

***FREEDOM***

**from Satan's Power**

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Other translations include *The New International Version* (NIV, Biblica, 2011); *New American Standard Bible* (NASB, Lockman Foundation, 1995).

The contents of this study are in accordance with the Statements of Faith of the National Association of Evangelicals (USA) and the Evangelical Fellowship of India.

The following abbreviations refer to the following reference works. The commentary series represent various titles and dates of which the authors will be noted in the study:

*BDAG A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, F. W. Danker ed., 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (University of Chicago).

*BENTC Baker Exegetical New Testament Commentary* (Baker).

*BST Bible Speaks Today* (Intervarsity).

*EBC Expositors Bible Commentary* (Zondervan).

*NICNT New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Eerdmans).

*NICOT New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Eerdmans).

*NIDNTT New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan).

*NIGTC New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Eerdmans).

*PNTC Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Eerdmans).

*TNTC Tyndale New Testament Commentary* (Eerdmans).

*TWOT Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody).

*Vine's Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, W. E. Vine (Thomas Nelson).

*WBC Word Biblical Commentary* (Word).

*Webster's Merriam-Webster Dictionary*; online at [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com).

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# ***FREEDOM***

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## **Section I**

# **Introduction to *Renew Ministry***



## Chapter 1

**God's Promise to Change Your Life**Romans 12:2

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ As you read, mark the answers to the following questions:

- 1) What does “transformation” mean? How does it happen? Why is this?
- 2) Why is Romans 12:2 not only a promise but also a command?
- 3) Why do we claim Romans 12:2 is among the hardest and most important commands to obey?
- 4) What was especially meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

A middle-aged Christian woman testifies:

If someone could travel back in time and see me a few years ago they would not recognize me now. I devoted the first ten years of my Christian life to Bible study and prayer. But the effect of Renew Ministry on my life has been to completely renew my mind in a way that was previously impossible. I have found freedom from habitual sins, allowing me to grow into a deeper relationship with God.

Is it possible to radically and permanently change your life? Yes! Did God intend for you to constantly struggle with controlling negative emotions like anger, anxiety, and discouragement? No! Why are we so confident about these things? Because like the Christian woman above, we have witnessed many people who have overcome these things through a process called Renew Ministry. It is a ministry based on biblical principles and a proven process to help God's people experience His promise to:

**Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** (Romans 12:2 NIV)

God promises that you will change your life when you change your mind.

## A) God's promise to transform your life <sup>1</sup>

Romans 12:2 is one of the most powerful promises in all of God's word. The original Greek word used for "*transformed*" is *metamorphos*. It means a RADICAL and PERMANENT CHANGE in the character or appearance of something or someone. <sup>2</sup> The Apostle could not have chosen a stronger Greek word to communicate being "*transformed*."

The biblical idea of transformation means RADICAL change. As NT scholar John Stott notes, Romans 12:2 is describing "a fundamental transformation of character and conduct, away from the standards of the world and into the image of Christ himself." <sup>3</sup> God is promising YOU CAN CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER in a revolutionary and lasting way. There is nothing about your moral weaknesses that cannot be changed, no matter how long you have been that way, or how hard you have tried to change it. God wants to help you change it because He loves you and He wants to be glorified through your life.

Why does mind renewal create such a RADICAL transformation of our character? Because when you renew your mind you will be trusting more truth and trusting the truth empowers the Holy Spirit to more consistently control you.

Secondly, God is promising PERMANENT change. When you are "*transformed*" the new you is the natural and consistent way you will live. When you are "*transformed by the renewing of your mind*" you will no longer have to force yourself to be different. You will simply and naturally be different. Being "*transformed by the renewing of your mind*" will require hard work. But AFTER you have been "*transformed*" you no longer need to work to maintain your transformation. It is PERMANENT. That is what transformation (*metamorphos*) means. Far too many Christians are focused on trying to conform their lives to the truth. Instead, they should focus on being transformed by the truth.

Why is mind renewal permanent? Because the Bible says, "*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it*" (John 1:5). <sup>4</sup> You cannot bring darkness into a place of light. But you can bring light into a dark place. And once a room has light, darkness cannot invade it. Likewise, lies and truth cannot occupy the same space.

A good illustration of *metamorphos* is the transformation that occurs when a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. First, the change is RADICAL. A caterpillar is ugly and crawls on many legs. The butterfly is beautiful and flies with two wings. Secondly, the change is PERMANENT. A butterfly does not need to keep trying to remain a butterfly. They have been permanently transformed into something else. A butterfly naturally flies because that is what they have been changed into. And notice that a butterfly cannot turn back into a caterpillar. Once changed, always changed. And this is true of the spiritual growth and transformation that the Bible is talking about.



God promises that you will change your life when you change your mind. This is because you will: “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2).

## **B) God’s command to renew your mind**

Again, Romans 12:2 is one of the most powerful promises in God’s word. But it is not an unconditional promise that God will fulfill regardless of what you do. Romans 12:2 is not only a promise, but includes a command: “Renew your mind.” God promises you will be transformed if you renew your mind. This answers an important question asked by many Christians: What is God’s part and my part in spiritual growth? God has already done His part by giving you the truth that can set you free from the power of sin (cf. John 8:31-36). Your part is to use that truth to renew your mind and be transformed.

Many Christians are confused about the most important questions in the Christian life: How do you grow spiritually? How do you become more like Christ? How do you become a more loving, joyful, peaceful, and fruitful Christian? The biblical answer is the promise and command of Romans 12:2: “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” There is always and only one way that you spiritually grow in a lasting way: renew your mind.

Many Christians put a great deal of effort into changing their circumstances because they believe it will make them happier. Think of all the time, effort, and peace lost in changing jobs, churches, friendships, and possessions. And then we quickly discover we are no happier. How do we truly experience more happiness? Pursuing God’s command to change our mind instead of our circumstances. And when we do, we will be surprised how many circumstances we can be happy in!

What does the command to renew your mind mean? Renewing your mind is replacing the LIES you believe about yourself, with God’s TRUTH. The Apostle Paul describes those who have a depraved mind as those who have “*exchanged the truth about God for a lie*” (Rom. 1:25 NIV). The Christian seeks to do the opposite: to exchange the lies we believe for the Lord’s truth, leading to a renewed mind and a transformed life. Mind renewal is not adding more biblical knowledge on top of the lies we believe. Rather, it is replacing lies we believe with the Lord’s truth.

The only way any Christian experiences radical and permanent change is to replace the lies that control them with the truth that grows them. You can do all kinds of Christian activities including praying, fasting, and Bible study, or you can go through difficult challenges. But if these activities or experiences do not change your mind, they will not change your life.

Why do you change your life when you change your mind? Because your mind is the control center of your life. It is where you believe, and everything you do is controlled by what you truly believe. The Bible says of all humans: “*For as he thinks within himself, so he is*” (Prov 23:7 NASB <sup>5</sup>).

This is why the Bible says, “*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it*” (Prov 4:23 NIV). Your beliefs determine what you will do and who you will be. This is how God created you.

If you change what you believe, you will change what you desire and feel. And because you act on what you desire and feel, all of this will change your character. And because you can permanently change your beliefs, you can permanently change your character. This is not pagan psychology. This is biblical doctrine.

There is another reason that mind renewal uniquely transforms the Christian. As explained elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials Faith Study*: TRUSTING the TRUTH turns on the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. TRUSTING LIES turns on the power of the sinful nature. It is that simple. Every time you sin it is because you are believing a LIE. Every time you experience the love, joy, peace, power, and holiness of the Holy Spirit, it is because at that moment you are TRUSTING the TRUTH. This is one of the most vital things to understand about the Christian life. <sup>6</sup>

The permanently and radically transformed Christian life is empowered by being consistently controlled by God’s Spirit in you. And renewing your mind is the only way for that to happen.

Do you see the biblical pattern and plan for spiritual growth and life transformation? Note this carefully because this answers those important questions that many Christians do not understand: How do you grow spiritually? How do you become more like Christ? How do you become a more loving, joyful, peaceful, and fruitful Christian? The biblical answer is explained in the following four steps:

- 1) Because you love God, make it your goal to obey Him and “Imitate God in everything you do” (Eph 5:1). Do not set your sights lower than that, because becoming like Him is His expectation for your life.
- 2) Let the current level of love you have for God motivate you to pursue obeying Romans 12:2. This may be the hardest thing you do in the Christian life, but your love for God will empower you to do it.
- 3) Be transformed by renewing the logical and subconscious parts of your mind so you will trust the truth of God’s love in more places of your heart and life.
- 4) Then you will be more consistently controlled by God the Spirit who lives inside of you, and will effortlessly and automatically experience His power to obey God so that His commandments are that “easy” and “light” yoke that Jesus promised (cf. Matt 11:28-30).

Notice that obeying Romans 12:2 is the starting point for all of the above. Therefore, we would argue that the commandment that requires the

most painful work and perseverance to actually obey may be to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2). We would also argue that Romans 12:2 is among the most important command in the Bible to obey.

This is because after you obey the command to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*,” you will automatically, effortlessly, and joyfully obey all the rest of God’s commands. If you do the painful and hard work of “*renewing your mind*” you will “*be transformed*” into a person consistently controlled by the Holy Spirit so that all the rest of God’s commands become the easy yoke and the light burden that Christ promised (cf. Matt 11:30). In fact, it is only by being “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” that you can actually obey any of God’s commands in a God-pleasing way, no matter how hard you try to do otherwise.

How consistently and completely will you obey the Greatest Commandment to “*love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength*” (Mark 12:30)? It completely depends on how diligently and completely you obey the command to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2). All of this is why we suggest that Romans 12:2 is among the hardest and the most important of all God’s commands to obey.

Therefore, we see this necessary “upward spiral” of synergy between renewing our mind and loving God. Which comes first? Renewing our mind. Our initial conversion to Christ demonstrated that. We had no real love for God before we were “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” with the truth of God’s love in the Gospel. And now we must apply all the love for God we have obtained through mind renewal, in order to be motivated to pursue more mind renewal, so we will love God even more.

Yes, in Renew Ministry you will learn that renewing those hidden, hurting, and hardened parts of your heart may be the hardest commandment to obey. But the transformation you experience by doing so, will also teach you that Romans 12:2 is among the most important commands to obey. Because when you do, the power of the Holy Spirit will be greater in your life, enabling you to obey all the rest of God’s commands automatically and effortlessly.

Do all Christians need mind renewal? Do you need this? Yes! Romans 12:2 is a command to all Christians to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*.” The Greek word translated “renewing” (*anakainōsei*) is in the present tense, indicating that “renewing of the mind is a continuing process” <sup>7</sup> for all Christians.

Everyone believes lies, and because of this, everyone needs to have their minds renewed. Coming out of our denial of our true spiritual state is the first step toward spiritual growth. If you doubt you need transformation, then complete *the FRUIT Study*. <sup>8</sup> It reminds you that God lives in you and should be living through you so that you consistently experience His love,

joy, and peace (being spiritually FREER! and FRUITFUL). It is consistent anger, anxiety, lust, shame, and depression that indicate we need more mind renewal.

Which is why God promises that you will change your life when you change your mind. This is because you will: “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2).

### **C) Who will benefit from the *FREEDOM* study?**

The *FREEDOM* study is primarily for three types of people. First, those who are desperately struggling with deep and destructive spiritual problems such as anger, depression, overwhelming fears, and addictions (the DEFEATED Christianity described in the *FRUIT* study). Essentially those who are losing hope that they can ever change their life and character. We understand that you might be skeptical that anything can really help you. But many of the testimonies you will read in this study are from Christians who have been spiritually defeated, and they are now free from these things. The same can be true for you.

Secondly, the study is for those who feel like they are trying to live the Christian life, but are not experiencing the supernatural love, joy, peace, and power of the Holy Spirit. Serving God and loving people feels like a duty instead of a delight (COPING Christianity). Renew Ministry can help you restore the joy and freedom you experienced when you first became a Christian.

Thirdly, this study is for those who want to effectively help a loved one with their spiritual struggles. For example, husbands are using the process taught here to help their wives overcome negative emotions. Parents are using Renew Ministry to help their children process hurtful experiences, so they remain free from their potential life-long effects. Pastors and church members are finally experiencing a simple and powerful tool to truly help people “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2).

### **D) The contents of the *FREEDOM* study**

The *FREEDOM* is connected to two other publications. The previous *FRUIT* study provided a biblical perspective on evaluating our spiritual health and maturity. It was designed to reveal our need for Renew Ministry. The *FREEDOM* study explains the biblical principles necessary to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*.” It encourages and equips us to be a Recipient of Renew Ministry.

The *Renew Ministry Training Manual* is designed to equip Renew Ministry Helpers to provide the process to Recipients. It is based on the biblical principles shared in the *FREEDOM* study, but shares more specific and practical guidance in how to help someone through the Renew Ministry Process.

The FREEDOM study is designed to be used as a part of Renew Ministry Training or it can be used on its own as a weekly or biweekly study with a small group discussing two or three chapters at a time. After some more explanation of Romans 12:2 in the next chapter, and testimonies in chapter 3, the study continues with two main sections.

### **Section 1: Introduction to Renew Ministry** (ch. 1-3)

This section introduces you to Renew Ministry and testifies to its powerful effect in transforming lives for Christ.

### **Section II: Understanding Satan's Schemes in Your Life** (ch. 4-16).

The Apostle Paul said, "*Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes*" (2 Cor 2:11). Unfortunately, this is not true of many Christians. This section will help you understand how Satan has worked in your life to gain control of your life and quench the power of God's Spirit in your life. It will explain how a painful experience in your past builds a Lie Fortress and "*gives a foothold to the devil*" (Eph 4:27). This section will also discuss the Bible's descriptions of the subconscious mind. Renew Ministry is really biblical spiritual warfare, and this section explains why.

### **Section III: Destroying Satan's Power in Your Life** (ch. 17-25)

Here we will describe the Renew Ministry process and the purpose of the questions that will be used. Understanding these things will help you have more effective Renew Ministry sessions.

Also, four requirements for effective Renew Ministry will be discussed. These include: Humility, Help, Hard Work, and a Heart for God. Humility is necessary because you must overcome the fears and shame that keep people from recognizing and confronting their need for change.

Help is necessary because most people cannot navigate through the Renew Ministry questions by themselves. You will probably need to team up with a Renew Ministry Helper to experience effective mind renewal through this ministry. Therefore, you will need the humility mentioned earlier, in order to be willing to get the help you need.

Hard work will be needed because the quantity and power of the Lie Fortresses in most Christians' minds is much greater than they realize. That is why so many of them have experienced so little victory over the power of anger, worry, depression, and lust in their life.

Finally, a Heart for God is necessary. Most people finally agree to "counseling" because they simply want to remove the pain of their problems. This is a legitimate and understandable place to start your journey to "*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*" (Rom 12:2).

But you will probably not have the power to finish your journey with such a self-centered motivation. There is only one thing that will give you the power to choose the Humility, receive the Help, and do the Hard Work

necessary to experience “*divine power to demolish strongholds*” (2 Cor 10:4 NIV) in your life. That one thing is your love for God. At some point in your Renew Ministry journey, your motivation has to change from doing it to please yourself, to doing it to please and glorify God.

### **Supplementary Topics: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Growth** (chapters 17-23 available per request: Email [renew@newlifecr.com](mailto:renew@newlifecr.com))

This section provides some theological background for the topic of spiritual growth and “sanctification.” It also addresses common and serious errors in modern Christianity about spiritual growth and warfare. Finally, it offers an in-depth chapter on the place of mood-altering medications in the Christian’s life. While these “supplementary topics” are not essential to your spiritual freedom, they will help you better understand an important topic in Christianity. These chapters are available per request: Email [renew@newlifecr.com](mailto:renew@newlifecr.com).

Finally, the Appendices contain the standard ones that have been provided in the *Christian Essentials* including the P.O.W.E.R. Plans for God Times, memory verses, and a broader description of the purpose and plan of the entire *Christian Essentials* series.

Again, Romans 12:2 is both a challenging command and an amazing promise. The *FREEDOM* study will instruct and encourage you in the necessary requirements for you to do your part in being “*transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” If you will do your part, God promises that you will change your life when you change your mind.

- ▶ Memorize Romans 12:2 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ Complete the next chapter to prepare for your Small Group.

<sup>1</sup> Sections A and B here are essentially repeated in chapter 2.3 of *Christian Essentials* study #2, *FOUNDATIONS*. However, these biblical truths are so important, they are worth repeating in the *FREEDOM* study as well.

<sup>2</sup> BDAG defines *metamorphos* as: “to change inwardly in fundamental character or condition, be changed, be transformed.”

<sup>3</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Intervarsity, 1994), 323.

<sup>4</sup> The NIV translates John 1:5 as “*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*” The word “*overcome*” translates the Greek word *katelaben*. Leon Morris writes: “It contains the idea of laying hold of something so as to make it one’s own (cf. its translations as “gets” with reference to a prize, 1 Cor. 9:24)” (*The Gospel According to John* [Eerdmans, 1995], 76).

This general meaning leads to some versions taking it to mean “lay hold of with the mind” and thus “*comprehend*” (KJV, NKJV, NASB). But most translations render it as “*overcome*” (NIV, ESV, HCSB, NCV). Morris adds, “We do not usually talk of darkness as trying to ‘understand’ light. . . . The verb has a rarer but sufficiently attested meaning, “overcome”. It is that that is required here” (Ibid.). Likewise, D. A.

Carson adds, “In the only other passage in the Fourth Gospel where the verb is used with the light/darkness metaphor, the meaning ‘to overcome’ is required by the context (John 12:35)” (*The Gospel According to John* [Eerdmans, 1991], 138).

- <sup>5</sup> (Prov 23:7)- The NASB gives the literal translation of the Hebrew. While most translations note this as an alternative meaning in their margin, they abandon the literal meaning of the Hebrew in an effort to better reflect the context of a warning not to eat food offered by a stingy person (cf. v. 6). So, the NIV has, “*for he is the kind of person who is always thinking about the cost.*” But the words “the cost” are not in the Hebrew text.

Nevertheless, the more literal translation fits the context well. If a person thinks in stingy ways, they will be stingy. The TEV captures this well, translating v. 7 “‘Come on and have some more,’ he says, but he doesn’t mean it. What he thinks is what he really is.”

Thus *K&D* translate with “most moderns . . . ‘as he reckons in his soul, so is he.’” Likewise, OT scholar Bruce Waltke translates the verse: “as he calculates within himself, so is he” and comments, “his inner thinking exposes his true identity” (*The Book of Proverbs*, Vol. 2, *NICOT* [Eerdmans, 2005], 227, 242). Thus, a good translation would be: “*What he thinks in his heart, he will be in his life.*” The more literal translation preserves a valuable biblical statement on the psychology of humanity.

- <sup>6</sup> For more on the relationship between trusting truth and being controlled by God’s Spirit see the section on the Spirit’s Power in *Christian Essentials* study #3: *FAITH*.
- <sup>7</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Eerdmans, 1996), 756.
- <sup>8</sup> The *FRUIT* study is an important introduction to this *FREEDOM* study. If you have not completed it, you are encouraged to do so before completing this study.

## Chapter 2

## Renew Ministry: A Powerful Tool to Transform Your Life

Romans 12:2

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

3) What is Renew Ministry? How is it different than typical counseling?

4) What is an important motivation for doing Renew Ministry? Why?

**Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** (Rom 12:2 NIV)

Renew Ministry is a proven process based on biblical principles that will change your life.

### A) The proven power of Renew Ministry: Experiencing the Spirit more consistently

This study is an introduction to Renew Ministry. Renew Ministry is a proven process for obeying God’s command to renew your mind and experience transformation (cf. Rom 12:2). It is not something new. The Bible speaks repeatedly about the power of changing your life by changing your mind (Ps 42:5; <sup>9</sup> Prov 4:23; 23:7; John 8:31-36; Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 10:3-5; Eph 3:18-19; 6:16; Phil 1:9; 4:8; Col 1:10; 3:10; 1 Pet 2:1-2). We have simply put the process of mind renewal into an intentional system, and targeted the subconscious/emotional part of the mind where most of our controlling lies exist.

Radical and permanent change in your character is more than the purpose of the *FREEDOM* study. It is the proven effect of this study. We have all heard many claims about something that will change your life. But the proposed program or product does not work as advertised. This is not true of the biblical principles and proven process in Renew Ministry. The numerous testimonies in the next chapter, and throughout the study, will demonstrate this.

Renew Ministry may be the most significant spiritual journey you will ever experience. This is what many would claim who have applied it to their lives. This is because being radically and permanently “*transformed by the*



*renewing of your mind*" (Rom 12:2) is a powerful experience with life-changing and lasting effects on every area of your life, including your love, joy, peace, marriage, parenting, work, and ministry.

We noted in the previous chapter that biblical transformation means a permanent change. That is what people experience in Renew Ministry. People often ask after a session, "What do I need to do to make sure the lie I believed doesn't return?" The answer is: "Nothing!" The power of biblical transformation and Renew Ministry is permanent. There may be other parts of your mind that are imprinted with a lie, but the part that is renewed will remain convinced of the truth.

We asked in the previous chapter, why does mind renewal create such a RADICAL transformation of our character? Because when you renew your mind you will be trusting more truth. And trusting the truth empowers the Holy Spirit to control you more consistently. And when the Spirit controls you, you have the power to consistently obey the supernatural commands of God and live the authentic Christian life. Remember, "*The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power*" (1 Cor 4:20 NIV).

Unfortunately, modern Christianity makes the common mistake of telling Christians what they are supposed to do, but not helping them have the power to do it! This is what the Pharisees did. And Jesus did not like it. Jesus said:

*You experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.* (Luke 11:46)

Church leaders do the same when they teach God's people to pursue the commands of Christ, but do not help them experience the power of the Spirit. Many Christians and Christian leaders seem to believe that being indwelt by the Holy Spirit automatically means you will be controlled by the Holy Spirit. No so! Many churches call their people to evangelism projects and discipleship programs and ministry needs. But never ask the question if the people are controlled consistently enough by the POWER of Holy Spirit to actually do these things in a God pleasing way. Much of modern Christian ministry is like giving you detailed instructions on how to operate a computer. But you don't have any electricity!

Likewise, Christian counselors will often listen to your struggle, <sup>10</sup> but then simply tell you what you are supposed TO DO. Which you probably already knew anyway. Most Christian discipleship materials and programs merely do the same. Teaching people biblical commands but not teaching them how to consistently experience the supernatural power necessary to obey them is another form of exhausting legalism.

As a result, many Christians are living what we described in the previous *FRUIT* study as COPING Christianity: trying to live the Christian life in your own human will power instead of the Spirit's power. The common lack of unconditional and supernatural love, joy, peace, patience,

self-control, and POWER in Christian lives and churches is proving that. So is the high numbers of Christians and Christian leaders who are experiencing spiritual “burn out.”

Renew Ministry “*is not a matter of talk but of power*” (1 Cor 4:20). We are not interested in simply helping you to cope better. Rather, we are serious about enabling people to consistently experience the power of God living in them and through them. This is the FREER! Christianity also described in the previous *Christian Essentials* study *FRUIT*.<sup>11</sup>

Remember what God promises and commands. Be radically and permanently “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2)! How can this actually happen? Renew Ministry is a proven process based on biblical principles that will change your life.

## **B) The revolutionary target of Renew Ministry: Your hidden heart**

We have received many testimonies from people who say that Renew Ministry has been much more effective than traditional Christian or secular counseling. Why is this? Because it has a different target than typical counseling. We believe that when the Bible says, “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2), it must include the hidden and subconscious parts of your mind. Typical counseling ignores this and only ministers to the conscious/logical mind.

You are not usually aware of what is in your subconscious mind. That is why it is “sub” or “un” conscious. But the hidden parts of your mind control your life in powerful ways.

For example, do you believe God loves you? Of course, you do. You could not even be a Christian if you did not believe God loves you. You know God demonstrated His love for you by having His Son die for your sins on a cross (cf. Rom 5:8). You believe the Bible verses you have memorized about God’s love. If someone claimed that God does not love His children, we would immediately, automatically, and confidently conclude they were foolish and deceived.

Then why do you still struggle with worry, selfishness, lust, and discouragement? Why are you so hurt and offended when people do not love you? If you really and completely believed in God’s love for you, then you would not care what people think of you and you would be free from all of these things.

Why can’t you consistently live what you believe? Because you do not believe it with your whole mind. Your logical conscious mind probably believes in God’s love as much as is humanly possible. But there are parts of your irrational subconscious mind that do not believe in God’s love. Therefore, when those parts of your mind get “triggered,” you feel and act anger, worry, and other sins as if God does not love you.

Therefore, the key to “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” is getting the power of God’s truth to the hidden, hurting, deceived, and controlling parts of your subconscious mind. Ignoring this truth is why so much Christian ministry, teaching, disciplines, and counseling is ineffective to change our lives radically and permanently. It is wrongly but widely believed that Christians simply need to understand or memorize more biblical truth to be changed. But the fact is this: MOST CHRISTIANS ALREADY KNOW THE TRUTH THEY NEED. IT JUST NEEDS TO BE EXPERIENCED IN MORE PLACES OF THEIR MIND.

This is why you will fail to “*demolish strongholds*” (2 Cor 10:3 NIV) of controlling lies if you only add more knowledge to your conscious/logical mind and ignore renewing the subconscious/emotional parts of your mind. Unfortunately, a typical counseling session looks something like this. You tell the counselor your problems and they give you some answers. The assumption is that you did not know these things before, or that you need to be more convinced of them.

But usually you already know the truth a counselor is telling you. The problem is not faulty logic or knowledge as many counselors assume. The problem is that there are hidden parts of your mind that have not experienced the truth your logical conscious mind already knows to be true. But because typical counseling primarily targets the logical conscious mind, it does not renew the part of your mind that actually needs it. It is because Renew Ministry is uniquely designed to effectively heal the hidden and hurting parts of your heart, that it has a unique ability to change your life radically and permanently.

Unfortunately, many Christians doubt the influence of their subconscious mind. They think such a concept has only come from secular psychology. However, in chapters 14-16 we will demonstrate that the Bible speaks clearly about the hidden parts of our mind and our need to minister to them.

In the *Christians Essentials* studies, you learned the truths and promises that your conscious mind must possess for transformation to occur. But how do you get those truths from your “head” to your “heart”? The biblical principles and proven process of Renew Ministry enables you to do that and believe God’s freeing and empowering truth with your “whole heart.”

God promises and commands “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2)! How can this actually happen? Renew Ministry is a proven process based on biblical principles that will change your life.

### **C) The radically different method of Renew Ministry: Asking questions instead of giving truth**

Some might call Renew Ministry counseling. But it is radically different in method than typical counseling. Renew Ministry does not require that

someone knows all the ANSWERS to your problems. In fact, it does not require them to know any ANSWERS, or a huge store of theological knowledge, or life experience to help you.

This is because Renew Ministry is essentially a set of prescribed QUESTIONS that enable a person to reveal and renew the hidden and hurting parts of their heart. Proverbs says, *“The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out”* (20:5 NIV). There is no better way to “draw out” the deep things of a person’s heart than the skillful use of questions.

Because Renew Ministry is ministering to your subconscious mind, you might assume the process is complicated. But it is relatively simple. The same questions have been proven over many years to help people renew the hidden and hurting parts of their mind. Virtually any caring person can learn how to effectively use the Renew Ministry QUESTIONS. In fact, many have even learned to use Renew Ministry on themselves and practice it regularly.

Therefore, Renew Ministry does not require lengthy training or the expertise of a Pastor or professional counselor. Because of its simplicity, Renew Ministry enables a local church to actually obey the often-ignored NT command to effectively *“counsel each other”* (Col 3:16). Obeying this command is vital to the Church today.

The need for effective mind renewal among Christians, and the personal attention it requires, is far too great for Renew Ministry to be confined and limited to Pastors and professionals. And the Renew Ministry process is simple enough for this to happen. And in fact, it has often proven to be even more effective than professional counseling. The simplicity of Renew Ministry is the reason we are so confident that virtually any trusted Christian friend or spouse can effectively help you through the Renew Ministry process.

Renew Ministry is really NOT counseling, therapy, Bible teaching, or spiritual guidance. Nor is the relationship between Renew Ministry Helpers and Recipients like a counselor/counselee or doctor/patient relationship. In fact, we strongly encourage all Christians to be both Recipients and Helpers in Renew Ministry and to obey Colossians 3:16 to *“counsel each other.”*

We do not claim that Renew Ministry is the only effective tool for renewing the mind. But after many years of research and experience, Renew Ministry has proven to be a very effective tool to help Christians experience real, lasting spiritual transformation through mind renewal.

God promises and commands *“be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Rom 12:2)! How can this actually happen? Renew Ministry is a proven process based on biblical principles that will change your life.

## D) The challenges of Renew Ministry

Renew Ministry is biblical, powerful, and simple. But it is not easy. We want to be honest with you about that. As noted above, many people have testified that Renew Ministry and the spiritual freedom it brings has been the most important and wonderful spiritual journey of their life. They experienced God in ways they never have before. But they would also testify that Renew Ministry was the hardest thing they have ever done.

Why is being “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2) so difficult? First, most Christians have been imprinted with more controlling lies in their hidden mind than they could ever imagine. They need more mind renewal than they think.

Secondly, healing those hidden and hurting parts of your mind will require facing the painful emotions that are there. Renew Ministry helps you experience the love, truth, power, and light of Jesus in those hurting, deceived, stubborn, and dark places within you. But there is no way to reveal the lies that control you unless you face the pain those lies are causing. Yes, being “*transformed by the renewing of our mind*” will bring a lot more love, joy, peace, and control into your life. But the challenges on the journey will teach you some very valuable things as well. We will have more to say about this later in the study.

God promises and commands “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2)! How can this actually happen? Renew Ministry is a proven process based on biblical principles that will change your life.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite 12:2 from memory.
- ▶ Complete Project A on the next page: “If You Could Change Anything About Your Character What Would It Be?”
- ▶ If you have not gone through the previous *FRUIT Study*, you should do so as soon as possible. It will give you more important biblical principles about mind renewal and additional motivation to pursuing it.

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<sup>9</sup> For an explanation of the powerful mind renewal being described in Psalm 42, see the *FRUIT* study, chapters 7-9.

<sup>10</sup> Many approaches to counseling reflect a belief that simply talking about the problem will solve it. Along these lines, trauma expert Dr. Bessel van der Kolk writes regarding a study of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:

Perhaps the most important finding in our study was that remembering the trauma with all its associated affects, does not necessarily resolve it. Most of our study participants could tell a coherent story and also experience the pain associated with those stories, but they kept being haunted by unbearable images and physical sensations. Research in contemporary exposure treatment, a staple of cognitive behavioral therapy, has similarly disappointing results: The

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majority of patients treated with that method continue to have serious PTSD symptoms three months after the end of treatment. . .

Traditional psychotherapy has focused mainly on constructing a narrative that explains why a person feels a particular way . . . Telling the story is important . . . But, telling a story about the event does not guarantee that the traumatic memories will be laid to rest. (*The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, 2014, Kindle ed.), 194, 219).

- <sup>11</sup> For more on the levels of spiritual health, including COPING and FREER! Christianity, see section III of the *FRUIT Study*.

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Project A

## **If You Could Change Anything About Your Character, What Would It Be?**

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As stated in chapter 1, Romans 12:2 is one of the most powerful promises in Scripture: “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” When you understand the full meaning of this promise, you understand this: there is nothing about your character that you cannot change.

So it is time to dream. It is time to be serious about what you would like to change about your character. We will be honest with you in the next chapters that the process in the *FREEDOM* study to renew those stubborn, hurting, hating, and hidden parts of you will not be easy. But it is also true that you can permanently change anything about your character so that you think, feel, and act differently without even any effort or struggle. That is what transformation means.

So think and pray about it. What do you want to change? List 3 things below and talk to God about them. If you have been doing Renew Ministry, reached a level of FREER! Christianity, and are now leading others through this study, you might be incredibly encouraged to see how the items below have changed. Share that with your Small Group.

1)

2)

3)

## Chapter 3

## Testimonies of Christians Being Transformed by Renew Ministry

2 Corinthians 13:1

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) Which best describes your thoughts about Renew Ministry?
  - Not sure of the value because I feel I am a fairly mature and spiritually free Christian.
  - I’m eager because I want to change my life.
  - I’m suspicious and doubtful because I have tried so many other things.
  - I feel overwhelmed because I feel that there are so many spiritual weaknesses that need changing in my life.
  - I feel afraid because powerful parts of me do not want to face the painful parts of my heart, but would rather leave them as they are.
- 2) What was especially meaningful to you in these testimonies? Why?

### **Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses** (2 Corinthians 13:1 NASB)

**Renew Ministry has radically and permanently changed many lives**

Since 2005 we have experienced unique and life changing effects with Renew Ministry. We’ve witnessed people being set free from chronic anger, fears, lust, shame, depression, and addictions. There has also been success with treating psychosomatic ailments of many kinds and many have been able to reduce or eliminate their anti-depressant medications. This is a “*fact*” that has been “*confirmed by the testimony of*” many more than “*two or three witnesses*” (2 Cor 13:1). Below are some testimonies regarding the effectiveness of Renew Ministry.

### **A) Testimonies from Recipients**

The following are a few testimonies from ministry in churches doing a form of Renew Ministry. They are intended to give you some idea of what is involved in Renew Ministry, its real power to permanently and radically



change lives, and hope for whatever emotional and spiritual problems and struggles you might be experiencing.

*Christian man, 40 years old, in full time ministry*

“I was serving as a pastor in a small church that was extremely legalistic. Some people in the church hurt my family and I in ways I would have never imagined. The negative impact it had on my family and I resulted in me walking away from the ministry for over 6 years. Although I believed wholeheartedly that God had called me into ministry, I didn't want to be close enough for people to hurt me anymore, so I chose to isolate myself from others. The lies I was believing had a grip on my life and I was slowly becoming more and more bitter and joyless every day.

All this began to change the day I began to go through Renew Ministry. Christ helped me see that things my father had said to me like, “You will never amount to anything,” greatly impacted my whole life. As a result, I was believing lies that I would never be good enough and that I was a complete failure when it came to ministry.

In addition, the lies I believed were that I had to please people if I ever wanted to belong. The devil wanted to steal, kill and destroy my life and ministry. He was winning until Christ showed me I had already won the battle, but my mind was believing a lie. Christ showed me that He was pleased with me and that is all that I should be concerned about! He revealed to me that it's Him that makes me enough and He is pleased with me regardless of any sin or mistake I make. Knowing this has set me free! I'm now walking with confidence and joy unlike I have ever experienced!” [And he has returned to a very fruitful full-time ministry].

*Christian mom of 5 children, married 15 years*

“Our marriage was in trouble. But we didn't need marriage counseling. We needed individual Renew Ministry to help us resolve our past. My husband and I had carried so much garbage from our upbringing into our marriage that it was causing a great deal of pain for us. Thank God our church offered a way to resolve these issues. Because I have pursued Renew Ministry, I am now free to have the marriage God intended for me. I am free to let my emotions show to others, and I am more quickly able to recognize when I am not operating in the Spirit and to correct it.”

*Mature Christian man in ministry*

“Through Renew Ministry, we were able to find the lies that have been informing my behavior subconsciously for the last 3 decades! Those lies don't work on me anymore. The thing is, I have known they were lies. I could have taught on the subject of those lies. BUT when there is a big hurt attached to the lie, your emotions solidify the lie in your subconscious. And then that lie dictates how you respond to certain stimuli in your life.

Since renewing my mind, I have been able to help my wife renew hers. It has been nothing short of miraculous for both of us individually as well as for our marriage. For fifteen years, I have been fighting my wife's lies. I no longer have to!! They have been eliminated because we have used the principles and process of Renew Ministry!

All of us probably have times in our marriage when we think, "She's never going to change. I'm going to have to deal with this the rest of our marriage." I will never have that thought again! I have discovered how to patiently find the source of the lie, bring my wife emotionally to that place, and wash her, *truly* wash her with the Word of God."

### *Young married Christian mother*

"Renew Ministry has given me freedom to love my family in ways I thought I was incapable of. Satan had me believing I was broken, but by renewing some hidden and hurting parts of my mind, I have found so much happiness! I no longer have to devote mental energy to stuffing hurt, but can be honest about it and MOVE ON!"

### *Christian man, late 20's, married, and in ministry*

"For a long time I struggled with a constant fear of failure. This fear of failure resulted in me becoming a critical, judgmental, and perfectionist workaholic. Nothing was ever good enough for me. I was extremely hard on myself and others and was constantly afraid that people would think that I was not good enough. This thought process made me strive to be the best at what I was doing. The only time I ever had any "satisfaction" in life was the brief moments in which I perceived myself as better at something than those around me. As soon as I found out someone else was better than me at something, I would do one of two things: work harder until I could be better than everyone else, or running from anything I could not do well.

This pattern continued until I found myself neck deep in life situations that I could not control and holding a ministry position that I could not do at the level of perfection that I expected out of myself. I found myself in a state of deep depression.

It was at this point that I started going through Renew Ministry. Through this process I quickly found that a great deal of the fear I was feeling came from childhood experiences with my perfectionistic mother. Nothing was ever good enough for my mother and I lived in constant fear of being yelled at or hurt if I did not do my schooling or cleaning perfectly.

After the Renew Ministry process allowed Jesus' truth to replace Satan's lies, the fear of failure was gone! That fear of failure no longer dictates the way that I live. When it does occasionally pop up, I can often administer the Renew Ministry process on myself.

God has used Renew Ministry to transform my life more than anything else in my Christian walk. I am certain that I would still be living in fear if

God had not used this process to radically transform the way I think. Though this process may not be the only way for mind renewal to take place, I have not experienced a more effective one.”

*Christian woman, married 28 years, mother of three children*

“I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior when I was a college student. After I was a Christian for several years, I felt like I wasn’t growing in my faith, the way I wanted to be. I read the Bible daily, prayed and memorized verses, and still felt like I wasn’t really connecting with God like I wanted to. Instead, I was struggling with anger, fear, and deep feelings of insecurity. I would often cry for what seemed like no good reason. I felt isolated and alone. I longed to have close relationships like other people have, but I felt like I couldn’t get close to people.

Then a friend told me about Renew Ministry. Jesus says, “The truth will set you free.” This has been my experience, being freed bit by bit, from the lies that have ensnared me over the years and from the negative reactions and responses that accompanied those lies.

As a result of receiving this ministry, I have been able to release a lot of anger. I feel less demanding toward my daughters and toward my husband, and this has improved the relationships in our house. I am less critical and judgmental of myself and other people. My husband says that I am more respectful of him. I have a stronger sense of God’s presence and I pray more because I have a stronger sense of who He is and who I am because of His love for me. I am grateful for the help I have received from several friends who have helped me through the Renew Ministry process.”

*30 year old Christian woman*

“Why have I continued to do the hard work of Renew Ministry? I can’t tolerate staying where I’m at. It is less painful to deal with my lies than it is to have them keep swimming around in my brain and affecting every part of my life. I have tasted true freedom. A 13-year struggle just fell away. I have had Renew Ministry and then later experience something in a relationship that previously would’ve really hurt me. But it no longer affected me at all and that is amazing to me.

That God can change things within me so drastically. I have felt God’s unconditional love that I’ve never felt worthy of before. I have felt His approval towards me where I’ve never felt like He or anyone saw me as competent and capable. I have experienced a real, and active relationship with Him where His word has become a living and active thing in my mind and heart, and I can’t settle until that is the consistent experience of my life. He deserves it and I want to be free to run for Him.

I have gone from reading about my Father to experiencing my Father. Motivational books will just tell you to force yourself to believe right things, tell yourself everything will be O.K. In Renew Ministry, I’ve told God I don’t

believe Him, I'm hopeless, I can't do it by myself, I feel alone and empty. And He's told me who He is. His words have come alive and become personal in the most painful and vulnerable places in my life."

### *22 year old single woman*

I have struggled with self-harm off and on for much of my life. It started as a way of coping with fighting and tension in my family, but soon became an addicting habit. It became a block in my walk with God, and I completely shut down all my feelings. That cold numbness became my new normal for years, sometimes accompanied by the wish to end my life.

It was one of these suicidal low points that made me decide to seek help through Renew Ministry. Renew Ministry is quite possibly the only thing that kept me from killing myself either by pills or cutting my wrists like I'd pictured and wished for hundreds of times.

Just the simple act of having someone care kept me coming back for more Renew Ministry and the process of dealing with my issues in a God centered environment is what made a huge difference in my life. It has been both the most difficult and the most liberating thing that I've done. I was so used to believing damaging lies about myself and reality, that it was a stubborn battle of wills between God and myself. Despite the lies and walls getting in the way, finding the truth is always worth any struggle I had getting there."

The Bible says, *"Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses"* (2 Cor 13:1). Renew Ministry has radically and permanently changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Christians all over the world.

- ▶ Answer the questions at the beginning of this chapter.
- ▶ Recite Romans 12:2 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize 2 Corinthians 13:1 in the translation above or another.
- ▶ Meet with your small group to discuss chapter 1-3

## **Section II**

# **Understanding Satan's Schemes in Your Life**

## Chapter 4

**Satan's Power I: The Potential to Destroy Your Life**1 Peter 5:8

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ As you read, mark the answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are some ways that the Bible describes Satan?
- 2) Why does the Bible warn you about Satan? Why is it dangerous to underestimate him?
- 3) How does the existence of Satan help to explain why life is so hard?
- 4) How do you know when you are being “devoured” by Satan?
- 5) How has Satan designed the world to tempt us to sin?
- 6) Why is there such a great spiritual battle inside of you?
- 7) What was especially meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

Jane was having horrible nightmares. She was regularly cutting her wrists so they would bleed. She did not necessarily want to commit suicide, but cutting somehow released the emotional pain that was bubbling up inside. She was constantly paranoid about someone hurting her.

Jane had been a committed Christian for many years. She had many Bible verses memorized, and attended church and Bible studies regularly. She had also been to several therapists for help. In fact, she was a mental

health professional and an experienced counselor herself. But she was struggling daily and did not know what to do.

She began meeting with someone who helped her through the Renew Ministry process explained in the *FREEDOM* study. It was discovered that Jane had been sexually abused multiple times when she was very young. She had never resolved the painful lies she was imprinted with at that time, and they were now controlling her on a regular basis.

Jane's journey to freedom was much longer and harder than she would have liked. But she would say without hesitation it was all well worth it. Why? Because now she had a new freedom to constantly experience the Spirit's power. But also, because she experienced Christ in the darkest and most painful places of her life. And she would not trade that for anything.

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Now Jane is devoted to helping others experience Renew Ministry. But she understands the Bible's warning:

**Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.**

(1 Peter 5:8)

You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is working around you and in you to destroy your life.

## A) The war against you: Satan

War. It is not just a current event in some foreign country. War is the reason for everything happening everywhere on Earth, including your life. Spiritual warfare is not just one subject of Scripture, but a primary theme of everything in Scripture. From Satan's deception of Adam and Eve in Genesis, to his eternal doom in Revelation, the Bible is the story of a Universe at war.

Because of Christ's sacrifice, you will win your war against Satan. Indeed, "*The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet*" (Rom 16:20). One day, "*The devil, who . . . deceived*" the world, will be "*thrown into the fiery lake [to] . . . be tormented day and night forever and ever*" (Rev 20:10). God promises Satan will lose in the future.

As explained throughout this study, your battle with the Devil is in your mind. But the Day is coming when God will create you with a new, pure, and perfect mind like Christ that cannot even think evil.

But in the present God also warns "*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour*" (1 Pet 5:8). There is still a great battle to fight in your life and mind against Satan's control of your life and mind. And if you do not fight this fight successfully, you will fail and suffer in your Christian life in many ways. And you will hurt others in your life as well.

The Devil is the most dangerous and destructive person in your life. This is why the Bible calls him Satan, which in both Hebrew and Greek means “enemy.”<sup>13</sup> Some think that talking about Satan too much gives him more power. Others think that because the Bible says Satan is only “roaring” that he really cannot harm you.

Neither of these views are biblical. Based on the repeated warnings in Scripture, it would seem most Christians do not talk and think about the dangers of Satan enough! Christians have understandably believed Jesus referred to him as the “thief” (John 10:1) whose “purpose is to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10).<sup>14</sup> This is why God commands us: “Stay alert! Watch out.” Those are words of danger, risk, and threat. Why did Peter use the analogy of a “lion” to describe Satan? Because even in ancient times the lion was considered the most dangerous and vicious beast on Earth. They attack their prey with surprise and always go after the weak. So does Satan.

Satan is also depicted in the Book of Revelation as “an enormous red dragon” (Rev 12:3 NIV). That should get our attention. Many of us have read the book *The Hobbit* or seen the movie. The story centers around a great and powerful dragon. One of the characters in the story makes this statement: “It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him.”<sup>15</sup> Indeed Christian, it is foolish to forget or ignore that you have a great enemy, especially because you live in his territory.

Satan is invisible, but very real. He is only an angel,<sup>16</sup> but is very powerful and described in the Bible as “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4). Satan can only do what God gives him permission to do (cf. Job 1:12; 2:6). But as revealed in the book of Job, he has the freedom to severely test God’s people. Because of what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross, Satan can no longer own you, or take you from God. But like Jane, Satan can still control you and destroy your life. This is why the Bible calls him “your great enemy” (1 Pet 5:8). You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is working around you and in you to destroy your life.

It is essential in the Christian life to fully understand God’s intense, constant, and powerful LOVE for you. It is also essential to fully understand Satan’s intense, constant, and powerful HATRED for you. Believe it Christian. Just as deeply as God loves you and wants to bless you, Satan hates you and wants to destroy you. Do you understand that Christian? There is a very powerful, invisible, angry, and cruel being who personally hates you and would torture and kill you and everyone you love right now if God gave him permission. Just as much as God LOVES you, Satan HATES you.

Maybe you have never experienced someone really hating you. Maybe you are a nice person who gets along with everyone. Perhaps you have never had an enemy, with a lot of power to harm you. WELL YOU DO NOW, and you had better live like it. Martin Luther would rebuke many Christians for



their apathetic attitude about their “*great enemy, Satan.*” He wrote in a famous hymn, with both sound theology and personal experience:

For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

Luther was not exaggerating. And Satan is not your only enemy. Because you are in a war with many beings who hate you, God says:

*Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of Satan. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.* (Eph 6:11-12)

Like it or not, your life is war. This World is not a spiritually safe place to live, but a dangerous jungle of demonic temptations and influences waiting to seriously hurt your life. You can ignore or deny you are in a war. But if you do, you will simply lose. Your war is not just against Satan, but a multitude of “*mighty powers*” and “*evil spirits*” “*in this dark world.*” You do not live in a world with only a good God. “*The world around us is under the control of the evil one*” (1 John 5:19).

Atheists live like there is no God and misunderstand the real cause of everything good in this life. They give good humans or good luck the credit instead of God. Likewise, many Christians live as if Satan does not exist and misunderstand the real cause of everything bad, evil, and painful in their life. They blame bad humans, bad luck, or even God.<sup>17</sup> But God says, “*the world around us is under the control of the evil one*” (1 John 5:19). He is the reason this world is a painful place to live with people who hurt you.

Imagine someone declaring war on you and your loved ones, and you either do not know it, or do not care. Your defenses would be down, and you would be very vulnerable. You would not understand or be aware of the “*strategies of Satan*” (Eph 6:11) against you. Therefore, you would not be able to “*stand firm against*” those “*strategies*” as God commands you to. Unfortunately, many Christians underestimate the intensity, power, and effect of evil, both outside of us and inside of us. Many Christians live as if the Earth is a playground, but it is a battlefield. Therefore, they live in constant spiritual defeat, and often confused about why. The popular Christian author John Eldredge writes:

Until we come to terms with war as the context of our days we will not understand life. We will misinterpret 90 percent of what is happening around us and to us. It will be very hard to believe that God’s intentions toward us are life abundant; it will be even harder not to feel that somehow we are just failing. Even worse, we will begin to believe some really awful things about God. . .

Before he promised us [an abundant] life, Jesus warned that a thief would try to steal, kill, and destroy it [cf. John 10:10]. Then why

don't we think the thief actually steals, kills, and destroys? Your life is a battle. A war against your heart. If you fail to see this you won't understand your life. You won't see clearly what has happened to you. Or how to live forward from here. . .

There is a glory to your life that your Enemy fears, and he is hell-bent on destroying that glory before you act on it. . . The story of your life is the story of the long and brutal assault on your heart by the one who knows what you could be and fears it.<sup>18</sup>

It is because of "*your great enemy Satan*" (1 Pet 5:8), that God tells you, "*Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of Satan*" (Eph 6:11). It is because "*the world around us is under the control of the evil one*" (1 John 5:19), that Jesus told you to pray every day: "*Don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one*" (Matt 6:13; cf. v. 11). It is because your life is in a war that God warns you: "*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, Satan. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour*" (1 Pet 5:8).

What does it mean for Satan to "*devour*" you? Ask any Christian who has struggled like Jane described above. Ask any Christian who is controlled by destructive sin. In fact, whenever you are being controlled by your sinful nature and experiencing anger, worry, lust, and discouragement, you are being "*devoured*" and controlled by Satan instead of God.

More Christians live this way than we imagine. This is proven by the abundance of DEFEATED and COPING Christianity empowered by the sinful nature and lacking the Spirit's power. As explained elsewhere in the previous *FRUIT* study, DEFEATED Christianity is being consistently overwhelmed by anger, worry, lust, and depression. COPING Christianity is suppressing such things by your own will power, but you are still not experiencing the supernatural and effortless love, joy, and peace of God's Spirit.<sup>19</sup> All of these common experiences in Christian's lives demonstrate how much power Satan has over God's people.

The Bible says, "*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, Satan. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour*" (1 Pet 5:8). You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is working around you and in you to destroy your life.<sup>20</sup>

## **B) The war around you: the "world"**

How does Satan try to hurt your life? By influencing you to sin. All of God's commandments are designed to make you happy and protect you from harm. But Satan offers you "*the fleeting pleasures of sin*" (Heb 11:25). But sin always hurts you and others and leads to destroying the true quality and happiness of your life.

Because Satan desires to “*steal and kill and destroy*” (John 10:10) your life, he tempts you to sin. We wrote elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials*:

God Himself created your heart with one ultimate, constant, and controlling desire: to be happy! Which is why everything you do, every decision you make, is ultimately motivated to make you happy. Becoming a Christian does not change this, but actually gives you the unique ability to truly satisfy your God-given hunger for happiness.

Unfortunately, your desire to be “happy” is the ultimate reason you sin. You become convinced that disobeying God will give you the most pleasure, significance, acceptance, or security. You disobey God to be happy.<sup>21</sup>

Satan wants to use your God-given desire to be happy to cause you to sin. To seek your happiness apart from God and from the things of this world. This is why he fills this world with “*life’s worries, riches and pleasures*” (Luke 8:14). “*For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world*” (1 John 2:16). And when we pursue the things of the world to satisfy our God-given needs for acceptance, security and significance, we sin.<sup>22</sup>

God warns you, “*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, Satan. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour*” (1 Pet 5:8). You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is working around you and in you to destroy your life.

### **C) The war within you: “the flesh”**

Why are you so attracted to Satan’s temptations around us? Because you have a sinful nature.<sup>23</sup> The Bible says:

*The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.* (Gal 5:17)<sup>24</sup>

As noted elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials*: “The personal cause of everything sinful in your life is your sinful nature. All sinful anger, worry, lust, and depression come from it.”<sup>25</sup> Your sinful nature is completely evil. Paul said, “*nothing good lives in . . . my sinful nature*” and “*it is sin living in me*” (Rom 7:17-18). “*For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws, and it never will*” (Rom 8:7).

Your sinful nature is like the Devil living inside of you. It thinks like the Devil, acts like the Devil, and has the same desires as the Devil. Therefore, the essential attribute of your sinful nature is that it desires to ignore, violate, and break the commandments of God. Scripture says, do not “*do what your sinful nature urges you to do*” (Rom 8:12) or “*what your sinful*

nature craves” (Gal 5:16). “*The sinful nature wants to do evil*” (Gal 5:17). “*When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures*” (Gal 5:19). “*The flesh [has] its [evil] passions and desires*” (Gal 5:24 NIV). Your sinful nature wants what the Devil wants.

The sinful nature is not just a NT concept. In the very first chapters of the Bible we see Cain’s sinful nature operating:

*The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”* (Gen 4:4-7)

But did Cain “subdue” and “master” his sinful nature that was “crouching at the door” of his heart, “eager to control” him? We read in the next verse:

*One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.* (Gen 4:8)

The sinful nature in humans has been pure evil from the very beginning. There is no limit to the evil it can produce, including murder. And it lives inside of you!

Your sinful nature is a “traitor” inside of you that deceives you into sinning and going against your true self and real desires. A desire to sin is not the true nature of a Spirit-indwelted Christian whose “*inner being delights in [obeying] the law of God*” (Rom 7:22 NIV). But when the sinful nature is controlling a Christian it acts as a demonic force and “person” within them that blocks and derails our true intentions of doing good. And we experience what Paul experienced:

*For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin [the sinful nature] living in me that does it.*

*So I find this law [sinful nature] at work: Although I want to do good, evil [the sinful nature] is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin [sinful nature] at work within me.* (Rom 7:18-23 NIV) <sup>26</sup>

Where is your sinful nature? Your sinful nature is the deceived parts of your mind. Wherever your mind believes lies that cause you to desire and

act like the Devil, that is where your sinful nature lives.

How did it get there? First of all, we were born with it. What David said of himself is true of all humans: “*I was born a sinner*” (Ps 51:5; cf. Rom 5:12, 19). Being born with a sinful nature gave us a heart that desired evil things and interpreted our experiences in a darkened and deceived way. We had a “*mind governed by the flesh*” (Rom 8:7 NIV), or a “*sinful mind*” (Col 2:18). Therefore, what Paul said of all unregenerated people was true of us: “*Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things*” (Rom 8:5). “*They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the [sinful nature’s] hardening of their hearts*” (Eph 4:18 NIV).

Therefore, the sinful nature distorted our understanding of what would make us happy and deceived us to pursue “*enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin*” (Heb 11:25). As noted above, God created you with one driving desire: to be happy. He created you to experience that happiness through trusting and experiencing His love. All sin is an effort to be happy apart from God. And our sinful nature was programmed by the world to seek happiness in sin. Therefore, “*your former way of life . . . your old self*” was “*being corrupted by its deceitful desires*” (Eph 4:22 NIV). Several Scriptures describe the result of this in our life:

*When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. (Rom 7:5)*

*You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. (Eph 2:2-3)*

And that kind of life and experiences programmed your mind for sin. Many Christians believe that Satan can directly plant thoughts in their mind through some sort of mental telepathy. But there is no biblical evidence that the Devil can do this to a Christian.<sup>27</sup> Rather, the Devil gets his lies into you through the experiences, influences, and people of the World he controls, and that program our sinful nature with lies that can then control us.

So, we have some good news and some bad news about the Christian life. The bad news is that “*your former way of life . . . corrupted by its deceitful desires*” (Eph 4:22 NIV), trained your mind to seek sin. The good news is that God has fixed the functioning of your mind and “*the eyes of your heart [mind] have been enlightened*” (Eph 1:18 NET) or “*flooded with light*” (NLT). You are no longer “*darkened in [your] understanding*” (Eph 4:18 NIV) of spiritual things. Therefore, you can now properly process

*“spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God”* (Eph 1:17; cf. 2 Cor 4:4-6).

The good news is that God also gave you a *“new heart”* that desires to love and obey God (cf. Rom 7:22; 8:9; 1 Pet 1:23; Ezek 36:26). The bad news is that you still have your old mind. And your old mind contains parts that are still programmed to sin. As we will learn in this study, most of those deceived and demonic parts of your sinful nature are in the emotional/irrational/subconscious part of your mind.

Therefore, we have more good news. You can *“be transformed by the renewing”* of those parts of *“your mind”* (Rom 12:2) that were programmed by the sinful nature. How did Paul tell us to defeat the power of our sinful nature? He said, *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Rom 12:2 NIV). As explained above, *“The pattern of this world”* is what your sinful nature is programmed with. How do you practically *“not conform”* to it? By constantly struggling against it? No. You automatically and effortlessly stop conforming *“to the pattern of this world”* that is programmed in your sinful nature, by being radically and permanently *“transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* Especially the subconscious/irrational/emotional part of your mind, which Renew Ministry uniquely and effectively does.

You will never completely renew your mind or eliminate the sinful nature in you. Nor will you ever diminish the potency of the parts of the sinful nature that remain in you. They will always be pure evil. But by renewing your mind, you can radically and permanently shrink the size, scope, and power of your sinful nature. Did you hear that? You can make your sinful nature SMALLER.<sup>28</sup> This not only reduces sin in your life, but even temptations, and leads to the FREER! Christian life described in the previous *FRUIT* study.

But remember, God warns you, *“Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, Satan. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour”* (1 Pet 5:8). You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is working around you and in you to destroy your life.

- ▶ Recite 2 Corinthians 13:1 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize 1 Peter 5:8 in the translation above or another.

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<sup>12</sup> An especially powerful videotaped interview and testimony is provided by Jane online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISoSug8sjRY>. Jane’s testimony illustrates how deeply we can be spiritually wounded in this life, the hard work required to be emotionally healed, and the power of Renew Ministry to set someone permanently free to consistently experience the power of the Spirit.

<sup>13</sup> TWOT, 874-5; BDAG.

- <sup>14</sup> Jesus describes “*the thief*” in John 10:10 when He says, “*All who have come before me are thieves and robbers*” (v. 8). Therefore, the most direct meaning of “*the thief*” is false prophets and teachers who do so much damage to God’s people. In fact, Jesus words here are clearly a reference to Ezekiel 34:1-31, and probably even the Jewish religious leaders of His day. But it is proper to understand “*the thief who comes to only steal, kill, and destroy*” as ultimately being Satan. False teachers are his servants (cf. 2 Cor 11:13-15).
- <sup>15</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (Random House, 1982), 217.
- <sup>16</sup> The Church has traditionally believed that Ezekiel 28:12-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15 describe the fall of Satan. These passages describe Satan as a created and punished angel (cf. Ezek 28:13-14). Unfortunately, most modern scholars deny this. Nevertheless, while these passages are describing human kings, their descriptions seem to clearly go beyond this. Isaiah describes Satan as falling from Heaven (14:12), not something that would be true of a human king. Ezekiel remarkably describes a wicked ruler who was in the Garden of Eden (28:13). Again, not true of any human king that the Prophet may have also been referring to. The idea, of course, is that Satan is the power and person behind all wicked kings on Earth. For further support of this view see M. F. Unger, “Satan,” in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker, 2004), 972; and Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan, 1994), 413.
- <sup>17</sup> For more discussion on the danger of blaming God for painful things in our past see *Christian Essentials* study #3: FAITH, and chapters on your new Father.
- <sup>18</sup> John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead* (Thomas Nelson, 2006), 17-18, 30, 34-35.
- <sup>19</sup> For more on these levels of spiritual health see section III of the *FRUIT Study*.
- <sup>20</sup> Several Scriptures have been shared here that clearly teach the Devil’s deceptions can control and harm the Christian. This is why the Bible continually warns us about the real dangers of our enemy (cf. Matt 6:13; Eph 6:10-18; 1 Pet 5:8). How do we reconcile these biblical warnings with what the Apostle John claims: “*We know that God’s children do not make a practice of sinning, for God’s Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch [haptetai] them*” 1 John 5:18 NLT).

The Greek verb *haptō* is variously translated as “*touch*” (NLT, NASB, ESV, HCSB, KJV, NKJV, NET, NCV ) or “*harm*” (NIV, CEV, GNB). *BDAG* includes the meaning of “to take hold of” (#2a). This probably is the meaning which makes the most sense here. It is to be contrasted with the Devil’s control of unbelievers in the next verse (19).

The Devil can certainly deceive, influence, and therefore harm the Christian. But he cannot possess, own, or dominate the Christian as he does “*the whole world*.” Jesus would seem to be speaking of the same thing when He promises:

*I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand.* (John 10:28-29).

Accordingly, NT scholar David Jackman comments on 1 John 5:18-19:

It is Christ who keeps God’s children safe, so that Satan cannot, literally, ‘fasten himself’ upon them. He may and will attack God’s children, but he cannot . . . succeed in getting them back into his grip. That is where the world is, as verse 19 will show us—in the grip of the evil one. (*The Message of John’s Letters* [InterVarsity, 1988], 167).

<sup>21</sup> Excerpt from *Christian Essentials* study #2, *FOUNDATIONS*, section on motivations.

<sup>22</sup> More specifically, we are describing the sin of idolatry here and being tricked into satisfying our God-given H.A.P.P.I.E.R. needs apart from God. For more on this see *Christian Essentials* study #3, *FAITH* and the section on spiritual idolatry.

<sup>23</sup> “*Sinful nature*” translates the Greek word *sarx* which literally means “flesh.” However, *sarx* is used in multiple and complex ways in the NT. *Vine’s* distinguishes 13 different meanings in the NT based on the context (242-243). Accordingly, NT scholar G. E. Ladd remarked, “The most difficult and complicated aspect of the Pauline psychology is his doctrine of *sarx*” (*A Theology of the New Testament* [Eerdmans, 1993], 509).

The two most common meanings for *sarx* are the human body in general (cf. Acts 2:31, Eph 5:29; Col 2:5), or human sinful nature (cf. Rom 7:18; Gal 5:16-17, 19, 24). The importance of distinguishing these meanings is illustrated by comparing the more literal translations using “flesh” in such verses as Romans 8:8 and Galatians 2:20. Which is another reason the NLT is uniquely helpful by translating *sarx* as “*sinful nature*” when the context calls for it.

Some object to translating the sinful aspect of *sarx* as the “*sinful nature*.” This is why most English translations render it as “flesh” no matter its context. However, the NT scholar Douglas Moo, a translator for several Bible versions including the NLT, writes regarding *sarx*:

A good English equivalent for Paul’s theologically loaded use of *sarx* in a negative [sinful] sense is difficult to find. . . One could avoid the language of “nature” by translating “sinful impulse,” but this rendering moves too far away from the idea of something that is the seat of sinful behavior. . . At the other end of the phrase, “sinful nature” is certainly preferable to “sinful self,” since the latter would suggest that the person as a whole is irremediably sinful.

And other possible variations—“evil nature,” “lower nature,” “old nature,” “fallen nature”—are hardly improvements on “sinful nature.” Therefore, “sinful nature” is hard to improve on if one chooses to translate *sarx* in a contextually nuanced manner [Which unfortunately many translations do not do]. (“Flesh in Romans: A Challenge for the Translator,” in *Communicating God’s Word to the World* [Zondervan, 2003], 365).

<sup>24</sup> In Galatians 5:17, “*You are not free to carry out your good intentions*” translates the Greek phrase *ha thelēte tauta mē poiēte* which literally means “whatever you want you may not do.” Some versions translate as, “*so you are not supposed to do whatever you want*” (cf. NIV, NCV). We have chosen the more common translation of “*so that you cannot do what you want*” (NLT, NET, NASB, KJV, TEV, ESV, CEV). This translation better reflects the NT teaching (especially in Romans 7:14-25) that the desires of the sinful nature are not your real desires. As the NT scholar Richard Longenecker writes: “Galatians 5:17 explains in a simple way, what is later spoken of more fully in Rom. 7:14-25.” (*Galatians*, WBC [Word, 1990], 245).

The meaning of Galatians 5:17 would be: “The sinful nature’s desires are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit’s desires are opposed to the sinful nature. These two forces within you are fighting to control you. That is why you are not free to always do the good things you really want to do.”

<sup>25</sup> Excerpt from the *FRUIT Study*, section 19.A



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- <sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, many NT scholars deny that Paul is speaking of himself as a born-again Christian in Romans 7:15-23. Therefore, they eliminate a very valuable text of Scripture about our identity in Christ (cf. 7:22) and the spiritual warfare of a Christian. For more discussion on this, see the Appendix of *Christian Essentials* study #3 *FAITH*.
- <sup>27</sup> For more on the question of whether or not the Devil can plant thoughts in our minds, see chapter 5.25, question #4 in this study.
- <sup>28</sup> For more on the good news that we can shrink our sinful nature see supplemental chapter 20 section D.

## Chapter 5

**Satan's Power II: The Lies You Believe**1 Peter 5:9

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ As you read, mark the answers to the following questions:

- 1) How does the Devil gain control of your life and cause you to sin?
- 2) What does “Devil” mean? Why is this important to remember?
- 3) What biblical evidence do we offer to demonstrate that the Devil's only power against you is a lie?
- 4) What is the one thing that the Devil lies about the most to defeat us? Why does this work?
- 5) What is faith and why is it the only weapon we need against the Devil?
- 6) How does “the armor of God” in Ephesians 6 demonstrate this?
- 7) What is God's part in giving you victory over the Devil?
- 8) What is your part in experiencing victory over the Devil? Why is it important to understand this?
- 9) What was most meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

A 32 year old mom of two children writes:

I pursued Renew Ministry because I recognized an amount of anger in me that was not acceptable to me. I didn't want to continue to be the person who shut people out and over-reacted to common situations. In particular, I was having trouble interacting with people in my family who had hurt me. Every situation with them seemed to end in yelling and tears. My heart's desire was to be a light to them. But because they had caused me so much deep pain, I was not able to.

Renew Ministry changed my relationship with God and allowed me to recognize how He really does work all things for good. I have stopped blaming Him for the bad things in my life and began thanking Him. I have also truly learned to forgive people and then hope the best for them. This was HUGE for me.

Renew Ministry has given me the tools to identify lies and replace them with truth. The questions lead directly to the source of my pain and to realize the truth in those places. Because truth will set you free, it has given me freedom.

This sister experienced how to be free from the power of Satan:

**Resist him, standing firm in the faith.** (1 Pet 5:9 NIV <sup>29</sup>)

Satan's only power is a lie, so the only weapon you need is the truth.

## A) The Devil's only weapon is a lie

The main verse for the previous chapter was 1 Peter 5:8, *"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, Satan. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."* It was explained that to be "devoured" by Satan simply means to be controlled by him. So how does the Devil "devour" and control you? By convincing you of LIES.

This is why he is called the Devil. The Greek word *diablos* ("devil") means a "slanderer." Your enemy's name means someone who speaks lies. This is why Jesus said of the Devil: *"He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies"* (John 8:44).

In fact, the Devil's only weapon against you is a LIE. That may not sound very dangerous. But remember, everything you desire and do is controlled by what you BELIEVE. <sup>30</sup> So, if the Devil can get you to believe the wrong thing, he can get you to desire and do the wrong thing.

That is how the Devil defeated Eve. She lived in a perfect paradise. God's love and provision for her were abundantly evident all around her. But she lost it all. Why? Because, *"Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent"* (2 Cor 11:3). Satan knew the power of a LIE. God said if she ate from a certain tree she would die (v. 3). The Devil said, *"You will not certainly die. . . When you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you*

*will be like God*” (vs. 4-5). Eve believed the lie, sinned against God, and brought unimaginable destruction to humanity.

The power of lies has continued to be the only weapon the Devil needs to control almost all of humanity throughout all of history. It’s that simple. The cause of sin, evil, and pain in this world is not a complicated mystery. It is all caused by one thing: believing lies. To whatever extent the Devil controls your beliefs, then he controls your life too.

The power of lies is demonstrated when Dr. Ed Smith notes:

If we believe a lie is true, then it does not matter that it is not true because it will have the same consequences in our life. For example, if we believe we are shameful because we were sexually violated as a child, it does not matter that we were innocent. The shaming lie will work itself out in our lives as though it is true, and the consequences will be the same. <sup>31</sup>

Do you doubt the power of believing a LIE? Unfortunately, many Christians do. They do not understand that ever since Adam and Eve’s deception, all sin is empowered by lies. Remember, your sinful nature is essentially the part of your mind that is programmed with lies. Virtually all of the sinful nature’s painful emotions including anger, worry, shame, and discouragement are empowered by believing lies. This is why the Devil only needed one weapon in the Garden to destroy Paradise. This is why He only needs one weapon now to destroy your life.

Let us try to demonstrate the power of a LIE. God’s word says, “*Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God*” (Rom 8:39). God is constantly feeling love for you. He is constantly pouring His love and grace on you. You are never separated or disconnected from God’s love for you, no matter where you are, or what is happening to you. Imagine always believing the most powerful Person in the Universe personally, constantly, and completely LOVES YOU. You would never feel afraid, alone, shameful, or worthless again!

So, if your reality is that “*nothing in all creation*” can “*separate*” you from God’s love, then why do you sometimes FEEL separated from God’s love? Why does God seem so distant and uncaring sometimes? Why do you experience feeling alone, afraid, embarrassed, and insignificant when God’s love is constantly pouring down on your life? Because you are believing the Devil’s LIES, rather than believing, trusting, and enjoying the TRUTH about God’s constant and complete love for you.

“*Nothing in all creation*” can actually “*separate*” you from God’s love. Not even “*death . . . demons . . . not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love*” (Rom 8:38). But just believing a LIE can separate you from experiencing all of that love God has for you. God’s love is powerful. But just believing a lie is powerful enough to block you from experiencing it.

This is why mind renewal is so important. It reconnects you to God's love so you can experience all of His joy, peace, and power. We have taught throughout the *Christian Essentials* this vital truth: Believing lies turns on your sinful nature. Trusting the truth turns on God's Spirit in you. The difference between being controlled by your sinful nature or God's Spirit is whether or not in that moment you are trusting a LIE or the TRUTH. Notice again the power of believing a lie. It can STOP the Almighty God the Spirit from controlling you!

If you never believed the Devil's lies, he could never control you. Spiritual victory and power are that simple. In fact, the Devil's strategy is even more simple than that. He only lies about one thing. GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU. That is what he constantly slanders. Why are the Devil's LIES always about GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU? Because believing, trusting, and enjoying God's love for you, is your greatest need! You were created to seek after love. And if you are not believing in God's love for you, then you will look for love elsewhere, which will lead to the sin of idolatry.

This is why the Devil is constantly attacking your IDENTITY. Your Christian identity is who you are because of God's love for you. If Satan can get you to believe you are weak, worthless, hopeless, rejected, and alone, then you will feel and act like you are these very things. We call these IDENTITY LIES. They are the essence of how Satan controls your life. As one influential Christian counselor put it, "Satan's greatest psychological weapon is a gut-level feeling of inferiority, inadequacy, and low self-worth."<sup>32</sup> An IDENTITY LIE.

Do not underestimate the emotional pain and control caused by IDENTITY LIES. We have written elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials* that God created us with emotional needs such as hope, acceptance, significance, security, and relationship.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, when someone does something that causes us to believe and feel we are hopeless, rejected, worthless, unsafe, or alone, it will be painful. And the pain of those IDENTITY LIES creates Hurting Parts in us that will seek relief and satisfaction apart from God, which is always sin.

You were reminded in the previous chapter that the Devil is your "*great enemy*" (1 Pet 5:8) whose "*purpose is to steal and kill and destroy*" (John 10:10). He does that through creating painful IDENTITY LIES in your mind that cause you to seek your significance, acceptance, and security apart from God's love. In other words, the Devil wants to cause you double pain. The pain of the IDENTITY LIES you believed when people or life was mean to you, and the pain that sin now causes you as you try to seek your emotional needs apart from God's love.

This is why the key to being "*made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God*" is to "*understand*" and "*experience the love of Christ*" (Eph 3:18-19). "*The love of Christ*" erases and replaces an IDENTITY LIE, freeing you from its power.

Notice something when Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Satan repeatedly challenged Jesus' identity by prefacing his temptations with, "*If you are the Son of God . . .*" (Matt 4:3, 6). Satan was even trying to cause doubt in Jesus' mind about God's love for Him. Of course, that was never going to happen, especially because immediately before these temptations, God the Father had proclaimed from Heaven: "*This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy*" (Matt 3:17). Believing this was what gave Christ the power to resist Satan's temptations. The same will be true for you.

God says of the Devil, "*Resist him, standing firm in the faith* (1 Pet 5:9). Satan's only power is a lie, so the only weapon you need is the truth.

## **B) The only weapon you need is the truth**

The Bible says, "*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him.*" How? "*Resist him, standing firm in the faith*" (1 Pet 5:8-9). What is "*faith*"? Faith is simply trusting the truth. This is the only weapon you need to completely defeat the Devil's influence in your life because lies are the only weapon he has against your life.

Jesus seemed to recognize this same relationship between the Devil's lies and His truth. He told some Jews that the Devil was their father who "*always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44). As a result, they were "*a slave to sin*" (v. 34). What was the solution to be set free from the power and lies of the Devil? It is here that Jesus made his famous statement: "*You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*" (vs. 31-32). Free from what? Free from the Devil's lies and the power of sin.

Jesus demonstrated the power of the truth over the Devil when He was tempted in the wilderness. His response to every temptation was: "*It is written . . .*" (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). Jesus simply responded to Satan with what is true. "*Then the devil went away*" (v. 11).

Because the Devil's only strategy is a LIE, "*the full armor of God*" that you need to "*take your stand against the devil's schemes*" (Eph 6:11 NIV) is simply trusting the TRUTH. The "*armor of God*" includes, "*the belt of truth*" (v. 14). The belt of an ancient soldier held his armor together, including holding his sword. Likewise, truth is the essence of all the Christian's spiritual armor because this is what defeats the Devil's lies.

Secondly, the "*armor of God*" is "*the breastplate of righteousness*" (v. 14 NIV). First, this probably refers to living righteously. Earlier in Ephesians Paul warned, "*Don't sin by letting anger control you . . . for anger gives a foothold to the devil*" (4:26-27). Sin certainly gives the Devil power in your life, and a holy life protects you.

But "*the breastplate of righteousness*" is also believing in your righteous standing before God (cf. Eph 1:4, 7). The Devil wants to attack

your identity and have you to believe your sins separate you from God. But Scripture says, “*nothing can ever separate us from God’s love*” (Rom 8:38). And trusting that protects you from the Devil’s lies.

Thirdly, armor from God includes having “*your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace*” (v. 15). Again, there is probably both a “positional” and “practical” aspect to this. Knowing that your faith in the Gospel gives you “*peace with God*” (Rom 5:1) is a great defense against the Devil’s constant accusations that God has something against you. On the other hand, being actively ready to share the Gospel and being an ambassador for Christ protects you from temptations to be like the unbelievers around you.

Fourth, God’s armor is to, “*take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one*” (v. 16). Why can “*faith*,” or trusting the truth, “*extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one*”? Because all of the Devil’s “*flaming arrows*” are LIES. Lies that he hurls at you to make you feel angry, afraid, or depressed.

Fifth, God’s armor is “*the helmet of salvation*” (v. 17). It is a “*helmet*” because the battle over the control of a Christian is in their mind. This is because it is simply a war between believing the Devil’s lies or God’s truth. It is “*the helmet of salvation*” because again, your firm faith in God’s complete forgiveness of you is a powerful defense against the Devil’s accusations.

Sixth, the armor of God is “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (v. 17). Again, the truth of Scripture is a weapon against “*the devil’s schemes*” (v. 11) because his only weapons are lies.

Again, Martin Luther understood spiritual warfare and wrote in his famous hymn:

For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate. On earth is not his equal.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us.

The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure. One little word [of God’s truth] shall fell him. That word [is] above all earthly powers.

Luther’s hymn reflected what God says of the Devil: “*Resist him, standing firm in the faith* (1 Pet 5:9). Satan’s only power is a lie, so the only weapon you need is the truth.

### C) God’s part and your part in spiritual warfare

Notice what is God’s part, and what is your part, in experiencing victory over “*the devil’s schemes*” (Eph 6:11). God has already given you “*the sword*

of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:17). He has given you truth through Scripture and power and desires through the Spirit.

But you must trust God’s truth in order to experience the Spirit’s power. You must “renew your mind” (Rom 12:2) by replacing the Devil’s lies with God’s truth, to experience spiritual victory.

There are commands in Ephesians 6 for you to obey. God expects you to “Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil” (v. 11). He commands you to “hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:16-17).

God is not going to “hold up” that “shield” or “swing” that “sword” for you. He expects you to learn how to do that and to be faithful to do so. As we have stated throughout the *Christian Essentials*: GOD IS NOT GOING TO DO FOR YOU WHAT HE HAS ALREADY ENABLED YOU TO DO.

Contrary to what some think, God is not going to fight the Devil for you. God will give you the weapons to defeat the Devil. But the command is for you to “Resist him, standing firm in the faith (1 Pet 5:9). Stop blaming others for your spiritual struggles. Stop expecting God to simply rescue you. Take responsibility to obey God so you can defeat the Devil in your life.

Teaching you how to “Put on all of God’s armor” is the purpose of this *FREEDOM* study. Helping you do that is the purpose of Renew Ministry. In the next chapters we will explain how the Devil imprints you with controlling lies and why they are so difficult to recognize and replace with God’s freeing truth. But for now, remember: Satan’s only power is a lie, so the only weapon you need is the truth.

- ▶ Recite 1 Peter 5:8 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize 1 Peter 5:9 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ Read the next chapter to prepare for your small group this week.

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<sup>29</sup> NLT has “Stand firm against,” but the Greek here (*antistēte*) implies something more like fighting and conflict. Thus, *BDAG* has “oppose” or “be resistant to power, resist” (cf. Rom 13:2).

<sup>30</sup> For more on the God-ordained power of belief see *the FRUIT Study*, chapter 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ed Smith, *Healing Life’s Hurts* (New Creation, 2005), 79.

<sup>32</sup> David A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions* (David C. Cook, 1985), 58.

<sup>33</sup> For further study of the H.A.P.P.I.E.R needs see *Christian Essentials* study #3, *Your Faith*, section on idolatry.



## Chapter 6

**Satan's Power III: Lie Fortresses**2 Corinthians 10:4

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
  - ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
- 1) What are indications that Paul is describing spiritual warfare against lies in the Christian's mind in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6?
  - 2) What elements of a “fortress” do we use to illustrate the psychological makeup of a Lie Fortress?
  - 3) Why is the barrier between the conscious and subconscious parts of your mind described as a “wall”? What demonstrates such a “wall”?
  - 4) What are typical feelings that act like guards to keep you from rescuing hurting and deceived parts of your mind?
  - 5) How are negative emotions used in the Renew Ministry process?
  - 6) What was especially meaningful to you about this chapter? Why?

Imagine a large castle in the age of kings and knights. This castle is ruled by a wicked king who controls and oppresses the people in the castle. The castle has high and thick walls and a large iron gate. Guards patrol the top of the wall and are stationed throughout the castle as well.

Deep within the castle is a dark dungeon where the wicked king keeps his prisoners. The dungeon is at the bottom of a maze of dark passageways and staircases guarded by more soldiers. The prisoners in the dungeon are kept in barred cells that can only be opened with the right key. They are being tortured and experiencing great pain. And those prisoners are deceived and hurting PARTS OF YOU.

This is why the Bible describes spiritual warfare like this:

**The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.**

(2 Corinthians 10:4 NASB)

Lie Fortresses in your subconscious mind are formed by IDENTITY LIES and accessed by connecting with negative feelings.

## A) A biblical description of Lie Fortresses

The Apostle Paul wrote:

**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup> We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. And we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. (2 Cor 10:3-6 NASB)**

The Apostle was describing spiritual “war” (v. 3) and “warfare” (v. 4) in a Christian’s life. What was the purpose of this spiritual “warfare”? “*The destruction of fortresses*” (v. 4; “*strongholds*” NIV, NLT, ESV, KJV). The Greek word translated “*fortresses*” is *ochyrōmatōn*. It is used only here in the NT. It means, “A strong military installation, fortress.” <sup>34</sup> The Apostle Paul had in mind the large fort that overlooked the city of Corinth at the time. The word was also used in ancient Greece to refer to a prison, referring to the fact that “people under siege in a fortress were imprisoned there by the attacking forces.” <sup>35</sup> From this text Christians have traditionally spoken of stubborn and powerful spiritual “strongholds” in a Christian’s life through which Satan controls them.

What are these demonic “*fortresses*” made of? LIES. As previously explained in chapter 5, the Devil’s only weapon and power is a LIE. Therefore, the “*fortresses*” within you, from which He controls you, are constructed of LIES in your mind. This is why the Apostle describes the spiritual “warfare” (v. 4) as “*destroying speculations* [“*false arguments*” NLT] *and every lofty thing* [*hypsōma*: “pride” <sup>36</sup>] *raised up against the knowledge of God*” and “*taking every thought captive*” (v. 5).

Paul is describing a ministry to help believers with a war in their mind between the Devil’s LIES and Christ’s TRUTH. <sup>37</sup> It is a ministry “*for the destruction of [LIE] fortresses*” (v. 4) which are made up of deceived and prideful parts of the Christian’s mind. These LIE Fortresses are the very same demonic “*footholds*” that Paul warned of in Ephesians 4:26-27 which are discussed more in the next chapter.

In Ephesians 6 Paul warns us that our real struggle in the Christian life is not against people but against demonic forces in the spiritual realm. And Paul instructs us there to defeat them with the truth. Likewise, 2

Corinthians 10:3-5 is describing this same battle and the weapons of warfare with divine power to destroy their influence in our lives. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 is giving a spiritual description of what Paul describes in more psychological terms in Romans 12:2: *“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (NIV).

These demonic Lie Fortresses are deceived and hurting parts of us. But it is important to understand they are not who we are. Remember in Romans 7 Paul essentially said, “I no longer sin, but it is this disease of sin in me that causes me to sin” (vs. 15-23). While the Devil and some psychologists would have you believe that these sinful, angry, anxious, depressed parts of you are part of your identity, your true self, that is a lie. Your true self hates all this sin and desires nothing more than to experience love, joy, and peace. These deceived and controlling Lie Fortresses in your mind are a spiritual disease in your life and need to be healed by the renewing of your mind.

The Bible tells us *“The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses”* (2 Cor 10:4). Lie Fortresses in your subconscious mind are formed by **IDENTITY LIES** and accessed by connecting with negative feelings.

## **B) How can you tell if a Lie Fortress exists in your mind?**

Answering this question was the purpose of the entire *FRUIT* study. Negative and sinful emotions such as anger, frustration, irritation, worry, apathy, discouragement, depression, and lust are very common symptoms that a Lie Fortress exists in your mind. See Project C after this chapter for a quick test that can identify the presence of Satan’s work in your life.

In addition, the *FRUIT* study described DEFEATED, COPING and FIGHTING Christianity. DEFEATED Christianity is experiencing addictions or being consistently overwhelmed by anger, worry, lust, and depression. COPING Christianity is suppressing such things by your own will power, but you still are not experiencing the supernatural and effortless love, joy, and peace of God’s Spirit. FIGHTING Christianity is experiencing God’s Spirit more consistently, but there is a rather constant and exhausting battle in your mind against sinful temptations.

These stages of spiritual health indicate the presence of controlling lies in your mind, or Lie Fortresses. The fact that DEFEATED, COPING, and FIGHTING Christianity are epidemics among Christians today tells us that Lie Fortresses are very common in the lives of God’s people. Many other effects of Lie Fortresses will be described in chapters 10-11.

How do you know if you are free from Lie Fortresses in your mind? You consistently experience the love, joy, peace, and power of God’s Spirit. This is the FREER! & FRUITFUL Christianity also described in the *FRUIT* study. FREER! & FRUITFUL Christianity was Paul’s goal for the spiritual warfare he describes in this passage. He told them if they used God’s power

to destroy fortresses of lies in the mind then they could grow to become “*fully obedient*” to Christ (v. 6).

The Bible tells us “*The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses*” (2 Cor 10:4). Lie Fortresses in your subconscious mind are formed by IDENTITY LIES and accessed by connecting with negative feelings.

### **C) The layout of a Lie Fortress**

(After this chapter you will be asked to draw a picture of the description of a Lie Fortress)

By using the biblical analogy of an enemy fortress, we can illustrate and introduce many practical things about Satan’s Lie Fortresses and the principles guiding a Renew Ministry session designed to set you free from them. All of them will be described in further detail in subsequent chapters of this study.

Let’s begin the description of a Lie Fortress with the inner most part, and work outward. First, then, are the prisoners locked up in the dungeon. These are the parts of your mind that are deceived and controlled by the IDENTITY LIES described in the previous chapter. They have been formed by painful experiences that imprinted your mind with lies about yourself. These Hurting Parts of you believe they are worthless, alone, unsafe, or hopeless. Therefore, they feel and act like they are worthless, alone, unsafe, and hopeless. These parts of you are hurting because IDENTITY LIES are very painful to believe about yourself.

The bars of the prisons are the IDENTITY LIES that these Hurting Parts of you believe and which control you. These prison bars simply send messages that you are worthless, alone, and hopeless. They were formed by painful experiences that made you feel these things and deceived you into thinking you are these things. The only reason the prison bars keep this part of your heart in bondage is because you believe their lies.

But prison bars and IDENTITY LIES are not all that is keeping these hurting and deceived parts of your mind in bondage. There are guards stationed around the Lie Fortress as well. These GUARDING PARTS keep you from trying to rescue the prisoners by producing powerful feelings like SHAME and FEAR and even PRIDE. These GUARDING PARTS are what compel you to suppress the Hurting Parts and deny they are even there. Their lies include the message that it would be way too painful to face these hurting and deceived places in your heart, so they persuade you to leave them alone. Their lies must be overcome to access the prisons and discover the Hurting Parts and IDENTITY LIES that are controlling you.

Finally, the walls and gate of this fortress symbolize the barrier between the conscious/logical part of your mind where you know the truth, and the subconscious/irrational/emotional part of your mind where you are

deceived. This “wall” is so thick and tall that the conscious/logical mind has no idea what is behind it. That’s why what is behind the “wall” is “subconscious” or unknown. Likewise, the “wall” is so real that the truth possessed by the conscious/logical part of your mind does not affect the lies that are in the subconscious part of your mind.

As noted in chapter 2, this is why much Christian ministry does not renew minds and transform lives. It does not minister to the subconscious part of our minds. You can fire a multitude of cannon balls of truth against the walls of your subconscious mind and they will simply bounce off and not penetrate the Lie Fortresses there.

The “wall” of the subconscious mind also explains why Christians can believe the truth about God’s love, but not be affected by it. They believe it with the conscious/logical part of their mind, but there are deceived parts in their subconscious/emotional mind that do not believe that truth. And if you have no way of getting through the iron gate of the fortress and into the subconscious mind, the hurting and deceived “prisoners” there will not be rescued.

## **D) How do we penetrate the “walls” of a Lie Fortress to set the captives free?**

So how do we set those hurting and deceived prisoners free? Jesus said His truth will set you free from the controlling power of lies and the sin they empower (cf. John 8:32). Again, the Devil’s only weapon is LIES that make up those prison bars. Therefore, the only power you need to defeat and resolve all of them is the TRUTH about God’s love. As explained in the previous chapter, God’s truth is always more powerful than the Devil’s lies. This is why our text says, *“The weapons of our warfare are . . . divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses”* (2 Cor 10:4). When a lie of the Devil is confronted with the truth of God, God and the truth always win.

But there are two challenges to making this happen. One, getting God’s truth to the right place; and two, making sure it is God’s truth. First, why do we need to get God’s truth to the right place? Because as we have said, MOST CHRISTIANS DO NOT NEED MORE TRUTH. RATHER, THEY NEED THE TRUTH THEY ALREADY HAVE IN MORE PLACES. Most Christians already possess in the conscious/logical part of their mind all the truth they need to be Spirit-controlled Christians. But they need a way to get that truth to the subconscious/emotional parts of their mind that do not believe that truth.

So, how do we open the gate to the enemy Lie Fortress to get the truth to the prisoners in the dungeon? How do we enter and minister to the subconscious mind? By following our FEELINGS. Especially our negative and sinful feelings.

The conscious mind is connected and organized by LOGIC. Logical thinking is what enables you to navigate and use your conscious mind.

But the subconscious mind is connected and organized by EMOTION. Usually negative emotions. Which is why they are suppressed into our subconscious/irrational mind.

When you are feeling negative and sinful emotions, you can usually assume you are experiencing your subconscious/irrational/emotional mind. Allowing ourselves to FEEL the negative and even sinful EMOTIONS in our subconscious mind allows us to minister to it. Recognizing the anger, fear, and shame we feel deep inside of us, connects us to the lies we believe deep inside of us.

Those negative and painful FEELINGS are the pathways to navigate the dark and often complex maze of passageways and staircases to the subconscious dungeon of your Lie Fortresses. Again, this is because the subconscious mind is connected and organized by EMOTION. And those negative and painful emotions are usually suppressed and pushed into the subconscious mind. Therefore, when we allow ourselves to feel those emotions, we are experiencing our subconscious mind.

And finally, experiencing negative, sinful, and painful FEELINGS is how we discover what IDENTITY LIES are keeping a part of you imprisoned. Remember, as we have thoroughly explained elsewhere, your FEELINGS reveal what a part of you BELIEVES. <sup>38</sup> Those negative, painful, and sinful feelings reveal what IDENTITY LIES a part of you is believing.

But “*the truth will set you free*” (John 8:32). When the GUARDING PARTS of shame and fear want to keep us out of the Lie Fortress and the dungeon, we submit them to God’s truth. We have already accessed these GUARDING PARTS by recognizing and confessing the feelings they are producing. Now we resolve them with God’s truth by simply asking the question, “How would Jesus respond to this GUARDING PART that feels (shame or fear)?”

Your conscious/logical mind knows and believes the needed truth about God’s love for you. That you do not need to be ashamed about your sin, or fearful about facing your hurting and deceived parts. And that truth about God’s love in your logical mind can now be transferred to a deceived place in your subconscious mind and set it free from the painful lies there.

Resolving the GUARDING PARTS allows us to proceed through the guarded passageways and staircases to the deep dungeon of our subconscious mind where our IDENTITY LIES exist. Likewise, embracing the painful FEELINGS of being worthless or alone coming from the IDENTITY LIE, exposes what this part of you believes. And confronting that LIE with the truth of God’s love sets it free to be controlled by God’s Spirit.

Unfortunately, the Devil has one more strategy to keep the deceived and hurting parts of you imprisoned by an IDENTITY LIE. Sometimes these parts also believe a GOD LIE. They believe in a False Jesus who lacks compassion and is powerless or condemning. These deceived and hurting

parts of your mind do not know Jesus as compassionate and powerful. A False Jesus is like the wrong key that will not open the prison door. It may look like the right key, but it is not. GOD LIES must be recognized and resolved in order to set the “prisoner” free with God’s truth. And we effectively do this in a Renew Ministry session.

Hopefully, the above illustration gives you some idea of what a Lie Fortress practically looks like and how Renew Ministry removes them. Again, we will describe these things in more detail in the following chapters. But this chapter introduces how we can practically obey and experience 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 in our lives.

This is how we, “*wage war*” in the spiritual realm of our minds (v. 3). This is how “*We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments*” (v. 4). This is how, “*We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps [parts of you] from knowing [the love of] God.*” This is how, “*We capture . . . rebellious [harassing, oppressive, and sinful] thoughts and teach them to obey Christ*” (v. 5). This is how we help Christians “*become fully obedient*” (v. 6).

This is how we radically and permanently help Christians “*be transformed by the renewing of [their] mind*” (Rom 12:2 NIV). This is how we overcome our sinful nature and more consistently live in the power of God’s Spirit and His love, joy, and peace.

The Bible says, “*The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil*” (1 John 3:8 NASB). This is not talking about Christ’s Second Coming. Jesus wants to destroy the works of the Devil in your life NOW. That’s why He brought the light of truth that conquers spiritual darkness (John 1:5), and sets us free from the power of sin (John 8:32). Christ’s Light illuminates the darkness. His Love heals the pain. His Power overcomes everything opposed to Him. His Truth frees the parts of you controlled by the Devil’s lies and brings them under the lordship of Christ! We have literally seen this happen thousands of times and it radically and permanently changes people’s lives.

The Bible tells us “*The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses*” (2 Cor 10:4). Lie Fortresses in your subconscious mind are formed by IDENTITY LIES and accessed by connecting with negative feelings.

There is one weakness in our analogy of a Lie Fortress with parts of you imprisoned in a dungeon behind bars. Prisoners in such a situation would have no power to do anything. But as described in the next chapter, these subconscious, deceived, and hurting parts of you that believe IDENTITY LIES will exert a great deal of damaging control and painful power over you. Which is why one of the most important goals of your life must be to remove them.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite 1 Peter 5:8-9 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize 2 Corinthians 10:4 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ On the next page, draw a picture of how you envision a Lie Fortress based on the description given in this chapter.
- ▶ Take a moment to complete Project C, the “Spiritual Health Test” on the next page. Discuss the results with your small group.
- ▶ Meet with your small group this week and discuss chapters 4-6.

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<sup>34</sup> BDAG.

<sup>35</sup> John MacArthur, *2 Corinthians* (Moody, 2003), Kindle edition.

<sup>36</sup> BDAG.

<sup>37</sup> Many NT scholars interpret 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 to refer to 1) Paul’s strategy to defeat his critics in Corinth, or 2) Paul’s strategy to evangelize unbelievers, specifically using apologetics. We believe it is a mistake to confine Paul’s meaning to these things, and that personal spiritual warfare and Christian discipleship was a primary point of the Apostle’s thoughts here.

Paul makes it clear in verse 6 that the purpose of the ministry described in verses 3-5 is to help believers “*become fully obedient*” (NLT). Therefore, the Apostle is describing discipleship, not evangelism.

Of course, Paul’s “spiritual warfare” in this passage included confronting and defeating his critics in Corinth (cf. 10:1-2). But his references to the thoughts and false beliefs of the mind in general, clearly expands the application beyond just dealing with critics and provides us with one of the Bible’s best descriptions of personal spiritual warfare in the lives of Christians.

Neither is Paul’s emphasis in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 apologetics in evangelism. The Apostle described his evangelism strategy in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 as not using “*impressive wisdom*” (v. 1), a “*message and . . . preaching [that] were very plain,*” and without “*using clever and persuasive speeches*” (v. 4). This is in sharp contrast to the ministry described in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 which was to “*destroy false thinking and . . . capture rebellious thoughts*” (v. 5). In other words, Paul’s evangelistic ministry in Corinth did not include confronting lies with arguments of truth. On the other hand, his discipleship ministry in Corinth was founded on this very thing.

Unfortunately, NT scholars who have ignored the applications in this passage for personal spiritual warfare and Christian discipleship have robbed the church of one more biblical reference to transformation through mind renewal.

For further arguments against the view that Paul is referring to apologetics in evangelism in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 see Kurt Jurgensmeier, *Biblical Apologetics*, chapter 5.12, section A

<sup>38</sup> For more on the important relationship between feelings and beliefs see the *FRUIT Study*, chapter 4.



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Project B

**A Lie Fortress**

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Project C

Spiritual Health Test

How do you know if you are being controlled by the Spirit or the sinful nature? BY HOW YOU FEEL. If you struggle with any of the things listed under “Common Signs of the Sinful Nature” on a daily or weekly basis, put a √ by it. Adding up your “Spiritual Health Score” will give you some idea of how much of your life is controlled by the Holy Spirit.

✓	Common Signs of the Sinful Nature <i>I feel . . .</i>	Spirit's Powers <i>I feel . . .</i>	
	Angry/Frustrated	Love	Compassion through Christ
	Lonely		The presence of Christ
	Jealous of others		Fulfilled in Christ
	Worthless		Valued by Christ
	Rejected		Accepted by Christ
	Defensive		Trusting Christ
	Unattractive		Created by Christ
	Guilt/Shame		Forgiven in Christ
	Suspicious		Sincere in Christ
	Useless/Purposeless		Living for Christ
	Ignored/Left Out		Wanted by Christ
	Complaining	Joy	Grateful for Christ
	Depressed		Joyful for Christ
	Bored		Serving Christ
	Numb/no emotion		Free to feel through Christ
	Worried/Afraid	Peace	Calm in Christ
	Hopeless		Hopeful in Christ
	Directionless		Focused on Christ
	Confused/Stupid		Wisdom from Christ
	Addicted/Tempted	Power	Free in Christ
	Exhausted		Energized by Christ
	Overwhelmed/ Inadequate		Capable through Christ
	Lustful		Pleasure through Christ
	Lazy/Uncaring		Eager to serve Christ
	Trapped/Stuck		Free in Christ
	Spiritual Health Score = 100% - (each marked item x 4)		

## Chapter 7

**Satan's Strategy I: The Power of Your Past**Ephesians 4:26-27

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) What is an IDENTITY LIE? How do they get formed in our mind?
- 2) Why are we especially vulnerable to IDENTITY LIES in childhood? How should this affect how we parent our children?
- 3) Do you have an example of a painful event in your past that imprinted you with an IDENTITY LIE?
- 4) Why is unresolved anger both the symptom and protector of an IDENTITY LIE or demonic “*foothold*”?
- 5) What does the Greek word *topon* (“foothold”) mean? How then does Paul’s warning in Ephesians 4:26-27 apply to your life?
- 6) What was especially meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

When John was a young boy his parents divorced. He lived with his mother and about the only time he saw his dad was on some weekends. One day John’s dad promised to take him fishing the following weekend. John was excited and very much looking forward to it. But when the weekend arrived his father said, “something came up” and he was not able to spend time with John.

This made John angry. In fact, he became bitter against his dad because it seemed like he was always breaking promises. He never felt like he could trust his dad. And if he could not even trust his own father, he reasoned he

really couldn't trust anyone else either. John experienced even at a young age how the following biblical warning can affect us:

**Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.** (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with **IDENTITY LIES** through painful events in your past.

## **A) The making of a demonic foothold in your mind**

In chapter 5 we explained that the Devil gains control of your life by convincing you of **IDENTITY LIES**. You read:

The Devil is constantly attacking your **IDENTITY**. Your Christian identity is who you are and what you have as a child of God. If Satan can get you to believe you are weak, worthless, hopeless, rejected, and alone, then you will feel and act like you are these very things. We call these **IDENTITY LIES**. They are the essence of how Satan controls your life.

How do these **IDENTITY LIES** get formed in your mind? Through experiences. More specifically, through emotional, painful, and wrongly interpreted experiences. Events that you do not respond to with the truth and love of God.

The Bible tells us that Satan attacks us through "*the fiery arrows of the devil*." What are these? They certainly include experiencing very difficult circumstances and people being mean and cruel. Often it is especially the cruel but influential **WORDS** of people. The Bible warns that merely, "*Careless words stab like a sword*" (Prov 12:18 NCV) and "*a perverse tongue crushes the spirit*" (Prov 15:4 NIV). The "*tongue*" is potentially "*full of deadly poison*" (James 3:8) that can be inflicted on others.

Why can mere words hurt us so deeply? Because they attack our identity. This is why the Bible says, "*the shield of faith*" will "*stop the fiery arrows of the devil*." Believing in God's love (faith) will harmlessly deflect any attack of the Devil designed to make you feel worthless, alone, rejected, ashamed, or hopeless. But what happens when we do not "*hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil*" (Eph 6:16)? Those burning arrows penetrate your heart and mind causing pain because of the lies they carry and we believe.

Experiences are the most powerful teacher in life. Your experiences and how you interpret them and what you learn from them (whether lies or truth) will affect your life more than anything you learn in a book or classroom. Experiences are the most powerful teacher in your life. Especially childhood experiences.

Your mind, especially when you were young, was like soft wax. It could be molded and imprinted by all kinds of experiences with no idea of what

was true or false, good or bad. The vulnerability of a child's mind is illustrated in a positive way in the Proverb, "*Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it*" (22:6). The fact that parents can have such lasting influence on their children illustrates how deeply past experiences can influence our entire life. The respected Christian counselor H. Norman Wright remarks: "How a child is treated when they are young (whether that treatment was good or bad), becomes the way they believe they *should* be treated." <sup>39</sup>

Likewise, Christian counselor Ed Smith writes:

Children unknowingly ask self-identity questions such as, "What does this say about me?" "Do I have worth or value?" "Am I lovable?"

Let me illustrate: A man comes home from work tired and ready to rest. He just wants a little "down time" to make the transition from being the office manager to being a husband and father.

His little girl hears him come in the front door and runs excitedly to greet him. In her hand she holds the picture that she drew for daddy as her special "homecoming" gift. She calls out, "Daddy, look what I made you!" Through his fatigue he says, "Not now. I'm tired. Just run along and play."

In that moment she will interpret what just occurred. She may rightfully conclude, "Daddy is just tired, but he really loves me and will look at my picture later." However, she may conclude, "He doesn't care about my drawing. I'm not important to him, so therefore, I am worthless." This interpretation of her self-identity then becomes a core belief by which she interprets many more life experiences in the future.

Twenty years later her husband comes home and drops down on the couch never saying a word about the house being cleaned and in order. Her assumption and conclusion: "I am not important to him." She came to this explanation for her husband's behavior by way of her heart belief: "I am worthless." <sup>40</sup>

Elsewhere, Dr. Smith has written:

Whenever something painful happens to a child, the child will interpret that event and store the interpretation in the memory of the event. Unfortunately, new experiences are interpreted through the lens of older painful ones. The mind places the old interpretation over the top of the new experience and falsely interprets it.

New experiences tend to confirm what was believed in the original event instead of reinterpreting it. Even when the child becomes an adult, his or her interpretation of the painful event becomes the source of present pain [and their interpretive lens of the present] every time something or someone triggers the memory. <sup>41</sup>

It is amazing (even scary) how the smallest thing can be misinterpreted by a child and imprint them with an IDENTITY LIE that causes them pain and dysfunction their entire lives. Even the Apostle Paul recognized that, *“When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child”* (1 Cor 13:11). Unfortunately, that is a dangerous thing because children often reason incorrectly. And they may not have a faith in God’s love that can shield them from the Devil’s damaging arrows of IDENTITY LIES (cf. Eph 6:16). The Devil takes full advantage of that.

This is why Eve was so vulnerable to his deceptions. It is probable that her mind was that of a child, even though she was in an adult body. Like anyone else, Eve was to learn and mature through experiences which she hadn’t had yet. Because she lacked the wisdom of an adult, she was more easily deceived. The same is true of our children. It has been said, “Children are the best recorders, but the worst interpreters.” This reflects that children are the most impressionable, but very susceptible to making wrong conclusions, especially about themselves.

Because most of your IDENTITY LIES are formed when you are young and impressionable, most of them consist of painful events you experienced with parents or older siblings. Parents who are critical, abusive, absent (physically or emotionally), or in some other way fail to communicate love, can cause deep emotional scars in their children. This can be especially true when parents get divorced. To a child, this communicates all sorts of painful lies.

Of course, sexual abuse at a young age is especially devastating to a person’s beliefs about God and themselves. Dr. Smith explains:

A commonly reported emotional response to childhood sexual abuse is a negative reaction to sexual intimacy and subsequent sexual dysfunction. Even though the person can rationally and logically differentiate between their spouse and the person that abused them in their childhood, sexual intimacy may cause them to feel dirty, fearful, and out of control. In this instance, they are “seeing” what they are believing. What they believe dictates their perceived reality, even when they rationally and logically know the difference. They may intellectually know what the truth is, but at the same time feel the lie.<sup>42</sup>

In our experience, bad parenting and sexual abuse account for about 85% of all emotional wounds in the lives of Christians.

Because your emotional wounds were formed when you were young and especially sensitive, there are a few things to consider. First, you might have misinterpreted some things that happened to you. But that really does not matter because they still felt painful and made an impression on you. It does not matter what was objectively true about the situation. “Your truth” is the belief that controls you.<sup>43</sup>

Secondly, something that deeply and emotionally hurt you as a small child may seem very insignificant as an adult today. But that event can still imprint you with powerful lies about yourself and God that greatly affect you today. Be sensitive to that.

Thirdly, many people have exerted a lot of effort to suppress, deny, and even “forget” those painful experiences of childhood. Therefore, most people are being much more effected by their past than they realize. It’s time to admit that even a small thing in your past may have great and negative influence in your life today. You cannot simply choose to not have your past effect you. You may need to interact with your real Father in Heaven to resolve hurts caused by your temporary father on earth. You cannot change your past. But you can change how your past affects you now.

It is staggering to think about all the ways people are deeply hurt in this world. They desperately need love, but experience rejection, racism, and even rape. We continually seek significance, but are treated like trash. We seek security, but suffer hurt. We want acceptance but experience rejection and shame. Sometimes the people who are supposed to care about you the most, actually hurt you the most.

This world is a very dangerous and painful place to live. No one, and we mean no one, lives here for very long without getting hurt in some way. The Devil, and those empowered by his sinful, selfish, and even sinister nature, have accomplished a great deal of hurt in this world.

As explained below, this is why the Bible commands: *“Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil”* (Eph 4:26-27). Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with **IDENTITY LIES** through painful events in your past.

## **B) The biblical warning of demonic footholds in your mind**

The creation of **IDENTITY LIES** described above is what Paul is describing in Ephesians 4:26-27. What is happening here? Someone says or does something that seems unloving to you. Because you do not believe and obey God’s truth in the matter, you feel hurt and respond with anger. As Dr. Smith explains:

The fact we hold on to our anger is evidence that we have a lie-based reason for doing so. We might believe such things as “My anger will protect me and keep me safe,” “My anger holds the person who hurt me accountable and keeps them from getting by with what they did,” “My anger helps me to control my situation,” or “My anger punishes those who hurt me.” <sup>44</sup>

But these are all lies that keep us in bondage to our anger. Which is why the Bible says, *“Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil”* (Eph 4:26-27).

Anger is simply a symptom of an unresolved hurt that has imprinted you with an IDENTITY LIE and continues to control you. Anger deceives you into thinking its purpose is to permanently protect and help you in place of God protecting and helping you. As explained in the previous chapter, IDENTITY LIES such as believing you are worthless or alone cause a great deal of emotional pain. Anger is the Devil's way of protecting those painful lies. Because you believe anger helps or protects you, you hold on to your anger long after "the sun goes down."<sup>45</sup> When anger deceives you, you do not forgive the offense, although you will try to "forget" about it.

Because you don't want to keep consciously thinking about your hurt and anger you push it into your subconscious mind, still unresolved. Now, subconscious anger is protecting a subconscious IDENTITY LIE that continues to control you from the dark shadows of your mind. There is now a part of your mind in which the "devil" has "a foothold" (Eph 4:26-27). This is why Paul is telling you to resolve your anger and forgive people rather immediately so controlling lies are not imprinted on your mind, giving "a foothold to the devil."

The Greek word used here for "foothold" is *topon* which means "a place of habitation."<sup>46</sup> The NLT (and NIV) translation of "foothold" reflects the Greek well. Webster's defines "foothold" as "a position usable as a base for further advance." It is a military term describing the invasion of an enemy. When you give "a foothold to the devil" you give him a place within your mind to control you. As one translation puts it, "Do not give the devil a way to defeat you" (NCV).

"A foothold of the devil" is demonic, but it is not a demon. A Christian indwelt with the Holy Spirit cannot be possessed by demons.<sup>47</sup> But as explained in this study, the Devil can control a Christian's mind through lies. The Apostle was warning of a very serious spiritual condition. One would hope that being controlled by demonic "footholds" would be rare. But unfortunately, most Christians are plagued with these very things.

When you experience a particularly traumatic, emotional, and/or painful event, there is a message in it. Emotionally charged events make a far greater impression on you. Often your most powerful beliefs (good or bad) have been imprinted in the atmosphere of experiencing powerful emotions. This is why you remember some things and do not remember other things. You remember the most emotional things.

In Ephesians 4:26-27 the Bible is explaining how the Devil influences you in this world. It is through the misinterpretation of painful experiences. This again corrects the very common, harmful, and unbiblical belief that Satan can directly put thoughts in your mind. Many make it sound like the Devil has the powers of some sort of mental telepathy. But there is absolutely no evidence in Scripture that the Devil can simply plant thoughts in the Christian's mind. None.



Paul is warning us that if we do not respond to a painful experience with God's truth, it will give the Devil "a place of habitation" in our mind through IDENTITY LIES. And "a position usable as a base for further advance" to control our lives. This is why he commands, "*Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil*" (Eph 4:26-27). Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite 2 Corinthians 10:4 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize Ephesians 4:26-27 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ Read the next chapter to prepare for your small group.

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<sup>39</sup> H. Norman Wright, *Making Peace with Your Past* (Revel, 1985), 17.

<sup>40</sup> Ed and Joshua Smith, "The Principles of TPM", online at [www.transformationprayer.org](http://www.transformationprayer.org).

<sup>41</sup> Ed Smith, *Healing Life's Hurts* (New Creation, 2005), 100.

<sup>42</sup> Ed Smith, *Essentials of TPM*, 182; online at [www.transformationprayer.org](http://www.transformationprayer.org)

<sup>43</sup> None of us remember things perfectly. For this reason, some Christians have criticized the resolution of memories for the purpose of mind renewal. For more on this see section the *Renew Ministry Training Manual*, chapter 9, section D, "Working with memories."

<sup>44</sup> Reference unavailable.

<sup>45</sup> For more on the dangerous sin of anger, see chapter 11 in *The FRUIT Study*.

<sup>46</sup> "Foothold" (NIV, NLT) translates the Greek word *topon* which means either a "place of habitation" (as in your heart; *BDAG* #1) or "a favorable circumstance for doing something, opportunity" (as in a congregation; *BDAG* #4; NASB, ESV, HCSB, NET). Unfortunately, the translation "opportunity" does not reflect the personal danger that Paul is warning of here. The whole world is an "opportunity" for the Devil to influence us. But what Paul is talking about is a demonic invasion into our own heart from where the Devil will personally control us.

The lexical data is very much in favor of "a place of habitation." For example, *topon* is used in the NT 93 times and in the NASB is given the meaning "place" 88 times and only 3 times as "opportunity."

Older commentators understood it this way. John Calvin commented on Ephesians 4:27:

Paul's intention was to guard us against allowing Satan to take possession of our minds. . . What is the cause of this, but that, instead of resisting the devil, we yield up to him the possession of our heart? (*Commentary*).

Or as Charles Hodge commented here: "Anger when cherished gives the Tempter great power over us" (*Commentary*).

It is obvious that the Devil must gain control of an individual before he could have an opportunity among others (cf. Heb 12:15). Thus, NT scholar Francis Foulkes writes:

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If an offense is retained and nursed as a grievance, it will let the devil lead his victim on to unkind thoughts, words, and actions, and so work havoc with personal relationships. The devil is to be resisted and given no place, whether it is the individual's spiritual life, or the welfare of the fellowship that is in danger. (*Ephesians*, *TNTC* [Eerdmans, 1999], 141; cf. O'Brien, *PNTC*, 341)

- <sup>47</sup> For further discussion on demon possession and the Christian see the classic treatment by C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian* (Crossway, 1989).

## Chapter 8

**Satan's Strategy II: The Effect of Your Past**Ephesians 4:26-27

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
  - ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
- 1) Why do we claim the pain & control of the past is caused by the lies, not the event? Do you agree? Why is this good news?
  - 2) How can you remove any emotional and spiritual effects of what has happened to you in the past? Why is this true?
  - 3) What are three factors that affect the number and strength of IDENTITY LIES in your life? Which of these are especially true of your life?
  - 4) What is a common interpretation of Philippians 4:13? What are problems with this view? What do we claim Paul was actually talking about? What do you think?
  - 5) What was most meaningful to you about this chapter? Why?

Counselor Dr. Ed Smith shares the following testimony:

Jerry came to me very angry with his father and ready to dissolve the family business. He said that all his life his father had been overbearing and critical and had made him feel worthless and inadequate. He said that the way he was treated caused him to feel like a helpless little boy. He agreed to do counseling.

Jerry had many different memories of times when his father had said or done hurtful things to him, and in each case lies were implanted into Jerry's thinking. I led him through the renewal process, and as a result, Jerry reported perfect peace in all the memories we had visited.

I ran into Jerry a couple of years later and he shared with me this wonderful testimony. He said he was still in business with his father, even though his father had not changed. Then he told me, “He just cannot stir me up anymore! It’s like his words have lost all power to penetrate.”

He went on to say that he now saw his father with compassion as a very wounded and unhappy man. When I asked Jerry if he had to work at maintaining this newfound peace when working around his dad, he told me no. He said it was effortless! <sup>48</sup>

Jerry learned the hard way about what Paul was warning Christians of when he wrote:

**Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.** (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past.

### **A) The pain of the past is caused by the lies, not the event**

The statement above is a very hard but important truth to understand and accept. It answers an important question. Why do some painful experiences in the past affect us, and others don’t? Many can relate mean things people have said and done to them, but that have no lasting effect in their lives at all. While others were devastated by a past event and are emotionally influenced by it every day. Why the difference?

Because one person was imprinted with an IDENTITY LIE through the painful experience, and another was not. It is not the event that occurred that hurt us and continues to control us. It is the IDENTITY LIES we were imprinted with that continue to cause the pain and control us from the experiences we have had. It is not what happens to you that causes the real pain in your life. It is what you believe from what happens to you that causes real pain. If people treat you badly and it makes you feel worthless, rejected, unsafe, hopeless, powerless, and alone, it is painful. Your guilt and shame about your sin will be one of the most painful things in your life.

The reason that IDENTITY LIES cause emotional pain is because those lies keep us from having our God-given emotional needs fulfilled. As explained further in *Christian Essentials* study #3 FAITH, God created us with the H.A.P.P.I.E.R. needs of Hope, Acceptance, Protection, Power, Importance, Enjoyment, and Relationship. When these needs are not fulfilled, humans experience hopelessness, rejection, insecurity, powerlessness, worthlessness, depression, and loneliness. The absence of having our emotional needs met and the resulting negative experience result in a great deal of emotional pain, even to the point of people wanting to commit suicide.

This was an important truth introduced in the previous *Christian Essentials* study *FRUIT*, chapter 4. The primary point of that chapter was: Your feelings are always controlled by what you are believing. In other words, NO ONE EVER MAKES YOU MAD. The reason you feel mad, afraid, or discouraged is because of what you are believing, not because of what is happening to you. This fact applies to the emotional pain, shame, fear, or anger you experience because of past events. As one very experienced counselor put it, “The greatest sources of our suffering are the lies we tell ourselves.”<sup>49</sup>

Dr. Ed Smith explains:

In working with people who have suffered from past trauma, I have learned that the emotional pain that people are experiencing is NOT from what happened. Original trauma does not cause lingering emotional pain. Rather, the source of our present pain is found in the interpretation we have given the event.

The reason that the memories of someone’s abuse are still agonizing for them is not because of the actual pain they had encountered. Rather, it is because of what they still believe about themselves [IDENTITY LIES], such as, “It was my fault,” “I am dirty and shameful,” “I am not in control,” “There is something wrong with me.” These beliefs are the real reasons for their current emotional pain.

We somehow think that if we do not blame the person or the situation for our emotions, then we are minimizing what the person has done or the situation itself. This is not so. What the person has done very well may be unjust, inappropriate, and downright evil. Nevertheless, we feel whatever we believe and not because of what has happened. Our belief is always the interpretive grid through which we understand our circumstances.<sup>50</sup>

If it were true that our past experience is the cause of our emotional state, (e.g. “I feel bad because of what happened to me as a child,”) then there would be no remedy for the pain because the past cannot be changed. However, if our emotional state is caused by a belief that we learned during a past event, then there is hope because this current belief is changeable.<sup>51</sup>

This has been demonstrated in Renew Ministry many times. For example, rape victims remember their experience with a great deal of emotional pain. This pain comes from the shame, sense of worthlessness, and feeling of being powerless in the experience. However, when the part of the mind that was imprinted by that event is renewed with the truth about God’s love, those events no longer produce emotional pain. Victims can describe the event with no shame or negative emotion, and even a sense of gratitude toward God, and compassion for their rapist. That is the transforming power of mind renewal.

There is good news here. We cannot change the past, but we can change the IDENTITY LIES we were imprinted with in our past. God promises you can be “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2). You do not need to be emotionally or spiritually effected by anything in your past. This is because the only control your past has over you is a LIE that you believe about yourself. The only weapon your past has over your happiness is the same sole weapon the Devil has: a LIE. So, when you replace those IDENTITY LIES that make you feel worthless, alone, or hopeless, with the truth of God’s love, you will be truly free of your past.

We have seen this in countless Renew Ministry sessions. People must revisit the painful lies they experienced in the evil things that were said and done to them in the past. These events continue to cause a great deal of pain, shame, and fear. But when the IDENTITY LIES that were formed or reinforced by the event are exposed and replaced with the truth about God’s love, the pain is completely gone! The memory is not gone, but God’s love has replaced all the shame, fear, and pain the Devil put there.

This does not mean you may not suffer some financial or physical or relational consequences from your past. We all experience that. But when you are “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2) your past will no longer affect your emotional and spiritual health. or your happiness.

But even when you are free from the lies of your past, you must maintain that freedom. You can be hurt and imprinted with an IDENTITY LIE today! This is why the Bible warns: “*Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil*” (Eph 4:26-27). Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past. This is why we need to seek mind renewal and forgiving people every day. The *FREEDOM* study and experiencing Renew Ministry will teach you how to do that.

## **B) Three factors that affect the number and strength of IDENTITY LIES**

In our experience there are three primary factors that affect the number and strength of IDENTITY LIES in a person’s life: 1) Emotional sensitivity, 2) Family dysfunction, and 3) Analytical tendencies.

Why can two siblings experience the same hurtful parents and painful experiences, but one of them is affected by these things much more than the other? The difference is their emotional sensitivity. God created some people with more emotional sensitive personalities. He intended them to be the deeply caring and compassionate among us. But their emotional sensitivity makes them more vulnerable to being hurt by the sins of others.

This is why women usually struggle with IDENTITY LIES and emotional wounding more than men. The Bible tells us that wives are generally the “*weaker*” gender in a marriage (1 Pet 3:7). This most likely refers to their greater emotional sensitivity.<sup>52</sup> As pointed out in the *FRUIT*

study, God created them this way to demonstrate the emotional sensitivity of God.<sup>53</sup> But it makes them more susceptible to believing IDENTITY LIES about themselves. Even men who are more emotionally sensitive will experience the same.<sup>54</sup>

The second factor affecting the number and strength of IDENTITY LIES in a person's mind is how dysfunctional their childhood was. Those growing up in loving, Christian homes are generally less emotionally wounded than others. More evidence for this will be given in the next chapter.

Finally, the degree to which people analyze their experiences especially affects the strength of IDENTITY LIES. Imagine a young child who is a rather deep thinker and analyzes things even at a young age. They get hurt and they start processing that. And because they don't know the truth, they process wrongly. And all that wrong processing and analyzing as a young person simply creates more hurtful lies in their mind that are greater in number, strength, and complexity.

If you are more emotionally sensitive or grew up in a more dysfunctional family, do not be discouraged. Your Father wants to set you free from any bad effects of all of these things. But the Bible warns: *"Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil"* (Eph 4:26-27). Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past.

### C) Didn't Paul say you just need to simply forget your past?

Many Christians have questioned the wisdom and need to resolve your past. Some base their belief about this on Paul's statement in Philippians 3:13: *"I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead."* First, we cannot interpret Paul literally. No one can completely forget their past. And neither had the Apostle. In fact, remembering his past helped Paul understand God's grace.

Writing late in life, he recalls: *"I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. . . [I was] even the worst [of] sinners"* (1 Tim 1:13, 16). The Apostle did not FORGET his past, but he RESOLVED it. How do we know this? Because he speaks so much about having a clear conscience (cf. Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Cor 4:4; 2 Tim 1:3). And his clear conscience surely included how he had treated Christians before becoming one. Paul did not gain such peace by merely *"forgetting the past."* In fact, resolving his past with God enabled him to be *"looking forward to what lies ahead."*

What did Paul mean then when he said, *"I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead"* (Phil 3:13)? First of all, no one claims Paul was talking about forgetting everything in his past. Therefore, his statement must be qualified. What specifically was Paul saying he was forgetting? In the context, the things of Paul's *"past"*

were the good works he had done for God as an unbeliever (cf. vs. 3-6). “*Forgetting*” them was simply placing no value on them for his relationship with Christ now (cf. vs. 7-11). The Apostle was talking about putting his past efforts in self-righteousness behind him, not forgetting the past sins he had committed or the hurts he had experienced.

If you still doubt this then think about what is involved in effective forgiveness. You cannot truly forgive someone unless you go back and embrace the event, are honest about its pain and cost, and then trust God with what someone cost you. True forgiveness requires meditation on, and resolution of, a past event in your life.

Unfortunately, many of those who claim you do not need to resolve your past, are among those most in need of doing it. Their denial of how their past affects them is understandably an effort to run from the pain that their past continues to cause somewhere deep inside of them. Others admit the potential effect that our past can have on our present. However, they claim you can simply believe the truth now, to overcome your past. This error will be addressed in later chapters of this study.

The Bible warns us about the effect of our past when it says, “*Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil*” (Eph 4:26-27). Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite Ephesians 4:26-27 from memory.
- ▶ Read the next chapter to prepare for your small group.

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<sup>48</sup> Ed Smith, *Healing Life’s Hurts* (New Creation, 2005), 63.

<sup>49</sup> Elvin Semrad, quoted by Bessel van der Kolk in *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, 2014, Kindle edition), 26.

<sup>50</sup> Ed Smith and Joshua Smith, “Identifying Our Triggers” online at: <http://www.transformationprayer.org/identifying-our-triggers>.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Essentials*, 27-28.

<sup>52</sup> Of course, the relative “weakness” in females could be a number of things including being weaker physically, and in authority particularly in marriage (see Wayne Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter*, TNTC [Eerdmans, 1988, 1999], 144). However, greater emotional sensitivity is certainly involved here as well, especially when we notice Peter’s admonition to women in the preceding verse, “*do not give way to fear*” (v. 6 NIV). Obviously, none of this is to imply that women are created mentally or spiritually deficient as compared to males.

<sup>53</sup> For more on God’s purposes for emotions, see chapter 5 section B in *The FRUIT Study*.

<sup>54</sup> The factor of emotional sensitivity is especially important for those with a Highly Sensitive Personality (HSP). For important information on this see the Appendix in *Christian Essentials* study #3: FAITH.



## Chapter 9

**Satan's Strategy III: The Importance of Your Past**Proverbs 22:6

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
  - ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
- 1) How does Proverbs 22:6 reflect the influence of your past, and especially your parents?
  - 2) What have studies demonstrated about the potential effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences on our adult life?
  - 3) Were any of the quotes in this study especially helpful or meaningful for you?
  - 4) What was especially meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

In a Renew Ministry session Joseph recognized there was a part of him that did not feel valuable. When he was asked what that feeling reminded him of, he immediately thought of an experience with his dad and brother Joshua.

Joseph and Joshua were about 9 years old and helping their dad repair the fence in their back yard. Joseph made a suggestion about how to fix something. His dad did not respond. Shortly afterwards, Joshua made the same suggestion. Their dad responded, “That sounds like a good idea. Let’s try that.” Joseph thought his dad had intentionally ignored him and interpreted the experience as evidence that his dad valued his brother more than him. That conclusion hurt him, forming a part of him that believed a painful and controlling IDENTITY LIE.

This example demonstrates that even the smallest and even unintentional painful experiences can have a profound and negative effect on us. This truth is reflected in a positive way when the Bible says:

**Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it (Proverbs 22:6).**

**Our childhood experiences greatly affect our adult life.**

Of course, many Christians have unfortunately learned that the above Proverb is not an unconditional promise. For example, many Christian parents have raised their children with Christian beliefs and values. But usually because the child does not become a Christian, they very much depart from the training they received as children.

Still, the Bible is teaching a very important principle that is true in some way in everyone's life. Few, if any, people influence your life more than your parents. Even their absence has a profound effect on most children. The fact that parents can have such lasting influence on their children illustrates how deeply past experiences can influence our entire life. Our parents and our childhood experiences greatly affect our adult life. This is reflected in the biblical principle, "*Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it*" (Prov 22:6).

### **A) Scientific evidence of how our past affects our present**

Since the mid 1990's the Center for Disease Control has been conducting a joint research project called the Adverse Childhood Experiences study (ACE).<sup>55</sup> Its purpose has been to determine the lasting effects of a child's environment on adult health and life. Studied factors have included physical and sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, family dysfunction, or having parents who were divorced, mentally ill, addicted, or in prison. Surprisingly, most of those in the study have been white, middle class, well educated, and financially secure individuals. Even so, two thirds of them have reported a painful childhood experience because of dysfunction in their family. Most of them reported multiple experiences.

The researchers have concluded that even though, "traumatic experiences are often lost in time and concealed by shame, secrecy, and social taboo, the impact of trauma pervaded these patients' adult lives." Those with dysfunctional families and childhoods were significantly more likely to experience the following in adulthood: chronic depression, suicide attempts, alcoholism, drug abuse, obesity, unintended pregnancies, multiple sexual partners, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Difficult childhoods were proven to affect adults financially, resulting in higher workplace absenteeism, more financial problems, and lower lifetime income. They also affect people physically. The study demonstrated that emotionally painful experiences in a child's life can even make them significantly more likely to have cancer as an adult. This is more proof of the connection between our emotional and physical health.<sup>56</sup>

A foremost expert on memory, Dr. Daniel Schacter of Harvard University, has written:

What has happened to us in the past determines how we experience our present. . . Even though memory can be highly elusive in some situations and dead wrong in others, it still forms the foundation for our most strongly held beliefs about ourselves. <sup>57</sup>

Likewise, an article in *Psychology Today* helps us understand that even subtle experiences in our childhood can have a negative effect on our adulthood:

The first 5 years of life can be the most powerful force in our development, especially when it comes to attachment. Most of us don't remember much from that period of time even though it is so important.

Myth: Not having bad memories of childhood means it was good.  
Fact: Many of the damaging events and interactions in our early childhood are invisible or very subtle. Our family life may look better than it actually was. A lack of consistent attention, reassurance, comfort, and love through our early years, may be more damaging than one incident of physical abuse. Emotional neglect can exist in families where all physical needs are met. That neglect sets up patterns in how we seek attachment and comfort that are unconscious and may last a lifetime.

A study published in *Child Development*, found that the type of emotional support that a child receives during the first three and a half years has an effect on education, social life, and romantic relationships, even 20 or 30 years later. <sup>58</sup>

Both scientific research and our personal experience has proven this. The ACE study and many others have confirmed that the continuing effects of painful childhood experiences in the lives of adults is by far America's largest public health problem. Sadly, the primary response to all of the emotional problems resulting from it is simply to prescribe people more mood-altering psychological drugs.

Our childhood experiences greatly affect our adult life. This is reflected in the biblical principle, "*Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it*" (Prov 22:6). If you are a mother or father struggling with anger, worry, or depression, it is important to get help, just for the sake of your children. If you grew up in a dysfunctional family, it is important to have an open mind about how that continues to affect you today.

## **B) Christian wisdom regarding how our past affects our present**

While many Christians have denied that our past affects our present, other godly Christians have known better. Writing many years ago, the respected Bible teacher D. M. Lloyd-Jones wrote:

The problem here is the case of those who are miserable Christians or who are suffering from spiritual depression because of their past. . . I would say that in my experience in the ministry, extending now over many years, there is no more common difficulty. It is constantly recurring, and I think that I have had to deal with more people over this particular thing than over anything else.<sup>59</sup>

More recently, the influential Christian counselor David Seamands explains:

In many instances, there can be no true healing and spiritual growth until we are released from painful memories which now interfere with our present feelings and behavior. . .

It's time that we take a closer look at one of the great myths about healing—that time heals all wounds. Time by itself does not and cannot heal those memories which are so painful that the person's mind cannot tolerate them. The evidence shows that such experiences are as alive and as painful ten or twenty years later as they were ten or twenty minutes after they were pushed out of consciousness.

Many of us have hurtful memories which we try to push out of our minds. Such memories cannot be healed by the mere passage of time any more than an infected wound could be. The infection turns inward and actually worsens because it spreads to other areas, affecting and infecting them. So, it is with certain painful experiences, especially those that happen during the important years of early childhood and teenage development.<sup>60</sup>

Likewise, Pastor Scazzero has written of his own personal experience:

When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, whether as a child, teenager, or adult, we are, in the dramatic language of the Bible, born again (John 3:3). The apostle Paul describes it this way: "The old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). . .

But we need to understand this does not mean that our past lives won't continue to influence us in different ways. I was under the illusion for years that because I accepted Jesus, my old life was no longer in me. My past before Christ was painful. I never wanted to look back. I thought I was free. Geri, after nine years of marriage, knew better. . .

Sitting in that counselor's office that day, embarrassed by the state of our marriage, we learned a lesson we would never forget: even though we had been committed Christians for almost twenty years,

our ways of relating mirrored much more our family of origin than the way God intended for his new family in Christ.

The work of growing in Christ does not mean we don't go back to the past as we press ahead to what God has for us. It actually demands we go back in order to break free from unhealthy and destructive patterns that prevent us from loving ourselves and others. . .

Looking to the past illumines the present. But make no mistake about it; it is painful. Because so few people do the hard work of going back in order to go forward, the symptoms of a disconnected spirituality are everywhere. . .

Most of us are resistant to going back and feeling the hurt and pain of our past. It can feel like a black hole or an abyss that might swallow us up. We wonder if it will only make us worse. . .

Our fear of bringing secrets and sin into the light drives many people to prefer the illusion that if they don't think about it, it somehow goes away. It doesn't. Unhealed wounds from the past open us up to habitual sin against God and others. <sup>61</sup>

Dr. Ed Smith also writes:

One common solution for dealing with a painful childhood has been to try to put our past behind us. For those who will be honest about it, it really has not worked very well. . .

Actually, attempting to put our past behind us is a mental process known in psychology as suppression. As well-meaning as people who advocate this practice may be, suppression is not a good or healthy thing to do and eventually takes a toll on those who do it.

People who advocate putting the past behind us are actually emotion suppressors more than memory suppressors. The only reason we would need to put the past behind us is because of what we feel when we think about it. The very fact we find it necessary to suppress a memory or emotional pain suggests it is wielding some force against us that we are having to manage. . .

An obvious problem with putting our past behind us is that it's neurologically and physiologically impossible to do. There is no place to put your past since it is stored and recorded as memory in your mind. If you successfully put your past as far back in your mind as is physically possible, it's never any further than about eleven inches from the tip of your nose (depending on how long your nose may be).

Rather than running from our past that is eleven inches behind us at all times, we need to identify what we are actually running from. Our belief [formed by past experience] is the source of our troubles. <sup>62</sup>

Finally, the respected Christian counselor H. Norman Wright explains:

Our view of ourselves began in infancy. Smiles or frowns, slaps or pats, reaffirming or sarcastic comments from our parents and others

were all filed in our emotional memory banks. These memory banks become our warehouses of beliefs, feelings, and impressions through which we live our life. . .

The mind of our old self has been programmed with our early experiences. . . The image that is formed by the words and actions of others throughout our childhood influences how we see ourselves—as worthy or unworthy of respect and love, competent or useless, likeable or distasteful, successful or a failure. We tend to respond to life according to what is in our memory banks. <sup>63</sup>

And Christians want to suggest you should just forget and ignore your past? How foolish and dangerous! Perhaps the very things you have been trying to forget and run from are the very “*footholds*” (Eph 4:27) from which the Devil’s lies still control you today. You must stop running from Satan and your past, and recognize and renew the deceived parts of you that have been imprinted from past painful experiences, with the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

The Devil laughs at Christians who believe they need not resolve their past. The Devil hides in your past. The Devil imprinted you with lies in your past. If you do not return to those places with the love and truth of Christ, those wounds will continue to affect you. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and He wants to reign over your yesterday, today, and forever. He is not bound by time. He does not want to leave your past under the control of the Devil. If you can boldly face your past you can change your future.

The affect that our past can have on us, especially dysfunction in our childhood, is reflected in the biblical principle, “*Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it*” (Prov 22:6). Our childhood experiences greatly affect our adult life.

### **C) Testimonies that childhood experiences can have powerful and negative effects on our adulthood**

It is understandable to most that significant childhood traumas like sexual abuse can have powerful and negative effects on a person’s adulthood. But the following testimonies help us understand that even the most subtle and unintended experiences can have the same effect.

“One day, I was arguing with friends about the moon. I said the moon was like a small planet. They disagreed. Finally, I called a teacher over to help settle the matter. I KNEW I was right, so I was looking forward to the teacher vindicating me. We asked her if the moon was a planet. She said, “No, the moon is a star.”

Before that, I hadn’t known grown-ups could be wrong. This profoundly shaped the way I viewed people as I grew up. From that point on, I had no respect for authority. To earn my respect, you have to be smart or talented.

I'll never respect you just because you happen to be in charge or have a degree."

"In 6th grade I was punched by a bully. I did not fight back because violence is wrong. I told my dad about it, proud that I took the high road, proud that I had a mature revelation about violence and the importance of alternative resolution methods. But he thought I was being childish and stupid, and he berated me for it. From that day on, I have known that when it comes to paternal guidance and fatherly support, I am completely on my own. I was only 10 but I remember that day because it was the day I 'lost' my father."

"At age 14 I watched my mom give birth to my little sister. I decided that I was never doing that, and I've been happily childfree ever since. Getting fixed this year."

"Through my parents' divorce and alcoholism, I learned these lessons early: I trust few people, never think about the future, and err on the side of caution every time. Life is a long series of hazards to be avoided and inescapable heartbreak."

"I won't talk about specific instances, but the abuse and neglect I experienced as a child has shaped the adult I am. I'm shy, withdrawn and have an extremely low sense of self-esteem. It has been, and will continue to be, a lifelong struggle to overcome my childhood."

"In my first year of high school, I finally managed to ask my crush out on a date. We were both geeky, but I was the more socially inept and outcast one. By lunch, everyone knew about our date. They made fun of her, and laughed at me. She blamed it on me, saying I told everyone, but I hadn't told a soul. The date didn't happen. I found out her best friend is the one who spread it around. They stayed friends, but I was treated like an outcast even more. To this day (years out of college), I haven't had even one relationship."

"I got made fun of a lot in grade school. I used to have to buy my spot at the lunch table, and my nipples were bruised for months because of constant "titty twisters." The experience made me very introverted and untrusting of people. Usually I'm convinced people are trying to make fun of me when they talk to me."

"In kindergarten my teacher noticed that I was reading faster than most of the other kids in class and she spent a lot of time encouraging me to read as much as I could. She even gave me the teachers' edition of one of her books. The teachers' edition! That was a big deal for five-year-old me. I remember being so proud and happy that day. My time in her class still remains one of my favorite childhood memories. I believe her

encouragement was one of the main reasons I am such a rabid reader today.”

“I was overweight in middle school and junior high and was teased mercilessly by several other students. I suffered in silence for a year and a half before finally breaking down and telling my parents that I couldn't take it anymore. Their response? Ignore it and it will go away. I realized then that they weren't going to help me, and I was going to have to deal with it on my own. Which I couldn't. I became shy and bitter and distrustful. It took me a long time to get over that. I'm not really sure I *am* completely over it.”

“To all fathers (and mothers) of boys out there—the ‘boys will be boys’ attitude is a terrible, terrible thing for the younger, smaller brother. No, it didn't toughen me up. It made me into a wimpy, overly-accommodating kid, afraid of all types of confrontation, who decided it was easiest just to avoid other people whenever possible.”

“My parents thought it was really cute that as a little 3-year-old, I'd mispronounce ‘hate’ as ‘hake.’ I went to preschool and I said ‘hake’ one day. One of the kids corrected me, but I insisted the word was ‘hake’ because my mommy and daddy said so. Eventually this escalated into a 3-year-old me, crying and backed against the wall, defending my parents against everyone in the classroom including teachers.

Long story short: because of a detail my parents thought was ‘cute,’ I lost my childhood innocence at an unbelievably early age. I was crushed when they admitted that the word was ‘hate’ not ‘hake’ I realized my parents weren't superhuman, and that in fact, I couldn't trust them. From that moment onwards, I was a different person: suspicious, irreverent, and sarcastic.

It's been decades since I was that little kid, backed against the wall, defending a lie. But to this day, I remember that moment very clearly. It must have been very traumatic since it defined my personality.”

“I was probably 14 or 15, and I was having one of those ‘when I'm a millionaire, I'm going to buy you a house on the beach’ conversations with my mom. My dad walked in, listened for a minute, and said something to the effect of, ‘You don't have the motivation to ever become a millionaire. You're going to go through life doing just enough to make ends meet, because you're too lazy to do otherwise.’ I left the room without saying anything, but I wish I had. 12 years later, it still haunts me. Even though I'm headed in the right direction for me, I always feel like I'm not doing enough, and I constantly beat myself up for being ‘lazy’ and ‘unmotivated.’”

“I think of that one time in woodwork class. I was the geeky, shy guy with the glasses and good grades. I was having a particularly bad period at school, and the ‘tough’ guys in class were pressing all the right buttons that



day. On the verge of sobbing uncontrollably in front of the whole class, all the feelings turned to rage. I swung my still unfinished wooden baseball bat at the back of the head of the leader of the gang--and missed. Afterwards, I was certain that I would have killed him if the blow had hit. I thought myself a horrible person, and the memory still pops up when something really good happens. I immediately think, 'You shouldn't be allowed to have a good time.'"

Parents should take notice of how negative childhood experiences can hurt their children in powerful and lasting ways. It is important that they do their best to protect their children from harmful environments and influences. This may mean pursuing homeschooling, something that is growing in popularity because of how emotionally dangerous public schools have become. In addition, if you have a highly sensitive child it is important to properly diagnose that and respond to it as discussed elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials*.<sup>64</sup>

More important than anything is the need to have an open relationship with your children so you can talk to them about their hurts and help them resolve them with the principles and process you will learn in the *FREEDOM* study.

The affect that our past can have on us, especially dysfunction in our childhood, is reflected in the biblical principle, "*Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it*" (Prov 22:6). Our childhood experiences greatly affect our adult life.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite Ephesians 4:26-27 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize Proverbs 22:6 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ Complete Project D "Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)" Test on the next page. Discuss this with your small group this week.

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<sup>55</sup> The description of the ACE study comes from Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, Kindle edition, 2014), 143-148. If you have any doubts that a person's past can severely affect their present life, read this book, chapters 7-10.

<sup>56</sup> For more on psychosomatic illnesses caused by emotional problems, see Appendix ?

<sup>57</sup> Daniel Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (Basic, 1996), 6-7.

<sup>58</sup> "The Enduring Predictive Significance of Early Maternal Sensitivity," *Psychology Today*, Vol. 86, Issue 3, May/June, 2015, pp. 695-708.

<sup>59</sup> D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures* (Zondervan, Kindle edition), loc. 1029).

<sup>60</sup> David Seamands, *Healing Memories* (David C. Cook, 1986), 24, 34-35

<sup>61</sup> Peter Scazzero, *Emotional Healthy Spirituality* (Zondervan, 2017), 28-29, 101, 109.

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- <sup>62</sup> Ed Smith, location unknown. For further information about the unhealthy results of merely suppressing painful emotions instead of resolving them see section C in both chapter 7 and 8 in *the FRUIT Study*. Also, you can do a Google search for “The Harmful Effects of Suppression.”
- <sup>63</sup> H. Norman Wright, *Making Peace with Your Past* (Revel, 1985), 39, 42.
- <sup>64</sup> The factor of emotional sensitivity is especially important for those with a Highly Sensitive Personality (HSP). For important information on this see the Appendix in *Christian Essentials* study #3: *FAITH*.

## Project D

**Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Test**

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**Circle any of the following 10 statements that describe experiences in your childhood and teen years:**

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1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
4. Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
5. Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
7. Was your mother or stepmother:  
Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

10. Did a household member go to prison?

If you circled any of the above, it may indicate childhood trauma with lasting effects today. Researchers suggest that 4 or more of the above experiences have very significant effects on physical, mental, and emotional health.

However, positive “Resilience Factors” in your childhood can be to offset some of the negative effects of trauma. For a “Resilience Questionnaire” and more information about ACE scores see <https://www.acesconnection.com/blog/got-your-ace-resilience-scores>.

## Chapter 10

**Satan's Influence I: The Source of Your Pain**Psalm 139:23-24

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the different meanings of the Hebrew word *ōtseb*?
- 2) In what ways does a mistreated physical wound illustrate the same for emotional wounds?
- 3) Why does God allow our “pain bubbles” to start leaking? Have you experienced this?
- 4) What is “coping” and what are examples of it?
- 5) What do we mean by “hurting people hurt people”? Have you experienced this?
- 6) What was most meaningful to you in this chapter?

As a young girl, Beth was often harassed and even sexually abused by her older brother. He was controlling, mean, and often angry. Beth's parents seemed unable to protect Beth or control her brother. Therefore, she lived in constant fear whenever she was home. This lasted even into her teen years.

These early experiences imprinted Beth's mind with the lies that 1) The world is a dangerous place and I have to constantly expect bad things to happen; 2) God will not protect me, so I have to protect myself; 3) I must not matter because God will not help me; and 4) I am alone.

These IDENTITY LIES resulted in many painful and sinful things in Beth's life. There was a hurting part of her heart that felt worthless and ashamed. It was like a part of her was stuck in the past, acting and believing like that little abused girl. Now as an adult, when someone was mean to her, it "triggered" all that fear she experienced with her brother. When the pain of her past was "triggered" she sought comfort in eating in unhealthy ways.

Because she did not believe she was secure in God's love, any kind of difficulty caused her mind to think the worst. The scary and painful events of Beth's childhood programmed parts of her mind to react with overwhelming worry when anything happened around her that could be hurtful. She constantly struggled with anxiety. And her worry made her unavailable to those around her as it made her irritable and focused on herself. Beth was experiencing what David was describing when he wrote:

**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 NASB)**

The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause us to be hurt and to hurt others.

### A) The rich meaning of *ōtseb*

David's prayer for spiritual help in the above verse is very rich in meaning. And it provides more biblical support for many of the principles in Renew Ministry. The verse also gives us a diverse description of the results of IDENTITY LIES and Lie Fortresses in the Christian's life.

First, we notice that David is asking God to reveal hidden parts of his heart. He is confessing there are parts of his heart he does not "*know*" and therefore needs God's help to know them and resolve them. This is yet another biblical reference to the subconscious mind. The importance of this biblical concept in Renew Ministry will be discussed further in chapters 14-16.

The second thing we notice in Psalms 139:24 is that David used the word *ōtseb*. This is perhaps the richest word in the Hebrew language, or any other language. It is impossible to translate it with only one English word. The mistake of doing so would seem to be demonstrated in the NCV which simply translates *ōtseb* in Psalm 139:24 as "*bad*."

The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT) illustrates its diverse meaning by defining it as either "sorrow," "wicked," or "idol."<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the ESV "*grievous*" meaning "causing or characterized by severe pain, suffering, or sorrow"<sup>66</sup> is about the best one-word translation available in English. But "*grievous*" is rarely used or clearly understood in common English. David understood *ōtseb* in its full and varied meaning, and so should we.

The root word of *ōtseb* is *āsab* which "relates to physical pain as well as to emotional sorrow. The verb means physical and mental anguish."<sup>67</sup>

*Ōtseb* certainly means “pain” in 1 Chronicles 4:9 where the mother of Jabez says, “*I gave birth to him in pain*” (NIV). However, the pain of *ōtseb* can be that which is inflicted on others. Therefore, in Psalm 139:24 the NASB translates it as “hurtful” (as in possibly hurting others). Perhaps this is what the NIV and NLT translators are trying to convey by using “*offensive*,” although that is unclear.

Also, the *TWOT* states *ōtseb* can also mean “wicked” as is used in the KJV, RSV, TEV, and CEV translations of Psalm 139:24.

And we are not at the end of the potential meaning of *ōtseb*. As noted, the *TWOT* lists “idol” as a possible meaning. Therefore, the NET Bible translates *ōtseb* in Psalm 139:24 as “*idolatrous tendency*.”<sup>68</sup>

Other rich Hebrew words used in Psalm 139:23-24 include *sarappim* and *derek*. The word *sarappim* is only used twice in the OT. It means “disturbing thoughts”<sup>69</sup> and is usually translated “anxious” (cf. Ps 94:19).

In addition, David used the word *derek* which literally means a roadway, but was often used metaphorically to mean habits of behavior.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, in contrast to the painful, hurtful, sinful, and idolatrous “ways” that David asked God to reveal, he asked God to lead him in the “*everlasting way*.” This means the “way of righteousness” which refers elsewhere in the OT to the moral law prescribed by God (cf. Ps 1:6; 27:11; Jer 6:16; 18:15).<sup>71</sup>

In summary, a suggested translation of Psalms 139:23-24 is:

Please God search me and know what is in the hidden places of my heart. Examine me and know my anxious and disturbing thoughts. See if there is any hurting, sad, evil, idolatrous, or offensive habits in me. And lead me in the everlasting way of righteousness.

We will expand on each of these elements of *ōtseb* as part of a further description of how IDENTITY LIES and Lie Fortresses affect our lives. The primary point of this chapter is: **The Devil’s Lie Fortresses cause us to be hurt and to hurt others.**

## **B) Emotional wounds & “pain bubbles”**

David asked God for help with hidden and hurting parts of his heart that were causing negative emotions such as anxiety. He especially describes these parts as being in pain. These are hurting parts because of the IDENTITY LIES they believe as a result of being imprinted during painful experiences. We previously explained this more fully in section 8.A.: “The pain of the past is caused by the lies, not the event.” Physical wounds cause pain and limit the function of a person. So do psychological and emotional wounds.

Imagine you get a cut on your arm. Instead of cleaning it, you simply wrap a bandage around it. Over time the wound gets infected and begins to “leak” nasty stuff. Again, instead of treating the wound properly, you simply

wrap more bandages around it and take more pain medications. This process continues until you cannot use your arm anymore.

We do the same with our emotional wounds. Instead of facing them and their pain, we simply cover them with our shame, anger, and denial. As Dr. Seamands remarks: "What cannot be faced and endured is denied." <sup>72</sup> When those wounds start leaking in the form of anger, worry, or depression, many of us just keep trying to cover it up with medications or more denial. Unfortunately, as Dr. Wright explained, "Stuffing hurt feelings and unresolved conflicts into the subconscious is common, but it keeps them alive." <sup>73</sup>

What is needed for both physical and emotional wounds to heal? Unwrap the bandages that are hiding the wound. Face the ugliness and the pain of the wound. And get it cleaned out so it will heal. This is what the Renew Ministry process will help you do.

When something painful occurs in our life and we do not process it with God, we simply stuff it into our subconscious. God created our mind to do this in order to protect us when we are not capable of correctly processing painful events. This is especially true of children. Dr. Seamands describes the God-given power of the human mind to suppress painful experiences:

People in serious automobile accidents almost never remember the actual moment of impact. That final experience of searing pain is rarely, if ever, within recall. They often remember many things just prior to that moment. They will say, "I could see that we were going to hit that bridge." But they do not remember the experience of going through the windshield. . .

Thank God they don't! Can you imagine what it would be like to go through life with that kind of a painful memory permanently accessed in your mind? Such a person would not be able to maintain sanity. He could not constantly bear the overwhelming pain of the memory. So, God in His mercy has provided a kind of mental and emotional fuse which simply blows itself when the circuits get overloaded. <sup>74</sup>

In the language of the Levels of Spiritual Health explained in the previous *FRUIT* study, God enables us to emotionally cope so we do not experience complete defeat and lack of control. But God wants us to grow into freedom and fruitfulness, not having to expend so much energy to suppress and manage our painful emotions.

No one completely understands the mental, emotional, and neurological process for this suppression. But we do know that it requires a great deal of continuous emotional energy to keep our hurting parts in their hidden places. As one expert on this topic put it, "It takes tremendous energy to keep functioning while carrying the memory of emotional trauma, and the shame of utter weakness and vulnerability." <sup>75</sup>

Dr. Seamands writes:



The harder we try to keep bad memories out of conscious recall, the more powerful they become. Since they are not allowed to enter through the door of our [conscious] minds directly, they surface in our lives in disguised and destructive ways. These denied problems go under water and later reappear as certain kinds of physical illnesses, unhappy marital situations, and recurring cycles of spiritual defeat.<sup>76</sup>

This process of suppression could be compared to a person trying to hold a bunch of balloons under water. With great effort they may succeed for a while. But eventually they get exhausted trying to keep those balloons hidden under that water. And so, the balloons start popping up out of the water exposing themselves.

These wounded parts of our “heart” can also be understood as “pain bubbles.” The subconscious mind is able to encapsulate our painful memories for a time in these “pain bubbles.” But those parts of us that are protecting and suppressing our hurting parts get tired. And the “pain bubbles” start to leak. We have observed that this often begins especially at about 40 years of age. People experience uncontrollable anger, fear, sadness, depression, and even body aches for no discernible reason. The past and pain they have tried to run from and keep pushed down begins to surface. Sometimes these hurting parts in our subconscious mind express themselves in dreams and nightmares.

Normally these controlling emotions are coming from childhood experiences that could not be properly processed when they occurred. We can interpret this “leaking” as God revealing His desire for you to stop running from your past and resolve it with Him. You were not created with the ability to indefinitely carry the pain of your past. By God’s own design, the defensive, protective, and suppressing parts of you begin to break down, “leaking” the negative emotions behind them.

God understands that when you were a child and perhaps did not know His love, the best you could do was suppress what happened. But now that you are an adult Christian, you are able to go back and heal that part of you that was imprinted through a painful experience.

David prayed, *“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”* (Ps 139:23-24 NASB). **The Devil’s Lie Fortresses** cause us to be hurt and to hurt others.

### **C) Sin, idols, & hurting people**

We noted above that David was also praying for God to reveal and resolve sinful, idolatrous, and hurtful parts of him. The parts of us that believe Identity Lies are in pain. It is very painful to believe you are worthless, alone, or hopeless. And the Devil uses that pain to drive us to

sin. In our seeking to relieve our emotional pain apart from God's love, we seek sin. We sin to soothe our inner pain. For example, we deceive ourselves into thinking that anger is a healthy release of feeling bad. Seeking pornography is often simply a desire to relieve our inner emotional pain of feeling worthless, alone, or rejected.

In other words, our internal pain causes us to seek idols. Elsewhere in the Essentials we describe an idol as a deceived way to fulfill our emotional H.A.P.P.I.E.R. needs.<sup>77</sup> One aspect of this idolatry and our effort to suppress our emotional pain is "coping." We discussed this a great deal in the previous study, *FRUIT*.<sup>78</sup> Among other things we wrote:

What will keep us from the kind of emotional honesty and openness that the Psalmist experienced? The power of denial, pride, fear, and shame. But let us add another obstacle here: "Coping." By coping, we mean habits that people form to suppress and manage the effects of the bad feelings and emotional pain occurring inside of them.

Examples of idolatrous "coping" include keeping busy so we don't need to feel. Overeating to feel comfort. Spending hours with entertainment to help us ignore the pain inside of us. Likewise, many approaches to counseling are designed to simply give a person techniques to help them mentally and emotionally cope with unresolved Lie Fortresses.

Dr. Ed Smith writes:

People typically respond to lie-based emotional pain in two ways – blame or distraction. They either blame someone or something for the way they feel; or they do something to distract themselves from their painful emotions. These distractions can include eating "comfort" food, drinking alcohol, having sex, doing church work, and seeking entertainment, etc.

When our solutions for dealing with our emotional pain has to do with changing those around us or our circumstance, we are doomed for failure. Even if we can change locations and get all new relationships, or eat 32 different flavors of ice cream, before very long we will find ourselves experiencing the same bad feelings all over again.

There is a common denominator here, and it is not our location or other people. None of these approaches to pain management address the real cause of our pain, so it remains. The common denominator is our own self and our personal belief system. . .

As long as we try to control what we feel, block it out, distract ourselves from it or blame others for it, we will remain in a cycle of defeat that cannot be resolved.<sup>79</sup>

Dr. Smith gives some helpful examples of both emotional "triggers" and how people might try to "cope" and suppress the pain behind them:

Rachael was again searching through the refrigerator, looking for something to eat. However, she knew that she wasn't even hungry. She had eaten a full meal just an hour before. Nonetheless, something was driving her to eat a slice of cold pizza out of the box she bought the night before. Rachael is triggered and has not yet realized it. Instead, she is managing her pain with another slice of pizza.

John cannot understand why he is unable to break free from the pull to look at scenes on his computer that leave him feeling shameful. It is not what he wants to do, but he just cannot find the power to stop. He hoped that his joining the accountability group at his church would help, but it is just making a liar out of him. There is something that keeps him from walking in the freedom his heart desires. John's emotional pain gets triggered, and his mind automatically defaults to self-pleasuring in order to distract him of his pain.

Frank has had his feelings hurt again. He feels childish because of it, but it hurts nonetheless. He took his Saturday off, and volunteered to paint the rooms in the youth department at the church. Sunday morning the youth pastor acknowledged several people who had also helped out, but completely overlooked Frank. Several things are at play here. First, Frank's motive to help out became exposed when his work was not recognized. Secondly, he was triggered by his own lie-based belief that was exposed in the moment.

Kaitlyn has run up a major debt with her college loans and they are coming due. Because of her limited income, she has no idea how she will make the payments. She believes the Bible verse that says, "God will supply all of your needs" is true, but she is filled with worry and anxiety. She tries hard to stay focused on what the Bible promises, but any time that she thinks about her indebtedness, she gets triggered and her fears stir up.<sup>80</sup>

Along the same lines, Pastor Scazzero writes:

In our culture, addiction has become the most common way to deal with [emotional] pain. We watch television incessantly. We keep busy, running from one activity to another. We work seventy hours a week, indulge in pornography, overeat, drink alcohol, take pills—anything to help us avoid the pain. Some of us demand that someone or something (a marriage, sexual partner, an ideal family, children, achievement, a career, or a church) take away our sense of being worthless and alone.<sup>81</sup>

And until such people feel the freedom to face their emotional pain, it will not be resolved. Perhaps David recognized something similar in his life and it was one reason he prayed, "*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*" (Ps 139:23-24 NASB).

Finally, we noted above that David was not only talking about hurting parts, but “*hurtful*” parts that are hurting others. The Lie Fortresses within us produce all kinds of things that hurt others like anger and addictions. One counselor described a Lie Fortress as “festered memories that are poisoning your inner life and outer relationships with others.”<sup>82</sup> HURTING PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE. Sometimes our own experience of emotional pain leads us to get help. But some finally seek counseling because of the effect their “*hurtful*” parts are having on their spouse or children.

David realized that unresolved sinful, idolatrous, and hurtful powers were lurking in hidden parts of his heart. Therefore, he prayed: “*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*” (Ps 139:23-24 NASB). The Devil’s Lie Fortresses cause us to be hurt and to hurt others.

- Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- Recite Proverbs 22:6 from memory.
- Memorize Psalm 139:23-24 in the translation above or another one.
- Read the next chapter to prepare for your small group this week.

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<sup>65</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)*, Bruce K. Waltke et. al. editor (Moody, 1980), 687-88.

<sup>66</sup> *Webster’s*.

<sup>67</sup> *TWOT*, 687-88.

<sup>68</sup> Likewise, the *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT)* argues that *ōtseb* should be translated as “idolatrous” in Psalm 139:24. This is also the view of L. C. Allen in his commentary (*Psalms* 101-150, *Word Biblical Commentary*, revised [Zondervan, 2014], 253).

<sup>69</sup> *Brown-Driver-Briggs*.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>71</sup> For support of understanding “everlasting way” as “the way of righteousness” see Keil and Delitzsch and Allen, *Psalms*, 253.

<sup>72</sup> David Seamands, *Healing Memories* (Victor, 1985), 35.

<sup>73</sup> H. Norman Wright, *Making Peace with Your Past* (Revel, 1985), 65.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>75</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, Kindle edition, 2014), 2.

<sup>76</sup> Seamands, 34-35, 38-39.

<sup>77</sup> See applicable parts of *Christian Essentials* study FAITH.

<sup>78</sup> The *FRUIT Study*, section 7.C.

<sup>79</sup> Ed Smith and Joshua Smith, “Triggered, Triggered, Triggered,” online at <http://www.transformationprayer.org/triggered-triggered-triggered>.

<sup>80</sup> Ed Smith and Joshua Smith, “Becoming Aware of our Triggers.”

<sup>81</sup> Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Zondervan, 2006), 139.

<sup>82</sup> Seamands, 11.

## Chapter 11

**Satan's Influence II: The Power of Your Pain**Psalm 139:23-24

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
  - ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
- 1) Why is it helpful to understand that parts of you may be stuck in painful past events? Have you experienced this?
  - 2) What is an emotional “trigger”? What are examples of this? How have you experienced this?
  - 3) Why do distorted “filters” form in our perception of events and people? How have you experienced this?
  - 4) What was especially meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

David prayed:

**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. (Ps 139:23-24 NASB)**

The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause stunted growth, sinful triggers, and distorted perception.

**A) Parts stuck in the past**

We have used Psalm 139:23-24 to provide a biblical description of how Lie Fortresses, and the Identity Lie within them, influence our life. There are other ways as well. One of these is that painful events leave a part of us “stuck in the past.”

We have explained that when painful events occur, especially in our childhood, they can imprint us with painful lies. Instead of resolving these, we suppress and “wall off” these parts of us to keep them from affecting us. By doing so, we essentially leave these parts in the past. As noted, many of

these parts get imprinted in our childhood. Therefore, they can still feel, act, and think like a child.

Of course, many secular counselors have abused this idea of an “inner child.” But it is foolish to discount any value in this concept because there is helpful truth in it for many. Accordingly, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, a respected and foremost expert on childhood trauma writes:

Abused children are likely to grow up believing that they are fundamentally unlovable; that was the only way their young minds could explain why they were treated so badly. They survive by denying, ignoring, and splitting off large chunks of reality. They forget the abuse; they suppress their rage or despair; they numb their physical sensations.

If you were abused as a child, you are likely to have a childlike part living inside you that is frozen in time, still holding fast to this kind of self-loathing and denial.<sup>83</sup>

Likewise, an influential Christian counselor explains:

Somewhere, sometime, you were a child. Although you don't remember all the details of your childhood, the child and teenager you once were is still important to you today, because they continue to live in you. The hidden child of your past is probably very much alive in you and affects everything you do, for good or for bad. . .

You cannot cut yourself off from your history. . . Many of the most important threads in the complex design of who you are were introduced in your childhood, especially in your relationship with your parents.

The hidden child within you can be a determining factor in your life. . . In some people . . . they interfere with present adult life. They hurt and destroy the most meaningful relationships. Or perhaps your inner child is so timid, fearful, defeated, and self-despising that no matter how much you want to, you just can't force yourself to make friends, or speak up when you have an opinion to express, or handle heavy responsibility. The hidden child of your past may keep you from becoming the person you have the potential of being. . .

Because of the power wielded by your inner child, it is essential that you know this part of yourself. . . As you discover where this hidden child of your past is defeating you, you can defeat them. You can break their destructive power over you so that you will be free to grow up in Christ into the perfect love which will make you a victorious, mature, and fruit-bearing Christian. . .

My experience is that the inner child of the past which most needs healing is usually one of four kinds: the hurting child, the hating child, the humiliated child, or the horrified child.<sup>84</sup>

It will be helpful to recognize a hurting little boy or girl in you. Perhaps you have tried to ignore them your entire life. You don't like them. But they need your help. Now as the adult you, you can go back and help the little you understand the freeing truth of God's love that they did not experience before. Renew Ministry will help you do this. In fact, many people going through Renew Ministry feel like they are "growing up on the inside," feeling more and more like an adult instead of a child.

Perhaps David recognized something similar in his life and it was one reason he prayed, *"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"* (Ps 139:23-24 NASB). *The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause stunted growth, sinful triggers, and distorted perception.*

## B) "Triggers"

We have introduced the concept of emotional "triggers" in previous chapters. These are events in life that habitually cause us to be "out of the Spirit" and controlled by our sinful nature.

These "triggers" occur because of our mind's ability for "association." Dr. Ed Smith explains:

Emotional overload occurs when a painful situation in the present is inundated with old pain. This causes the current situation to feel more painful than it should. When we experience emotional overload, our emotional response will be more intense than the situation warrants. For example, if someone takes our parking place our emotional response might call for some mild irritation, but not rage. The rage is coming from somewhere else. . .

This happens because God created our minds to work by way of association. Any time someone says or does something that consciously or subconsciously reminds us of a similar situation in our past, our mind brings this information forward and we feel what we felt the first time it happened.<sup>85</sup>

Likewise, Dr. Seamands writes:

Christians are particularly confused when they "take it out" on someone nearby—a spouse or a child they dearly love. This, in turn, fills them with remorse, guilt, and spiritual defeat. They are further bewildered because they can't figure out where it all comes from. Most likely they unwittingly drilled into some ancient and untapped river of resentment which, like a sudden oil strike, "blew" up. When this keeps happening and doesn't seem to be helped by typical Christian disciplines, we should look for the causes in the pressure and pain of unhealed past events.<sup>86</sup>

For example, perhaps as a child someone did something to you that made you very angry. You did not forgive them, and a place of anger

remains in you (cf. Eph 4:26-27). As a result, if someone else even years later, does or says something similar to you, your mind makes an association with what happened years ago. The current event “triggers” your mind to connect to the place you have stored anger for a similar reason in the past. And out comes the stored up anger, far greater than what the current event calls for.

This is why we have referred to emotional wounds as a “hook in your heart.” Something the world, flesh, and the Devil can yank on in the right circumstances and lead you where they want you to go. One person described Lie Fortresses as: “They live in me like underground water; every well I put down taps them.” Indeed, the anger and fear coming from emotional wounds can exist under the surface of our consciousness, but be “tapped” by a related experience in the present.

The Devil uses this natural ability of association to control us. We use it in Renew Ministry to connect with Hurting Parts so we can reveal the Identity Lie they believe and set them free.

Dr. Smith shares the traumatic experience of being interrogated by a police officer in the investigation of a crime when he was in middle school. He writes:

Something would happen in my adult life which would “trigger me” and I would then feel fearful, worthless, abandoned, and alone [like he felt with the police officer]. There were later other times in my life when someone would question me in a direct, “interrogative” tone, and I would immediately feel like a twelve-year-old boy sitting under the lights in the school office being yelled at by that “giant” police officer. Whenever I revisited those memories, I always felt bad. I knew the truth logically and intellectually, but my heart belief was contrary to my intellectual belief, and affected me a great deal.<sup>87</sup>

Perhaps David recognized something similar in his life and it was one reason he prayed, *“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”* (Ps 139:23-24 NASB). The Devil’s Lie Fortresses cause stunted growth, sinful triggers, and distorted perception.

### C) Filters

Can you think of someone who does not like you? Someone who has ended a friendship or marriage with you. Or someone who has criticized you, like a boss or work mate? If you’re married, think about the last time your spouse was hurt by you. As you think about these examples, ask yourself this question: How often have these things happened because someone simply misunderstood your words, actions, or intentions? They totally missed what you were trying to say or do, and therefore, they totally miss who you really are.



The people who know you the best, like you the best. They know about your faults, weaknesses, and sin, but predominantly see the good in you, and therefore like you. So why don't those other people like you? They have filters about you. This is not meant to ignore the real faults in our lives. But it is a fact that most bad impressions of us, and therefore most of our broken relationships, are caused by people misinterpreting us because of distorting filters in their own life.

This reminds us of the Apostle Paul's experience. After many years of sacrificial, Christ-like ministry in Asia, he wrote one of the most shocking statements in the Bible: *"everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me"* (2 Tim 1:15). How could this be? A man who rightfully said, *"you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ"* (1 Cor 11:1). The Apostle Paul was one of the best examples of Jesus Christ Himself who walked the Earth. And yet, all of those Christians in Asia deserted him, and apparently wanted nothing to do with him.

Why did that happen? Was it because Paul was such a bad guy? No. It was because all those Christians had distorted and darkened filters about the Apostle. And we often have the same problem with how we interpret the people and events in our life. These filters are distorted and do not allow us to see people and events as they really are. Worse, these filters are darkened because they make you see people and events as worse than they really are. And all of this results in these filters being demonic because they destroy relationships and serve the Devil's purposes.

These filters are among the most powerful tools of the Devil in our lives because they cause us to believe lies about people, and lies are the source of his power over us. It did not matter how godly, kind, loving, and holy Paul was toward the Christians in Ephesus. Their distorted and darkened filters were going to make them view the Apostle as a bad person who needed to be rejected and deserted.

These distorted and darkened filters about people and events are another result of Lie Fortresses in our mind. They are what Jesus was referring to when he warned us of "planks in our eye." Jesus taught:

*And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? <sup>4</sup> How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye. (Matt 7:3-5)*

Jesus warned us about anything that seriously distorts our perception of people and events around us. These darkened filters cause us to falsely imagine things in others' lives that need to be corrected. Jesus called this hypocrisy. This is because your distorting and darkened filter toward that person is more sinful and destructive than whatever "speck" might actually be in the other person's life. Your "log" causes you to hypocritically

exaggerate whatever might be wrong with another person, but diminish what is actually wrong with you. The hypocrisy is even greater because the “*speck of sawdust*” (NIV) you are offended by, is often made of the same substance as the “log” in your own eye. In other words, we are especially biased against sins and weaknesses in the lives of others, that are actually even more of a problem in our own life. This bias enables us to experience the “pleasure” and pride of self-righteousness, without the pain of humble self-evaluation and repentance.

Therefore, people with filters are in constant conflict with people. And even worse, they are often not able to reconcile with people who have offended them because they will not be able to see the truth. Literally imagine someone with a log sticking out of their eye trying to take a speck out of another’s eye. People would be hurt, not helped. Likewise, trying to reconcile with people who have distorting and darkened filters about you, will often prove to damage the relationship further. Jesus said the only way that people with filters are going to see things rightly is if they “*first get rid of the log in [their] own eye.*” People with “logs in their eyes” cannot correctly interpret what you do, even if it is good.

Jesus described this dangerous state of mental insanity when earlier in the same sermon He warned:

*“Your eye [perception] is like a lamp that provides light [truth] for your body [and whole life]. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness [deception]. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is! (Matt 6:22-23)*

Why did Jesus warn us so strongly about “logs in our eyes” and having “darkened eyesight”? Because if this describes you, you are in a very destructive and dangerous situation. You are spiritually, emotionally, and mentally blind, living in spiritual, emotional, and mental darkness, just like a blind person experiences physical darkness every minute of every day. You are right where the Devil wants you. He seeks to steal, kill, and destroy your life (cf. John 10:10), and this is one of the primary ways he does it. Because if you suffer from distorted and darkened filters about people and events, you are even deceived about being deceived. “*And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!*”

Sometimes our distorted and darkened filters about someone are inflicted on us because we listened to distorted, darkened, and demonic gossip and slander. This is why gossip and slander are in lists of the worst sins in Scripture (cf. Prov 18:8; Matt 15:19; 2 Cor 12:20; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; James 4:11; 1 Pet 2:1; Rev 13:6.). When we speak negatively about other people, we are usually doing the Devil’s work in inflicting others with distorting, darkened, and demonic filters about other people.

These filters also often form the same way any Lie Fortress does: experiencing painful people and events. Perhaps someone's father was rather mean, and they learned to never trust him because he constantly disappointed them. Such a person will probably view all future authority figures with suspicion, even if they are good people. If your first spouse regularly disrespected you, your sinful nature learned this, and it now expects your new spouse to do the same, and regularly falsely interprets them that way. Dr. van der Kolk writes:

Being traumatized means continuing to organize your life as if the trauma were still going on—unchanged and immutable—as every new encounter or event is contaminated by the past.<sup>88</sup>

Likewise, Dr. Ed Smith shares:

If we believe a lie, the consequences will be much the same as if it were true. In a sense we create our own reality based upon our belief. We have all heard the saying that “seeing is believing,” but the truth is “believing is seeing.” What we believe with our hearts will greatly impact what we “see” and experience. We will “see” whatever we believe. This is partially due to the emotions that come from believing the lies, and how these emotions heavily impact the choices we make.

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How do we pull distorting logs out of our own eyes? How do we heal darkened eyesight and perception of people and events? First, we need to humble ourselves to admit that we, like most humans, have these distorting filters in our life. We ask again, how many times have you offended people and it was because they misunderstood your words, actions, or intentions? A lot, right? People with “logs” in their “eyes” need to humble themselves enough to admit the same is true for them. The vast majority of the time they are being offended is because of their distorted and darkened filters, not because people are actually doing, thinking, or intending what they falsely imagine.

Secondly, people with “darkened eyes” need to forgive the people who have offended them, regardless if they misunderstood their actions or not. A lot of the “logs in our eyes” that Jesus warned us about are made of unforgiveness.

Finally, we need to renew our minds, and heal the emotional wounds causing our filters. Thankfully, Renew Ministry has repeatedly proven to effectively do all of these things.

Perhaps David recognized distorting, darkened, and demonic filters operating in his life, and it was one reason he prayed, “*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*” (Ps 139:23-24 NASB). The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause stunted growth, sinful triggers, and distorted perception.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite Psalm 139:23-24 from memory.
- ▶ Meet with your small group this week to discuss chapter 10-11.

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<sup>83</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, 2014, Kindle ed.), 279.

<sup>84</sup> David Seamands, *Putting Away Childish Things* (Victor, 1988), 9-10, 22. Other respected sources of helping people change their lives and recover from painful events agree that the concept of an “inner child” is helpful. One source for the principles and process of Renew Ministry is Internal Family Systems Therapy, as explained in Appendix ? This approach to counseling recognizes wounded inner child subpersonalities as “exiles” because they tend to be excluded from conscious thought in order to avoid/defend against the pain carried in the memories that formed them.

Likewise, the organization of Adult Children of Alcoholics has helped a great number of people overcome the effects of abuse. Their experience has demonstrated that “healing the inner child” is one of the essential stages of recovery from addictions, abuse, and psychological trauma, including post-traumatic distress disorder.

<sup>85</sup> Ed Smith, *Healing Life’s Hurts* (New Creation, 2005), 73, 76.

<sup>86</sup> David Seamands, *Healing of Memories* (Victor, 1985), 172.

<sup>87</sup> Ed Smith at <http://www.transformationprayer.org/belief-series-part-10-the-role-of-memory-and-core-belief>.

<sup>88</sup> van der Kolk, 53.

<sup>89</sup> Ed Smith, *Essentials of Transformation Prayer Ministry*, 182.

## Chapter 12

**Satan's Defenses I: Guarding Parts**2 Timothy 2:25-26

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) How do we describe a Guarding Part?
- 2) How are Guarding Parts formed?
- 3) What is the ONE thing that will help you recognize a Guarding Part is operating in a Renew Ministry session?
- 4) What are some examples of how Guarding Parts might affect you? Have you experienced any of these?
- 5) What was most meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

Lisa was a mature Christian. But was struggling with a number of negative emotions. As she was going through Renew Ministry, her Helper noticed the sessions being slowed down by Lisa's desire to analyze and evaluate her thoughts. Before Lisa answered a question, she wanted to make sure it was the “right” answer.

When the Helper pointed out that this was probably a Guarding Part interfering with the process, she was shocked. But in a Renew Ministry session the lies empowering this analytical and skeptical part of Lisa were revealed and resolved.

The day after she was asked how this affected her life. She wrote: “I can't tell you how quiet my brain is today. I've even tried to analyze things but to

no avail. Unbelievable! Truth be told, I feel a little bit like I don't have anything to do if my brain is not working constantly. It's a weird feeling."

Lisa's "analyzing" had been such a large part of her for so long that she thought it was just her personality. She had never considered it was a Guarding Part that was constantly quenching the Spirit in her life. What this part of Lisa needed was how Paul instructed us to deal with deceived people:

**Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants. (2 Timothy 2:25-26)**

Guarding Parts often surround a Lie Fortress in our mind and must be resolved.

## **A) Understanding Guarding Parts**

Guarding Parts are places in your mind that have been working to help you cope with the emotional pain inside of you. They have helped you suppress, deny, or be distracted from these painful emotions like feeling worthless or alone.

Guarding Parts are usually formed in childhood to help us cope with painful events that we are unable to properly process at the time. When we are children, creating a defensive wall to shield us from pain can serve as one of God's great gifts to us. If someone suffers emotional or sexual abuse as a young child, denial of the assault on them provides a healthy survival mechanism. Blocking out the pain enables them to endure such painful circumstances. It is helpful to not fully experience painful realities when we are that young so that we survive emotionally.

Therefore, Guarding Parts have performed a God-ordained and helpful function to keep us "going" in spite of all the emotional and spiritual wounds we carry. But the Devil has perverted them to serve his purposes. Guarding Parts are deceived. They have no relationship with God. In reality, they are powers of your sinful nature and will power. They cause powerful feelings of anger, fear, shame, and doubt. The Devil uses our Guarding Parts as the protective "wall" around the Lie Fortresses within us. These walls of anger, fear, shame, and doubt keep us from recognizing, revealing, and resolving the IDENTITY LIES in our Lie Fortresses.

Our anger, fear, and emotionally shutting down were ways we learned to protect ourselves and cope with painful events and feelings. But these same Guarding Parts now keep you from being connected to, and controlled by, God and His Spirit in you. Jesus Christ wants to replace or renew these Guarding Parts with His love and truth. He wants to be your

protector now, and protect you from painful Identity Liew with His truth instead of past coping mechanisms.

Therefore, the text above has much to say that applies to Guarding Parts. The passage is referring to people who “*have been held captive*” by the Devil. In working with Guarding Parts for many years, we have discovered that they act much like a personality within people. Therefore, they are like a part of your personality that has “*been held captive*” by the lies of the Devil and needs to be freed with the truth and love of Christ.

While Guarding Parts have served a function, they are working independently from God and are deceived about Christ’s love and power. They need to “*learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap*” (2 Tim 2:25-26). Jesus wants to redeem our Guarding Parts to serve His purposes instead of the Devil’s. He wants them set free with the truth of His love, instead of being in bondage to lies.

Many professional and Christian counselors have recognized the need to resolve Guarding Parts in people in order to help them “*be transformed by the renewing of [their] mind*” (Rom 12:2 NIV). H. Norman Wright explains:

The healing of an intensely painful memory is difficult because of the defenses we have built around it to keep us from directly confronting that ghost from the past. In our minds we build a wall to keep the enemy out, but we end up keeping others away from us as well.

This limits us from enjoying deep intimacy, trust, and love. Building the wall does not make our castle more secure, rather it turns our sanctuary into a lonely dungeon. To heal our hurts of the past, we must lower the wall by giving up our defense mechanisms and confronting the painful memories.<sup>90</sup>

Likewise, Dr. van der Kolk describes a foremost example of how Guarding Parts work:

One of the hardest things for traumatized people is to confront their shame about the way they behaved during a traumatic episode. . . In later years I encountered a similar phenomenon in victims of child abuse: Most of them suffer from agonizing shame about the actions they took to survive and maintain a connection with the person who abused them. This was particularly true if the abuser was someone close to the child, someone the child depended on, as is so often the case. . .

Just as we need to revisit traumatic memories in order to integrate them, we need to revisit the parts of ourselves that developed the defensive habits that helped us to survive.<sup>91</sup>

Dr. Seamands mentions guilt as a common Guarding Part:

One of the reasons that painful memories can cause such disruption in our lives is that they usually contain many negative emotions, such as fear, hurt, anger, guilt, shame, and anxiety. Again, and again these feelings arise and we wonder where they are coming from. We feel confused because we are unable to pinpoint the cause of the feelings. This makes us feel guilty, because “Christians are not supposed to have such feelings.” So, we not only have the problem, but we double back on ourselves with added guilt for ever having the problem.<sup>92</sup>

And the Guarding Part causing guilt keeps us from resolving the lies and pain that the guilt is protecting.

Such deceived parts of us require that we minister to them in the way the Bible instructs us to minister to deceived people: *“Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.”* (2 Tim 2:25-26). Guarding Parts often surround a Lie Fortress in our mind and must be resolved.

## B) Recognizing Guarding Parts

Recognizing Guarding Parts in a Renew Ministry session is important. If they are not recognized and resolved they will not allow you to access the hidden, hurting, and deceived parts in your mind that need healing and renewal. In fact, the most difficult part of Renew Ministry is recognizing and resolving Guarding Parts.

Where do we begin? As will be demonstrated below, there are many, many different kinds of Guarding Parts. So, what is the best way to detect them? Just remember that all Guarding Parts will present themselves in this one way: RESISTANCE to answering a question. A Renew Ministry session is simply comprised of going through some prescribed questions. The most common ones are “How did that make this part of you feel?” and “Why did this part of you feel that way?” Whenever you experience resistance or hesitation or distraction from answer such questions, you have encountered a Guarding Part. RESISTANCE to talking about feelings, revisiting your past, or revealing painful beliefs, are the consistent signs of a Guarding Part operating.

This is because virtually all Guarding Parts are AFRAID in some way. They may present themselves in various ways, but usually their underlying emotion is FEAR. A sense of wanting to flee or hide or otherwise avoid ministering to the hurting and hidden parts of your heart.

That strong desire to avoid the pain manifests itself in too many ways to define and describe them all here. But we can offer six different categories that sufficiently include them. The following examples should



help equip you to cooperate with your Renew Ministry Helper in recognizing and resolving your Guarding Parts.

### **1) Blocking normal mental processing**

First, and most difficult, are the Guarding Parts that block normal mental processing. These hinder people in thinking clearly and include doubting, skeptical, critical, analytical, confused, and exhausted parts.

Doubting, skeptical, and confused parts are among the most powerful Guarding Parts. They make people uncertain they are even able to process truth. But doubting that you can process truth is like doubting you can breathe. God created you to process truth just like He created you to process oxygen because you need both of these functions.

Many Renew Ministry Recipients have struggled with the thought: “I feel like this process is not going to work for me. I know people who have been greatly helped by it. But it will not work for me because there is something wrong with me that will keep me from doing or understanding what I need to.” This is a Guarding Part that causes a person to even believe they can sufficiently function mentally.

Doubting parts may prompt the question, “Am I just imagining all of this?” including the feelings, lies, visual thoughts, and memories that might be encountered in a Renew Ministry session.

The effects of Guarding Parts that block mental processing during a Renew Ministry session include racing or distracted thoughts, rambling in answer to questions, or responding with “I don’t know.” Likewise, long pauses when a question is asked, often demonstrate such a Guarding Part at work. Some Guarding Parts even make a Recipient feel very sleepy or mentally foggy during the session. All of these are simply RESISTANCE to processing painful feelings and lies in a Renew Ministry session.

### **2) Blocking openness**

Secondly, there are Guarding Parts that block openness with the Renew Ministry Helper. These make the Recipient feel very self-conscious about the process because they want to please the Helper and not be judged or rejected by them. These parts usually deceive us into thinking they help us be “self-aware” and to be more accepted and effective in relationships. But in reality, these parts are often working constantly to monitor people’s reactions to us so that we can talk or act in such a way as to please them. They never let you relax around people.

The effects of Guarding Parts that block openness during a Renew Ministry session include fearing that the Helper will not like you, or even reject you, if they know your problems. There is a temptation to believe you can handle your problems on your own, or they are not that bad to need help, because there is something bad or embarrassing about people who need help.

Again, these parts are motivated to please people instead of God. That includes pleasing the Helper. One Renew Ministry Recipient described his struggle with such Guarding Parts:

Some parts of me felt like “Those situations were not a big deal. I was and am just fine.” I regularly asked myself, “Am I wasting [my Helper’s] time trying to work through things when I do not even need to?” I respected and appreciated [my Helper] so much that I wanted the process to work for their sake, so that they would not be disappointed.

Such thinking will never allow you to recognize and resolve hurting and controlling parts of you. We simply address such concerns about the Helper by directing the Recipient to Jesus and asking, “What would Jesus say to you about your concerns about what I might think of you?” Recognizing the true answer to that question usually helps to resolve the effect of a Guarding Part blocking openness.

### 3) Anger

A third and common Guarding Part reveals itself as anger or even frustration. The feeling of frustration can be directed at the process itself. Angry Guarding Parts believe that anger can help keep us safe, give us control over our circumstances, or punish people for how they hurt us. Of course, for the Christian, none of these things are true. The Bible says, “*Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger*” (Eph 4:31) because, “*Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires*” (James 1:20).<sup>93</sup>

Common lies that empower angry parts include beliefs such as: “My anger protects me from being hurt again,” “Anger puts me in control,” “If I let my anger go, then they will get by with what they did to me.”

Angry parts are often blaming others for their problems and pain. But as we have pointed out elsewhere in the *Essentials*,<sup>94</sup> no one ever makes us feel anything. We feel hurt or mad because of what we believe, not what people do. As Dr. Wright put it, “Blaming parents or others for our problems is an excellent way to rid ourselves of responsibility. However, it will not rid us of the emotional pain we are experiencing.”<sup>95</sup>

Some angry parts want justice for what happened to them. They produce interfering thoughts about their circumstance being “wrong” or “unfair.”

Angry parts often turn their anger against our Hurting Parts. A common thought is “This is stupid.” Our angry parts can be accusing and condemning of our Hurting Parts.

Other feelings produced by angry parts include feeling: self-hate, hate toward others, stubborn, shame, critical, and judgmental.

#### 4) Logic

Remember that what makes Renew Ministry effective is that we are ministering to a part of your heart that is not normally reached. It is essential that you stay focused on the lies that your subconscious/emotional mind believes. Because these lies are painful, many are tempted to engage their logical mind to distract them. A common reply is, “I know this is a lie,” or “I shouldn’t be feeling this way,” or “they really didn’t mean to hurt me.” All those things may be true, but you have to embrace the deceived part of you that does believe those things. The interference of logic often results in ANALYZING everything to protect ourselves, as Lisa was doing in the testimony at the beginning of this chapter. A common example of this is thinking: “I have to figure this out on my own before the session so I don’t look stupid.”

Dr. Seamands writes of the need to stay engaged with the hurting and deceived part of our mind, instead of reverting to logic:

I want to stress the importance of tapping into these submerged feelings [coming from our Lie Fortresses]. Many people are terribly afraid of doing this. Fearing they will lose control of their emotions, they keep it all on a head level, always wanting to analyze. . . .

Our negative feelings and false identities need to be owned before they can be disowned. . . . It’s amazing how tenaciously people will deny their feelings because ‘Christians are not supposed to feel that way, especially not Spirit-filled Christians.’ This is denying reality and is a form of dishonesty. Until it is brought up and out into the light, it cannot be healed by the One who is called the Spirit of Truth.

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#### 5) Suppressing negative and sinful emotions

A fourth and very common kind of Guarding Part is those that suppress negative emotions. When they are interfering in a Renew Ministry session, the Recipient might say, “My emotions just went away” or “I stopped feeling anything.” The Recipient might report feeling “invisible” or “frozen.” In general, such a Guarding Part will cause the Recipient to feel very uncomfortable about recognizing, admitting, describing, or resolving their painful and sinful emotions.

Along these lines, Pastor Pete Scazerro shares:

I meet many people afraid to feel; they are worried it will unleash a torrent of negative thoughts from within themselves. They are fearful that rage, hate, bitterness, sadness, or self-doubt will erupt. Perhaps that’s true.

But an amazing by-product of the emotional health journey is a fresh discovery of the mercy of God in the gospel. Not only does God not reject or punish us for being honest and transparent about ourselves, but he actually loves and accepts us where we are. We are

anchored in God's love as he gives us permission to express ourselves—the bad along with the good—in order to help us grow. . .

I remember the awkwardness when I began to be honest about my feelings. Initially I wondered if I was being sinful. I was breaking an unspoken commandment of my family and my church tradition. I also feared that if I opened Pandora's box, I would get lost in a black hole of unresolved emotions.

To my surprise, God was able to handle my wild emotions as they erupted after thirty-six years of stuffing them. I came alive like never before. And I rediscovered God's love and grace—much like David, Job, and Jeremiah. I also began the journey to know myself so that I might know God.<sup>97</sup>

Common lies and even responses in a Renew Ministry session that reflect Guarding Parts blocking emotion include:

"I am not very good at feelings. I'm more about doing."

"It is sinful to express sinful feelings."

"I don't know what I'm feeling. It's all a big blur."

"Emotions disorganize and confuse me."

"Digging around in my feelings could make things worse, not better."

"If I allow myself to feel what is inside of me it will overwhelm me, and I will lose control over it."

"Not feeling protects me."

"Not feeling protects others."

"If I allow myself to feel what happened, then it will somehow make it true."

All of these lies empower Guarding Parts that block the recognition, understanding, and resolution of negative and sinful emotions, which is essential to renewing the hidden and hurting parts of our mind.<sup>98</sup>

## **6) Blocking painful memories**

Finally, there are Guarding Parts that block painful memories. Recalling painful events where Lie Fortresses and IDENTITY LIES were formed is usually very helpful in understanding and resolving them. But again, many people have spent years trying to run from their past instead of resolving it. And these Guarding Parts have enabled them to do that.

Common lies and responses in a Renew Ministry session that reflect Guarding Parts blocking memories include:

"Not remembering what happened keeps me from knowing what I don't want to know."

"What good will all this remembering of my childhood and my parents' mistakes really do?"

“If I remember what happened to me, the pain will be too much for me to handle.”

“If I remember what happened to me, it might prove that it really happened.”

“If I remember what my mom did, it might affect my relationship with her.”

“What happened to me really wasn’t that bad, I shouldn’t be feeling so strongly about it.”

“My brother got hurt a lot worse than I did.”

“If I go back there, I will get stuck there.”

“If I go back there, I will die.”

The RESISTANCE coming from such Guarding Parts requires us to pause in a Renew Ministry session, take a step back, and gently resolve them in much the same way Paul told us to minister to deceived people: *“Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants. (2 Timothy 2:25-26). Guarding Parts often surround a Lie Fortress in our mind and must be resolved.*

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite Psalm 139:23-24 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize 2 Timothy 2:25-26 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ Read the next chapter to prepare for your small group this week.

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<sup>90</sup> H. Norman Wright, *Making Peace with Your Past* (Revel, 1985), 41

<sup>91</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin. Kindle edition), 13-14, 279-280

<sup>92</sup> David Seamands, *Healing Memories* (Victor, 1985), 71-2.

<sup>93</sup> For more on the sin of anger see *the FRUIT study*, chapter 11.

<sup>94</sup> For more on the fact that “no one makes us mad” see chapter 5 in *the FRUIT Study*.

<sup>95</sup> Wright, 22.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 129, 135.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Scazzerro, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Zondervan, 2010), 54, 72.

<sup>98</sup> For more on God’s desire for us to be open with Him and others about our emotions see chapter on “Openness with God” in *Christian Essentials study #2 FOUNDATIONS*.

## Chapter 13

**Satan's Defenses II: Guarding Parts & God Lies**Ephesians 6:14

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
  - ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
- 1) How can Guarding Parts harm us psychologically, spiritually, and physically?
  - 2) How do Guarding Parts keep us from getting help with spiritual and emotional struggles?
  - 3) How do Guarding Parts hinder progress in a Renew Ministry session?
  - 4) How can a Renew Ministry Recipient assist the Helper in recognizing a Guarding Part is interfering with the session?
  - 5) What needs to be our response to Guarding Parts?
  - 6) What is the effect of God Lies?
  - 7) How are God Lies usually created?
  - 8) What was most meaningful to you about this chapter? Why?

Jim was struggling. Anger, discouragement, and lust regularly threatened to control his life and destroy his marriage. But he was afraid to get help. There was a part of him that said, “You will be embarrassed if you

tell someone what you struggle with.” Another part said, “It will be too painful and too much work to overcome those things.” And another part of him felt like he would fail if he tried.

But Jim’s struggle got worse. His wife was more hurt. And he finally made the decision to get help. And was he glad! The Renew Ministry Helper helped him to resolve his fears with Jesus. And he began to reveal the roots of his anger, discouragement, and lust, and replace controlling lies with God’s love. He was becoming more and more free, increasingly experiencing the love, joy, and peace of God’s Spirit controlling him. Both he and his wife were so happy about this.

Jim had to make a decision to do what Paul said we must do to overcome the influences of Satan in our life:

**Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth.** (Ephesians 6:14)

We must face and resolve our Guarding Parts & God Lies with the truth of God’s love for us.

### A) Effects of Guarding Parts

Guarding Parts are the Devil’s most powerful weapon to keep people from even considering pursuing help with their emotional pain and spiritual weaknesses. Guarding Parts are what deceive us into thinking we do not need mind renewal. They are able to bury our pain so deep that we rarely experience it. But it is there and comes out in difficult circumstances. Guarding Parts are also Satan’s greatest defense against our Lie Fortresses being resolved in a Renew Ministry session. The controlling lies of Guarding Parts are why people will not pursue Renew Ministry at all.

Guarding Parts have many harmful effects, some of which have already been mentioned. First, they eventually cause psychological harm because they suppress toxic emotions and lies instead of resolving them. They result in the “coping” discussed in a previous chapter (10). Again, we have defined this as, “habits that people form to suppress and manage the effects of the bad feelings and emotional pain occurring inside of them.”

Romans 1 describes the power of parts of the mind to suppress painful truth that could set people free. Paul writes: *“But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them”* (Rom 1:18-19). There is a part of all adult humans that knows God exists. But the guilt and fear they would experience by allowing that thought to enter their conscious mind, creates other parts that suppress that truth to “protect” them. But it actually hurts them.

The same is true of the Guarding Parts that keep the hurting parts of us from knowing the truth of God’s love and power that would set them free (cf. John 8:32).

Normally in the Christian there is a mental conflict of various parts. Some parts of us want Hurting Parts to be healed, and other parts of us do not want this. Guarding Parts can cause a fighting within ourselves that can only be resolved when the Guarding Parts are resolved.

Secondly, Guarding Parts eventually cause spiritual damage. They are never controlled by the Spirit, but always controlled by our sinful nature. How do we know that? Because they never feel or produce the fruit of the Spirit including love, joy, and peace. They always produce thoughts that are angry, negative, critical, condemning, fearful, self-centered, ashamed or guilty. Therefore, Guarding Parts always “*stifle the Holy Spirit*” (1 Thess 5:19) when they are operating.

Thirdly, Guarding Parts can cause physical pain. Dr. Sarno provides the following testimony of the psychosomatic illnesses we have discussed elsewhere in the *FRUIT* study:

Helen’s story dramatically illustrates the power of painful childhood experiences. She began to remember being sexually abused by her father. She decided to attend a meeting of victims of incest in her community. This was a very emotional experience.

Later that day she began having low back pain. Over the next 3 hours the pain got progressively worse. By the morning of the second day she was virtually paralyzed with severe pain. What she didn’t know was that during those 36 hours the poison of her great rage, shame, and pain, which had lain dormant all those years, and had been stimulated by the meeting, was forcing its way closer and closer to consciousness.

The subconscious mind, in a desperate attempt to prevent the explosion of those feelings into her conscious mind [a Guarding Part], was making the back pain worse and worse. But the subconscious mind lost. In our appointment Helen began to cry as she had never cried before, she raged, she wanted to cut her wrists and die. The poison poured out of her. And as it did, virtually all the back pain disappeared.<sup>99</sup>

Guarding Parts are a common and effective way that Satan gains control of our life. When we are young, helpless, and hurting, they promise to help and protect us. But as we get older, they reveal themselves as idolatrous parts of us that act independently of God but keep us dependent on them. They keep us stuck in the past, keeping us emotionally immature, blocking us from fully growing into Christian adulthood. They are no longer protecting us, but rather, protecting the Lie Fortresses and IDENTITY LIES that Satan uses to control us.

Therefore, a common effect of Guarding Parts is causing all kinds of fears about getting help. The Devil does not want us to get help, and keeps us in bondage with the lies that control Guarding Parts.



Unfortunately, these sinful, deceived, immature parts of us have become so ingrained, that we are deceived into thinking they are our God-given personality and identity. Sometimes a critical, protecting, doubting part of you has been with you for so long, and has influenced so much of your life, that you think it is you. Guarding Parts convince us that they are necessary part of us and if they are removed or redeemed, we will cease being who we are. Indeed, we will. And we will become more of who God made us to be. God created our personality, and it lives to its fullest when we are controlled by God's Spirit. Guarding Parts have been created by pain and perverted by the Devil to make us more of who he wants us to be.

Jesus wants to replace those guarding, analyzing, doubting, critical, fearful, ashamed, and people-pleasing parts of you with Him! His Spirit and Truth controlling you can give you all the discernment, wisdom, and emotional protection you need. And Renew Ministry will help you realize and experience that.

Again, Guarding Parts are the greatest obstacle to a successful Renew Ministry session. This is why they can be seen as merely annoying distractions in a session and unworthy of our attention. But again, remember that Guarding Parts do not only interfere with the Renew Ministry process, but they control your life every day. Therefore, it is certainly worth the effort and time to resolve them.

Still, recognizing and resolving Guarding Parts is the hardest part of Renew Ministry. First, they can be difficult to detect. They can simply manifest themselves as merely slowing down the Renew Ministry session. This is why a Recipient must be willing to report anytime they feel interference or hesitancy with a question they are being asked in the session.

However, the presence of others will be evident. As noted above, when a Guarding Part is working, the session will stall out, emotions will disappear, and memories won't come to mind. The person may become distracted, or feel angry. Some are very powerful. When one was encountered in a session, a Recipient said, "I feel like you are asking me to put my hand on a burning hot stove."

Some Guarding Parts will cause severe bodily reactions such as shaking, or such powerful disassociation that the person will seem to be in a trance, locked in a blank stare. Unfortunately, some have interpreted these as "demonic interference" and responded by trying to confront a demon. This is misguided and not necessary.

All Guarding Parts are simply empowered by lies that give the Recipient a way to escape from recognizing and resolving painful emotions. Therefore, we must face and resolve our Guarding Parts & God Lies with the truth of God's love for us. Instead of running from the Devil's work in our lives, the Bible says, "*Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth*" (Eph 6:14).

## B) Responding to Guarding Parts: Fight instead of run

Ephesians 6 is about spiritual warfare “*against all strategies of the devil*” (v. 11). Three times in this passage the Apostle says to “*stand*” against the Devil instead of running from him. Why does Paul say to “*stand*” three times? Because he knew we would be very tempted to run from the Devil instead of face and fight him.

We run from the Devil when we fail to face his work in our life. When we simply let our anger, worry, lust, and discouragement control us. We are running from Satan when we try to suppress the emotional pain in us. We have dangerously turned our back on the Devil when we fail to face how he has affected us in our past.

The Devil is a very powerful, wise, and fierce enemy. But we are not to run from him in fear. If we are afraid, he already controls us and has won the battle. The Bible says, “*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*” (James 4:7). We are to “*resist*” him, not run from him. God wants the Devil to “*flee from you*,” not have you run scared from him. God wants you to fight Satan, not fear him.

The first weapon God wants you to use is “*the belt of truth*” (Eph 6:14). In fact, all of the pieces of armor in this passage are based in the truth. This is because the Devil’s only weapon against you is a lie. Including the lies that keep you imprisoned in shame, fear, and hopelessness. These lies discourage you from even fighting. The Devil tries very hard to deceive you about this because he knows if you work to “*hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil*” (Eph 6:16), you will defeat his lies. When our Guarding Parts realize the truth, they lose their power. Once an angry or fearful part of you realizes that anger or fear does not really protect you, it will stop trying to protect you.

The Devil knows this too. He knows if you learn to “*take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (v. 17), you will defeat him. Therefore, his most effective strategy is to use Guarding Parts to convince you not to fight at all.

But you must fight if you want to love, serve, and glorify your God. And your fight must begin by even being willing to get help with your struggles to get help. The bottom line is that most Christians need help to resolve their Guarding Parts even before they resolve the Identity Lies that are also controlling their behavior and quenching God’s Spirit in their life. The Renew Ministry process gently, patiently, but effectively will help you resolve all these things.

Guarding Parts are like bandages for a physical wound. They have served their purpose, but now must be removed to clean out and heal the wound. Guarding Parts feel like friends because they have been protecting you from pain. But now Jesus wants to protect you and take away the pain. We can choose to resist the Devil’s Band-Aids and, instead, choose God’s permanent remedy.

God always wants you to move forward in a Renew Ministry session with faith not fear. Your Helper will not push you beyond your faith. When a Guarding Part is encountered, it becomes the focus of the session. We simply ask questions to identify the lie that the Guarding Part is believing, and then ask, “How would Jesus respond to that?” Usually this part of the Recipient’s mind is renewed, and they can move forward in the session with new faith.

We must face and resolve our Guarding Parts & God Lies with the truth of God’s love for us. Instead of running from the Devil’s work in our lives, the Bible says, “*Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth*” (Eph 6:14).

### **C) The pain and obstacle of God Lies**

There is another obstacle to freedom from Lie Fortresses in your mind. We call these God Lies. A God Lie is a false belief about God that is attached to a Hurting Part. Examples include a belief that God is angry, disappointed with, or condemns a Hurting Part. This often results in the Hurting Part feeling anger, shame, or fear toward God. As Dr. Seamands notes:

Perhaps the most puzzling and shocking experience of a devout Christian is when they discover they feel anger against God Himself. This is terribly hard to admit. . . It is surprising the number of genuine Christians who are caught in an inner conflict between what they *think* about God and what they *feel* about God (and how He feels towards them).<sup>100</sup>

Yes, it is. But it is necessary to face these lies within us as well. It is essential that a Hurting Part has a trusting relationship with Jesus Christ because only His love and truth can set our heart free from the IDENTITY LIES within our Lie Fortresses.

God Lies are often formed in childhood. Imagine a 6 year old girl believes in God and knows she can pray to Him. Her mom and dad are fighting a lot and she knows some friends whose parents no longer live together. So, she prays to God every night to keep her mommy and daddy together. But her parents divorce and her daddy no longer lives at home.

Isn’t it understandable that she might conclude some false things about God? Even adults in similar situations do. The part of her that was hurt through her parents’ divorce was also imprinted with lies about God such as, “He does not care about me,” or “He is a weak God who really cannot help with such things.” Christian counselor Ed Smith explains:

We become angry towards God because we misunderstand Him. We fail to fully comprehend His purposes, His thoughts, His motive, and His heart, and because of this, we often find ourselves angry at Him.

To clarify something here, we are not angry at God because of what He does or does not do. We are angry at Him because of our

misinterpretation of who He is, based upon what we believe He has or has not done.

For example, we are not angry at God because “He let something happen to us,” we are angry because we believe that the reason “He let what happened to us happen” was that “He doesn’t care about us,” “He can’t be trusted,” or “He is cruel.” It might have been true that “He let that happen,” but it is not true that He is cruel, does not care, and cannot be trusted.

[They are at God] because of what they believe about their state-of being: unprotected, vulnerable, helpless, and powerless. These perceptions reflect their understanding of who God is: not trustworthy, uncaring, distant, uninvolved, etc. This is why the [Recipient] is angry.<sup>101</sup>

God Lies are often encountered in Renew Ministry sessions. Especially when we want to bring the truth and love of Jesus into the session to address a painful Identity Lie. The Hurting Part we are working with may not trust Jesus enough to be helped by Him. If a Hurting Part senses anything from Jesus besides compassion, there is probably a God Lie operating.

At this point we expose the lie being communicated by such a “false Jesus” and replace him with the Jesus who died for us on a cross. Then the real Jesus can provide the truth needed to set the hurting part free from its Identity Lie.

We must face and resolve our Guarding Parts & God Lies with the truth of God’s love for us. Instead of running from the Devil’s work in our lives, the Bible says, “*Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth*” (Eph 6:14).

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite 2 Timothy 2:25-26 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize Ephesians 6:14 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ See Graphic 2: “How God Lies Form” on the next page.
- ▶ Discuss chapters 12-13 in your small group this week.

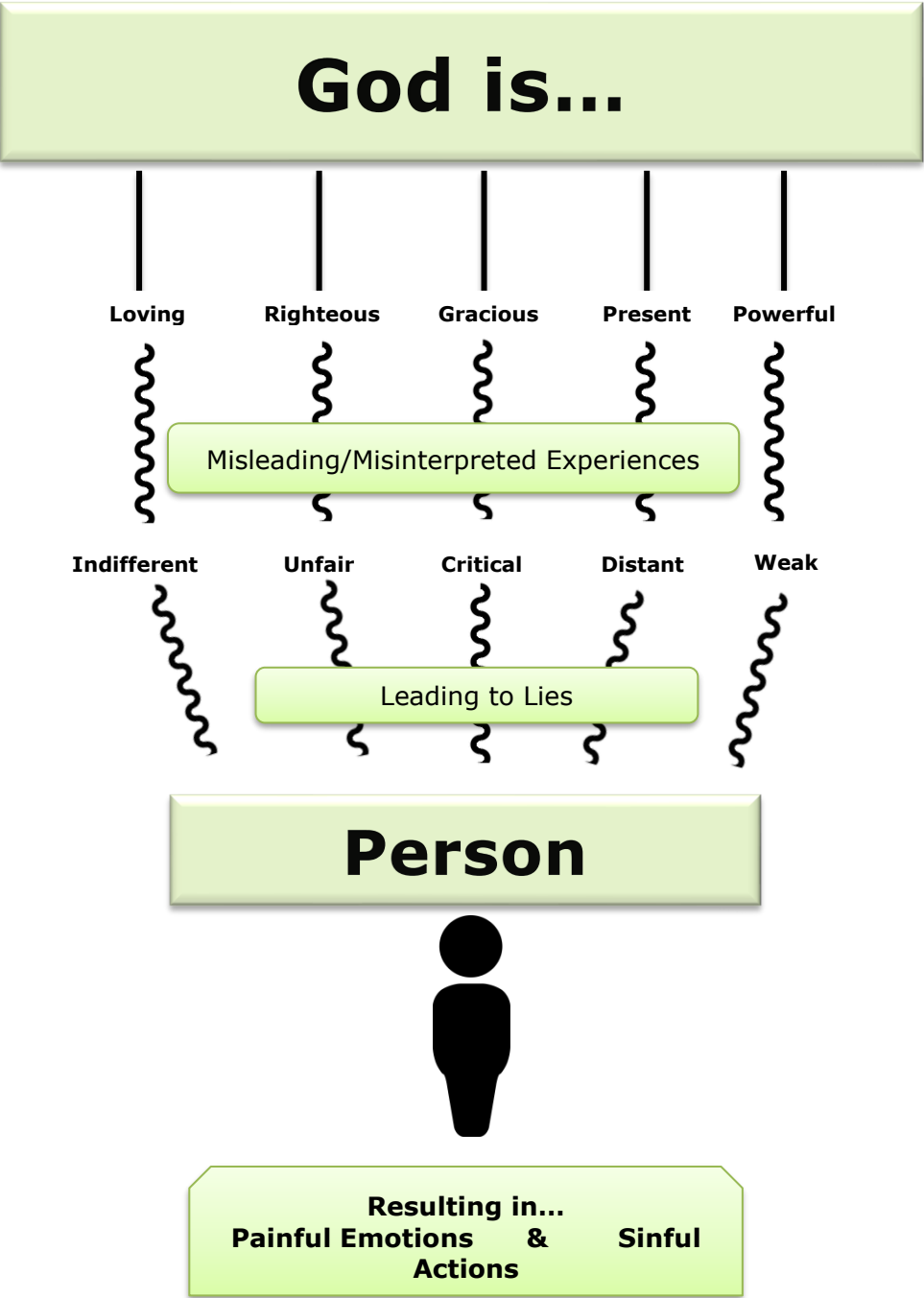
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<sup>99</sup> John Sarno, *The Divided Mind: The Epidemic of Mindbody Disorders* (Harper Collins, 2006), 140-141.

<sup>100</sup> David Seamands, *Healing Memories* (Victor, 1985), 92, 95.

<sup>101</sup> Ed Smith, *Essentials of TPM*.

Graphic 2: How God Lies Form



## Chapter 14

## Satan's Territory I: The Reality of Your Hidden Heart

Psalm 51:6

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) What evidence of our subconscious mind is in Psalm 51:6? What other Psalms indicate this?
- 2) What Scriptures describe our mind and heart as being in parts?
- 3) What were your impressions from the quotes of respected Christians confirming the existence and importance of ministering to the subconscious mind?
- 4) What was most meaningful to you about this chapter? Why?

Jim was a mature Christian and knew a lot of the Bible and its truths. He was absolutely convinced of God's love for him and could confidently and sincerely give a teaching about it.

So why did he always struggle so much with fears, doubts, and a lack of confidence? If he was so sure that the Almighty God of the Universe loved him, wouldn't all of these things disappear?

Jim knew the promise in Romans 12:2, “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” But what else did he need to do to experience this? Study the Bible more? Memorize more Scripture? Pray the word into his heart? Like many Christians, Jim was confused about how to effectively apply Romans 12:2 to experience radical and permanent change in his life. But through Renew Ministry, he learned an important truth about God:

**You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part  
You will make me know wisdom. (Psalm 51:6 NASB)**

Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.

### **A) Human experience with the subconscious mind**

As far as we know, the human mind is by far the most complex thing God has created. However, recognizing its various parts is essential to understanding it. God created your mind with two parts: CONSCIOUS and SUBCONSCIOUS. The thoughts and beliefs in your conscious mind are those you are aware of. The beliefs and mental processing in your subconscious mind are things you are not aware of. At least not until they are brought into your conscious mind.

“Conscious mind” and “subconscious mind” are the psychological terms for these parts of our mind. Medically, they have been identified as two separate areas of the brain: the logical part in the prefrontal cortex, and the subconscious/emotional part in the amygdala and limbic system.<sup>102</sup>

A brief experiment will help you experience the difference between your conscious and subconscious mind. As you are reading this notice your breathing. In. Out. Before you read this, your breathing was operating in your subconscious mind. You were not consciously aware of it. Nonetheless, it was controlling an important part of your life. When you were asked to think about your breathing, it came into your conscious mind. The process of breathing demonstrates the subtle but constant and very powerful influence your subconscious mind has in your life. It affects you in many more ways than simply controlling your breathing. It controls a great deal of your life.

Dreams and nightmares are generally understood to come from your subconscious mind. The fact that you cannot usually remember dreams is because they occur in your subconscious mind. You will only remember the parts of a dream that somehow make it into your conscious mind. It is because dreams and nightmares occur in the subconscious/illogical part of your mind that they are so irrational, disconnected, and difficult to interpret. Dreams also illustrate that the subconscious mind is the more visual and emotional part of your mind.

One reason that we struggle to recognize the influence of our subconscious mind is that it is subconscious. By definition we are unaware of its contents. Therefore, we ignore it. For example, many people find it difficult to understand the idea of subconscious anger. It is hard to believe that such powerful forces could be inside of them without their knowledge. The idea that emotions—raw, heated, overwhelming emotions—can exist deep within us without us being aware of them is hard to accept. But they are there. And they are often controlling you.

This is why David prayed to God: *“You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom”* (Ps 51:6 NASB). Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.

## **B) The Bible’s description of the subconscious mind**

Christians have long believed the promise in Romans 12:2 *“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (NIV). But one of the greatest mistakes they have made in pursuing spiritual growth is to ignore the importance of the subconscious mind. Many Christians even deny the subconscious mind exists.

And the Devil laughs because he lives in the hidden, hurting, dark, and deceived places of our subconscious mind and continues to control us from there. If we never recognize this, and effectively remove his influence there, then he will continue to cause all kinds of sin and hurt in our life. Because the Devil has imprinted your subconscious mind and influences you from there, you must fight and beat him there. Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.

The Devil has taken great advantage of the widespread denial and ignorance of the subconscious mind among Christians. And Christian teachers who choose to ignore the clear biblical descriptions of it are mostly to blame. Contrary to what many teach (or don’t teach), God teaches us in Scripture that there are subconscious parts of our heart that need renewal.

David believed this and prayed to God: *“You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom”* (Ps 51:6 NASB). *“Innermost being”* comes from the Hebrew word *tūhôt* and “Describes an object covered over, hidden, or concealed.”<sup>103</sup> *“Hidden part”* translates the Hebrew word *sātām* which means “to hide.”<sup>104</sup> Unlike many modern Christians, David recognized there were hidden parts of his heart, the contents of which he was not aware. Accordingly, the OT scholars C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch write that in Psalm 51:6 David is referring to “the hidden part of his mind.”<sup>105</sup>

Why does God want His “truth” in the “hidden” subconscious “part” of your mind? Because there are lies there that continue to control you despite what the logical/conscious parts of you believe.

This is why David prayed elsewhere: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart . . . Point out anything in me that offends you”* (Ps 139:23-24). David believed there could be things in his heart that offended God, but he needed help to reveal them because they were hidden from his conscious mind. Accordingly, David prayed elsewhere: *“How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults”* (Ps 19:12). Again, David admits there are sinful parts of him hiding in his heart and making him sin.

Hebrews clearly warns us about these hidden parts as well: *“Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many”* (Heb 12:15). As one writer commented:



A root is a structure that is hidden and covered up, yet supports and nourishes the part of the plant that is visible. So, buried anger can see the under the surface of our hearts, largely hidden from our conscious thinking, yet powerfully shaping and directing the course of our lives in destructive ways.<sup>106</sup>

The context of Psalm 51 is David's confession of his adultery with Bathsheba. David was probably in shock over how he could have done such a thing, including the murder of Bathsheba's husband to cover up his guilt (2 Sam 11:14-17). God Himself said of this man, "*I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do*" (Acts 13:22). When we read of David's love for God, especially in the Psalms, we too are shocked that such a man could do these things.

David recognized there were hidden powers "*lurking*" (Ps 19:12) in his heart that could reach up from the depths of his subconscious and destroy his life. Thus, David asked God to reveal and resolve these hidden parts of his heart. David prayed: "*You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom*" (Ps 51:6 NASB). **Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.**

God has created us with two parts of our mind, conscious/logical and subconscious/emotional. Additional biblical evidence for this is how Scripture describes our heart and mind as being in parts. Jesus said, "*the most important commandment*" is "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind*" (Matt 22:36-37). Jesus recognized that we could love God with only a part of our "*heart*" or "*mind*."

The Apostle Paul reflected this when he wrote:

*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. . . For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind.* (Rom 7:15, 22-23 NIV).

That is a very mature Christian describing themselves as a divided person.<sup>107</sup> Elsewhere, Paul described this inner conflict between parts of us as between "*the Spirit*" and "*the sinful nature*." "*These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions*" (Gal 5:17).

In James we even read that a person can be "*double-minded*" (1:8; 4:8 NIV). The Greek word used here is *dipsychos* which literally means "double-souled . . . a suggestive indication of the depths of the division within this person."<sup>108</sup>

In all of these Scriptures, this division within us causes sin. Which is why David prayed to God, "*give me an undivided heart*" (Ps 86:11 NIV).

This psychological reality is why we commonly refer to working with "parts" in Renew Ministry. This not only reflects common human experience, but biblical teaching as well.

These biblical truths reveal something revolutionary about how to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2). The Psalms teach us that mind renewal must include the “*hidden*” and subconscious parts of our mind. When God promised and commanded: “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2), He was including the subconscious mind He created you with. This is because renewing both the conscious, logical, informational part of your mind, and the subconscious, irrational, and emotional part of your mind is necessary for you to “*be transformed*.”

Likewise, when Jesus commanded us to love God with our whole mind (Matt 22:37), He was including loving God with our subconscious mind. When Paul instructed us to “*take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*” (2 Cor 10:5 NIV), he was including the thoughts in our subconscious mind.

Unfortunately, most Christians believe these verses simply mean we need more truth. But this is rarely the case. What most Christians really need to “*be transformed*” is to get THE TRUTH THEY ALREADY HAVE IN MORE PLACES! of their heart and mind. To get the truth they already know in their logical/conscious mind to the still deceived and subconscious parts of their mind. This is why David prayed to God: “*You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom*” (Ps 51:6). Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.

### C) Christian wisdom on the subconscious mind

Unfortunately, many believe the secular psychologist Sigmund Freud invented the idea of a subconscious mind. Because he created some wild and discredited theories based on it, the idea of a subconscious mind was abandoned completely by many. Unfortunately, this has caused many secular and Christian counselors to view the subconscious mind as a damaging myth, rather than seeking to minister to it.

But Sigmund Freud did not invent the subconscious. As early as the fourth century, the Church Father Augustine believed that our minds contained memories that our conscious mind was not aware of.<sup>109</sup> Likewise, the foremost theologian of the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas, believed there were “processes in the soul of which we are not aware.”<sup>110</sup>

John Calvin seemed to be referring to hidden parts of our mind when he wrote: “The human heart has so many crannies where vanity hides, so many holes where falsehood lurks, is so decked out with deceiving hypocrisy, that it often dupes itself.”<sup>111</sup>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the respected Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer wrote:

We are constantly brought face-to-face with the concept of the subconscious, which is the realization that man is more than that which is on the surface. All too often the evangelical Christian acts as

though there is nothing to man except that which is above the surface.

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More recently, the respected Christian teacher John Piper said the following in response to the question, “Do you think it is appropriate to talk about the subconscious?”:

Yes. That is basically what I was trying to say. Most of our life is lived from resources that are not presently reflected on in our mind. Our words are coming from inside — “What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person” (Matthew 15:18). And most of that heart is unconscious or subconscious.

Whenever I pray, I am pleading with God, “Work down deeper than I can get in my reading right now. Take your scalpel, and don’t just deal with the sins I am aware of; go be a surgeon.” Surgeons put you to sleep, and they go into places on your body you don’t know anything about and work on you. That is what God has to do with us. So, yes, I think the subconscious is being worked on by the Holy Spirit all the time. <sup>113</sup>

From a more scientific view of the subconscious mind, David Myers writes:

Recent cognitive science reveals a fascinating unconscious mind, another mind backstage . . . More than we realized over a decade ago, thinking occurs not on stage, but off stage, out of sight. . . Thinking, memory, and attitudes all operate on two levels (conscious and deliberate, and unconscious and automatic). Today’s researchers call it dual processing. We know more than we know we know. <sup>114</sup>

Respected Christian counselor H. Norman Wright believed:

The more painful these memories are, the more hidden and repressed they become. They hide, as it were, in a corner of the deepest cavern of our minds. Because they are hidden, they escape healing. . . Trying to forget the pains of the past gives these memories power and control over your life, and you proceed through life dragging a weight.

In severe situations, a dissociation or splitting off and storing away of the experience can take place. It then seems to be deposited into a part of the memory which is not immediately available to conscious recall. <sup>115</sup>

Dr. John Sarno, Professor at New York University School of Medicine, has written:

We live in the world of the conscious mind, and most of us think it is our only world. One must learn to think of subconscious feelings in volcanic terms and understand that their intensity has the potential to wreak havoc in our lives. . . Learning about the subconscious mind

should be a part of our educational systems, because it is fully as important as reading, writing, and arithmetic.<sup>116</sup>

Emotional trauma expert, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk writes:

Previously uncontaminated childhood maps [habits of thinking] can become so distorted by an adult rape or assault that all roads are rerouted into terror or despair. These responses are not reasonable and therefore cannot be changed simply by reframing irrational beliefs. Our maps of the world are encoded in the emotional [subconscious] brain . . .

Generally, the rational brain can override the emotional [subconscious] brain, as long as our fears don't hijack us. . . But the moment we feel trapped, enraged, or rejected, we are vulnerable to activating old maps and to follow their directions [what has been referred to as "triggers" in section 11.B).

Change begins when we learn to "own" our emotional [subconscious] brains. That means learning to observe and tolerate the heartbreaking and gut-wrenching sensations that register misery and humiliation. Only after learning to bear what is going on inside can we start to befriend, rather than obliterate, the emotions that keep our maps fixed and immutable. . . If we want to change posttraumatic reactions, we have to access the emotional [subconscious] brain.<sup>117</sup>

Finally, the respected Christian psychologist and author David Benner writes:

Genuinely transformational knowing of truth always involves encountering and embracing previously unwelcomed parts of self. While we tend to think of ourselves as a single, unified self, what we call "I" is really a family of many part-selves.

That in itself is not a particular problem. The problem lies in the fact that many of these part-selves are unknown to us. Even though they are usually known to others [because of our anger, worry, etc.], we remain blissfully oblivious of their existence. . .

The problem is that there are important aspects of our experience that we ignore. Many of us, like the woman [who was sexually abused], refuse to face the parts of us that feel ashamed. To do so makes us feel too vulnerable. So, we pretend they do not exist and hope they will go away. Or it may be our broken and wounded parts that we try to deny.

When we do so, however, these unwanted parts of self do not go away. They simply go into hiding. . . There is enormous value in coming to know [and renewing!] these excluded [and hurting and deceived] parts of self. . . . Parts of self that are not acknowledged become stronger, not weaker. Operating out of sight and beyond

awareness, they have increasing influence on our behavior. Christian spirituality involves acknowledging all our part-selves, and exposing them to God's love [and truth].<sup>118</sup>

This is what David was seeking when he prayed: “*You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom*” (Ps 51:6). Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite Ephesians 6:14 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize Psalm 51:6 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ See Graphic 3 “Conscious vs. Subconscious Mind” on the next page.
- ▶ Read the next chapter to prepare for your small group this week.

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<sup>102</sup> For more scientific evidence of these different parts of the brain see Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, 2014, Kindle edition), Part 1.

<sup>103</sup> *TWOT*, 347.

<sup>104</sup> The *TWOT* says of the Hebrew word *sātām*: “The root in its basic meaning is “hide” (636). Elsewhere it states this word refers to “the seat of the sinful nature” (802).

<sup>105</sup> *K & D*. Other OT verses apparently referring to our subconscious mind include the use of the Hebrew word *cheder* (“innermost part”) in Proverbs 18:18; 20:27, 30; 26:22.

There is no justification for the NIV and NLT to translate the Hebrew word *tūhôt* (“to cover”) as “womb.” Other Hebrew words mean the womb (e.g. *rechem*), but they are not used here. The *TWOT* states: “Ps 51:6 clearly communicates the sense of “inward being.” There is no mention of it possibly meaning “womb.” Perhaps the translators believed David’s mention of his birth and conception warranted their approach. But this is not so. Verse 5-6 make better sense by not erroneously translating *tūhôt* as “womb” in v. 6. No one could explain how God would expect “faithfulness even in the womb” (NIV) or how God could teach an embryo “wisdom.” In other words, these translations do not even make sense.

In addition to ignoring the reference to the subconscious mind in Psalm 51:6, these translators further obscure God’s meaning by translating the Hebrew *emeth* as “faithfulness” (NIV) or “honesty” (NLT). The word’s basic meaning is “certainty” (*TWOT*, 52). However, its use is divided in the NASB between “faithfulness” and “truth.” Of its 125 uses in the OT, the NASB translates it with a version of “truth” 106 times and “faithful” 19 times. There is nothing in the context to warrant translators rejecting the overwhelmingly majority meaning of *emeth* as “truth” in Psalm 51:6. Accordingly, Keil and Delitzsch interpret David as saying God desires “Truth in the . . . hidden part of David’s mind.”

<sup>106</sup> David Bovenmyer, “Emotions and the Heart”; online at <https://davebovenmyer.com/2010/02/20/emotions-and-the-heart/>.

<sup>107</sup> Commenting on the fact that Romans 7:15-23 reflects a Christian experiencing different “parts” of themselves, Dr. William Richardson, Professor and Clinical

Director of Marriage and Family Therapy and Counseling at Reformed Theological Seminary writes:

This two-entity aspect of Paul has variously been called [in highly respected commentaries on Romans] “the divided *ego*” (Dunn, 18.3), the “*ego* in conflict” (Moo, 466-467) the “I” in discord (Ridderbos, 117), the “distinction between the two ‘I’s” (Schreiner, 375), and the contrast of “the real Paul...with the other Paul” (Morris, p.295). Moo writes:

There is a part of this person [Paul]...that acknowledges the just demands of God’s law...If [Paul] only [had] him . . . we would not be able to explain why he does what he does not want to do. (457-458)

Moo adds that there is one *ego*, yet there are “different ‘parts’ and ‘directions’ of this *ego* as they have been delineated in vv. 15-23” (467). [*Ego*” is italicized to indicate that its original Greek form “ἐγώ,” translated “I” was used by the quoted author.] . . .

But there are more than two “personalities” present in this passage. There is a third “I” who is describing the other two parts. This third “I” is evident in v. 25b, “So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.” Throughout this passage Paul has been reporting on two aspects of himself. He has used his self-conscious to observe and report first on an “inner man” and then on its antagonist. This requires three “persons,” one reporter, two objects thereof.

I believe that we see more than just a simple self-conscious multiplicity in Romans 7. We see more than a man simply describing himself, e.g., “I observe myself sinning.” We see a man describing two person-like parts in a conflict relationship. (*Internal Family Systems Therapy Meets Evangelical Christianity*, 2007)

For more on the fact that Paul is describing himself as a mature Christian in Romans 7, see the Appendix in *Christian Essentials* study #3 FAITH.

<sup>108</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James (TNTC)* (Eerdmans, 1985), 62-66. Dr. Moo adds concerning the phrase “double-minded”:

The word is used here for the first time in Greek literature, and some think James himself may have coined it. But however new the word may be, the idea is not. The Old Testament characterizes the sinner as having a ‘divided heart’ (Ps. 12:2; Ho. 10:2) and pronounces a blessing on those who pursue God with ‘a whole heart’ (Ps. 119:2). . .

We should note that this ‘double-mindedness’ is the antithesis both of that ‘wholeness’ or ‘perfection’ (*teleios*) which is the goal of Christian living (v. 4) and of God’s ‘single’, ‘whole-hearted’ character (v. 5). This desire for singleness and purity of intention is a leading theme in verses 2-8, and occurs throughout the letter (see especially 4:4-10).

<sup>109</sup> *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1967), Vol.1, p. 185.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, online at ccel.org, III.I.20.

<sup>112</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Tyndale, 1971), 131.

<sup>113</sup> Kenneth Acha, “The Unconscious Mind in Christian Theology” online at <https://www.kennethmd.com/the-unconscious-mind-in-christian-theology/>.

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<sup>114</sup> David Myers, *Intuition: Its Power and Perils* (Yale, 2002), 4.

<sup>115</sup> H. Norman Wright, *Making Peace with Your Past* (Revel, 1985), 40.

<sup>116</sup> John Sarno, *The Divided Mind: The Epidemic of Mindbody Disorders* (Harper Collins, 2006), 108-109, 150.

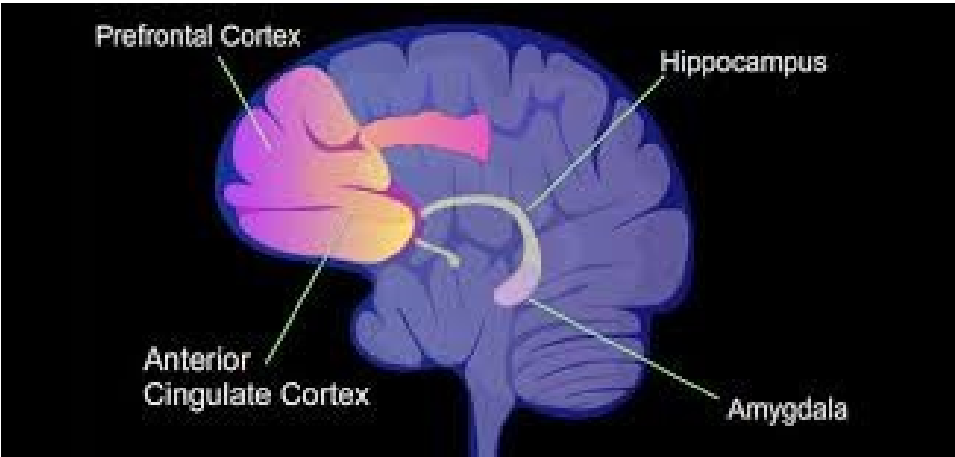
<sup>117</sup> van der Kolk, 129-130, 205.

<sup>118</sup> David Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* (InterVarsity, 2009), 62.

Graphic 3

**Conscious vs. Subconscious Mind**

Conscious Mind	Subconscious Mind
Aware of its contents	Unaware of its contents
Organized and operates with logic	Organized and operates with emotion
Rational	Irrational
Proactive thinking	Automatically reacting
Planning	Nocturnal Dreaming
Physical location: Prefrontal Cortex (“front of brain”)	Physical location: Amygdala and limbic system (“bottom of brain”)
“Head”	“Heart”





## Chapter 15

**Satan's Territory II: The Importance of Your Hidden Heart**Psalm 19:12

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) What can you learn from the testimony about Joan?
  
- 2) What is the context of David's question in Psalm 19:12? How does his experience illustrate the primary point of this chapter?
  
- 3) Why do we suggest David is making a distinction between “hidden” and “willful” sin in Psalm 19:12-13? What is the difference between these? What would be examples?
  
- 4) Have you experienced knowing the truth in your conscious/logical mind but not being able to live it out? What is an example of this in your own life?
  
- 5) What was most meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

Dr. Ed Smith relates the following to illustrate the effect of IDENTITY LIES in the subconscious mind and how to resolve them:

Joan came to me depressed with considerable body pain. Her doctor had diagnosed her condition as fibromyalgia. I asked her if there were times she felt more pain and depression than others. She reported that she felt them more at work than anywhere else. She said she loved her work, but at the same time it depressed her. I asked her

about her job and discovered that she was part of a ministry for unwed mothers. I asked her to feel the emotional pain she felt when working at the ministry, and then to report the first thing that came to mind.

Almost immediately she said, "But I have already dealt with that. I know that God forgave me for that!" She had an abortion as a teenager, and had asked the Lord for His forgiveness many years earlier and many times since. I asked her what she was feeling as she looked at the abortion memory. She began to sob, "I feel so ashamed. But I know God has forgiven me. I just don't understand why I still feel so bad. I guess I just can't forgive myself."

Had this woman come to me for help before my using the [Renew Ministry] principles I would have simply encouraged her to deny her feelings, stand on the truth she knew, and live out her forgiveness in faith. I would have pulled out my "Claim it by faith," "Reckon it to be so," and "Trust God, not your feelings" lectures. She would have done the best she could but would have likely still felt the same shameful emotions for the rest of her life.

Joan's logical truth about God's forgiveness and grace were right on target. But somehow it had had little effect on her emotional state. This scenario is common. People who genuinely seek forgiveness for sinning in dramatic ways often cannot find release from the emotional pain even though they believe they are forgiven from God. Joan's logical cognitive truth—"God has forgiven me" was in conflict with the hold her experiential [subconscious] knowledge had on her mind—"I'm a guilty murderer."

That day I said, "Let yourself feel the shame and embrace the thought that you are a murderer." I then continued with the [Renew Ministry] process and watched as the [truth] of Jesus began experientially to minister to her. In just a few short minutes she looked up at me with a changed countenance, beaming with joy. She said through her tears, "He would just say I am forgiven."

Now her experience [of God's love] matched her cognitive truth [about God's love]. Now she could walk in effortless victory in this area of her life [FREER! Christianity as explained in the *FRUIT* study]. Before, she had to battle the shameful feelings and claim the truth even when it did not feel true [FIGHTING Christianity as explained in the *FRUIT* study]. Now, she could experience the peace and joy of her forgiveness. Joan's bodily pain never returned after that session, and her doctor could find no sign of the fibromyalgia. <sup>119</sup>

This dear Christian woman was struggling with what David expressed when he prayed:

**How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. (Psalm 19:12)**

Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.

### A) David's prayer about his subconscious mind

David asks an important question. "*How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart?*" The NLT implies that David is merely seeking to recognize hidden sins. But the more literal NASB has, "*Who can discern [bin: 'understand'] his errors?*"

The context of David's question is a description of his convictions regarding the greatness, power, and even clarity of God's word in verses 7-11. In v. 11 he says, "*They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them.*" Not many have been more dedicated to studying, meditating, memorizing, and obeying God's word than David. His life and mind were full of God's word. But he still sinned. This is why in verse 12 he essentially asks, "How can I understand why I still sin"? Or "*How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults*" (Ps 19:12).<sup>120</sup>

David recognized that he knew and loved God's truth and commandments with his conscious/logical mind. But he was frustrated that there were hidden parts of his heart that still lead him to sin. He contrasted sin coming from his subconscious/irrational mind with that coming from his conscious/logical mind when prayed in the next verse: "*Keep your servant also from willful sins*" (v. 13 NIV).<sup>121</sup> David's insertion of "*also* [gam]" suggests he is thinking of a different kind of sin from the one he has previously described. NIV calls them "*willful*" sins. The NLT has "*deliberate*" sins. The Hebrew word used here (*zed*) "Carries the element of willful decision. . . This seems to explain David's distinction between 'hidden' and 'willful' sin in Psalm 19:12-13."<sup>122</sup> Accordingly, the OT distinguished between deliberate and unintentional sins (cf. Exod 21:14; Deut 17:12-13).

David recognized that some sin comes from deliberate planning and intentional desire. But other sins seem to "come out of nowhere" and surprise and shock us. David asked for help him understand why this is so.

But David also prayed, "*Cleanse [naqah] me from these hidden faults.*" First, "*cleanse*" translates a Hebrew word which basically means "to be emptied." In Isaiah 3:26 it refers to "a city that has been emptied of its inhabitants."<sup>123</sup> It can also refer to "a place that is purged of evil (Zech 5:3)."<sup>124</sup> OT scholar John Goldengay explains that in Psalm 19:12 David's meaning is, "being free or empty. . . The cleansing for which the psalm is asking is not forgiveness but the removing of the inclination to wrongdoing."<sup>125</sup>

What would be the result of David's freedom from his hidden, subconscious inclinations to sin? In verse 13 David says, "*Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression*" (NIV).<sup>126</sup>

David recognized the primary point of this chapter: **Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.** David prayed: *“How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults”* (Ps 19:12).

## **B) The effects of the subconscious mind**

Have you ever wondered why you don't seem to be able to consistently live what you believe? For example, as a Christian you believe God loves you. You know several Bible verses about this. In fact, you could probably teach others with conviction and passion that God loves all Christians. And like most Christians you can probably say you believe without a doubt that God truly loves you.

So why do you still often feel afraid, or lonely, or ashamed, or unimportant? If you truly believed the greatest Person in the Universe loved you, you would not experience any of these things.

Maybe you have recognized that your life does not reflect a person who wholeheartedly believes God loves them. So perhaps you have tried to “renew your mind” by memorizing verses, doing Bible studies, and listening to teachings on God's love for you. Maybe you have even pursued counseling to help you experience God's love more. And while these things have been encouraging, you notice you still struggle a lot with worry, anger, loneliness, or lust.

Let us take worry for example. You understand the biblical commands and promises concerning worry. You know you understand them because you could explain them to someone else. And when you worry you try to apply these truths to combat your feelings of worry and it doesn't work. You still worry. What is going on?

Why do we know the truth about something but still struggle to have that truth control us? **BECAUSE WE DO NOT HAVE GOD'S TRUTH IN THE RIGHT PLACE.** As explained in the previous chapter, your “heart” is in parts. While the conscious part of your mind may believe the truth, there may be a part of your subconscious mind that does not. This creates the frustrating conflict that we experience when we don't act or feel according to what we believe. The reason is that we do not believe it with our whole heart and mind.

The fact that God created you with both a conscious/logical mind and a subconscious/irrational mind is an example of you operating in independent parts. You have the ability to believe one thing in your conscious/logical mind, and the complete opposite thing in your subconscious/irrational mind. This is why you can believe without doubt that God loves you in your conscious/logical mind, but still be controlled by worry coming from your hidden and subconscious/irrational mind.

This conflict is demonstrated in Renew Ministry sessions. People will often say something like “I know that what I am saying is not the truth, but

it feels true.” “I know that God loves me, but I feel abandoned by Him.” “I know that Jesus died for my sins and I am forgiven but I still feel dirty and shameful when I think about what I did.”

How does this conflict in our heart and mind happen? Suppose a woman was sexually molested as a young girl before she was a Christian. She had no support or way of properly processing such an event. Accordingly, the message she received from that event can be things like: “I’m dirty,” “I’m damaged,” “I’m not safe.” After she becomes a Christian, she can memorize all sorts of Scripture regarding these false messages, but it doesn’t seem to heal her sense of feeling dirty, damaged, or unsafe. This is because the truth is not getting to where it is needed. If there are suppressed areas of our subconscious mind that have not “accepted” such truth, we will continue to act contradictory to what we “believe” and know in our conscious mind.

The conflict between the conscious and subconscious mind is demonstrated in countless ways in human experience. This is especially true of the contrast between what people intellectually and logically believe with their conscious mind, and how they feel in their subconscious/emotional mind. For example, the Bible teacher Erwin W. Lutzer writes:

One of my great encouragements is to be friends with those who were personally acquainted with A. W. Tozer. This man, who knew God so intimately, had days when he was so discouraged he felt he could not continue as a minister. A man who instructed thousands in the deep things of God often felt he was a miserable failure. <sup>127</sup>

Not many intellectually understood the doctrine of God’s love better than A. W. Tozer. And yet he often struggled with actually experiencing what he knew. We could add Charles Spurgeon and David Martin Lloyd-Jones to the list of men who deeply understood and believed in the love of God but struggled with powerful depression.

How do we explain this? It’s the conflict between the beliefs in the conscious/logical mind and the subconscious/emotional mind. Along the same lines, Christian counselor Dr. David Seamands shares:

Sometimes I ask people who are having a difficult time describing their God to draw a picture of Him. . . One young theological student said he couldn’t draw very well but next time he’d bring a picture of his God. I was very curious about it.

It happened to be the Christmas season and he brought a magazine with an artist’s drawing of an extra large, angry and demanding Scrooge [from Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*] sitting behind his desk, quill pen in hand with his debit-credit ledger before him.

Standing in front of the desk facing Scrooge was small, terror-stricken Bob Cratchett. Pointing to Scrooge he explained, “That’s

God,” and then to Cratchett, “That’s me.” And just think, this young seminarian made an A in his theology class! <sup>128</sup>

Are you beginning to understand the importance of renewing your subconscious mind to experience transformation? Dr. Smith explains:

If we were honest with ourselves, we would likely admit that a significant portion of the biblical truths we intellectually believe do not actually *feel* true to us. Even if we say we believe all that the Bible says, our emotions are a clear indicator of what we believe within our hearts. If we say our trust is in God, but live in fear, then something is amiss. If we say that we believe Jesus is always with us, but *feel* alone, then something is not right. If we claim to believe God is our provider, while simultaneously worrying about our finances, then we are double-minded.

If cognitive, logical truth always resulted in peace, our churches would be full of peace-filled people. Christians today have more truth than any generation in the history of the Church. But many do not walk in peace. A lack of peace indicates there is a lie present. <sup>129</sup>

Along these lines, Dr. Seamands shares what can happen in traditional counseling that targets only the conscious/logical mind:

The most subtle trap to avoid in this whole process is “the paralysis of analysis.” This is where it all turns into a great big *head trip*. It is possible, through an extensive time of counseling, for counselees to very clinically describe [their problem]. They can analyze it all in their heads, realize the problems which need solving in their heads, and work out the solutions in their heads.

But after it’s all over, they will discover that nothing has really changed. It was all a kind of fascinating intellectual and spiritual game. Everything took place in their heads [logical mind], but their hearts [subconscious mind] and ways of living were untouched. <sup>130</sup>

Some will explain this conflict by contrasting “mind belief” with “heart belief” or intellectual knowledge with experiential knowledge. But practically speaking they are describing the difference between what we believe in our conscious/logical mind and what we believe with our subconscious/irrational/emotional mind. Therefore, you do not need to believe the truth more “deeply,” as much as more “completely” with your whole mind.

This is why **mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.** The problem with renewing the hidden parts of your subconscious/irrational mind is just that: they are hidden and subconscious. You are not consciously aware of the irrational beliefs in your subconscious mind, even though they regularly control you. Therefore, it is the hidden subconscious parts of your mind that especially need renewing.

As taught in the previous chapter, David understood this and prayed: “*You desire truth in the innermost being [tūhôt: covered, hidden]; And in the hidden part [sātām: NIV “secret place”] You will make me know wisdom.* (Ps 51:6 NASB). When we are struggling with bad fruit above ground (like addiction to porn and other behaviors springing from sexual brokenness), we must understand the hidden roots below the surface from which they grow.

Unfortunately, as also noted in the previous chapter, this has been widely ignored by modern Christians. And they are paying a heavy price for it. Again, the Devil laughs because the subconscious mind is where he hides in people and controls them.

Satan cannot exist in our conscious/logical mind very well because it knows the truth. But his controlling lies can remain in the dark and deceived places of our subconscious mind and secretly but powerfully lead us into destructive sinful emotions and actions. Because the Devil imprinted you in your past and controls you in your past and your subconscious mind, you must fight and beat him there. Christians need to wake up to the reality of the hidden parts of their heart if they will have any chance of effective personal spiritual warfare.

Like the subconscious mind, 90% of an iceberg is under the water. And the Titanic discovered, it is the hidden part that is the dangerous part. So it is with your mind. Which is why David prayed: “*How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults*” (Ps 19:12). Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite Psalm 51:6 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize Psalm 19:12 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ Read the next chapter to prepare for your small group this week.

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<sup>119</sup> Ed Smith, *Theophostic Prayer Ministry: Basic Seminar Manual* (New Creation, 2005), 291-2.

<sup>120</sup> OT scholar John Goldingay remarks on Psalm 19:12 that it reflects a “sense of puzzlement at the human inclination to go off the rails. The mystery of human sin is the fact that we all go astray even though we can see that God’s expectations make sense, in the way vv. 7-11 have described” (*Psalms* [Baker, 2006], 294)

<sup>121</sup> The word “also” is in the Hebrew text (*gam*) (cf. NIV, NASB, ESV). Unfortunately, the NLT omits it.

<sup>122</sup> Goldingay. The common translation of “presumptuous” is both obscure and not the most accurate (cf. NASB, KJV, ESV). Again, the word basically means “proud.” Using “presumptuous” is another example of using obscure words in modern English translations. In addition, the *TWOT* points out that “*zid* is frequently used to refer to three specific aspects of pride. One is presumption (Ibid.). However, it adds two

others including, “rebellion or disobedience” or “willful decision.” The latter fits the context best (cf. NLT, NIV, HCSB, GNT). NLT has “*deliberate sins*” and the CEV translates, “*Don’t let me do wrong on purpose.*”

<sup>123</sup> TWOT, 596.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 597.

<sup>125</sup> Goldingay, 295. Likewise, *naqua* can mean “freedom from an oath (Gen 24:8; Josh 2:17, 20)” (TWOT, 597). However, the word more fully means “release from obligation or from guilt/punishment” (Ibid.). Most translations only reflect this second meaning (cf. NASB, ESV, NET, NIV). So, is David asking for forgiveness of his hidden sins or freedom from them? We believe both, which is why he used a word that means both, while there were several words available that only mean forgiveness.

<sup>126</sup> In verse 13 David uses the Hebrew word *tammam* which means “to be complete.” It can refer to being healthy or whole (cf. Ps 38:3; Ezek 15:5). While several OT uses of *tammam* focus on its more literal meaning (“complete”), its meaning elsewhere “moves naturally toward that which is ethically sound.” Speech which is *tammam* is “in accord with truth” (TWOT, 974). In addition, David uses the word *naqah* (free, empty) again as in v. 12. Thus, Dr. Goldingay translates verse 13, “Then I shall be whole and free from great rebellion” (295).

However, most translations of Psalm 19:13 reflect the idea of forgiveness (“free of guilt” NLT; “blameless, innocent” NIV, NASB, ESV, NET). But as noted above, David probably meant more than just being forgiven. The more literal meanings of *naqua* and *tammam* in Psalm 19:12-13 help us understand that David is not only asking for forgiveness from the penalty of sin, but freedom of its power. Or as the GNT translates v. 13: “*Then I shall be complete and free from the evil of sin.*”

<sup>127</sup> Reference unknown.

<sup>128</sup> David Seamands, *Healing of Memories* (Victor, 1985), 101.

<sup>129</sup> Ed Smith, *Essentials*, 91.

<sup>130</sup> Seamands, 128.



## Chapter 16

**Satan's Territory III: Ministering to Your Hidden Heart**Psalm 86:11

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
  - 1) How do we renew our conscious/logical mind? Why is this important?
  - 2) Why do the vast majority of Christians already possess the truth they need to resolve the Identity Lies that control them?
  - 3) How does the analogy of a computer help to understand what is needed to renew our subconscious mind?
  - 4) What are the two most common questions asked in a Renew Ministry session? What is the unique purpose of each of these questions?
  - 5) What was most meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

John shares about growing in love through Renew Ministry:

I had divorced parents, and grew up with an unbelieving mother and two unbelieving brothers. We were often broke and moved wherever my mom found work. When I graduated high school I had been to 10 different schools in 12 years. I was naturally shy growing up, and my mother had a domineering personality, so I often retreated inwardly. I had intense depression and even at 7 or 8 years old contemplated suicide.

I became a Christian when I was in high school, but my family's reactions ranged from bitter opposition to cold indifference to oppressing me for “abandoning” them. While I knew I had Christ at the time, my depression grew worse and I was eventually medicated.

Depression, apathy, sorrow, and a victim mentality were a constant part of my life. Marriage, parenting, and full-time work all increased the stress in my life and caused these “fortresses of the Devil” to rise to the surface and control me. This resulted in me not being emotionally engaged with my family and sometimes deciding to not care about anything in life.

I had a good biblical perspective on suffering, pain, and God’s love. I knew that He allowed these things for His purposes, and was with me every moment. But there was a part of my heart that didn’t believe a word of that and could not imagine how a God who decided to place me in my family was ever with me, or ever loved me.

Through Renew Ministry we came to that place in my heart of aloneness and what I have described as an emotion of “endless sorrow.” The truth is that Jesus was a constant companion during those times, even if I didn’t “sense” Him, and that my family was the means God used to bring me to Christ.

For the first time in my life I feel the power and ability to freely love other people. There is not a sense of fear when meeting new people. I am free to be unconcerned about what people think of me. I have far fewer self-critical thoughts. I am able to have compassion on my wife, and not shrink back in depression and fear when she has strong emotional reactions.

John is experiencing what David prayed for:

**Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.**  
(Psalms 86:11 NIV)

Most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart.

## **A) David’s prayer for an undivided heart**

The Bible teaches that one result of the pain and lies we experience in this life is a broken heart. This is why Jesus quoted Isaiah 61 to describe why He came to Earth: “*He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners*” (v. 1 cf. Luke 4:17-21). The word “*brokenhearted*” comes from two Hebrew words, *leb* (“heart”) and *shabar* (“break in pieces, shattered”).

Satan is the Great Divider. He divided one third of the Angels from God and each other (Rev 12:4).<sup>131</sup> He divided Adam and Eve from God and Paradise. He is constantly working to divide and destroy friendships and marriages. And through his lies and the pain they inflict on us, he divides our heart into parts. In chapter 14 we gave several biblical references to this. It was concluded there: “In all of these Scriptures, this division within

us causes sin. Which is why David prayed to God, ‘*give me an undivided heart*’ (Ps 86:11 NIV).”

And it is why Jesus said His ministry was “*to bind up the brokenhearted*.” To “bind” something is to bring something together and secure it. That is what God wants to do with your heart. To reach all the isolated, hurting, fearful, ashamed, angry, and deceived pieces of your mind, and bring them all under the lordship and love of Jesus Christ. When we “renew the mind” (Rom 12:2) we are uniting the mind.

Along these lines, the popular Christian author John Eldredge writes:

A good deal of research is coming forth to confirm what Isaiah described thousands of years ago: human beings are actually a collection of shattered “pieces.” Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, one of the leading experts in trauma research, discovered after decades of inquiry that every person carries within themselves a shattered personality. . . . In other words, we are fragmented beings. He writes, “We all have parts. . . . Parts are not just feelings but distinct ways of being, with their own beliefs, agendas, and roles in the overall ecology of our lives.”

You know the internal war this is describing. It is the unhappiness and isolation of our inner parts that cause so much of the unrest, awkwardness, and sabotage in our lives. James describes the poor souls who are . . . “split-souled.” Did you just feel that inner tremor? Something in you is responding to this even as you read it. We are all traumatized and fragmented; no one passes through this life of tears without it. <sup>132</sup>

This is why David prayed, “*Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name*” (Ps 86:11). What would be the result of “*an undivided heart*”? Fearing God. Does this mean God wants us to be afraid of Him? No. That was a motivation to obey God in the OT. <sup>133</sup> But the NT says:

*God is love . . . Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.* (1 John 4:16, 18)

Even in the OT, the Hebrew word for “fear” (*yārē*) often meant, “reverence and awe” <sup>134</sup> David wanted to obey the Greatest Commandment to love and worship God with an undivided whole heart, mind, and soul (cf. Matt 22:37). Therefore, he prayed, “*Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name*” (Ps 86:11). David understood that there were parts of his heart that knew God’s love, and others that didn’t. Because we are in parts, most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart.

## B) Renewing the conscious/logical mind

Chapters 14-16 explain the importance of ministering to the hidden and hurting parts of our heart. But this is not intended to imply that Christians do not need good Bible teaching, Bible study, and verse memorization. We have encouraged these very things and given practical advice on them elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials*.<sup>135</sup> As explained further below, if biblical truth is not understood and believed in the conscious/logical mind, the subconscious/irrational mind will have no source for the truth it needs.

Because of poor or false Bible teaching in modern Christianity, many Christians have Lie Fortresses in their conscious/logical mind. No part of them understands or believes the truth they need to thrive in the Christian life. They believe lies even in their conscious/logical mind. These might include believing you can lose your salvation, that evolutionary theories explain Creation, or you must speak in tongues to prove you are baptized by the Holy Spirit. Such unbiblical lies can be very damaging to our lives. Fortunately, renewing your conscious mind is simply a matter of good Bible teaching, verse memorization, and confronting lies you become aware of in your logical mind.

But our experience with Renew Ministry has demonstrated that renewing a Christian's conscious mind is rarely the need. If a Renew Ministry Helper suspects that a Recipient does not possess the logical truth they need to resolve a lie in their subconscious mind, they ask a simple question: "What would you tell someone who believes that lie?" Very rarely will someone not be able to sufficiently answer that question. That is because their conscious/logical mind understands and knows the truth they need. Or as our primary point states: Most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart.

Another reason most Christians possess the truth they need is that the necessary truths are usually very simple. You read in chapter 4:

If you never believed the Devil's lies, he could never control you. Spiritual victory and power are that simple. In fact, the Devil's strategy is even more simple than that. He only lies about one thing. GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU. That is what he constantly slanders. Why are the Devil's LIES always about GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU? Because believing, trusting, and enjoying God's love for you, is your greatest need! . .

This is why the key to being "*made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God*" is to "*understand*" and "*experience the love of Christ*" (Eph 3:18-19).<sup>136</sup>

Accordingly, the vast majority of the people we have counseled already knew the simple truths about God's love that are necessary to be free of the Identity Lies controlling them. These truths consist of beliefs like, "God

loves me,” “God accepts me,” “God values me,” “God is with me,” “God rescued me.” We have rarely seen the need for deep theological truth to confront the Devil’s lies that make up his Lie Fortresses in a Christian’s mind. Which is another reason why most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart.

### C) Renewing the subconscious/emotional mind

Unfortunately, the vast majority of Christian ministry and teaching completely ignores the God-given importance and power of your subconscious mind. It only targets increasing the information in your logical/conscious mind. Therefore, these efforts do not affect the spiritual and mental “strongholds” (2 Cor 10:4) in our subconscious mind.

Likewise, many approaches to Christian counseling do not address the subconscious mind. One popular approach to Christian counseling is called “nouthetic” or “Biblical Counseling.” Its fundamental premise is that Christians do not adequately understand the doctrines of Scripture and how they apply to their life. Accordingly, “Biblical Counselors” focus their training on learning more theological truth so they have sufficient answers for the lies that Christians are believing.

There are all kinds of good things about “nouthetic” and “Biblical Counseling” for both counselors and counselees. But if they are honest, the lasting results of this approach have been disappointing. Why? Because “nouthetic” and “Biblical Counseling” ignore the God-given importance and power of our subconscious mind. It is agreed that the essential problem for struggling Christians is that they do not fully believe the truth. But merely cramming more biblical/logical truth into a person’s conscious mind usually does not help to renew their subconscious mind.<sup>137</sup>

Our perspective is reflected in what Paul prayed for the Ephesians:

*May you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. <sup>19</sup> May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. (Eph 3:18-19)*

Paul is describing a progression in mind renewal.<sup>138</sup> First, we must intellectually “*understand*” God’s love. But then we need to “*experience the love of Christ*,” giving us an experiential and personal knowledge of God’s love. The difference is illustrated in intellectually believing there is such a thing as love, and then actually experiencing it when someone forgives, serves, or adores you. Only experiential knowledge of God’s love will result in being “*made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God*.” Therefore, it is vitally important to pursue Christian ministry

and disciplines that will go beyond just providing intellectual knowledge, but give you experiential knowledge of God.

Renew Ministry does this. How? It gets the truth of God's love to hurting places of your heart that have never experienced it before. When you realize the truth of God's love for the first time, in a place of your heart that has believed you are worthless or alone, it is an EXPERIENCE! When the love and light of Jesus invades a part of your past that has been dark and demonic for decades, it's an EXPERIENCE! That's why unlike a lot of Christian ministry, Renew Ministry "*is not a matter of talk but of power*" and actually advances "*the kingdom of God*" (1 Cor 4:20 NIV) in a person's heart. Along these lines, Dr. van der Kolk writes:

For a hundred years or more, every textbook of psychology and psychotherapy has advised that some method of talking about distressing feelings can resolve them. However, as we've seen, the experience of trauma itself gets in the way of being able to do that. No matter how much insight and understanding we develop, the [conscious] rational brain is basically impotent to talk the [subconscious] emotional brain out of its own reality. . .

Psychologists usually try to help people use insight and understanding to manage their behavior. However, neuroscience research shows that very few psychological problems are the result of defects in understanding; most originate in pressures from deeper regions in the brain that drive our perception and attention. When the alarm bell of the emotional [subconscious] brain keeps signaling that you are in danger, no amount of [logical] insight will silence it.

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Likewise, Dr. Seamands writes:

Because a lot of specifics are protected by our defense mechanisms and hidden in our buried memories, we cannot find emotional and spiritual relief from their onslaughts. We need to uncover the situations, experiences, and attitudes which are causing the negative emotions and deal with them specifically. . .

What we desperately need is to be able to discover the place of specific need in our heart—to find out where the real problem is so we can deal with it. If we are not able to process specifically about it, it will be like trying to fight a fog.

The principle involved here is an important one: We cannot process with God what we have not recognized ourselves. And so, we make our generalized confessions, give and receive generalized forgiveness, and end up with a hazy, foggy, generalized relationship with God.

Instead of the general prayers, "O Lord, please help me to forgive my father," the specific hurt needs to be mentioned in detail. For example, "O Lord, I was so hurt that day that dad threw my toy across

the room and broke it because I had accidentally spilled water on his book. And then he made fun of me when I cried. I was so angry. I really hated him for that.” This illustrates specific memories which have finally been allowed to surface, resulting in specific confessions of specific feelings; and specific forgiveness given and received. <sup>140</sup>

We can illustrate the problem with much Christian ministry with the analogy of how computers work. There are two places where data is stored and used. The data in the “random access memory” or RAM of the computer is what is displayed on the screen. You might say this is the data the computer is “aware” of and illustrates your conscious mind.

However, the vast majority of the data on a computer exists in the “hard drive.” It is “hidden” until it is accessed and brought into the RAM to be processed. The “hard drive” of a computer illustrates the subconscious mind.

It is helpful to understand that the hard drive is divided up into sectors that contain parts of data. Now imagine there is a computer virus or false data in one of the sectors of the hard drive. The bad data in that sector of the computer’s memory is causing the computer to malfunction. How would you correct this problem? Would you just feed more correct information into the computer? Would you simply increase the amount of correct data on the hard drive in order to correct the bad data in the affected sector? No, you would not, because the new correct data must get to the place on the hard drive that is corrupted.

Along the same lines, you could tell a Christian like John described above over and over “God loves you, God loves you” and it will not “compute.” You often cannot “feed” new information into the “front end” of a person’s “computer” and expect it to replace the bad information on their “hard drive.” That memory and the bad data there needs to be accessed, brought into their RAM (conscious mind), and replaced there. Then the sector on the hard drive (subconscious mind) will be renewed.

This is a good picture of what is happening in a Renew Ministry session. Lies are discovered in the hidden hard drive of your subconscious mind. Then truth from what is already stored in your logical/conscious mind is used to replace the lie. In psychological terms, Renew Ministry is a back and forth interaction between your conscious/logical mind and your subconscious/emotional mind.

The word of God is a very powerful weapon against the power of sin in your life. But even the most powerful weapon is useless if it is not hitting the right target. Contrary to a lot of approaches to Christian discipleship, most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart.

In World War II there was a massive campaign to eject Japanese troops from islands in the South Pacific. Before an invasion of an enemy-held island, The U. S. Navy would pound it constantly for many days with

powerful bombs. The island would practically be pulverized. Yet when U. S. troops would land on the island, they encountered heavy resistance from thousands of remaining enemy soldiers. How could this be? Because the enemy had dug themselves into deep tunnels and trenches unaffected by the bombardment. It was necessary for foot soldiers to go into the tunnels and trenches to locate and eliminate the enemy.

This is also true of locating and eliminating the Lie Fortresses in our mind. Most Christian ministry believes a bombardment of truth is the solution, but it will have no effect on the deep tunnels and trenches of your subconscious mind and the enemy will remain. Unfortunately, when we only minister to a person's conscious/logical mind, Christians experience what is described of unbelievers who are *"always learning but never able to come to a [truly life changing] knowledge of the truth"* (2 Tim 3:7). Paul said, *"I do not fight like a boxer beating the air"* (1 Cor 9:26 NIV). But that is precisely what a lot of Christian ministry and disciplines do because they do not reach the needed target.

Which again, makes all the misplaced effort on merely more knowledge in Christian ministry a tragedy. We'll say it again. The Devil laughs because all that knowledge in the conscious/logical mind does little if anything to defeat his controlling lies in the subconscious/emotional mind. Which is why so many Christians have worked hard to gain Bible knowledge, but are still wondering why their life is not radically and permanently changing.

Fortunately, Christian counselors in growing numbers are discovering that to truly help most people, we need to get God's freeing truth to their subconscious mind. And that is one of the unique aspects of Renew Ministry. In the next chapter we begin to explain more specifically how we renew the hidden and hurting parts of a person's heart in their subconscious mind.

David prayed, *"Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name"* (Ps 86:11). David understood that there were parts of his heart that knew God's love, and others that didn't. Because we are in parts, **most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart.**

In the next section of the *FREEDOM* study, we explain how we access and renew the hidden, hurting, and deceived parts of our heart.

- ▶ Return to the beginning and answer the questions there.
- ▶ Recite Psalm 19:12 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize Psalm 86:11 in the translation above or another one.
- ▶ Complete Project E on the next page, "Renew Ministry Truth Test. It will help you confirm that you have the necessary doctrinal understanding in your logical mind to resolve Identity Lies in your subconscious mind.
- ▶ Meet with your small group this week and discuss chapters 14-16.



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- <sup>131</sup> NT scholar Grant Osborne remarks on Revelation 12:4, “Satan sweeping away a ‘third of the stars’ most likely refers to the original war in heaven. In that primordial event, Satan and his followers (one-third of the heavenly host) rebelled against God.” (*Revelation*, [Baker, 2009], 461); cf. Dan 8:10.
- <sup>132</sup> John Eldredge, *All Things New: Heaven, Earth, and the Restoration of Everything You Love* (Thomas Nelson, 2017, Kindle edition), loc. 1540-1543.
- <sup>133</sup> For other differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant in Scripture see chapter the section on God’s acceptance in *Christian Essentials* #3, *FAITH*.
- <sup>134</sup> *TWOT*, 399.
- <sup>135</sup> For more on important Christian habits see *Christian Essentials* study #2, *FOUNDATIONS*.
- <sup>136</sup> Excerpt from Chapter 4.A.
- <sup>137</sup> For further evaluation of the “Biblical Counseling” movement, see the *Renew Ministry Training Manual*, Appendix A.
- <sup>138</sup> The NLT rendering of Ephesians 3:19 helps us understand Paul’s meaning: “*May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully.*” The word “*experience*” translates the Greek phrase *tēn hyperballousan tēs gnōseōs*, literally meaning “go beyond knowledge” (*BDAG*). Some believe Paul is essentially contradicting himself by praying that the Christians would know something that is beyond their ability to know it. Such a view is based on the false belief that anything can benefit a human in any way even if we cannot understand it. God simply did not make us that way. Only the truth we understand will personally affect or benefit us in any way. That is why Paul was in fact praying for understanding.
- The better way to understand Paul is that he is praying for experiential knowledge instead of merely intellectual knowledge. In fact, the Greek word used here for knowing (*gnosis*) usually simply means an “intellectual grasp of something” (*BAGD*). Paul is praying for something beyond this, which would be an experiential knowledge of something. Accordingly, NT scholar Peter O’Brien comments on Ephesians 3:18-19:
- Their grasping Christ’s love cannot be simply a mental exercise. Clearly it is personal knowledge . . . it cannot be reduced simply to intellectual reflection. Paul wants them to be empowered so as to grasp the dimensions of that love in their own experience. (*The Letter to the Ephesians* [Eerdmans, 1999], 264).
- <sup>139</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, 2014, Kindle ed.), 48, 64.
- <sup>140</sup> David Seamands, *Healing Memories* (Victor, 1985).

## Project E

**Renew Ministry Truth Test**

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**Do you believe the following statements? Circle Yes or No.**

- 1) God the Father does not have any of the weaknesses or sins of my earthly parents. Yes No
- 2) God loves me, and has compassion on me even when I sin. Yes No
- 3) I am not worthless because I am very valuable to God. Yes No
- 4) I am never alone because God always sees me and is with me. Yes No
- 5) I am not the same person I was before I became a Christian. My past life does not define who I am now. Yes No
- 6) My life is never hopeless because God has given me many promises about the future. Yes No
- 7) God wants me to be open with someone about my struggles so I can get help. Yes No
- 8) My mind is able to recognize lies and replace it with the truth. Yes No
- 9) God is never angry with me. Yes No
- 10) God will help me do difficult and painful things. Yes No
- 11) My sinful nature is just parts of my mind programmed with lies, and is not the real me who wants to love God. Yes No
- 12) The painful emotions I experience about past events is usually because I am believing lies about myself. Yes No
- 13) There is no place in my life, past, or mind that Jesus cannot be present. Yes No
- 14) It does not matter how “bad” my sin is, past or present, it does not separate me from God’s love and forgiveness. Yes No
- 15) God is always good and loving even when my circumstances tell me otherwise. Yes No
- 16) God does not have to change my past or present circumstances in order for me to be at peace about my circumstances. He only needs to change what I believe about my circumstances. Yes No

## **Section III**

# **Destroying Satan's Power in Your Life**

## Chapter 17

**Revealing Satan's Power in Your Life**Psalm 42:5

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) What allows us to access and minister to the hidden and hurting parts of our heart?
- 2) Why does the question “WHY?” so effectively reveal the root cause of your sinful emotions? Why is this important?
- 3) What is the relationship between your logical/subconscious mind and your emotional/subconscious mind in a Renew Ministry session? How are these parts of your mind ministered to in a session?
- 4) What was especially meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

Beth, a middle-aged woman shares:

Through Renew Ministry, I have felt the release and healing of hurts, disappointments, anger, and memories that kept creeping up and causing emotional pain. I have been able to more fully forgive those that have hurt me (childhood sexual abuse, abusive husband), abandoned me (emotionally aloof parents; alcoholic & compulsive gambler ex-husband). I have also been able to forgive myself (teenage abortion, adultery) and move forward in assurance of my faith in Christ. Diligently pursuing Renew Ministry has been God's tool in my life to heal and restore me to where He wants me to be.

Beth has experienced the power of asking what the Psalmist did:

**Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and  
my God. (Psalm 42:5 NIV)**

We reveal a Lie Fortress's location and power by following painful emotions and discovering the lies we believe about our identity that are causing them

### **A) Locating & invading Lie Fortresses through focusing on and following negative and painful emotions**

In Psalm 51:6 David prays: *"You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom* (NASB). How do we get this *"truth"* to our subconscious *"innermost being"* as God desires? How do we get God's *"wisdom"* and truth to *"the hidden part"* of us?

The Psalmist quoted in our primary text for this chapter reveals some powerful principles that begin to answer these vital questions for effective personal spiritual warfare. He prays, *"Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God.* (Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5). The Psalmist was modeling for us the process of 1) Recognizing our negative and sinful emotions, 2) Rebelling against them instead of just accepting them, 3) Revealing the lie causing them, and 4) Resolving them with God's freeing truth.<sup>141</sup>

Here we want to focus on two of these steps. First, recognizing that negative, sinful, and painful emotions come from Lie Fortresses in our subconscious mind. Secondly, revealing the cause of those controlling emotions.

First, then, how do we locate and access the hidden Lie Fortresses through which Satan controls us? BY FOCUSING ON AND FOLLOWING OUR NEGATIVE AND SINFUL EMOTIONS. The Psalmist in Psalm 42 recognized a deceived, hurting, sinful, and controlling part of his heart by recognizing his *"soul"* was feeling *"downcast"* and *"discouraged."* This revealed that a part of His heart was not being controlled by God's Spirit and truth and a *"hope in God."* These painful feelings were coming from the place that believed lies. Therefore, these negative emotions were the path to locating those lies.

So, how do we open the gate to the Lie Fortress to get the truth to the prisoners in the dungeon? How do we enter and minister to the subconscious mind? By following our FEELINGS.

The conscious mind is connected and organized by LOGIC. Logical thinking is what enables you to navigate and use your conscious mind.

But the subconscious mind is connected and organized by EMOTION. Usually negative emotions. Which is why they are suppressed into your subconscious mind.

When you are feeling negative and sinful emotions, you can usually assume you are experiencing your subconscious/emotional mind. Allowing ourselves to FEEL the negative and even sinful EMOTIONS in our subconscious mind allows us to minister to it. Recognizing the anger, fear,

and shame we feel deep inside of us, connects us to the lies we believe deep inside of us.

Those negative and painful FEELINGS are the pathways to navigate the dark and often complex maze of passageways and staircases to the subconscious dungeon of your Lie Fortresses. <sup>142</sup>

Emotions such as anger, worry, discouragement, and lust are like smoke coming from a fire burning in the hidden parts of your mind. If you follow the smoke, you will find the fire. Likewise, if you follow those emotions, you will find the Identity Lies that are producing them. This is why a Renew Ministry session will focus a great deal on your negative emotions. Along these lines, Dr. van der Kolk writes:

If a patient tells me that he was eight when his father deserted the family, I am likely to stop and ask him to check in with himself: What happens inside when he tells me about that boy who never saw his father again? When you activate your gut feelings and listen to your heartbreak—when you follow the interoceptive pathways to your innermost recesses—things begin to change. <sup>143</sup>

And that is what the Psalmist experienced in Psalm 42. But it was necessary for him to connect to a hurting part of himself that was feeling negative emotions. And you must do the same. There is no way to heal painful parts of our heart without embracing and experiencing them. Unfortunately, many people just try to keep suppressing the “smoke” of their emotions. Instead, they need to follow the “smoke,” find the fire, and put it out. As we noted earlier in this study:

What is needed for both physical and emotional wounds to heal? Unwrap the bandages that are hiding the wound. Face the ugliness and the pain of the wound. And get it cleaned out so it will heal. This is what the Renew Ministry process will help you do. <sup>144</sup>

This is why some describe Renew Ministry as jumping into a cold and possibly fast-moving river. It’s uncomfortable. It might even seem scary. But that river will take you to where you need to be. Likewise, accessing our negative and sinful emotions can feel the same way, but there is no other way to find, access, minister to, and resolve the hurting and deceived parts of our subconscious mind. If you choose the stay on the bank and not get into the river of these negative emotions, nothing will change. Others describe these emotions coming from our hurting and hidden parts as a river. We need to be in the flow of the river to get to its source. If we stay on the bank and do not get into the water, we will not resolve the pain that is flowing in the river.

Some hesitate to do this because they recognize these emotions can be sinful. But these sinful emotions are already in your heart and you are not

sinning more by expressing them in a counseling session. Remember, you are embracing and expressing them in order to resolve them.<sup>145</sup> The Psalmist modeled accessing deceived and hurting parts of his heart when he asked himself, “*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*” (Ps 42:5).

We reveal a Lie Fortress’s location and power by following painful emotions and discovering the lies we believe about our identity that are causing them.

## **B) Revealing the Identity Lie causing your painful and sinful emotions by asking the question Why?**

Notice that the Psalmist does something very powerful in this text. He simply asks the question “WHY?” “*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*” (Ps 42:5). You may not understand this yet, but that one question is one of the most important steps in effective personal spiritual warfare. It is also a key component of Renew Ministry.

Notice that God tried to help Cain with the same question:

*“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? . . . Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”* (Gen 4:6-7)

God wanted Cain to recognize his anger, not just suppress or ignore it. Then God wanted Cain to understand the cause of his anger, not just feel it. Only then could Cain “subdue” his sinful anger and “be its master.”

Do you want to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2 NIV)? Then learn the habit of asking yourself WHY you are feeling bad emotions. Do you want to be free of the spiritual and emotional “footholds” (cf. Eph 4:27) and “fortresses” (cf. 2 Cor 10:4) the Devil has in your heart? Then learn to attack those stubborn places by asking WHY you feel what you feel. Do you want to begin to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5 NIV)? Then start confronting your anger, worry, and discouragement with the question WHY like the Psalmist did. Don’t just accept feelings that do not come from God’s Spirit, but seek to reveal their root cause.

Why does the question WHY so effectively reveal the root cause of your sinful emotions? Because bad and sinful emotions are ALWAYS caused by believing a LIE:

Listen carefully. Your bad EMOTIONS ARE USUALLY A BAD GUIDE TO WHAT IS TRUE. But YOUR FEELINGS REVEAL WHAT YOU BELIEVE. Do you see the difference?

Your feelings are “the voice of your heart.” They tell you what is happening in your heart. But your feelings are also “the voice of your head.” YOUR FEELINGS REVEAL WHAT YOU BELIEVE. . .

Why do you change your life when you change your mind? Because the mind is where you believe, and everything you do is controlled by what you truly believe. The Bible says of all humans: *“For as he thinks within himself, so he is”* (Prov 23:7 NASB). This is why the Bible says, *“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it”* (Prov 4:23 NIV). Your beliefs determine what you will do and who you will be. This is how God created you. . .

EVERYTHING YOU FEEL, DESIRE, AND DO IS BASED ON WHAT YOU BELIEVE. Everything. For example, consider the feeling of being anxious, worried, or afraid. God commands: *“Don’t worry about anything”* (Phil 4:6). Therefore, worry is a sin and a power of the sinful nature. And when you are worrying you are not experiencing peace or joy, which are powers of the Holy Spirit. What is empowering the sinful nature when you worry? You believe a LIE.

Many Christians have never made the connection between what they BELIEVE and what they FEEL. Therefore, they believe they cannot control what they feel. Their feelings feel forced on them. But understand this Christian: THERE IS A BELIEF UNDER AND BEHIND EVERYTHING YOU FEEL. Your feelings do not simply descend on you from nowhere. They are always based on what you are believing in that moment. <sup>146</sup>

Asking WHY you feel what you feel is such a powerful question because it allows you to begin to understand the beliefs causing your feelings. When you begin to confront those feelings with the question WHY, you begin to get behind and under the feeling and expose the LIE that empowers your anger, worry, lust, or discouragement. And when you discover what we call the “Identity Lie” about yourself, you will be able to permanently eliminate what causes that bad emotion and radically change your life.

This is revolutionary for many Christians. How do many respond to their anger, anxiety, lust, and depression? They expend a great deal of energy to run from them, hide them, and cope with them. They even expend a great deal of money to take medications for them, or deal with the physical ailments caused by them. But what if you could reveal the real cause of your sinful and destructive emotions and permanently renew them? Do you doubt this is possible? Then what else is God promising and even commanding when He says: *“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Rom 12:2 NIV)?!

If you want to be a spiritually healthy and free Christian, your motto must be: “DON’T JUST FEEL, BUT REVEAL.” That is what the Psalmist did. But it is the LAST thing the Devil wants you to do. Satan just wants you to FEEL. He is trembling in fear right now that you are learning how he influences you. He is very afraid of you actually CONFRONTING your anger, worry, lust, and depression with the question WHY, instead of just COPING with and suppressing these feelings. He does not want you to discover the Identity LIE he has been using to control you your entire life.



Christian, the real cause of any emotions coming from your sinful nature is believing a lie about yourself. And you can learn how to identify such controlling lies and permanently renew those deceived parts of your heart with God's freeing truth. This claim is based on both Scripture and multitudes of testimonies from Christians using the biblical principles and proven process of Renew Ministry.

The Psalmist modeled how to reveal the source of our negative and sinful emotions when he asked himself, "*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*" (Ps 42:5).

We reveal a Lie Fortress's location and power by following painful emotions and discovering the lies we believe about our identity that are causing them.

### **C) Renewing the hidden and hurting parts of your heart through Renew Ministry**

First, the Psalmist recognized that negative and sinful emotions were coming from a part of his heart that was not hoping or trusting in God and was therefore believing a lie. Secondly, the Psalmist sought to reveal the lie causing those feelings by asking himself why he was feeling that way. Thirdly, he pursued resolving those sinful and negative emotions when he said, "*Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God*" (Ps 42:5). Putting "*your hope in God*" is simply trusting His truth. Why is trusting God's truth the cure for negative and sinful emotions? Because again, the power of your negative feelings is simply believing a lie.

How do we accomplish what the Psalmist did and renew our minds? Through asking QUESTIONS.

Renew Ministry is essentially a set of prescribed QUESTIONS that enable a person to reveal and renew the hidden and hurting parts of their heart. Proverbs says, "*The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out*" (20:5 NIV). There is no better way to "draw out" the deep things of a person's heart than the skillful use of questions.

Because Renew Ministry is ministering to your subconscious mind, you might assume the process is complicated. But it is relatively simple. The same questions have been proven over many years to help people renew the hidden and hurting parts of their mind. <sup>147</sup>

Probably the most common question a Helper will ask a Recipient in a Renew Ministry session is "How does that make this part of you feel?" This question helps the Recipient to connect with the negative feelings in their subconscious/emotional mind. It also helps the Recipient to stay focused on their negative emotions because they are the necessary focus of a Renew Ministry session.

The second most common question asked in a Renew Ministry session is: “Why does this part of you feel this way?” This question enables your conscious/logical mind to help your subconscious/emotional mind to realize what it believes. Remember, all feelings are based on a belief. Asking, “Why does this part of you feel this way?” enables you to begin to understand the beliefs (actually lies) that are under your feelings of anger, worry, and discouragement.

Asking how you feel connects with your emotions to get you to the place you need truth. Asking why you feel that way reveals the controlling lies that need to be replaced with the truth. These two questions enable a Recipient to locate the place in their mind and heart that do not believe the truth.

At this point, the part of your mind that does believe the truth can minister to this part of your heart that does not know the truth. Therefore, we simply ask a third question: “If Jesus interacted with this hurting part, what would happen?” This enables the truth you possess in your logical/conscious mind to replace the lie that has been revealed in your subconscious emotional mind.

What essentially makes Renew Ministry effective is it facilitates an interchange between your emotional mind that is hurting and deceived, and your logical mind that knows the truth that will set it free from those emotions. Emotions get you to the place you need truth. And then logical truth will set that part free. Renew Ministry is a transfer of truth from your logical mind that knows the truth, to parts of your subconscious mind that are deceived. And when that happens, you will “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2 NIV), including a previously hidden and hurting part of your mind. “*You will know the truth*” in a place of your heart that did not trust the truth, “*and the truth will set you free*” (John 8:32) from the power of sin that Jesus was referring to (cf. v. 33-36).

This kind of mind renewal takes you from merely knowing, understanding, and “believing” truth, to actually TRUSTING it. Why? Because there are no longer conflicting parts of your mind that “believe” different things. Your mind will not fully accept conflicting, contradictory things as being true. God did not make your mind that way. A contradiction always exposes a lie. Therefore, when your whole mind is renewed about a truth, it is united in its belief in that truth and therefore TRUSTS that truth. The Psalmist said to himself, “*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*” (Ps 42:5). He recognized that negative and sinful emotions were coming from a part of his heart that was not hoping or trusting in God and was therefore believing a lie. Secondly, the Psalmist sought to reveal the lie causing those feelings by asking himself why he was feeling that way. Thirdly, he pursued resolving those sinful and negative emotions when he said, “*Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God*” (Ps 42:5).

We reveal a Lie Fortress's location and power by following painful emotions and discovering the lies we believe about our identity that are causing them.

And through simple questions, Renew Ministry helps a person experience these necessary steps to renewing the hidden and hurting parts of your heart.

► Complete Project 1 on the next page: “Reveal Your Lies”

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<sup>141</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of Psalm 42:5 and how it provides biblical support for the Renew Ministry process, see chapters 7-9 in the *FRUIT study*.

<sup>142</sup> Excerpt from chapter 6.C in the *FREEDOM Study*.

<sup>143</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, 2014, Kindle ed.), 238.

<sup>144</sup> Excerpt from chapter 10.B in the *FREEDOM Study*.

<sup>145</sup> Openness about our emotions is very important to Renew Ministry. If you struggle with this, read the chapter on this in *Christian Essentials study #2, FOUNDATIONS*, in the section describing the P.O.W.E.R. Plan for God Times.

<sup>146</sup> Excerpt from the *FRUIT Study* chapter 4 section A.

<sup>147</sup> Excerpt from chapter 2 section C in the *FREEDOM Study*.

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Project F

## Reveal Your Lies

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You were encouraged to do this Project in the previous *FRUIT* study. But it is worth repeating because it helps you understand how Renew Ministry works and you may learn how to do it yourself sometimes.

We truly encourage you to spend some time learning how to effectively wage spiritual warfare in your life by doing what the Psalmist did. He said to himself, “*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*” (Ps 42:5). Asking the question “Why?” helps you to discover the lies that are behind, under, and empowering negative emotions in your life. It is especially important to identify the “Identity Lie” about yourself. The most common “Identity Lies” are a variation of “I am worthless” or “I am alone.”

The goal of this Project is to begin to learn how to discover the “Identity Lie” that a hidden part of your heart believes and that controls your emotions and actions. To ask your “heart” questions until you reveal a part of you that feels worthless or alone.

In this Project you are encouraged to have a conversation with your “soul” like the Psalmist did. The two questions that will help you the most to get to the “Identity Lie” that is causing negative and sinful emotions are these:

*How am I feeling?*

*Why am I feeling that way?*

Therefore, a conversation with your “heart” may look like this:

*How am I feeling?*

Discouraged.

*Why am I feeling that way?*

Because my spouse pointed out something I did wrong.

*How does that make me feel?*

Rejected.

*Why does that make me feel that way?*

Because I keep failing people.

*How does that make me feel?*

Worthless.

A hidden and hurting part of you that believes that you are “worthless” is a typical “Identity Lie” behind negative emotions such as feeling

discouraged or rejected, etc. How can you replace this “Identity Lie” with the truth? Ask another powerful question:

*What would Jesus who died for you on a cross, say or do to this part of you that believes it is worthless?*

Don’t be surprised if a part of your heart experiences the love and truth of Christ in a way it never has before!

This exercise illustrates an important part of the mind renewal process in Renew Ministry. Do not be discouraged if you get “stuck” in asking and answering these questions. Your Renew Ministry Helper will help you reveal and resolve the “Identity Lies” in the hidden parts of your heart. But start now to practice the valuable skill described in this Project. The Psalmist said to himself, “*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?*” (Ps 42:5). Begin to learn to do the same.

## Chapter 18

## Helpful Hints to Experience an Effective Renew Ministry Session

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the 2 most important things to remember to experience an effective Renew Ministry session?
  
- 2) Which of the additional hints were most helpful to you?

### A) What is a Renew Ministry Session?

Essentially, a Renew Ministry session is a 1-2 hour meeting with a Renew Ministry Helper. As a Renew Ministry Recipient you will basically be asked a prescribed set of questions. They are designed to get you in touch with your negative and painful feelings so you can locate deceived and hurting parts of your heart, discover the Identity Lie causing those feelings, and experience the truth of God’s love to renew your mind.

The primary purpose of a Renew Ministry session is not to give you advice or tell you the truth. Again, most Christians do not need any more truth. What they need is to get the truth they already have, to the places in their heart that do not have it. This is best accomplished by simply being asked questions. Therefore, the best Renew Ministry Helpers will spend the entire session only asking you questions.

There are seven steps in a Renew Ministry session:

- 1) CONNECT
- 2) FEELING
- 3) EXPERIENCE
- 4) LIE
- 5) JESUS
- 6) TRUTH
- 7) REVIEW

Each Step has a specific purpose that is accomplished by answering the prescribed questions. In the next chapter we will discuss these steps in more detail. In this chapter we will explain what you, as the Recipient, can do to make your sessions most effective.

## **B) The two most important things for a Renew Ministry Recipient to do during a session**

### **1) Answer the questions with the very first thing that comes to mind.**

Remember, the target of the questions in a Renew Ministry session is your emotional, irrational, subconscious mind. Therefore, the answers we are looking for will be emotional and irrational. We are wanting to discover the lies that hidden parts of your heart believe, so we need to let them “speak.” We are not looking for the logically “correct” answers, but the answer that a hurting and deceived part of you believes. Again, this is because we are wanting to work with your “heart” not your “head.”

You may think in response to a question: “I know that is not true or right, but that is how I feel.” Yes, and you need to express the answer that this deceived part of you feels. This indicates you are working with your emotional and irrational subconscious mind. Just answer the questions with the first thing that comes to mind, no matter how illogical or even sinful it might be. Again, we have to let these deceived and even sinful parts of you “speak” in order to know what they believe.

When you are struggling to answer the Renew Ministry questions with the first thing that comes to mind, this usually indicates a Guarding Part is operating. These Guarding Parts do not want the deceived and sinful parts of your heart exposed and therefore will try to have you stay in your logical mind. What will that look like?

- You want to “analyze” your answer to a question to make sure it is the “correct” one before speaking it.
- You try to “figure out” your problem.
- You monitor the process, or keep track of where you are in the session.
- You try to anticipate the Helper’s questions.

These kinds of thoughts usually indicate a Guarding Part that will interfere with the session.

So, the most important thing for a Renew Ministry Recipient to do in a session is to answer the questions with the first thing that comes to their mind.

### **2) Report any hesitancy, resistance, or distractions in responding to the questions.**

If there is anything happening in your thoughts other than focusing on answering the Helper’s questions, then report this to your Helper so they can help you resolve it and make progress in the session. Common examples include: going blank, having no emotion, being distracted with

other thoughts, feeling embarrassed, etc. If you sense any interference, hesitancy, resistance, or distraction from answering a question in the session, simply report this to your Helper.

Any mental interference to answering a question usually indicates a Guarding Part. These are the most common cause of an ineffective Renew Ministry session. Therefore, your Helper needs your assistance to recognize them if they occur during a session. Do not try to “push through” a session or simply ignore interference. It is important to recognize and resolve any Guarding Parts along the way to a successful Renew Ministry session.

Finally, before you come to a session, think about how you feel about the session. Do you sense any hesitancy or bad emotions about going to the session itself? Report these to your Helper at the beginning of your session so they too can be resolved.

The 2 most important things that a Renew Ministry Recipient can do to help ensure an effective session is: 1) Answer the questions with the very first thing that comes to mind; 2) Report any hesitancy, resistance, or distractions in responding to the questions.

### **C) Other encouragements for an effective Renew Ministry session**

#### **1) You cannot fail**

You might be concerned that if you do not do all the right things, a session will fail. Or you may be discouraged if you do not complete all 6 Steps of Renew Ministry in one session. But understand God is pleased with whatever efforts you are making to overcome sin in your life. Pleasing God is success in the Christian life. Therefore, if you are simply doing your best to do your part in a session, this pleases God and you cannot fail.

Remember, all that is really expected of you is to do your best to do the two things described above: 1) Answer the questions with the very first thing that comes to mind; 2) Report any hesitancy, resistance, or distractions in responding to the questions. If you simply do your best to do that in a session, your session will please God regardless of its outcome.

However, every step you do complete in a Renew Ministry session is progress in mind renewal, even if you do not complete all the steps in one session. For example, even attempting the first step FEELINGS can be significant progress for many people. They have never talked about their painful emotions before, and doing so is the first step to getting them resolved.

Therefore, be patient with yourself and the process. If mind renewal and freedom from your past, was easy, everybody would experience it more. And remember, you are dealing with the most complex thing in all of Creation: the human mind! Sometimes issues will need to be resolved in



layers and will not occur all at once. Just keep persisting in the Renew Ministry Process and mind renewal will occur.

## **2) No pain no gain.**

Understand you must feel the pain, in order to heal it. There is no other way to heal the hurting parts of your heart. You must embrace and experience their pain in order to realize the Identity Lie causing the pain and resolve it.

This is why the experience of God's truth and love in these places is so powerful. You are experiencing them in the midst of pain. God wants you to experience His love in a way that "*surpasses knowledge*" (Eph 3:19 NIV). And experiencing it in your emotional/subconscious mind, instead of merely the logical mind is what makes the difference. Dr. van der Kolk writes:

People cannot put traumatic events behind until they are able to acknowledge what has happened and start to recognize the invisible demons they're struggling with. . . . In order to regain control over your self, you need to revisit the trauma: Sooner or later you need to confront what has happened to you . . . Relief does not come until we are able to acknowledge what has happened and recognize the invisible demons we're struggling with. <sup>148</sup>

## **3) Do not overlook small emotions or events**

Many times in the Renew Ministry session a small emotion will turn out to be connected to a powerful Hurting Part. It is easy to overlook small emotions in a session and think they are not worth pursuing. But often they are the "tip of an iceberg" that is underneath and controlling your life. Do not ignore or overlook even a little bit of anger, fear, or shame in a session, but report it.

Likewise, do not dismiss apparently small events that might come to mind, especially in the EXPERIENCE step. You may not think you have experienced a lot of traumatic or painful events in our life. Especially compared to others. This does not matter. Even the smallest event in childhood can hurt you deeply and continue to control your life in powerful ways. Do not overlook or ignore seemingly small event. They too may be the "the tip of an iceberg."

## **4) Do not be surprised by how strong some of your emotions are**

You may encounter parts of you that really hate God. You may encounter parts that really love sin. It is important to embrace and feel these parts in order to discover the lies they believe and resolve them.

In the *FRUIT* study which is one of the two Renew Ministry Books, different stages of spiritual health were discussed. These included

DEFEAT, which is when we are struggling with obvious and controlling sin, COPING which when we are suppressing of sin in our own will power, GROWING which is when we are focusing on replacing controlling lies with empowering truth, and FREER! Christianity which is when we are trusting the truth and experiencing the Spirit. In a very real way, a Renew Ministry session takes you through all of these stages.

First, you must be willing to embrace those parts of you that are experiencing spiritual DEFEAT because they are deceived about God and sin. Secondly, you must confront those Guarding Parts that are simply trying to COPE and suppress things in your own will power because of fear, guilt, and shame. Thirdly, you must do the hard work of GROWING by discovering the controlling lies in your hidden heart and replacing them with freeing truth. Only then will you experience God's Spirit more consistently controlling your life which is FREER! Christianity.

## **5) Open & close the box of your feelings**

A Renew Ministry session will typically be a very emotional experience. It is important to be as open about your feelings as possible. Usually those negative feelings are completely resolved. We are not exaggerating to say that over 85% of Recipients leave a session feeling very relieved and happier.

But sometimes not all of the painful emotions that were stirred up in a session get resolved. Therefore, as much as possible, you must "put a lid" back on those emotions at the end of the session. Suppressing negative emotions and the COPING Christianity that results, is not God's ultimate goal for your life. But until you are consistently experiencing FREER! Christianity, this is the best and least destructive thing you can do.

As you start your Renew Ministry journey, you may struggle more with emotions than you did before. Things are getting "stirred up." But this is necessary. It has been the lie that you should not stir things up that has kept you in bondage. But as you continue to make progress, this struggle will significantly diminish.

So, you need to "open the box" of your painful emotions in a Renew Ministry session because it is a safe place to do so. But you need to "close the box" on any unresolved emotions until your next session.

As you make more progress, you may be able to do some Renew Ministry on your own. But be careful. Many Recipients attempt to get their negative emotions resolved on their own and end up just being mentally exhausted. If you can make progress on your own, do so. But if a self-session becomes too difficult, stop, and wait to get help.

Some have found it helpful to keep a journal of their emotions throughout the week. This can help them have a place to "put" their negative feelings until a Renew Ministry session. This can also assist you in knowing what feelings to start with in an Renew Ministry session.

## **6) Move forward in faith, not fear or frustration**

We never want you to do something in a Renew Ministry session until you are ready to do it. For example, it may be helpful for you to revisit a very painful, scary, and shameful event in your life. We don't want you to "go there" until you have the faith to do so. It is not necessary or helpful to "push through" your fears. Therefore, when we encounter any resistance or hesitation to a step in the Renew Ministry session, we will back up, and resolve the issue before moving forward.

This is why it is important to recognize and resolve Guarding Parts and God Lies along the way. There may be Guarding Parts that will strongly resist you accessing these hurting, controlling, and deceived parts of you. Other Guarding Parts may want to "force" you to "just get this done," and become impatient with the process. But you need to move forward in the process by FAITH, not FEAR or frustration. Recognizing and resolving Guarding Parts and God Lies along the way will enable you to trust and experience Jesus and His peace throughout the process.

## **7) Probably close your eyes**

Most Recipients will find it helpful to close their eyes during the session. Again, this is not a typical counseling session where the focus is a dialogue with the counselor. You need to be focused inward on your feelings, not outward on the counselor or anything else. Therefore, closing your eyes will probably help you have this inward focus.

## **8) Use your imagination if it is helpful to you**

People process lies and truth in different ways. Many people, when working with their subconscious mind, will process things in pictures and images. This helps them "experience" the lies and truth in a helpful way. It has been said, "a picture is worth a thousand words" and this can be true in a Renew Ministry session.

For example, people may not just feel an Identity Lie, but have a visual picture of it. People may not just "think" what truth Jesus would give them, but may "see" Him communicating that truth in a certain way. Guarding Parts may not just be thoughts, but present themselves as images. Common images occurring in a Renew Ministry session include walls, black balls, boxes, fire, darkness, and a figure or person.

None of this should be interpreted as receiving visions of direct divine revelation from God. Our minds are simply created to process in pictures and to use our imagination to experience truth in a deeper way.

In fact, the Scriptures encourage us to use our imagination. For example, think about the place of imagination in obeying the following command:

*Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. (Col 3:1-2)*

You are required to use your imagination to “set your sights on the realities of heaven” and “Think about the things of heaven.” We are encouraged here to even imagine Jesus sitting at God’s right hand. Therefore, it is biblical to imagine Jesus being anywhere at any time. He can be imagined in your memories because He is never limited by space or time. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8).

God expects us to use our imagination to help us experience truth in powerful ways. Certainly, our sinful nature can be used to imagine sin in destructive ways. Accordingly, Christian counselor H. Norman Wright notes:

Good mental pictures, by involving that half of our mind which we call imagination, will take our understanding further than rational analysis on its own can ever go. This is evidently one reason why Jesus taught in parables and why all communicators do well to cultivate a style of presentation that is as imaginative as it is analytical.

Imagination can rescue us from daily doldrums or lead us to invent a machine. One is tied to escape, the other to discovery. Imagination can also be used to help heal our painful memories and free you from self-condemnation. . . Imagery can be used to bring about the positive changes we seek in our lives. <sup>149</sup>

Using our imagination is especially important when working with Hurting Parts in our hidden heart. Dr. van der Kolk write:

The imprints of traumatic experiences are organized not as coherent logical narratives but in fragmented sensory and emotional traces: images, sounds, and physical sensations. Therefore, visualization is important. It has been proven that emotional trauma shuts down areas of the brain that control speech, but stimulate brain areas responsible for visualization. . . Also, it has been demonstrated that emotional events are experienced with the right (visual) part of the brain, not the left (logical) part. <sup>150</sup>

All of this is why we invite people to use their God-given imagination to mentally process in pictures. For example, we ask Recipients to imagine their Hurting Parts in a room. This has proven to have several benefits. First, it helps the Recipient focus on the part of their mind that needs renewal. Secondly, it helps us simplify complex parts, separating out their various components. Thirdly, we have found that the room imagery can decrease the emotional intensity and expenditure in the session, without diminishing its effectiveness. This helps to avoid unnecessary emotional pain in the session, and allows the Recipient to process for longer.

However, if you are more of a “conceptual” thinker instead of a “visual” one, or are simply uncomfortable with introducing imagery in the session, please just tell your Helper. In such a case you will probably be able to process effectively without it.<sup>151</sup>

A Renew Ministry Helper will never encourage you to imagine or visualize something beyond what is prescribed in the Renew Ministry Process. Encouraging Recipients to place things in “Rooms” has proven to be a safe and helpful step in the Process. However, Helpers are not authorized to encourage whatever imagery they might think will be helpful. They are only to respond to the images your mind might create in answering the prescribed questions of the Renew Ministry Process.<sup>152</sup>

## **9) God is usually not interested in answering “why” questions**

Renew Ministry deals with the impact of the most tragic and painful events in your life. It is common to want to know “why” God allowed such things to happen. There are theological answers to that question that are most clearly answered in the book of Job. But those answers rarely help people in the midst of their pain.

What will actually relieve your pain is not having an answer to “why did God allow that to happen.” Rather, the source of your pain is an Identity Lie that was imprinted by the experience and made you feel worthless, alone, etc. Revealing and resolving that will relieve your pain and you probably will no longer care about answering the “why” question.

## **10) You are probably more free than you think**

Often the significance of the transformation that occurs in a Renew Ministry session will not be recognized immediately. But in the days and weeks ahead, when you experience circumstances that previously triggered the Identity Lie you resolved, you will discover that you are not even tempted to feel the way that you use to. The freedom you accomplished in a Renew Ministry session will become more evident as time goes by.

- Complete Project 2 by taking some time to review the “Primary Principles of Renew Ministry” on the next page. Ensure that you understand them.

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<sup>148</sup> Bessel van der Kolk MD, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, 2014, Kindle ed.), 204, 211, 219).

<sup>149</sup> H. Norman Wright, *Making Peace with Your Past* (Revel, 1985), 50.

<sup>150</sup> van der Kolk, 43-45.

<sup>151</sup> A *Wikipedia* article on “Visual thinking” relates the following:

Visual thinking, also called visual/spatial learning or picture thinking is the phenomenon of thinking through visual processing. Visual thinking has been

described as seeing words as a series of pictures. It is common in approximately 60–65% of the general population. . .

“Real picture thinkers”, those who use visual thinking almost to the exclusion of other kinds of thinking, make up a smaller percentage of the population. Research by child development theorist Linda Kreger Silverman suggests that less than 30% of the population strongly uses visual/spatial thinking, another 45% uses both visual/spatial thinking and thinking in the form of words, and 25% thinks exclusively in words. (online at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual\\_thinking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_thinking))

<sup>152</sup> If you are looking for a respected, Christian, and professional opinion about the use of imagery in counseling, you can read Dr. H. Norman Wright’s chapter on the topic in his book, *Self-talk, Imagery, and Prayer in Counseling* (W Pub Group, 1986), in the highly regarded professional series, *Resources For Christian Counseling*.

## Project G

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## Primary Principles of Renew Ministry

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- 1) **The Spirit's Power.** Authentic Christianity is consistently experiencing the unconditional powers of God's Spirit in you which include love, joy, and peace.
- 2) **Feelings.** Everything you feel is empowered by what you are believing. Feelings are not always a good guide to what is true, but they reveal what you really believe.
- 3) **The Spirit/truth vs. Sin/lies.** Believing lies empowers your sinful nature producing anger, worry, discouragement, etc. Believing the truth empowers God's Spirit in you, producing His fruits of unconditional love, joy, and peace.
- 4) **Transformation.** Because you are controlled by what you believe, you can "*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*" (Rom 12:2) and replacing the lies you believe with the truth. This transformation is radical and permanent.
- 5) **Identity Lies & Hurting Parts.** The Devil's only weapon is a lie. Specifically Identity Lies about God's love for us. The most common is a belief that we are worthless or alone. These Identity Lies are very painful and create Hurting Parts that need the truth of God's love to set them free.
- 6) **Your Past.** Through painful experiences in your past, the Devil has established "*fortresses*" (2 Cor 10:4) and "*footholds*" (Eph 4:27) of Identity Lies in your subconscious mind that greatly affect your life.
- 7) **Guarding Parts.** Guarding Parts often obstruct the resolution of Hurting Parts deceived by Identity Lies. These often include feeling afraid or ashamed. And often result in analytical thinking, anger, or the suppression of painful emotions or memories.
- 8) **God Lies.** God Lies are imprinted in painful circumstances where we are deceived into being disappointed and hurt by God. Because God is the source of the truth we need, these must be resolved for Hurting Parts to be set free.
- 9) **Hidden Parts of Your Heart.** Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective. Most Christians do not need more truth, but rather they need the truth they already have in more places of their mind.
- 10) **Emotions & Logic.** Connecting with negative emotions allows us to access the hidden part of our heart and reveal the lies it believes. Asking "Why" questions and what Jesus would say, engages the logical mind and allows us to transfer the truth there to renew the hidden, hurting, and deceived parts of our mind.

## Chapter 19

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## The Seven Steps in a Renew Ministry Session

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) Are there any Renew Ministry steps that you still feel confused about or uncomfortable with?

Below are seven Basic Steps in a Renew Ministry session. It will be helpful for you to review them because understanding the process makes Renew Ministry sessions much more effective:

- 1) CONNECT
- 2) FEELING
- 3) EXPERIENCE
- 4) LIE
- 5) JESUS
- 6) TRUTH
- 7) REVIEW

If interference in these steps is encountered because of a Guarding Part or God Lie (as described later in this chapter), then additional questions are asked to resolve these.

Each Step has a purpose that is accomplished by answering prescribed questions. These purposes, questions, and helpful instructions for the Renew Ministry Recipient are briefly described below for each Step.



## THE CONNECT STEP

### CONNECT

Connect to Jesus

**Connect Question #1:** "How do you feel about being here today?"

*Negative response: Go to Guarding Part Process.*

**Connect Question #2:** "How does Jesus feel about you being here today?"

*Negative response: Go to God Lie Process.*

The purpose of the Connect Step is to connect with Jesus as well as expose God lies and Guarding Lies early on.

### A) Connect with Jesus

It is often helpful for recipients to find some measure of comfort and security in Christ before moving on to focusing on painful emotions. This can be seen as securing your harness before diving in. Also, it is normal to feel nervous and anxious before a session, especially for new people, and this helps calm those anxious parts.

### B) Expose Guarding Parts and God Lies early on

These two questions may also flush out God Lies or Guarding Parts (God Lies and Guarding Parts are discussed on p. 38) early in the process. This often makes for a smoother session with less Guardian Parts and God Lies later on.

### C) Don't be surprised if you spend a lot of time in the Connect Step

This step is intentionally designed to flush out God Lies and guardian parts, so do not be surprised if you spend whole sessions in this step. This is progress! Many individuals have never explored their emotions in this setting before and may have a lot of guarding parts keeping them from diving in. Also, many individuals have never thought about how Jesus feels toward them in a meaningful way, so it is very important for them to work through this before moving on.

### D) It's okay to skip this step

This step may especially be helpful for new people who are not used to diving into their painful emotions. For those that appear more comfortable exploring their negative emotions right away, this step may be skipped. Use your best judgement in this area.

## THE FEELING STEP

### FEELING

Find a deeper emotion

**Focus Question:** "What negative feeling are you struggling with?"

**Why Question:** "Why do you feel that way?"

**How Question:** "How does that make you feel?"

*Repeat Why and How Questions until they express a strong and specific emotion.*

The purpose of the FEELING is to focus on one strong negative emotion. Emotions are central to the Renew Ministry process. This is because the target of Renew Ministry is the hidden and hurting parts of your subconscious mind. Because this part of your mind operates on emotion, you need to access, embrace, and analyze feelings to resolve controlling Identity Lies.

This is perhaps the hardest part of Renew Ministry for most people. The feelings produced by lies are painful. Normally we are trying to suppress anger, fear, shame, etc. In a Renew Ministry session we are asking you to let these things "come to the surface" so you can face them, reveal their source, and permanently resolve the lies that are causing them. Some additional guidance for the FEELING Step includes:

### A) No need to accurately label feelings

You do not need to describe your feelings with an accurate label. It is sufficient to just say, "It feels bad." Or "it hurts." Your Helper does not need to know the specific feeling and sometimes you may not be able to specifically label it. Describe it the best you can.

### B) Must experience the feelings

It will not be sufficient to just "talk about" your feelings. What is important is that you are actually FEELING them. Only then can we know that we are ministering to the right place in your heart. If your feelings are somewhat vague and difficult to "connect" to, your Helper may ask you something like, "When is the last time you felt that way?" Discussing recent experiences that were challenging or upsetting can help you experience the feelings you need to resolve.

**C) Come to the session with a negative feeling to work on**

It can be helpful to monitor your feelings throughout the week and make at least a mental note of something that “triggered” you to feel negative and sinful emotions. This will be a good place to begin a session.

**D) Try to focus on one feeling**

Some struggle to have any feelings at the beginning of a session. But others are struggling with a lot of strong emotions. It will probably not help you to just “vent” about all of your problems and struggles. The sooner you can focus on one feeling/issue and begin resolving it, the better.

**THE EXPERIENCE STEP**

<b>EXPERIENCE</b> Find associated experience or theme	<b>Experience Question #1:</b> “As you focus on that feeling what comes to mind?”
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Connecting to a past painful event will help you connect better to a hurting and hidden part of your heart. Our mind has an amazing ability to “associate” current feelings with past events where we experienced the same thing. Doing so is not always necessary but usually helpful. Some additional guidance for the EXPERIENCE Step includes:

**A) Don’t “remember” events, but instead follow feelings.**

Again, it is important to work with the subconscious mind. Therefore, focusing on following the feeling, will lead you to a hidden and hurting part. If you try to “remember” painful events logically, you will probably not be accessing a hidden and hurting part of your heart.

This is why we do not begin by asking you about your past or have you try to remember painful events. This would tend to simply engage your logical/conscious mind. By starting with feelings, and focusing on and following those feelings, we are working with your subconscious mind.

Dr. Smith shares:

To demonstrate how association works, think about the word “CLASSROOM.” What just happened? A memory probably surfaced. Did you see how quickly that occurred? Notice that you did not have to try or look for a memory about a classroom.

Now think about the words “FIRST KISS.” Whoa! Bet you didn’t see that one coming. This is how God designed your mind to work. It

is natural, automatic, and effortless. The associative process is not a strange and mysterious thing, but rather, the natural outcome of mentally focusing on something.

If the facilitator has explained to the person how God has designed our minds to naturally “associate” to a memory, then the person can *relax* in their emotion and allow their mind to do what it was designed to do.

## **B) Specific events or general themes will work**

It is common to simply connect to “themes” instead of one specific event. Something like, “My dad was always angry.” This is fine. What is again important is that you are experiencing negative emotions and connecting with a hidden and hurting part of your heart.

## **C) Don’t underestimate the significance of a past experience**

Do not dismiss what first comes to mind in answer to Experience Question #1 in the EXPERIENCE Step. Often you will have no idea how it relates to the feeling/issue you are working with in the FEELING Step. Likewise, what comes to mind may seem unimportant. But the first thing that comes to mind has proven to be where people need to go.

Do not worry about not understanding how your current feelings are connected to a past event. Most people will not know this initially. Do not dismiss a memory because you cannot immediately make this connection. After things are resolved in the session, the significance of the event and the relationship between things will be more clear.

## **D) Your perception matters, not reality**

Some are concerned that they may not remember something accurately. First of all, no one does. No one perfectly remembers everything or knows everything about a particular event. Especially events that occurred in our childhood.

Thankfully, it does not matter. What matters is how you remember something because that is your reality and what may have imprinted you with a painful lie. If a memory comes to mind and gives you negative feelings, then it is a source of a painful lie you believe. What you must resolve then is your interpretation of what happened, not necessarily what actually happened. <sup>153</sup>

## **E) It will not be necessary to share all the details of a past event**

In fact, you do not need to share any details. The only purpose of the EXPERIENCE Step is simply to be better connected to a Hurting Part. Then

you can answer the questions in the LIE Step about how this part feels and why.

**F) It's OK if these places feel childish**

Remember, hidden and hurting parts of your heart are stuck back in time when they were hurt. When you re-experience these places, it may feel a little odd because you may be dealing with a childish part of your mind.

**G) It's OK if you have to visit a specific event several times**

Some painful events create several Hurting Parts and Identity Lies. Therefore, it may be necessary to work with a particular event in several sessions. This is normal and does not mean you are not making progress. Each time you resolve an Identity Lie that was created by a painful event you are making progress.

**THE LIE STEP**

<b>LIE</b> Reveal painful bottom lie	<b>Why Question:</b> "Why do you feel that way?" <b>How Question:</b> "How does that make you feel?" <i>Repeat Why and How Questions until they respond with an emotional Identity Lie. Usually, a version of worthless or alone.</i>
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This is where the real "battle" is: Searching the hidden parts of your heart to find the deceived and hurting parts. These things are usually not on the "surface" and require some "digging." It is necessary to get to the "bottom" of these hurting parts which will be a painful Identity Lie.

A good analogy is pulling weeds. It is easy to just pull the top off of a weed. But unless you pull up all the roots, the weed will just grow back. So it is with the Lie Fortresses in the hidden and hurting parts of your heart. You must find that painful Identity Lie in the bottom of the dungeon of that fortress in order to set it free. The "truth" will not work until the bottom Identity Lie is revealed. Some additional guidance for the LIE Step includes:

**A) Report any hesitancy or interference to answering a question**

This Step is probably working with some very painful places in your heart. It is important to proceed slowly and not force things, resolving Guarding Parts and God Lies along the way.

## **B) Don't be frustrated by the repeated questions**

This Step can last 20-30 minutes of asking the *Emotion* and *Belief* questions over and over again: “How does that make you feel?” and “Why do you feel that way?”

Why do these questions need to be repeated over and over again? Because we are working with your emotional, irrational subconscious mind. Because it is “subconscious” it is not “aware” of the lies it believes. It must be helped to “discover” what it believes. And this requires a patient and seemingly tedious process of asking and answering these questions repeatedly. Along these lines, Dr. Smith notes:

There have been some people who have complained that the questions [in the LIE Step] can become redundant and monotonous and even frustrate the person receiving ministry. This is understandable if the person receiving ministry is uninformed as to why these questions are being asked. However, for the person who has been taught well and is oriented to the process, the questions make sense and the person will flow with the process. He hears the “redundancy” as a reminder for him to dig deeper, look in new directions or to clarify. This is why it is so important to train the recipient with the process as well as the principles and concepts.

## **C) Don't take shortcuts to the Identity Lie**

You will discover that by far the most common Identity Lie that you are looking for is a version of feeling “worthless.” Sometimes it will be a version of feeling “alone,” “hopeless,” or “powerless.” But knowing these things and trying to “logically” discern or discover them will not help you. You must let your subconscious/emotional/irrational mind **REALIZE** these painful Identity Lies. And that simply requires repeatedly answering the *Emotion* and *Belief* questions in the LIE Step with the first thing that comes to mind.

## THE JESUS STEP

<p><b>JESUS</b> Recognize and resolve Guarding Parts</p>	<p><b>Jesus Question #1:</b> "Let's isolate this part of you that feels _____. If we could bring Jesus to see you feeling that way, how would He feel towards you?" <i>If Jesus responds with anything other than compassion: Go to the God Lie Process.</i></p> <p><b>Jesus Question #2:</b> "How does this part of you feel toward Jesus?" <i>Negative response: Go to the Guarding Part Process.</i></p>
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The main purpose of the Jesus Step is to recognize Guarding Parts and God Lies.

### A) Guarding Parts

A Guarding Part is a deceived part of you that acts to protect a Hurting Part. Also referred to as a "Guardian Lie." They are the "defense" and "coping" mechanisms created in painful events to keep you from experiencing the pain fully. Examples include parts that act and feel angry, distracted, confused, or ashamed. These hinder or block the Recipient from progressing to deeper emotions and pain in the Renew Ministry session.

Sometimes you will encounter up to 3-6 Guarding Parts (and/or God Lies) in one session. Do not be overwhelmed or confused by this. Simply, diligently, and patiently recognize them and continue to "divide and conquer" them.

Recognizing and resolving Guarding Parts and God Lies is the most difficult part of Renew Ministry. Almost all recipients will encounter them, especially in the beginning sessions. If they are not recognized and resolved the session will not progress to revealing an Identity Lie and healing a hurting part of your heart. As the recipient, assume that guarding parts will be operating at times and be sure to report any sense of resistance or hesitancy on moving forward to your helper. This will greatly increase the effectiveness of the session.

A skilled Helper can notice a Recipient struggling with a question and go to the JESUS Step to determine if a Guarding Part or God Lie is operating. But it is often helpful if the Recipient is willing to report this lack of focus or peace about answering a question. The questions above help to recognize Guarding Parts and God Lies. There are additional questions the Helper will use to enable the Recipient to resolve them on page 44.

## **1) Don't be frustrated if you encounter a lot of Guarding Parts or God Lies**

These can seem to be an unnecessary obstacle that needs to be pushed aside so the session can progress and be helpful. But Guarding Parts and God's Lies are not merely distractions hindering a Renew Ministry session. They are deceived parts of you that probably effect almost every day of your life. Resolving them will not only make Renew Ministry sessions easier and faster, but more importantly it will change your life in a significant and permanent way.

## **B) God Lies**

A God Lie is a false belief about God that is attached to a Hurting Part. These are sometimes referred to as a "false Jesus." Examples include a belief that God is angry, disappointed with, or condemns a Hurting Part. This often results in the Hurting Part feeling anger, shame, or fear toward God.

Obviously, God Lies will hinder a Hurting Part from receiving the necessary truth of God's love to set it free from the Identity Lie controlling it. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize and resolve any God Lies that a Hurting Part believes. One purpose of the Jesus Step is to detect any God Lies attached to the Hurting Part you are ministering to by asking how Jesus feels toward the part. Any lack of compassion from Jesus always indicates a God Lie.



## THE TRUTH STEP

### TRUTH

Experience  
the truth

**Truth Question:** "If Jesus interacted with you, what would happen?"

*Negative response: Go to the God Lie Process.*

**Emotion Question:** "How does that make you feel?"

*Negative response: Go to Lie Step.*

**Test Question #1:** "Are there any other negative feelings in this place?"

*If yes, ask: "How would Jesus respond to that?"*

*If still unresolved, go to Lie Step.*

**Test Question #2:** "Let's return to any past or present experiences. How do those places feel now?" (Recheck each memory visited in order from least to most recent.)

*If unresolved emotions, ask: "How would Jesus respond to that?" If still unresolved, go to Lie Step.*

This is the fun part! The dawn after the darkness. The new victory after feeling the pain of past defeat! Here you will experience Jesus after confronting the painful lies of the Devil. Because we have revealed the "bottom" Identity Lie in the LIE Step, you are now ready to receive and experience in a new way the freeing truth about God's love. Some additional guidance for the TRUTH Step includes:

### A) We are depending on the truth you already know from Scripture, not miraculous revelations from Jesus

In the Truth Question we are attempting to personalize the truth by making Jesus its source. In fact, visual thinkers may experience the mental processing in the TRUTH step in the form of pictures.

But the Truth Question is worded carefully to avoid the impression that we are expecting direct divine revelation. By asking, "How would Jesus interact with this part of you?" we are appealing to the historical Jesus revealed in Scripture, not a new, present, and personal revelation from Jesus. Jesus physically appeared and audibly spoke to the Apostle Paul (cf. Acts 9:4-6; 18:9-10). This is not the kind of experience that occurs in a Renew Ministry session.

Therefore, a Renew Ministry Helper will NEVER ask you a question like, “What is Jesus saying to you?” or “What is Jesus showing you?” Nor will a Renew Ministry Helper claim to have a “prophecy” or “word of knowledge” for you. A miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit or a supernatural divine revelation is not needed to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2).

What is practically happening in the TRUTH Step is that the truth you already trust in your logical/conscious mind is simply being transferred to a part of your subconscious/emotional mind. God created our minds to do this and the Renew Ministry process works to facilitate it.

## **B) Jesus is not bound by time**

Often the painful Identity Lie you are addressing was experienced in a painful event. In the TRUTH step, some people will object that they cannot receive the truth of Jesus in that place because they did not have a personal relationship with Him at the time. But “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Heb 13:8). Even if you did not know Jesus when a painful event occurred, you can apply His truth now to the Identity Lie that was formed from a past event.

## **C) Testing freedom**

Test Question #1 is designed to test if the Identity Lie has been replaced with the truth. You will know this has happened if the painful feelings have been replaced with peace. Often people will say that place or part feels “better” or “good.”

## **D) Sadness**

When asking the Test Question #1, sadness may be present even though the painful Identity Lie has been replaced with freeing truth. Sadness is often a truth-based emotion and a legitimate feeling about the painful experiences addressed in the session. God is also sad about these things too. Grieving is often very appropriate. If you report a remaining sense of sadness, the Helper will simply ask something like “What would Jesus say about that?” This usually brings significant comfort.

## **E) Residual issues**

Even when the painful Identity Lie is resolved, some experience remaining questions in that place or from the renewed part. Again, the Helper will simply ask what Jesus would say about these things and they are usually easily resolved.

## F) Experiencing your new freedom

Test Question #2 is designed to give the Recipient an opportunity to experience their new freedom from the Identity Lie. This lie previously caused negative feelings in a present circumstance discussed in the FEELING Step and perhaps in past events encountered in the EXPERIENCE Step. The Helper will use Test Question #2 to help you revisit these places. Usually people will feel very different about these circumstances, giving further evidence that mind renewal has occurred.

## THE REVIEW STEP

### REVIEW

Process and  
close the  
session

**#1:** "What lie did this hurting part believe?"

**#2:** "How has this deceived part of you effected your life?"

**#3:** "What was the truth that this hurting part realized today?"

The questions in the REVIEW Step help you to briefly meditate on what you discovered in the Renew Ministry session. As a result, Recipients often have a deeper understanding of the renewal that occurred, and realize several additional applications of the truth they have newly experienced.

- Complete Project 3 by taking some time to review the "Renew Ministry Steps" on the next page. Do not be overwhelmed by it. You do not have to understand it all, your Helper will. But this helps you be familiar with the Process. If you have any questions about a Step, ask your Renew Ministry Helper.

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<sup>153</sup> For more on the concerns about ministering to memories see the *Renew Ministry Training Manual*, chapter 9 section D.

Project H

# The RENEW Ministry Steps: The Basic Process

<b>CONNECT</b> Connect to Jesus	<p><b>Connect Question #1:</b> “How do you feel about being here today?” <i>Negative response: Go to Guarding Part Process.</i></p> <p><b>Connect Question #2:</b> “How does Jesus feel about you being here today?” <i>Negative response: Go to God Lie Process.</i></p>
<b>FEELING</b> Find a deeper emotion	<p><b>Focus Question:</b> “What negative feeling are you struggling with?”</p> <p><b>Why Question:</b> “Why do you feel that way?”</p> <p><b>How Question:</b> “How does that make you feel?” <i>Repeat Why and How Questions until they express a strong and specific emotion.</i></p>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b> Find associated experience or theme	<p><b>Experience Question #1:</b> “As you focus on that feeling what comes to mind?”</p>
<b>LIE</b> Reveal painful bottom lie	<p><b>Why Question:</b> “Why do you feel that way?”</p> <p><b>How Question:</b> “How does that make you feel?” <i>Repeat Why and How Questions until they respond with an emotional Identity Lie. Usually, a version of worthless or alone.</i></p>
<b>JESUS</b> Recognize and resolve Guarding Parts	<p><b>Jesus Question #1:</b> “Let’s isolate this part of you that feels _____. If we could bring Jesus to see you feeling that way, how would He feel towards you?” <i>If Jesus responds with anything other than compassion: Go to the God Lie Process.</i></p> <p><b>Jesus Question #2:</b> “How does this part of you feel toward Jesus?” <i>Negative response: Go to the Guarding Part Process.</i></p>
<b>TRUTH</b> Experience the truth	<p><b>Truth Question:</b> “If Jesus interacted with you, what would happen?” <i>Negative response: Go to the God Lie Process.</i></p> <p><b>Emotion Question:</b> “How does that make you feel?” <i>Negative response: Go to Lie Step.</i></p> <p><b>Test Question #1:</b> “Are there any other negative feelings in this place?” <i>If yes, ask: “How would Jesus respond to that?” If still unresolved, go to Lie Step.</i></p> <p><b>Test Question #2:</b> “Let’s return to any past or present experiences. How do those places feel now?” (Recheck each memory visited in order from least to most recent.) <i>If unresolved emotions, ask: “How would Jesus respond to that?” If still unresolved, go to Lie Step.</i></p>
<b>REVIEW</b> Process and close the session	<p><b>#1:</b> “What lie did this hurting part believe?”</p> <p><b>#2:</b> “How has this deceived part of you effected your life?”</p> <p><b>#3:</b> “What was the truth that this hurting part realized today?”</p>

RENEW Ministry Steps: Resistance Process

GUARDING PART PROCESS	
Before moving on, asking the Why and Truth Questions will resolve more simple and less painful Guarding Parts.	
<b>Isolate the Guarding Part</b> (Checking first for a God Lie that is attached to the Guarding Part)	<b>Guarding Part Question:</b> "Let's isolate this part of you that feels _____. Let's recognize this part has been protecting you, but has been deceived and is keeping Jesus from healing the hurt here. If we brought Jesus to see this part of you, how would He feel towards you?" <i>Negative response: Go to God Lie Process.</i>
<b>Resolve the Guarding Part</b>	<b>Truth Question:</b> "If Jesus interacted with this part of you what would happen?" <i>Negative response: Go to God Lie Process.</i> <b>Emotion Question:</b> "How does that make this part feel?" <i>Negative response: Ask Why and Truth Questions.</i> <b>Test Question:</b> "Is this part of you willing to yield to Jesus?" <i>Negative response: Ask Why and Truth Questions.</i>

<b>GOD LIE PROCESS</b>	
<b>Reveal God Lie</b>	<b>Expose Question:</b> "What would this Jesus want to say or do to this Hurting Part of you?"
<b>Isolate False Jesus</b>	<b>Isolate:</b> "Let's take this Jesus who [would feel, do, say the answer to Expose Question]. Isolate him."
<b>Resolve God Lie</b>	<p><b>False Jesus Question:</b> "If we brought the Jesus of Scripture, who died for you on a cross, to see this False version of Himself, how would he feel?"</p> <p><b>Truth Question:</b> "If we let the Jesus of Scripture interact with this False version of Himself, what would happen?"</p> <p><i>For multiple God Lies: See "Multiple God Lie Process" in the Renew Ministry Training Manual.</i></p>
<b>Return to Basic Process</b>	<p><b>True Jesus Question:</b> "Let's bring the Jesus who loves you back to this Hurting [or Guarding] Part. If this Jesus could see this Part of you, how would He feel?"</p> <p><i>If you have the true Jesus, continue with Guarding Part or Basic Step you were working with. If another God Lie, see "Multiple God Lie Process" in the Renew Ministry Training Manual.</i></p>

## Chapter 20

**Renew Ministry Requirements I: Humility**James 4:6-7, 10

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
  - ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
- 1) What aspects of Eustace’s experience describes what you anticipate happening through Renew Ministry?
  - 2) In what ways do we “fight God”?
  - 3) Why does our Father discipline His children?
  - 4) What are things that our PRIDE produces that hinders us in admitting we need help?
  - 5) What does humility practically look like in Renew Ministry?
  - 6) Are you currently struggling with any fears or shame about Renew Ministry? What can help you overcome these?
  - 7) What was especially meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

Renew Ministry is about layers. Layers of painful events to be visited. Layers of lies to be resolved. Layers of Guarding Parts and God Lies to be revealed. Layers of hurting parts to be healed. Dealing with all those layers will be one of the most painful experiences in your life.

The renowned Christian author C. S. Lewis gave us a picture of what this painful resolution of layers looks like. In his *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, he tells us of a young boy named Eustace. The young man is selfish, stubborn, and sinful. As a result, he becomes a big ugly dragon. But

the pain of experiencing the consequences of his sinful nature creates a desire within him to change.

But he cannot do this himself. Eventually the great lion Aslan (representing Jesus) appears to him and leads him to a pool of special water to bathe in. But because Eustace has become a big dragon, he is too large to enter the pool. Aslan tells him to undress. Eustace remembers that he can cast off his skin like a snake. So, he takes off a layer by himself, dropping it to the ground, making him feel better. But as he moves to the pool, he realizes he is still too large and that there is another hard, rough, scaly layer still on him.

Feeling frustrated, in pain, and longing to get into that beautiful bath, Eustace asks himself, “How many skins do I have to take off?” After three layers, he gives up, realizing he cannot do it himself. Aslan then says, “You will have to let me undress you.” To which Eustace replies:

I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So, I just lay flat down on my back and let him do it. The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I’ve ever felt. . .

Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off, just as I thought I’d done it myself the other three times, only they hadn’t hurt. And there it was lying on the grass: only ever so much thicker, and darker, and more knobbly looking than the others had been. And there was I, smooth and soft . . .

Then he caught hold of me and threw me into the water. It smarted like anything but only for a moment. After that it became perfectly delicious and as soon as I started swimming and splashing I found that all the pain had gone from my arm. And then I saw why. I’d turned into a boy again. . . After a bit the lion took me out and dressed me with his paws in these new clothes I’m wearing.<sup>154</sup>

Like Eustace, embracing the layers of Guarding Parts and Identity Lies in your life will be painful. Remember, though, this is only because the lies you believe about yourself are so painful. But also, like Eustace, you will discover in Renew Ministry that Jesus Christ and His truth will do a powerful and wonderful work to set you free from controlling lies about who you are. But even Eustace had to choose to put himself in a position for Aslan to effectively help him. The Bible says that position is humility.

**God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.  
So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will  
flee from you. . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he  
will lift you up.** (James 4:6-7, 10)

**Stop fighting God and start defeating the Devil.**



## A) God opposes the proud

Christian, God your Father loves you deeply. He sent His Son to suffer and pay for all your sins. And when this life is over, He is going to bring you into an eternal and perfect Paradise to live with Him. David described your Father like this:

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious . . . He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. (Ps 103:8-14 NIV)*

God your Father deeply and completely loves you. And that is why He will oppose damaging pride in your life. Pride will hurt your life. What would that pride look like? Denying that our spiritual needs are hurting us and hurting others. A refusal to get the help we need. When we have that kind of pride, we will experience God's opposition. A child of God can find themselves actually fighting against God.

God warned of this in the OT: "*O people of Israel, do not fight against the LORD. . . for you will not succeed!*" (2 Chron 13:12). He warned us of this in the NT: "*You stubborn people. . . Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit?*" (Acts 7:51). When a child of God continues to be deceived about their sin, or in denial of it, our Father "*disciplines those he loves*" (Heb 12:6). "*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it*" (Heb 12:11 NIV). "*Righteousness and peace*" are God's goals for allowing hardship and pain in our life.

As explained in the previous *FRUIT* study:

He loves you enough to protect you from the dangers of pride and denial to bring painful things into your life to humble you. He so desires that you have an accurate and honest understanding of your true spiritual condition that He will allow your spiritual weaknesses to intensify and become so painful and destructive that you will no longer be able to deny they are there. But again, this is all to help you. "*God opposes the proud*" to teach them to be "*humble*" so He can give them His "*grace,*" power, and blessing.<sup>155</sup>

Dr. van der Kolk describes the potential results of our pride and refusal to admit our need for help:

As long as you keep secrets and suppress the truth, you are fundamentally at war with yourself. Hiding your true feelings takes an enormous amount of energy. It saps your motivation to pursue worthwhile goals, and it leaves you feeling numb and shut down.

Meanwhile, stress hormones keep flooding your body, leading to headaches, muscle aches, problems with your bowels or sexual functions—and irrational behaviors. Behaviors that may embarrass you and hurt the people around you. Only after you identify the source of these responses can you start to be free from them. . .

Silence about trauma also leads to death—the death of the soul. Silence reinforces the godforsaken isolation of trauma. Being able to say aloud to another human being, “I was raped” or “I was battered by my husband” or “My parents called it discipline, but it was abuse” or “I’m not making it since I got back from Iraq,” is a sign that healing can begin.

We may think we can control our grief, our terror, or our shame by remaining silent, but naming them offers the possibility of a different kind of control. If you’ve been hurt, you need to acknowledge and name what happened to you. I know that from personal experience: As long as I had no place where I could let myself know what it was like when my father locked me in the cellar of our house for various offenses, I was chronically preoccupied with being exiled and abandoned. Only when I could talk about how that little boy felt, only when I could forgive him for having been as scared and submissive as he was, did I start to enjoy the pleasure of my own company.

Feeling listened to and understood changes our physiology; being able to articulate a complex feeling, and having our feelings recognized, lights up our limbic brain and creates an “aha moment.”

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Because our Father loved His people, He appealed to His prideful children who were afraid to change:

*It was I, the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things. But no, my people wouldn’t listen. Israel did not want me around. So I let them follow their own stubborn desires, living according to their own ideas. Oh, that my people would listen to me! Oh, that Israel would follow me, walking in my paths! How quickly I would then subdue their enemies! (Ps 81:10-14)*

God reminded His people that He rescued them. And He has done the same for you: “*He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins*” (Col 1:13-14). He promises that if we will turn to Him to receive from Him, He “*will fill [us] with good things.*” But sometimes we continue to ignore Him and He lets us “*follow [our] own stubborn desires*” that continue to hurt our life. As a loving Father He

pleads with us, “*listen to me.*” And He promises if we will “*follow*” Him, He will “*quickly subdue [our] enemies*” and help us to be victorious over them.

You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is always working around you and in you to destroy your life” (1 Pet 5:8). And you need God’s help “*to destroy the works of the devil*” (1 John 3:8) in your life. Which is why the Bible says: “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up*” (James 4:6-7, 10).

Do you see the connection between being humble toward God and defeating Satan? Humbling yourself before God is resisting the Devil. Being humble toward God makes Satan “*flee from you.*” Being humble is the first step to being free from the lies Satan uses to control and hurt your life. Therefore, being humble is the first step to experiencing God setting you free and lifting you up out of your painful and dysfunctional life.

And again, this humility is demonstrated in our willingness to admit our need. David did this when he prayed to God: “*I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me*” (Ps 109:22). Can you admit the same? **Stop fighting God and start defeating the Devil.**

## **B) Resist the devil**

Earlier in this booklet, we described how Satan gains control of our lives through Lie Fortresses (cf. 2 Cor 10:4). And how he protects those Lie Fortresses with Guarding Parts:

Guarding Parts are places in your mind that have been working to help you cope with the emotional pain inside of you. They have helped you suppress, deny, or be distracted from these painful emotions like feeling worthless or alone. . .

Therefore, Guarding Parts have performed a God-ordained and helpful function to keep us “going” in spite of all the emotional and spiritual wounds we carry. But the Devil has perverted them to serve his purposes. Guarding Parts are deceived. They have no relationship with God. In reality, they are powers of your sinful nature and will power. They cause powerful feelings of anger, fear, shame, and doubt. The Devil uses our Guarding Parts as the protective “wall” around the Lie Fortresses within us. These walls of anger, fear, shame, and doubt keep us from recognizing, revealing, and resolving the IDENTITY LIES in our Lie Fortresses.

Guarding Parts keep you from being connected to, and controlled by, God and His Spirit in you. Jesus Christ wants to replace or renew these Guarding Parts with His love and truth. <sup>157</sup>

The Devil has probably constructed such “walls” to protect his Lie Fortresses in your mind. These walls are usually made of FEAR, PRIDE, and SHAME.

FEAR is the visible outer surface of these walls. We say this because FEAR about discussing your spiritual condition or past painful experiences is the most apparent indication that Satan has sinful fortresses controlling your life. Deep down, it is a FEAR of being rejected if people knew more about you. You must trust God to be open with someone about your spiritual struggles. If you do not, Satan will continue to control you from his fortress in your mind and your life will not change.

The substance of these walls that Satan puts around his fortresses is PRIDE. PRIDE is always protecting some kind of PAIN. It causes you to put a “mask” on so that you seem more significant and secure than you really feel. But ironically, PRIDE is usually the confident looking “shell” that is protecting and hiding our FEAR. If you have things in your life that you feel embarrassed about, PRIDE will cause you to protect yourself. And in doing so, you protect Satan’s fortresses in your life. This is one reason why the Bible warns: *“Pride leads to destruction; a proud attitude brings ruin”* (Prov 16:18 NCV).

PRIDE causes the FEAR that keeps you from being open about how the Devil has hurt you. It comes from the belief that your value and acceptance depend on your performance or how people view you. This is why some of the most confident looking people actually have a great deal of FEAR in them. And this is one of the best ways to detect PRIDE in your life. Do you FEAR people? Do you FEAR people knowing about your weaknesses and struggles? If so, it is because your PRIDE causes you to believe your true value and acceptance depends on what people think of you.

For all of these reasons, the Bible says three times: *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”* (Prov 3:34; 1 Pet 5:5; Jms 4:6). If you have destructive and protecting PRIDE in your life, God loves you enough to humble you so He can give you his grace, power, and blessing.

Finally, deep inside and underneath our PRIDE and FEAR is SHAME. Shame is caused by an underlying and deep doubt about the love and grace of Christ. It is probably the most powerful weapon the Devil uses to keep people from recognizing and destroying his Lie Fortresses in their minds. SHAME serves Satan. It keeps the Devil’s work inside of you in the dark, and he has power in the darkness.

The feelings and attitudes of FEAR, PRIDE, and SHAME lead to the action of DENIAL. This is the practical effect of the “walls” of painful lies Satan has created in your mind to protect his sinful “strongholds” (2 Cor 10:4). You are in DENIAL if you automatically think painful events in your past are better off forgotten. Simply ignoring a wound will not keep it from festering. You are in DENIAL if you ignore or underestimate the degree of your sin or how much it is hurting you and others.

Denial of our sin and spiritual struggles can lead to even deeper self-deception. First, we start making excuses for our sin. Then we even begin to falsely blame others for our sin. We are ultimately responsible for our sinful responses to people sinning against us. “No one makes us mad.”<sup>158</sup> And all of those excuses and blaming will only leave us trapped in our deception, pain, and pride.

This is why the Bible warns us: “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. . . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up*” (James 4:6-7, 10). Stop fighting God and start defeating the Devil.

How do you heal your SHAME? It must be gently but fully brought into the loving light of Jesus Christ. And how will you do that? How do you overcome SHAME? By believing the truth that those dark and dirty parts of you ARE NOT YOU. Often, they represent things that were done to you by truly dark and dirty people. But you Christian are not dark and dirty. God says, “*You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord*” (Eph 5:8 NIV).

Our SHAME sometimes comes from the lie that we are somehow uniquely sinful or damaged or challenged. Not true. God’s word reminds us that the struggles and sins and pain we have experienced are unfortunately common in this world (cf. 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Pet 5:9). This is not to invalidate your pain in any way. But the truth is that your Renew Ministry Helper has probably ministered to people who had sins, struggles, and experiences that were very much like yours. They probably will not be surprised by your story. There is no reason to believe they will reject you because of how you have been hurt and are hurting.

Renew Ministry is not intended to push you where you do not want to go. It is designed to gently but effectively deal with your FEAR and SHAME and other obstacles that keep you from experiencing Jesus’ promise that “*the truth will set you free*” (John 8:32).

How do you know you are being humble? The Bible says:

*All of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God.* (1 Pet 5:5-6)

Do you see the connection between being humble with people and being humble with God? What does this humility toward people look like in Renew Ministry? Just being willing to be honest about your feelings. Being willing to talk about things that have hurt you in your past. Being willing to do the hard work to be free that we discuss in the next chapter.

All of this is why the Bible says: “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. . . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up*” (James 4:6-7, 10). Stop fighting God and start defeating the Devil.

- If being open about your sin and struggles is challenging for you, it might help to read the chapter on this elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials*, study #2 *FOUNDATIONS*, “The Power of Openness.” In that study you are encouraged to have God Times following the P.O.W.E.R. plan which includes being “Open” with God. Practicing this will help you have the necessary openness to process effectively in Renew Ministry.

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<sup>154</sup> See C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, (Collier, 1970), 90–91.

<sup>155</sup> Excerpt from *the FRUIT Study*, chapter 2 section B.

<sup>156</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (Penguin, Kindle edition, 2014), 233.

<sup>157</sup> Excerpt from the FREEDOM Study, chapter 11 section A.

<sup>158</sup> For more on our ultimate responsibility for sinful responses to sinful people see *the FRUIT Study*, chapter 4 section B, “No one and nothing MAKES you mad, afraid, or discouraged”

## Chapter 21

**Renew Ministry Requirement II: Help**Colossians 3:16

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1) Why is Renew Ministry difficult to do by yourself?
- 2) What are some reasons given to explain why most churches and Christians today disobey God’s command regarding counseling? Why does God want a “culture of counseling” in our local churches?
- 3) Why should you consider becoming a Renew Ministry Helper?
- 4) What was most meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

David and Kristen both had painful childhoods and carried a lot of spiritual and emotional struggles into their marriage. They were regularly “triggering” one another and communication was difficult. Fortunately, they were coached in how to provide Renew Ministry to one another. It became an essential practice in their marriage. And it transformed their relationship with God and each other. They are so glad they are in a church that takes the following biblical command seriously:

**Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.**

(Colossians 3:16 <sup>159</sup>)

**You cannot win in spiritual warfare all by yourself.**

**A) Your need for help in Renew Ministry**

Throughout the *FREEDOM* study there are many testimonies of people experiencing radical and permanent changes in their life through the biblical principles and proven process of Renew Ministry. All of these people have one thing in common: they did not do it alone. They had help from someone who had learned how to provide Renew Ministry, and cared

enough to make the time to do so. The same will be true for you. You will need someone to help you renew the stubborn, hidden, controlling Lie Fortresses in your mind.

One of the most common questions we get about Renew Ministry is, “Can I do this myself?” Surprisingly, very few can. Like the Psalmist we discussed in Psalm 42 (see chapter 17), we encourage people to confront their negative emotions with the question “Why?” (cf. Ps 42:5). In Project 5.F we gave a sample of what this might look like. A few people can make some progress in identifying the Identity Lie in a hidden and hurting part of their heart and resolve it on their own. This seems especially true for those with less emotional personalities. Therefore, we have found more men able to do Renew Ministry on themselves, than women. However, even men often need more help to effectively access the painful parts of their heart in the emotional/subconscious part of their mind.

Doing Renew Ministry by yourself is a very attractive prospect for those who don’t like having to get help from others. If more people could do Renew Ministry on their own, it would sure make things easier in the Church. We would not even need a “Renew Ministry.”

But again, in our experience, very few people can effectively administer the Renew Ministry process on their own. Most will discover they get “stuck” in the process and can only get so far. Why is this? First, Identity Lies usually exist in places of great emotional pain. The parts of their heart that need to be ministered to are too highly charged with emotion. In order to access and resolve them, you will have to rather fully experience the emotions there. These might include powerful and overwhelming feelings of fear, sadness, or shame. Therefore, when you are experiencing these painful emotions, it will be very difficult to simultaneously apply the logical, biblical truth you need from your conscious/logical mind to set you free. It will help a great deal to have someone there to ask the questions in the Renew Ministry process to help you keep moving through it.

As we explained in section 16.C of this study, Renew Ministry is a back and forth interaction between your subconscious/emotional mind (where the painful lies are), and your conscious/logical mind (the source of the freeing truth). Because of the focus needed on the emotional/subconscious mind and the painful feelings there, most are not able to do that “back and forth” on their own. In some ways, the Renew Ministry Recipient is borrowing the logical mind of the Renew Ministry Helper through the Renew Ministry questions they are asking. And this frees the Recipient to focus on their subconscious mind as needed.

In addition, many Lie Fortresses are very complex, involving several God Lies and Guarding Parts that must be resolved in addition to the Identity Lie. It is very difficult to navigate through all of those parts on your own.



Finally, perhaps one of the reasons that God requires that you need help in Renew Ministry is to ensure your humility. Renew Ministry is intense personal spiritual warfare. Proud, independent, and self-sufficient people will not be able to “*demolish strongholds*” (2 Cor 10:4) that the Devil has in them. In fact, their pride will protect those “*footholds*” of the “*devil*” (Eph 4:27). The need to seek help in Renew Ministry ensures the necessary humility for effective personal spiritual warfare.

The most effective spiritual warfare occurs when you are teamed up with others. The ancient OT wisdom about fighting an enemy applies: “*A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer*” (Eccl 4:12). That verse will come to life like never before as you team up with another person to engage in spiritual warfare over the “*strongholds*” in your life.

Therefore, we encourage people to try the Renew Ministry process on their own. It can be a powerful and valuable spiritual discipline in the life of a believer. However, if a person regularly gets “stuck,” and only stirs up painful things that do not get resolved, they should be encouraged to stop doing Renew Ministry on their own and seek regular meetings with a Renew Ministry Helper.<sup>160</sup>

You cannot win in spiritual warfare all by yourself. This is why God’s word commands the local church to, “*Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives*” (Col 3:16).

## **B) Why do most churches and Christians disobey Colossians 3:16?**

Unfortunately, the biblical command to “*counsel each another*” (Col 3:16) is largely disobeyed by Christians and local churches. God wants effective biblical counseling to be a primary ministry in every local church, and a primary habit in most Christians’ lives. So why are we not obeying God in this matter?

First, we have conveniently delegated this ministry to professional therapists. There may be a place for paid professionals outside of the local church ministering to Christians. But Colossians 3:16 was not just a command to professionals. God expected the ministry of counseling to be primarily, (if not exclusively) administered in the local church.

Why isn’t this happening? Because of the lie that lay people cannot learn to effectively counsel. Again, Colossians 3:16 was a command to all Christians, not just Pastors and professionals. If that is not clear enough for you, then ponder what Paul said to the Roman Christians: “*I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct [nouthetein] one another*” (Rom 15:14 NIV). The Greek word used here is the same word Paul used in Colossians 3:16, and as it was there, it should be translated as “*counsel*” and distinguished from the idea of teaching.<sup>161</sup> How many

Christians and churches could the Apostle write to today and say they are “competent to counsel one another”? Unfortunately, not many.

This is one reason why New Life has worked so hard to create “a culture of counseling” in our church where people are both receiving and providing effective mind renewal. We strive to actually obey the command in Colossians 3:16.

A final reason that counseling is neglected in the local church is because Christians themselves avoid it. What Paul commanded as a good and godly thing that all Christians need to be giving and receiving, has become a dirty word among many Christians. To need counseling has come to mean there is something seriously wrong with you. Perhaps you even have a mental illness. This unbiblical stigma about counseling is one of the things that has driven this ministry out of the local church because it feels more “secret” to get counseling in a professional’s office instead of a fellow Christian’s living room.

Contrary to all of this, the NT says that a local church where counseling is being regularly provided and received is a healthy and God-pleasing body of believers. Deceived Christians think a person is less spiritually healthy if they are receiving a lot of counseling. But just the opposite is probably true. God knows that those regularly seeking counseling are usually more serious about spiritual growth than others. And as a result, they are spiritually stronger than most Christians, not weaker. The stigma about counseling among Christians is demonic.

What if you were told that a lot of people in a local church go to the gym a lot to work out? As if it was some sort of core value in the church. Would you conclude it must be because the people in that church are weak and needy? Would you look down on them, saying to yourself, “Gee, I’m glad I don’t need to exercise like that”? On the contrary, you would be impressed with their commitment to physical health and strength. And you would expect to see a lot of strong and healthy people in that church. You might even wish your church was like that.

A church committed to obeying God and to “*counsel each other*” (Col 3:16) is a church that is committed to doing all we can to destroy the works of Satan in our life and become all that God wants us to be. They have been humble and diligent to honestly recognize stubborn habitual sin in their lives, and seek the consistent and unconditional love, joy, and peace of God’s Spirit. A church committed to “*counsel each other*” (Col 3:16) is a God-pleasing and God-glorifying church.

We do not deny that significant mind renewal can occur through personal Bible study or public Bible preaching. But notice one reason in our text that the Apostle Paul wanted counseling to be occurring among the church members: So “*the message of Christ [would] dwell among [them] richly*” (Col 3:16 NIV). In other words, the Apostle Paul did not believe personal Bible study and public preaching were enough. If the Colossian

Christians in a local church were to experience having the word of Christ dwell in them richly, then they needed to “*teach and counsel one another*” (Col 3:16). This is because **You cannot win in spiritual warfare all by yourself.**

### **C) Would you consider helping others defeat the Devil in their life?**

The Bible commands: “*Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives*” (Col 3:16). That means that people in the church should not only be receiving counseling, but providing it. And again, perhaps the biggest obstacle to the local church obeying this command is the deception that only “professionals” can provide this ministry.

On the contrary, Renew Ministry is relatively simple to learn and has proven to be at least as effective as “professional” counseling, and for many people, even more effective. Notice in the verse that God is willing to give us “*the wisdom*” we need to obey the command to “*counsel each other*.” A lack of wisdom should not be the excuse. In fact, as you experience the process yourself as a Renew Ministry Recipient, it will teach you most of what you need to know to minister to others!

As we have pointed out, Renew Ministry is unique in that it consists of prescribed questions that are simply asked by the Helper. There is no need for a high amount of experience or Bible knowledge. This is why Renew Ministry is one way that the local church can actually obey Colossians 3:16.

In fact, learning to be a Renew Ministry Helper is so accessible, that we have a number of husbands using it to minister to their wives, as in the example of David and Kristen shared above. In addition, parents are using elements of the Renew Ministry process with their children to protect them from being negatively imprinted by emotional experiences. Therefore, not only can effective counseling be a core ministry of a local church, but it can be a part of the culture in a Christian family. And it should be if the Bible commands Christians to “*counsel each other*” (Col 3:16).

There is another reason why we would ask you to consider becoming a Renew Ministry Helper. The need is so great. The number of Lie Fortresses that are hurting and hindering God’s people are immense in any local church. God wants all of His children to experience what the Apostle John said of one group of Christians: “*you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one*” (1 John 2:14). But that will never happen unless effective counseling is multiplied in the local church.

Christian, we are in a time of war. A spiritual war. And the spiritual enemies and controlling lies in the hearts and minds of Christians are so great, that all Christians should be equipped to defeat them. God forbid that in such a war, a local church would be described in this way: “*So on the day of the battle none of the people of Israel had a sword or spear, except for Saul and Jonathan*” (1 Sam 13:22).

Get spiritually free Christian. And then help others to be free. You cannot win in spiritual warfare all by yourself. This is why God's word commands the local church to, "*Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives*" (Col 3:16).

- ▶ Answer the questions at the beginning of this chapter.
- ▶ Recite James 4:6-7, 10 from memory.
- ▶ Memorize Colossians 3:16 in the translation above or another.
- ▶ Complete Project G by beginning your Renew Ministry journey if you have not already done so. Obtain a Renew Ministry appointment at New Life by going to: <https://newlifecr.com/renew-ministry/>. There you will find a link to fill out a form to request an appointment.
- ▶ If you would like to be trained to be a Renew Ministry Helper, contact a New Life Pastor.

## Chapter 22

**Renew Ministry Requirement III: Hard Work**James 1:4

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
  - ▶ After reading this chapter, answer the following questions:
- 1) What are the most attractive benefits of spiritual growth, power, and freedom that comes from being “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2 NIV)?
  - 2) What are at least two reasons that God has ordained that perseverance through painful difficulties is necessary to spiritual growth?
  - 3) What do we claim is the very best thing about persevering through Renew Ministry?
  - 4) What are specific aspects of Renew Ministry that will require perseverance?
  - 5) What is the “good news” about the number of Renew Ministry sessions you may need to experience spiritual freedom?
  - 6) What was most meaningful to you in this chapter? Why?

Humans are constantly seeking products and programs that will radically change the quality of their life, with as little cost, time, and effort as possible. But anyone who has lived for very long will tell you that the saying is true: “You get what you pay for.” The search for something that is powerful, but easy or cheap will usually lead to disappointment and a waste of your time and money.

The same is true of spiritual growth. Christians are looking for something that will radically change them and help them experience the power of the Holy Spirit’s love, joy, and peace. But they often do not want

to invest the necessary time and effort to accomplish this. The Apostle Paul wanted to correct this false and worldly thinking about spiritual growth when he told Timothy, *“Train yourself to be godly”* (1 Tim 4:7).

The word *“train”* translates the original Greek word *gymnaze*. Obviously, we get our words gymnastics and gymnasium from this word. It was used in Paul’s time to refer to the very difficult and even painful training that ancient Olympic athletes would commit to in order to increase their physical strength or skill. Like the example of the Christian gymnast Gabby Douglas above, there was perhaps no greater example of training in Paul’s day than the Olympic athletes. Which is why he used their example elsewhere in Scripture when he wrote: *“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training”* (1 Cor 9:25 NIV).

Likewise, when God commands us to *“train yourself to be godly”* (1 Tim 4:7) He wants us to work hard at our spiritual growth. Bigger and stronger muscles and more conditioned bodies do not just happen without our effort. Physical growth requires work. And so does spiritual growth.

Notice that it is your responsibility to *“train yourself to be godly”* (1 Tim 4:7). God is commanding and expecting you to do this because you have the ability to do it. This brings up a foundational truth of the Christian life: GOD IS NOT GOING TO DO FOR YOU WHAT HE HAS ALREADY ENABLED YOU TO DO.

So, what is God’s part in your spiritual growth? *“God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him”* (Phil 2:13). This *“desire”* and *“power”* to be godly comes from His Spirit living in you. If God’s Spirit lives in you, you will never lose your *“desire . . . to do what pleases”* God. But the *“power”* to be godly does not happen automatically. You have a necessary part to play to *“train yourself to be godly”* (1 Tim 4:7) and experience the Spirit’s power.

And that necessary part for you to play in your spiritual growth has been the topic in the *FREEDOM* study and is also described in the following verse:

**Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.** (James 1:4 NIV)

If there is no pain, there is usually no gain in spiritual growth.

## A) The worthwhile gain of Renew Ministry

This verse is about cost and reward. Before talking about the cost, notice the reward! To *“be mature and complete, not lacking anything”*! As discussed elsewhere in the *Christian Essentials*, we do not believe the Bible teaches that we can become a constantly perfect person in this life. We will sin until the day we die, or Jesus comes back. But we must not ignore the full meaning of what a person indwelt with God’s Spirit can become. <sup>162</sup>

Twice in this verse, the Greek word *teleios* is used. This is a very rich word that usually refers to something reaching its end goal, or being “*mature and complete*” as it is used in James 1:4. NT scholar William Barclay comments that the idea here is that a person becomes “fit for the task they were sent into the world to do.”<sup>163</sup>

In the context, the “*mature and complete*” person is contrasted with those whose “*loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do*” (James 1:8). To be “*mature and complete*” here means to have a united heart, a healed and renewed heart, that loves God. And that is worth a lot.

You only have one life to live. In order to make the most of it, you must be free of the hurting and deceived parts of your hidden heart. You must “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2 NIV). And when you are, the benefits and blessings of that will be too many to number. But let’s just try a “top ten” of the wonderful results of being a “*mature and complete*” Christian:

- #1: You will be closer to God, having a more intimate relationship you’re your Father like Jesus had.
- #2: You will be as close as you can be to actually obeying the Greatest Commandment to “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*” (Mark 12:30)
- #3: You will “*produce much fruit*” and become “*true disciples*” of Jesus, living a life that “*brings great glory to [your] Father.*” (John 15:8)
- #4: You will fulfill one of your ultimate purposes in life which is the “*goal to please him*” (2 Cor 5:9 NIV), giving your Father joy, instead of grieving His Spirit in you (cf. Eph 4:30).
- #5: Because you will be consistently obeying Jesus’ “*commandments*” “*you will be filled with [His] joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!*” (John 15:10-11)
- #6: Because Jesus Christ is consistently living through you, you will make the most of this life and have a great and eternal impact on the people in your life.
- #7: Because you will be consistently controlled by the Holy Spirit, you will consistently experience His love, joy, and peace (Gal 5:22) regardless of your circumstances.
- #8: Because you will be consistently controlled by the Holy Spirit, the commands of Christ and the high demands of the Christian life will feel like an “*easy*” yoke and “*light*” burden (Matt 11:30).

- #9: You will be free from the pain, destruction, and shame that comes from sinful anger, bitterness, envy, lust, depression, fear, and addictions.
- #10: You will make the most of your eternity because you stored up more treasure in Heaven, and built your life on precious things, instead of worthless and wasted things that will just burn up. (cf. Matt 6:19-21; 1 Cor 3:12-15)

What would you be willing to do in order to accomplish all of that with your short life on this Earth? What would it look like if, rather than putting so much effort into controlling your behavior, you put the same amount of effort into transforming your life? What if you put more effort into GROWING Christianity, instead of COPING Christianity? COPING is hard work too. Exhausting. But it provides no lasting progress. GROWING by being “*transformed by the renewing of your mind*” is hard work too. But at least it results in radical and permanent change.

But that requires you to “*Let perseverance finish its work*” (James 1:4). Specifically, the perseverance and hard work required to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Rom 12:2) by healing the hurting and hidden parts of your heart. The Bible teaches that, if there is no pain, there is usually no gain in spiritual growth. But the gain is awesome, and God will make sure it is well worth the pain.

## **B) The necessary pain of Renew Ministry**

It is obvious that God made our bodies so that it requires some work and even pain to grow and strengthen our muscles. The same is true of growing spiritually. It requires work, perseverance, and even some pain. The Apostle Paul described the nature of spiritual growth when he wrote: “*Endurance develops strength of character*” (Rom 5:4). Perseverance through painful difficulties and challenges is necessary to grow our faith and spiritual maturity.

But why is this? Because faith in God grows through experience. You can read about God’s power and love in the Bible. But you especially grow in your relationship with God when you personally experience Him. How did the Israelites learn to depend on God? He led them into a desert and revealed Himself to them. Later Moses explained:

*He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna . . . to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.* (Deut 8:3)

Experiencing the love and power of God in a painful place is the most powerful way that we grow in our relationship with God.

And this is both the hardest and the very best thing about Renew Ministry. It will probably require you to recognize and minister to some painful parts and places of your life. Things you have been pushing down



inside of you and trying to forget and ignore. But if you are honest, you will realize that ignoring or running away from your painful parts and places does not work. They keep chasing you. Pastor Scazzaro writes:

Turning toward our pain is counterintuitive. But in fact, the heart of Christianity is that the way to life is through death, the pathway to resurrection is through crucifixion.

Gerald Sittser, in his book *A Grace Disguised*, reflects on the loss of his mother, wife, and young daughter from a horrible car accident. He chose not to run from his loss but to walk directly into the darkness, letting the experience of that overwhelming tragedy transform his life. He learned that the quickest way to reach the sun and the light of day is not to run west chasing after it, but to head east into the darkness until you finally reach the sunrise.<sup>164</sup>

In Renew Ministry, we gently help you to stop running and turn around and face your “demons” with Jesus. Perhaps you have tried to resolve these painful parts and places in your life before and only experienced pain and defeat. “*But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ*” (2 Cor 2:14). We follow God in Renew Ministry sessions and when we do, He “*always leads us to triumph in Christ*” over those scary, overwhelming, painful, and sinful parts and places in our life.

And this brings us to the very best thing about persevering through Renew Ministry: A closer relationship with God. All of the many people who have gone through this process will tell you this is what they appreciate the most. The love of God is more real to them. God is more real to them. And this happened because they EXPERIENCED the love and light of God in the darkest, most deceived, and most painful places in their heart and mind.

You can gain a knowledge of God’s love from reading the Bible. But it is experiencing His love that permanently transfers that truth from your mind to your “heart.” It is experiencing the truth that builds your faith and sets you free, not just knowledge. And EXPERIENCING GOD is about the best two-word description of what Renew Ministry is. But this will only happen if you persevere.

All of this explains why even God designed mind renewal to require time, work, and even pain. It is a journey, and perhaps a difficult and long one. Why? BECAUSE JESUS WANTS YOU TO EXPERIENCE HIM ALONG THE WAY. He wants you to gain more than just freedom from painful and controlling lies. He wants a closer relationship with you. And that usually happens in no other way than going through difficult things with Him.<sup>165</sup> Accordingly, one respected and experienced Christian counselor has written:

One of the chief obstacles to [spiritual] healing is our obsession with the immediate. The “itch for the instantaneous” pervades much of our Christian thinking. We tend to think that unless [spiritual growth] is

immediate, it is not of God. We have become impatient and frustrated with things that take time. The truth is that God Himself is going to slow down our pace, for He has no shortcuts to spiritual growth and maturity.<sup>166</sup>

This is because Jesus Christ wants to go on a challenging but victorious journey with you, not just wait at the end when you are done. Those who persevere in Renew Ministry discover that THE JOY IS IN THE JOURNEY, just as much as in the “finish line.”

Still, if there is no pain, there is usually no gain in spiritual growth. Which is why the Bible encourages us to, “*Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything*” (James 1:4).

### **C) The necessary perseverance for Renew Ministry**

There are several aspects of renewing the hidden and hurting parts of your heart that will require perseverance. First, the individual sessions themselves typically require 1.5 to 2 hours. And a great part of that time is spent on you focusing on painful feelings and events that you have suppressed for most of your life. The things you have never wanted to talk about, need to be talked about. The feelings you have never wanted to feel again, need to be experienced. There is simply no other way to heal those hidden and hurting parts of your heart that are hurting your life.

Which is why you will never be looking forward to a Renew Ministry session. Every time several parts of you will tempt you with excuses of why you should not go to your appointment. Let us repeat. You will probably never feel like going to a Renew Ministry appointment. Which is why it is important to remember, if there is no pain, there is usually no gain in spiritual growth. “*Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything*” (James 1:4).

For some, their overall emotional pain from bitterness, anxiety, depression, and shame will consistently decrease with each Renew Ministry session. But for others, their pain will at times increase. Things need to be stirred up that you have wanted to be left alone. Those things may plague you to a greater degree as you work to get them permanently resolved.

But that extra pain is simply Satan’s strategy to tempt you to stop messing with him and his territory in your heart. You must trust God with the pain, and trust Him to remove it when you demolish the demonic Lie Fortresses that are causing the pain.

Perseverance will also be needed because of the number of sessions you will need to “*be mature and complete*.” There are a few people who may only need a few sessions to be free from their Lie Fortresses. But we would estimate that at least 75% of people will require 1-3 years of weekly sessions

to renew all the places in their subconscious mind that have been imprinted with Identity Lies from their past painful experiences.

The bad news is that most of us are more spiritually wounded, broken, hurting, and deceived than we ever imagined. And this will become more apparent to you as you progress through Renew Ministry. Virtually everyone is surprised by how spiritually weak and wounded they really are, and how many sessions it will require to heal those parts, and become “*mature and complete*.” Becoming like Jesus is the most important work of your whole life! Do not think that renewing and rescuing the hidden and hurting parts of your heart is going to be accomplished in a couple 30-minute sessions.

The good news is that there is a finite (limited) number of hurting, deceived, and especially controlling parts in your hidden heart. For example, there is a finite number of people you need to forgive. When you do, you will be radically and permanently free from the controlling anger and bitterness caused by whatever that person did to you. When such hurts are resolved, people will be living that level of spiritual health we described as FREER! Christianity in the previous *FRUIT* study. A life where you are consistently controlled by the love, joy, and peace of God’s Spirit as God intended you to be.

The really bad news is that most Christians have stubborn and demonic “*strongholds*” (2 Cor 10:4) of Identity Lies hidden in their heart that keep them from becoming who God intended them to be. The really good news is that, “*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work*” (1 John 3:8 NIV), including the work Satan has done in your life.

The really bad news is that most Christians have experienced painful and traumatic events that mentally imprinted them, emotionally wounded them, and broke a piece of their heart. The really good news is that, “*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds*” (Ps 147:3 NIV).

The really bad news is that most Christians have parts deep in their heart that are locked up in the dark dungeons of Lie Fortresses, controlled by the Devil, and all too often controlling them. The really good news is that Jesus came to teach us the truth about God’s love, and He promised, “*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” (John 8:31-32 NIV).

The really bad news is that you have “*your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour*” (1 Pet 5:8). And he has perhaps devoured and now controls parts of your heart and life. So you must, “*Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith*” like all the rest of “*your family of believers all over the world*” who are “*going through the same kind of suffering you are*” (vs. 9) because of the Devil’s work in their life.

The good news is that IF you will learn to “*stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith*” (v. 9), then “*after you have suffered a little while,*

he [God] will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation” (v. 10).

The really good news is that God’s word is full of powerful, wonderful, and life changing promises! You can “*be transformed*” (Rom 12:2), be “*mature and complete, not lacking anything*” (James 1:4), and “*be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God*” (Eph 3:19).

The challenging news is that most of these promises are conditional. YOU have to be “*renewing your mind*” (Rom 12:2), “*Let perseverance finish its work*” (James 1:4), and seek to “*grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ*” (Eph 3:18).

Before God’s people crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land, God gave Joshua another one of those awesome but conditional promises: “*I will give you every place you set your foot*” (Josh 1:3 NIV). God wanted His people to conquer all their enemies in the Promised Land and to possess and enjoy everything He had for them there. BUT THEY HAD TO FIGHT FOR IT.

Experiencing and possessing all the blessings of the Promised Land required God’s people to trust Him. That was proven by the previous generation, who, “*because of their unbelief they were not able to enter his rest*. (Heb 3:19). Which generation of God’s people do you want your life to look like? Moses’ generation who wasted forty years of their life wandering in the desert because they would not trust God enough to go with Him and fight to defeat their enemies? Or Joshua’s generation that trusted God, fought their enemies, and accomplished God’s will for their life?

We have been honest with you. Renew Ministry may be the hardest thing you have ever voluntarily experienced. Other painful experiences have been “forced” on you by people or circumstances out of your control. But experiencing the very temporary but necessary pain to rescue the hidden, hard, and hurting parts of your heart is something you have to choose. As one Pastor testifies:

My focus was upward and outward — growing our church, reaching people for Christ, raising up leaders, buying a building. But an authentic relationship with Christ also takes us into the depths — the shadows, the strongholds, and the darkness deep within our own souls that must be purged. Surrendering to this inward and downward journey is difficult and painful.<sup>167</sup>

Yes, Renew Ministry takes you to those dark and scary places in your heart. But never forget, the Devil’s darkness can never overcome Christ’s light (cf. John 1:5). Your darkness is not hidden or scary to Jesus. David said:

*I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you*

*the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.* (Ps 139:11-12)

But you must be willing to go into the darkness with Him. And that will be temporarily painful. But if there is no pain, there is usually no gain in spiritual growth. “Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:4).

<sup>159</sup> “Counsel” translates the Greek word *nouthetountes* meaning “To counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, admonish, warn, instruct” (BDAG). The NLT has “counsel.” The NIDNTT includes the word “advice” as a common meaning and comments on Colossians 3:16, “Admonition as a form of spiritual counseling is also the task of the whole church towards one another” (I.569).

Most English versions translate *nouthetountes* as “admonish” in Colossians 3:16 and throughout the NT. But as usual, this is not a word that is commonly used or clearly understood by most modern English speakers. In fact, many interpret “admonish” to mean to “correct” or “rebuke.” But “In the case of *noutheteō* the meaning of chastise [or rebuke] does not occur in the NT at all” (NIDNTT, I.568). Webster’s defines “admonish” as “to give friendly earnest advice or encouragement” Thus to counsel someone.

Unfortunately, many translations use “teach” or “instruct” for *nouthetountes* at Colossians 3:16 (and Romans 15:14). But NT writers usually use a form of *didaskō* when they refer to a teaching ministry in the Church. Accordingly, the NIDNTT notes: “In contrast to *didaskō*, which is concerned with the development and guidance of the intellect, *noutheteō* has to do with the will and feelings of a man” (I:568). Accordingly, to “teach” (*didaskontes*) and to “counsel” (*nouthetountes*) are clearly distinguished in Colossians 3:16.

<sup>160</sup> Dr. Ed Smith writes of a similar process to Renew Ministry:

Many people are not able to minister to themselves without some degree of assistance, especially during the early stages of their journey. Some have endured severe and often long-term traumatic life experiences, and as an outcome, they harbor many lie-based beliefs. Some are dissociated, repressed, and/or emotionally shut down. In such situations, help may be needed over a long period of time. (*Essentials of Transformation Prayer Ministry*, 203).

<sup>161</sup> See endnote #1 above.

<sup>162</sup> For more on “perfectionism” and the question of how godly we can become, see *Christian Essentials* study #3 FAITH.

<sup>163</sup> William Barclay’s *Study Bible*, available online at [www.studylight.org](http://www.studylight.org).

<sup>164</sup> Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Zondervan, 2006, Kindle ed.), 140-1.

<sup>165</sup> For more on how the difficult “deserts” of life formed the character of several people in the Bible, see Pastor Kurt’s book, *Visionary Faith*.

<sup>166</sup> David Seamands, *Healing Memories* (Victor, 1985), 181.

<sup>167</sup> Scazzero, unknown.

## Chapter 23

**Renew Ministry Requirement IV: A Heart for God**John 14:15

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- ▶ For a God Time use the “P.O.W.E.R. Plan” in Appendix A.
- ▶ After reading this chapter answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the ultimate reason people keep pursuing Renew Ministry? Why do you think this is?
- 2) Why must Renew Ministry be ultimately motivated by love, not pain?
- 3) Why do we say that Romans 12:2 is both the hardest and most important command in Scripture to obey? What do you think?
- 4) What challenges were shared in the video that might most apply to you?
- 5) What encouragements in the video were most helpful to you?

Kathy has experienced years of Renew Ministry and it has significantly changed her life. She would testify that it has all been very worthwhile. But she was honest when she wrote in response to the question: “What is challenging about Renew Ministry?”:

Everything. Everything. I NEVER want to do Renew Ministry. I ALWAYS want to just avoid whatever is bothering me. I’ve felt like I can’t do Renew Ministry like everyone else can do it, that I’m the defective one. I’ve been mad at [my Helper] and looked for excuses why this whole thing is crap and I should never go back.

So why did she? Ultimately because she loved God. This is the example that Jesus gave us.

The greatest challenge imaginable was facing Jesus Christ. As He knelt in that garden, He began to feel the weight of the sin that was waiting for Him on the cross. He was anticipating what it would feel like to be PUNISHED for ALL of our SINS and experience the full WRATH of

Almighty God. Perhaps even more painful, was the thought of being separated from His Father for the first time in eternity. Because of all this, we are told, *“being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground”* (Luke 22:44 NIV).

Three times in that garden, our Savior, *“bowed with his face to the ground, praying, ‘My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.’”* (Matt 26:39). In Renew Ministry, you will be constantly confronted with a similar challenge and choice. Again, renewing the hidden and hurting parts of your heart is painful and requires a great deal of time, energy, and sacrifice. And like Jesus, you will want to find another way. An easier and shorter way. Or just to ignore those hurting and controlling parts of your heart altogether.

So why do this? At the resurrection you will be raised a perfect person with no emotional pain, anger, lust, fear, discouragement, or sin at all. *“We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him”* (1 John 3:2 NIV). *“God . . . predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of his Son”* (Rom 8:29 NIV). You are *“predestined”* to be completely *“transformed”* without doing the hard work of *“renewing your mind”* (Rom 12:2 NIV). So why not wait until that Day when all of this renewal is completely and automatically done for you?

In the previous chapter we offered at least ten reasons, ranging from being closer to God to glorifying God. But there is another reason. It is the ultimate reason. And probably the only reason that will be powerful enough to enable you to do what it takes to *“be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* in Renew Ministry. That reason is this: YOUR LOVE FOR GOD.

Remember, Romans 12:2 is a command. Renew Ministry is not just a nice church program that will help you, and is available if you want to do it. Renew Ministry is a practical and effective way to OBEY THE COMMAND to *“be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Rom 12:2). If you want to obey God, then you have no choice but to find the most effective way to do that. Renew Ministry is one of those.

Throughout this study you have read and heard marvelous testimonies about the permanent and radical transformation that people have experienced through Renew Ministry. You’ve heard about its blessings. But when *“the renewing of your mind”* becomes perhaps the hardest and most painful thing you have ever chosen to do, why will you continue to do it? We are given the answer when Jesus said to us:

**“If you love me, obey my commandments.”** (John 14:15)

Only your love for God will be enough motivation to keep you pursuing being transformed by the renewing of the hard and hurting parts of your heart.

## A) The ultimate motivation for Renew Ministry

Often John 14:15 is read as a request from Jesus to prove our love for Him. If we truly love Him, then we will obey Him. This is true. Obeying Him is the proof that we love Him. But there is also a promise here. Jesus said, “*If you love me,*” you will “*obey my commandments*” (John 14:15). Nothing will be able to stop our obedience to Jesus, if we love Jesus. If we love Jesus, obeying Him will always and automatically happen. Love for Jesus is the ultimate reason and power that enables us to obey Jesus.

It turns out that obeying the Greatest Commandment is the ultimate motivation for obeying all the commandments. When you “*love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength*” (Mark 12:30), you will obey even the hardest commands with joy!

Love for God is why Jesus went to the cross. Nothing else would have been enough, even for Him. In the face of a very painful choice, it was the Son’s love for His Father that gave Him the power to sincerely say, “*I want your will to be done, not mine.*” (Matt 26:39).

God the Father wanted His Son to love Him by suffering to pay the penalty for your sin. What are you willing to suffer in order to love God by overcoming the power of your sin? The Bible challenges us: “*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood*” (Heb 12:4 NIV). Jesus was willing to shed His blood to love His Father. We ask you again, what are you willing to do “*in your struggle against sin*”?

Love for God is why Jesus obeyed the most difficult and painful command His Father ever gave Him. The same will be true for you. In Renew Ministry you will discover that Romans 12:2 may be the hardest command in Scripture to actually obey (we will explain that more below). In Renew Ministry you will experience just how hard it is to obey the command to “*be transformed by the renewing of*” the hidden, hurting, hard, and controlling parts of “*your mind*” (Rom 12:2 NIV). And when you realize how hard this will be, only your love for God will be enough motivation to keep you pursuing being transformed by the renewing of the hard and hurting parts of your heart. Which is why Jesus said to his disciples: “*If you love me, obey my commandments*” (John 14:15).<sup>168</sup>

## B) Renew Ministry must be motivated by love, not pain

Understandably, most people begin their journey of mind renewal because they want to get rid of their pain. Their anger, fears, lust, and depression are stealing their happiness and hurting those around them. Their emotional and relational pain is what initially motivates them to get help. And this is O.K. This is even part of God’s design. But a mere motivation to reduce your pain will usually not be enough to finish your journey to spiritual freedom.



This is how many approach going to the dentist. We have a toothache. We put up with it for a while because going to the dentist to fix a toothache requires time, money, and is unpleasant. But when the pain of the toothache becomes great enough, we overcome our reluctance and do what it takes to get the tooth healed.

Again, unfortunately, this is how many Christians approach the need to focus a period of time on permanently removing sinful strongholds in their life. They do not pursue this until those strongholds have caused a great deal of pain in their life and the lives of others. There is a better way. It is to pursue GROWING Christianity because you love God.<sup>169</sup>

Ultimately, the desire to heal your pain is rather self-centered. Therefore, when you perceive that the work, time, and even pain of mind renewal is greater than the benefits, you will stop. You will be contented with simply COPING better, instead of being spiritually FREER!, simply because you have experienced a significant decrease in emotional and relational pain.

What will motivate you to continue mind renewal in order to reach the true spiritual freedom and fruitfulness that God wants? YOUR LOVE FOR HIM. Your desire to become more obedient, pleasing, and glorifying to Him. Your desire to love Him with more of your heart, more of your mind, and more of your life. That will be the only sufficient motivation to get you through your journey to the place of spiritual freedom and fruitfulness that your Father has waiting for you.

We encourage you now to make a decision that you are ultimately pursuing transformation and godliness to please and glorify God, instead of just pleasing yourself. Tell God now what Jesus told Him in the garden: *"I want your will to be done, not mine"* (Matt 26:39).

As we said, you will probably experience God in ways you never have before through the Renew Ministry process. But it requires that you love God enough to recognize and resolve whatever parts in your heart that do not yet believe and obey your Lord.

In the previous chapter we listed at least ten amazing results of becoming a *"mature and complete"* Christian. These are wonderful promises for those who *"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete"* (James 1:4). Elsewhere Paul recognizes that such promises are powerful motivations for holiness, but he reminds us of the ultimate motivation when he writes:

*Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.* (2 Cor 7:1 NIV)

Simply put, God DESERVES for us to do everything in our power to become holier and please and glorify Him with our lives. Can you say in your heart what the popular worship song says?:

I would run for a thousand years  
 If I knew every step would be getting me closer.  
 And I'd swim to the ocean floor  
 For my Lord is the treasure, my Lord is the treasure. <sup>170</sup>

Only your love for God will be enough motivation to keep you pursuing being transformed by the renewing of the hard and hurting parts of your heart. Which is why Jesus said to his disciples: *"If you love me, obey my commandments"* (John 14:15).

### **C) What is the most important commandment to actually obey?**

Romans 12:2

We would argue that Romans 12:2 is the most important commandment to obey. Your obedience to all other commands depends on obeying this one. Only to the extent that you are *"transformed"* can you love God and love others. Only to the extent that you are *"renewing your mind"* will you be controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit. And only by being controlled by the Holy Spirit can you obey any of God's commands in a God pleasing way. And obeying Romans 12:2 to *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind"* (NIV) is at the bottom, and the ultimate source, of all these things.

Therefore, we see this necessary "upward spiral" of synergy between renewing our mind and loving God. Which comes first? Renewing our mind. Our initial conversion to Christ demonstrated that. We had no real love for God before we were *"transformed by the renewing of your mind"* with the truth of God's love in the Gospel. And now we must apply all the love for God we have obtained through mind renewal, in order to be motivated to pursue more mind renewal, so we will love God even more.

The Bible reveals a prescribed pattern for spiritual growth and life transformation:

- 1) Because you love God, make it your goal to obey Him and *"Imitate God in everything you do"* (Eph 5:1). Do not set your sights lower than that, because becoming like Him is His expectation for your life.
- 2) Let the current level of love you have for God motivate you to pursue obeying Romans 12:2.
- 3) Be transformed by renewing the logical and subconscious parts of your mind so you will trust the truth of God's love in more places of your heart and life.
- 4) Then you will be more consistently controlled by God the Spirit who lives inside of you, and will effortlessly and automatically

experience His power to obey God so that His commandments are that “*easy*” and “*light*” yoke that Jesus promised.

Obedying Romans 12:2 is the starting point for all of the above. Yes, in Renew Ministry you will learn that renewing those hard and hurting parts of your heart may be the hardest commandment to obey. But the transformation you experience by doing so, will also teach you that Romans 12:2 is among the most important commands to obey. Because when you do, the power of the Holy Spirit will be greater in your life, enabling you to obey all the rest of God’s commands automatically and effortlessly. <sup>171</sup>

You will learn in Renew Ministry that only your love for God will be enough motivation to keep you pursuing being transformed by the renewing of the hard and hurting parts of your heart. Which is why “*Jesus said to his disciples: ‘If you love me, you will do as I command’*” (John 14:15)

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<sup>168</sup> See *Christian Essentials* study #2 *FOUNDATIONS* for several more biblical motivations to obey God and do the hard work of being transformed by the renewing of your mind.

<sup>169</sup> Excerpt from *the FRUIT Study*, chapter 32 section B.

<sup>170</sup> “Treasure” by the Desperation Band, copyright, Integrity Music.

<sup>171</sup> Excerpt from *FREEDOM Study* chapter 1 section B.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

**“P.O.W.E.R. Plan” for God Times**

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**Praise** for your Dad’s character and blessings (≈2 minutes):

- Consider kneeling for this portion of your God Time.
- What are things about your Dad to worship Him or thank Him for?
- How has your Dad answered your prayers?

**Openness** to your Dad about any negative emotions (≈2 min.):

- Are there any bad feelings you are struggling with today such as worry, anger, apathy, discouragement? Talk to God about these. Or thank Him that the powers of the Spirit are controlling you today like love, joy, and peace.

**Word** from your Dad (≈7 min.):

- If you are struggling with bad feelings: Ask why you are feeling that way. Our feelings are always based on what we are believing. Bad feelings not of the Spirit are always based on believing lies. Try to understand the lie that is causing your anger, fear, or discouragement. Then “*take up the shield of faith*” which is believing the truth of God and use “*the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God*” to confront the lie (Eph 6:16-17). If you believe the truth, “*the truth will set you free*” (John 8:32).
- If reading the *Christian Essentials* study: Answer the questions at the beginning of the chapter and follow the instructions at its end.
- If reading the Bible: *Pray* the Bible, thanking God for promises and blessing in the text and asking for help to obey commands. Make God Times a two-way conversation with God!

**Entreaties** and prayer for yourself and others (≈5 min.):

- What are 2-3 specific things you are asking God to do in your life right now?
- What family and friends can you pray Eph 3:14-19 for?
- What lost people in your life can you pray for?
- What is happening in your life today that you want God’s blessing for?

**Resolutions** to your Dad (≈3 min.):

- How can you be kind to someone today?
- What commitments do you need to be faithful with?
- What is something that could be better with more planning?

## Appendix B

**“P.O.W.E.R. Plan” for Small Group**≈ 80 minutes

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**Praise** for your Dad’s character and blessings (≈5 minutes):

- What do you want to thank your Dad for this week? How has your Dad answered your prayers?
- Take turns thanking Him for these things now.

**Openness** about any negative emotions (≈15 min.):

- Are there bad emotions you have been struggling with this week including anger, worry, discouragement, or lust?
- If so, what were you believing that made you feel that way?
- What would be truth from Jesus that would set you free from these feelings?

**Word** from your Dad (≈45 min.):

- Ask one another how consistent and encouraging your God Times have been this week.
- Take turns answering the questions at the beginning and end of the chapters assigned this week in the *Christians Essentials* study.
- What did you learn from any Projects you were assigned this week?
- Recite your verses for this week. A list can be found in Appendix C.

**Entreaties** and prayer for yourself and others (≈10 min.):

- What are 2-3 specific things you are asking, seeking, and knocking for God to do in your life right now?
- What family and friends can you pray Eph 3:14-19 for?
- Who do you know that needs Christ in their life and you can pray for?
- Take turns praying for each other.

**Resolutions** to your Dad (≈5 min.):

- Are there any actions you want to pursue because of your discussion?
- Is there anything you would like your group to hold you accountable to this week?
- How did you do with any commitments last week

Appendix C

<b><i>FREEDOM</i></b> <b>from Satan’s Power</b>	
<b>Section I: Introduction to Renew Ministry</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>God’s Promise to Change Your Life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• God promises to change your life when you change your mind (Rom 12:2)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A) God’s promise to transform your life</li><li>B) God’s command to renew your mind</li><li>C) Who will benefit from the <i>FREEDOM</i> study?</li><li>D) The contents of the <i>FREEDOM</i> study</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Renew Ministry: A Powerful Tool to Change Your Life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Renew Ministry is a proven process based on biblical principles that will change your life. (Rom 12:2)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A) The proven power of Renew Ministry</li><li>B) The revolutionary target of Renew Ministry: Your hidden heart</li><li>C) The radically different method of Renew Ministry</li><li>D) The challenges of Renew Ministry</li></ul></li></ul>
	Project A: What Would You Change about Your Character?
<b>3</b>	<b>Testimonies of Christians Being Transformed by Renew Ministry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Renew Ministry has radically and permanently changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Christians all over the world. (2 Cor 13:1)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A) Testimonies from professionals using Renew Ministry</li><li>B) Testimonies from recipients of Renew Ministry</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Section II: Understanding Satan’s Schemes in Your Life</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Satan’s Power I: The Potential to Destroy Your Life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is always working around you and in you to destroy your life. (1 Pet 5:8)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A) The war against you: Satan</li><li>B) The war around you: the “world”</li><li>C) The war within you: the “flesh”</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Satan’s Power II: Lies You Believe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Satan’s only power is a lie, so the only weapon you need is the truth. (1 Pet 5:9)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A) The Devil’s only weapon is a lie</li></ul></li></ul>

	<p>B) The only weapon you need is the truth</p> <p>C) God's part and your part in spiritual warfare</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Satan's Power III: Lie Fortresses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lie Fortresses in your subconscious mind are formed by IDENTITY LIES and accessed by connecting with negative feelings. (2 Cor 10:4)</li> <li>A) A biblical description of Lie Fortresses</li> <li>B) How can you tell if a Lie Fortress exists in your mind?</li> <li>C) The layout of a Lie Fortress</li> <li>D) How do we penetrate the "walls" of a Lie Fortress to set the captives free?</li> </ul>
	<p>Project B: Lie Fortress</p> <p>Project C: Spiritual Health Test</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Satan's Strategy I: The Power of Your Past</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past. (Eph 4:26-27)</li> <li>A) The making of a demonic foothold in your mind</li> <li>B) The biblical warning of demonic footholds in your mind</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Satan's Strategy II: The Effect of Your Past</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past. (Eph 4:26-27)</li> <li>A) The pain of the past is caused by the lies, not the event</li> <li>B) Three factors that affect the number and strength of Identity Lies</li> <li>C) Didn't Paul say you just need to simply forget your past?</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Satan's Strategy III: The Importance of Your Past</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our childhood experiences greatly affect our adult life. (Prov 22:6)</li> <li>A) Scientific evidence of how our past affects our present</li> <li>B) Christian wisdom regarding how our past affects our present</li> <li>C) Testimonies of how childhood experiences can powerful and negative effects on our adulthood</li> </ul>
	<p>Project D: Adverse Childhood Experiences Test</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Satan's Influence I: The Source of Your Pain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause us to be hurt and to hurt others. (Ps 139:23-24)</li> <li>A) The rich meaning of <i>ōtseb</i></li> <li>B) Emotional wounds &amp; "pain bubbles"</li> <li>C) Sin, idols, &amp; hurting people</li> </ul>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Satan's Influence II: The Power of Your Pain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause stunted growth, sinful triggers, and distorted perception. (Ps 139:23-24)</li> <li>A) Parts stuck in the past</li> <li>B) Triggers</li> </ul>



	C) Filters
<b>12</b>	<b>Satan's Defenses I: Guarding Parts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guarding Parts often surround a Lie Fortress in our mind and must be resolved. (2 Tim 2:25-26)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Understanding Guarding Parts</li> <li>B) Recognizing Guarding Parts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>13</b>	<b>Satan's Defenses II: Guarding Parts &amp; God Lies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We must face and resolve our Guarding Parts &amp; God Lies with the truth of God's love for us. (Eph 6:14)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Effects of Guarding Parts</li> <li>B) Responding to Guarding Parts: Fight instead of run</li> <li>C) The pain and obstacle of God Lies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Graphic 2: How God Lies Form
<b>14</b>	<b>Satan's Territory I: The Reality of Your Hidden Heart</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective. (Ps 51:6)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Human experience with the subconscious mind</li> <li>B) The Bible's description of the subconscious mind</li> <li>C) Christian wisdom on the subconscious mind</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Graphic 3: Conscious vs. Subconscious Mind
<b>15</b>	<b>Satan's Territory II: The Importance of Your Hidden Heart</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind. (Ps 19:12)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) David's prayer about his subconscious mind</li> <li>B) The effects of the subconscious mind</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>16</b>	<b>Satan's Territory III: Ministering to Your Hidden Heart</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart. (Ps 86:11)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) David's prayer for an undivided heart</li> <li>B) Renewing the conscious/logical mind</li> <li>C) Renewing the subconscious/emotional mind</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Project E: Renew Ministry Truth Test

### Section III: Destroying Satan's Power in Your Life

<b>17</b>	<b>Revealing Satan's Power in Your Life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We reveal a Lie Fortress's location and power by following painful emotions and discovering the Identity Lie causing them. (Ps 42:5)</li> </ul>
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	<p>A) Locating &amp; invading Lie Fortresses through focusing on and following negative and painful emotions</p> <p>B) Revealing the Identity Lie causing your painful and sinful emotions by asking the question Why?</p> <p>C) Renewing the hidden and hurting parts of your heart through Renew Ministry</p>
	Project F: Reveal Your Lies
<b>18</b>	<p><b>Helpful Hints to Experience an Effective Renew Ministry Session</b></p> <p>A) What is a Renew Ministry Session?</p> <p>B) The <u>two most important things</u> for a Renew Ministry Recipient to do during a session</p> <p>C) Other encouragements for an effective Renew Ministry session</p>
	Project G: Review the Primary Principles of Renew Ministry
<b>19</b>	<p><b>The Seven Steps in a Renew Ministry Session</b></p> <p>1) CONNECT</p> <p>2) FEELING</p> <p>3) EXPERIENCE</p> <p>4) LIE</p> <p>5) INTERFERENCE</p> <p>6) TRUTH</p> <p>7) REVIEW</p>
	Project H: Review the Renew Ministry Steps
<b>20</b>	<p><b>Renew Ministry Requirement I: Humility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop fighting God and start defeating the Devil (James 4:6-7, 10)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) God opposes the proud</li> <li>B) Resist the Devil</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>21</b>	<p><b>Renew Ministry Requirement II: Help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You cannot win in spiritual warfare all by yourself. (Col 3:16)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Your need for help in Renew Ministry</li> <li>B) Why do most churches and Christians disobey Colossians 3:16?</li> <li>C) Would you consider helping others defeat the Devil in their life?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Project I: Get a Renew Ministry Appointment

22	<p><b>Renew Ministry Requirement III: Hard Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is no pain, there is usually no gain in spiritual growth. (James 1:4)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) The worthwhile gain of Renew Ministry</li> <li>B) The necessary pain of Renew Ministry</li> <li>C) The necessary perseverance for Renew Ministry</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
23	<p><b>Renew Ministry Requirement IV: A Heart for God</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only your love for God will be enough motivation to keep you pursuing being transformed by the renewing of the hard and hurting parts of your heart. (John 14:15)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) The ultimate motivation for Renew Ministry</li> <li>B) Renew Ministry must be motivated by love, not pain</li> <li>C) What is the most important commandment to actually obey? Romans 12:2</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Project J: Video: “Testimonies About the Challenges and Helpful Encouragements for Successful Renew Ministry”</p>

**Supplementary Topics:  
A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Growth  
(Available Online)**

24	<p><b>Questions &amp; Answers about Renew Ministry</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How was the Renew Ministry process developed?</li> <li>2) Is Renew Ministry biblical?</li> <li>3) Will Renew Ministry work for unbelievers?</li> <li>4) Can Renew Ministry work with children?</li> <li>5) Does Renew Ministry get harder or easier?</li> <li>6) Will Renew Ministry just stir up a bunch of stuff that will not be resolved?</li> <li>7) Does Renew Ministry encourage a “victim mentality”?</li> <li>8) How do I know when I’m done with Renew Ministry?</li> </ol>
25	<p><b>Questions &amp; Answers about Spiritual Growth &amp; Warfare</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How do I forgive myself and others?</li> <li>2) How do I treat those who have hurt me?</li> <li>3) If Jesus didn’t help me in the past, how can he help me now?</li> <li>4) Can the Devil plant thoughts in my mind?</li> <li>5) What is the place of exorcisms in ministering to Christians?</li> </ol>

	6) Can a Christian be affected by “generational sin”?
<b>26</b>	<b>The Four Stages of Biblical Sanctification</b> (Rom 8:29-30) A) The complex meaning of “sanctification” B) Our Predestination C) Our Conversion D) Our Sanctification E) Our Glorification
<b>27</b>	<b>The Biblical Starting Point for Understanding Spiritual Growth</b> (Romans 12:2) A) Many approaches to spiritual growth are not working B) The unbiblical and tragic neglect of Romans 12:2 in modern Christian teaching on spiritual growth C) Romans 12:2 is a vital key in understanding how Christians spiritually grow D) Why does renewing your mind transform your life? It shrinks your sinful nature
<b>28</b>	<b>False Teaching about Spiritual Growth in Colossa: Performing vs. Transforming</b> (Colossians 2:23) A) Pursuing spiritual growth in the Spirit’s power B) A worldly approach to spiritual growth does not recognize a biblical standard of spiritual victory C) The root of worldly approaches to spiritual growth is that they are pursued with human will power instead of the Spirit’s power D) A warning against “asceticism” E) A warning against the harsh treatment of the body F) “Colossian legalism” vs. Authentic Christian spiritual growth Table 1: Performing vs. Transforming
<b>29</b>	<b>Christian Nonsense about Spiritual Growth &amp; Warfare</b> A) Christian nonsense about spiritual growth B) Vague, useless, and even dangerous instruction on spiritual growth C) Christian nonsense about repentance to spiritually grow D) Christian nonsense about confession to spiritually grow E) Christian nonsense about “just believe” to spiritually grow F) Christian nonsense about “just submit” to spiritually grow G) Christian nonsense about “just deny yourself” to spiritually grow H) Christian nonsense about “just pray” to spiritually grow I) Christian nonsense about “just act” to spiritually grow J) Christian nonsense about “just let God” produce our spiritual growth K) Pentecostal & “charismatic” nonsense about spiritual growth

<b>30</b>	<b>What is the Place of Psychiatric Medications in the Christian life?</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
	<b>A:</b> P.O.W.E.R. Plan for God Times
	<b>B:</b> P.O.W.E.R. Plan for Small Groups
	<b>C:</b> Extended Table of Contents for <i>FREEDOM</i> study
	<b>D:</b> Primary Points of <i>FREEDOM</i> study
	<b>E:</b> Memory Verses for the <i>FREEDOM</i> study

## Appendix D

**Primary Points of the *FREEDOM* Study**

- 1:** God promises to change your life when you change your mind.
- 2:** Renew Ministry is a proven process based on biblical principles that will change your life.
- 3:** Renew Ministry has radically and permanently changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Christians all over the world.
- 4:** You have a powerful and cruel enemy who is always working around you and in you to destroy your life.
- 5:** Satan's only power is a lie, so the only weapon you need is the truth.
- 6:** Lie Fortresses in your subconscious mind are formed by IDENTITY LIES and accessed by connecting with negative feelings.
- 7-8:** Satan gains control of your life by imprinting you with IDENTITY LIES through painful events in your past.
- 9:** Our childhood experiences greatly affect our adult life.
- 10:** The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause us to be hurt and to hurt others.
- 11:** The Devil's Lie Fortresses cause stunted growth, sinful triggers, and distorted perception.
- 12:** Guarding Parts often surround a Lie Fortress in our mind and must be resolved.
- 13:** We must face and resolve our Guarding Parts & God Lies with the truth of God's love for us.
- 14-15:** Mind renewal must include the subconscious mind to be effective.
- 16:** Most Christians do not need more truth, but to experience the truth they already have in more places of their heart.
- 17:** We reveal a Lie Fortress's location and power by following painful emotions and discovering the Identity Lie causing them.

- 20:** Stop fighting God and start defeating the Devil.
- 21:** You cannot win in spiritual warfare all by yourself.
- 22:** If there is no pain, there is usually no gain in spiritual growth.
- 23:** Only your love for God will be enough motivation to keep you pursuing being transformed by the renewing of the hard and hurting parts of your heart.

Appendix E

# **Memory Verses for *FREEDOM* Study**

All verses are in *New Living Translation* (NLT) unless otherwise noted.

Reference	Verse
<b>Rom 12:2</b>	<i>Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (NIV)</i>
<b>2 Cor 13:1</b>	<i>Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses. (NASB)</i>
<b>1 Pet 5:8-9</b>	<i>Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.</i>
<b>2 Cor 10:4</b>	<i>The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. (NASB)</i>
<b>Eph 4:26-27</b>	<i>Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.</i>
<b>Prov 22:6</b>	<i>Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.</i>
<b>Ps 139:23-24</b>	<i>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. (NASB)</i>
<b>2 Tim 2:25-26</b>	<i>Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.</i>
<b>Eph 6:14</b>	<i>Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth.</i>



<b>Ps 51:6</b>	<i>You desire truth in the innermost being; And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. (NASB)</i>
<b>Ps 19:12</b>	<i>How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults.</i>
<b>Ps 86:11</b>	<i>Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. (NIV)</i>
<b>Ps 42:5</b>	<i>Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (NIV)</i>
<b>James 4:6-7, 10</b>	<i>God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.</i>
<b>Col 3:16</b>	<i>Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.</i>
<b>James 1:4</b>	<i>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (NIV)</i>
<b>John 14:15</b>	<i>“If you love me, obey my commandments.”</i>