannot make its way back, perhaps entangled and ensnared, as the classic picture of Jesus finding it portrays. It is lost and confused, unaware that a roaring lion is about, "searching for someone to devour." It is easy prey. God, as the Good Shepherd (Jesus), knows the sheep is missing and places very great value on it. He leaves the rest and searches knowingly for the sheep (finds the reason), places it on His shoulders (takes the weight or guilt Himself without recrimination) and rejoices over it with friends and neighbors (gives affirmation and restoration). Notice He does not blame or belittle the sheep; the entanglement itself did the teaching and warning.

Emotional-spiritual entanglements include myriad possibilities: ungodly soul ties, binding self-vows, false covenants or agreements with darkness, self- and external curses, generational iniquity, unforgiveness and its consequences, dabbling in the dark side, etc. The

primary ministry approach toward a lost sheep (entanglement) is to *break* the authority of entanglement: (1) recognize and frame the nature and source of the entanglement; (2) help the person break agreement with it, (3) let Jesus take or bear it and (4) exchange it with truth and a right agreement with God in meeting any legitimate need in that area; (5) bless and affirm. Often there is a deeper revelation concerning the need the sin was supposed to meet.

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–24): Sin

The Prodigal Son openly rebelled, lived in sin and suffered torment. He lost his perspective, his “senses.” He went farther than he planned and stayed longer than he wanted, and it cost him more than he could afford. It ruined him. When he came to his senses, repented on the inside and took steps toward home, his Father (God the Father) ran to him, kissed him, covered him (took away his shame), gave him a ring (a restored position as son) and sandals (restored purpose) and rejoiced over him with friends and neighbors (affirmation and restoration).

The primary ministry approach toward a Prodigal Son is *confession* and repentance of sin: to help the person (1) recognize the sin and come to awareness about what it really is, (2) confess and repent of it and (3) receive forgiveness and restoration; and to (4) bless and affirm.

The Older Brother (Luke 15:25–32): Ungodly Beliefs

The older brother was, on paper, the perfect son—and so he thought. But in actuality he was more of a slave than the hired hands, unable to come into intimate relationship with his Father and enjoyment of his inheritance because of his performance orientation. He did not know the Father and believed things about *both* himself and the Father that were false. The Father came to him, addressing the three main issues of almost all ungodly belief: his false beliefs about himself and his relationship to Papa God

“Son, . . .”), his own lack of intimacy with his dad (“You have always been with me”) and his perceived inability to own and enjoy the inheritance (“All that is mine is yours”). The Father completes the restoration by inviting His older son to stand with Him, side by side before all the guests, in welcoming the younger brother home and throwing a huge party—the position of honor that the older brother needed all along but could never believe he would experience. Just as God the Father affirmed Jesus with the words, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5), He wants to affirm each of us who are like the older brother as well.

When we heal wounding, undo entanglements and repent of sin but still feel distant and unsatisfied, ungodly belief is almost always the reason. Our foundational sense of who Papa God is, what Jesus has done and of the moment-by-moment uplifting presence of the Holy Spirit is incomplete. The primary ministry approach toward the false and ungodly beliefs of the older brother is to understand lies and *renounce* them to reveal truth: to help the person (1) recognize the ungodly beliefs that interfere with relationship with God and ability to receive from Him, (2) receive revelation about the truth, (3) renounce the lies and (4) declare the truth; and to (5) restore, affirm and bless.

Demonic Issues

We also know that dealing with the demonic, either as a by-product of ministry or with overt focus, can be part of ministry sessions, and thus we have added the demonic component to our acronym. As we illustrated earlier in Foundation #3, demons hover over other issues, adding energy and lies to make them stick and build them into a stronghold. We never assume their presence within someone (this is rarely helpful), but we do assume their influence in the situation even if it is not addressed head-on. In most cases the flies leave when the garbage is hauled to the dump.

The primary ministry approach concerning the demonic is to rebuke and *cast away*: to (1) find the reasons the demonic is present, (2) remove those reasons, (3) assert authority over the demonic to remove it and (4) fill the place of demonic influence with truth and blessing.

Did you notice something each of the four parables had in common? Yes—a party at the end! God is into celebration, good food and intimate fun. *Rejoice* is just another word for “party.” We like that. Make sure you rejoice.

Now on to the second component of our framework—the general steps we follow, like road signs, in every first responder ministry situation.

The Fruit Loop

Driving through my small town is an exercise in solving the labyrinth. Even after many years of driving through twists and turns, I still love those signs in the middle of town with an arrow that say “HWY 431.” They tell me I am still on the right course. We have developed a simple five-phase process to do just that: keep you on track through the twists and turns of ministry.

This process is the Fruit Loop. Its steps do not have to be done sequentially; you have freedom and flexibility. Go with God, keeping an eye on the steps more for the sake of completeness. They may be initiated in any number of ways, most of them informal—as we have said, this is a lifestyle as much as a ministry.¹

We are called on to simply deal with what is now presenting—the “fruit,” or the thing God is after—and to bring truth, grace and compassion to that area. We are normally looking to identify the *stronghold*, the place inside that does not allow Jesus to be both intimate Friend and powerful Lord, and so is leading to the current problem.

We do not have to try to untangle everything, only the thing God is after. Sometimes it is *the* linchpin, causing whole structures

to crumble; sometimes it is the next peel of the onion, taking off a layer of lies, pain or unbelief. Remember process. Remember there is both sin and wounding. Let God clearly identify and frame the issue(s) needing to be dealt with. Ask God to reveal to you what He is focusing on right now.

Typically we identify the issue in the Fruit step, understand its origin and nature in the Root step, undo it in the Boot step, restore what was taken in the Loot step and help to protect it going forward in the Scoot step.

This is how it works:

1. *Fruit*—“What is going on?” Current events, feelings, breakdowns, etc., are signposts that point to a deeper reality. Bringing definition to these opens the way to healing. The goal of the Fruit step is to bring some WESUD definition to current events—to put a handle on them, but in a gentle and non-categorizing way.
2. *Root*—“Where did it come from and why?” We trace bad fruit back to a bad root. We drift back in time; we ask God to show us; we query the person about first occurrences, origins and reasons.
3. *Boot*—“Clear out the problems.” We get rid of both the problem and the lies and any demonic influence that is helping to sustain it. We seek to fix what is broken, heal what is ill and undo what is binding the person.
4. *Loot*—“Take back what was stolen.” God intends for our healing and restoration to cost Satan something. We look for God’s intent in the situation, both current and past, for God’s ultimate objective to bless and for what has been stolen.
5. *Scoot*—“Make life choices and changes.” We are practical. We make provision to walk out and defend the new ground that has been taken. We are realists and know that every victory

is a product of both God’s power and human will and desire. We identify steps, decisions and actions that should be taken to make the advance of the Kingdom permanent.

Doing Kingdom Business

Now let’s talk about the specific actions we take within a session, the third element of our overall framework. Recall that we talked about the power of “mere words.” In Doing Kingdom Business (DKB) we are literally executing business in the Kingdom. We are taking advantage of the cause-and-effect reality of the world to cut off an old reality and initiate a new and godly one.

As stated in chapter 4, there is a legal, or perhaps supernatural, set of laws revolving around sowing and reaping. When these laws are broken, consequences result. Everything, good and bad, began somewhere. This can happen as a result of actions, decisions and choices—ones made prior to becoming a Christian or afterward and those of others against us, including by past generations, and even while we are in the womb.

Doing Kingdom Business is all about reversing things that were done using our heartfelt words, spoken and believed. We often ask Jesus where we should go and what we should do. Just like there are different kinds of contracts, there are different ways of Doing Kingdom Business: (1) *forgiving* those who have wounded me, (2) *confessing* and repenting of my own sin, (3) *breaking* false alliances and covenants, (4) *renouncing* false beliefs about myself and God and (5) *casting away* darkness and its representatives.

Repeat-After-Me Prayers

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21). Our words are powerful weapons. But many people just do not know how to shoot. A person may want to say *something* but needs someone to help him express what is in his heart, the truth. We

lead people effectively through this much like the wedding officiate leads the bride and groom through their vows. They mean it, they just need help with the words to express what they mean. This is not meaningless repetition but suggestion of wording. We always tell people to say things in their own words and, if they feel it, keep right on going . . . we will catch up.

For example, in forgiveness we often hear people pray something like, “Please help me to try to forgive so and so.” That is not very effective. We can lead the person to express firmly the real conviction and truth that they desire and feel, not pious religious phrases that skip across the surface of the heart rather than plunge deep into it.

For vow breaking you might say, “Are you ready? Okay, then, let’s do a repeat-after-me declaration. I will help you express breaking that vow, but feel free to say it better than I do if I don’t get it right.”

Repeat-after-me prayers can become God led very fast. You begin with a simple prayer or declaration and find the ministry time moving quickly into Holy Spirit–led wording that touches the very core of the person and may bring them to strong emotion and tears.

A word about human emotion and physical touching: The display of strong emotions is not a necessary condition for freedom. They can even be a smoke screen. They should never be expected or manipulated. If they appear naturally and as a response to deep conviction or release, great. The key is “from the heart.”

On the other hand, the absence of emotion can be an indication that the ministry is not being effective or of some other blocking mechanism (defense mechanisms, fracture, etc.). A good cry or expression of long-repressed anger is normally very therapeutic. Take time to let people grieve over lost lives, lost innocence, lost love, etc. *Do not* interfere with emotional expression or seek to stifle it. Sometimes the physical touch of the team actually distracts someone from hearing God. Touch in order to comfort and bring to the right level of self-control. We practice safe touch always.

Find the balance.

Let’s explain the five main areas of DKB.

1. Forgiveing

Many Scriptures confirm that unforgiveness is a major hindrance to freedom (see, for example, Matthew 5:23–24; 7:1–2; Luke 17:3–4 and 1 Corinthians 4:5). God and science agree that unforgiveness is like a glowering emotional cancer eating away well-being, pock-marking a person with painful symptoms and periodic flare-ups. It causes torment, hinders prayer, contributes to ill health, destroys relationships and organizations and causes long-standing regional hatred. In our experience, 90 percent of “prisoners” are in prison due to harbored unforgiveness. Unforgiveness can begin to dominate our thoughts and spill over into other aspects of life. Bitterness is unforgiveness gone to seed—defiling many (Hebrews 12:15).

Forgiveness is often part of dealing with wounding issues and involves three related things: (1) debt owed but unpaid, (2) judgment maintained against the perpetrator and (3) expectation that a perpetrator may someday give the injured person what is owed or needed. Dealing with all three is important to freedom. Saying, “I forgive him the debt he owed me, that jerk,” does not quite do it!

Symptoms of *debt owed* in unforgiveness include an internal sense of anger and preoccupation. There is a heaviness of heart when seeing or thinking of people we are not forgiving, rehearsed arguments and thoughts of vengeance against them in our minds or avoidance of them. If we see them in the department store, do we crouch down in the shoe section, pretending to try on cross trainers?

Symptoms of *judgment* include feeling sluggish and without a sense of power, buoyancy and well-being; having unexplained nagging physical problems; having periods of despondency; suffering from lack of sound sleep; feeling hindered and opposed in life situations. Judgment may exist in our lives when we seem to be continually treated with judgment by others in various situations—and often that judgment follows a similar pattern (Matthew 7:3). If I have rejected someone, I may experience rejection; if I have criticized someone, then I find I am criticized; and so on.

Symptoms of unmet *expectation* include remaining entangled with and somewhat controlled by a person emotionally, leading to repeated painful encounters and a lingering longing for a need that the other person cannot or will not meet.

Everyone who has been wounded is eventually challenged by God to forgive the perpetrator—just like He did and still does. It is *not* easy to forgive in the face of pain and wounding, and there is no place for belittling the events that have happened. Forgiveness does not require that the perpetrator have access to act against us again; it does not need to be followed by kind feelings toward the perpetrator or trust; it does not mean that we excuse or ignore sinful actions by another. It means we allow God to deal with the situation or person as He sees fit and to heal our wounds. If I choose to keep another in prison I am, in fact, choosing to keep myself at the prison door, making sure they stay put. I am imprisoned, too.

We forgive till we have forgiven. We go as deep as we can in one setting. But sometimes, with deeper or more prolonged wounding, other things come to mind later. That is not an indication that you have not forgiven. Forgive those things, too. No problem.

Sometimes forgiveness comes after freedom, but sometimes it is a *precondition* to freedom, and things do not progress until we forgive. Sometimes it is more obedient choice than emotion—that is fine.

Speaking forgiveness can be systematic, or it can be spontaneous, used throughout the process. We may ask God to show the person to whom we minister the people needing to be forgiven, and then we simply go through it. The things forgiven may include not only specific actions the offending party took but much deeper results or impacts—for example, “I forgive you for teaching me the lie that . . .”

We do not forgive God. But forgiveness can involve speaking about our unmet expectations and repenting of judging God and having expectations, demands and beliefs about God that may be untrue or untimely.

It can mean forgiving ourselves—often we are our harshest critics. We sometimes use an empty chair and ask the person to see themselves there and speak what they need to say, and what they hear God saying.

MINISTRY TIPS

It is often effective, for emotional heartfelt connection, to picture a person who hurt us standing in front of us and to speak directly to that person, even if he or she is deceased. We are not, in fact, talking to such people but to the place in our wounded memory they hold. We are engaging our whole being as far as possible in releasing them from our unforgiveness, and the picture in our minds goes far deeper than the mere fact. We might say: “*Name*, I forgive you for . . .”

Here is how you can include these three parts when forgiving:

Debt owed. Enumerate the debt owed. Count it up, make a tally, according to your perception of what is owed. We all know there are different perspectives. Forget about those. This is yours, and you are giving it up. Feel it. When it is finished, speak out and also mentally write *Canceled* on it.” If you feel you have missed something, simply ask Jesus if there is more.

Judgment maintained. Because you do not know what motivated the person who hurt you, you should also release any ways you have judged them. Only God can execute judgment because only God is omniscient. Therefore you can say, “I give up my perceived right to judge you; only God knows your hidden reasons and motivations. I do not, and I repent now of judging.” Again, ask Jesus if there are other ways you have judged, and repent of those, too.

Often when we do this we begin to gain God’s perspective about the person, and we find forgiveness less a decision made through gritted teeth and more the natural outcome of love received from God and passed to another.

Expectation of met needs. It is easy to forgive people you do not care about. But the needs you have as expressed in the debt owed by

this person can be felt even after you forgive. We have found it very helpful to identify those needs and ask Jesus (God) if He would be willing to meet them. He has a way of speaking deeply into the heart about legitimate unmet needs and finding ways to meet them.

The following are typical statements of forgiveness:

- “Bill, you owed me *this, this* and *this*. Today I forgive you for everything I feel you owe me, and I freely choose to release you completely now from the debt you owed me.”
- “Mary, I have judged you as if I knew all the reasons you did what you did. Only God is omniscient and able to judge hearts. I repent of judging you and release you totally from any judgment on my part.”
- “Lord, I have placed expectations on You and judged You for not meeting them. I have set myself up to be disappointed by You. I confess that I do not understand sometimes but that I love You and want a restored relationship with You.”
- “Papa God, because You have forgiven me, I now choose to forgive myself of *this*. I also release myself from accusation, judgments, self-slander and self-hatred.”

2. *Breaking Agreement*

Sticks and stones may not break my bones, but words do hurt me! But I can also speak words that allow me to be set free. I do not have to understand the intricacies of spiritual cause and effect to stop doing lost sheep things and start doing smart things. God has a way of revealing the source and origin of things that hinder us. (Please review Proverbs 18:7, 21; Matthew 5:34–37 and 12:36–37 for insight into the power of our words.)

Entanglements (that is, an agreement that entangles us) needing to be broken come in many varieties: swearing to dark organizations, self-cursing and cursing another, generational sin, childhood agreements with “imaginary friends” for protection, judgment,

occult dabbling, sexual soul ties outside of marriage, other kinds of soul ties and dependencies and more.

MINISTRY TIPS

In the fruit and root steps we ask what is happening and may be able to relate it to a type or category of issue. We ask God, and He is often willing to bring a thought or memory to mind. It may have occurred in the life of the person we are ministering to, in the womb or even in a past generation. Verification in some of these cases is not possible. But we do not need details or even verification to renounce what we feel we have been shown. We trust God.

Because Jesus bore the curses and bought our freedom, we can annul and break entanglements. Once we recognize what we have seen, we frame it and lead the person through breaking past agreements. Forgiveness and repentance may also be needed. In entanglements there is often an exchange in which Jesus will give us the true and real thing we needed when we got entangled—for example, we can claim the generational blessing intended for our family line instead of the curses.

3. Confessing and Repenting

Sin is not unimportant. It was so important, in fact, that God took care of it Himself. Scripture is clear and unconditional (Psalm 32:1–6; James 5:19–20; 1 John 1:8–9; 2:1). Help the person you are ministering to realize that sin is almost never the ultimate issue with God. Jesus dealt with all those sins at the cross (Romans 5–8). God is not mad at them. Sin does not damn them. And they are helpless to walk things out without God’s grace. See how the Prodigal was treated—it will be great.

God has a role in giving grace to hate sin and to repent. Believers have a role in keeping themselves under that grace. Sin requires confession and repentance, and people require cleansing and, if appropriate, deliverance. Confession agrees with God; repentance

makes the actual change in mind and actions. It is (almost) that simple.

Real repentance is not simple remorse and self-pity. It is seeing that we have hurt another deeply or have debased and hurt ourselves, fully facing our sin and turning to God without excuse. It is confessing we are helpless to change and crying out for His help. It is being willing to bear the consequences and to make restitution.² It is being willing to confess our part in a broken relationship and let it go, even apart from the cooperation of the other.

Habitual sin is often not the result of simple chosen or prolonged rebellion and disobedience. It can be rooted in trying to get temporary relief from some painful situation. In those cases repentance is important but not foundational. To be set free, the person needs healing from wounding and truth in place of the lies.

It is important to perceive whether or not the person understands he or she is forgiven. Many have lived in low-level or background guilt and accusation so long that they find it hard to accept that the sin and guilt can be taken away that easily. When people confess, they need to hear they are forgiven and know release and acceptance. It is insufficient to say, "It's all right." It is not all right, but it *is* forgiven . . . forever. God allows us to minister reconciliation and speak forgiveness to those confessing, just as He would (2 Corinthians 5:18–19).

MINISTRY TIPS

The minister's role in confession and repentance is to remove roadblocks to this revelation and point people in the right direction. It is to help them see the unbelief that keeps them trapped in sin, and to find root causes of sinful behavior in lies believed, reactions to hurt, rebellion and pride, etc.

Sometimes a person needs to experientially visit the sin event(s) using the Inviting Jesus tool (see chapter 11) and ask Jesus to speak to the forgiveness issue (e.g., a woman who had an abortion hears

and sees Jesus receiving her and setting her free from guilt and shame). There may be a need to renounce belief in lies of accusation and to cast away dark influence and energy in the sin area. Pray for the cleansing blood of Jesus to wash away this sin according to 1 John 1:9, Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:20. Ask the person to claim that cleansing and thank God for saving the person from this sin and bringing him or her near to God. Go to deliverance as necessary.

The following are typical statements of confession and repentance:

- “Lord, I confess the sin of [*name sin*]. I choose today to repent of this sin and to obey You in this area, and to come under Your Lordship in this area of my life.”
- “Lord, I confess that I am helpless to change myself and humbly ask You to change me from the inside. I submit myself to You. I take [*name sin*] to the cross and ask You to put it to death.”
- “I ask You, Jesus, to cleanse me with Your blood from the sin of [*name sin*].”

Speak forgiveness to the person and release from the guilt of the sin and its shame. “I want you to know that God says when you confess, He takes away the sin and that you are forgiven of [*name sin*], and your guilt is washed away. It is Papa God’s will to cleanse you from all unrighteousness and sin and to make you know you are clean.” (See 1 John 1:9.)

If the evil one brings up more past offenses, take them quickly to the cross and confess them—following these steps. If old memories crop up and cause guilt after a session, tell the person to agree quickly that they were sin and then move quickly to thanksgiving that they are covered and that God has shown such mercy.

4. Renouncing

Renouncing means to formally declare one’s abandonment of some belief, claim, right or possession. In a ministry setting it

means to formally abandon a false and harmful belief out of which I have lived my life to my detriment. It is to declare, “I was wrong. I renounce my agreement with this belief. I ask You, God, to show me what the truth is so that I may follow after it and obey.”

It is more than a change of mind; it is a true change of belief in the heart. As such it *sometimes* takes some time to accomplish fully, which makes the Scoot step most important. In a session we identify and renounce the ungodly belief and set ourselves to replace it and change our hearts.

The term *ungodly belief* was popularized in inner healing circles by Chester and Betsy Kylstra.³ The term refers to any belief that does not align with God’s truth—both the truth of His Word and the truth about His character and nature. Scripture abounds with examples and admonitions about what we believe.⁴

Ungodly beliefs are based on our perception and interpretation of circumstances and our paradigms about God, others, ourselves and the world around us. The core lies we discussed in chapter 4 are a type of ungodly belief and form a distorted foundation on which to build. In that chapter we described how these beliefs begin and grow, aided and abetted by the demonic. The most important are about God and ourselves.

Ungodly beliefs often form the backdrop against which people live their lives. They are the hidden motivator for all sorts of life circumstances and behaviors that are unfruitful and even idolatrous. The law of sowing and reaping, of belief and expectation, tend to work together in a negative way to bring about the negative—thus reinforcing the lies.

It is important to ask Jesus to help you trace this manifest fruit back to its hidden root(s). Dealing with behaviors or circumstances will only indirectly and weakly address the roots. The key to healing is getting God’s perspective on a belief, situation or event that caused a belief, etc. If advanced tools are used, the Inviting Jesus tool in chapter 11 is helpful to this purpose. The Father Ladder tool (chapter 10) might be best for beliefs about God.

MINISTRY TIPS

Behaviors and circumstances in the Fruit step give an indication of ungodly beliefs. Ask Jesus to show and to frame what is really believed. Test this with the person: “How true does _____ sound to you?”

Once the issue is framed, go to the Root step to see where it came from. Sources can often be generational and cultural. A specific upbringing within a family and religious setting may have imprinted someone with an understanding far from the truth. Ask Jesus to show a memory, a symbol, etc. Go with what is presented. If nothing comes, simply skip to the next step without knowing the origin.

Frame what is true. This is often *already* spoken by God in His Word and not a simple fresh statement—though both apply, and a fresh word is usually powerful and intimate. Often asking Papa or Jesus to show specifically what is true will bring amazing and personal revelation.

The first key to framing the truth is understanding the unquenchable, unhindered and unconditional love of Papa God. If, while I was a terrible sinner, I was loved and drawn to Him, how much more, now that I am a son or daughter, does He love me with great affection? The second key is setting someone on the course of realizing the amazing and comprehensive work of Jesus in (1) dealing with our past sin, our current sin, the sin tendencies of the flesh, the unbearable accusation of the law and the dark one who uses it against us; (2) providing us with His power working within us to overcome and (3) making possible the promised eternal outcome of a glorified body living in eternal bliss with Papa & Co. (not to mention the firstfruits of healing).⁵

Once this is finished, go to DKB to break, repent, renounce, etc. Declare what is true.

The Scoot step is important here. Back the truth up with Scriptures (no preaching) and give homework. It may be important to write it down. It may take some heart transformation to begin to walk in this truth automatically. You might assign or follow up with reading or meditation for a couple of months.

5. *Casting Away*

Rarely in first responder ministry is there an overt and direct confrontation with the demonic. The Hidden Enemies foundation shows why, and chapter 12 gives much more information on what we do when we do encounter the demonic more overtly.

Because we assume a dark influence even if there is no presence, we often, at the end of a prayer session, or at intervals between phases of it, speak to the dark influence and command it to cease its activity and leave. We do not need a name, we simply address it by what it has done or attempts to do. We declare our freedom from its influence, and that its familiar voice of accusation and deception is now recognized and will be opposed and ignored henceforth. We remind ourselves and it of the finished and triumphant work of Christ and call on Christ and His army to enforce what we have asked. It might look something like this:

- “I declare today that Jesus has broken your power over me; I put myself under His protection and am washed by His blood; and I command you to cease your activity.”
- “You spirit that [*name demonic activity*], I command you to stop your activity, and I send you away from me. I declare I am under the authority of and protected by the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And we move on. It is not a power encounter, though God is all-powerful. It is not even a truth encounter, though knowing the truth sets us free. It is a God encounter.

And God wins.

chapter

8

Putting It Together

Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. . . . Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. . . . So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

John 8:31–32, 34, 36

How few there are who have courage enough to own their faults, or resolution enough to mend them.

Benjamin Franklin

Everything should be made as simple as possible; but not simpler.

Albert Einstein

In this chapter we will put together WESUD, the Fruit Loop and Doing Kingdom Business. This chapter is sort of like training wheels. No bike-riding child who has left training wheels behind thinks much about how they are balancing on two wheels. They are too engrossed in the ride, the wind and the destination. So, too, with Freedom Prayer ministers—once you get your balance, you will rarely, if ever, feel the need to refer back to this chapter. That is just fine. Remember: Never forget your partnership with God and to honor people.

The assembling of these Freedom Prayer tools in this chapter is comprehensive, covering all aspects of WESUD. You would only do a bit of this in any session, so do not be intimidated! Come expectantly. Listen spiritually for God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit's¹ voice. Do not be afraid to ask a person to close his (or her) eyes and ask God direct questions. Speak encouragement and faith into him—this is his day.

The person in need is mostly just a “reporter” of what he is seeing, sensing or hearing. He does not have to analyze, excuse, understand or interpret. He *can* hear Jesus speak inside him. There is no pressure and there are no wrong reports. We, as ministers, submit what we sense and see to the person and team as well. We make no pronouncements without allowing feedback.

Honor the person by giving him a voice. Let him talk. Listen to him and to God at the same time. Allow for naturally expressed emotion to be fully felt—wait. You do not need every detail. Do not let people get into morbid self-analysis, religious babble, excuses or explanations that let themselves or others off the hook with misplaced mercy.

Find the balance.

The Snappy Diagram

Snappy can mean both “irritating” and “concise and neat.” Perfect! The diagram on page 138 gives a picture of the Fruit Loop and WESUD combination. We engineers love diagrams! If you do not, skip it and go on to the description following. Realize that because this chapter is comprehensive, it incorporates actions for all aspects of WESUD. In any ministry setting, you may only deal with, for example, Prodigal Son (sin) issues or lost sheep (entanglement) issues; most of the activities illustrated in the rest of the diagram would not come into play at all.

Across the top of the diagram run the five steps, or phases, of the Fruit Loop. Down the side are the five buckets of WESUD. The Fruit and Boot columns show typical symptoms and actions, respectively.

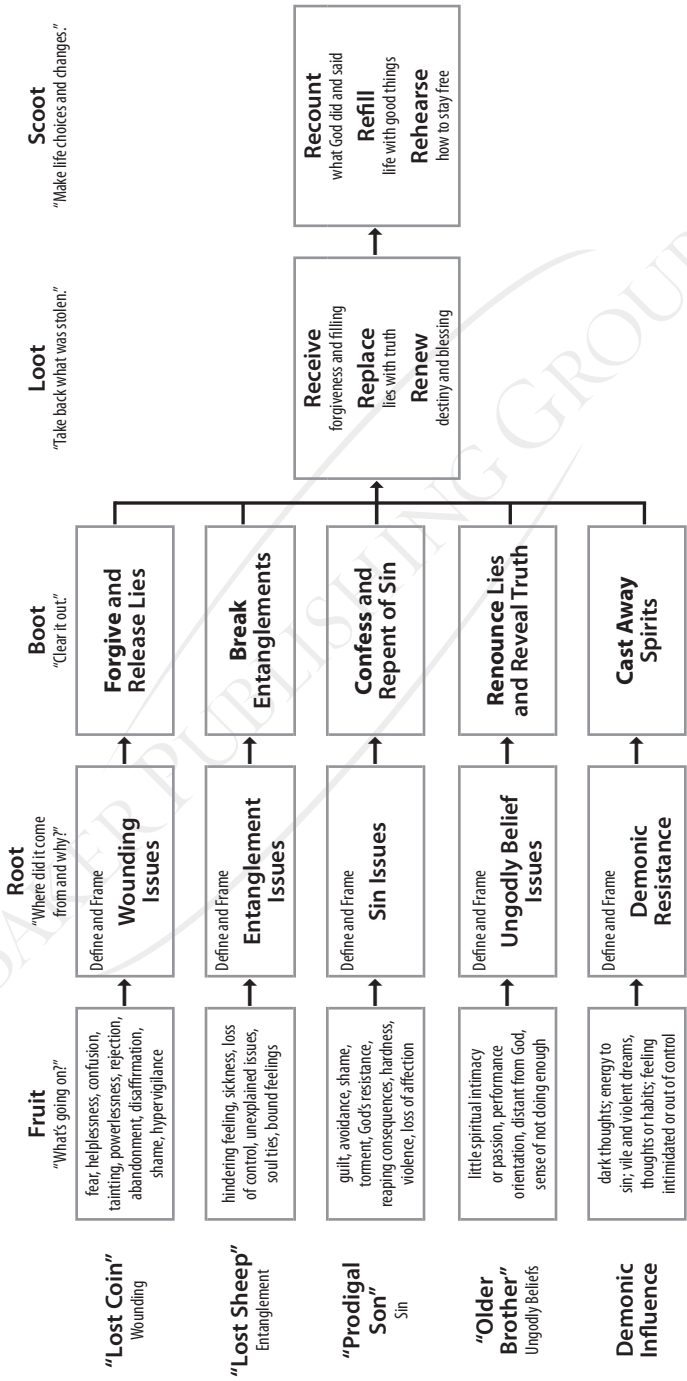
If you know the more advanced tools of part 3 of this book, then you may use one of them to quickly get to definition and resolution. The most typical ones when matched to WESUD are the lost coin (Inviting Jesus), the lost sheep (the Four Doors), the Prodigal Son (the Four Doors), the older brother (the Father Ladder) and more overt demonic resistance (Dealing with Demons). Doing Kingdom Business techniques and actions are used in all cases in the Boot and Loot steps.

Let us reiterate that this figure is like a city map. After living there a short time, you find you rarely, if ever, need it. Most trips are short, and you know the way by heart. Most Freedom Prayer encounters are simply short but effective conversations in which only a snippet of the diagram—the approach—comes into play. This diagram is the pair of training wheels that will come off soon enough.

Step 1: Fruit

In this step we are simply trying to discern and understand What’s Going On with a person, or what transpired in a single event. It is all about listening with one ear toward the person and one ear

Figure 6



toward God—it is important to both hear what the person says and also to think in terms of spiritual cause and effect, and whether it is even an issue that you can or should deal with. Most often it is as simple as, “So, why are you here?”

Remember that normally we are not trying to figure out everything that is wrong with someone. That is a lifetime project! We are trying to discern what Papa God wants to do right then so we can appropriately partner with Him. We trust His timing and His sure and gentle hand in another’s life.

We are trying to discern things like these:

- What specifically is the person experiencing?
- What part of WESUD is involved? Is it captive-based, prisoner-based or (most likely) both?
- What is happening behind the scenes? What are the real motives?
- What is the stronghold area of sin and wounding? How should we define or name it? What does God call it?
- What lies does the person believe?
- Is this a pattern? What part of the issue lies with the person?
- How does this target their metron, their calling?

Necessary information in a ministry session can come from the person, inspired questions, a picture, word or sudden thought from God, a revelation offered and verified by a ministry team member and, rarely, if ever, from dark threats or lying thoughts of the demonic operating in a person’s thinking. Look at typical WESUD symptoms in the diagram for help.

Key in this is to discern the difference between “prisoner” and “captive” issues. They are intermingled, and even when issues are clearly wounding, issues such as retained anger, unforgiveness, ungodly beliefs or fallout from past vengeful actions can be dealt with as prisoner issues.

Prisoner issues (entanglement, sin and ungodly beliefs) are often direct and easily discerned. There was a “cause,” and the person is experiencing the “effect.” The issue may be obvious to an experienced minister, though it is always best to rely on Jesus to express things just right. He has a way of getting to heart-based reasons for bad decisions and actions that allows for true and lasting heartfelt confession, renouncing, breaking and repentance.

Captive issues are the most complex; while wisdom and understanding in how these kinds of issues work in people is important, trying to sort them all out in a session is not the role of a Freedom Prayer minister. We work to simply help the person see and hear what Jesus (God) wants to do right then. Very often there is a key memory or truth that, when spoken by Jesus, brings light and life and begins a longer process of transformation as it plays out in the weeks following the ministry time.

Step 2: Root

In this step we are trying to understand where things came from, what is the source of the issue, pain, etc. It is most often obvious—but always dig deeper than the surface. Often there is a more deeply rooted heart issue at stake.

It may be difficult to uncover, but it is always there. There may be a memory, picture or thought. Go with what is presented. God can work a miracle with anything. Sometimes a picture or impression later becomes a key for unlocking issues, or it becomes a road sign given at just the right time. The root may be a time period, an event or a relationship. It may be found in generations past or in prenatal events. Follow God’s leading within yourself and within the ministry dynamic, always.

This step is often skipped in situations that are a simple cleaning up of an event. For example, if you are just helping your child to forgive a classmate, then the event itself is the root, and there is no need to delve further.

We are looking for the following:

- What happened, when did it happen or where did it come from?
- What is the pattern? Is there a deep-seated false paradigm of life they hold about themselves, life, God?
- What door was opened during this event or the source event?
- Is the person experiencing the negative consequences of past sin or past pronouncements?
- What legal right, through words, actions or beliefs, did the devil have to control and try to destroy the person?
- What entanglement with darkness is the person in?
- What lies are involved? What biblical truth is violated or is applicable?
- Does the person hold unforgiveness and judgment?
- How did the person come into agreement with sin, wrong attitudes or ungodly beliefs?
- What destiny call is being targeted by Satan?

When you sense the need to look deeper, you might ask the following:

- “Jesus, what is the reason that . . . ?”
- “Jesus, where did I first come to believe the lie that . . . ?”
- “Jesus, will You help this person see the first time that . . . ?”
- “Jesus, what did I believe about this situation that is false and harmful when [*event*] happened to me?”
- “Jesus, will You tell me what is true?”
- “Jesus, will You show me where You were when this happened?”

Step 3: Boot

In this step we are cleaning out the problems. We can take the following key DKB steps matched to the five key areas of WESUD:

forgive and release wound-based lies, break entanglements, confess and repent of sin, renounce ungodly beliefs and reveal truth and cast away evil spirits and their influence. We go only to what is presented. These are just titles for a wide array of things we might feel led to do. They serve as boundaries and location markers more than rigid steps. Our knowledge can help take the person to places they cannot see. But God's revelation can take us all to places we cannot even imagine.

Forgive People and Release Lies

A person who has been wounded has formed self-protective barriers to keep safe from being hurt again. Unfortunately, in so doing he isolates himself from Papa God as well. He may have been wounded during prenatal development, when our spirits are tender and fully alive (Psalms 22:10; 58:3; Proverbs 18:14; Luke 1:44). It often helps to let the person remember what happened when he first learned to rely on a lying explanation of a situation, and to ask Jesus to show him (1) where Jesus was when it happened and (2) what He says is actually true about it, about this specific aspect of reality and life or about the person himself. We need to hear truth and love and comfort—most effectively from God Himself (2 Corinthians 1:3–5; 1 Peter 5:6–7). This approach is formalized in the Inviting Jesus tool.

We must lead the person in choosing to allow those barriers to come down and to let Jesus in. The forgiveness steps may be needed. He should be led to repent of any ongoing choice of self-protection and admit and relinquish his reliance on lying explanations and understandings.

You might lead the person into praying the following:

- “Jesus, I confess today that when [*event*] happened I was deceived and wounded and did not know enough to allow You to heal and protect my heart.”
- “Jesus, what is true about [*event*]? Will You show me?”

- “I confess and declare now that when this happened I believed [*ungodly belief*]. Today I call it a lie and ask for freedom in this area. I reacted in self-protection and did not trust You or allow Your help.”
- “I confess today those reactions and their present-day hold on me, and I give them to You on the cross. I confess my need for You to help and save me.”
- “I confess today my total reliance on You to heal my broken heart, and I ask You to forgive me and to cleanse me of all pain and hurt. I call on You, Jesus.”

Break Entanglements

Our words have the power to entangle (Proverbs 18:21; Matthew 12:33–37). Wrong and hurtful vows, covenants or associations need to be renounced, repented of and broken. Blessing can be given in its place (Psalm 109:28; Luke 6:28). Spoken curses, both by us and against us, need to be renounced and broken (Proverbs 26:2). Soul ties—any illicit relationship in which one person puts another in control or bondage—need to be broken and forgiveness and blessing spoken. Ancestors may have done something in the past that has been passed down to us. It can be negated and broken, forgiveness spoken and sin taken to the cross of Jesus (Leviticus 26:40–42; Matthew 23:34–36; Romans 5:12–21; Galatians 3:13–14).

Take a stand against and renounce the revealed places where lies have been believed, vows made, curses spoken, unforgiveness harbored and so on, that opened doors to strongholds and demonic presence. Ask Jesus to show you if there is more you need to know.

Remember that normally an exchange will take place. Ask Jesus what life-giving thing He would like to give in exchange for giving the hurtful thing to Him. You may follow each instance all the way through the Loot step, exchanging the illicit decision or action for the legitimate need that Jesus wants to meet.

Help the person to declare things like these:

- “I renounce my participation in [*entanglement*] and break any agreement with it now.”
- “I renounce my right to [*entanglement*] and give it to You, God.”
- “I break the covenant made by my ancestors when . . .”
- “I break the vow I spoke when [*event*] and take back any ground given.”
- “I renounce the words I cursed myself with when [*event*] and break their power over me.”
- “I break the covenant I made with evil when I . . .”
- “I bind away from me now a spirit of [*name spirit*], and I choose to be bound to the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- “I break my unrighteous soul tie with [*name*] and send back to her the part of her heart she gave me. I ask You to bless her and heal her of wounding caused by my sinful actions. I ask You, God, to return the part of my heart I gave to her and to heal me.”
- “I declare my freedom from the lie of [*ungodly belief*], according to Your Word.”

In each case you would give the consequences of your past entanglement to Jesus—He bore them all.

Confess and Repent of Sin

Sin needs to be confessed, repented of and assigned to the cross. It is forgiven and covered by Jesus’ blood and finished work (Psalm 32:1–6; Matthew 5:23–24; 1 John 1:8–9). The person must humble himself and confess his sin, his part and his unforgiveness. He must not hold back or make excuses for himself or others. He should confess his part and actions, even if another was the major perpetrator. Make it simple, direct and clear.

When all is confessed, make it *very* clear that all these specific sins and all unrighteous areas are fully forgiven and covered by the work of Christ (1 John 1:9). Ensure that like the Prodigal Son, the person knows his or her identity as son or daughter. Make sure the person knows.

You might lead the person in the following:

- “Jesus, today I confess the sin of [*name sin*]. I repent of it now.”
- “Jesus, I ask Your forgiveness for all the ways [*name sin*] has affected my life.”
- “Jesus, I confess that that day I chose [*name sin*], but I repent of that choice today and choose [*name truth*] instead.”
- “I take [*name sin*] to the cross and ask You, Jesus, to put it to death.”
- “I commit myself to breaking [*name sin*] out of my life, turning from it and turning to Your ways.”

Renounce Lies and Reveal Truth

Help the person to see he believes something—normally about God and himself in relation to God—that is not true. This leads to beliefs, decisions, attitudes and other entanglements that establish barriers and distance between God and the person, leaving him lonely and vulnerable. The goal is to help him see both how untrue his beliefs are and how those beliefs have bound him and kept him away from God (Papa, Jesus, the Holy Spirit), who is the only source of help and comfort. The ungodly beliefs can be pinpointed quickly with the Father Ladder or Inviting Jesus tools. Believed lies need to be confessed, exposed and renounced. Truth should be confessed and declared in its place. We can declare allegiance to, and dependence on, Jesus.

As in the other DKB areas, you may desire to follow each instance all the way through the Loot and Scoot steps and to write

down truth—Scriptures of unshakable solidity—that counter the lies previously believed. Listen for God’s voice to lead.

You might lead the person to say the following:

- “I renounce my belief in the ungodly belief and lie of . . .”
- “I repent of believing a lie and living in accordance with it.”
- “I declare the truth that . . .”

Cast Away the Devil and His Demons

We want to make sure we specifically identify places of agreement with, association with or bondage to demons, and break them. We discover most of these places through the initial steps, though God may give us more specifics here. Use your authority over demons and send them to where Jesus tells them to go. Use the fact of the power of the finished work of Jesus at the cross and His cleansing blood. When possible, you should specifically name demons by function, activity or strongholds.

Help the person to declare things like these:

- “I rebuke, in Jesus’ name and by His authority, every spirit of . . .”
- “I rebuke the spirit that caused/deceived me into . . .”
- “I rebuke any spirit that gained a foothold in me when . . .”
- “I command you in Jesus’ name to be silent and to leave me, [*name spirit*].”
- “I command you to go to the feet of Jesus, and to go where He sends you.”
- “Lord, as a captive, I was unjustly [*describe event*] by the demonic, and I ask You today for the justice due me. I ask You to restore what has been stolen and to heal what has been wounded.”

We will talk more about this in chapter 12.

Step 4: Loot

We want to take back what was stolen, and then some. Having given away that which did not come from the Lord, we do not want to leave anything that was cleaned out empty or void of truth and blessing. We are looking for God's own truth and gift to fill that void; that is the exchange. We want the person to *know* that he is forgiven, cleansed and acceptable to God. We want him to be focused on God's destiny calling and on staying filled. We want him to feel good, both about what he has done and about God's unconditional love for him. We want him to go beyond healing to destiny!

Receive Forgiveness and Infilling from God

Ask God to cleanse the person in the specific places of sin and perversion, to return his focus to Him alone, to renew his love for Jesus and to turn his mind, will and emotions over to His control. Listen to what God says He wants to do.

Help the person to declare things like this:

- "I now receive Your forgiveness for [*name sin*], Jesus, according to Your promise that if I confess my sins, You will forgive and cleanse me."
- "I agree with Your sacrifice for me on the cross and now receive Your washing with Your blood to clean me thoroughly from . . ."
- "I thank You, God, that You will never bring up these sins again, that You have chosen to forget them because You love me so much."
- "I ask You to freshly fill me with Your Holy Spirit and with grace and joy, and I receive it now."
- "I ask You, God, to fill the empty, clean places with blessing, grace and righteousness."
- "I renew my devotion to You, Jesus, and come willingly under Your Lordship and protection."

Replace Lies with Truth

We are *exchanged* people as much as *changed* ones. “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” is a very real and practical concept (John 8:32). Our goal is to help the person understand and declare what is true in areas he has believed lies and then to speak his allegiance to the truth.² Lead him to declare his position under the authority of God’s Kingdom in those areas and call on God for protection and strengthening. Speak scriptural truth in the areas of sin and wounding. Listen to what God may be saying.

Help the person to declare things like these:

- “I declare and receive the truth that . . .”
- “Jesus, I ask You to renew my thinking with Your truth about . . .”
- “Today I choose to agree with God and to believe that . . .”
- “I replace every lie and pattern of deception with truth in the area of . . .”
- “I thank You, God, for Your love and care for me and rejoice in the truth that . . .”
- “I receive Your love, Papa God, and I come willingly to You without fear that You will punish me. I ask You to speak to me of Your love and of my destiny. I receive the truth that You [*speak scriptural truth of the Father’s love*].”

Renew Joy, Faith and Hope, and Refresh by Ending with Blessing

Ask and listen to what God may say. Make sure the person feels good about himself, what God has done and how God feels about him (and he about God). Remember that issues are not random. During the session, watch for truth about purpose and destiny to be revealed, and speak it. Help the person to see the precious and

dangerous (to darkness!) place inside that was the target of trouble. Help the person to reclaim it and see a vision for moving into his or her calling. Assure him that God will help him walk out the new freedom he has gained, and that some real transactions have taken place. Leave him with vision for the future:

- Declare what has been accomplished.
- Reiterate to the person Satan’s plan and how God countered it out of His love for him.
- Declare release of destiny and removal of hindrances.
- Speak blessing and protection over the person.
- Ask God to give him faith and strength to walk out his new freedom.
- Ensure that he is feeling good about his relationship with Papa God, and that this event or issue has not clouded or darkened that relationship.

Let the person know that he is not alone in this walk and that God began and will complete the good work in him. God is his partner, and He loves him totally.

Step Five: Scoot

This step is homework. James 1:22–25 tells us to be “doers” and not hearers only. It is walking out what has been revealed and experienced. It is helpful for the person to envision his life, now cleaned out, with a chance to “redecorate” the rooms that were cleansed. Instruct him to walk out what he has experienced in practical ways every day. You might even give one simple step or instruction to put into practice. Keep it simple. He can use these same techniques every time he experiences issues—he himself can resist, confess, forgive, etc.

In this step we offer practical advice in three key areas:³

Recount with the person what transpired during the session.

Help the person to list and understand what has been done. Help him see what God clearly spoke to him—recount it for him. Lead him in thanksgiving and help him to *be thankful*. Write it down if necessary. Maybe send him an encouraging follow-up email. Tell him to refer to what happened again and again—it is a gift to him. Scoot these things into his life.

Rehearse what the person can do if issues try to return. Show the person how to resist the evil one and avoid temptation. Help him to see he has the power to walk things out powerfully and a Helper to see him through. Scoot new thought patterns into his house, and scoot old ones out. We recite truth, watch our thoughts, keep encouraging company, focus our senses on good things and take advantage of the opportunity to walk free.

Show the person how to refill his life by replacing unhelpful behaviors and environments with renewed ones. Jesus said that the demonic comes back and, if it finds the room empty, will make it worse than before (Matthew 12:43–45). Choose to redecorate your empty rooms—first with God’s presence, then with good internal things and then with good external things.

We are scooting things out that have tempted and harmed a person. Help him see the situations in which he has felt trapped or victimized, and help him choose renewed behaviors based on what he has been given during the session. Do not be deceived; bad company corrupts good morals. God said that one (1 Corinthians 15:33). Flee youthful lusts. He said that one, too (2 Timothy 2:22). Help the person to recognize situations, friends, practices, pastimes or environments that have led him into trouble and to scoot these out of his life permanently. To draw a line not to cross. To work out his salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12–13).

Help him also scoot things *in* that will make for continued healing: good relationships, habits of prayer and Bible study, meditation on truth, habits of joy and thankfulness.

Unlike the other areas, an ungodly belief, because it is so deeply held, is often best changed by an immediate revelation of truth during the session and then soaking in that truth for several months to renew and transform the mind. We may write down specific Scriptures then or send them to the person later. Through this post-session “mindfulness” period, we are actually “rewiring” the brain’s beliefs and function in that area.⁴

Examples

Here are a few abbreviated examples to illustrate the use of the simple steps above.

Mary

Fruit—Mary was estranged from her daughter despite attempts to contact her. They had not spoken in three years.

Root—We never blame a person we are not ministering to even if that person is 95 percent of the problem. We can only deal with the person before us. So we did. When we asked Jesus to show Mary what was going on with her, not her daughter, it became clear in an inner picture that Mary still held strong negative opinions about her daughter—judgment. She also realized that it was her own sense of insecurity that was driving things from her end. She realized she was insecure about being a good mother and looked to the relationship to affirm her abilities—this pointed to a deeper place of wounding.

Boot—Mary knew she had forgiven her daughter before, but she stepped into it again, and during a repeat-after-me prayer, things got really deep really fast. This time she also renounced the ways she continued to hold her daughter in judgment. She confessed her

motives were wrong. She asked Jesus to show her the source of her insecurities and eventually forgave her own mother for acting in the same way. She was able to release her insecurities as Jesus spoke comfort to her, telling her that she was very capable and that He was *more* capable. She could rest in that truth and just be herself—that was all her daughter really needed anyway. Lots of tears.

Loot—She accepted God’s estimate of her and thanked Him. She listened to God’s words of blessing and affirmation spoken over her own life. She then, in turn, spoke a strong and teary blessing over her daughter, speaking out her godly dreams for her daughter.

Scoot—Mary stayed open to her daughter and maintained an attitude of blessing without control. She sent her an email when she felt prompted, just blessing her. She heard from her daughter in a surprisingly short time:

“Hey, Mom, want to have lunch? I have a surprise for you.”

And, out of the overflow of her now-filled heart, she was able to bless her daughter without reservation, bring about restoration of the relationship and step into the role of trusted and wonderful granny to her new granddaughter.

Terry

Fruit—Terry was a young boy who uncharacteristically lashed out at a playmate. His mother saw it and asked him about it shortly thereafter—in private. Private is *always* good.

Root—After a little probing, being asked where the ugly words came from and what was hurting inside, Terry talked about feeling rejected by some older boys on the playground who (from Terry’s perspective) had not let him play. His mother, with reliance on Jesus, led Terry to understand that there may have been another interpretation of the situation, and that Terry, although a big boy, was several years younger than those boys.

Boot—Terry forgave the boys for not being sensitive to his feelings and renounced his belief in his own rejection. He confessed

his own pain and gave it to Jesus, receiving comfort in return. He repented of lashing out at the other boy and agreed to go to the boy and ask him to forgive him the next day. A spirit of rejection was told to leave Terry's presence, and Terry asked God to help him see that angels were walking with him (see Matthew 18:10).

Loot—Terry was led to understand that his feeling of wanting to be in the middle of things was a gift of God and that he was a leader. He was encouraged that he was one who could give support to others and that what happened was the evil one's attempt to knock him off course.

Scoot—Terry received these words and announced to his mother that he was ready to go play. Off he went, happy and singing, no hardness able to form in his tender heart. He went to the other boy and asked to be forgiven. He even had to help the boy speak it. They became fast friends as a result, and five years later it is still a habit in Terry's life—keeping short accounts.

Ivan

Fruit—Ivan was a young man who was adrift in life without purpose or vision. He had little self-awareness or drive toward any sort of career or direction. He also had ADD.

Root—After he was asked about things in life without real result, Ivan was asked about the circumstances of his birth. He stated that his parents had been in the midst of divorce and that he was an unexpected and unwanted surprise. They stayed together for his sake until he was two, but it was tumultuous and stressful for his mother throughout the pregnancy.

Boot—Ivan was led to forgive his parents for bringing him into a world that, even in the womb, felt unwelcome and filled with fear. He was led to understand that God had a purpose for him despite the circumstances of his conception—he was not a mistake. We told spirits of deception who had stolen from him that it was their turn to be looted.

Loot—Ivan declared that he accepted his purpose, that he would find it with the help of Jesus and that he fully embraced God’s plans for his life and for his living. He was blessed by his friends. When he asked Jesus to show him where He was at Ivan’s birth, he got a vivid picture of angels rejoicing and of Jesus smiling and nodding and saying, “Finally—presenting *Ivan!*” He cried and shook.

Scoot—He began to fill his mind with the truth about his destiny and began to look for God’s hand in his daily activity. In short order, he began to feel drawn to commercial art, entered a trade school and became a class leader. Amazingly, his ADD began to wane and eventually disappeared. He is now the owner of a successful commercial art firm, a leader in his small suburban community and a big brother to several young men.

Tony

Fruit—Tony was having trouble with pornography. When probed it was quickly discovered that he was addicted to masturbation.

Root—When asked what he felt just before he decided to turn on the computer as a way to gain relief, he stated he felt a deep inner loneliness and boredom. When God was asked why Tony felt lonely, Tony was shown an inner picture of his father walking away from him. God showed him a specific symbolic or representative memory of a deep feeling of abandonment and rejection because Tony was not interested in his father’s cherished pastime. He also was shown the first time he turned to masturbation as a tool of escape—having been shown how to do it by another boy in the neighbor’s garage, using lingerie pictures in women’s magazines.

Boot—Tony chose to forgive his father. When he spoke release of the debt of love and affirmation his father owed him, God showed him a picture of his father’s own loneliness and his father’s dreams that he and his son would connect around this pastime. He saw his father’s inability to relate growing out of his own treatment as a boy. Tony wept and released ways he had judged his father.

He renounced his choice of masturbation as an escape and chose to give his pain to Jesus on the cross—to be cleansed by His blood of all sin. He renounced his agreement with pornography and spoke blessing to the women he had viewed, renouncing his agreement with the objectification of women on the Internet. He forgave the boy who taught him to masturbate and asked Jesus to show him a better way to walk out his pain. We cast out unclean spirits of lust and perversity. We told rejection it was rejected in favor of Papa God.

Loot—Tony turned to Papa God for comfort and affirmation. In the end he asked Jesus, with whom he felt very close, to show him a true picture of Papa God, to take him there. An amazing inner event happened wherein he was taken into a garden and ended up in Papa’s lap looking into His eyes. Everyone wept then!

Scoot—Tony agreed to find another man with whom he could learn to walk fully free of this physically and emotionally addictive habit, and to put controls on his computer. We recommended a book for him to read as well.⁵ He agreed to flee youthful lusts (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22). Leaving the pain behind, he learned habits of self-control, met and honorably courted a young woman and is now happily married.

*Sheri*⁶

Fruit—Sheri and Roger were going down the road in their truck and hit a pothole. Sheri yelled, “Watch out—*oh no!!*” There was an embarrassing silence, and then Roger said, “So . . . what’s that all about?” It was too late. Sheri and Jesus were already way down the road to freedom. Roger was just along for the ride.

Root—Sheri’s parents, in the past, made everything a big deal, going from zero to worst case in scant moments. Hitting a pothole would mean they would have to fix the truck, which meant they would not have enough money for the mortgage, which meant they would lose the farm and everyone would die.

Boot—Right there in the truck, Sheri renounced her agreement with that lie and that way of thinking, and she forgave her parents for passing this along. She asked Jesus what was true and received an answer about His faithfulness that deeply comforted and freed her. Memories of His care for her flashed into her mind. She was convinced.

Loot—She declared her singular allegiance to and belief in this great Protector and asked Him to take back every place where she had shrunk back from risk out of fear. She declared that God had not given her a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV).

Scoot—She looked at Roger and told him, “It’s okay, honey; it’s better now. You can just drive.” And like most husbands, he was both a little oblivious and deeply thankful to Papa for providing him with such an amazing wife. Three minutes was all it took.

Your turn!

Try it out. Walk through the Fruit Loop with your own issues. Walk through it with a friend. See if God is not faithful to you. And when you are ready to learn more, go on to part 3.



Part Three

More Advanced Tools

BAKER PUBLISHING GROUP

chapter

9

The Four Doors

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

Psalm 139:23–24

I think the oddest thing about the advanced people is that, while they are always talking about things as problems, they have hardly any notion of what a real problem is.

G. K. Chesterton

If stupidity got us into this mess, then why can't it get us out?

Will Rogers

Blood pressure . . . check. Pulse . . . check. Any aches or pains? Your blood and other lab work look okay, except your cholesterol is a bit elevated, as is your weight . . . again. You *are* exercising, aren't you?"

So goes my annual physical. Checking all the signs of deterioration and trouble is what my family doctor does best. He can burn through a standard physical in minutes and normally not miss a thing—at least not a normal abnormality.

The tool we call “the Four Doors” does the same thing. It is a major tool, great for a checkup, a spring cleaning. It has been used for new believers, giving them a thorough screening. It works well within small groups, too, with each person going through the doors with their friends. It creates a good framework for vulnerability and the ability to tell one's story, warts and all.

This approach has various sources and is typical of the “checklist” type of inner healing, in which an inventory of various types of issues is followed to help insure thoroughness. Another great checklist-type approach is the Seven Steps to Freedom, found in our friend Neil T. Anderson's popular book *The Bondage Breaker*.¹

While a checklist is not our normal mode, it does have its uses. Some people use the Four Doors as a structure to organize their ministry session every time.

Figure 7 illustrates the Four Doors. Simply put, it is a combination of WESUD and the Fruit Loop applied to four key areas of sin (the four doors) that have opened a door or point of access to both demonic influence and sin's consequences in a person's life:

1. Sexual sin and soul ties
2. Anger and unforgiveness
3. Fear and control
4. Occult or false religion

Figure 7. The Four Doors Matrix

Source* →	Wound- ing of the spirit or soul	Entangle- ments or binding actions	Sin and rebellion	False or ungodly beliefs	Demonic influence
Sin ↓					
Sexual sin and soul ties					
Anger and unforgive- ness					
Fear and control					
Occult and false religion					

*The source for each door may be personal or generational

In this approach the rows represent sin and issue *areas*, while the columns represent sin and issue *sources*—WESUD. Using the intersection of columns and rows (one of our more colorful practitioners calls it “spiritual bingo”), you have a powerful tool to help explore a person’s issues and needs and their root causes.

Let’s take a more detailed look at each door.

Door of Sexual Sin and Soul Ties

David was having trouble in his marriage. He seemed distracted by encroaching thoughts of past women. The Lord showed us a picture

of his heart broken into many pieces—shattered. Each piece had been sent to someone else. He had but a fragment to give to his wife. We walked him through repenting of instances of fornication, naming names and breaking ties as the Lord brought faces to mind. He asked for his heart back and returned the part of each woman's heart he had stolen. He repented of taking the place of the husband with "Papa's girls." When he saw that is what he had actually been doing and understood how he had defrauded these daughters of the Most High, he wept over it for the first time. He blessed each one and declared his independence from them. We then asked God to reform his heart and make it presentable to his wife. Again he wept. We cast away demonic influences bent on keeping him trapped.

A month later he reported that his love for his wife was far fuller and stronger than ever and that he was no longer tormented by past memories. He felt clean and forgiven. He could still recall them but he now saw the memories for what they were—they had lost the allure.

Key Scriptures: Review 1 Corinthians 6:15–20 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8 about two becoming one, your body as a temple of God, God's will in this, possessing your own body and the concept of defrauding another.

Basic goal: Recognize and repent of violating God's law, another's body and your own self, and move to break harmful dependency relationships (ungodly soul ties).

Common descriptors: perversion, lust, adultery, fornication, masturbation, rape, abuse, violence, abortion, shame, betrayal, Jezebel, unforgiveness, judgment, romantic spirit, lewdness, fantasy, hopelessness, depression, control, false romance, pornography, molestation and rape.

Ungodly Soul Ties

Because this may be a new term to you, let's discuss it briefly. An ungodly soul tie is any illicit relationship, often in which one

person puts another into unclean or inappropriate control or bondage.² Often biblical fraud is involved, in which someone promises something he or she cannot righteously fulfill (1 Thessalonians 4:6). Godly soul ties are God’s provision for healthy nurturing and relationship (e.g., the friendship of David and Jonathan, the marriage relationship, parents and children, etc.).

The measure is *legitimacy*, not *intensity*. In legitimate relationships we learn to *bond*—to be emotionally vulnerable and physically intimate (in ways appropriate to the relationship). When the relationship is illegitimate, we do not bond; we are *bound* and we are emotionally and physically abused. Sometimes a legitimate relationship is distorted into illegitimacy (e.g., “If my children loved and honored me, they wouldn’t move out of town”).

Sexual sin causes soul ties. Scripture tells us that we “become one” with each person we have sexual relations with (1 Corinthians 6:16). When this happens outside of the marriage covenant, our hearts become shattered and divided. Memories may torment and haunt us, and demonic, sexual and lust problems dog our steps toward purity. When we repent of past fornication and adultery, bless the others, sever the ungodly soul ties, break covenants and release the others to be godly wives or husbands to their present mates, we clean the slate and have the ability to reclaim a whole heart to present to our present or future mate.

Examples of ungodly soul ties include the following:

- family issues of dominance, dysfunction or illegitimate dependency (e.g., maternal domination or control of grown children)
- abuse of free will and domination (e.g., overcontrol of children by parents or domination by the husband or wife, or by a person in authority), allowing a sense of control even if the person is miles away
- unhealthy interrelationships, wherein one person controls another by his or her moods, threats, etc.

- illegitimate sexual partners (both before marriage and during), including damaging sexual practices in a marriage relationship
- sexual hurt, abuse and rejection, creating a fear and control soul tie between the abuser and the victim even years after the event

Soul ties are broken through DKB actions, including renouncing the ungodly parts of the relationship, renouncing an unhealthy dependency on the person (even confessing idolatry), forgiving the person, taking back the part of the heart that has been given away, giving back the part of the heart taken, confessing sins and casting out demons.

Specific Ideas and Approaches

We confess and repent of sin and break false or sinful relationships. These relationships can even be, for example, with people on the pornographic site we frequented. This type of sin is unique, committed against the person's own body, and there needs to be a clear perspective and hatred for what is being perpetrated against the person's body and others. Often we need to go to the root wounding that the sexual addiction is used to medicate. See chapter 11, "Inviting Jesus," for this approach. This sin is common, and there are many good books and ministries on the subject that we highly recommend.³

1. *Fruit*—Frame the issue(s) in terms of the understanding in the Four Doors rows.
2. *Root*—Seek to know where and under what circumstances the issue got started, using the columns of the Four Doors matrix as a guide. Consider other tools as you go.
3. *Boot*—Take appropriate DKB and Dealing with Demons (DWD) actions with each issue, such as confessing sin and repenting of violating one's own body as the temple of the

Holy Spirit. Break each specific soul tie or partner remembered—by name. If the person cannot recall or there are many, ask God to show him or her one that can represent the rest. Repent of taking the place of the husband or wife in the other's life illegally.

4. *Loot*—Bless and pray for the objects of previous desire, and help the person see them as God's daughters or sons. The person should give back to each partner what belongs to that partner and receive back what belongs to him or her—give a partner's heart back and take his or hers back, too. Sever the bonds even symbolically. Reaffirm rite of passage to manhood or womanhood and pronounce a blessing. Ask God to restore lost ground in the area of sexual purity. Fill empty places.
5. *Scout*—Far more than most areas, the area of sexual sin relies on a strong Scout component. Unlike for many sins, the iniquity structure is within the body—a physical-psychological mind-set, an emotional and physical addiction and deep-seated lifestyle patterns and habits must be broken. Direct practical actions that support fleeing youthful lust (2 Timothy 2:22), retraining and restraining the body (1 Corinthians 9:27) and learning how to operate the body's machinery (1 Thessalonians 4:4). Get rid of things, avoid situations and sever relationships that stimulate the problem. For example, destroy or disable (e.g., the Internet) all connections to pornography. Commit to walking in transparency with another.

Door of Anger and Unforgiveness

Bev was a young woman we ministered to almost twenty years ago. She was brought to us by her boyfriend and was in a near catatonic state. She could not pray or even mention Jesus' name. We tried to lead her through a declaration of her intent to be free—she could not even lift her head. Listening to Papa, we began to see that she

was deeply mired in pain, and unforgiveness was the lock on the door. Because she seemed to have a litany of people she held in unforgiveness, we began by asking her to write down a list of all the people who had hurt or offended her: name and offense, name and offense, name and offense.

Three pages later she had listed the four rapes she had suffered, abandonment and a long series of hurts and wounds. We explained the truth about forgiveness as described in chapter 7. Amazingly, an older woman, who was a friend and powerful intercessor, slipped silently into the room, winked and mouthed, “God sent me; go for it!” And we were off.

As her current boyfriend watched in amazement, we led her through a repeat-after-me prayer of forgiveness of each person on her list. Name, offense, pronouncement of release of debt, judgment and expectation. She began to visibly lighten as we went through the list. We took time for her to recall, and even experience, each instance and then to choose to forgive. She picked up the pace as we entered page three and began to scream out the forgiveness like a runner on the last kick. At the end she snatched the declaration of freedom out of my hand and shouted it to the Lord and then began to sob and sob—smiling through her tears. She was so very free. And is to this day.

Key Scriptures: Review forgiveness in chapter 7 and Matthew 5:23–24, 1 John 2:9–11 and Hebrews 12:14–15 about leaving your worship of God to go make it right, how hatred causes us to stumble and the roots of bitterness.

Basic goal: Find the event or source and break it or sever it through repentance, forgiveness and releasing judgment. Address wounding as appropriate.

Common descriptors: anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, judgment, self-hatred, eating disorders, control, betrayal, violence, murder, death, suicide, predator, failure, bitterness, condemnation, guilt, rejection, abandonment, comparison,

jealousy, competition, gossip, slander, envy and desire to make someone else look bad.

Specific Ideas and Approaches

Forgiveness was discussed in chapter 7, and this tool takes that concept and applies it specifically. For example, hatred or unforgiveness toward a parent violates the command to honor our fathers and mothers in Ephesians 6:1–3. When we break this command, no matter the condition of the parent, we set in motion a set of judgments and consequences within our own lives. When we repent of dishonor and choose to forgive and honor (especially for an adult child, *honor* is different from *obey*, or to come back under control and bondage), we stop the cycle in our own lives and often find God free to move in the lives of our parents.

In this tool we ask God's help in identifying and listing *each* offender in terms of what he or she did—be specific and direct without making value judgments about motives or intents. Make sure the person faces honestly what has happened, even the emotion of it. Do not go forward mechanically—it should be from the heart, though it is a choice. You may switch to the Inviting Jesus tool for deeper healing of wounding. Be alert for instances where the person was the offender or sinned, and lead in confession and repentance.

1. *Fruit*—Frame the issue(s) in terms of the Four Doors rows. Look for clues to unforgiveness.
2. *Root*—Seek to know where and under what circumstances the issue got started, using WESUD as a guide. Ask God if there are any specific memories He wants to bring up. Understand each person involved and what happened. Also look for curses or ungodly pronouncements spoken. Could it be generational or cultural? Consider other tools as you go.
3. *Boot*—Take appropriate DKB actions for each instance. The person should forgive (cancel debt owed) each person specifically

for what he or she did. You can sometimes start with the easiest. Have the person release any judgment held against the offenders. Remove any expectation they will act better.

4. *Loot*—Have the person speak blessing to the people he or she hated, if possible. At least the person can ask God to have His will with them. Fill empty places of need they left. Pray for healing of the wounding suffered. Ask Jesus to heal or show what He wants the person to know.
5. *Scoot*—Ask God if there is anything else the person should do to clear his or her conscience. Sometimes He shows a step or action to take.

Door of Fear and Control

Elisa was prim and proper. For a young woman she seemed old beyond her years. She presented very little exuberance or spontaneity. Before one word was spoken, one member of the team got a picture of her in a straitjacket. When we approached this door she kept rephrasing the questions to avoid confronting them head-on. We finally asked her directly what she was afraid of—what thing or situation gave her the most discomfort. She struggled. We asked Jesus to give her a memory or thought—clarity. She stumbled a bit and then said, “Something that would embarrass me in front of others.” She then began to cry. In the next thirty minutes she told of cruelty by her mother, who would scold and demean her in public. She seemed to shrink as she talked.

We began at the door of fear and control. When we felt we understood the lying paradigm in which she lived, we led her to ask Jesus if God was like that—to show her what was true and if He could be trusted. She reported that He held her tight and whispered love to her. They walked and He held her hand in public.

We went to another open door we had noted, and she forgave her mother and declared the truth. We asked if it was okay if she gave

the task of “protection” to God, and she cried some more as she willingly handed that exhausting job over to Jesus. We demanded the demonic to leave using DWD techniques.

We blessed her and talked about ways the control was manifested, and we worked with her to recall the pictures God gave her. She drew one of them and put it in her car. She agreed to talk to a dear friend about this and to get her support. Weeks later she was greatly improved and even joined a dance club. Now that is bravery!

Key Scriptures: Review 1 John 4:18, Hebrews 2:14–15, Romans 8:15–17 and 2 Timothy 1:7 about love casting out fear, Jesus rendering fear powerless, our adoption and the spirit we have been given in place of fear.

Basic goal: Replace fear and associated lies with faith and trust in Papa God.

Common descriptors: control, self-strength, predator, victimization, intimidation, fear of man, unbelief, works, performance, pride, presumption, unforgiveness, judgment, death, suicide, failure, apathy, anger, drunkenness and escape.

Specific Ideas and Approaches

All fear leads ultimately to fear of death, which is why Hebrews 2:14 is so powerful. If Jesus protects in the extreme, then He can protect anywhere along that path. Fear can often be linked to a misconception of the love of God—feeling it is conditional, withheld, etc. Fear most often originates in childhood relationships or events—creating ungodly beliefs. It can result in a strong need for control and reliance on self-strength. Often physical or emotional abandonment in childhood let the fear in. Movies and other media may also be a source.

1. *Fruit*—Frame the issue(s) in terms of WESUD. Look for places where there is not normal freedom to move, think, act, go, etc., as those are clues to specific areas of fear for that person.

2. *Root*—Seek to know where and under what circumstances the issue got started, using WESUD as a guide. Ask God if there are any specific memories He wants to bring up.
3. *Boot*—Take appropriate DKB and DWD actions with each instance. Renounce specific fears. There may be a need to forgive the one who caused the fear. You can lead the person to visualize the event and invite Jesus to help find the source and ask Him if there is anything you need to know or do—a form of the Inviting Jesus tool. Break any vows or covenants of protection with the demonic. Repent of things done to open a door to fear.
4. *Loot*—Declare truth about the fear; claim God’s protection. Ask God to restore lost ground in specific areas. Often He will show His presence and perspective in the memory.
5. *Scoot*—Ask God if there is anything else the person needs to do to become free, even a symbolic thing. For example, when ready, the person may take an action that shows the opposite of the fear.

Door of Occult and False Religion

Tim was raised in a very strict and “quirky” church environment. As he became a teenager he rebelled and with two buddies began to experiment with dark music and corresponding trappings. It grew darker and darker until they were determined to find information about rituals that could influence or curse others. Then Tim met Maria and fell in love. I do not condone missionary dating, but she was a forceful young woman who simply told Tim that what he was doing was “stupid, wrong and will lead you to being more of a puppet to Satan than you ever were to your strange church.”

When they came to talk, Tim quickly understood the trap he was heading for, his current state of entrapment and his alternate futures based on his current choices. This logic worked for him.

He understood his need to forgive his parents and church and to renounce any ungodly bonds from both the false religious system he had experienced and the cultic practices in which he later engaged. We led him through DKB and DWD. It took some time to clean house as the Lord brought up different memories of cultic involvement. So we took our time.

Tim was elated with how he felt on the inside when we finished. We blessed him and asked God to fill him with truth and a real sense of his destiny. He immediately saw that he was destined to be a fierce shepherd and that the false direction he had followed was aimed to pervert and destroy that. When they left, he and Maria were already deep in a conversation about praying together, throwing away the music and other dark stuff and how to eventually win his two friends to God.

Key Scriptures: Review 1 Samuel 15:23, Leviticus 20:6, 2 Corinthians 11:2–4, 13–15 and 2 Peter 2:1–3 about divination being rebellion, God’s opposition to occult, deceitful spirits, God’s jealousy for intimacy and the rise of false prophets and teachers.

Basic goal: Replace demonic control with Jesus’ loving Lordship.

Common descriptors: rebellion, witchcraft, Jezebel, intimidation, control, false prophecy, lying, spiritualism, presumption, hate, spirit of the world, judgment, unforgiveness, idolatry, mocking, Ahab, false religion, mysticism and control.

Specific Ideas and Approaches

Much of what we see is a combination of deception and rebellion. There may be many reasons one resorts to the occult, including wounding, need for protection, healing, power or an unmet thirst for supernatural knowledge and reality. It may be entered into due to naïve curiosity and seemingly innocent practices: media, games, organizations or fantasy. It all stems from witchcraft, whether it has

the patina of open and “respectable” white witchcraft or darker covert occultist practices.

Witchcraft can be defined as “demonically inspired manipulation and intimidation for the eventual purpose of control and domination.” It manifests in hundreds of ways, both overt and subtle. The test is the source, not the result.

At its worst the occult diverts seekers of power into demonic control. Occult includes preaching a false Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:2–4) and exercising control (2 Corinthians 11:13, 20). It includes all types of practices—horoscopes, fortune-telling, Ouija, séances (even “innocent” slumber party ones), hypnotism, palm reading, astrology, tarot cards, cultic fantasy games, etc.

Divination provides knowledge through illicit supernatural means. Sorcery is a form of this and gains control or alters the physical senses through various physical or symbolic means. Drug use might be involved.⁴ It can include binding with another person or a spirit, soul ties, inner vows, etc.

Some alternative medicines and medical practices are of demonic New Age origin. False religions (including false Christianity) are a type of occult practice. This can even include exaggerated denominationalism—influenced by spirits of division. Movies and music or other media can be sources of demonic influence and occult control, as can idolatry of music and movie stars. They all have one thing in common: They are counterfeits of God’s supernatural reality.

1. *Fruit*—Frame the issue(s) in terms of WESUD. Look for clues in irrational or magical thinking, fears, control, voices, dark feelings, nightmares, violent or perverted thoughts or drives, etc.
2. *Root*—Using WESUD, seek to know where and under what circumstances the issue got started. Look for each instance or type of involvement. There is often more than one. Ask God if there are any specific memories He wants to bring

- up. Recognize the nature of the sin is idolatry and ultimately Satan worship. Let God stir up sorrow and realization at the reality of what has been done.
3. *Boot*—More than any other door, direct confrontation with the demonic will happen here. Take appropriate DKB and DWD actions with each instance. Confess and renounce each instance specifically remembered and break the bind with it—this is radical and takes concerted effort. Declare intention to come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in each area. Repent of idolatry and not trusting God, making Him jealous and rejecting His provision. Renounce each step of a ritual.
 4. *Loot*—Pray for healing from the damage that resulted. Pray for filling of each area with specific truth and protection. Replace lies and the counterfeit with truth and reality. Ask for the blood of Jesus to cover and protect the person.
 5. *Scoot*—Ask God if there is anything else the person needs to do to become free, even a symbolic thing. For example, he or she must be willing and agree to destroy all occult and cult objects, books, music, etc. There is sometimes a period of resisting Satan's attempts to reassert ownership and control. If the hold was strong, plan to walk things out with a friend as appropriate.

Walking through the Four Doors: Carol

So how does this all work together? To answer that, we have created a condensed fictitious account showing the key points in a typical session involving Carol and a ministry team led by Sam. Any similarity between this example and any specific real-life session is coincidental. Other tools may be appropriate as well, but we will limit ourselves to this tool and DKB. Notice the movement around the steps of the Fruit Loop.

Basic introductions are made and initial explanations (including how “repeat after me” prayers work) accomplished. Everyone is comfortable and ready to go. We all spend a minute listening to God and soaking. We encourage Carol to open herself up to the Lord, and we bind any spirit that does not name Jesus Christ as Lord from interfering or hindering. We ask for angelic protection.

Sam: So, Carol, what’s going on with you?

Carol: Well, I’ve been feeling jumpy for the past six months or so. Maybe a lot longer, but it’s really coming to a head lately. The other day my daughter came up behind me and said something, and I screamed and almost passed out. She says I boss her around, too. And my husband says I am getting really sensitive to suggestions or even gentle criticism, and I jump down his throat whenever he suggests the smallest thing.

Sam: You said you are comfortable with Jesus, so let’s ask Him to help you. Can you give an example? Jesus, will You show her an example to clarify things?

Carol: Let me see. The other day my husband asked me to vacuum the living room, and it’s like a bomb went off inside my head—I yelled at him, “You are not my mother!”

Sam: Why your mother? What was she like?

Carol: Well, she was really wonderful in most ways, but she was very strict with me—at least that’s what I thought. I am kind of a dreamer with a lot going on inside my head, some say even prophetic, and she was very practical and all business. It made me really mad, like she was trying to control me.

We ask Jesus to bring to mind those things that are pertinent. At this point, we are getting insight into several areas to pursue. We always address what comes up, believing Jesus or the Holy Spirit will prompt the right things and memories.

Sam: Why do you think she was trying to control you? Jesus, what do You say?

Carol: I don't know. [Pause.] I just got the thought that maybe she was jealous of my relationship with my grandma. I am a lot like she was before she died, and I spent a lot of time with her when I was a child. Mom said that she was into all kinds of weird things; she read fortune cards or something and told people's future. Stuff like that. So Mom made sure I went to this terrible church—dry, boring, strict. I would sneak out when I could on Wednesday nights and go to the movies. A real rebel, huh? Then after the accident—the one where Grandma was killed, and I was injured—I began to feel like maybe I should start doing things like she did . . . sort of like to honor her memory or something.

Sam: The accident? Let's hold that one for later, okay?

We do not have to do a complete and complex total map of a person's needs but simply deal with what has been presented to us, leaving the rest to other times and places as God leads. At this point we are getting the clear sense that God may want us to see several open doors to explore and close, including rebellion and unforgiveness of Mom (Door of Hatred and Unforgiveness), fear from the accident (Door of Fear) and witchcraft as a result of Grandma (Door of the Occult). We will take them in that order, though in a real session it might weave in and out a bit. There is also the probability of demonization in the areas of fear, control and the occult—maybe transferred from Grandma at the time of her death.

We have also been given a picture of the attack against Carol's prophetic gifting and destiny call, so we overtly ask her to interact a bit with Jesus in order to awaken this call. In other cases we would simply ask Spirit-led questions, counting on the Lord to reveal and bring to mind the way we should go and the answers that should be given.

Sam: Let's start with your mom. Why do you think she was so strict with you? Let's ask—who are you most comfortable with:

Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit? Jesus? Let's ask Jesus if He would be willing to help you get to the bottom of things, okay?

Carol: That would be great!

Sam: Let's do a repeat-after-me, okay? "Jesus, will You show me why my mother was so controlling with me?" [Carol repeats, and they pause.] What are you seeing, sensing or hearing, Carol?

Carol: This is silly, but I think it was because she was afraid I would end up like Grandma, into that weird stuff and all. I just remembered her saying something like I would go to hell if I did that stuff. It scared me, and to this day I feel like I have to not pay attention to anything inside my head.

Sam: How does that make you feel?

Carol: I feel really bad, I guess, because she was doing the best she could to protect me. Maybe she was afraid of her mom. She was controlling, though.

Sam: Are you willing to really forgive her and let it go?

Carol: Yes, that would be really good for her and me.

Sam: Then let's do a repeat-after-me prayer. I'll lead to help you with the wording—sort of like a marriage vow you want to get just right. But if you can say it better or more accurately than I can, use your own words. I am just here to help you through it. God will honor the intent of our hearts even if our words are fumbling and incomplete. Okay?

Carol: Sure.

Sam/Carol: [Very slowly, and with pauses to think, listen and cry.] Mom, I forgive you for controlling me and being very strict with me. I forgive you for making me distrust Grandma. I also forgive you for trying to force upon me a religion that does not listen to the Holy Spirit in favor of rules and controls. You did not know what you were doing and tried your best to protect me. I take back now and repent of all judgments I've held against you, as if I know better than you why you did what you did. I release you now from any inner or spoken curses from me against you, and I repent of them and of rebellious and angry thoughts against you.

Jesus, I confess rebellion and judgment against my mom. You have said that rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft to You, and I am sorry for my participation in it. Would You forgive me of my judgments and rebellion and make me totally clean in that area according to Your promise about confession? I declare my freedom in Jesus today from any demonic control in this area, and I place myself under the blood and protection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I choose today to honor you, Mom, as my mother and to bless you. Jesus, will You please bless my mom and lead her into a closer and closer walk with You? Would You heal her of any fears and unforgiveness she has had toward her mom? I bless you, Mom.

I also renounce my participation in a false religion of control and externals and ask You, Jesus, to bring Your healing and gentle presence into that place. I repent of judging them, as if I knew better, and I ask You, Jesus, to forgive me for judging Your church—that is Your place, not mine. I repent of it. I submit to You, Lord, and I ask You to take back the ground I have given away to the evil one for me. Amen.

Sam: How does that feel?

Carol: Wow, that feels real good . . . that's amazing!

Sam: Anything else about your mom before we go on?

At this point we might do a few other things about the mom if there are other places of rebellion or sin. We would continue to ask Jesus to show us anything there. We now turn to a different door to explore her relationship with her grandma; we do this in a way that leads us to the times and places where she participated with Grandma in occult practices.

Sam: Tell me about your times with Grandma. Did she and you do some of those weird things you were telling me about together? Let's ask Jesus to show you any times or memories He wants you to see, okay? Repeat after me: "Jesus, will You please show me

where I participated in things with Grandma that were false and not good for me?”

Carol: A couple of thoughts are coming to me . . .

We then do Kingdom business to renounce participation, repent of it and choose the real over the false. Then we move to DWD to rebuke any demons of the occult that entered her and ask Jesus to fill her.

Sam: Carol, from what you’ve said, Grandma had a lot of influence over you, maybe some of it inappropriate in terms of her control and relationship.

Carol: That’s right. She told me I was her soul mate . . . sort of funny.

Sam: Would you like to break that inappropriate soul tie while still blessing Grandma?

Carol: Yes, that would be really good—it always made me feel a little strange or inappropriate. You know, nothing sexual, but a little . . . well, violated. But I wanted her attention.

Sam: Let’s break those soul ties—want to repeat after me? [We explain briefly what soul ties are first, and then we pray slowly and thoughtfully . . . as always.]

I repent of the inappropriate soul ties I participated in with Grandma. I choose to sever them today, allowing only the reality of appropriate relationship to exist, even though she is now dead. I send away from me the wrong part of Grandma that she tried to put in me and to give me. I refuse it now and give it to Jesus to take to the cross. I claim my freedom from ungodly influences coming to me through my grandma. I am tied spiritually to my Lord Jesus Christ, and I ask You, Jesus, to fill that place with Your presence alone. I renounce any participation vow or covenant made with any demonic spirit through my grandmother, and I command you to leave my presence and go where Jesus tells you to go. I ask You, Jesus, to take back the ground I have lost in this area.

At this point a team member senses things may not be fully done and passes that information along. We ask Carol, and she agrees that something is still there. We may move into part of DWD and deal with identifying and casting out spirits.

Seeing the pattern of control—a subtle form of witchcraft—we lead her to recognize the control her grandma tried to exert, her mother’s control and her own attempts to control her husband and children. We do Kingdom business in renouncing, repenting, claiming freedom and choosing the control of the Holy Spirit rather than demonically inspired witchcraft.

We may also, if we sense it, go after generational witchcraft coming from Grandma’s line by forgiving past generations; repenting on their behalf; taking those things to the cross of Jesus and placing the cross between Carol and past generations; severing Carol from curses, vows and other things of the occult; asking God to allow the good things and the destiny gifts from the generations to flow fully to Carol and claiming her God-intended inheritance from Grandma and her ancestors.

Now a place is open to deal with the accident and fear. A logical next step might be to use the Inviting Jesus tool to go to the place of fear—but as this is the Four Doors . . .

Sam: Carol, let’s talk about the accident, is that okay? Tell me about it.

Carol: Grandma and I were driving and a truck came out of nowhere and plowed into us. I was awake the whole time, but Grandma died. I was sort of out of it.

Sam: How old were you when that happened? How did it feel, and how does it feel today?

Carol: I was six. It was awful, and I don’t like to think about it. I avoid ever going down that street; it gives me the creeps. Since that time I still don’t feel safe when I drive, like I am unprotected.

At this point, based on a note passed to the leader, we might do a very short explanation about the demonic and transference, in

a way that reassures her she is okay and helps her to understand voices in her head and the fear she feels—this is not an exposition on demonology. After she walks through the memory, she sees it and is ready.

Sam: Would you like to deal with the fear and the voices and bless Grandma? Let's do another repeat-after-me, okay?

Carol: Let's do it.

Sam/Carol: I renounce the lie that I am alone, exposed and not protected, and I choose today to rely on the truth that, Jesus, You are my protection and my shield. I renounce any other source of protection or reliance. I break any covenant I made with any demon offering protection, and I also renounce coming under the authority and influence of a demon causing fear. I renounce my participation in believing those lies of fear and I break that hold over me today and announce my covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ in the area of security and protection. Jesus, You and Papa God love and protect me, and Your perfect love casts out fear . . . I consider it cast out today. I also declare today that Jesus Christ is my only source of spiritual information and the only One with whom I make any covenant to gain information, insight or any other form of revelation. I ask You, Jesus, to remind me of this declaration, and to teach me by Your Holy Spirit to walk in faith and trust in You, especially when I drive.

Sam: How are you doing? Are you okay?

Carol: That was amazing—I actually felt something lift off of me, like it was tight in my throat and then gone.

Sam: Jesus is Lord over all Satan's demons, and you have His authority over yourself to stay clean and clear.

After some further probing and asking if there is anything else God wants to do, the team gets the "all clear" sign from both Carol and the Lord that the restorative work for that session is complete. So we move into blessing.

Sam: Carol, let's take a little time to bless you and to thank the Lord Jesus for the places of truth and of freedom He brought you to today. How does that sound?

Carol: I'd like that.

We now begin to thank God and may ask Carol to verbalize her own thanksgiving. We ask for the Holy Spirit to fill her, and we return to each area of ministry, asking for God to protect, fill and communicate the truth. We ask for angels to cover those places while tender and to defend her against any backlash of the demonic. We ask the Holy Spirit to help her follow through with transformation of her thinking and remind her of the key truths she heard today.

We may also speak to Carol about her prophetic destiny and show her the pattern of attack against her. We would remind her of the good coming through the generations and the demonic scheme to pervert it and turn it to witchcraft. We would help her see that that is a sign of the power that God trusts her with, and that God would like her to begin to move into that place—slowly, and under proper authority and protection within a loving church family, and with older women and men who can help teach and guide her. We might have Carol specifically claim and specifically accept her calling and inheritance.

We would tell her about any follow-up activity and then bless her and send her on her way.

We then take a little time to debrief the team members and gain insight that may not have been brought forward fully. It is a teachable moment for all to gain wisdom and experience. We then pray for Carol, for each other, for protection over our entire sphere and for our expectation of blessing, not backlash, in our lives. We clean up the room, turn in paperwork and . . . get a bite to eat together.

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chapter

10

The Father Ladder

Two little girls, on their way home from Sunday school, were solemnly discussing the lesson. "Do you believe there is a devil?" asked one. "No," said the other promptly. "It's like Santa Claus: It's your father."

Unknown

To carry a grudge is like being stung to death by one bee.

William Walton

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.

1 John 3:1

I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection.

Sigmund Freud

Our friend Dawn said, “Okay, Bev, close your eyes. What picture comes to your mind when I say the term *Father God* or *God the Father*? Not your religious head picture but your heart picture. What did you see, sense or feel?”

Uncharacteristically, Bev did not have a picture in her head. She felt like no one was there, a sense of absence. But she did get a vague feeling of not being okay, of angst or fear, of wanting to shrink back, of not doing quite well enough. She suddenly felt lonely. Strange—is God like that?

Could Bev see God the Father as having a celebration in her honor—especially when she did not deserve it? She did not think so. Not even in her dreams. Even though Scripture clearly shows that is His pattern.¹

What Is Your Picture of Papa?

I, Andy, was that way. Maybe you are, too.

I used to think that God was probably saying something like, *No, stupid, not like that*, or *Maybe some other time*. You might laugh. Okay then, smarty, what is the one thing *you* really think God’s Spirit says inside of you? Some might answer something like, *Well, you failed again*, or, *You’re not quite right for the occasion*, or, *I’m pretty busy right now*, or just, *Shut up*.

That is *not* what the Holy Spirit says. This is:

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son . . . that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying,

“Abba! Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Galatians 4:4–7

Sons. Heirs. Savor that.

Scripture states that the one thing the Holy Spirit of God stresses again and again within us is “Call Him Abba” (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6).² The *one* message God the Father, Creator of the universe, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, wants to get across is that it is okay to call Him “Papa.” He likes it.

It makes Him smile.

It conveys His heart; it opens His lap for snuggling. It allows us to see His crinkly warm smile when He looks at us and to feel warmly accepted and loved. No fear. No misunderstanding. No cringing. No backhand. He wants us to believe that.

The Father Ladder³ tool gets to that—and to other relationships, too: mother, siblings, Jesus, the Holy Spirit.

Basic Concept

Our earliest primary relationships (father, mother, siblings) frame the reality in which we experience all relationships—especially intimate ones. When we begin to understand and try to experience intimacy with the loving members of the Trinity, that early framework, meant by God to be a boon, is often the bane in our ability to experience intimacy with God in all His aspects.

For example, Jesus tells us in the Word what Father God is really like—loving and forgiving. That is objective truth. But our human family relationships color how we see God. As Stephen Covey said, “We see the world as *we* are, not as *it* is.” We see God the Father through the veil of reality created out of experiences when we were young and in the presence of our earthly fathers. We gain ungodly beliefs.

It is also true that we tend to see Jesus based on the treatment we received from siblings or peers, and our views of the Holy

Spirit are colored by the treatment we received from our mothers or mother figures. Bullying, abuse or sibling rejection can cause us to hold a heart belief that Jesus is unsafe. A harsh or distant mother creates within us a belief about life in which nurture is absent, tenderness is rare and hard to receive, insecurity and a cold remoteness flavor every interaction. We come to view the Holy Spirit as these things to us . . . but it is the complete opposite of who He really is.

We may have been wounded by any or all of these, even when the people in our families are good people. No parent is perfect.

As shown in figure 8, fathers tend to be the ones who best impart identity (who I am), protection (the world is safe) and provision (I will be well cared for). Mothers impart comfort, nurture and instruction—all focused on how I learn to navigate life initially in safe and comfortable ways. Siblings and peers provide companionship and communication, helping us connect laterally to others.

Figure 8

Father God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Protection • Provision 	Father
Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companionship • Communication 	Siblings/Peers
Holy Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort • Nurture • Instruction 	Mother

The Father Ladder is very good at establishing the potential for, and beginnings of, intimate relationship with Father God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus—though relatively few have a tough time seeing Jesus as a gentle, wise and compassionate friend. The goal is to reestablish relationship with each member of the Trinity as needed. It can also help heal perceptions about others around us who may still somewhat play these roles, and open the way to having the unmet needs in the middle column met.

Basic Approach

The Father Ladder tool can be initiated from any place in figure 8. For example, if the prayer leader senses that some of the things in the middle column, related to one of the family member categories, are missing, they might simply ask about it, ask about the relationship history with that family member or ask about the person's picture of the corresponding member of the Trinity.

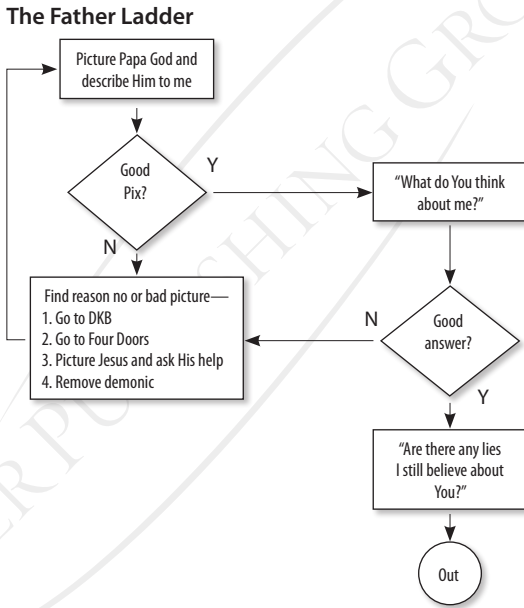
Common negative father images associated with fathers' basic roles include absent dad, broke dad, angry dad, fearful dad, abusive dad and stingy dad. Common negative mother images might include busy mom, absent mom, emotional mom, controlling mom. Common negative sibling images include selfish sibling, burdened sibling (taking care of me), rejecting sibling, belittling or betraying sibling and ignoring or disinterested sibling.

Ministry often begins with our earthly fathers. We have never known anyone with a clear, intimate heart-picture of Father God who is very messed up emotionally. But problems with and perceptions of earthly fathers have created lies and false concepts about Papa God that color and block intimacy with Him. It is at the very heart of the battle—what is Papa really like? Get that one right and all else follows. When we deal with the roadblocks and clutter, then we free the person to be able to hear directly from Papa God, often through a revelatory picture.

When we ask a person to picture the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit, we normally get a strong impression of what the relationship has been like with the corresponding family member, and what lies are believed about God. We ask God to help the person set aside the false paradigm and reach for the true one. We can then quickly move to healing and forgiveness in that relationship using Doing Kingdom Business. God Himself often interacts, speaking into the person's heart in amazing ways. Sometimes the person is so afraid of the Father that we need to ask Jesus if He would be willing to assist in bringing the person to Papa God.

Figure 9 shows a basic logic sequence through the Father Ladder using the option of starting with Father God. Recall there are different entry points. It is very simple in concept. As with all the tools, we do not force anything. If we are stymied in one line, we simply go to another tool. There is *never* a sense of failure, and there are no wrong answers to any questions.

Figure 9



We are interacting with both the person and God throughout the process. We will walk through it with God the Father in mind here, though the same basic approach is used from any starting point and with any relationship. It works well with the Holy Spirit and Jesus, too, though a large portion of the time a father issue is present.

We sense an issue with relationships or an ungodly belief. In this case we begin by asking the person to picture Papa God (or other member of the Trinity). We might say, “What picture comes

to mind when I say *Father God?*” or, “Picture Father God and describe Him to me.”

Those with a strong sense of Father’s blessing and a healed relationship will always have a good, intimate picture of Father God. His face is clear and loving, they feel close and warmly loved and they have little trouble thinking of themselves in His lap, resting, not religiously doing.

Other pictures make Papa God seem distant, stern, formal, high above and scary, seated and unapproachable, a feeling or entity without welcoming body or form, etc. This is contrary to God’s scripturally given picture of Himself to His adopted children.

When we have a “bad” picture of Papa God, we look for reasons. The reasons are based primarily on lies or misconceptions we believe about Papa God, learned through past experience with our primary father figure. These are often held in place or maintained through our understandable, but sinful, reactions to and attitudes about events, periods of time, the relationship itself or even the lack of relationship.

When we clearly understand the picture a person sees or feelings that person experiences, we might move to the Boot steps of DKB, such as choosing forgiveness, renouncing lies, repenting, etc.

It might be that the person is so traumatized or so deceived concerning Papa God and the father image in general that we ask Jesus for help. We can ask the person to picture Jesus, deal with any issues there first, and then, if the person is experiencing a clear and intimate picture of Jesus, we can ask something like, “Jesus, will You take me to (or show me) Papa God?”

Often it is hearing what Father God has to say about us that brings the healing—so we can lead the person into asking, “Papa God, what do You think about me?” If there is not a good answer, we go back to find reasons using the other tools. If there is a good answer, we clean up any related lies by asking Papa God, “Papa, are there any other lies I believe about You?” This often leads to more revelation and healing. (In that way it is a variation of the Inviting Jesus tool of the next chapter.)

We find that the picture God gives to the person is often highly symbolic of that person's own calling. God shows us the part of Himself that we are to strongly live out and reflect to the world—that part of Him that we are. For example, a man got a picture of a fierce but kind lion. That picture prophetically showed him the reality behind his own fears and timidity, and his calling as a fierce but kind protector of the weak . . . which was his passion—and the focus of the enemy's attack against him.

Walking through the Father Ladder: Bob⁴

This format is a formal ministry setting, but this could be done through simple conversation as well. The basic introductions are made and initial explanations and liability paperwork accomplished. We sense Bob is a little tight and nervous (maybe because he pops up so often in this book!), so we take a bit more time to get comfortable.

We talk to Bob about what this kind of ministry is: just first aid for a wounded heart. We explain that Jesus came for this purpose, and so we are spot-on in the bull's-eye of God's will for today—that this is Bob's day. We tell him that we are not professionals, but there is nothing he can tell us that we have not heard before or probably even done before. We could just play musical chairs and one of us would be in the "hot seat"—we are all brothers, and the problem is the problem, not Bob. We may chat a bit about how he heard about Freedom Prayer and got here. His job is the easiest, as he is just the reporter—telling us what he sees, hears and senses. We explain repeat-after-me prayers, making sure he will not just parrot and can rephrase all he wants, or stop any time—especially when it comes to forgiveness.

Everyone is comfortable and ready to go. The team spends a bit of quiet time listening to God and soaking. We settle our hearts and invite the felt presence of God into the room. We encourage Bob to open himself up to the Lord, and we pray: "We ask for You

to be Lord of this time together, and we bind any spirit that does not name Jesus as Lord from bringing confusion.”

Sam: So, Bob, let’s go for it. What’s the thing you least want to talk about? After that it will be easy!

Bob: [Laughs.] Well, I have a list. In a nutshell, I am finally realizing that I am an angry person. I blow up at my wife and kids all the time. It seems like I have this dialogue going on inside my head, like I am justifying myself to myself and finding reasons for what I do.

Also I have some problems with Internet porn—nothing like every day, but maybe once a month or so I just stray into something. It makes me feel ashamed and guilty, so I am not sure why I do it. . . . I’m an elder in my church, and I hate this “dirty little secret,” you know? It makes me want to quit. I love people and helping them, and watching over them seems like the greatest thing I ever do—but I seem to be so harsh sometimes. It just kills me.

My wife says I work all the time and seem preoccupied constantly. She may be right. I catch myself staying late for no real reason.

If we sense that Bob is not used to honoring inner pictures, thoughts, senses and communication, we may take a minute to help him put more weight on it and show him that this is how God may want to communicate with him. We pray and ask God to bring thoughts, senses, pictures, etc., and we commit to honoring them and reporting them truly. We decide to use the Father Ladder, starting with the inner picture of Father God.

Sam: Bob, would you close your eyes and sort of let things happen? When I say the term *Father God* or *God the Father*, what picture immediately comes to mind? What do you see?

Bob: The picture that came to me was like that Abraham Lincoln statue—sort of formal and distant, very good and important, sort of big and above me. . . . I know God loves me and—

Sam: Bob, I'm not needing you to tell me what you think, but what you feel and sense. It's not what we think that moves us and defines us but what we really feel and believe on the inside.

Tell me about your dad. Was he like that? Distant and good, but aloof?

Bob: Well, he was always busy with work and gone a lot. When he was home he was always preoccupied with things: bills, sports on TV, you know. I never really felt like we spent time, just the two of us. I know he worked hard and always tried to provide for us. I remember him forgetting to take me to baseball practice and I got cut from the team because I couldn't get there. He never even said he was sorry, just, "I was busy."

The goal at this point is to work with Bob to help him understand his feelings about himself and his dad—to get clarity on places of wounding and unforgiveness and places where he believes a lie about himself based on how he was treated by his dad. We might go to Inviting Jesus in a particular memory, but as this is about the Father Ladder, we will limit ourselves to an approach that reveals lies and truth through the Father picture and revelatory questioning.

Sam: How did that make you feel?

Bob: Not very important, like I did not matter all that much. [He starts to cry, and we let him do so with a comforting hand on his shoulder.]

Sam: So to that little boy, how true would this sound? "I'm not as important to Dad as all those other things. I am not very valuable, and I have to prove myself somehow."

Bob: That would sound very true. Seems obvious when you put it that way.

Sam: Would you like to forgive your dad for being distant and stern like Abraham Lincoln?

Bob: That would be good.

Sam: Then let's do a repeat-after-me prayer. I'll lead to help you with the wording—sort of like a verbal contract or vow you want

to get just right. I'll do my best to reflect what you have told me. I'll try to listen to the Lord, but I make lots of mistakes for sure.

I want you to really be able to agree with what is being spoken. So if you want to say it better or more accurately than me, you can use your own words. If you feel something I say is not right, then let's stop and look at it. I am just here to help you through it. God will honor the intent of our hearts even if our words aren't perfect. Okay?

Bob: Sounds fine to me.

We anticipate that, as we launch into speaking forgiveness, the Holy Spirit will lead us, maybe with Bob unaware, in a prophetic direction of saying and sensing things that are key to Bob's places of hurt. We might, for example, get a picture of a little boy and sense his feelings, and we speak from there; go to a memory and speak forgiveness from within that place; speak things as they really are without sugarcoating or making excuses, so the forgiveness can come from the darkest corner of wounding and pain, etc. Bob repeats, changing some of the words and crying. After thirty minutes of talking and tears, Bob feels it and is ready to speak out.

Sam/Bob: I forgive you, Dad, for not loving me enough to spend time with me; for not showing me that I was significant and important to you. I forgive you for being preoccupied with other things when we were together and for making me feel like I had to compete for your love. I forgive you for seeming to be aloof and stern and important but not intimate, kind, gentle and humble with me when I was a little boy, alone in my room and wanting my dad to come find me. I forgive you for not taking me to ball practice and making me get cut from the team because you felt you had more important things to do. I forgive you for always making me feel that the things that were important to me were stupid and small, and for teaching me the lie that God is that way, too. I choose today to stop judging you for your actions as if I knew why you acted the way you did, but to leave all judgment to God. I choose instead to

bless you and to ask Papa God to bless you and fill you with the knowledge of His grace and love. I honor you as my dad today and for the rest of my life.

We ask the Holy Spirit or Jesus to show us if there is anything else that keeps Bob separated from Father God. We may handle a few things with DKB or go off on a longer side trip. Then we move on.

Sam: Let's picture Father God again, and this time let's ask Him to give you His own picture. [Pause.] What are you seeing or sensing now when you picture Him?

Bob: He invited me to come up, but I still feel like I cannot go there. It seems scary or inappropriate or something—like I am barging in on something important, like caring for China or something.

Sam: Let's try this. When I ask you to picture Jesus, what comes to mind?

Bob: Oh, He's great, so loving, you know, and He died for me and—

Sam: I know all those wonderful things, but let's see if Jesus would give you a picture of Himself just now. Repeat after me: "Jesus, would You show me a picture of Yourself now?"

Bob: Sure . . . that was easy. We're walking in some grass, like a park with buildings all around. Yes, it's like in Washington, D.C.—weird. I can see where Lincoln, well, where Father God is sitting far ahead.

Sam: Would you like to do a brave thing? [Bob nods.] Say this: "Jesus, would You take me to see Papa God?" [Pause.] What's happening now?

Bob: [Laughs.] Jesus is saying, "I'll race ya," just like my brother used to do.

Sam: Would you like to? [Bob nods.] Well, ready, set, go!

Bob: [Laughs.] I beat Him! I think He let me—we're right in front of God, down below.

Sam: Would you like to go closer to Him? [Bob nods.] Ask Jesus to take you to Him. Ask, “Jesus, would You be willing to take me to see Papa God?”

Bob: Oh, that’s cool! I’m sitting on His lap; He has His arms around me and is crying. [Cries.]

We wait for a while, not wanting to interrupt something God seems to be initiating on the inside of Bob. Is this just mental? Bob would tell you it is more real than anything he has encountered religiously for a long time. Bob seems to be ready, and we get a nudge to do one more thing, to go after one key lie Bob still lives with.

Sam: Are you still feeling brave? [Bob nods.] Then ask this: “Papa, what do You think of me?” [Long pause.]

Bob: Wow . . . He says He has been waiting for me to finish what I was doing and that He has all the time in the world for me. I’m His favorite. [Cries.]

Sam: How does that feel to you? Does it sound good and true?

Bob: It feels really good—I feel like it is true, you know. I really do. Wow! He just handed me a shepherd’s staff and said, “Welcome to the team.” [Cries.] That’s so awesome, I feel . . . man . . .

We may just soak for a while and thank Papa. We would then begin to speak over him about his destiny as a shepherd and as a gentle person who may be intense but is neither angry nor impure. We would reaffirm Papa’s love for him and help him to hold on to what he hears Papa say to him. We might relate a bit about how much God likes to speak to us and that the things He says are ours to keep—no matter who might try to steal them away from us. They can be life changing.

Notice that at this time we did not go after the pornography issue directly. We did not want to ruin this moment, we felt. But in Scoot, we suggested when tempted he could return right here with Papa and bring it to Him.

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chapter

11

Inviting Jesus

Everyone stumbles over the truth from time to time, but most people pick themselves up and hurry off as though nothing ever happened.

Sir Winston Churchill

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. . . . He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalms 34:18; 147:3

Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere; it is more important than knowledge.

Albert Einstein

It was 1992. Toni was not a believer—well, not in my then-narrow interpretation, anyway. So you can imagine her surprise when I asked her what she thought Jesus might have to say about her being taken out of her abusive family and placed in foster care—how Jesus felt when five-year-old Toni was being forced from her mother. Toni said, “I don’t know—how would I know that?” “Well, for me, it is kind of simple,” I replied. “I just close my eyes and look for Him, and I just try to ask Him and see what He says to me on the inside, and—”

I was about to launch into a conversation designed to show Toni that she needed Jesus in her life. It was my turn to be surprised when Toni, eyes shut, interrupted, “He says He was sad, too, but would never leave me alone.”

“He what?!”

“I guess that’s Jesus, huh? Like you said, He sounds so close and friendly.”

“Ah . . . well . . . yes, sure . . .”

I guess He *is* near to the brokenhearted.

Back then I was surprised when Jesus answered directly. Today I am surprised when He seems not to.

Jesus Speaks

One of my favorite movie scenes is in *The Matrix*, when they are about to plug Neo into the matrix for the first time. Morpheus, the old father figure, says, “This will feel a little weird at first.” And then, *wham!*—he suddenly appears in a different world. One with cooler clothes.

Neo has to learn that his perceptions are not totally aligned with reality, and that his own belief can change the dynamics of that world. He learns that his beliefs are the limiting factor. To prove it Morpheus leaps two hundred feet to another rooftop.

The Inviting Jesus tool is a little bit like that. Like all of Freedom Prayer, this tool is based directly on the truth that God Himself wants to interact with us and bring healing. It is both scripturally rational and real-time phenomenological; its foundation allows us to stand firm on unchanging truth in the Word and the equally rock solid truth that we are led daily, moment by moment, by our ever-present God.

This tool is derived from a number of sources that all have to do with how we try to safely and effectively hear God, judge what we feel we hear against both Scripture and our knowledge of God's character and ways and determine how to best respond to what we hear.¹

We had been encountering and interacting with Jesus for a while in ministry settings when we saw (much to our relief) many others growing in this understanding of ministering through an interactive session with God Himself (this led to our Partners with God foundation).²

This "tool" is as old as the church, as old as the book of Acts.

For example, in Acts 15 all the Church leaders of that day gather for the famous council in Jerusalem to make a decision on one of the key doctrines of the Church: law or grace. After doing all the things one would do to discern God's voice, the leaders in Jerusalem (including some original apostles) wrote that it "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" to take such and such a direction (verse 28). To them, with clear hearts and a willingness to obey God, "seemed good" seemed good enough.

We sometimes are not fully certain of our understanding, but we are certain of our God and that if we, with as clean a motive as we know, ask Him for an egg, He will not give us a scorpion . . . will He? (Luke 11:12). So, in this tool we listen and follow, keeping

well within the boundaries of Scripture and love. When you ask God a direct question, like any good father, mother or friend, He will respond—mostly in familiar and safe ways, but often in surprising ways, too. This may stretch our paradigms about God somewhat—and maybe that is a good thing.

I, Jennifer, adopted a little daughter from China. Because of a cleft palate she spoke very little Mandarin and understood very little English. I speak a lot of English and knew few Mandarin words. All I wanted her to know was that I loved her from day one. So I used her native language, my native language, pictures, puppets and a whole lot of acting and theatrics to get my point across. I was going to meet her in whatever way she needed to heal. And if I, being evil, know how to give good gifts to my child . . . well, you get my point. How much more does God want us to hear His heart?

We all must learn to listen when we pray . . . ask and then listen. If it is a real conversation, we do not just talk; we listen because that is where the answers are. God is not human and His first language is not English. This truth is both freeing and humbling. At the very least, most Bible-believing people have an understanding that God may want to speak to them in the present day, whether or not they actually experience it that often.

Inviting Jesus into a situation just makes room for Him to present Himself so that we can understand, see and hear Him. Biblically He does this. It may be difficult, for example, to wrap our brains around the idea of Jesus as a Shepherd, a King, a Bridegroom, a Priest, a Lamb and a Lion all at once. But in certain situations, those individual truths of His personality stand alone and speak to the situation specifically. He delights in speaking to us in words but just as often in thoughts, pictures, memories, “knowing” and feelings, right then, right there . . . far deeper and more clearly than mere words. A picture, even to God, may be worth a thousand words! It is what He did throughout the Bible, so it makes sense

that He would continue to speak in those ways. When we listen, we are often amazed at our real-time God.

Overview of the Inviting Jesus Tool

The primary target of the Inviting Jesus tool is also its strength: addressing inner wounds (“captive” versus “prisoner”) and the internal belief structures that keep us from healing. Often the wounding is little more than a painful memory that, seen through adult eyes, is thought to be no great thing. Sometimes it is extreme and horrific trauma. At the first responder level, we sometimes refer the most extreme types to others with more skill and experience—though you might be one of those who deals with trauma often. This tool is effective at every level.

Inviting Jesus focuses on the understanding that we are best healed from past wounding by hearing God tell us what is true and what He thinks. We receive His perspective on both past and present as He accompanies us into the dark and frightful place of memory, comforting and freeing us.

How is this so?

Recall the discussion in chapter 4 about the growth of a stronghold. A wounding occurred in the past, normally in childhood. Our wonderful minds, often with demonic assistance, constructed a false childish reality or explanation to account for and deal with the wounding. If it was a single traumatic event, then it is often remembered in vivid detail but with bizarre explanations as to why it happened. If it was repeated trauma, the response is often denial, internal defense mechanisms, large segments of lost time and intense, often self-directed anger. The trauma may have been an event—the *presence* of abuse—but also it may have been experienced through neglect or abandonment—that is, the *absence* of something vitally needed.

We then live within that construct and build upon it. It seems true to us—so it plays out that way in our world. It is what we

believe about what happened that is important, our perception of reality at that time. And so we have a two-part problem: the painful memory of what happened, mostly kept away from our daily lives but leaking through in myriad ways, and our resultant beliefs about life and ourselves that were laid down emotionally, often physically and, less deeply, logically.

We may, in response, have exhibited and/or continue to exhibit reactions of anger, fear, hatred and unforgiveness and developed negative ways to escape or mask the pain. Sometimes sickness or pain within the body is the strongest clue that something inside is trying to speak to us; some ministries even use these as clues to healing.³ These are secondary—important, but not central; symptoms, not causes. Even when sophisticated defense mechanisms have developed, memory and emotion often leak through in unhelpful ways.

When something happens in the present that feels somewhat like the old pain, it is like hitting a bruise—there is an overreaction. We (or worse, our spouse or friends) walk into an emotional minefield. That inner-lie structure amplifies past pain in present circumstances. Present emotions and issues reflect the past event.

It is thus normally important, in some way, to work inside or beside the traumatic memory, where the painful connection is strongest. Using this current-day “fruit,” we can follow it back to the point of origin—the “root.” God (normally Jesus, but we sometimes ask which member of the Trinity the person is most comfortable dealing with) accelerates the process amazingly by bringing and accompanying the person right to the point in time when the lie was first believed, the pain first incurred, the confusion implanted. Sometimes it is a memory that is typical, representative or even symbolic of what happened repeatedly, but it is somehow the “right” memory.

When we allow the Lord to be with us, remove the lie and replace it with truth, the pain can drain out. The reality of what happened is what it is. But both our perceptions and reactions are changed forever. It becomes more a past event, not a defining trauma.

So we ask Jesus to communicate what is true about that situation, maybe where He was, maybe what He thinks about it. The person does the questioning through our repeat-after-me leading and facilitating. This often leads to other restorative exchanges with Jesus and Papa God in terms of loving revelation, healing, memories explained, destiny assured and fears calmed.

Many years ago, when we first began ministry, we were amazed how Jesus (or another member of the Trinity) seemed ever-present in our times of need (Psalm 46:1). Later, techniques within Theophostic Prayer Ministry helped us to systematize the way we worked cooperatively with Jesus.⁴ But we were troubled, as were many, that in more extreme cases, asking a person to “go to a memory,” even with us present in the room, seemed a bit like asking a child to enter a darkened basement all alone. When we noted fear or a sense of insecurity about knowing where things came from, we began to invite Jesus to be with the person right from the beginning, before we even opened the basement door. We helped the person find a safe place in his or her mind’s eye with Jesus—a real place he or she could name and stay in or return to during ministry.

Others, too, had taken this turn, notably Dr. Karl and Charlotte Lehman with the Immanuel approach—meaning “God with us.”⁵ As Psalm 23:4 (NIV) says, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

We found that the ability to process the memory and hear Jesus is not diminished when there is a sense of current safety and security, even a sense of a buffer, allowing the person to look at the memory, sometimes within it, but also sometimes “beside” it. This buffer concept is common in secular trauma treatment in which, for example, the person views the memory as a movie, accompanied and in control.⁶ With Inviting Jesus, we believe the difference is that it is not just make believe—God really *does* walk with us through the darkest valley; He really *does* have a powerful staff and rod.

Before moving on, we want to raise a couple of points about dissociation and related issues. In our experience, every Freedom Prayer minister will encounter various forms of defense and coping mechanisms, including dissociation and dissociative identity disorder. As ministers we should be able to understand what we are seeing, even though we are not counselors or therapists and *never* make diagnoses of any kind—especially concerning this topic. Having said that, many Freedom Prayer ministers are very skilled in befriending those with dissociation and helping them in amazing ways. Further factual background can be easily gleaned from online sources, and we have included a short informative section at the end of this chapter on how we embrace it within Freedom Prayer.

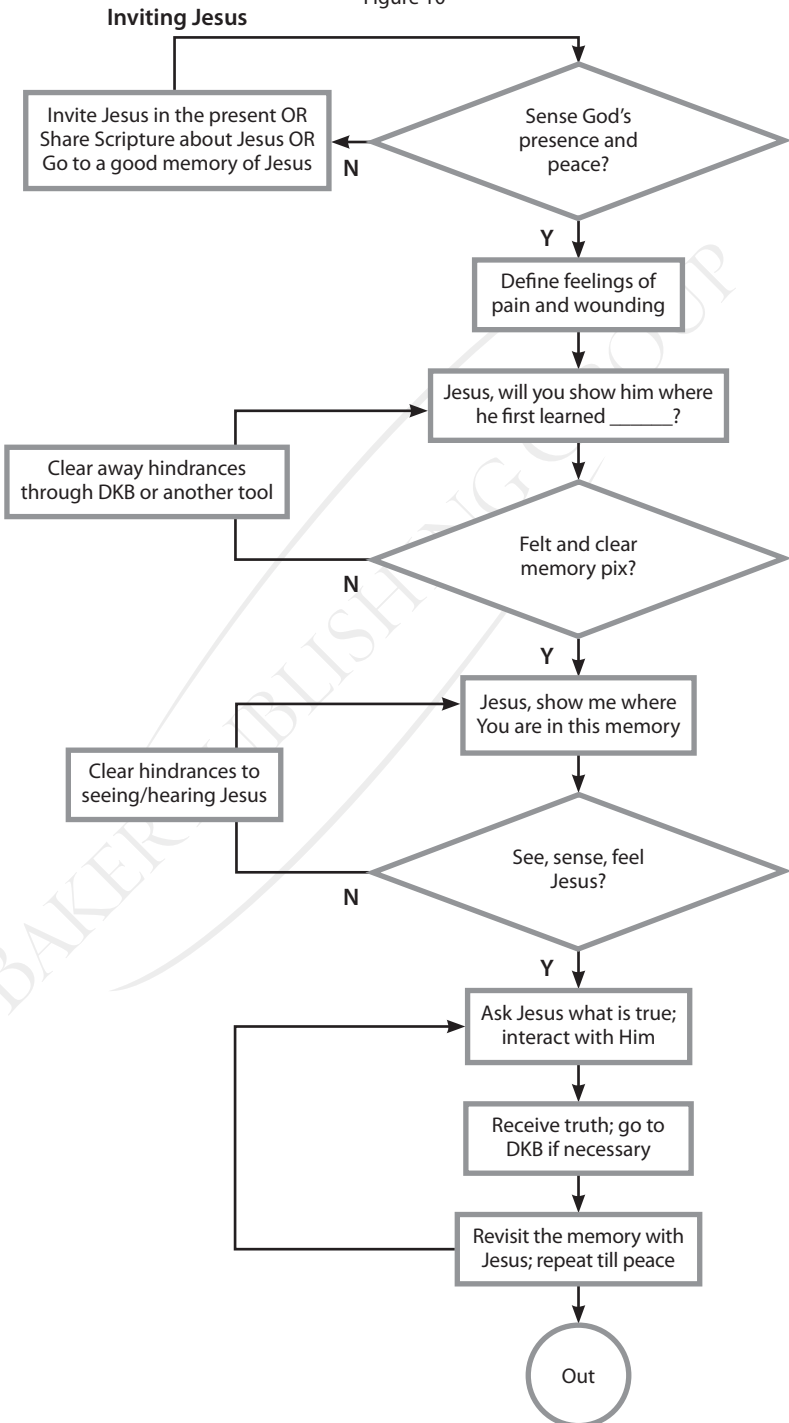
How to Use the Tool

Figure 10 shows a “logic flow chart” through Inviting Jesus. As always, if charts intimidate you, skip it! The flow in the diagram is typical but not rigid. It is very simple in concept. We do not force it. As with all tools, if we are stymied in one line, we simply go to another or to another tool, without any sense of failure. There are no right or wrong answers to any questions asked . . . ever. And we are not trying to dredge up every bad memory—only the key place God would like us to go to in order to correct a false belief on which part of the person’s life is based.

Sense God’s Peace and Presence

If we get the sense that the person is feeling uncomfortable or insecure, like that child descending into the dark basement, then the first priority is to help them attain a sense that God is accompanying them and that they are safe. This is done by our teams in different ways, but it always includes simply asking Jesus to be with them. The first block in the diagram lists three alternatives to directly going to the memory and meeting Jesus there.

Figure 10



The *first* is to simply ask Jesus to be there in the present. We ask them to close their eyes and say something like, “Jesus, I am going to try to remember some hurtful things now. Would it be okay if You came along with me? I need You.” We ask them what they are seeing, sensing or feeling; to look around for Him in their mind’s eye. Often Jesus will establish a touch with a person, such as hand holding, carrying, etc. We can deal with any fears as well, giving them to Jesus to carry.

Second, for people who are used to approaching God through Bible verses, we remind them of key Scriptures that demonstrate God’s love, presence, power and protection. The Psalms and Proverbs are simple places to start, as they are filled with verses showing the truth of God’s personality and include an invitation to respond. Proverbs 18:10, for example, states that “the name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.” For a person who is badly wounded or traumatized, this method makes it safe and easy. Put your own list of Scriptures together.

We focus on the Word of God in this second approach so that a person does not have to think too hard or feel inadequate because he or she does not know how to start. We invite Jesus into that living and active Word to make a present conversation safe enough to stabilize the past: “In this moment, despite everything you are remembering, can you think about the truth that He is your strong tower? How does that feel to you right now? The Scripture says that you can go there and be safe. His Word is tested and true. Is that a safe invitation for you in this moment? Can you experience that safety with Him right now and go there—either in your mind’s eye or in your heart?” If the answer is yes, then we ask if we can stay in that safe place—however it looks or feels in the moment—to look at the past with Him there beside the person. What may begin as a logical or religious head knowledge can quickly become a real conversation, providing a safe place from which to work. For many with painful pasts, this is the first time in a long time that they have encountered God. The beauty of beginning this way is that

the person learns by practice how to connect with Jesus through Scripture. For those especially who do not easily see pictures or who get scattered when they pray, this provides a solid start.

Others respond well to the *third* starting point, which is to ask them if they have a memory of when God felt especially close, in which they could sense His loving thoughts and feelings toward them. This acts as a doorway to intimacy and begins to stimulate an interactive sense of God's presence. That peaceful sense is what we take along with us when we ask God or Jesus to accompany a person into a place of painful memory.

In all three cases we express thankful appreciation that God wants to be with us, lead us, help us, free us and heal us. It is also sometimes helpful to name that safe place. It could be "holding my hand" or "God with me" or "on the mountain." If the person becomes fearful or hesitant, we simply ask him or her to stop and look at or go to that named place, event or memory and find peace again.

Define Feelings of Pain and Wounding

Sometimes the memory is clear and we can skip this step; on the other hand, sometime we only think the source memory is clear, and we are surprised at what God brings up. Our goal for this step is to end with the person saying, "I feel *this* negative emotion often, it leads to *this* harmful dynamic in my life, and it seems to point to *this* lie I strongly believe." That would be perfection—but even close works well.

We listen for words and phrases that are keys to strongly held beliefs ("I feel lazy," "I can't ever . . .," etc.). Ask who, what, when and why questions to clarify for the person. Ask, "How did it feel when . . .?" The lies can be about the person, others, the world or God.

Maybe there is a recent event in which the person overreacted. What did he or she feel when this happened? Did an accusing inner voice say anything? What did the person think about himself or herself or the circumstances when it happened? "I felt that . . ."

Look for deeper emotions behind presenting ones—for example, sexual lust masking loneliness, anger masking rejection. The deepest emotions are often experienced early in life, long before they could be given names.

If you can, seek to frame what they are feeling and echo it back to them. You might ask something like, “When you are feeling that way, on a scale of one to ten, how true does this phrase sound...?” To sharpen it you might ask, “How would you state it to sound more true to your heart, not your head?” Try to keep them from logic or explanations.

If it seems simple and clear, you can sometimes just focus on Jesus and ask Him what is true and to bring healing, without all the memory work in the following Root step—but this is rare. In those cases we simply ask, “Jesus, what do You say about this . . . ?” or, “Jesus, would You tell [*name*] what is true?”

Find the Origin of the Pain

Our goal for this step is for the person to be able to experience or recall vividly an event that leads him or her to say, “I *first* believed that lie right here. That is where the pain began.” Or, “This event seems very significant for understanding where my problems came from and how to dismantle them.” In most first responder cases we are dealing with personality limitations, not debilitating trauma, and the memory is painful but not overwhelming—in most, but not all. So be alert. Remember that God is with the person. Help the person to keep this peaceful place in view and return to the named place if he or she becomes fearful.

We look for first occurrences or origins of the memory. Often we help the person float loosely back in time until he or she seems to “land” on a memory or thought that is earlier than the one first presented. You may simply ask Jesus to take the person to the place where he or she “first learned the lie that . . .”

Often when we ask God for help, the very first thing that comes up is key—even if it feels silly. A standing joke in this ministry

is hearing someone say, “Well, I just had this silly thought,” “I haven’t thought about that for a long time” or “I forgot all about this until you asked.”

We rarely settle for memories that are past the age of twelve for deeper character-forming wounds. Wounds that involve affirmation, destiny and the blessing of manhood or womanhood, however, often happen at puberty. Sometimes the person starts with a more recent experience, and we track backward in time, like walking a fence line, recalling similar types of events until the origin is found.

Never direct, control, manipulate, explain, make assumptions, judge, imply or force your opinion on anyone. Ask clarifying, not leading, questions. Do not put words in people’s mouths or ideas in their heads. Do not even go near suggesting memories by mentioning that a specific person might have harmed them, done something to them, etc.

Please reread that last paragraph and put it on the prayer room door! The minds of vulnerable humans are amazingly plastic, especially under stress, and can take on false beliefs and understandings at the implication of a trusted “counselor.” We should *never* be that manipulating counselor.

This is not court testimony or counseling. We are not looking for explanations or a place to put blame, only to understand the person’s perceptions. Memory is a tricky thing. First of all, it is the *perception* of the event we are dealing with. No one recalls everything from a true perspective except God. What “feels” true and what “is” true are different. Second, emotional and traumatic memory is often detailed and exact and stored in a bottled-up and high-pressure state. It may explode. Simple recall is not like that; it mostly consists of the brain reconstructing a reasonable facsimile of the event from a few stored facts.⁷

We are not after precision and details in the memory so much as we are after allowing God to heal what is perceived and the thoughts and behaviors that come from it. Let’s say your middle school gym teacher was not really as awful as you remember.

For years, though, you have felt small and emasculated because of his treatment toward you, and your recollection of it has felt very limiting in all areas of your life. When you ask God, that is where the root memory seems to be. We can almost bet that toward the end of the prayer time, you will feel better not only about yourself but toward the gym teacher as well. If asked, the gym teacher might remember the situation in a completely different manner—but that is not the point. We do not have to get caught up in whether the memory is the “right” one or the first root that God wants to use; nor are we too concerned about the other people involved in the past. Our safety net is the combination of foundations and tools that lead to positive outcomes such as forgiveness, truth about ungodly beliefs and ultimately restoration. God desires the freedom of the people who show up for prayer because they are seeking it. He can speak truth to the heart and is happy to “translate,” working within what we have and what we remember.

Memories are sometimes clarified or enhanced when we stir up visual or emotional parts of the brain. We are careful not to ask the person to go deeper than we feel God is leading, but we do not shy away from letting the person experience strong emotions. We can ask him or her to describe the room, an object, etc. We may allow the person to pour out his or her feelings about the situation—sometimes talking directly to Jesus. We always ask gently.

In our experience, the spirit part of our tripartite nature often feels childlike. Sometimes we address that childlike spirit of the person first with words of comfort, encouragement and blessing. It is almost like asking a child, “Where does it hurt?” and watching her point to a sore spot on her body.

We believe in and properly use prophetic gifting. Remember our foundation about being partners with God: We dishonor God both when we “despise” and avoid the prophetic *and* when we grieve God by its wrong use. Your prophetic insights are to be used to ask wise questions, to help nudge toward a memory or thought

and to help overcome hindrances, *not* to take the place of Jesus in ministry. It is normally best when we simply use those revelations to help us as facilitators of an encounter with God. If it *is* God, it will bear fruit and be evident without our saying so. At the same time, we do not shy away from asking about an inner impression we received—but we ask gently, with a totally open hand.

If people have trouble seeing, we encourage them with the truth that Jesus is an ever-present help in time of need and will never leave them or forsake them. We may also need to deal with lies or the demonic that are blocking the person's expectation that God would want to speak to him or her, or compelling him or her to cut off the process, etc. The initial safe place often serves this purpose.

At God's leading you sometimes need to remove hindrances through renouncing, confessing, stilling voices, forgiving, etc. They tend to be lies, unforgiveness, sin issues or demonic. Let Jesus show you if there is a block to freedom. He will.

Be aware of false, demonic, red-eyed "Jesus figures" masquerading and speaking harshly, being falsely religious, etc. Be equally aware of anything counterfeit that masquerades subtly, looking a lot like Jesus but with dictator-like rules and regulations that emerge, even if presented in a "nice" voice. Take authority and demand it identify itself or be gone. Use *Dealing with Demons*.

Hear Truth, Bless, Fill, Proclaim

When present in the memory, we ask Jesus to bring truth, to tell what He thinks, to show where He was or what He was doing. We ask the person to be a reporter—what they are seeing, sensing or hearing about Jesus and His presence—allowing Him to do what He wants to do, to bring truth in any way He chooses.

It is very effective to carry on a three-way conversation with Jesus, asking Him things like, "Jesus, will You bring truth about this situation?" "Jesus, what do You feel about this?" "Jesus, what do You have to say about this?" "Jesus, what is true?"

It is an amazing and simple dynamic. For example, the person is feeling small and vulnerable and has believed a lie that Jesus cannot be trusted. We could quote a ton of Scriptures saying He can. But that addresses adult logic, not childlike fear. So we simply refer the fear to Jesus and ask the person, while in the memory, to ask Him, “Jesus, can I trust You?” When He says “Yes,” it may seem trite to us as adult observers. But it is very impacting to the little one in the memory. We have often seen someone visibly relax, open up and be freed on the basis of that simple exchange. Jesus is timelessly present with them in the painful memory. We are not. His way works best. We have to be secure enough to trust Him. We are not changing memories or telling Jesus what to do. Jesus can communicate with pictures, words, symbolic acts, simple presence, gestures or facial expressions, etc.

In one case a girl heard nothing but instead saw Jesus lying beside her, taking the worst of the pain so she could bear it. In another instance a young man saw Jesus holding his heart in the midst of a difficult accusation—protecting it. In yet another Jesus took a girl away with Him when a rape happened. Again and again, victims of rape or assault report seeing Jesus protecting their heads, and upon seeing that, many are relieved to have an explanation for why they did not lose their minds after such unspeakable trauma. Sometimes Jesus allows them to “check out” to cope with the pain without crumbling. How comforting to know that it was His provision that allowed their minds to do that—that they are not strange because they mentally “stepped away” from something too hard to focus on. It gives a peace that human wisdom cannot. Only He can do that, and only He can bring that kind of healing and closure.

Complete the session with blessing and asking, “How does that feel?” Pray for the person and establish the truth—repeat it, or ask the person what he or she knows to be true. Speak blessing and express joy at what Jesus has done. Be aware of a counterattack of doubt. Use DKB as appropriate to renounce lies or entanglements, to forgive and so on. Send demonic influence away.

Remember the Scoot step and see what God directs you to say to help people walk things out. Often there has been a sweet encounter that serves as a place they can return to again to meet Jesus and even continue the healing. Sometimes so much is hung on their lies that they have a hard time figuring out who they are after the session. Help them find comfort in letting the same Jesus they met in the memory help them every day.

Walking through the Inviting Jesus Tool: Ted⁸

The basic introductions are made and initial explanations accomplished. Everyone is comfortable and ready to go. The Freedom Prayer team spends a bit of quiet time listening to God and soaking. We encourage Ted to open himself up to the Lord, and we bind any spirits that do not name Jesus Christ as Lord from interfering or hindering. We ask for angelic protection.

One or more of the team members have gotten pictures or words, which they write at the top of their notepads and hold to see what God may want to do with them—knowing that they might be totally or partially wrong. At the beginning of the session, a team member passes a note to the leader. It says, “Grade school, maybe third grade, I see him standing with a uniform on.” We hold on to it and just see.

Sam: So, Ted, what’s going on with you? What brought you here today?

Ted: Well, I’m not getting along with my wife in the area of religious stuff. She keeps trying to get me to do things, and we argue a lot. She nags all the time about me being more spiritual, and I would like to find a way to get her off my back.

Sam: Hmmm . . . well, we cannot really help her, you know—you are the intended victim today! [Smile.]

Ted: I’m here just to find out if the way I am is okay, I guess. I’m not very religious, you know—I kind of leave that to my wife.

Every time I try to read the Bible or pray, it just seems dull, and I can't really think of anything to say.

Sam: Well, let's ask God to show us where to start—I bet you're a lot better at it than you think.

We do not sense in this initial part a significant trauma, so we do not begin by bringing him to a safe place with Jesus. We do proceed to tell him briefly about getting pictures or words or sensing things inside and ask him to be the reporter; he reluctantly agrees. We chat for a bit and then, when we feel we are zeroing in on a key lie, we ask . . .

Sam: Ted, how true does this sound: “God will never be real to me because I am not very spiritual”?

Ted: That sounds sort of true—on a scale of one to ten, maybe a six or so.

Sam: What would sound more true to you—more toward a ten? Jesus, would You be willing to help Ted here?

Ted: I didn't say this when we first started, but I just felt it again. I felt a twinge of fear—like feeling ashamed.

Sam: How true does this sound to you: “Being spiritual is painful and shaming”?

Ted: I would say that feels very true—maybe a nine or ten.

Sam: Let's ask Jesus if He would be willing to show you a memory that has meaning to you. Ted, close your eyes and let yourself begin to drift back. Jesus, will You help Ted to think of a time when he first began to believe the statement, “Being spiritual is painful and shaming”? [Pause.] Are you getting anything?

Ted: Not really.

Sam: Ted, one of the team members kept hearing *third grade*. It may not mean anything at all. Does third grade mean anything in this context?

Ted: No. Well . . . It is kind of silly, but my private Christian school was kind of strict, with uniforms and all. I don't think it was

the third grade, but I do remember a time—wow, haven't thought about this for years [we all smile]—I was asked to stand up and pray one day. When I stood up, I started stuttering and shaking and just froze. It was awful. I was so embarrassed and scared and ashamed. My teacher said, "Ted, sit down," in a kind of mean way, and everyone laughed. Then she called on this other guy. I hated him, and he said this great prayer. I just sat there and thought, *I'm never doing that again*. Kind of silly, huh?

Sam: Maybe not to a little boy trying to fit in. Besides, it seems God brought this one up, so let's go there, okay? Close your eyes and go to that memory if you can. How did it feel to you? Describe the classroom. Tell me how you felt.

With this we are stirring up the memory to make it vivid to help him access his emotions. As Ted describes the room, he clearly warms up. He describes the kids' faces, the mean teacher, his own shaking hands and feelings of being exposed and alone.

Ted: I was so ashamed; I just wanted to crawl into a hole. I felt all alone, like a total failure—it was so painful. [Tears up.]

Sam: You felt alone. To that little one, how true does this sound: "I'm a shameful failure when I try to be spiritual"?

Ted: Yes, that's about it. Maybe not all of it, though.

Sam: "And I'll be rejected and cast aside for someone better."

Ted: Yes! That's a 12 out of 10, for sure. [Tears up again.]

Sam: Let's ask Jesus where He was when that happened. Look around the room. Ask this: "Jesus, will You show me where You were when that happened?"

Ted: He is standing behind me with His hands on my shoulders, holding me steady. [Cries.]

Sam: Ask Him this: "Jesus, what do You think about what happened? What is true?"

Ted: [Pause.] He says I'm an evangelist.

The team looks up in surprise—that is not at all what we asked or expected. That is our God.

Sam: How does that sound to you?

Ted: I've always known that.

Sam: Really?

Ted: Yes, I just never wanted to think about it.

Sam: Let's ask Jesus if there is anything else He wants to say to you or show you. "Jesus, is there anything else?"

Ted: I need to forgive the teacher.

Sam: I want you to really be able to agree with what is being spoken. So if you want to say it better or different than I do, feel free to use your own words. If you feel something I say is not right, then let's stop and look at it. I am just here to help you through it. God will honor the intent of our hearts even if our words aren't perfect. Okay?

We do Kingdom business, leading him through forgiveness. Then, with sudden insight, we explain a little bit, ask permission and lead him into renouncing the lie he believed about his destiny, repenting of his fear of stepping into being an evangelist and breaking the agreement he made to stay away from spiritual stuff in exchange for protection from shame. We command all spirits involved in this to leave.

Over the next few weeks Ted's wife notices he is taking a real leadership role, even if somewhat awkwardly. Ted has to figure out who he is after Freedom Prayer, as he has built so much of his life on the lie of being unspiritual and needing to protect himself. To realize the opposite is true is a shock. As much as a year later, a couple of follow-up sessions clean up ancillary things, and Ted begins to move with real authority into his destiny calling. His wife sees that she had read Ted right but did not have the tools to gently help him into it. Her own Freedom Prayer dealt with control issues and deep wounding from her mother. Today Ted and his wife are strong ministers together and have begun a church targeted at nonreligious "misfits."

Understanding Dissociation in Freedom Prayer Ministry

There are many learned articles, opinions, theories, disagreements and diatribes about dissociation. We encourage you to do your own reading from reputable sources and return for a focused application to Freedom Prayer.

Back? Okay.

As you may have read, we have many kinds of coping and defense mechanisms for protecting or defending ourselves from unpleasant thoughts, memories, feelings and behaviors; these mechanisms can be mild or serious in impact. We want to focus on two things in this section: First, we discuss how we use the Inviting Jesus tool to minister to people with defense mechanisms and mild forms of dissociation. Second, we talk about our roles and responsibilities as prayer ministers with respect to the more severe form of dissociation called dissociative identity disorder, or DID (formerly called multiple personality disorder).

To dissociate means to detach from our immediate surroundings. It is detachment from, not loss of, reality. Dissociation is a disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity or perception; it exists along a continuum from normal daydreaming to pathological dissociative disorders. You and I dissociate. As a Freedom Prayer minister you will encounter various levels of dissociation and defense mechanisms, and recognizing what is happening and knowing what to do is important.

Freedom Prayer and Non-DID Defense Mechanisms

Many defense and coping mechanisms are not signs of full-blown disorder but still involve behaviors that create barriers to freedom. For example, some people:

- cannot or will not get in touch with their emotions, fending off real progress with intellectualizing.

- continually rationalize and minimize their own behavior and that of another who has harmed them, rather than looking at the real issues.
- compartmentalize their thinking to allow sinful or fearful behavior in one area while holding a different standard in another.
- may displace blame to themselves or another unrelated person or object to avoid the pain of blaming the real person.

We use the Inviting Jesus tool to help the person see this inner dichotomy—one part of them wants freedom (or they would not be in the session), while another wants to avoid the truth. Being very careful not to imply we think they have “multiple personalities,” we simply ask if we could try a way of getting to the heart of the issue by having them see the parts of themselves as having names or “handles” and that we would like to have a conversation with one part of them or the other.

For example, we may call attention to this, asking if the person would allow us to address the “part of you that has not had a voice” or “the part of you that feels wounded and hurt.” We sometimes frame it this way: “‘Intellect’ (or ‘Brain Guy,’ as one of our lead ministers says), you have done a wonderful job protecting the part of you that really feels the pain. I am wondering if you would be willing to let the part that feels these things very strongly speak for a while.” Often there is a nervous laugh, and then the person simply opens up naturally. It may seem a bit awkward at first to approach it in this manner, but allowing permission to temporarily set aside the ever-spinning protective barriers of the mind and allow the part in pain to be heard is a powerful tool, and one that is readily embraced when described in this way.

When we allow the person to consider these as separately responsive parts of themselves, he or she can often realize freedom and release long-pent-up emotions, wounds and strongholds not accessible other ways. Often, in the end, the logical protection part gives its exhausting job to Jesus and takes on its God-given role of

being a steward to the more creative, childlike or emotional part. The culmination looks like an individual who can increasingly trust and make room to be more internally free and more easily led by the Lord, instead of relying on coping or defense mechanisms for protection.

Freedom Prayer and DID

While the Inviting Jesus tool can be very effective in all levels of dissociation, the use of this approach for ministering to those exhibiting true dissociative identity disorder (DID) symptoms is beyond the limits of normal Freedom Prayer ministry and is reserved for those trained, experienced and approved by their church leadership. We normally instruct those not so permitted to gently close the session and work toward referral.

What follows is an introduction designed to help us recognize and understand this phenomenon so that we can better befriend and assist those who have DID in a nonreactionary, loving and truly helpful way—not so we can “try our hand” at ministry. Each church and ministry must decide for itself what its role can and should be in the lives of these whom God loves and who need our understanding. We recommend that all Freedom Prayer ministers spend their own time researching DID until they feel they understand its salient features.

OVERVIEW OF DID

More intense manifestations of dissociation involve what mental health professionals consider a form of mental illness, moving from amnesia to a feeling of observing oneself from outside one’s body, or to having a sense that things around one are not real, or both. At the extreme end is DID.

DID is the result of perceived or real ongoing and normally severe trauma in early childhood. It is a survival mechanism for helpless little ones that shatters their minds and breaks their hearts.

Those with DID are amazing and typically very creative people for whom DID was a gift and the logical response to trauma. They are not strange or outcasts, nor are they to be shunned. Many of them might say, “I am DID,” not, “I have DID,” because they see it as a way they have had to become to survive, not a mental disease or disorder they have acquired. They are to be respected, their differences recognized and accounted for, and treated normally and loved by Freedom Prayer ministers. They are equal partners in their own healing.

Part of our Jesus-given ministry as believers is to “bind up the brokenhearted” (Isaiah 61:1; see also Luke 4:18 NKJV). The word *brokenhearted*, in both Hebrew and Greek, means “broken in pieces and crushed to the ground.” What an accurate picture of the impacts of trauma on a child’s heart! Helping is part of our calling . . . our responsibility.

INDICATIONS OF DID

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the standard reference for psychological disorders, describes DID as (1) disruption of identity characterized by two or more distinct personality parts that may be observed by others, or reported by the patient, (2) amnesia between parts of the personality and (3) a resulting disturbance that is not a normal part of broadly accepted cultural or religious practice, or part of the normal fantasy play of children.⁹ This disorder causes clinically significant distress and impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

Dissociation develops according to a pattern. The person, by setting up an amnesic barrier to keep the daily perceptual or conscious part of the brain from accessing the traumatic memories imprinted elsewhere, attempts to (1) escape reality, (2) contain reality, (3) separate self from reality and (4) forget reality. Often in adult life the barrier begins to crumble, resulting in increasing dysfunction, and help is sought.

DID is characterized by parts of the individual, called “alters,” forming at points in time and increasingly taking on their own identities and personalities—though this is not always fully true in milder cases. Alters typically have defined roles that help the person “do life.” They may not be fully formed personalities, and they may not be aware of one another. Each may hold different memories; have different beliefs, ambitions, talents, outlooks, sexes and ages; and sometimes present different physical and psychological aspects from the “host” personality. Changing between these alters as the felt need arises is termed “switching.” It is normally subtle but detectable.

Alters are not demons, and demons are not human. Alters can be healed, have a relatable personality, are sticklers for truth, protect the person, can merge and harmonize, have human feelings and do not have to respond to the authority of Jesus. Demons have none of these characteristics.

While we do *not* diagnose, we must be able to recognize and not be thrown off when we encounter someone who may have DID. Indications of DID may include the following:

- two or more (sometimes many more) distinct identities or personality states with varying and changing degrees of control, and all the confusion and inconsistency that implies
- an inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness or physiological effects of a substance (such as drugs or alcohol) or other physiological disorder (e.g., seizures)
- a high level of intelligence and creativity; superachievers
- an extreme need to please, low self-esteem, feeling depersonalized, deep feelings of deprivation, negative outlook on life
- unexplained physical ailments common to those who have suffered severe abuse, often with multiple previous diagnoses, extensive past physical or neurological workups, sleep

disturbances and insomnia and varying physical reactions to the same medication or alcohol at different times

- repeated revictimization in adulthood
- possession of skills they have no memory of acquiring; finding things in the house they have no prior knowledge of
- talking in terms of “we” with internal dialogue
- inconsistent about most things, including preferences, work or school performance, body image, mood; inordinate indecision about simple things
- hallucinations of terrible thoughts or episodes, with evidence of violence, flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive images, dream-like memories, suicidal thoughts
- repetitive episodes of extreme forgetfulness, from losing “misplaced” things to difficulty in finding a parked car; time loss; memory distortion

COMPREHENSIVE MINISTRY TO THOSE WITH DID

Secular ministry to those with DID often consists of Internal Family Systems (IFS) therapy and sometimes Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Christian- and church-based ministry to those experiencing DID is often a long-term commitment with many lifestyle-related goals. The internal structure of alters is revealed through asking questions. Inviting Jesus is a powerful tool, as each alter is talked with and often gives Jesus their role of protection, often “going with” or into Jesus or the core person. They are part of the person all along and thus never destroyed. There are different approaches to this and some potentially very effective shortcuts that focus on the core of who the person is rather than each alter. This can require many sessions together.

If a church or group of churches begins to welcome and honor those with DID, they may find both an immense challenge and a great reward. Their needs go beyond simple inner healing and can encompass socialization skills, job training, housing assistance,

legal protection, mentoring, etc. Such a church should have a team that has counted the cost; it should also have strong supportive or partnering referral services and links with local resources, counselors and others who are simply available to be friends.

Our view is that this facet of Freedom Prayer ministry is not for every minister, and yet the need is everywhere. We trust God will meet it as we are willing to hear Him about our roles and responsibilities and those of our church.

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chapter

12

Dealing with Demons

One Almighty is more than many mighties. All these mighty sins and devils make not one almighty sin or an almighty devil.

William Gurnall

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. . . . So that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

The apostle Paul
(Ephesians 6:10–11; 2 Corinthians 2:11)

Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

Jesus (Luke 10:19)

There are many treatises on demonology.¹ This is not one of them.

Rather, this is a practical look at how we encounter our enemy, why we can send him away and how we do so. This is a long chapter, and it still leaves a lot out. But it is a good introduction for first responders. It gives a framework in which you can place all sorts of follow-up understanding and knowledge. There is more, and after you feel comfortable as a first responder, I encourage you to go explore.

Dealing with Demons (DWD) consists of identifying, as necessary, the demonic presence in and around us, eliminating its right to be there and, under the authority of Christ, casting it out.

But first let us make one thing clear: Nobody gets to be Buffy.

We are after God, not demons. We are not focused on dealing with our “stuff,” not on escaping pain, not on fixing ourselves. We are not all about fixing someone else, either—even if they *need* fixing. Passionate, intimate love from and for God is the main thing. Finding freedom from our emotional constraints and being rid of demonic influence is an *outcome* of relationship with God, not the focus of it.

Okay, then.

In a Freedom Prayer ministry session, it is normally not necessary to use DWD if there is little or no perceived demonic interference. Most often demons simply go when commanded with minor or no manifestation as part of the Boot step in the Fruit Loop. Remove the reason, the handle, and they lose traction within me.

But sometimes freedom is impossible without dealing directly with the demonic. This was true for Jesus and His disciples, and

it is arrogant or naïve to think it is not true of us, too. We cannot simply tell someone to control himself or counsel him out of an issue if demonic influence or presence is keeping things locked up and energized. Sometimes demons may want to hinder what is going on, subvert our attempts at freedom or challenge our authority to send them away.

We need another tool to do those things—that is what DWD is.

If and when we turn to DWD techniques, our basic questions are “Why is the demonic (still) here?” and “What makes it think it can stay?” Find and deal with the answers to those questions and you are most of the way there.

Stats on Our Enemy

In chapter 3 we saw that our enemy has hidden ways that specifically target our destiny call. Let us now go further in application.

This age and this world are, in a real sense, a war zone in which there are real casualties, prisoners, captives, destruction and loss. While Satan and his demons have been soundly and totally defeated (more on that later), a struggle continues against his schemes, lies and handiwork in places of entanglement, sin and wounding. There are relatively few Christians who are not targets of, or vulnerable to, demonic attack or influence. Even with Jesus, Satan was only temporarily put off while he awaited a more opportune time (Luke 4:13).

Paul the apostle makes it clear as clear can be: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

The spiritual struggle Paul talks about² indicates a wrestling match in which one or the other is thrown down and pinned. It seems to take place on many levels, but for convenience we will boil it down to two: (1) *individual* temptation and trial from without or demonic strongholds formed within, and (2) *external*, regional,

territorial and institutional strongholds within societies, people groups, organizations, nations and geographic areas. We are focusing on the most common individual, hand-to-hand types of situations, though we may deal with the results of the other in an individual's life.

Demons take advantage of human weakness in our mental-emotional-physical “machinery.” They attack and pervert human personality and attitude, emotions, minds and thought patterns, as well as physical appetites and drives (e.g., hunger or sex). They seem to lodge in, or target, certain parts of the personality—especially *wounded* personality—with a particular assignment. Their two primary tools are accusation and deception (Revelation 12:9–10). You are deceived into believing lies or into sinning, and then you are accused of being a failure and a sinner. A vicious cycle.

Demons entice, harass, torture, torment, compel, control, enslave, defile, shame, deceive, drive, trick, blind, dull, manipulate, dominate, bully, intimidate, accuse, influence, cause sickness and infirmity, tempt and help cause addictions. They can be the instruments of the dark side of the law of sowing and reaping. They enforce vows, curses, pledges and dark covenants. They warp natural urges and drives and force them to extremes. They are “religious” and love to invent doctrine (1 Timothy 4:1). They love uncontrolled flesh and fallen human nature. They steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

Demons are liars and, unless confronted by God's authority, will always speak lies (John 8:44). When commanded with legitimate authority (by Jesus and His followers) they tell the truth, though they will take advantage of every legal loophole or escape to avoid speaking the truth or to get what they want (asking to be sent into pigs rather than be expelled, for example, as we see in Mark 5:9–12). Even when they tell the truth, their purpose is to avoid accountability, deceive or cause trouble (Acts 16:16–17).

Many demons seem to have a particular “specialty” and need the help of others to more fully control a human personality. They

can operate within a hierarchy (e.g., the “seven other spirits more wicked than itself” in Matthew 12:45, “Legion” in Mark 5:9 and the seven demons in Mary Magdalene in Mark 16:9). There are certainly orders and differing powers, perhaps reflecting the different orders of angels in traditional Jewish thought. They are mutually cutthroat.

In the Bible, the titles given to some evil spirits are jealousy, evil, lying, perverse, sleep, heaviness, unclean, ignorance, harlotry, mute, deaf, infirmity, divination, deceiving, fear and error. These names are examples, not limitations. In reality, we have encountered many names, often surprising, many boastful. These names can give a characteristic and a “handle”—they indicate function or focus. It is not certain that they are all fallen angels.³ But if they are, then, like angels, they may have other proper demonic or angelic names (e.g., Molech, Abaddon, Lucifer).

At higher levels demons influence and control both physical places and the social structures of men: buildings, cities, regions, nations, institutions, organizations, governments and cultures. Within such institutional frameworks or families they can pass from generation to generation, maintaining their hold from father to son, from grandfather to grandchild. They can also somehow attach to or hide behind objects, whether idols or cursed things (Deuteronomy 32:16; Psalm 106:37; 1 Corinthians 10:20).

Demons need a deceived host in which to most fully express their evil intent from the inside. They will even choose pigs over nothing (Mark 5:12).

Authority and You

If all this feels a little disconcerting or otherworldly, that is normal. This section is for you. Read it several times, look up the verses and meditate on them.

We mean it!

Lawbreakers respond to authority, not to more laws. History can be seen as a contest for authority, won by God (like there was any question). In summary:

1. God gave Adam a measure of authority over the earth (Genesis 1:26).
2. Eve (through deception) and Adam (through rebellion) gave Satan their authority and subjected all mankind to demonic control (Luke 4:6; Romans 5:12–14; Ephesians 2:1–2; 2 Corinthians 4:3–4; 1 John 5:19).
3. Satan offered his authority to Jesus in exchange for worship of Satan (Luke 4:7). Jesus declined.
4. While on earth, Jesus demonstrated what a righteous man rightly related to God can do, and He gave of His personal power and representative authority to the Twelve and the Seventy (Luke 9:1; 10:17–19).
5. Jesus died in our place, took our punishment on the cross and was given all authority (Matthew 28:18).
6. When He rose and ascended, He totally and completely disgraced Satan and all his demons, annihilating their authority over any child of God (Colossians 2:13–15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8).
7. Those who belong to Jesus come out from under Satan’s authority, influence and control, move into God’s domain and are given the “greater One” within (Romans 8:37–39; Colossians 1:13; 1 John 4:4; 5:18).
8. Every child of God is seated with Jesus far above all demonic authority. We have derivative authority and fullness of the Spirit from Jesus to enforce His victory against our enemy (Acts 19:15; Ephesians 1:3, 20–22; 2:4–6; Colossians 2:9–10).
9. Jesus’ Church is to *attack* the gates (place of authority) of hell and to prevail. We are to bind and loose according to

the pattern, force and decisions we see in heaven, where there is *no* demonic authority or control. We bind what has been bound, loose what has been loosed, joining God's will and man's action (Matthew 16:17–19; 18:18–20).

10. When we go after the demonic, we bind it and force it out. This is violent, complete and forceful—even as it is gentle and loving to the person involved (Matthew 12:28–29; Mark 3:27; Luke 10:19; 11:21–22).
11. When Jesus returns He will visibly establish His authority and reign over the earth (Revelation 21:3–4).
12. The inevitable, final and eternal place for the devil and his demons is in the lake of fire, while our assured place is to reign with Jesus (Ephesians 1:7–10; 2:7; Revelation 20:10).

Everything changed at the cross.

Since the death and resurrection of Jesus and forevermore, Satan and every demon is in a state of utter defeat. That defeat is to be enforced on earth, as it is in heaven. Demons still work for control in the sons of disobedience and within the unaware Christian, but they *must* respond to the authority and power of Christ and His brothers and sisters. Their ploy is to try to bluff their way out of compliance.

We *have* authority and *grow* in our realization, experience and exercise of it. There is no substitute for knowing on which foundation you firmly stand. We are not peers of or subject to demons. And it is not about our performance or perfection, which was nailed to the cross without our participation, but about the fact that we are hidden in and seated with Jesus. Remember, the most demonized person in the Bible, the Gerasene man, filled with a legion of demons, could not be kept from running and falling down at Jesus' feet (Mark 5:1–13).

This authority given to believers is not some mantra or set of incantations but a living, relational and revelational reality. The

seven sons of Sceva tried to cast out demons using a secondhand-incantation approach and suffered for it. The demons knew Jesus and had heard of Paul, and they knew these sons were not connected with that authority (Acts 19:13–16).⁴

How do we apply and enforce the victory won by Jesus? In the next sections we will talk about the typical encounters and actions we take with the foundational understandings we have.

Handling the Demonic during Ministry

Demons need something to work with, to feed on—pain or sin, wounding or guilt. Flies swarm because of, well, because of doo-doo.⁵ Demons are like those flies. In this kind of ministry, we are after life’s doo-doo and, secondarily, the demonic. The fly problem often seems to take care of itself when the doo-doo is cleaned up. We always check, and when we find we need to go after flies, we do. But flies are not often the point.

In most ministry sessions, we do not encounter demons’ *presence*, but we always encounter their *handiwork*. They may not be present *within* someone, but we have come to see that they seem to always be involved in schemes, snares, lies and attacks.

Step one is recognizing the demonic dynamic. How does it “look” or “manifest”? A manifestation is simply the visible evidence of a deeper, though heretofore hidden, reality. This has two aspects: How does it look in everyday life, and how does it look in a ministry situation?

Let us talk about the “ministry situation” version of manifestation first as it applies throughout all the steps of the Fruit Loop. Then we will discuss recognizing the demonic in daily life as a part of the Fruit step.

Dealing with demons in an overt way is not uncommon in our ministry practice but certainly does not happen most of the time. The discussion here is for the situation we encounter when a demon manifests. It is neither avoided nor sought. But if demons stand in

the way of a child of God's freedom, they have to go—no question. If they are hiding, we smoke them out.

Demons will remain hidden until we get to their “food source”—the inner lies, entanglements, sin and wounding upon which they feed and hold; until something stirs them to react; or until they feel they have enough power to be hard to dislodge. Then they will make efforts to fend us off, scare us, resist, show off and threaten.

Demonic manifestations are neither good nor bad in themselves. It is the end result that matters. Often the way demons show themselves gives away their strategy or tactic for operating and reason(s) for staying. So a manifestation can be a good thing—but it is always a thing we bring under control. As a friend once said, “I don't care if they show themselves; I just want to know if they are coming or going.”

Manifestations can look like a number of things internal and external: confusion, blank inside, dark feelings, sudden thoughts, crying, shaking, screaming, nausea, blank stare, yawning, sudden dark emotions (e.g., anger, despondency, etc.), dulling of the eyes, contortions, facial change, voice change, change in the “feel” of the room, false leads, a false inner picture of Jesus, inner dark voices, guilty or shameful feelings, physical infirmity (headache, sleepiness, coughing, retching) or emergence of a non-alter personality.

Then again—it may not be demonic at all!

If we encounter something that gives us pause, we simply pay attention and seek clarification. We will know—in God's time. But we *never* prematurely assume nor overtly accuse someone of having a demon. The person receiving prayer is not evil for having been victimized, and what has happened to them is not unusual.

Remember to honor the person. Make sure they know these things.

Manifestations have three sources: the Holy Spirit, demonic spirits and a frail human's honest emotions. We react by (1) following the Holy Spirit, if it is God, (2) expelling, binding and dealing with demons or (3) understanding, helping, comforting and,

as necessary, urging the person to exercise discipline if it is flesh. Fear may simply be just that—the person (or part of the person) being afraid of what is happening. Look for nondemonic reasons first. Realize there is always a mixture as both the human and the demon make use of the person’s internal emotional-mental-physical machinery.

We go by the Lord’s timing, not that of a demon, or even of the person. We do not swing at every pitch. At any time, if a person “manifests” a demonic presence and begins to lose control:

- Ask what’s going on inside of them.
- Address the person with love and kindness; do not incite fear.
- Address demons and bind them in Jesus’ name; order them to stop. Tell them that if they refuse they will be referred to Jesus.⁶
- Address the demon if it is time to cast it out or make the person regain consciousness or control over him- or herself.
- Tell the person to take control over his or her body and mind and to open his or her eyes in Jesus’ name. Help the person by talking to him or her, asking simple questions, etc.

Let’s also talk referral.

The longer, deeper or more traumatic the demonization, the greater the ability of the demon to take control of the person’s thoughts, emotions and even body.

Because of its volunteer, relational, single-session (or a couple of sessions), first responder nature, Freedom Prayer practitioners are not equipped to deal with every situation and should not feel bad about recognizing when referral is necessary. That is a good and necessary part of being first responders—and friends.

If we sense we are really in over our heads (for example, the person receiving prayer is a victim of deeper abuse, exhibits dissociation or becomes physically threatening or violent, as in more extreme manifestations), we bring comfort and encouragement,

shut down gracefully and work toward later referral to someone more skilled and experienced in dealing with these cases. Even the disciples referred a case to Jesus (Mark 9:15–29). Always go slowly and gently in this arena. It is no place for bravado or foolhardy experimentation.⁷

What about you?

Freedom Prayer ministry often brings things to light in the prayer minister. You yourself may experience confusion, emotions, blockage or sudden vile thoughts. First of all, vile thoughts or temptations are not sin—they are attacks to put us off. Even Jesus was tempted in all ways (Hebrews 4:15). God and you, not the devil, determine the timing of your own ministry. Normally, the things triggered in the minister are dealt with after the session with the help of the others there, or later. Not being perfect does not disqualify you to minister freedom. Rebellion does, and you are not rebellious.

Okay, back to a typical session in which DWD is used.

Starting a Session

Generally, at the beginning of more formal ministry sessions, we gently but firmly assert spiritual authority. The people may not even be aware of what we are doing or may not be sure they even believe in demons. Most will accept a simple, gentle and calm explanation or simply agree with our prayer or declarations. Once we are sure the people are comfortable and ready to go for it, if we sense demonic resistance or a need to, we may take authority over the session and bind away any hindrances to what we are about to do. We might say something like this (remember, no formulas or mantras!):

- “I command any spirit that does not name the Lord Jesus Christ, who came in the flesh and who died for [name]’s sins, and does not bow the knee to Jesus, to come to attention.”

- “I bind you now from hindering, blocking or in any other way stopping the work of God within this person now.”
- “You may speak only if and when spoken to, or say only what the Lord Jesus Christ gives you to say.”

As we begin working through the Fruit Loop, we come to realize we may need to turn to DWD at some point in the session and encounter the demonic more directly. Let us walk through the steps and show how DWD techniques can come into play in each of them.

Fruit Step—What Raises Flags

Now let’s talk about the “in everyday life” part of manifestation. In chatting we become increasingly aware that there may be some stronger-than-normal demonic involvement and that the DWD approach may be called for. How do we know that?

Demons find many ways to manifest their insidious plans for destruction and control. Many people who are influenced or intermittently controlled are simply unaware of it. They may consider a certain sin, entanglement or wounding as part of a lifestyle. It feels like a hindrance or handicap, but a familiar one. Because of the culture or milieu in which they were raised or to which they have become accustomed, people may also be oblivious to the fact that a certain lifestyle, practice or belief is, in fact, sinful.

Demonic presence may often appear as an *exaggerated* and *energized* place of sin or lack of self-control. Below is a brief list designed simply to expand your thinking about manifestations. No single item on this list, in itself, indicates demonic activity, just as no one physical symptom always indicates a certain disease. But these items do raise suspicion (though you are not to be suspicious!). Many of these things are also deeds of the flesh—recall there is often a combination. Sometimes the exaggeration of the manifestation is the clue. But that exaggeration can also simply be a result of pent-up emotions and anger released by

seemingly small events. A symptom may also be an indication of true mental illness, when a referral to a physician or counselor may be warranted.

Someone strongly influenced by the demonic may chronically experience or exhibit some of the following:

- addictions
- anorexia and bulimia
- behavioral extremes
- bitterness and unforgiveness
- compulsive behavior
- dark thoughts and impulses
- deceitful personality
- depression
- emotional disturbance or long-term unbalanced emotions
- escapism and withdrawal
- extreme or exaggerated denominationalism
- extreme self-focus
- false concept of Scripture
- false gifts of the Spirit
- false philosophical concepts, universalism
- false religion and belief
- fears and phobias
- guilt and condemnation
- hearing internal or external voices
- hereditary illness or chronic or repeated sicknesses
- immaturity in character or relationships
- irrational behavior
- legalism or deep spiritual bondage
- nightmares
- occult involvement
- out-of-control appetites
- out-of-control tongue or emotions
- sexual aberrations
- suicidal tendencies
- undiagnosable or shifting symptoms
- violence and temper

In the Fruit step we simply note and explore these things as they come up. We trust God will bring the right things to our attention—in His timing. They cause us to be alert, to jot it down

and to circle back in the Root and Boot steps to make sure these things are covered or addressed.

Sometimes we ask clarifying questions to ascertain if the person is experiencing any of the above symptoms. As in all our sessions we must be careful not to plant thoughts nor suggest something that has not been stated. We are not to “lead the witness.” As stated earlier, we never assume the presence of the demonic within a person, but we always assume there is dark handiwork afoot in issues of this sort.

Other times we just listen to what the person says and go straight to the Root step, asking God to show us where the thing mentioned first came up or first happened.

Root Step—Times and Doors of Entry

Recall from chapter 8 that in the Root step we begin probing for the source and origin of the issue. In this tool we are on “high DWD alert,” and we specifically look for demonic doors of entry that help explain what we saw in the Fruit step. We see the fruit in someone’s life, and now we look from that fruit to where or how things got started. We normally do this by asking the person if he or she knows, or by asking Jesus or the Holy Spirit to show us. Or we could, at this point, switch to the Four Doors tool and do a more thorough spring cleaning.

Demons gain influence or entry in a large number of ways, and at a specific point in time. They are *opportunistic* beings—looking to “gain ground” (see Ephesians 4:27) or some control over a body and mind through which they act out their particular bent or character. They choose the weakest moment and the most vulnerable place. They focus on your *metron*—your place of reflected glory. Wounding and ungodly beliefs often create such opportunities.

Demons are also *legalistic* beings—they take advantage of laws broken, vows or covenants made and God’s commands violated to

press their case of accusation and torment. Sin and entanglements create such doors.

It seems that entrance is gained by minor sin and rebellion practiced over a long period of time or a more traumatic sin or incident happening even once. It is like a cut getting infected. It takes both the cut (sin, wounding or entanglement) and the presence of the germ (demon) for infection to begin. And it takes time and acquiescence, ignorance or inattention for it to continue growing and to expand into a stronghold. It is like a beachhead landing within us now being exploited.

The following are potential entry points we and others have experienced:

- addictions
- association with cursed objects and locations
- coming under the “ministry” of demonized persons
- curses
- fatigue and exhaustion
- generational or personal entanglements (vows, curses, covenants, etc.)
- harboring unforgiveness
- occult sin, even once
- personal sin, blatant or persistent
- religious spirits and doctrines of demons
- sexual sin
- transference at the death of a relative combined with a similar open door
- trauma and accidents
- ungodly soul ties in family, sexual and abusive relationships
- wounding, abuse and rejection

Often, and *key*, is that demons supply something that people are deceived into thinking they need or desire. Their true will is to maintain or keep that something around, even if it is killing or entrapping them.

This dynamic, most often initiated during childhood, is often well hidden until the demon thinks it cannot be dislodged or is

forced out. For example, a traumatic incident, an abusive relationship or simple unprotected or lonely curiosity in early childhood opens the way for an agreement to help and partner with a child—perhaps appearing as a fantasy childhood friend. But it is actually a demon bent on eventual domination.

Demons enter for one reason, but they *stay* due to a continued place of wounding, unresolved entanglement, a place of unbelief, a perceived need or sin. The Bible says demons form “strongholds.” As stated earlier, a stronghold is a place within us that contains beliefs, attitudes and actions that stand in contradiction to God’s established Kingdom order. When touched, it can feel unassailable, hopeless and unchangeable. We do not fully control it. We may feel trapped in it. That place, or those places, may or may not be inhabited but are certainly strongly influenced or controlled by the demonic, a base of operations.

Every deliverance and inner healing ministry commands demons: to cast them out, silence or bind them from interfering, etc. Some deliverance ministries listen to them as well. Some say they never listen to and get information from demons. Biblically it is not a question of right or wrong as much as preference. Jesus spoke to and listened to demons. In Freedom Prayer ministry, however, at the first responder level, we do not recommend any conversation with the demonic. Get what you need from the person and from God. Normally the person knows what is going on inside and what he or she is hearing. If the person is unable to keep it under control, it is time to refer to others with more experience; you did your job by recognizing the need and connecting the person with the help he or she needs.

Boot Step—Casting Out

We are now ready to do Kingdom business and clean out legal rights or to go to the wounding with Inviting Jesus. We set about to undo what has been aided and abetted by the demonic.

Most of the time, when we know we have dealt with lies and are ready to cast out, we simply call the demon by the name of its apparent function within the person and command it to leave, all without incident or resistance.⁸ Often we lead the person to speak the commands.

The person usually senses a lightness, relief, inner cleanness, etc. But when we sense resistance or hindrance—when we know more is there—we then turn a more pointed focus on the reasons why.

The ability of the demonic to resist being removed is often directly proportional to the person's belief system and especially his or her choice, true will and desire. If demons disobey and interfere, it is an indication that (1) they believe they have a right to stay and resist, (2) they have something to say that is necessary to know and God is allowing it or (3) they are simply testing or resisting authority.

Demons will also resist if they know we expect them to resist and are not fully aware of our authority. Sometimes it is our belief system that allows resistance to occur—or more properly, our “unbelief” system. You are not responsible for enforcing authority. Shouting and loud voices do not impress demons and often scare the person. It is not necessary. Those most in authority exercise it quietly, confidently and firmly. Demons shrink away when they encounter the authority of God within a believer. They flee in terror, as it says in James 4:7. Bluffing on your part is as apparent as it is on theirs. Talk directly and simply. They are subordinate beings. They obey us. God seems to take a very dim view of demons that disobey a lawful command of one of His children ministering freedom. Remind them of truth about their defeat, Jesus' authority and their hot future.⁹

If we know there is nothing else to deal with in this area, then wording may follow this pattern:

- “I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for my sin and whose blood cleanses me—the true Jesus, who came in the flesh—to stand aside and stop hindering. If you refuse and choose to disobey this command, you are

choosing to disobey and defy the authority of Jesus. What is your choice?”

- “I ask you, angels of God, to enforce this command now on this demon and to force compliance.”
- “I command you to go and deal with Jesus because you are defying His authority.”

When all rights have been broken and all ground taken, tell the demons to go where Jesus sends them. We do not teach sending demons to the pit, to hell or to dry and waterless places. We feel that is Jesus’ prerogative, not ours.

In this step and subsequent ones, a few additional ways of declaring may be helpful:

Binding and releasing

- “I bind away from me now a spirit of [*name spirit*], and I choose to be bound to the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- “I release this sinful habit of [*name sin*] to You, Lord, and ask You to put it to death on the cross.”
- “I release any bonds I have formed with [*name entrapment*] and instead bind myself to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Declaring and choosing

- “I declare my freedom from [*name spirit*] from this day on, according to Your Word.”
- “I choose today to accept, believe and receive the truth that . . .”
- “I declare that God’s Word says [*declare truth*], and I choose today to believe God and not the lie.”

Taking authority

- “I declare my freedom from the demonic spirits of [*name spirits*] from this day forth, according to the Word of God, and I cast you away from me.”

- “I take authority over every spirit of [*name spirit*], and I command you to cease your activity. I cancel your assignment and order you to leave me alone and go to where the true Lord Jesus Christ tells you to go.”
- “I command all demonic powers to cease their interference in this session and to be silent.”

Reclaiming lost ground

- “I confess, Lord, that I have given away part of myself, part of my control to the kingdom of darkness.”
- “I choose today to submit this part of my life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and ask You, Lord, to reclaim and take back the ground I have lost.”

Claiming justice

- “I ask You, God, to bring the justice due me on the basis of my repentance from all known sin and on the basis of the unjust activity against me by the demonic.”
- “I ask You, God, to return to me what was stolen when . . .”
- “I ask You, God, to free me from unjust influence and control when [*event*] happened to me.”

Loot Step—Refilling

We also tell demons they are forbidden to return to their past host (Mark 9:25). And we make sure that the person is filled and defended! So we now fill them with truth instead of lies. We fill them with trust in God and surrender of those “rooms in the person’s house” to the Lordship of Jesus. We ask for the Holy Spirit to fill the person. With respect to DWD we may say something like this:

- “I break, cut off, destroy and dissolve any ability to reconnect with [*name person*] and now command you to leave [*name*”

person] and to go where the authentic and genuine Lord Jesus Christ tells you to go. You must report to Him now.”

- “I also forbid you to return to [*name person*]. He (she) belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, covered in His blood. If you try to return, you are willfully disobeying this command and will deal with Jesus and His angels.”

Scout Step—Instruction

We help a person take specific steps to get and stay clean emotionally, physically, relationally and so on. This instruction does not differ much from typical Scout instruction, except that we may help the person be alert to familiar but demonically empowered thoughts and temptations.

If there is time, or if we have a relationship developed by meeting more than once, we might help the person understand how to win the daily battle through understanding his or her identity in Christ¹⁰ and how to handle temptation when it comes through the three-step process found in James 4:7–8:

1. *Submit to God.* When we first begin to feel tempted, we quickly turn to God and ask for help.
2. *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* Turn and resist in the key area of temptation through the use of prepared and memorized Scripture, saying, “It is written,” just like Jesus did when He was tempted. Fire away!
3. *Draw near to God.* Turn back to God with thanksgiving for what He has done, for what is true and that you have been given the victory.¹¹



Part Four

Application in Church and Life

BAKER PUBLISHING GROUP

chapter

13

Building a Freedom Prayer Ministry in Your Local Church

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:15–16

Too many of us are lonely ministers practicing a lonely ministry. You cannot not minister if you are in communion with God and live in community.

Henri Nouwen

If you are still reading, you likely understood several chapters ago that this is not just about you anymore—it is about those you love, those whose paths you cross and those you have yet to meet.

You might be experiencing the elation and elevation that comes from increasing measures of freedom: increased intimacy, sense of calling, of God moving around you. Your eyes may be opened to the power of prayer and abiding and the sweetness of simple, honest fellowship. You might be one in your church or fellowship who always seems to notice the hurting, the wounded, the fallen and the entangled. It stirs your heart, even incites you. You know, just know, it was for freedom that Christ set us free (Galatians 5:1). You have to do something about it. And it makes you a bit nervous.

The “random” thoughts you were having a few chapters back about freedom ministry do not seem so random now, and you question if the job requirement is actually that simple, that familiar: love one another, speak truth to one another, confess to one another and bear another’s burden. You know the seed was placed in your heart months or years ago; you *have* been “wired” to be a carrier of that grace for your church and for God’s people.

With some trembling and heart pounding, you conclude that it is for such a time as this. It is for you.

“Inner healing” as expressed in Freedom Prayer is experiencing transformation. It is moving from a sort of one-session encounter through a parachurch organization or an adjunct ministry within the church to one that is integrated with both the lifestyle of the individual, in terms of discipleship and daily practice, and the

culture of the church itself. What you are feeling is being felt by many others. You are certainly not alone.

Your next question after deciding *to* get started is *how* to get started. We have found, broadly speaking, that three steps or phases are important:

1. Build a Freedom Prayer team that can become and minister as a family.
2. Secure the support of church leadership, and partner with them in your mutual mission and goals.
3. Partner with the larger Body of Christ within your local church and in the wider church community.

We want to take each of these in turn and provide you some hard-won insight and advice.

Building a Freedom Prayer Team

You know you need a team.

The *process* of building a team is as important as the *product*. Taking the time to build trust relationships will protect both those who come to pray and those who lead the prayer times, and it will strengthen your local church in amazing ways.

You Need a Team

Working in a functional and collaborative manner as part of the Body of Christ is integral to building and maintaining a thriving prayer team. It is imperative for accountability, trust and safety. It is God's design.

Vigilante, isolated and individualistic prayer ministry is a recipe for disaster. Many efforts that fail do so not for lack of talent or desire but due to personal and interpersonal issues that have not been resolved in a humble, healthy and godly manner. When you

recognize the target God has placed on the work of the evil one, recognize also that a target will get painted on you. You are now armed and dangerous to that evil kingdom.

When word gets out, Freedom Prayer ministry will be inundated by people in crisis—needy people often filled with challenges. That is its sometimes messy purpose. Issues of procedure, confidentiality and burnout will arise. Mistakes and misunderstandings may come. A transparent and unified environment of checks and balances helps keep the ministry clean and safe for everyone and glorifying to God.

Look for Gifting—Yours and Others’

An early step is to seek the Lord to see what He is already doing: to get an idea where you fit in His plan, where your own gifts and talents end and those of another must take over. Ask Him to check your motives and purpose for service and the building up of the Body of Christ, no matter what your role is.

You likely know your wiring and spiritual gifts well enough to determine where you could be most beneficial to a new prayer team. If you remember humility in all you think and do, it is likely that He will delight to show you the next steps in your personal involvement on a Freedom Prayer team.

Then . . . find friends! Our belief is that every church is equipped with the necessary people to start and sustain a Freedom Prayer ministry. Because this is central to His purpose, He sees to it the raw materials are all present.

Some churches will have enough skilled people and background to build a large team from the beginning with many components. Most will start simple and small. In all cases, here are some key roles framed as questions:

- Are you visionary, gifted with that forerunner personality that blazes new trails for the Kingdom of God? Can you cast vision and express the need compellingly?

- Are you pastoral and shepherding? Do you have eyes to watch over a prayer team, meeting the needs of those who minister and need covering and safety?
- Are you administrative? Even Jesus had someone keep track and collect the leftover loaves and fishes.
- Do you walk in wisdom, maybe from years of experience in the church? Can you effectively work with team leadership, counseling and guiding them?
- Are you a true intercessor who cannot wait to pray for this type of ministry and the people who will come for restoration?

Often there has been a small group of people who had “prayed this ministry in” long before we ever stepped foot in the building. These amazing intercessors knew of the need, knew that the Lord wanted to meet it and knew it would take prayer to usher in a move of God in which freedom was a component. Those are the type of people you want to invite on the team!

It is also wise to look for the wise! Look for the ones whom people flock to for advice and counsel, for prayer and guidance. They are respected and trustworthy and provide an element of security for those being prayed for. They often accelerate quickly in the marriage of their gifting and God’s power.

One of our favorite types of person to look for in building a prayer team is the one who gives himself to the ministry of the Word. This type is rare—able to work in both Spirit and Truth to bring a Scripture, pray it into reality for the person and unfold its meaning at just the right spot in a prayer time. It can be a game changer in ministry when offered in a life-giving way.

Church leaders are often overwhelmed by the number of hurting and broken people but unaware of the powerful assistance they could get from a Freedom Prayer team. Look for people who can advocate for this cause, with an understanding of the need and an

ability to clearly articulate both the biblical support for such ministry and God's desire to free His people. We have several people who do not actually serve on our Freedom Prayer team but who are official "poster children" for the cause!

Look for Mature Character

A sound Freedom Prayer team carries diversity in spiritual gifts, experience, age and personality. Look for people who "get" other people and who walk in great grace and humility. These two traits are imperative for healthy team members. It is far easier to teach ministry technique than humility and graciousness.

Freedom Prayer is a selfless ministry—the Lord must increase and we must decrease. It will not work if the desire is to fill a need for attention or receive accolades for being the superstar Freedom Prayer minister! A healthy Freedom Prayer team honors and remembers that we each have been rescued. Humble prayer ministers are safe, and there is plenty of room for God to work and partner with them. We are the ones at the end of the parade with the broom!

Become a Family

Once you find your team, become a family. Learn to pray with one another before you pray for others. In the heat of ministry it is crucial that the team know and trust one another. "Clean houses" with open doors must exist within the team. Pray and eat together. Have coffee and conversation. Know you are "for" each other, you have the others' backs . . . unconditionally.

One milestone in becoming a true family of prayer happened during a Freedom Prayer session which Jennifer was leading, assisted by two other women. In her words: I am comfortable leading and have done so for years. One time, halfway through DKB, I heard the Lord clearly say, "Stop . . . stop, STOP!" I was midsentence in a repeat-after-me prayer, and I stopped on a dime! I frantically

looked at my friends assisting me. I knew someone else had something better. The first shook her head slightly, but the second was grinning ear to ear. She had something she felt the Lord had told her to write just moments before, and she simply trusted I would look her way. It was perfect. We were giddy to obey and watch the holiest of outcomes when we made room and trusted what we were hearing and each other. God told me to zip it! I was happy to oblige—I love Him and my freedom family.

Look for Balanced Teams

Paul talks of the Holy Spirit having three main aspects, which He keeps in perfect balance: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV).

We can think of these three characteristics of the Holy Spirit—power, love and sound thinking—as three legs on a tripod, balanced. Each is equally important in a ministry session, and your team should value each.

In the end it is the power of God that breaks chains . . . not our smarts. Our best compliment is to hear people say they met a kind and powerful God, and, “Thank you for helping me meet Him.” As Paul said well,

I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:3–5

Unbalanced “prophetic power” can overwhelm people and make them uncomfortable. Love and compassion are key, the oil that allows power and reason to function. We must be able to weep with those who weep, even to synchronize with their pain (Roman 12:15).

God’s Word brings truth to set free (John 8:32). But the Word of God without a direct dependence on the Spirit’s leading and love

can be dry and legalistic, a long mechanical checklist, a simple iteration of *logos* we committed to memory or read from a cheat sheet. The Holy Spirit has an amazing ability to bring to us scriptural truth amazingly applicable to the moment and need. He also brings amazing statements directly to the person—revelation, sweet secrets, powerful pictures—the personal *rhema* of God that somehow breaks the logjam and in a twinkling moment changes everything.

A strong and sustainable team will balance one another in the actual prayer time. For example, the lead prayer minister may sense the road map for how to proceed from the Holy Spirit and operate in loving wisdom. The prayer minister in the second chair may see a picture and a word from God that unlocks the stuck places. The intercessor in the third chair may love the Word of God and can pray it into reality. This results not only in a solid team but an exciting one to be a part of!

Partnering with Leadership

Freedom Prayer is inherently *just* prayer in the sense that it is seeking the Lord and waiting on Him with others—that concept has been around from the beginning. A central message of this book is that this kind of ministry is actually a lifestyle, a way of living together. Anyone can and should minister. If you are led to build a team in your local church, however, the requirements are a little different—more formal, more organized. There is more on the line. Thus it is *essential* to be submitted to and have the support of your church leadership.

Obviously, if you don't have permission, don't try to build a team! Pursue your freedom with the Lord individually and trust Him and His timing for how He wants to work in the church at large. If the ministry itself depends on the Lord, then surely its genesis should also.

The genesis of support can happen in different ways: a heartfelt conversation, an expression of need, someone changed who testifies

to the leadership. It normally culminates with the expression of your heart meeting the heart of a leader who sees firsthand the need in his congregation.

Knowing what to share is a balancing act. God can give you the right message if you give Him the right heart to carry it. That Freedom Prayer is working in hundreds of churches; is very flexible and nonproprietary, yet you are supported by others with experience; and is eminently biblical while being God led seems always to be a positive.

If there is one key leader, then their support is vitally important. And they are normally wearing too many hats and juggling too many balls. Patience! Freedom Prayer may be just one of many things incubating and growing within the church.

Ultimately, you submit and honor your culture and the leaders and structure in place. God has a very effective ways and means committee! If a leader does not see it as a challenge but as a humble offer of support from trusted church members, laying out initial steps to build a team might be very welcome. Often those steps begin with a less formal referral or trial period. Sometimes it is integrated with other forms of prayer, and as it gains reputation it also gains support and becomes part of the culture.

Another key person to partner with is an elder or deacon. This leader can effectively interface between pastors and the team and also serve as an advisor or mentor.

Finally, in our experience, a majority of churches usually have some sort of framework in place to help when church members are struggling. This could be a pastor or a couple, a parachurch ministry or even a counselor in the community. It will be important to relate in an honoring way and to be wise in how this additional resource is introduced. Work to be mutually supportive and accommodating.

A word of caution. It is important not to mix and match various inner healing techniques and approaches without careful consideration. Freedom Prayer has been carefully built over a decade to meet needs in a certain way. Others may have been built that way,

too. But when some methods are mixed, our experience is that the whole can be less than the sum of the parts, and some confusion, awkwardness or breaking of the flow occurs. This caution is simply to emphasize that the ten foundations that frame our culture and approach are important to preserve, even while our prayer times can be very flexible.

Partnering with the Body of Christ

A thriving Freedom Prayer ministry should be a connected piece of the Lord's bigger picture, complementing other areas where He is working. To begin, we encourage three steps we have found to be helpful in this process:

1. Build an administrative structure.
2. Work with other complementary ministries.
3. Partner with needed resources outside the church.

Building an Administrative Structure

A prayer team is a great addition to a church family. An organized one is even better!

We say with experience that prayer ministers are often not the most organized. We can say that because we are those people! But God is merciful.

In the early rush of fast growth, having a person in place with an intercessory heart who understands and loves the ministry but is also able to coordinate a team with those who sign up, plus interface with church building schedules and calendars, is vital.

Prayer appointments do not just materialize. A system is needed to schedule the time and location, remind everyone and distribute and collect necessary intake paperwork. We suggest using a scheduling or appointment program and a separate password-protected e-mail account to keep Freedom Prayer messages in one place. Reminders

and future information can be cataloged here, too. The administrator should also be able to coordinate with the building staff and the larger church calendar for room reservations and training needs.

This administrator is the ministry's "first impression," providing hope in the dark places. He or she should be articulate and merciful in responding to those who ask for prayer. It is a difficult thing for someone who has lived in pain or bondage for years to work through the necessary administrative steps and then wait. Honoring encouragement should be the administrator's forte.

Working with Complementary Ministries

One of the most exciting aspects that we have experienced working within a Freedom Prayer ministry is the opportunity to partner with another ministry and see both flourish.

For example, it is commonplace for Freedom Prayer team members to be asked to serve in church retreats. Retreats such as marriage weekends often bring up things within a person that an on-site team can quickly and effectively deal with.

Freedom Prayer is also a beautiful complement to any worship night. Prayer and worship work in tandem in an effortless way. It is as if worship paves the way for freedom. Entering into worship, individuals tend to know quickly if they feel unworthy, distracted, shallow or blocked. What better time to receive assistance with strongholds that want to interfere with our worship than immediately in a worship setting?

Another great partner ministry is the small group system (see the next chapter). When our Freedom Prayer ministry team reached out to the life group leaders in our church, we expressed our great need of them—their gifts, their leadership, their hearts and their ideas. We then shared that their regular meetings and deep relationships were perfect for walking out freedom with their people.

The result has been amazing. One of the most influential and meaningful outcomes of that partnership is the growing number of

Freedom Prayer appointments that contain a “fourth” team member from the life group—the “buddy.” The individual ministered to is saying, “I want to walk this out transparently before God, this team and you.” That unity is the place where the Lord commands the blessing—life forever (Psalm 133:3).

Partnering with the Community

To sustain a Freedom Prayer ministry, relationships and partnerships with resources in the community are essential. Sometimes issues uncovered in ministry require further help outside the realm of a Freedom Prayer team’s capabilities. We recommend establishing relationships with medical doctors, psychiatrists and Christian counselors. Each brings a unique set of vital skills and insights to the table. For example, some issues may have strong physical and chemical components, and obtaining a physical evaluation in conjunction with ministry is wise. In other cases Freedom Prayer ministry can “break things loose” while ongoing counseling helps complete the transformation of the mind and establish behaviors and habits in keeping with freedom.

It is wise to be familiar with treatment facilities, safe houses and shelters for issues that require further help. It is great to have some licensed counselors and family/marriage therapists in the community as active partners, if not team members. Several licensed marriage and family therapists work with our team to provide counseling services outside of the church walls and, with the individual’s permission, share information necessary to the person’s overall freedom. Everyone is on the same team.

One of the licensed professional counselors on our team, Wendy Barnes, states,

Receiving training on Freedom Prayer has been invaluable to me as a counselor and has helped me facilitate my own counseling sessions. I have seen it be effective in a ministry setting and in counseling sessions. I trust folks who go to

Freedom Prayer will be listened to, prayed for and encouraged. Conversely, the ministry has encouraged some clients to seek professional counseling, as they may need more frequent sessions, other coping strategies or life skills. Our collaborative work often results in an individual strengthening his or her relationship with Christ.

This is what we have found: When done carefully and with a right, humble spirit, building a Freedom Prayer team can be one of the single most important steps a church takes for the health and strength of its members . . . and for the sanity of its leaders!

BAKER PUBLISHING GROUP

chapter

14

Freedom Prayer as a Lifestyle

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Colossians 3:12–14

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

Charles Dickens

On a group of theories one can found a school; but on a group of values one can found a culture, a civilization, and a new way of living together among men.

Ignazio Silone

I like video games, but they're really violent. I'd like to play a video game where you help the people who were shot in all the other games. It'd be called *Really Busy Hospital*.

Demetri Martin

We know two things for sure: Freedom occurs in Freedom Prayer, and we need other people to maintain it.

Jennifer would like to tell you a short story about her tribe:

There I was, standing at the top of a wooden platform overlooking a Texas river with a rope swing in my hand. I really wanted to swing out and land fearlessly in the middle of the water, but . . . I was hesitant. It was not the fear of the plunge but the thought that my nervous, sweaty palms might just slip off the rope, landing me hard on the tree roots jutting out of the water. With enough metal in one knee to build a small robot and four young children (one newly adopted) watching their mama contemplate the jump, it became more about wisdom than appearing fearless. And then it happened, like a hissing whisper: *You will only go so far with the Lord. You will be limited and unable to leap to the places you long to go with Jesus. You are crippled in spiritual matters, and fear will have its way.*

It stung for a moment, seeking its target. Crazy, huh?

At this point in my life I am pretty adept at knowing whose voice is whose. Condemnation, limitation and failure are not my Lord's way. His limits never break my heart. In that moment as I declined the jump I immediately began desperately searching for Jesus inside—wanting His truth. And He spoke comfort to me, but I was still a little shaken and, honestly, a little heartbroken. I stepped into an inner tube, paddling out to watch others. There were tears in my eyes.

And they came paddling!

One mom friend just shook her head over and over as she paddled up. From ten feet away another paddled toward me, loudly asking, "What's the lie, Jen? What's the lie? Don't believe it!" Four

middle-aged moms in inner tubes huddled together in the middle of the river. I'm sure we were a sight! I'm sure Jesus loved it.

My friends confirmed what God had said and exhorted me wonderfully. Happy tears ran down my face in the safety of a community where this—this right here—is normal. Healing, freeing and restoring are everyday conversation.

This is how we do life on a regular basis. No lie gets a chance to take root—sometimes it is able to hang around for only a couple of seconds . . . only as long as it takes to paddle together!

What would it look like if the distant and polite way in which we do life was turned upside down, and instead of sweeping things under the rug, we started shaking out the rug in front of each other—dust and all?

We would rather hide a dirty house from guests. Fear and pride join forces to keep us silent and apart, to keep up appearances. But family? Nope. Safe, healthy family we welcome to help us shake out the rug, air dirty laundry and even fumigate.

So how do you start a community that lives freedom as a lifestyle?

Freedom through Discipleship and Small Groups

In most churches a system is in place to provide some sort of fellowship for the people. Small groups, life groups, house groups, Bible studies, women's groups and even discipleship relationships exist regardless of denomination. If you cannot find one of those, there always seems to be at least a book club! When freedom ministry begins to flow through these groups, the likelihood of someone keeping and growing in freedom is high.

Brady, an initial Freedom Prayer skeptic, is a great example of the strength of a women's small group:

It has been almost five months since I experienced Freedom Prayer, and my tantrums, anger, constant need for control

and anxiety about pleasing others are completely—and I mean completely—gone. I have more compassion for others because I know I am not the only one with a sore heart; but I see my freedom and I want others to know about it. Most of all, my ability to give grace to others is new. When any of us begin to feel attacked, we search out one of our friends and we do mini–freedom prayers right then and there. It has been a beautiful experience that has bonded us closer as sisters in Christ and turned us into warriors for each other.

For pastors or church staff reading this book, this section is for you. Through years leading small groups of young adults and discipling a variety of people, we have found, over and over again, that integrating Freedom Prayer is one of the keys to spiritual formation and maturity. Freedom Prayer gives a leader tools to allow the Lord to unlock the “stuck” places that keep their people from Christian maturity. Brian, the connecting pastor at a nondenominational church, speaks of the effect of multiple individuals going to Freedom Prayer and returning to a life group:

Freedom Prayer is the answer for group leaders who feel helpless at times when people share a need and we are unsure how to respond. We ask God together. Freedom Prayer and small groups that desire discipleship go hand in glove. God’s love is unhindered, maturity increases and a greater Kingdom impact emerges.

One of Jennifer’s favorite kinds of “meetings” is spending time with a small group of college and young professional women in discipleship.

We sit around my kitchen table and, to be honest, it looks more like a Scripture quilting bee—sewing the ancient written Word and right-now spoken word. This is fertile ground for Freedom Prayer to provide the “backstitch” (ask your grandma!) that keeps truth strong and secure.

And, like a quilting bee, there is *a lot* of chatting.

One of my favorite questions to ask in a small group is, “Why don’t you believe this verse?” Or, more directly, “Why does this verse make you mad?” Those questions get to the heart of things quickly and open a door wide to Doing Kingdom Business. (The normal response at my table is, “Why did you have to ask that?” or, “I don’t want to answer that!”) Room is made for God to show the root of the disbelief or anger.

For example, a group of young women wanted to receive biblical truth about disciplined prayer and to personally grow in their prayer lives. When we started digging into the Lord’s Prayer, they were captured by the first two words: *Our Father*. The idea that God is their Father led to conversation and naturally to Freedom Prayer ministry that dealt with truths and lies they believed about Father God based on relationships with their earthly fathers. As we interacted with God, He began to remove obstacles and belief systems that ultimately kept them from approaching God as Father, or even approaching Him at all.

Our Bible study in Matthew 6 combined with Freedom Prayer became a time not only to *learn* about prayer but *experience* God in it . . . to *own* the Scripture we studied.

One friend states,

In Freedom Prayer, God showed me that my deep-seated feelings of unworthiness and self-hatred were rooted in my dad’s rejection of me—specifically, the spiritual me. After seeing what had eluded me for over thirty years, I was able to specifically forgive him and was in turn given something more precious than I could ever describe: a picture of my heavenly Father accepting, affirming and even creating that truest, deepest part of me.

Jesus wants us to bear much fruit and that it would remain (John 15:16). Our church has begun to implement Freedom Groups as a

“next step” to living our freedom. Those who have been through Freedom Prayer have the option to be in a small group devoted to the next steps: nurtured and living in new freedom-bought habits and beliefs. We want our people free. We want them to keep their freedom. We need each other to make that a reality.

Freedom through Community

We have both had the opportunity to live in various parts of the country and to be members of different types of churches. Many do a great job of presenting salvation and providing various ministry, fellowship and study opportunities.

But we have found that many members and leaders alike struggle with the idea of specific and expectant prayer together, especially combined with the vital biblical concept of listening to God for real-time answers.

When this kind of community begins to grow in a church setting, we have found that it spreads along two lines. In the last chapter we spoke about the first, a more structured Freedom Prayer ministry that provides a defined and safe avenue to freedom.

Second, flowing out of the more structured ministry times, these kinds of conversations and this kind of prayer ministry begin to permeate the life of the church and community. Why wait for an appointment when we friends are armed with something deadly to the dark kingdom?

Many unscheduled prayer times happen on Sundays and in small groups during the week, over the phone and in parking lots and coffee shops. It is a regular occurrence to stop midconversation, midmeal or “midlife” and ask the Lord together . . . and to expect to hear from Him.

It is contagious. Here is one man’s experience:

Freedom Prayer made me nervous. To me it sounded mysterious, controversial and hyperspiritual. On top of that,

I felt like I was already walking in freedom and did not think I would get much out of it. I figured that anything God wanted to deal with could be done in the privacy of my own prayer closet. And so I kept ignoring the invitations. But then a few close friends, skeptics like me, signed up and emerged from their prayer times amazed, changed and full of life. I had to experience it for myself. God spoke to the deepest places in my heart, and by the end I felt light as a feather, loved and free. I honestly do not know why it took coming to Freedom Prayer to find freedom from those things. Maybe there is really something to the phrase “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them.” Regardless, I was transformed by the Spirit of God, the Word of God and the people of God coming together to minister to me.

Jennifer’s kitchen table is a pretty busy place of family meals, homework and the chatter of friends. She shares: In the middle of kids and conversations, when we decide to turn and just ask God, I often get asked, “Is this ‘it’? Are we doing Freedom Prayer?” “Is this discipleship?” “We’re friends, right? Is this ministry?” So funny. So fun.

The answer is YES! to all those questions. We ask God about all kinds of things, and some of those things seem like ministry—but many just seem like a few friends asking God because that is where the answers are.

Friends don’t let friends drive drunk . . . or waste away in bondage if the other does not want to. We are all givers and recipients alike. Like the Acts 2 church, who knew something about the power of praying continually, a lifestyle of freedom prayer can be scheduled but shows up most importantly in unspecified times of simple friendship. The lines are blurry because they can be.

This way of living is not only about “issues.” That may be where it starts, but it quickly transforms into relationships in which God goes beyond healing to destiny, above zero to gain new ground. He loves to take back way more than was stolen.

Play dates for children or dinner dates among families often become times to hear the Lord for each other. I have one friend who calls it “drive-by Freedom Prayer”—we chat at the table to catch up on life, and inevitably we are asking the Lord what He thinks. And He tells us.

There is a standing joke in Freedom Prayer ministry that if you cannot do it in Starbucks in twenty minutes, you are not doing it right. That may be true for Millennials, who have time for long coffee chats; but I would add that if you cannot do it at the kitchen table in twenty minutes with a herd of active children in the playroom, you are not doing it right, either!

One friend describes a typical afternoon visit as herself sitting on my living room rug with her baby girl moving Cheerios back and forth into toys, my preschooler playing superheroes in the adjacent room and my toddler sleeping in the bedroom. She writes,

I had walked through my friend's front door feeling discouraged, confused, dirty, angry and afraid. I felt abandoned by a God who promised abundant life but did not deliver me from the insecurity, inferiority and a broken sexual identity I experienced. I had seen some victories, but overall I still felt like a prisoner in my own mind and body, chained to self-hatred, shame and desires that I know did not please the Lord. I felt I was an unqualified and useless poser in the Body of Christ.

We sat drinking tea. In most polite Christian conversations, expressing that kind of feeling would be out of bounds. It would be awkward and might end with a sort of, “I’ll be thinking about you . . . So, how is your child’s baseball team doing this year?”

I asked, “So how’s it going for real, my friend?”

She calls it that “sweet, sincere knowing question.” I call it life, true life. She began to cry, tears pouring down her face. I encouraged her to just tell the Lord everything. Pain, anger, accusations, questions and doubt all came hurling at God. Lies about our identity

sting the most—they lodge where our hearts are most tender. And it is easy to believe God is the source and origin of them.

When everything was out on the table, I encouraged her to keep the communication going.

“Ask Him what He thinks. What He desires from you and for you.”

When she asked in that bare, honest place, she saw Father God’s kind eyes and gentle hands. He began to speak affirmation in the broken places and tenderly exhorted her to the next steps in her healing. He pointed her to Romans 6; the thought just popped into her head. Suddenly, for real she felt like she could offer herself as an “instrument of righteousness” and truly count her flesh dead, but herself alive in Him. She had never done or declared anything like it in her life.

Sure, she had begged for forgiveness and help in changing, but this identity shift in the safe hands of the Father was entirely different. It was entirely life changing. She knew in that intimate moment that she was indeed dead to sin and alive in Christ. Knew it! And I watched it happen right there on my rug with children playing all around us. God came near and she saw Him, felt Him, knew Him.

She wrote me later:

I shifted my allegiance right then and there. He pointed me to powerful scriptural truth and also spoke sweet, personal affirmations to my spirit about my inclusion in the Kingdom and destiny in the Body of Christ. I saw myself as right before Him, an instrument for His use—shame evicted. Salvation secured. My hope for change and commitment to forsaking the temptations of the flesh were restored. I did not show up that day seeking profound, paradigm-shifting or supernatural healing or salvation. I was just hanging out with my friend. Doing what friends in the Kingdom do.

In our experience a freedom culture begins to spread into the church family at large when the core ministry team begins to

demonstrably live it and when the senior leadership of the church is fully supportive. Things start slowly. Then individuals whose lives are changed begin to tell others, and it sort of goes viral.

It is not just a mom thing, by the way. All this is true for men. Coffee, phone calls, car repair, golf cart ministry and even business meetings can become environments where God is naturally and cleanly brought into the conversation. “Let’s stop for a minute and ask God. What are you hearing?” is a common occurrence.

If a lifestyle of freedom is new for your church family, it will take a little bit of plowing to allow this way of doing life to take root. Most people are not excited to start sharing their secrets, wounds and sins because it is not safe to do so. That is why it is essential that the individuals on a Freedom Prayer team are first transparent about their own freedom. They change the conversation. Their open testimony encourages others to both try it and to join the freedom conversation. We find that others begin to admire the courage and evident joy of those sharing and want it for themselves. Keeping painful secrets is hard, disheartening work!

Slowly, the walls start to come down. People nervously show up for prayer, and they realize the team of Freedom Prayer ministers can compassionately say, “I know you are scared. I was too. But wait until you see what God is going to do. We are on your team, and we’re honored to partner with Him and you on your behalf.” The move of God becomes a movement among men and women.

There will be messes. But they *already* exist. The epidemic of brokenness that comes barreling out in a church family pursuing corporate freedom is not a *new* mess, just a mess that now has a *safe place* to be exposed and to get healing. The mess has been around for quite some time—abusive marriages and eating disorders, a life lived “doing the right things” but with little relationship with God. Before she becomes spotless, the Bride needs a good bath! If the leadership team and Freedom Prayer team are in agreement that they want freedom, honoring safety and gentleness more than propriety, then great breakthrough happens.

Solomon says it this way: “Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; but much increase comes by the strength of an ox” (Proverbs 14:4 NKJV).

Hold the course. Remember that you are doing the very work of Christ, demonstrated and commanded by Him, and that you, too, are grateful recipients of freedom simply sharing the gift we have obtained in abundance with others in need. The key in this season is to keep looking up and to see somehow, in the midst of the mess, the church starting to become a family united with a common theme: “I once was lost, now I’m found; was blind but now I see.”

It is an amazing fact of this kind of ministry that God seems to have a big memory eraser for the dark and painful parts of someone’s life and an amplifier for the good and called parts. In fact, many people on our Freedom Prayer team (us at the top of the list, embarrassingly so) cannot recall details of the person’s story—even from a week or two before—because all that we remember is what God did and how only He could do it. The people in every Freedom Prayer team we know comment that they quickly forget the issues they deal with in someone, but the destiny, calling and amazing resilience of those for whom they pray is etched forever in their mind’s eye.

Andy witnessed Jennifer in her church home, meeting person after person as she pointed around the room, each of whom was known by his or her gifting, love and relationships. Knowing looks of love were everywhere. Pleased pastors, happy members, healthy kids.

Feels like church.

Freedom through Marriage

We are both married, and we have both seen God move so powerfully through the lifestyle of Freedom Prayer in marriage that we have more testimonies than we can count! We will introduce them in this section using our names.

Jennifer. I and the cute twenty-year-old who was pursuing me at the time were introduced to inner healing prayer. For the majority of our three years of dating and our fifteen-year marriage, we have lived and operated in the tools and foundations of Freedom Prayer. It is all we have known, and it made perfect sense to us as the next piece of our mutual walk with God. Freedom Prayer never felt “new,” just . . . well, normal. No big deal—just doing the next thing in growing up.

I naïvely assumed that everyone did married life this way. I thought, *Why wouldn't you want to get to the bottom of things and see them how God sees them?* Right!

We were invited to talk at a relationship class about the “difficult issues” in marriage and how Freedom Prayer can help. I distinctly remember a room full of women staring at me with eyes wide open—*shocked* wide open. One said, “We don’t talk about those things with each other. How do you do that? That is *not* normal.” It was a compliment, I think, but I can almost feel the red flush of embarrassment in my face even now. I *knew* that it could be the most normal thing for anyone, and I *assumed* it was the way most marriages operated.

I was pretty sure, as a 23-year-old newlywed, slightly strong-willed woman with just enough Cajun blood to be dangerous, that my filter was not always clear enough to determine God’s way of truth in any given marital dispute on my own! Even now, approaching forty, I find myself putting up a convincingly stubborn argument and yet, mid-rebuttal, asking the Lord to speak His truth to *my* heart about *my* husband.

Living as a couple in this Freedom Prayer reality makes submitting to my husband easy, because I know he is doing the same.

Andy. My wife and I have lived this way for lots of years. I still recall one time we were sitting on the covered porch as one of my sons came strolling in after a day on the town. The lawn was *not* mowed. I said, “What, you could not complete the few simple chores . . . ?” The front door slammed and I fumed.

My wife's response was, "So . . . ?"

"So . . . ?" for us means, "Do you want to deal with that or live with that, honey?" The better part of me thought dealing with that was the best approach, and I closed my eyes, focused on the Lord, and asked Jesus where that anger came from. Quicker than I can say it, the whole truth plopped in my mind. I was feeling poorly prepared, inadequate and insecure as a father, unsure how to be a great dad to teenaged young men. It is almost never about the situation. It is almost always about me. So I defaulted to what I learned: berate and belittle.

With my wife supporting me, I confessed my inadequacy to Papa God and received forgiveness and assurance that He, in fact, did know how to raise sons and would be pleased to show me. "Step one," He said, "is to walk in the front door and tell all this to your son." Gulp! I did so openly and teary eyed. He ran to me and we hugged. He encouraged me and expressed sorrow at his forgetting to help out. Starting right then—right then—and to this day, years later, our relationship has remained amazing, and his rise to responsibility and maturity accelerated immensely. That is our God.

Jennifer. Yes, as married humans, we have plain old sinful responses sometimes. But often we respond because we believe some lie that has little or nothing to do with the spouses and kids who are on the receiving end of it. We fear something about our spouses because we saw it growing up, or next door, or on the news. Or we believe they will operate like someone who hurt us in the past, or that we are unworthy. The list—it is a very long list—goes on and on. We act out of what has been deposited in our hearts over the years—true or not (Proverbs 4:23). We act from that anger or fear, we feel insecure and we put up walls and protect ourselves.

But what if you dive in individually and together, asking the Lord to help identify the reasons and root causes? Then it is not so much about who is right and wrong but what we believe: truth or consequences?

Once I knew that my future husband was the guy for me, I just assumed that every argument (1) was darkly designed to tear us apart but (2) could be turned on its head to bring us more closely together. So . . . I fought for us. God is good and Satan is bad, and I do not want the bad guys to win. I fought *for* us, and therefore there was not so much fighting *with* him. I am sure my husband is thankful for that mind-set! He shares it with me. It is all we have ever known, and it works. I have learned that I am not always right (mostly, but not always!) but that God always is. And we can find Him right smack dab in the midst of conflict.

Our pastor often says, “I hate car wrecks. But I don’t hate the people involved in car wrecks. In the same way, God hates divorce, but He does not hate the people involved in the divorce.” But what if you could prevent the car wreck in the first place? I am fascinated by the newer car advertisements that show *the car* sensing the impending wreck and adjusting speed and position to avoid it, even before the driver has any idea of the danger. It has been my personal experience, and the experience of many of my friends and acquaintances, that Freedom Prayer as a lifestyle in marriage can do just that. It can predict and prevent the collision before it ever happens.

And, in our experience, it can take a major accident with wreck-age and scale it back to a bump on the fender or a scratching of paint. It can both reinterpret the “facts” of the situation and change and soften the hearts involved.

I recall a morning visiting a friend with three small children. She expressed that in the midst of “things being good” her heart was increasingly frustrated and discontent. The normal things that trigger moms with toddlers, like a messy house, cranky kids or a husband not meeting an expectation, were snowballing. She wept,

I peaked in my twenties. I got married and had kids, and all the excitement of my youth, my professional life and who I was as a woman seemed long gone. The vision and plans for

what my life is going to be are gone, too. It isn't going to be as I had once dreamed.

Her husband was on the receiving end of this growing bitterness. With one ear listening to my friend, who was grieving a loss, and another tuned in to God, I had a sudden thought. I told her it reminded me of the time her home had been burglarized. That she felt robbed of what was hers. Her eyes shot open and she cried, “That’s it!! There isn’t an area where I feel holy contentment, because I feel robbed of everything good that I was supposed to have.”

It seemed easy then. While our problems may seem opaque and complex, God’s answers are often very clear and simple. We began to interact with God in prayer. He sweetly caused a very meaningful song that beckoned her to Him to well up inside of her. In the way only God can bring about, she became convinced He was not done with her, and that the best was yet to come; that He had already prepared the next things for her life, and that restoration was hers. He spoke straight into the consuming lie that wanted to distort everything—marriage, ministry and child rearing. Now, when the overwhelming feelings of loss and discontent start to sneak back in, she can view them how the Lord views them.

It could have gone a different direction.

It would be easy for two wives chatting to bitterly blame the husband or the circumstance and to take sides: *He should fix this problem*. It is a common and seemingly harmless and normal way of showing empathy, but it leads to a wreck with injuries.

Andy. I recall a time when a couple came for marriage counseling. Four people greeted them at the door, two men and two women. We separated for a couple hours; each member looking at the issues, with loving help, before the Lord. When we came together in the living room, the couple rushed to each other, each of them blurting out why the key issues in their marriage were their

fault and speaking the truth they heard. They then just stopped . . . frozen . . . and then broke out laughing. God had said almost the exact same thing to both of them. In the light of God's words, the *problem*, not the person, became the problem. And they saw themselves on the same side of the table, the problem on the other side. We all sipped coffee and shared, planning together the Scoot step of walking it out relationally. But they were miles down the road knowing with certainty that God had both a plan and the power to bring change.

Jennifer. All couples come with some conflicting flesh. In God's economy of character and maturity, parenting may do the rough cutting, but marriage completes the sanding and finishing. But a hidden battle lies just below the surface. It really is more than a battle of flesh and flaw—an unseen spiritual struggle is taking place. But if both parties can agree to get God's perspective on each other and the issues, things move quickly toward healing resolution.

One of the greatest honors of my life is when a married couple asks me or my husband to attend counseling with them. This vulnerability creates accountability and community. There is nothing hidden between us. We can advocate for our friends in the midst of their struggle because it is all out on the table. We are vulnerable to each other and God *and* invincible to the enemy. When the lies invade and foundations start to crumble, we can go straight to the Father together. No protecting pride and reputation; it is just real and honest. No disunity, no backstabbing, no teams. Freedom Prayer as a lifestyle in marriage takes the tools and foundations and blends them into daily dealings with each other, with friends who are also married and in friendships with other couples.

John describes it this way: "If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Freedom Prayer as a lifestyle in marriage is the normal married life . . . happily ever after.

Freedom for Children

God is a fierce protector of children. Perhaps the most pointed words of all from Jesus were about just that:

He said to His disciples, “It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.”

Luke 17:1–2

God is a warm friend of children. He will impart both comfort and blessing to them:

Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 19:13–14

I, Jennifer, love praying with children. I know God does, too. Sometimes, though, we tend to believe that children will have to grow into their prayer lives over time and “pay their dues,” so to speak, in learning to hear God. While maturity does take place over time, Samuel figured it out in one night. In the initial confusion, sweet Samuel tuned in to the voice of God. I have watched the same thing happen—in one night. We say, start them young!

Many adults during Freedom Prayer pinpoint childhood wounds that have kept them bound up for years into adulthood. What if they had encountered the Father heart of God sooner? Imagine the benefits of freeing people while they are still children! Freedom Prayer for children is a powerful key for unlocking early healing for children and their families. As kids navigate the cultural full-court press,

the schemes of the enemy and their own sin, Freedom Prayer offers our children's ministry an early offensive tool to deliver them from wounds, entanglements, lies and baggage they often face in their younger years. Jesus said, "Let the children come." Our children's ministry team seconds that!

Renee, children's pastor

I can remember one of the very first times I introduced Freedom Prayer to our children. My oldest daughter, then six, was doing Kingdom business with God and was adamantly after His help with walking something out. She asked Him and then just smiled at the answer and curled up in her bed, content with what had transpired. I asked her curiously, "What just happened?"

She said, "I saw a turtle."

Now, I have participated in and led hundreds of Freedom Prayer times. She was, without question, the first to see a turtle!

I breathed, "Jesus, this is all You . . . right?"

I tentatively asked, "Do you want to ask the Lord what He is saying to you with that picture He gave?" Her eyes were closed, ready to go to sleep. She smiled and said, "Oh, He already did. He says that the Holy Spirit is like that turtle shell. I can hide in it and be safe. Even when I peek out of it, He is still surrounding me. Oh, and you can't break it, either."

Not bad, Lord. Not bad at all.

As a mother and Freedom Prayer minister, I have learned that what He has for children is far beyond my ability. He understands their development, their ability to reason and their capacity for encountering Him much better than I. The same creative and creator God will speak individually to children on their level.

Each child is different. My oldest daughter seems to step easily into that kind of interaction on a regular basis. My oldest son's interactions look entirely different. It is in this difference that I can trust the Lord—nothing about our God is formulaic.

My oldest son, eleven then, had spent the past couple of years seeking (and finding) the Lord in the middle of a struggle with fear. What started as fear about a peanut allergy led to a fear in social situations and somehow to a fear about stepping “all in” with God, as demonstrated by baptism. What kept him from making that leap was that he somehow knew there was a cost, and that it was big. He knew (again, something between the Lord and him) that it might cost his life in some form or fashion, and he was not sure he was ready to have it cost him like it did Stephen in the book of Acts. Martyrdom and torture were heavy on his mind, despite the fact that we do not spend much time discussing those topics. We have toddlers, and this is not how we introduce them to God at the dinner table! This topic was on his heart for a reason we cannot explain but that we knew to be profound and important, something only the Lord could speak into.

So we gave Him room to do so. In Freedom Prayer, our son wrestled this out in layers over time. We were in no hurry to rush baptism, or even to rush him in Freedom Prayer—we knew when he decided it would be for real. In one prayer time the Lord reminded him of a dream he had a few nights prior. He told us,

I was in a battle scene—good versus evil and lots of super-heroes and powers. I was scared, but the leader of the good guys kept placing me in the front line. I didn't want to go each time he placed me there and felt afraid. But once the battle started I was fighting and fighting well. Even the leader of the bad team knew it. And each person that the evil team placed up against me, I could beat. The leader of the good team believed I could do it, and I could. It was like I was the best of the best.

I hold dreams loosely but know if they have importance, we can ask our good Father. So our son asked the Lord. His eyes popped open wide with surprise. The Lord told him that he *was* the best

of the best and that he need not worry about any of his prevailing fears. He could kick out the fear and trust Him.

He then got a spot-on picture from the book of Revelation with people around the throne, elders and the whole bit. I know that passage and it gives me comfort and hope, but honestly not like it did my son in that moment. He smiled and was excited. He knew the Lord loved him, saw him and had good plans for him, no matter what.

To train children young to hear God, as parents we have to be willing to weather the process with grace and patience and hold fast that it is all Jesus. I will not press the Lord to do something, and I will not press my son, either. It is a holy conversation that we get to offer and make room for. Our son knew when Jesus was and was not speaking because he had experienced both and practiced praying through both. When his eyes popped open at the vision of the throne, we knew it was the real thing.

How phenomenal to step into “all-in” Christianity with that kind of experience. To biblically count the cost in ways most of us do not, and to know Jesus is worth it all. To literally “see” Scripture in his mind as the Lord’s response, and to know it made a profound impact on an eleven-year-old child. Is that not what it is supposed to do, anyway? *Rhema* and *logos* words colliding to set a life solidly in motion? My husband and I could have told him all of those things, but not like the Lord can.

I can speak to a child. He can speak *in* a child.

Freedom Prayer as a lifestyle can be life changing for children and their families. One of my favorite (I have lots of favorites!) prayer times involved an eight-year-old boy who was clinically diagnosed with ADHD and greatly struggling in school. He and his dad came to Freedom Prayer, and we began to seek the Lord.

To his surprise and delight, our prayer room had crayons and paper, blocks, Legos and action figures in various places on the floor. Ministry to children must often involve movement, creativity

and distraction. In the midst of drawing or playing they can often speak, draw or demonstrate what is going on. He was quiet and sullen despite the fun options, but we offered him the crayons anyway. We asked him why he thought he was coming to prayer.

“Because I’m so angry.”

“Do you know why you are angry?” He shook his head.

“Can you ask the Lord what the anger looks like? How it feels?” He nodded.

This young boy closed his eyes, and when he opened them, he proceeded to get the crayons and paper and painstakingly draw his anger. It was red and black with sharp lines that consumed the paper.

In the midst of drawing anger, he began to tell about situations at school, where anger took over on the playground and got him a chair in the principal’s office. He could feel the anger, and it was very real.

“Can you ask God if there is something you believe about this anger that is not true?”

With his eyes closed, the sullen expression on his face turned from anger to grief.

“It’s who I am.”

Anger is a complicated emotion, frequently with other emotions attached. It is often called a “secondary emotion,” a reaction to a primary stimulus. I may not have strong opinions or a background sufficient to make some sort of medical diagnosis, but I do know this: Anger may be something he has to learn to cope with, but there are a million Scriptures that say anger is *not* who he is. I may not fully understand disorders and illnesses, but I know that they were never meant to define a person and give (or steal) identity. This young boy’s face went from sullen to fearful as a tear ran down his face.

“I’m scared it’s who I am.”

“Do you want to ask the Lord who you really are?”

He did and jumped down on the floor (we followed!) and began to set up a brilliant display of horses and knights and Playmobil

figures, along with coaches and castles. There was a battle. He could “see it” in his mind’s eye, but it was easier to design it and “play it out.” He was showing us (and any principality listening) what was really going on and who the Lord said he was. The battle was real, but there was protection in towers and soldiers on his team. He could clearly see “anger” now as the opposing side, separate from him.

At the end of the prayer time, we were amazed to be sitting on that holy ground. The son knew he was not “bad” anger; he was strong and a fighter, “good” anger at evil. His dad was awestruck that his son, his ADHD-diagnosed son, had just prayed—engaged and determined—for two hours!

While many ministry times with young children may involve either dealing with fear or forgiving someone, the ultimate dark target is all about identity. The enemy knows who children are and starts young to steal, kill and destroy. Most of the adults I know can point to a time when they were young when things started to unravel. If the enemy starts young, then we do, too.

I, Jen, have hung on to a book from my graduate school years, packing it in a box each time we move: *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, by Vivian Gussin Paley. Paley, now retired, was a champion of early childhood research and found play to be the most usable context for growth in young children. She believes you can play to figure it out, to learn and to interact. I agree with her and would add that children should never be discouraged in “figuring it out” while playing with the Lord!

Our God, creator of never-ending galaxies, is not beyond showing up in a child’s play, especially one that invited Him into the game. He knows how they process and meets them where they are. Most children have a tense and stoic concept of prayer, and when they find that they can ask God and color at the same time, prayer becomes something they feel good about and want to do more.

In our household, we have a creed: *Keep it in the light. Ask Jesus everything.*

It does not matter how bad the thing is that you did or feel; this is our house rule. And if identity is the issue, this rule protects from a whole truckload of lies and ungodly beliefs. Likely some sin, too.

In one prayer time, twelve-year-old Jessica was having difficulty keeping the issues “in the light.” Her parents knew why she was there, she knew why she was there and she knew we knew why she was there. Sometimes it is just really hard to say it. Jessica had grown up in the church after being adopted at age three by a wonderful family, yet she continued to lie, cheat and steal at home and at school. It was getting worse, and her parents and school staff feared it would land her in serious trouble. She was hesitant to talk, so we played a game in which I would guess possible things that could be bothering her and she would raise her hand if they were true. I purposely made up ridiculous things that made her laugh to make sure she was not just agreeing with everything. She was not. It was freeing for her to be able to acknowledge, even by the raising of a hand, what was going on. She had trouble focusing on Jesus and felt unworthy to talk to Him because of the stealing and lying.

Then, like a sudden burst of sunlight, she said something that felt real but sounded absurd to her:

I know it sounds crazy, and I know it's not true, but when I'm stealing, I actually feel okay for a moment. Afterward I feel terrible, but in the moment, I feel like who I really am. And I know it's crazy, that you can't inherit something like stealing, but I feel like I did.

Bingo.

Jessie knew her biological father was a thief and an addict, but she also knew of a time when he stole baby food to feed her. With the root of the issue now in the light, God began to gently speak truth about her compulsions. Tears streamed down her face when she could, before God, separate herself from the “bad” habits in

her family line, give them to Jesus to take to the cross, bless her biological dad and keep the good habits that God intended. She could safely be connected to her dad without all of the baggage. She could “kick out” the compulsions that had ruled her and receive new ones to replace them.

And the most beautiful part of keeping things in the light that day was that she could ask Jesus anything. And she did. When she shyly asked if she could talk to Him, even though she had done so many things wrong, she saw Him nodding His head over and over again—drawing her to Him. She laughed and said it was like watching a bobble head figure—how quickly He kept nodding to her! Hinder not the children.

She came to Jesus and repented, and He met her with all of the grace He so willingly paid for her. That day she received freedom and a bonus of salvation. It clicked for her when Jesus received her despite it all. He wanted to deal with the troubling things *with* her, not against her.

The self-described “black sheep” became a child of the one true King. And the beauty of her gift of salvation and freedom—it stuck. That night, after her prayer time, Jessie went home and for the first time ever asked for forgiveness from her mom and dad. Her mom says she is a different person. And she is.

At this point it is probably smart to give you a few pointers for ministry to children that have been learned by many practitioners over the years.¹

First of all, older and younger children are ministered to differently. With older children to young teens:

- It is important to ascertain from both the teen and the parents that it is all right not to tell the parents what you talked about, keeping legal requirements on reporting in mind. If it is, tell the teen that whatever he or she chooses to share will be held in strictest confidence.

- Ask the teen if he or she wants to be there. This goes a long way. If the answer is yes, then ask the teen what he or she would like to talk about that is bothering him or her—not what the parents think you should talk about. You normally get to the second one, anyway. If the answer is no, heartfelt sympathy and offered freedom just to chat often warm the conversation.

With younger children:

- It may be important to ascertain the home life of the child and try to get the parent into ministry as well. Some make it a condition of ministry to a child.
- Start with an interview of the parent(s) to understand the Fruit step and get a feel for their understanding and overall look and feel (affect).
- Parents must know what is going on and are often present with the child.
- Sometimes the parents can stand in for the child in forgiving, renouncing, etc. Sometimes the child will watch and then chime in.
- Let children play, wiggle and draw. Have toys that can be used in make-believe. Often they can draw things they cannot express. They are listening even when they seem not to be.
- Keep it simple and short. But do not talk down. Get on the floor with them. For example, use *disagree with* instead of *renounce*.

Resist the request by a parent to “fix my kid.” Instead try to engage the parent as a partner in the healing process.

With all children, do not dishonor the parents. It can trigger shame in children, make them worried they will get in trouble and make them afraid. This can get tricky with forgiveness and such things. But there are ways of explaining someone needs to be forgiven in an honoring way—for example, “Sometimes people

hurt others even when they are not trying to. They are not bad; they just did not know.”

Remember that in the United States there are state and federal duty-to-report laws that must be followed. Become acquainted with them in your location.

Women are normally not as scary as men for younger children and older ones alike—though there are exceptions.

Take time to allow the child to connect with Jesus. This normally is easier the younger the child is.

At the end, in the Scoot step, point the child back to the place he or she met Jesus, and encourage the child to return there to work things out with Him when he or she is angry or afraid.

Summary

We think you are starting to get the picture. The concept of walking in freedom together is both biblical and contagious. This lifestyle pierces the polite walls we erect around us out of ignorance, cultural momentum, fear and shame. It gives us tools to be more effectively real and honest with each other and to discover that Paul was totally right when he told us how the Body of Christ, how a church, grows stronger as well as bigger:

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:15–16

Speaking truth does not just mean speaking Scripture. It means first speaking truth about me to another. Lack of vulnerability in relationship breeds superficiality; that leads to all kinds of problems. But when we start by speaking the truth and doing it in a loving

manner, a living body begins to grow, and grow rapidly. Speaking truth first means opening myself up before others in a true and vulnerable place, knowing it is safe and loving. It is safe because they have been equipped and are skilled in being first responders. It is loving because they have already demonstrated that we are linked in unbreakable but flexible ligament relationships, allowing life from Jesus to flow throughout the body.

We think anyone would join a church like that. Anyone would marry a bride that beautiful!

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Epilogue

Well, there you go. There is much more we want to share with you, but we are confident that this framework will launch you on your way. And we are more confident that as you launch, you will find God to be a help in time of need.

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

Matthew 9:36–38

The wording in this Scripture is very graphic. It says the people were fleeced, mangled and cast to the ground in abject depression and despair. It sounds for all the world like the aftermath of a wolf attack. And, it says, Jesus was moved deeply within Himself with compassion—His “bowels” ached. His response was to tell His disciples to cry out to the Lord for people to be moved with compassion, equipped and willing to minister.

That is us.

In our world today, things are not that great. In the United States, one of the richest places on earth, a record 37 percent of all babies are born out of wedlock, and among babies whose mothers are between 20 and 24, the statistic is approaching half. Half of all

babies live without nuclear families. Only one-third of all marriages will reach their 25th anniversary—and the percentage of married people is at an all-time low of 59 percent. Almost 11 percent of high school students will drop out in any one year. Recreational marijuana and habitual drug use of deadly methamphetamines and Ecstasy are at epidemic levels. Downcast, dispirited, mangled, depressed, alone and abandoned.

That is us, too.

Perhaps this is why God says, in the last verse of the Old Testament, that one sign of the end times—one thing that will be desperately needed—is turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers (Malachi 4:6).

It is your turn now, you know. You know too much to turn back now. It is your turn to be healed and freed; your turn to heal and free others; your turn to partner with Papa God and His amazing Son; your turn to be humble and brave and to walk with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is still watching over His sheep and seeing their sorry condition, and He is still asking Papa for harvester-shepherds who are willing to risk it with Him.

He is asking for you—but you know that, or you would not have read this book to the end.

May you be blessed in every word and work. We send you love and blessing!

Andy, Jennifer and
all our teammates

Notes

Chapter 1: Polite Society

1. American Psychological Association, “What Role Do Religion and Spirituality Play in Mental Health? Five Questions for Psychology of Religion and Spirituality Expert Kenneth I. Pargament, PhD,” APA press release (March 22, 2013), <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2013/03/religion-spirituality.aspx>.

2. Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal L. Park, eds., *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 2d ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2013).

3. S. M. Saunders, et al., “Spiritually Conscious Psychological Care,” *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 41, no. 5 (2011): 355–362.

Chapter 2: Two Foundations about God

1. Gregory Boyd, *God at War* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 32.

2. William Coffin, interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, WHYY Radio, April 14, 2006.

3. Father Heart Communications, “Father’s Love Letter,” (September 16, 2014), <http://www.FathersLoveLetter.com>.

Chapter 3: Two Foundations about Our Enemy

1. More examples include Psalm 101:3; Luke 9:54–55; 22:31; John 8:43–44; 13:2; Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 10:20; 2 Corinthians 4:3; 11:3, 13; Ephesians 2:1; 1 Timothy 3:6; 5:14; Hebrews 2:14–15; James 3:14; and 1 John 5:19.

2. God the Father works through Jesus by the Holy Spirit. All are shown in Scripture to be mutually involved, concerned and active. They are one. We can address any of the Trinity in a ministry time. Many find it easiest to speak to Jesus, as they can picture and relate most easily to Him.

3. We are very careful when we ask and listen to ensure we have first dedicated our time to God, taking authority over dark suggestions. Then, as we listen, the team constantly compares what is heard to both the character of God and His words. We rely on the verses that tell us, “My sheep hear my voice, and the voice of another they will not follow” (see John 10:4–5).

4. Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker: Overcoming Negative Thoughts, Irrational Feelings, Habitual Sins* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1990).

Chapter 4: Two Foundations about Us

1. This statement is based on the insights of Dr. Ed Smith and Doris and Peter Wagner.
2. That is why, in dealing with younger children, the two most common forms of Doing Kingdom Business are helping children learn how to combat fear and how to walk in forgiveness.

Chapter 5: Two Foundations about Being a First Responder

1. This idea courtesy of Bob Mumford.
2. Thanks to Mark Virkler and Communion With God Ministries (<http://www.cwgmministries.org>) for this insight.
3. Thanks to Diane Hawkins for the basis of this analogy.

Chapter 6: Two Foundations about Tools and Process

1. See also Deuteronomy 23:21–23 and Matthew 12:33–37 for more on “mere words.”
2. Gail Saltz, *Becoming Real* (New York: Riverhead, 2004), 5.
3. For example, the book *Tools for Transforming Trauma* by Robert Schwarz (Routledge) is a collection of techniques for getting past barriers in the brain that protect it from addressing past trauma.

Chapter 7: Key Elements

1. See, for example, Proverbs 25:11–12; Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1–2.
2. Biblical restitution means restoring what we have taken and then some in order to allow the other person to trust us again and to help restore normal relationship. See Exodus 22 for more on this.
3. <http://www.healinghouse.org>.
4. See, for example, Romans 1:18–2:11; 2 Corinthians 4:3–4; 1 Timothy 4:1–3; Hebrews 3:12–4:9.
5. See resources at www.freedomprayer.org.

Chapter 8: Putting It Together

1. God the Father works through Jesus by the Holy Spirit. We can address any of the Trinity in a session. Because many find it easiest to speak to Jesus, we will use the term *Jesus* throughout, though Papa God and the Holy Spirit are equally loving, concerned and involved.
2. See, for example, Neil Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness* (Regal).
3. See *Winning the Daily Battle* at www.freedomprayer.org.
4. See Andrew Newberg, *The Spiritual Brain: Science and the Religious Experience*, offered by The Great Courses, www.thegreatcourses.com.
5. Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker, *Every Young Man's Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation* (WaterBrook).
6. Andy's friend tells this story on his wife—and it is way funnier when he tells it.

Chapter 9: The Four Doors

1. Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1990).
2. See, for example, 2 Corinthians 11:19–20 and Galatians 2:4–5 for church-based soul ties.
3. See, for example, Ted Roberts, *Pure Desire* (Regal); Patrick Carnes, *Out of the Shadows* (Hazeldon); Harry W. Schaumburg, *False Intimacy* (NavPress); Stephen Arterburn, et al., *Every Man's Battle* (WaterBrook); David Cross, *Soul Ties* (Sovereign World); Jill Southern, *Sex* (Sovereign World). See also resources on our friend David Kyle Foster's website, <http://www.masteringlife.org>, especially for homosexual issues.
4. Interestingly, recent brain scan studies on newer, more potent forms of marijuana show that the active ingredient, THC, shuts down the part of the brain that protects or modulates irrational and hallucinatory thoughts.

Chapter 10: The Father Ladder

1. In Luke 15, the prodigal, the older brother, the lost sheep and the lost coin all ended up in undeserved parties!
2. *Abba* is a Hebrew childlike term of endearment equivalent to Daddy, Papa or even Pops in English.
3. The concept was conceived by Alan Ray, and when he originally sketched it, it looked like a ladder with God the Father and earthly father on top.
4. This is a condensed fictitious account showing the key points in a typical session. Any similarity between this example and any specific real-life Freedom Prayer session is coincidental. In reality there may be many more questions and exchanges to get to the closing point. Another tool may be appropriate in this scenario as well, but for now we will limit ourselves to this tool and Doing Kingdom Business.

Chapter 11: Inviting Jesus

1. If you have forgotten (or skipped—surely not!) the content of chapter 5 about honoring the flow of God, His voice, His ways and His willingness to enter into our pain and need with truth and grace, I recommend you do a quick review and then read on here.
2. Interestingly, a couple of my counseling friends pointed out that some of the basic understanding comes from, or is shared with, cognitive therapy approaches—with the twist that God Himself, not a counselor or the counselee, brings truth.
3. Two good resources are Peter A. Levine, Ph.D., *In an Unspoken Voice* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010) and Robert C. Scaer, M.D., *The Body Bears the Burden* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
4. See <http://www.theophostic.com> for more information about Theophostic Prayer Ministry.
5. E. James Wilder and Chris M. Coursey, *Share Immanuel* (Pasadena, Calif.: Shepherd's House, Inc., 2010).
6. Robert Schwarz, *Tools to Transform Trauma* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2002), 108ff.
7. For a very interesting discussion of brains and memory, see Daniel Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness* (Random House).

8. This is a condensed fictitious account showing the key points in a typical session. Any similarity between this example and any specific real-life Freedom Prayer session is coincidental. In reality there may be many more questions and exchanges to get to the closing point. Observe the flow of the Fruit Loop. Another tool may be appropriate as well, but we will limit ourselves to this tool, DKB and DWD.

9. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013).

Chapter 12: Dealing with Demons

1. See, for example, books and other materials of Peter Horrobin, Don Basham, Neil Anderson, Bob Larson, Derek Prince, Jessie Penn-Lewis, Charles Kraft and Ed Smith. We in Freedom Prayer ministry owe each of these a debt of gratitude for their enlightened examples and clear writings, and we want to acknowledge them here.

2. The term *spiritual warfare* is a bit of a misnomer since Jesus has won the war. But Paul does talk about struggle, and that is the term we will use.

3. For example, a theory called the “gap theory” states that demons are disembodied spirits of a pre-Adamic race.

4. It is interesting that the final result of that manifestation of demons was hundreds of scared people repenting of their evil practices and burning their magic books. God is a better chess player than Satan!

5. Analogy thanks to Kris Vallotton, Bethel Church, Redding, California.

6. Stalling or avoiding is a demonic tactic. “If you refuse . . .” is used throughout this tool to bring demons to a decision point where they clearly obey or know they are in opposition to the direct authority of Jesus and will have to deal with Him and/or His angels. We learned this idea from Dr. Ed Smith and have often found it effective.

7. See, for example, Jude 8–9 for the *wrong* attitude.

8. For example, “You spirit that took advantage of John’s jealousy . . .”

9. Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel 28:17–19; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:18–19; 11:20; Acts 10:38; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14–15; Revelation 12:11 and 20:10 are helpful.

10. The books from our friend Neil Anderson are very good for this.

11. A follow-up audio called *Winning the Daily Battle* is available from <http://www.freedomprayer.org>.

Chapter 14: Freedom Prayer as a Lifestyle

1. Some of this is courtesy of our friend Vikki Waters of Growing in Grace Ministries in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Mike and Marilyn Seth of Kids in His Presence Ministries, Redding, California.

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Andrew (Andy) Reese has served as an active minister and church leader for many years, with a focus on biblically based Freedom Prayer ministry. He is president of The Freedom Resource, a ministry dedicated to providing training, networking and information on using Freedom Prayer in both personal and church ministry settings. A noted speaker, writer and leader with many years of service in a variety of church and ministry settings, Andy has also been married for over 35 years and is the father of four and a grandfather to a growing clan. He is a professional engineer and a leading authority on sustainable design. You can connect with his many other projects and blog at www.andyreese.org.

Jennifer R. Barnett has actively served the church for many years in a wide variety of locations. Alongside her husband, Cory, a military medical doctor, she currently leads in their local church's Freedom Prayer ministry and college and young professional ministry and discipleship; they also serve as elders. Jennifer is a speaker and writer who delights in advocating for freedom in the Lord, participating in and training Freedom Prayer teams regularly. Formerly an educator, with degrees in music education and interdisciplinary fine art therapy, Jennifer is passionate about community and adoption. She pursues an exciting and successful nonprofit career as a mother to four vibrant school-aged children, complete with soccer mom duties and an abundance of laundry and sno-cone excursions.

Find out more about Freedom Prayer, including audio, written and video resources, at www.freedomprayer.org. You can contact both Andy and Jennifer with questions or speaking/training requests at admin@thefreedomresource.org.

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