

**You shall worship the
Lord your God and serve
Him only. Luke 4:8**



Glacier Bible Camp Ladies' Retreat 2025

Foundations of Freedom Notes

Focus Group Sessions Notes

**“For An Audience of One
Living Free to Worship”**

1. Friday Afternoon 3:45-5:15 pm

Foundations of Freedom Session 1– JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle before Focus Groups

- Group One - **Living Free From Anxiety & Fear** (Lower-Level Lodge) Rev. Mary Ballenger
- Group Two - **Living Free from Insecurity & Negative Self Image** (Tabernacle). – Brenda Sturm

2. Saturday Morning 9:50 - 11:15 am

Foundations of Freedom Session 2 – JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle before Focus Groups

- Group One – **Living Free from Unforgiveness & Bitterness** (Lower-Level Lodge) Rev. Dawn Rehbein
- Group Two – **Living Free from Pride & Self Sufficiency** (Prayer Chapel) Karen Anderson
- Group Three - **Living Free from Brokenness & Dysfunctional Relationships** (Tabernacle) Dawn Lakey
- Group Four - **Worship Walk** (Meet at the Tabernacle Main Doors) Christy Edmonds

3. Saturday Afternoon - 4:00-5:15 pm

Foundations of Freedom Session 3– JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle, before Focus Groups

- Group One - **Living Free from Guilt & Shame** (Prayer Chapel) Rev. Emma Curtis
- Group Two - **Living Free from Unhealthy Habits** (Tabernacle) – Rev. Tonya Blessings
- Group Three - **Living Free for Purpose & Direction** (Lower-Level Lodge)-Kim Vohs

“4 R’s” Tools in your walk to Freedom

- To **recognize** what has happened and where we could be with God. Recognize the lie that we might be believing Asking His intervention and forgiveness and then moving out of a place of woundedness into freedom. Being able to freely worship is key to moving into all we could be with Christ.
- To **receive** God’s acceptance and forgiveness along with His perspective and direction for our continued walk with Him and what He has called us to be.
- To **resist** the enemy’s plan for your life. Being able to use God’s word to assist us on our path to freely worship
- To **reframe** what has taken place in our lives and see with clarity to move towards our purpose in worshipping and serving Christ.

Foundations of Freedom Session 2 –

JoAnn Roberts- Tabernacle before

Focus Groups

- Group One – **Living Free from Unforgiveness & Bitterness** (Lower-Level Lodge) Rev. Dawn Rehbein

Group Two – **Living Free from Pride & Self Sufficiency** (Prayer Chapel)

Karen Anderson

- Group Three - **Living Free from Brokenness & Dysfunctional Relationships** (Tabernacle) Dawn

Lakey

- Group Four - **Worship Walk** (Meet at the Tabernacle Main Doors)

Christy Edmonds

Foundations of Freedom Session 2~ "Receive & Resist" JoAnn Roberts

Review – "Recognize"

Remember, God is the One Who brings circumstances into our lives to bring the issues to the surface, for the purpose of recognizing what is going on deep within us. **Our responses are just symptoms, or by-products, of something deeper.** David was able to stop and recognize what was going on in his life. He was willing to ask the Lord to search deep inside and expose anything that would displease Him.

The response to our circumstances that we desire to see is one of worship ~ Because we know that we know that He is good, and worthy of our praise. When we live like this, we are living for an audience of One, and the symptoms that will develop in our lives will be the fruit of His Spirit working in us.

Tool #2 – Receive

Receive ~ His Word, which is truth.

"Jesus said to those that believed in Him, 'If you abide (continue) in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.' (John 8:31, ESV)

"Therefore, ridding yourselves of all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21, NASB)

We need to receive His Word, which contains the truth about Who He is, who I am, and what is going on in the world around me. It seems silly to say that to receive the Word, we need to be reading it, but many statistics seem to say that Bible reading amongst believers is at an all-time low. Although the Barna studies have had to change their categories of Christians from one category (Christians) to 2 different Categories, (Practicing Christians, and Non-Practicing Christians). It seems that Jesus had a different view on who does, and who does not belong to Him. He said, *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples." (James. 8:31, ESV)* Suffice it to say, if you are not reading His Word, you will not be able to abide, or continue in it, and consequently, you will not know the truth that can set you free.

Now, receiving His Word does entail more than just reading it. In **James 1:21**, it tells us to receive the word implanted in us. This does not mean just "listening" or "hearing." That is just the first part, and the process can be summed up with one word: "Hearken."

When Jesus explained the parable of the Sower in **Luke 8:15** He said, *"But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a good crop."*

In **Luke 6:46** Jesus said, *"Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?"* Also, in **Luke 8:21**, Jesus said, *"My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." This is what "hearkening" is all about. Just "hearing" God's word is not enough. We need to hear it, retain it/guard it, and walk it out.*

This means we must respond to His Word. When we hear the truth of His Word, we need to examine our lives in light of it. We acknowledge that it is the truth, and we let it guide our lives, and challenge our belief systems. **Psalms 119:105** says it best: *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* (NKJV)

When something in our lives doesn't line up with the Word, we accept the truth of His Word and reject the false belief that we had. This means that we agree with Him, and what He says about every area of our lives, and that is part of the process of our minds being renewed. (**Romans 12:2**)

We touched just briefly on how the enemy tries to distort both God's image, and ours and how our false beliefs about God impacts how much we trust Him, obey Him, and worship Him. I have also shared before about how I have found in my own life that the beliefs which I held about God were based more on my own life experience than on the truth of God's Word. For example, I had this idea that God was watching to see if I toed the line just right – so that He could whack me upside the head if I blew it. That picture of God can hardly be substantiated with scripture. Yet, that belief greatly influenced the way that I lived my life, and the way that I responded when things went "wrong." In that instance, when I saw that my belief did not line up with His Word, I had to repent for believing the lie of the enemy over what His Word said.

“Receive ~ His Mercy”

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16, NASB)

“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end.” (Lamentations 3:22, ESV)

When we recognize a lie that we have been believing, it is important to go straight to the throne of grace and ask for forgiveness. It sounds really simple, but in practice, it can be difficult, especially when we usually choose not to forgive ourselves. The Bible is clear that when we confess our sins, He will forgive us. The imagery that the Scriptures use is that of being washed as white as snow. (**Isaiah 1:18**)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, NIV)

Tool #2 Receive

- His Word, which is truth.
- Abide in Him, continue in Him.
- Agree with His Word (for your life and circumstances)

Tool #3 - “Resist”

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” (James 4:7-8 KJV)

We are told in the Scriptures that we are in a war, and that we do have an enemy. Although it is easy to get mad at people, or circumstances when things don't go the way we want, the Scriptures describe who we are actually fighting: ***"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*** (Eph. 6:12, NKJV)

In **1 Peter 5:8-9**, the believers were warned: ***"Be sober-minded and alert. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in your faith."*** (BSB)

One of the things we have to recognize is that we are in a real battle, with a real enemy who wants to destroy us. If we fail to understand this, we will not be able to resist him the way we are told to. In **2 Corinthians 2:8-10**, Paul talks to the believers about the enemy's plan to outwit them but mentions that they were not unaware of his schemes. Because they knew how he worked, they were not deceived. They recognized his plans, and they resisted them, and that is what we are called to do, too.

Whom Do I Serve?

As I pondered that question, my "spiritual" side wanted to jump right in and say, "Jesus!" Since I am a Christian, that is the most logical answer. Several years ago, I surrendered my life to Jesus, repented of my sins, and asked Him to be the Lord of my life. Now, however, as I thought about it, I wondered if I was serving Him alone. How could I tell?

There are so many Scriptures that talk about our hearts, i.e. the importance of seeking Him with all our heart, and the danger of a divided heart. In **Matthew 6:21-24**, it says: ***"For where your treasure is, there will your heart also be...No man can serve two masters."***

If the Lord is our treasure, then we will seek Him with our whole heart. We will want to know what He wants us to do about everything. If there is anything else in our lives that we look to ~ our finances, our flesh, our feelings, as to whether or not we can do something, then we are serving two masters. If we are constantly seeking God's direction throughout the day, we are showing Him that He is the authority in our lives, and that He is the treasure that we seek. Then, we will be living like Paul says in

2 Timothy 2:4, ***"to please our commanding officer."*** We will be living for an audience of ONE.

Obedience Creates Authority

In **Romans 6:16**, the Bible says, ***"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves to the one whom you obey."*** What is this saying? Whatever we are constantly obedient to will have authority in our lives. What will it be? The flesh? Satan? Our past? Our peers? Our checkbook? Or God?

When we look at it that way, we can see that decisions we make daily determine who, or what, has authority in our lives. As I looked at my own life, and the basis on which I based my decisions, I

began to see some things that I was giving authority to in my life. I will address two of these "factors" briefly to give an example of how I was transferring authority to them.

Finances

As a family, we have always struggled with finances. We have heard that many families struggle with this area, and so we didn't think it strange. However, we felt like God was challenging us with our view of our finances. We had been missionaries for many years, but God was teaching us to obey His voice on an even more specific level. Daily we would seek His direction and guidance, and then we would go where He tells us.

In the past, we were really into "planning" everything we did. Part of that planning addressed finances for any project that we were considering. When we had completed our plans, we would say "*Here are our plans, please bless them.*"

Now, we felt like God was challenging the way we viewed things. We tended to judge things by what our eyes could see. And, just as God was teaching us to not let anything determine what we did but Him, He was also teaching us to walk in the Spirit. Instead of looking at a situation and adding up the "pros and cons" to determine a course of action, the Lord wanted us to seek His direction, we were just to hear and obey.

Herein was the problem: If God has told us to do something, do we then look at our checkbook to see whether or not it agrees? A number of times we would feel that God was leading us to do something, and we would immediately look at our checkbook to see if we had enough money to do it. We knew that God was challenging us to find out what He wanted us to do, and then to stand firm.

One time, we felt strongly that the Lord wanted us to go to Seattle. We were in Central California at the time, and so we started to look at different ways of getting there. We only had \$30, but we knew that we weren't supposed to base our decision on that, so we continued to pray and seek His direction. After a few days, we felt very strongly that He was telling us to go. We had to trust Him to provide. We called on Sunday to let our church know that we were coming. Then we started to pack. Within 48 hours, we had over \$500 put into our hands for the trip. We were in Seattle for four days, and then we came home. We had \$10 left in our pocket from the money that was given to us. God had provided exactly what we needed to do what He told us to do.

We have since then had God lead us to do something and, as we stepped forward, we would see Him meet the need. On the other hand, we have had times of plenty, and could get anything we wanted, but we still had to ask the Lord about everything. Finances (in plenty or in lack) are NOT to determine what we do, or don't do.

We began to realize that we had to change our language, too. It was amazing to see how many times we would respond to a question with, "*We can't afford it.*" Daily, and sometimes even moment by moment, we were transferring authority to our finances. They were constantly dictating

to us what we could and could not do. We are learning that God wants us to look to Him alone to determine whether or not we can do something.

And food for thought: If we first seek to figure out how we can finance what God wants us to do, and then we obey ~ are we really obeying the Lord?

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other." (Matthew 6:24, NKJV)

Natural Reasoning

We really feel like God is wanting His people to learn to say, "Yes, Lord," or "No, Lord," and not walk according to their natural reasoning. In **1 Corinthians 2:14** it says, ***"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."***

Another influence that we had to battle was that of our own "common sense." We know that God wants us to learn to hear and obey, but many times we would feel God prompt us to do something, and immediately we would say something like: "Well, that doesn't make sense." Or "Why should I turn here; it will take me longer to get to where I am going..."

Proverbs 3:5 tells us to: ***"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge he and he will direct your path."*** Knowing that God doesn't want us to lean on our understanding, and DOING it are two very different things. We constantly battle with seeking to understand what God is telling us to do. However, we were failing to understand the danger here ~ we were giving authority to our own soul. We would look at what we felt we were supposed to do and think things like, "O.K., I can see why He wants me to do that." Or "Maybe if I do what He has told me, then He will do..."

In any case, our obedience was based upon whether or not we agreed with what He was telling us. So, in essence, we were obeying our own natural reasoning, or common sense. Unlike wisdom and discernment, which are *gifts of the Spirit*, these are *functions of the soul*. And, when we did that we were living a "Soulish" life, NOT a spirit-led life.

If we are constantly seeking God's direction throughout the day, we are showing Him that He is the authority in our lives, and that He is the treasure that we seek. Then we will be living for an audience of One.

When God is Silent

There have been times when we have sought God's will in a particular situation and felt like He gave us no direction at all. It almost felt like He was deliberately being silent. What do we do then? I personally believe that there will be times when we face the "Saul scenario" described in

1 Samuel 13:1-15. Saul was in the middle of a battle, and he was told by Samuel to wait for him seven days. However, Saul saw that his men were scared and starting to scatter so he went ahead

and did the sacrifice by himself. As soon as he finished Samuel arrived and rebuked him. Samuel said: *"You have acted foolishly...You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord and sought out a man after His own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."*

Saul's actions during the time he was supposed to wait showed what was really in his heart. I believe that we face this same temptation today. When it comes down to the wire, do we really want what God wants, or what we want? Our answer will be exposed during our "waiting" times.

Do we really want to do what God wants us to do? We know that He has good plans for us ([Jer. 29:11](#)) and that He loves us, but do we really believe that?

I believe that one big ploy of the enemy is to try to get people to "grab" all that they can so they don't "miss out." But can we ever lose if we are waiting on Him? When we look at Saul, we know that we will lose if we refuse to wait.

I am convinced that we miss many blessings just because we refuse to wait. Do we really want God's plans? Many times I have felt that God doesn't let me know too much because I have a tendency to say, "I'll take it from here, God." Excuse me? Sorry, Lord. There is never a time I can "do" anything on my own - APART FROM HIM I CAN DO NOTHING.

So, when we feel like God is being silent: PRESS INTO HIM. Worship Him. Acknowledge that He is in control and that He *"delights in the well-being of His servant."* ([Ps. 35:27](#))



"Strongholds"

In [2 Corinthians 10:4-5](#), the Bible tells us:

"The weapons that we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

We are in a battle. However, we do not fight the way that the world fights. One of the best things we can learn to do as Christians is to "take every thought captive." The battle that goes on in our head is incredible.

Listen to what Paul tells the believers in **Romans 12:1-2**:

"Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (NASB)

An important thing to note here is that in a sacrifice – the FLESH DIES. And, many times, our flesh doesn't go down without a fight. What is God's plan for our lives? Is it just salvation? If that is our view, we are in danger of not recognizing the next step. After salvation, it is God's desire to conform us to the image of Christ. A major part of this is dealing with the strongholds that we have in our lives.

Much of what we go through is a result of the strongholds that we have allowed to be built in our lives. Francis Frangipane has an excellent book called *The Three Battlegrounds*. One of the battlegrounds that he mentions is the mind. In that book, he goes into great detail about the battle that goes on in our "house of thoughts."

It is important for us to realize that God wants our minds to be renewed, and as that takes place our lives will be transformed. Paul tells us in **Galatians 5:16**

that if we ***"live according to the Spirit, we will not satisfy the lusts of the flesh."*** When we understand that we are made up of body, soul, and spirit, and that they work together to make us the person that we are, it will help us to recognize the origin of many of our thoughts. The soul includes the functions of our mind, like common sense and reasoning. Our emotions, like happiness or anger, are also included in the soul. When we are born-again, the Spirit of God brings life into our dead spirit. When the Bible tells us to ***"walk, or live, according to the Spirit."*** it is telling us which part should be in control. It is talking about the Spirit of God that now resides within our spirit.

Unfortunately, many times we have gone for so long letting our soul (reasoning, emotions, etc.), or our bodies (appetites, etc.,) be in control, that it is hard to change. In the Psalms, David many times had to tell his soul to bless the Lord, or to be still. The Spirit is supposed to be the one who puts a check on the operations of the other two. However, many times, quite the opposite is true. We will sense something in our spirit, like the Lord is telling us to do something, and immediately our soul checks it with a statement like: "But that doesn't make sense!" We are not meant to be ruled by our emotions, or our reasoning, or anything else, except the Spirit of God.

Since we know that our enemy wants to destroy us, we need to pray for wisdom to recognize his lies. If we take each thought captive and look at it, the Spirit of God will enable us to discern their origin (our flesh, emotions, authority figures, demonic) and bring them into subjection unto Christ.

Thought Patterns

When we think of a stronghold, we sometimes give it a bad connotation. However, a stronghold in a believer's life is not necessarily a bad thing. In **Psalms 2:9**, says that **"The Lord is ...a stronghold in times of trouble."** It also says in **Psalms 18:2** that the Lord is our **"shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."**

We can see that this "stronghold" is a place of safety and protection. However, what about the strongholds mentioned in **2 Corinthians 10:4-5**? These are areas that the enemy builds up in our lives.

Strongholds are more than just random thoughts that we have. They consist more of thought patterns that have built up over time, and many of them are so wrapped up in our personalities that we aren't even aware that they are there. When we let thoughts come in unchecked, and just accept them, those thoughts can then build up a stronghold in our minds. Those thoughts can be a straight-out lie, or even just a half-truth (which is still just a lie). God often brings circumstances into our lives that allow these thought patterns to be revealed, and then He brings the truth of His word to replace the lie.

An example of this happened to me a few months ago. I had felt that God was asking me to do something, and I was struggling (to say the least) with it. I battled within myself for quite some time, and didn't seem to be making any headway. The more I thought about what I felt He wanted me to do, the more I went berserk. It got so bad that my husband drove me to a Starbucks and told me to go and take "as long as I needed."

I wept and screamed and wept some more. Little by little, the Lord began to reveal to me what was going on. Deep down, I didn't really trust Him, and what He was asking me to do was bringing that to the surface. "I can't do it," I would yell up at the sky. "What if you abandon me?" "What if I do that and then You don't take care of the void that it will bring?" YIKES. He showed me my unbelief. The depression and despair were just symptoms of the problem.

In the book of John, Jesus describes His relationship to His sheep and how He leads them - **"When He puts forth all of his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from Him because they do not know the voice of strangers."** (John 10:4-5, NASB) It is really not surprising that we hear the enemy. What is surprising is that WE AGREE WITH HIM! We have a choice to make ~ to either listen to our Good Shepherd's voice, and follow Him, or listen to our enemy's voice, and follow him.

We must be aware that having a thought isn't a sin, but taking a lie from the enemy, and believing it over what God tells you (the truth of His Word), IS a sin. It is the sin of unbelief, believing a false report over God's report, an issue that caused the Israelites to wander in the desert for 40 years

instead of crossing into the land that God had promised them (**Numbers 13-14**) We must realize that the enemy has no authority or power over us to defeat us, it is our openness to him, and our transferring authority to him that defeats us!

If we are going to apply Tool #3, we are going to need to examine our thoughts and hold them up the scrutiny of His Word. If a thought doesn't line up with the Word of God, you need to resist it! Capture it! Bring it into subjection to Christ! Say, *"That doesn't sound like what my Heavenly Father would say to me, so I reject that thought!"*

It is so important to not agree with thoughts like that. For example, someone that you know might walk past you at the store and not acknowledge you. Immediately you think, *"That was rude! What is the matter with them? They are so arrogant, and they don't care about anyone but themselves. I have tried to be a friend to them, but I shouldn't ever even try to help them again, blah, blah, blah!"* If you start saying, *"Yeah, that's right...Look at them! Yeah, I shouldn't try to help them anymore...that will show them, blah, blah, blah."*

While the fact that they walked past you might be true, the interpretations can be off. What if that friend just found out that one of their parents was diagnosed with a terminal disease, and they were going to have to figure out a way to take care of them, and their thoughts are so overwhelming, that they are totally unaware of anything else going on around them?

It is amazing how quickly our thoughts can run wild. Someone does something we don't like, and we start thinking about what they did, and why they did it. The thoughts might start small, but they gain momentum as soon as we start mulling them over. Pretty soon, the string of assumptions have built up a whole scenario in our mind, and it usually doesn't have any basis of truth in it!

We can see in Scripture some other areas where we can allow the enemy to gain ground in our lives. **In Ephesians 4:26-27, it warns us: "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." (NASB)** Another version says, **"do not give the devil a foothold." (Berean Standard)**

In Hebrews 12:15, we are also warned: **"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many will be defiled."** In the book of Romans, we are told: **"The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore, let's rid ourselves of the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." (Rom. 13:12, NASB)**

We are to rid ourselves of the deeds of darkness. We need to recognize the need to be vigilant, aware, and not let our enemy outwit us. We have been called to be children of the light, so let us not tolerate the deeds of darkness, and give the enemy any opportunities to take ground in our lives.

"You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light." (Ps. 18:28, NIV)

Here are some common lies the enemy uses:

About God , He Attacks His Character:

“He is not a good Father. He is uncaring...He is absent.”

“If God were good, that would not have happened to you! (Or “that would have happened.”)

About Us, He Attacks our Identity and value

“You are a mistake, or a failure.”

“You will never change (or things will never change)

“You always mess up, why do you even try?”

“If people really knew you, they would reject you.”

“You will never amount to anything.”

“If you are successful, people will love you!” (a more subtle lie)

Responses and Character Traits

When we are in alignment with Him, the fruit of the Spirit will be the “symptom, or by-product,” produced in our lives, and this fruit will be able to grow and flourish in us ~ **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**” (Gal. 5:22-23 NASB). This fruit is a direct result from abiding in the vine. It is produced by the Spirit working in us – it is not a product of our own doing. A great visual for this is the plumbline. It is a tool that is used to help builders and carpenters keep things straight and level. It helps achieve accurate vertical alignment. Likewise, the Fruit of the Spirit is a great plumbline for us to use to check our “vertical alignment (i.e. alignment to Him).”

We are all in the process of “becoming,” but what are we becoming? (**Col. 3:10; John. 1:12**) Am I becoming more loving, kind, joyful? Or, more angry, critical, bitter, unkind? The Fruit of the Spirit are qualities that reflect God’s character, and they are being produced in us as we are being conformed to His image. (**Romans. 8:9**)

We must remember that God is the One Who brings circumstances into our lives to bring the stuff to the surface, for the purpose of exposing what is going on deep within us. **Our responses are just symptoms, or by-products, of something deeper.** There are also certain characteristics, or personality traits, which can be developed in our lives because of beliefs that we have. These characteristics, or symptoms, are a by-product of those beliefs.

For example, when we choose to believe what someone, or something else has said about us over what God has said about us, that unbelief can create traits like insecurity, or depression. In contrast, when we choose to believe what God says about us, that belief can create traits like joy, or optimism. When we are walking in pride, our determination to show that we can take care of

ourselves can result in traits like stubbornness, or competitiveness. In contrast, when we walk in humility, believing that God loves us and will take care of us, that can result in traits like being teachable and confident.

It would not be possible to go through all of the personality traits there are. The main point is that the Word gives us a list of traits associated with the Spirit's working in our lives. We can use that list as a plumbline to check against the traits we are recognizing in our own personalities. When we see a trait that is not in alignment with the Fruit of the Spirit, or other godly traits we see exhibited in the heroes of the faith, we need to examine it to see what lie we are believing that is producing that trait.

Here is a sample list of traits, comparing the Fruit of the Spirit, with the Fruits of the Flesh:

Fruit of the Spirit	Fruit of the Flesh
Love	Hatred, Apathy, Indifference, Rejection
Joy	Sorrow, Sadness, Despair, Misery, Depression
Peace	Discord, Conflict, Opposition, Rebellion, Anxiety
Patience	Impatience, Agitation, Insubordination
Kindness	Unkindness, Cruelty, Harshness, Selfishness
Goodness	Evil, wickedness, immorality.
Faithfulness	Unfaithfulness, Faithlessness, inconsistent
Gentleness	Harshness, Hardness, Severe, Rigid
Self-control	Impulsive, excessive, irrational, inordinate

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” (Col. 3:12, ESV)

When we tolerate, believe, and agree with enemy, it builds strongholds in our lives, and those are areas that he can move around freely, and wreak havoc. Remember, it is the truth that sets you free, and the lies that take you captive. So, we have to learn to resist those thoughts, and take them captive, or they will eventually take **us** captive. **2 Peter, 2:19** warns us that “***a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.***” Paul reminds us “***All things are permitted for me, but not all things are of benefit. All things are permitted for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.***” (1 Cor. 6:12, NASB)

Critical Thoughts for the Battle

We Need to Know Our Position.

Knowing our position in the battles we face is critical. In **2 Chronicles 20:13-23**, Jehoshaphat and the people were told that the battle was not theirs, but God's. Even though they were not going to have to fight in this battle, they were told **to take up their positions and stand firm**. The King and the army got up early in the morning and marched to the battlefield because they trusted in what God had told them. So, what is our position?

"Position from Victory"

We need to use the weapons that He has given us because they have divine power, and with them, the enemy will be defeated. The Scriptures teach us to take our thoughts captive, to resist the enemy, to stand firm, to pray, to put on **the whole armor** of God.

We do have an enemy, and yes, he is a formidable foe – but he is a **defeated one!** **Colossians 2:15** states that **Jesus "disarmed the rulers and authorities," and "made a public display of them"** through the cross. Jesus conquered all of the powers of darkness and sin, declared **"IT IS FINISHED,"** and then He sat down at the right hand of His Father.

Ephesians 2:1 then tells us that **"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms."** **1 Corinthians 15:57** says, **"Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,"** and **2 Corinthians 2:14**, says, **"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ."** We have the victory!

This is crucial to understand because it means that we are not fighting **for** victory, **WE GET TO FIGHT FROM A PLACE OF VICTORY!** This is a huge perspective shift, and it will dramatically change the way we view the battles we are in, and the way we will fight them.

"Position of Righteousness"

In **Ephesians 6**, one of the items in the list of the Armor of God that we are told to put on is called the "Breastplate of Righteousness." It is an important piece of the armor and it protects the vital organs. When thinking about righteousness, we can quickly start to think about how to live "right," and not make mistakes. But, just like knowing that we fight **from** a place of victory is crucial, so is understanding where our righteousness comes from.

2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us that **"God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."** Paul said in **Philippians chapter 3**, that he counted all of the things that he had done as nothing, and that he let go of everything **"to be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."** (v. 9)

The righteousness that we have is not based upon our works, and how good we did that day. If we try to fight with a breastplate made up of our righteousness, it will be filled with holes, and totally useless to protect us. It is His righteousness, given to those who put their faith in Jesus (**Gen 15:6, Phil. 1:11, 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 1:17, Rom. 4:3**), that protects us. Because of the grace and mercy of God, we are now in

right-standing with Him because of the price that Jesus paid for us. (Yes, we do seek to obey Him, and turn from sin, but that is NOT the source of our righteousness.)

If we don't understand this, we will find ourselves always trying to fight the enemy and his lies, from the place of our "holiness," or lack thereof. When we are doing that, we are responding with comments like: *"I didn't mean to do that." "I did my best." "I am not as bad as that person." "At least I tried to do what was right."*

Picture yourself standing in the court of heaven, standing before the Righteous Judge over all of the earth. When you are standing there, and the list of everything you have done is set before Him, how will you plead? That you did your best? That you tried to do good? Will you try to stand there and defend yourself and say that you deserve to be forgiven because of your good deeds? **Romans 3** tells us that *"all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,"* and that *"none is righteous, all have turned aside,"* and by the *"works of the law no one will be justified in His sight."* But, those who believe, will receive the *"righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ."* (v. 10-23) We are justified by faith (**Rom. 5:1**), by believing in what He has done for us, so at that moment, when you are standing before the Righteous Judge, will you point to your own righteousness, or to the righteousness that was given to you when you put your faith in Jesus?

Again, understanding this will affect the way we fight our battles. Instead of spending so much time defending ourselves or thinking that we are going to lose because we have blown it so badly, we will be able to resist the enemy, stand firm, and see the victory that He has given us to impact every area of our lives, and the lives of those around us. When we are confident in who we are in Him, then we will have nothing to prove to ourselves, or others, and consequently, we will have nothing to lose!

I love the way this section on righteousness in **Romans** concludes:

This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' The words *'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why it was credited to him as righteousness. The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.'*

"Position of Perfectly Loved"

The Scriptures are so clear that God loves us so much that He gave His only Son to die for us. Other Scriptures talk about how much we are loved:

"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8, NASB)

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved!” (Ephesians 2:4-5, ESV)

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

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

“So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in them.” (1 John 4:16, NKJV)

“We love because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19, NASB)

It is so important that we settle this in our hearts once and for all! God loves us! If you do not believe this truth, we will always be trying to earn His love, instead of living confidently **from** His love. When we live like that, we are more susceptible to the lies of the enemy that sound something like this:

“If God really loved you, then this would have happened (or would not have happened).”

When we don’t live from the platform of His love, we end up living “on the daisy train forever ~ “*He loves me, He loves me not!*” That is a life that is based all on emotions and circumstances, instead of a life that is built on a firm foundation built on the truth of Who He is and what He says about me. Oftentimes, this belief works its way into our other relationships, too, and we will find ourselves constantly striving to earn other people’s love and acceptance.

“Worship - A Position of the Heart”

I was wrestling through a bunch of stuff this morning, and I turned on Pandora, and the song started saying “I know the battle is Yours” over and over. Am I hearing You, Lord? The chorus was simple and just said that our part is to start praising Him.

If I really know, really believe the battle is His, I will start singing, start praising, start worshipping Him now, before I see anything! So, am I doing that right now? I should be! I know I have a reason to sing. He has taken me from death to life. I am a new creation, and His grace has been poured out on me, and He has changed my story. His Word tells me that He won’t abandon me here, but He will finish what He has started in me. Thank You, Lord.

Seriously, If I am recognizing what is going on in myself, I have to say that I am saddened to realize that worship is seldom my first response. It might eventually happen, but many times it is only after I have vented a bit first!

This is the response I get to have. And it’s the only befitting one for all that He has done for me. I get to praise the Lord, to bless His Holy Name! and to exalt Him, above everything else (my plans, my

emotions, my circumstances)! He is worthy of it all! It might look like everything is falling apart, and like I am surrounded with troubles, and no way out, but the **truth is I am surrounded by YOU! This is how I am to fight my battles!**

You're worthy, Lord. You are worthy of it all, **"for from You are all things, and to You to are all things, You deserve the glory!"** (Rev. 4:11). Psalms 113:1-4 says, **"Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens."** is what worship is! It is not just a song that we sing on Sunday morning. It is letting the adoration of our hearts, the fruit of our lips, the meditations of our heart and mind, bring glory to Him continually. (Ps. 19:14; Heb.13:15-17)

This is how we fight our battles. Worship is our warfare! Jehoshaphat knew this when he reminded the people that the battle was not theirs, it was God's. They were facing overwhelming odds, but they knew what their response to that circumstance was supposed to be! They bowed down and worshipped the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Jehosophat appointed worshippers to go out before the army and he commanded them to.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for His faithfulness is everlasting." Hear the timing of their victory: **AS SOON AS THEY BEGAN TO SING**, God stepped in and routed the enemy.

Remember the point that a little leaven will affect the whole lump, and how a bitter root defiles many? It helps us to realize the damage that even a little sin can do, not just in our lives, but in the lives of those around us. That can be a "scary" idea. There is a similar idea that should cause us to have great joy. Consider another parable that Jesus used about leaven to explain about the Kingdom of God: **"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."** (Matthew. 13:33, NIV) In the same manner that sin can spread and affect everyone around it, so the Gospel of the Kingdom of God has the power to permeate and transform people's lives, and ultimately the world around them.

I love the story of how Paul and Silas, when they were thrown into prison, began praying and worshipping at midnight. The amazing part is that the shaking did not just open their prison doors, but it also opened all of the other prison doors. That is such a powerful visual of how our worship during hard times can affect other people around us. (Acts 16:25-34)

I know that there are times when we are blindsided by something that happens, when the news we hear is so hard that it takes our breath away. In those times, worship and praise might seem like an impossible response, but we need to remember that worship is not about the song we sing, it is more about the position of our heart in all circumstances. Job knew what it was like to be blindsided by bad news but hear how the Bible records his response: **"Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshipped."** (Job 1:20, NKJV)

Tool #3 Resist

- Obedience Creates Authority – Don't transfer to the enemy.
- Capture your thoughts and bring them into submission to Christ.

- Don't give the enemy a stronghold.
- Recognize lies in thought patterns, responses, and traits.
- Stay "Plumb" with the Fruit of the Spirit
- Know your position.
- WORSHIP!



Living Free from Unforgiveness and Bitterness Rev. Dawn Rehbein

It feels like since I was asked to share on this topic, God put one person after another in my path to have a conversation with about forgiveness. Some wanted the person that offended them to come to them and ask for forgiveness, but we know that doesn't always happen. Why is that? Is it because the person didn't realize they offended us? Is it because of pride and shame? Could be one could be both. Could be reasons I didn't mention. Sometimes it's my job or your job to go to the individual and have a conversation with them.

Mathew 18:15-17 NIV reads “¹⁵ ‘If your brother or sister^[a] sins,^[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’^[c] ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Let's look at this passage again in a paraphrase of The Message: ¹⁵⁻¹⁷ *“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won’t listen, tell the church. If he won’t listen to the church, you’ll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God’s forgiving love.”*

We don't like to confront things these days when it comes to being offended or sinning. We take offence when someone confronts us that there is a sin issue or maybe a missed communication. We want to be instantly offended and validated that our feelings are just. We don't always need to be on the defensive, we need to learn to listen in love, but we also need to confront in love. The first thing you must do if you are offended by someone is to pray, you want your heart to be right when you speak to them. You want to pray that they will be able to hear what you want to say to them that hurt you. Be loving, gentle, kind, patient/understanding, and exercise self-control. You are, after all, having a conversation in hopes to bring reconciliation. I think of my dad who passed away in March 2011. My sister who is not a church goer but was raised Catholic, like we all were, spent a lot of time helping my mom take care of my dad as he was close to transitioning from earth to heaven. When I visited with him before he was released from the hospital and transitioned home on hospice, he would get these fits of rage often followed by his teeth clenched together and a look on his face. He would say “Pray the Lord’s Prayer.” It took a moment to figure out why he was so angry. I believe it was a situation caused by his niece years ago. She sued her uncle who attempted to talk it out, went to her dad to help work it out, went to the Priest with no resolve. He was deeply hurt by her actions, the only thing he knew to do at the end of life was to pray over and over the Lord’s prayer. **Matthew 6:9-13** lets pray that together.

What is unforgiveness & bitterness? That is what we are going talk about but to really grasp an understanding of the whole picture we also need to understand some definitions.

- Forgive is a *verb meaning it's an action word*. Forgive means “to stop blaming or being mad at someone for something that person has done, or not punish them for something” https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/forgive#google_vignette)
- Forgiveness is a *noun (notating action)* meaning “the act of forgiving or the willingness to forgive” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/forgiveness>)
- Unforgive is an adjective (describes the noun or pronoun) meaning “not willing to forgive people for things they do wrong.”
- Unforgiveness as defined by AI (artificial intelligence) means “is the state of being unwilling or unable to forgive someone for an offense or betrayal. AI says this often leads to lingering resentment and bitterness.”
- Bitterness is a noun meaning “feeling of anger and unhappiness” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/bitterness>)
- Bitterness in the Greek is *pikria* [pee-kree-a] meaning “bitterness, bitter resentment, be terribly envious” (taken from Lemma in LOGOS word study program)
- Grace is a noun meaning “approval or kindness, especially in a Christian religion that is freely given by God to all humans” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/grace?q=Grace>)

Hebrews 12:14-15 “¹⁴*Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord;* ¹⁵*looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*” NKJV)

¹⁴*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.* ¹⁵*See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.* (NIV)

Three points we hope to cover in this teaching: 1- Understand the symptoms/fruit that unforgiveness and bitterness produce. 2- Understand the cost of partnering with unforgiveness and bitterness. 3- Understand how to find freedom from unforgiveness and bitterness.

1. Understand the symptoms/fruit that unforgiveness and bitterness produce.
 - a. Our passage in Hebrews we see that bitterness is compared to a root that when it grows causes trouble and may defile many. I’m a firm advocate that everything we do is tied to a soul. I watched a video on YouTube a message by Adrian Rogers, the Root of Bitterness. He made excellent simple points that I am going to glean from and share with you today. Because he kept it simple, and I believe all of us can relate to the fruit that is tied with this root.

- i. Really quick I want you to know that Bitterness is a stronghold on a person. A person with a stronghold of bitterness might come across like a:
 - ii. Porcupine:
 1. Harsh
 2. Critical
 3. Judgmental
 4. Sarcastic
 5. Be filled with anger.
 - iii. Iceberg
 1. Might act very cool,
 2. aloof,
 3. diffident (shy, and not confident of one's abilities),
 4. politely indifferent,
 5. act like they don't need anybody.
 - iv. Cry baby
 1. Person acts sullenly.
 2. Self-piety
 3. Moroseness = "the quality of being unhappy, annoyed, and unwilling to speak or smile" (taken from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/moroseness>)
 4. Sad
2. Understand the cost of bitterness:
 - a. If we partner with the stronghold of bitterness it will come at a cost:
 - i. It affects our communities.
 - ii. It affects our churches.
 - iii. It affects our homes.
 - iv. It affects the individual.
 - b. How does it cost me all of the above you might be asking yourself and where does this stronghold start taking root?
 - i. Often, we as humans don't really understand the meaning of words. Most of us struggle with basic English language. You are not alone my instructor for biblical studies required all of his students to purchase an "English handbook" because he said it's hard to teach students Hebrew and Greek when they don't understand the English language. That is why when we go over the definition, we needed to understand the parts of speech. I still struggle at times, have to go back to my English composition class in high school and ask myself what Mrs. K (Kilsdonk) would say right now.
 - c. Forgiveness is a noun. It is an action. Scripture says **Psalms 103:12** removes our transgressions as far as the east is from the west. **Isaiah 43:25; 44:22** there is action when the Lord shows us forgiveness, there is action when we show forgiveness to others.
 - i. Bitterness starts with a hurt or offense that may be intentional, unintentional, or imagined.
 - ii. That hurt turns to anger, and sometimes hostility when you don't know what to do. "Heart harbors the hurt"
 - iii. You become sensitive, struggle with gratitude, maybe criticize rather than compliment. You struggle with mood swings, or depression. Now I'm not saying all depression is tied to bitterness, there is other research on

depression we could spend hours discussing , but not today. But I will say depression may be situational or circumstantial.

- iv. The cost of bitterness can affect us physically and emotionally. Pastor Adrian Rogers refers to a quote from a Dr. McMillan who shares how bitterness can affect us physically and emotionally.
- v. **Proverbs 15:17** mention that hatefulness and holiness cannot dwell in the same heart. This can cause a chain reaction.
- vi. **Ephesians 4:31** ³¹*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.* ³²*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*
(Holy Bible NIV) the list that is tied with Bitterness:

- 1. Rage/wrath – defined as anger, fury or intense desire.
- 2. Anger-goes back to rage and wrath, a desire to want to punish.
- 3. Brawling/clamor-shout, loud cry
- 4. Slander-blasphemy or evil speaking.
- 5. Malice- badness, wickedness, hatefulness (Exegetical Guide in Logos)

- vii. The cost of unforgiveness and bitterness makes for a not very likable person, or nice person to be around. It separates us from God's love, His forgiveness, mercy, and grace.
- viii. God's desire is that we be Holy as He is holy, strive to live in peace with everyone, and that we walk in grace. When we don't it feeds the stronghold of unforgiveness.

3. Understanding how to find Freedom from unforgiveness and bitterness:

- a. Choose to forgive, **James 1:22**
- b. Confess- **James 5:16**
- c. Repent- repentance is the turning away from sin **Matthew 3:2** John the Baptist called the people to repent, **Acts 2:38** Peter called the people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
- d. Go to the person and speak with them, reconcile your differences **Matthew 18:15**
- e. Forgive yourself is important as forgiving the person who offended or hurt you,
- f. Renounce lies and ask the Lord to show you the truth about the situation.
- g. Give grace, as we all need God's Mercy, God's forgiveness, but we all need God's grace that doesn't give us what we deserve.

In Conclusion:

- 1. Ask God to help you to RECOGNIZE the need. To **recognize** what has happened and where we could be with God .is vitally important Recognize the lie that we might be believing asking His intervention and forgiveness and then moving out of a place of woundedness into freedom. Being able to freely worship is key to moving into all we could be with Christ.
- 2. Allow God to have your anger, your hurt, choose to forgive, and give grace knowing the other person is not perfect. To **receive** God's acceptance and forgiveness along with His perspective and direction for our continued walk with Him and what He has called us to be.

3. To **resist** the enemy's plan for your life. Being able to use God's word to assist us on our path to freely worship. Combat the enemy's plan with the word. **Ephesians 4:31.**

Hebrews 12: 14-15

¹⁴Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Ephesians 4:31

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

4. Seek to be full of Grace and Forgiveness as you allow God to deal with the other individual, you can exchange it for His peace, and love for you today. To be able to **reframe** what has taken place in our lives helps us see with clarity. It moves us towards a divine purpose in worshipping and serving Christ and others. It is a powerful tool to see things through the lens of His word and the Holy Spirit's counsel.

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Living Free from Pride and Self- Sufficiency Karen Anderson

We live in a world that encourages us to be proud of our accomplishments, think highly of ourselves, rely on self, promote self and to even embellish our own self-worth. We see this in athletes, celebrities, musicians, business owners and even our own life, (it can be there even when we don't recognize it). Pride is common and self-indulgence is everywhere, and this also leads to arrogance which is not of God.

PRIDE: a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired. (Webster Dictionary)

We know that God created all things and everything is from Him. So how can this even be a part of the Christian life? We can often react to things in a worldly fashion with pride and self- sufficiency and not even realize it. We can be caught up in a moment, by an event, or feeling less than so we respond in an instant without thinking before we speak or act.

But it's important to remember Jesus was on this earth but not of the world, only He never sinned and yet He went to the cross for our sins and even Jesus asked God, **"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."** (Luke 23:34). Are we any different than those who persecuted Jesus? Ask yourself if you could be or have been of a mindset that crucifies Jesus in a conversation, action or even our own thoughts. We need to **recognize** if there is anything that God wants to show us as we continue this weekend. God's desire is for us to be all that we can be with his guidance and when we **recognize** in us something that goes against Him, he is faithful to forgive as we seek him and confess our sins.

So, let's look at Pride that is brought out in the bible? The first example of complete and indulgent pride is:

1. Lucifer's pride is a powerful warning about the dangers of elevating oneself above God. Initially he was created as a beautiful angel, but his pride led him to desire God's throne, saying, **"I will ascend to heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."** (Isaiah 14:13-14). His unholy ambition to take God's authority resulted in his fall and transformation into Satan. And with that he is here on earth to do only what is left for him because of his prideful choices and actions. **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy."** (John 10:10).
2. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was a powerful ruler who built immense statues and demanded that all people worship them. His pride and arrogance led him to believe that his power and achievements were solely the result of his own greatness. The king spoke and said, **"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty"?** (Daniel 4:30). One day, he had a troubling dream that was a warning from God about his pride (Daniel 4:19-27). Daniel told him that he needed to repent or his kingdom would be taken from him (Daniel 4:27). Despite this warning,

Nebuchadnezzar did not humble himself and continued in his arrogance. **“That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.” (Daniel 4:33).**

3. After the Last Supper, Jesus foretold that all His disciples would fall away, but Peter boldly declared with **pride** that he would never abandon Him. **“Truly I tell you, Jesus declared, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” (Matthew 26:34).** Later, when Jesus was arrested, Peter denied knowing Him. Pride got in the way of receiving a truth from Jesus and because of pride he was made to deny the one and only true Lord.
4. The Pharisees in **Matthew 23** exemplify pride by focusing on outward appearance while neglecting inner holiness. Jesus rebukes them for seeking public admiration through loud prayers and elaborate robes, yet their hearts were far from God (Matthew 23:5-7). Their pride blinded them to their own sin and the message of grace Jesus offered. In contrast, Jesus highlights the humility of a tax collector who prayed, **“God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” (Luke 18:13).**

“Everything they do is just to show off in front of others. They even make a big show of wearing Scripture verses on their foreheads and arms, and they wear big tassels for everyone to see. They love the best seats at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues. And when they are in the market, they like to have people greet them as their teachers.” (Matthew 23: 5-7).

Let’s take note of what God says about PRIDE:

- **“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18).**
- **“But He gives more grace, therefore, it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6).**
- **“In his pride the wicked man does not seek him, in all his thoughts there is not room for God.” (Psalm 10:4).**

Pride can come from (this is just a short list):

- Having low Self Esteem
- A lack of respect for God
- Abuse of wealth or status
- Our superior Intellect (perceived)
- Comparing ourselves to others

We need to **resist** self and remember only Jesus can be our true source of PRIDE. It must come from Him, or we are guilty of denying the one and only true Savior and the Holy Spirit that dwells

within each of us. **“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.” (John 14:16).**

SELF-SUFFICIENCY: able to maintain oneself without outside aid: capable of providing for one's own needs, having an extreme confidence in one's own ability or worth. (Webster Dictionary)

Self-sufficient can be a good thing when we need to change a tire on a country road, when it's our turn to pick up the kids, run weekly errands or even adjust the water heater. We “just do it” or if needed we might even google it. Daily tasks can be a “just do it” and we move forward in everyday life. We work and receive a paycheck so that we can be self-sufficient, to a degree this is a good thing. Jesus **said “Even when we were with you, we gave you a rule. We said, “Anyone who won't work shouldn't be allowed to eat.” 2 Thessalonians 3:10.** So obviously we need to be able to do things. But do we overdue our self-sufficiency and never rely on **our Helper**? Do we get too comfortable in our faith journey or is it we just don't understand that we weren't created to be independent, but to live in humble, loving dependency with God first. As a “Christian” we can slowly and subtly begin to feel less in need of the Heavenly Father and our own corruption grows and awakens a fresh confidence in our own energy and effort and we don't even **recognize the Heavenly** need we have forgotten. We must be aware and resist the laziness of self and seek Him first. **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33).**

So when does self-sufficiency become a problem in the life of a Christian? The Old Testament provides numerous examples and teachings on the dangers of this.

1. In Deuteronomy, Moses warns the Israelites against forgetting the Lord once they have settled in the Promised Land and become prosperous. He cautions them, **“You may say in your heart, 'The power and strength of my hands have made this wealth for me.' But remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you the power to gain wealth.” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).** This passage highlights the temptation to attribute success to our own efforts rather than recognizing God's providence.

2. King Uzziah in **2 Chronicles 26** serves as an example of the downfall that can accompany self-sufficiency. Uzziah's reign began with success and prosperity as long as he sought the Lord. However, **“When he became powerful, his pride led to his downfall.” (2 Chronicles 26:16).** Uzziah's self-reliance and pride led him to overstep his boundaries, resulting in his eventual downfall and affliction with leprosy.

The New Testament continues to address the issue of self-sufficiency particularly through the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.

3. The rich man, who stored up wealth for himself, is called a fool by God, who says, **“And I'll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him, You fool! This very night your life will be**

demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:19-21). In this parable, Jesus illustrates the folly of self-sufficiency and the neglect of spiritual priorities. This parable underscores the lack in value of earthly wealth and the importance of being rich toward God. We need to **receive** God’s words of wisdom, truth, compassion, admonishment, and especially unconditional LOVE that is the greatest. **“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good his love endures forever.” (Psalm 136:1).**

Pride and self-sufficiency often go together, and these are considered by many Theologians to be some of the most destructive sins. Pride leads individuals to ignore God and elevate themselves above God. **“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18).** This highlighting the inevitable consequences of self-sufficiency and arrogance.

Self-sufficiency wants us to believe that WE are providing all things, only WE are capable of achievements, our works, good deeds and our best accomplishments are because WE did something on our own. We must **resist** the false identity that brings us to believe we do not need our Heavenly Father. **“O God, You are my God; early will I seek You.” (Psalm 63:1)**

God’s desire is for us to **resist** and be sold out to Him and Him only. Yes, we live in a world that constantly entices us to go after material things, new concepts and even wildly ungodly (yet accepted) beliefs. God will not force his will upon us, He gave us free will and we make choices, some good and sometimes bad. But God warns us to know that these things are not from Him. **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” (1 John 2:15-16).**

Jesus warns against the love of the world and all the selfish prideful selfish things within it. **“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4).**

‘I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, it is he that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.’ (John 15:5). This verse encompasses the biblical principle that full reliance on God is essential and biblical teaching consistently points how vital our dependence on God is for spiritual fruitfulness.

CONTRAST

It’s our responsibility to **know** our Heavenly Father and cultivate a heart and mind relationship that brings faith and trusts in God. Align our priorities, desires and thoughts with **His Will** and **recognize** the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. Jesus highlights the humility and desperation of the Prodigal Son in **Luke 15:11-32** for our benefit. **“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:14).**

When we can **reframe** our own mindset to rely on Jesus through prayer, scripture, preaching, prophecies, bible study and any and all avenues to KNOW God in a truly intimate relationship then we are on the right track to inner peace, purpose, love, joy, Godly wisdom, strength, moral guidance, physical and emotional well-being, spiritual growth and strengthened faith, being more **Christ like** and this is our earthly rewards when we draw closer to Jesus.

There's more about our Heavenly rewards. **"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."** (Matthew 6:12).

"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:24).

We need to **reframe** our past mistakes in a way that we use them for growth and to be all that God has called us to be. All that we do must point to the glory of our Heavenly Father. God will always equip the ones He calls; it is not in our power to "just do" for the Lord. He calls his children and then grows them, encourages them, gives them wisdom and so much more. God chooses and He can work through anyone that is willing.

David had many errors in judgement, yet God called him a **"A Man after God's own heart"** in 1st Samuel 13:14. He had absolute faith in God. He slew Goliath by faith and proclaimed that God delivered him from the paw of the lion and from the bear.

ARE WE WILLING TO MOVE FROM PRIDE AND SELF-SUFFICENCY, FULLY GO AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART, BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP AND LIVE FOR JESUS?



Living Free From Brokenness and Dysfunctional Relationships Dawn Lakey

For An Audience of One

Living Free from Brokenness & Dysfunctional Relationships

The most vital information for you to know about me is that I am a fierce follower of Jesus. Without that qualification, what I share with you would only be man's wisdom, a behavior modification model to life's issues, a dramatic downgrade from truths mined from God's Word, the Bible. I have an intense passion to equip women to be set free from anything that hinders them from walking in the truths of God's Word. My journey from bondage to freedom is a remarkable story of God's redemption process. May you be encouraged as I passionately share the biblical principles that set me free. I am a mother of six and a volunteer at Glacier Bible Camp.

Have you ever said to yourself something like, "If you had ever told me I would be doing _____? Fill in the blank. My life falls into this category in real time. Volunteering full time? No way. Speaker at a retreat? Absolutely not and I would have been on a flight as far as the east is from the west.

With that being said, the journey to land me here was anything short of easy. Brutal would be more of an accurate description. As crazy as this might seem, I would not trade all the brokenness in my life for the intimacy and freedom I now have in Jesus. God's faithfulness to walk me through the valleys of this life made me who I am today. What a privilege to be made whole, a vessel fit for the Lord's use, and I get to equip others with the truths from God's Word that changed my life. Beauty from ashes is truly a real thing! My heart is to share that beautification process with you!

It is one thing to know that there are promises made to us from God's word. It is another to believe them. One promise I have clung to no matter what I faced in life and has been stamped on my heart is **Deuteronomy 31:8, "And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."** If the statements in this verse are true, and they are, then we can confidently believe, not only say, that we are never alone.

Corrie Ten Boom, one of my favorite heroes of the faith said, "There is no pit so deep that He isn't deeper still." This quote gives us hope that no matter how deep the hole in our lives, there is a rescuer, Jesus our Savior. Corrie ten Boom and her family helped Jews escape the Holocaust during World War II, saving nearly 800 lives. Betrayed by a fellow Dutch citizen, the entire family was imprisoned, however Corrie survived. She went on to tell the world how the Lord sustained her through her time in the Nazi concentration camps where there was no hope, except for the hope she relied on in Jesus. Many have been comforted by her life-giving words of hope.

The only relationship that was 100% perfect was Adam and Eve's relationship with God until the fall in the garden when Satan deceived Eve. Adam sinned as well. Since then, humanity has been broken in some capacity. From this we can determine that sin is the originator of all

brokenness and trauma backed by Satan and his minions. If you believe you are the only one trapped in bondage or struggling to have victory in your Christian faith, know you are not alone. The entire human race is plagued by sin, thus our dire need for Jesus to set us free. We can be grateful God sent Jesus to redeem our relationship with Him!

As I reflect and see the hand of God at work in my life, I can tell you with 100% certainty that when I walked through the deep dark valleys of life, in my desperation and brokenness, I had only one place to turn. Jesus met me in my despair and hopelessness. I had nothing to offer but the fragments of a broken life. Intimacy with Him was the result when I cried out to Him in my desperation, and He was a perfect deliverer! It's one thing to read and believe who God is, but another to experience Him in your darkest moments. When life is out of control and the pain is unbearable, we have a choice, either run into His arms or flee in anger or bitterness. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and will not force Himself on us.

If you choose to run into His arms, you have promises set forth in Scripture you can hold onto. One such verse is found in **Psalm 34:18**, ***"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart and saves such as have a contrite spirit."*** Another verse that builds on the other is, ***"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds"*** (**Psalm 147:3**). Brokenness is exactly where God does His best work if we allow Him to have access to our heart. Then the healing can begin. This does not usually occur until we have exhausted all our resources to fix our situation or crisis. Once we relinquish control, then the Lord will do what only He alone can do, change us.

Are you ready to do it God's way? From personal experience, no other way brings personal freedom in Christ that incorporates joy and peace that I did not even know existed. My way only ended in chaos and misery. I had to learn the hard way to listen to His ways and trust Him.

Are you willing to allow the Lord to take your ashes, broken relationships, abuse, injustice, guilt, shame, hurts, anger, pride, hopelessness, fear, unforgiveness, despair, self-hatred or anything in your life and lay it at his feet?

If so, He will change them into something beautiful and give you rest in your soul. **Matthew 11:28-30** confirms this reality, ***"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."***

Isaiah 53:3 portrays Jesus as the ultimate example of brokenness in history, ***"He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."*** With great brokenness comes great victory. We see this in Jesus' life. He was the example and is the precursor to victory. By now you have probably noticed a theme, ***it's all about Jesus***. Sometimes we just need to see Him and the Word of God through a new lens, one that becomes readily available when we are completely open to being teachable by the Holy Spirit who does the work in and through us.

Here is my challenge, a question for you to evaluate. It starts with a core belief.

Do you believe that healing from brokenness starts with a relationship with the One, Jesus, who loved you enough to take your place on the cross, having an intimate relationship with Him, believing He is God's only Son who was without sin, and sacrificed His life in your place?

This is the first step to freedom from bondage and the power over sin in your life. It is more than an intellectual belief; it is a belief that leads to faith and results in a changed life. Remember, the demons believed, but they are not saved. We all must acknowledge we are a sinner and in need of accepting the gift of salvation from Jesus. It is free and cannot be bought or earned. Once we are born again spiritually, surrendering our lives to Him is not an option. The next step is in regard to having an intimate relationship with Him. This matter of true salvation must be settled, otherwise the rest of what I say to you will not make a difference in your life. You have an opportunity in this very moment to choose Jesus.

Jesus brings this topic of salvation to a greater depth with His teachings by way of parables. One is the Parable of the wise and foolish virgins found in [**Matthew.25:1-13**](#).

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming go out to meet him!’ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us! But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

“Do you have oil in your lamp? Do you know Him? Are you ready?”

You may be wondering why I am harping about true salvation, relationship verses religion, head knowledge verses heart knowledge. One reason is because of [**Matthew 7:21-24**](#). ***“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’***

Once again, I ask, “Do you know Him?” Are you doing His will? Are you practicing lawlessness?”

In both passages the Lord is communicating a heart issue that determines one's eternal destiny. Jesus repeats, "I do not know you and I never knew you." Both refer to a personal relationship or lack thereof with Him. In both stories everyone fully believed they were His by association. The five virgins believed they were going to the marriage feast as His bride but lacked intimacy with the bridegroom. In the second they believed they knew Him because of the things they did for Him. Neither had a relationship with Jesus that was authentic and real. It was based on false pretenses. The virgins that were wise could not share their oil with the foolish. No one can share the relationship they have with the bridegroom with anyone else. In both cases, they were doing things their own way and neither group surrendered their lives fully to Jesus.

One of my callings is to be a truth teller to the body of Christ. That is why I am so passionate about challenging all of you to examine whether you are truly of the faith. The Bible is clear that there will be people sitting in church who think they are saved due to good works, church attendance, serving in church, or being a good person. Not one single item listed here will get someone into Heaven. True salvation is all about what Jesus did on the cross. Once we realize we are a sinner, repent of our sins, and call on Him, then we do those good works. So, I am going to ask you again a few questions and I want you to be honest with yourself and Jesus. (He knows anyway) Based on the Scriptures presented:

Do you have an intimate relationship with Jesus separate from anyone and anything you have ever done for Him?

If you were to die today, would you know with certainty that Jesus would welcome you into Heaven?

Will Jesus say to you, "Well done good and faithful servant?" Or

"Will He say to you, "Get away from Me, I never knew you."

When you are truly His, then healing can begin in every area of your life. The closer your relationship is with Jesus, the more you can trust Him. As you allow Him to touch those broken parts of your heart and mind, the healing begins. Sometimes the Lord chooses to set someone free in an instant, and in other instances, He chooses a different or longer route. That is not our business but His.

Now to address strongholds, the chains the enemy wraps around us to keep us in bondage to those things that suffocate a vibrant relationship with Jesus. In the Bible, a "stronghold" is primarily referring to a habitual pattern of thought, belief, or attitude that hinders spiritual growth and obedience to God. It can be likened to a fortress that is difficult to penetrate or overcome, representing deeply ingrained mental or emotional barriers. These strongholds are often the result of negative thoughts, lies, or unbiblical beliefs that have taken root in a person's life.

When I learned about strongholds and what they looked like in my life, it changed everything. As the Lord started setting me free from areas that were broken, He was always gentle and patient. He knew when I was ready for a deeper layer.

My life story changed with this verse from **Ephesians 4:27, “nor give place to the devil.”** Paul was talking to the church at Ephesus. He was talking with people that confessed to be Christians. I was forced to consider what it looked like to give place to the devil. How did I end up with strongholds that constrained me from being who Christ designed?

Here is what I discovered:

- We give the devil a place when we outwardly or inwardly rebel against God.
- We give the devil a place when we believe his lies. Many of the lies we have believed for so long we don't even realize to be lies.
- Word curses, that we, without knowing better, started to believe because we were told those things for much of our lives. They are almost always opposite of the truth that God speaks over us in His word.

There can be evidence in our lives of strongholds, but we usually are not aware of them until we ask the Lord to show us. The fruits of strongholds are very evident to others. Anger, impatience, gossip, slander, fear, pride, to name a few. Basically, strongholds are in direct opposition to the fruits of the Spirit found in **Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”**

The enemy starts as soon as we are born to come against who God created us to be, to defeat God's plans for His children. This leads to the fierce battle, the war that satan wages against God's children.

THE BATTLE

If you don't acknowledge you are in a war, then you are not fighting it. Also, you must know the strategy of the enemy to prevail against him. Battles are not fought alone. If one person is doing all the fighting, then the other person is receiving all the damage. **Ephesians 4:26-27** says, **“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷nor give place to the devil.”** Paul is speaking to the church.

Bringing to light, meaning understanding these verses, changed my life. Add to that **Ephesians 6:10-18** which also gave me more clarity. Many of us have read or heard these verses but I would like to point out a few things you may have not seen or thought about when reading them. Ephesians 6:8-18,

¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the

preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Strength and power mean that there is a force that is very strong. We **need** the Lord to handle our enemy.

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Not only do we need strength and power from the Lord, but we also need His armor to protect ourselves from our enemy.

The next verse declares, *“We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* Do you realize Paul doesn’t say we wrestle with the devil? He says that we are wrestling or fighting against an army that consists of four different parts. It puts things in a hugely different light when you consider that the enemy of God, and our souls, has a well-organized military that has the sole purpose of trying to defeat God and His plans. If you can grasp the gravity of this, it should rock your world.

The truth about our enemy:

- The enemy hates God.
- The enemy is silenced by the truth. God’s Word is our example. Jesus was in the wilderness three times quoting the Word of God to silence him.
- He hates praise and worship- *“God inhabits the praises of His people” (Psalm 22:3)*. The book of Psalms is a great place to go to find verses to praise the Lord.
- The enemy hates Christians that are affecting the kingdom of God.
- The enemy hates prayer.
- He loves when you forget the things God has done in your life.
- He loves it when we are not watchful and careful with our thoughts- taking them captive-he is relentless, but God is greater than anything the enemy can throw at us. The Lord gives us the strength and wisdom to counter him with the truth. **Philippians 4:8** is the antidote, *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*
- He hates the truth about God.

Remember, *“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4)*. Also, Jesus gave us this prayer as a mighty tool. **Matthew 6:9-13**,

“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.” (Putting His name above any other and acknowledging who He is).

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as is in heaven. (Laying aside any ideas of what we want but truly asking Him to do what is best. It starts in Heaven and then comes to earth. In other words, it starts with Him in the heavenlies, then comes down to earth and manifests itself, because of His perfect will.)

“Give us this day our daily bread.” (This is a reminder for us that He is truly the One that provides for our every need).

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive our trespassers.” Forgiveness is one of the keys to not giving the enemy a place in our lives. It is twofold, forgiving others as well as receiving God’s forgiveness when we sin. Jesus makes it clear in **verses 14-15** that if we do not forgive, He will not hear our prayers and He will not forgive us our sins. ***“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”***

“Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” We need Him to give us eyes to see when the enemy is tempting us and strength to overcome the temptation.

“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” This is a vibrant way of acknowledging GOD!

This passage is packed with insights to help us be overcomers. The war is on, but have you considered:

- That the battle is real
- What the battle entails
- How to fight it

SUNGLASSES EXAMPLE

Sunglasses filter out the light just as lies filter out the truth.

The belt of truth becomes your protection as you get acquainted with the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God wielded against the enemy.

John 8:32 says, ***“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*** This verse can be interpreted to mean choosing truth over feelings and can transform how people feel, think and act.

Remember, the enemy starts as early as he can thwart God’s perfect plan for our lives.

If you want to live free you first must leave Egypt (or slavery). Next is the journey to the promised land. The Israelites journeyed through the wilderness, because they had to get to know the one true God, then they were able to enter the Promised land.

If you want or desire to live free, then you must leave what you know and is familiar and comfortable. The journey to the place of freedom is allowing the Lord to walk you through and show you what you have been believing that is not true... anything that does not match up with what the Bible says.

TOOL #1 RECOGNIZE lies you believed as the Holy Spirit reveals them to you. Recognize the path of salvation and freedom that God has for you.

TOOL #2 RECEIVE His word and forgiveness. Abide in the intimacy of relationship.

TOOL # 3 RESIST the enemy. Capture your thoughts and bring them into submission to Christ. Don't give the enemy a stronghold. Recognize lies in thought patterns, responses, and traits.

TOOL #4 REFRAME it with the TRUTH, what God says in His Word. God has a plan. Walk in the path that God is so wanting to show you.

In real time, this is my story of how God taught me these truths.

- Share my story...
- My son Aaron, pregnancy, worst case scenario, prophetic word spoken over him, desperate for answers, the freedom class.
- The duck story
- The household spiritual change/ physical change
- Field encounter
- Obedience
- The consequences of that change- bad and good but God makes beauty from ashes.
- My battle with fear- 2 years
- Hopelessness- deliverance
- Still broken but a praying daughter...
- I have never been the same.
- Home with Jesus story

I learned valuable truths as I walked out what the Lord has taught me.

Suddenlies:

Things that are out of character for someone or something that happens suddenly. Can be something physical like a headache etc. I ask the Lord if it is something spiritual and then I listen. Sometimes it is and sometimes it's not. Also, when the opposition is strong and there is somewhat of a cascade of events, I seek the Lord about the cause instead of just assuming it's natural.

Living free is having tools and wisdom from the Lord to fight not against flesh and blood but being able to recognize when the enemy is at work. We never want to focus on him, but we are in a battle.

My process: I usually start with my heart asking the Lord to show me anywhere I've opened a door. Then I walk it out with Him. It is helpful to use the tools of Recognizing, Receiving, Resisting and Reframing with truth.

Hopefully from all that you have heard today, there will be two major takeaways:

1. That you have been challenged to consider your present walk with God. Is it your heart's desire to truly belong to Him fully? God longs to have an intimate relationship with you. It begins with your decision to choose Jesus.
2. That you have acquired what you need to allow the Lord to start healing all the broken parts in your life so you can live in freedom and worship the audience of One, Jesus!

