

Renovar Ministries presents

# IF ONLY I KNEW



# **IF ONLY I KNEW**

PRESENTED BY RENOVAR  
MINISTRIES



## ***If Only I Knew***

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b><i>Spiritual Growth</i></b>	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>15</b>
<b><i>Jesus the Redeemer</i></b>	
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>25</b>
<b><i>Doors of chaos - Opening doors for the enemy</i></b>	
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>63</b>
<b><i>The joy of being a believer</i></b>	

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## **WE PRAY THE FOLLOWING PRAYER OVER YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES :**

“[I always pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may grant you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation [that gives you a deep and personal and intimate insight] into the true knowledge of Him [for we know the Father through the Son]. And [I pray] that the eyes of your heart [the very center and core of your being] may be enlightened [flooded with light by the Holy Spirit], so that you will know *and* cherish the hope [the divine guarantee, the confident expectation] to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (God’s people), and [so that you will begin to know] what the immeasurable *and* unlimited *and* surpassing greatness of His [active, spiritual] power is in us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of His mighty strength.”

Ephesians 1:17-20 AMP

CHAPTER 1

***SPIRITUAL  
GROWTH***

Every once in a while, you will reflect back on your life and examine the life choices you have made, and how these have affected your current circumstances.

In these moments certain choices may come back to haunt you, or may fill you with regret. Alternatively, some decisions encourage and inspire you, as these choices have prospered your life. The questions that you should raise are:

- Had you known better would you have made the same decision?
- Would knowing the truth or the future outcome change the way you act in the present?

The likelihood is that it would. Based on this premise, we want to encourage you to read the following information, as we hope to reveal God's truth that will steer and guide your life more purposefully through the many traps of the enemy.

Take courage today that God is on your side and desires that you trust in Him at all times. Let the Bible open up your understanding to help you perceive the battle you face as a child of God.

There is much joy in this journey that will be derived from the wisdom and guidance of God. Do not fear but be encouraged to let your confidence in God navigate you through this life.

In this chapter we are going to deal with the consequences that a lack of knowledge has on your faith in God and how being unprepared can cause you to fall into the traps of the enemy. Finally, we will then learn how the Holy Spirit guides you in the way you should go.

## **IGNORANCE IS BLISS**

In the book of Hosea chapter four verse six, God says that His “people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge”.

*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge,” Hosea 4:6a (NKJV)*

When you choose to ignore the evidence, in order to give in to the flesh, you play ignorant to the truth and ultimately perish. You should be taught to trust your God-given instinct and the Holy Spirit, which warn you that something is not good for you.

God gives you discernment, which is the ability to judge well in challenging situations. In fact, the Ten Commandments are written on your heart (Romans 2:14-15). God has equipped you to be knowledgeable and to be informed. This a great defence you can have against the schemes of the enemy.

The proverb “Ignorance is bliss” teaches that not knowing something can help you not to be impacted or troubled by an event or situation. However, ignorance is not always bliss.



There are facts that you need to know in order to operate in victory against the enemy. God has provided several truths that you as a believer must know in order to prosper as a child of God.

It is important to understand that rejecting knowledge, especially the knowledge that God provides, will bring about your destruction. The Bible has all the knowledge and wisdom you need to be a good steward of His gift of life. To ignore this, means to purposefully and wilfully disregard the facts or information that is known. When you ignore the evidence that something is a threat, you will cave into the strongholds that come with it.

*“And the Holy Spirit also adds His testimony to us [in confirmation of this]; for after having said, is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will imprint My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will inscribe them [producing an inward change],”  
Hebrews 10:15-16 (AMP)*

*“For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without [regard to] the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged and condemned by the Law. For it is not those who merely hear the Law [as it is read aloud] who are just or righteous before God, but it is those who [actually] obey the Law who will be justified [pronounced free of the guilt of sin and declared acceptable to Him]. When Gentiles, who do not have the Law [since it was given only to Jews], do instinctively the things the Law requires [guided only by their conscience], they are a law to themselves, though they do not have the*

*Law. They show that the essential requirements of the Law are written in their hearts; and their conscience [their sense of right and wrong, their moral choices] bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or perhaps defending them on that day when, as my gospel proclaims, God will judge the secrets [all the hidden thoughts and concealed sins] of men through Christ Jesus.” Romans 2:12-16 (AMP)*

*“for their [moral] understanding is darkened and their reasoning is clouded; [they are] alienated and self-banished from the life of God [with no share in it; this is] because of the [willful] ignorance and spiritual blindness that is [deep-seated] within them, because of the hardness and insensitivity of their heart.” Ephesians 4:18 (AMP)*

## **UNPREPARED CHRISTIANS**

Why are Christians often unprepared to be a follower of Christ?

Many times the church does not fully deal with the realities of the spiritual realm. You should be aware of how the spiritual realm works, if you are to safeguard yourself from the enemy. Take the advantage you have through the connection and intimacy you will have with the Holy Spirit. The latter should be your primary focus, as it will bring the prophetic voice in your life.

### ***The breach of covenant and forgiveness***

Many say, “Don’t get me wrong, it is a great package but I’m just not ready for that kind of commitment right now.”

This ideal that Christianity is an easy way out of condemnation is a sorely misunderstood ideal. Christianity requires a deep commitment to uphold and follow the commandments of Jesus and to form a meaningful and deep relationship with Him. Often times the desire to have worldly fun overshadows the moral compass that God requires a born-again Christian to follow. This very potent stimulus can easily draw you away from the ideals Jesus calls you to uphold. This, therefore, lures the lukewarm Christian away from the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

However, there is a set of boundaries that safeguards a Christian from falling for the lusts of the world, they just need to be applied. It is often the case that a new believer is not educated about the realities that he or she is about to face and how to deal with them, resulting in them backsliding or renouncing their faith in Jesus. The truth is crucial for any Christian, because the truth shall set you free, while shedding light on the darkness.

### ***The need to be aware***

You need to be aware and trained in understanding the spiritual realm, so that you can withstand and overcome the enemy. The Bible teaches that your fight is “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high

places.” (Ephesians 6:12). These forces of darkness operate out of sight and it is difficult to discern what is taking place in the spirit if you operate in the flesh. Spiritually minded Christians are more readily able to withstand the tactics of the enemy.

Because your fight is not against flesh and blood, God gives you the ability to discern in the spirit through the spiritual gift of discernment. This is given through the Holy Spirit.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES**

In the book of Luke, before Jesus ascended into heaven, He opened up the understanding of His disciples so that they could clearly comprehend the Scriptures and what the intention was for His death and resurrection. He also highlighted the significant role that each one of them would play as the forerunners of the Good News; spreading the message of salvation from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. As a result, other believers would follow suit (Luke 24:45-53).

But to be fully equipped and empowered to do this, they would have to first wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

God is faithful to His people because after the disciples and many other believers experienced the nearness and awe-inspiring wonder of Christ being amidst them, He left them

and us with the promise of the comfort and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In the book of John, Jesus speaks to His disciples and shares the following:

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” John 16:7 (KJV)*

In the book of Luke 24:49 Jesus says:

*“Listen carefully: I am sending the Promise of My Father [the Holy Spirit] upon you; but you are to remain in the city [of Jerusalem] until you are clothed (fully equipped) with power from on high.”*

*Luke 24:49 (AMP)*

Right where you are today, can you say, “I need God’s power in my life. I need the power of His Spirit.”

In this regard, nothing has changed between God’s disciples then and you now. You cannot operate successfully in your own strength. You need the Spirit of God to rest upon you and to connect with you in order to walk in the power of God.

The disciples had been in Jesus’s training school. They had even gone out two-by-two to minister to others under the guidance and leading of Jesus Christ. But without God’s presence and the leading of His Spirit, they stood at great risk of being misguided and acting out of their own

understanding. When you operate in our own strength, you operate out of the flesh and not out of the spirit.

I love that Scripture in Romans chapter 8:5-8, which states:

*“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:5-8 (NIV)*

There you have it. Things of the spirit produce life and peace and things of the flesh produce death. That is why it is so important to pursue the things of the spirit, by being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

After Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent to be with us all, Jesus ascended into Heaven to take up His position at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20-23).

Because the disciples personally saw Jesus after He was raised from the dead, they trusted and believed everything that Jesus said was true. Therefore, they exercised their faith by waiting and believing that the Holy Spirit would come and that He would move amongst them.

Perhaps you are waiting on the Lord for one of His promises today, or for a greater movement of His Spirit in your life, or

even over others. I want to encourage you to keep trusting and exercising your faith.

Can you imagine how excited the disciples must have been as they waited on the Lord? Jesus told them that John baptised with water, but they would be baptised with the Holy Spirit. They knew and understood the close connectivity they had with Jesus and valued this so much that they could hardly wait to be saturated and connected with the Holy Spirit.

What exactly does that mean? It means that they would be immersed in the Holy Spirit and that His presence would fill them and surround them. It also means that there would be a significant spiritual transformation and a deeper supernatural awakening.

One of the important things you need to remember in the 21st century, where so many things are accessible at the click of a button, is that the Holy Spirit can never be forced to move. This is why it was so significant that the disciples had to wait for His coming. It acts as an important reminder to you, that there will be times in your life when you will have to wait on the prompting, guidance, or even for a powerful movement of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, the Holy Spirit is with you and near to you, but you need to recognise that He moves according to His own speed and purpose. You are not to quench Him; meaning, that

sometimes you can also be in such a rush that you cut Him off from fully leading in corporate gatherings or operating in your own personal life.

When the Holy Spirit came, the disciples were all fellowshiping together and they were fully surrendered to the will and movement of God:

Let's follow this together in the book of Acts chapter 2, from verse 2:

*“When the day of [a]Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place, and suddenly a sound came from heaven like a rushing violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. There appeared to them tongues resembling fire, which were being distributed [among them], and they rested on each one of them [as each person received the Holy Spirit]. And they were all filled [that is, diffused throughout their being] with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other [b]tongues (different languages), as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out [clearly and appropriately].” Acts 2:2-4 (AMP)*

I want to encourage you to invite the Holy Spirit to come and transform your life today with His Power. If you are longing for a touch from the Holy Spirit or a breakthrough in your life spiritually, just say, “Here I am God. I surrender my will. Let Your Spirit take full control. Lord, please transform me!”





CHAPTER 2

***JESUS THE  
REDEEMER***

*“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should [a]not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*

*John 3:14-17 (NKJV)*

**I**f there is one thing that you must know while alive here on earth it is that there is a redeemer of your soul. Jesus is your redeemer, sent by God to claim you back from the penalty of sin. It does not matter who you are or what you have done, what does matter is that you receive this free gift of salvation and claim your inheritance in Jesus; which is eternal life.

Jesus is the Son of God, and His role was and is to be the atonement for all the sins of the world. Jesus has reclaimed you and saved you from your own downfall and death in sin. He is the pure and perfect sacrifice on the altar before God; the final sacrifice and atonement for your sins, which means that you are fully forgiven.

Why would God sacrifice His Son for the whole human race?

The answer is simple; **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him**

**shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16 NIV)."** God loves you and desires that you be with Him for all eternity. This requires some effort on your part. You need to accept the invitation and follow Him.

### ***What does it mean to be a Christian?***

You become a follower of Christ when you take up your position as a son or daughter of God and start operating in the office of your calling in the Christian family. This requires you to have a fulfilling relationship with God and to fulfil the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16).

### ***What power does this sacrifice have?***

It was a pure sacrifice, without blemish. In the past, a pure white lamb without blemish would be used to atone (make amends) for a person's sin. The blood, which represents the life of a living creature, is shed over an altar. The shedding of the blood would cover the multitude of sin.

Jesus died willingly by giving up His spirit (Luke 23:46), which means that He did not die at the mercy of the people who wanted Him crucified. Because of this, the power of salvation lies in the spirit and overcomes in the spirit. The spirit is a dimension with different rules than that of the physical dimension. Therefore, this sacrifice has power in the spiritual realm over the death of sin.

Much of your bondage, affliction, and suffering is rooted in the spirit. This is why the power of salvation is most potent in the spirit and as a result, you start to experience the release in the natural (like physical healing in your body, and emotional restoration).

It is similar to the experience you have when you experience emotions. It is common knowledge that your emotions are an experience you have based on how you feel. This experience does not take place in your muscles or organs, but rather in your soul. As a consequence, you start to experience the emotion in your physical body, which feels tangible.

Furthermore, the body does not heal the emotional pain; instead, through resolving issues, the mind does. The mind is a core part of your soul, which is why resolving problems where they lie forms an important part of your healing and deliverance.

When Jesus took the sins of the world upon His shoulders He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34). He was separated from God and out of a deep sense of abandonment, Jesus cried out:

*“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”* Matthew 27:46b (NLT).

It was only after Jesus conquered sin that He was reunited with God the Father. This is the same experience that you have when you sin; you feel this complete sense of separation from God. Thankfully, Jesus has paid the price and overcome sin on your behalf.

It is at this point that sin loses its power, and you gain your source of life and strength in Jesus. In this way you are able to overcome the things that you face, because Jesus advocates on your behalf.

John 3:16 is the perfect verse in scripture that encapsulates the very essence of Jesus's purpose on earth. It demonstrates the depth of love that God possesses for His creation. Everlasting life is within each person's reach, freely given to those who believe. The ideal that God would willingly and without delay give each person who believes in Jesus everlasting life, is an ideal many are willing to forfeit.

How beautiful is the understanding, knowing that God has revealed the redeeming power of Jesus Christ His Son in many places in the Bible? Jesus overcame sin and bore your suffering; being wounded, afflicted, and stricken with your iniquities, so that you could be free. A gift so pure, that it seeks your redemption and gain.

Imagine being rejected, despised, bruised, whipped and wounded for the transgressions of others. This would be

enough to make you run for your life, but Jesus decided to take it upon Himself, to bare it.

Imagine being separated from the very source of life, feeling your breath leave you and your heart cease. Imagine being subjected to the innermost parts of the earth where fire, suffering, and affliction reigns for eternity. Imagine loving someone so much that you would give up your life and suffer for them, so that they would reap the blessings of everlasting life, peace, joy, and love.

Imagine a world where you would choose to bare the heartache, regret, and pain of others; how intense that experience would be if you took on the pain of the mass of people on earth today.

The intensity of Jesus's suffering is incomprehensible. Measuring it with your understanding and experiences of pain can never match that which Jesus suffered when He took it upon Himself. You have no true measuring rod. You can only imagine. However, imagining it is enough for you to realise that the gift you have received from Jesus, is beyond your ability to give and that it is truly a gift unmatched by any other. This gift is salvation!

### ***What will you do with this gift?***

Salvation is the deliverance of the all human beings from sin, through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His Blood

paid the price for your sins, so that when you believe you may be justified before God through Him. Jesus is your advocate, for it is through Jesus Christ alone that you have access to the Father in heaven.

Salvation is more than a free ticket to heaven, it encompasses the compassion, authority, and ultimate atonement of your sins before God; and requires more from you than the response, 'Yes;' it requires a lifetime commitment.

***Scriptures for further reflection:***

*1 Who would have believed what we heard?*

*Who saw the Lord's power in this?*

*2 He grew up like a small plant before the Lord.*

*He was like a root growing in a dry land.*

*He had no special beauty or form to make us notice him.*

*There was nothing in his appearance to make us desire him.*

*3 He was hated and rejected by people.*

*He had much pain and suffering.*

*People would not even look at him.*

*He was hated, and we didn't even notice him.*

*4 But he took our suffering on him*

*and felt our pain for us.*

*We saw his suffering.*

*We thought God was punishing him.*



*5 But he was wounded for the wrong things we did.*

*He was crushed for the evil things we did.*

*The punishment, which made us well, was given to him.*

*And we are healed because of his wounds.*

*6 We all have wandered away like sheep.*

*Each of us has gone his own way.*

*But the Lord has put on him the punishment*

*for all the evil we have done.*

*7 He was beaten down and punished.*

*But he didn't say a word.*

*He was like a lamb being led to be killed.*

*He was quiet, as a sheep is quiet while its wool is being cut.*

*He never opened his mouth.*

*8 Men took him away roughly and unfairly.*

*He died without children to continue his family.*

*He was put to death.*

*He was punished for the sins of my people.*

*9 He was buried with wicked men.*

*He died with the rich.*

*He had done nothing wrong.*

*He had never lied.*

*10 But it was the Lord who decided*

*to crush him and make him suffer.*

*So the Lord made his life a penalty offering.*

*But he will see his descendants and live a long life.*

*He will complete the things the Lord wants him to do.*

*11 He will suffer many things in his soul.*

*But then he will see life and be satisfied.*

*My good servant will make many people right with God.*

*He carried away their sins.*

*12 For this reason I will make him a great man among people.*

*He will share in all things with those who are strong.*

*He willingly gave his life.*

*He was treated like a criminal.*

*But he carried away the sins of many people.*

*And he asked forgiveness for those who sinned.*

*Isaiah 53:1-12 ICB*

*But Ahaz said, "I will not ask for a sign. I will not test the Lord." Then Isaiah said, "Ahaz, descendant of David, listen very carefully! Isn't it bad enough that you wear out the patience of people? Do you have to wear out the patience of my God also? But the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and she will name him Immanuel. He will be eating milk curds and honey when he learns to reject what is evil and to choose what is good. You are afraid of the kings of Israel and Aram now. But before the child learns what is good and what is evil, the lands of Israel and Aram will be empty.*

*Isaiah 7:12-16 ICB*



CHAPTER 3

***DOORS OF  
CHAOS -  
OPENING  
DOORS FOR  
THE ENEMY***

**Y**ou are responsible for the actions you take. Although you may not always see the consequences of your actions, your actions have a positive or negative effect on your personal life and that of others.

You also need to bear in mind that your actions can have a direct effect on your spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

The Word of God describes how you are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). God has three special aspects to Himself: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Human beings also have three essential aspects to themselves: spirit, soul, and physical body (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

When you get involved in the wrong things in life, (like alcohol abuse, drug abuse, occult practices, and sexual unrighteousness) you end up opening doors to the enemy in your life; creating an area where he can attack and infiltrate. This results in sinning against God and the consequence for this life of sin is spiritual death. "For the wages of sin is death, ..." (Romans 6:23).

## **LUST OF THE FLESH, LUST OF THE EYE, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE**

*"Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers*

*only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.” 1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)*

The world that you live in today has access to a range of experiences and things that can easily capture your attention, your senses, and eventually your soul. There is almost instant access to anything you desire. It is easy to long after something you desire and to dedicate your life pursuing after your desires, but it ends up robbing you of your dignity and purity. Lust is a powerful sensual luring of something that consumes a person to the point of sinning, whether in your mind or in your actions.

To sharpen your understanding of the many lusts out there today, a series of doors leading to sin will be discussed in more depth below.

## **WORSHIPPING MONEY - MAMMON**

Believe it or not, one of the topics that Jesus spoke about frequently in the Bible was money. There are many references to money in the Bible. From this, you can probably infer that money was and will always be problematic for humankind.

We are taught from a young age that we must work hard and get a good job so that we can earn enough money, not only in order to enjoy life, but also to retire as young as possible and live the dream. Instant gratification is the name of the game; take risks so that you can make as much money as quickly as possible. But often the more you have, the more you want. Society looks up to the rich and the famous as the ones setting the trends, yet almost half of the world's population lives in poverty.

The problem with money is that it has become a 'drug' as opposed to a seed. Jesus is very clear in Matthew 6:24 that no one can serve both God and money.

*“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. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24 (NKJV)*

There is nothing wrong with money itself. God created trade and industry which makes up our economy and the economy has evolved from trading with produce, to cash, to Bitcoin (and many other forms of currency). Everyone needs money to live and supply for their livelihoods and to support their loved ones. However, it is the love and lust thereof that causes people to sin.

Furthermore, money and wealth give you a false sense of security. You can read in Luke 12:15-21 of a man who hoarded

a great deal of possessions, thinking that 'he had arrived', but then the Lord took his soul and the man's possessions were left behind. There is no security in money. Today you might have plenty but tomorrow you could have nothing; that which you do have, you cannot take with you to heaven.

### ***So, how should you view and interact with money?***

- Firstly, you are not to be lazy but work for a living; as commanded right in the beginning of the Bible (Genesis 2:15).
- Secondly, be content with what you have (1 Timothy 6:8-10). Being content stops the hunger that comes from the lust of the world.
- Lastly, this might surprise you, be generous. Live with open hands and give, give, give (2 Corinthians 9:6-8). This is not so that God can see how much you give, so that you can get more from God, but rather to act as the steward that he appointed you to be.

Proverbs 30:7-9 provides a balanced view concerning money:

*<sup>7</sup> O God, I beg two favors from you;  
let me have them before I die.*

*<sup>8</sup> First, help me never to tell a lie.*

*Second, give me neither poverty nor riches!*

*Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.*

*<sup>9</sup> For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?"*

*And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.*

*Proverbs 30:7-9 (NLT)*



## **Scripture for further study**

<sup>19</sup> “Do not store up for yourselves [material] treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart [your wishes, your desires; that on which your life centers] will be also. <sup>22</sup> “The eye is the lamp of the body; so if your eye is clear [spiritually perceptive], your whole body will be full of light [benefiting from God’s precepts]. <sup>23</sup> But if your eye is bad [spiritually blind], your whole body will be full of darkness [devoid of God’s precepts]. So if the [very] light inside you [your inner self, your heart, your conscience] is darkness, how great and terrible is that darkness! <sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the Lord].

*Matthew 6.19-24 (AMP)*

<sup>5</sup> Let your character [your moral essence, your inner nature] be free from the love of money [shun greed—be financially ethical], being content with what you have; for He has said, “I will never [under any circumstances] desert you [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], nor will I forsake or let you down or relax My hold on you [assuredly not]!”

*Hebrews 13:5 (AMP)*

# **CORRUPTED BLOODLINES**

## ***What is a bloodline?***

A bloodline is the spiritual link between you and all of your ancestors. The Bible mentions that the sins of a person's forefathers will not be forgotten instead they can have a direct impact on a family right through to their third and fourth generation (Exodus 34:7, Numbers 14:18). For sexual sin the word of God says up the tenth generation (Deuteronomy 23:2).

The reality is, what your ancestors did before you can have a direct effect on your life right now. If your family tree looks good and your ancestors truly served and loved God, you will be able to see the blessing over your life and those in your family who are currently alive and serving the Lord.

However, if your family tree looks rebellious and corrupt in nature, they can cause their descendants to face curses.

Thankfully, because Jesus died on the cross for you, those curses can be broken over your life.

Here is an example of how a curse manifests over the generations:

A young adult attending university, seeks help from his campus pastor because he is always in some form of accident.

If it is not burning himself on a stove, then it is a car accident, a bicycle accident, or an accident by the swimming pool. This is the story of his life. By nature he is not clumsy, therefore something else must be causing the accidents, because he noticed that his uncle and grandfather suffered the same.

### ***Prayer for my bloodline***

Father God, I want to thank You for my family. Thank You Jesus, for dying for each of us on the cross. Thank You for the cleansing power of Your Blood that was shed for each of us.

I want to repent on behalf of my biological father and mother and my biological ancestors. I ask Your forgiveness for any ungodly activity that they may have fallen into at any time. I renounce all unrighteous behaviour. I ask Your forgiveness for where they may have dishonoured You through their bodies with any sexual sin or pride. I ask Your forgiveness where they may have served other gods above You. I renounce any occultic practices and humbly ask for Your forgiveness.

Lord, I ask that You will deal with my bloodline and remove and sever off anything that needs to go. Please remove every demonic altar, every stronghold, and every corrupt cycle synced to my bloodline. Please break all curses over my life associated directly with my bloodline. Thank You Father. I ask all of this in the Name of Jesus Christ my Saviour. Amen.

I declare that all curses over my life are cancelled out and

made null and void because of what Jesus did by dying on the cross for me according to Galatians 3:13.

## **POWER AND PRIDE**

A growing trend in the world today teaches people to live a life of power, self-ambition, and self-gratification that ultimately endorses pride. Many people are so power-hungry that they will do anything, literally anything, to get their hands on more power. As a result, many injustices in the world have been caused by power-hungry individuals or groups of people.

However, God does not endorse or tolerate pride, which is why protecting yourself from this way of thinking and living is critical in your walk with God.

Pride slowly overwhelms you and takes control of your life. It is subtle and persistent, and before you know it, you cannot recognise it in your life. Power and pride are both addictive. If you cannot admit the problem, it cannot be fixed.

There is nothing wrong with being in a position of power or authority, as long as you remember that all authority comes from God (Romans 13:1-2). The problem arises when power is abused, which will ultimately lead to pride. Take some time and research how the abuse of power has happened in the past and how it is happening today.

A story in the Bible that significantly demonstrates how a hunger for power and pride leads to a fall, is the one of Satan. Take some time and read Ezekiel 28:17. If you have any doubt whether God hates pride, please read Proverbs 6:16-19. The very first thing that God lists is pride. Also, Proverbs 16:18 clearly says that pride comes before a fall.

### ***Self-ambition***

The next trait to watch out for is self-ambition. There is nothing wrong with ambition in itself, as long as it's not from "self" and towards "self", but rather from God and towards God.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there's any form of *self* in you; whether it be ambition, pride, power, or anything else that is opposed to humility. Jesus had and still has all the power and authority (as given to Him by God – Matthews 28:18), yet he personifies humility and teaches us to live a life of humility through His presence in us.

If you are wondering, humility is a characteristic that takes an entire lifetime to learn and live out. This transformation into the image of Jesus will take the duration of your individual mission here on earth. It will be so beautiful, because it is what God wants you to be. He will finish His work in you (Philippians 1:6).

Our sinful nature makes this so difficult to live out a life of humility; it is easy to look out for ourselves and want the praise of men, or to be placed on podiums by our actions or by people's approval. Be very careful, the door to pride has just been opened.

The choices are clear – self, demonic, or God's power. The outcome of the pursuit of the first two will be disastrous, as demonstrated in the story of Satan. But, following in Jesus' footsteps of self-denial, and using every opportunity to advance God's Kingdom, will bring glory to your King. Don't delay – make a choice today!

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, Philippians 2:3 (NIV)*

### ***Prayer of repentance for Pride and domination***

Father, I confess that throughout my life there have been instances where I have operated out of pride and self ambition; I repent of this. Father, I repent of any "power clashes" I have had with others, where I have not operated out of love or where I have not submitted under your instruction. Father, I repent of any moment where I have been domineering and where I have abused the authority that you gave me or that was given to me in a position of leadership, whether at a school, tertiary institution, the work place, or even at home. I humbly renounce those moments of pride in

my life and I ask that you please protect me from operating in pride in the future. Please help me to be attentive to the Holy Spirit in the Name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

## **ADDICTION**

An addiction is often, if not always, formed as a result of life's many hardships and struggles. The dependency on a substance or activity is a coping mechanism to escape reality in most cases. You can recognise when you or a loved one is suffering from addiction when there are clear signs that the individual cannot do without the object or activity. There are many addictions but only substance abuse, pornography and gambling will be discussed here.

### ***Substance abuse***

Substance abuse is typically defined as the misuse or use of substances such as drugs, alcohol or tobacco. These are the broad categories and have been around for centuries, even though, in many cases, they have been developed into variants of the substance. While some have more severe consequences and effects than others, all substance abuse have both physical and physiological consequences.

The biggest problem with substance abuse is that it becomes a hiding place for pain, a so-called "happy place"

where you can avoid the reality of the world. Over time, if not addressed, the substance abuse becomes worse and in a Christian's life, could end up as an idol with an elevated status above God. Besides the fact that too many of these substances can alter the state of your mind, it is also harmful to the human body – think of heart problems, cancer, etc.

Ultimately, the substance abuse becomes a bondage with a demonic root that must be broken. It has become effortless to obtain alcohol and drugs and as a result, many lives have been ruined once addicted. In addition, think of how subtle the abuse can be in the context of consuming alcohol regularly, just to take the edge off a stressful day, or a bad experience, or even when socialising with friends. Starting with small quantities but before you know it, you are addicted to alcohol and things start spiralling out of control. The euphoric experience is like a light to a moth, you cannot resist it in your own strength.

There are many Bible verses on the topic of substance abuse. One that stands out is 1 Peter 5:8.

*“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8 (KJV)*

You cannot be sober if you are under the influence of a substance and if you are not sober, then you cannot guard your heart against the devil.



*“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.” Romans 12:1 (KJV)*

You have a responsibility towards the Holy Spirit Who lives inside you, to keep His temple clean and undefiled; which means keeping your body and mind clean. Apply the fruit of the Spirit self-control. Let this be true of you that the Holy Spirit will help you to exercise self-control, so that the door of substance abuse is never opened in your life.

***Prayer of repentance for substance abuse:***

Father I come to you in the Name of Jesus and I acknowledge that I have fallen into a trap of habitual sin and abused substances as a solution to suppress my problems and emotions. Lord, I recognise that by having this stronghold in my life I have hurt the relationships I have with the people I love. I also repent of all of the sins that are often associated with substance abuse. I repent of losing control over my mind and body and, in doing so, acting aggressively toward others while intoxicated. Lord, I ask that you will remove the clutches of this demonic stronghold and destroy any unholy alters built over my life. Please deliver me from all evil that has me captive. I believe that the power of the blood of Jesus has set me free. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

## ***Pornography:***

In its simplest form, pornography is any sexually explicit material, whether written or graphic in nature, intended to stimulate sexual excitement. You live in a world that canvases pornography in very clever ways without being obvious. And to make matters worse, pornography has gone digital, which means that almost anyone can access this vile world anywhere and at any time using various types of technology, including phones, tablets, laptops, TVs, etc.

*“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” James 1:13-15 (KJV)*

As you can see from James 1:13-15, it all starts with temptation or enticement. The temptation from Satan does not even need to be as blatant as explicit material; rather, it could be as simple as reading a book which describes a sex scene. The temptation just needs to be suggested.

The addiction to pornography is a very dangerous trap. It might all start with innocently seeing an explicit picture, but this picture might arouse sexual excitement in this moment and, unless you guard your heart, the desire for more will be planted.

Now, it's very easy for Satan to tempt or entice you. Once you start looking at explicit material, it's hard to stop. Not only do you want to see more, but, over time, the desire becomes stronger to look at darker forms of pornography; whether it is same-sex material, sex with animals, child pornography (which is illegal), or the like.

There are many verses in the Bible that speak about sexual immorality. For example, look at 1 Corinthians 6:18:

*“Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body.”*

*1 Corinthians 6:18 (NLT)*

If the bondage of pornography is not broken, the consequences will be dire. It will break relationships, not only with God, but also with your spouse; you will become dissatisfied with your sexual relationship because pornography paints a false world which looks far more exciting. Ultimately, it will rob you of the purity which God gave you.

If you've been caught in the trap of pornography, you must be alert to the signs that lead to the temptation and close the door before it opens. For example, if you know that a movie contains sexual scenes and you know that this has tempted you before to looking at pornography, don't go and watch the movie. In the same way, if you know that when you're bored at home you are likely to start browsing the Internet, which could

lead to searching for explicit material, wilfully choose to walk away.

Remember, temptation is not a sin. It is only a sin when you give in to the temptation. Therefore, remain strong in the Lord and resist evil.

### ***A prayer for being sexually unrighteous***

Father, I want to thank You that You are the One Who formed my body. I repent of every corrupt sexual sin whether it be in thought or deed. Please deliver me from the strongholds and cycles that Satan has trapped me in. Please cut me free from any corrupt sexual soul ties and please deliver me from all evil, in the mighty Name of Jesus. Amen.

### ***Gambling***

According to the Meriam Webster dictionary, gambling is to play a game for money or property or to bet on an uncertain outcome. The most well-known forms of gambling are: online gambling, a casino (tables/slots), animal races/fights, sports-betting, and playing the lottery.

Have you noticed that the common denominator in all of the forms of gambling, is to walk out with more than what you started with? To put it differently, being driven by greed and

using luck to get rich quickly. Be assured, this is a recipe for ruining your life.

While the Bible may not explicitly speak about gambling, the root of the problem is the greed for money. 1 Timothy 6: 9-10 explains this problem very clearly:

*“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” 1 Timothy 6: 9-10 (NIV)*

Greed is the lust or desire for more of something which results in the endless spiral of ‘the more you have the more you want’ and the endless spiral’s lie says that you’ll never have enough.

*“Then He said to them, ‘Watch out and guard yourselves against every form of greed; for not even when one has an overflowing abundance does his life consist of nor is it derived from his possessions.’”*

Luke 12:15 (AMP)

The Bible teaches you to work hard for your money (Ephesians 4:28). When you use this hard-earned money on gambling, it is in essence the same as throwing money away. Rather, give the money that you would have used on gambling to the poor.

Gambling often gets labelled as a leisure activity or harmless fun. But if you apply sound financial principles, then you would not even consider gambling in any shape or form.

Beware of opening this door, because before you know it, you'll be trapped in bondage.

### ***A prayer of repentance for gambling and any other forms of addiction***

Lord, I confess that I have been trapped by addiction. I repent of putting this addiction (example: Gambling) above you and allowing it to consume my thoughts. Lord, please remove the strongholds attached to this/these addiction/s in my life, along with every unholy altar that has been formed over my life. Please deliver me from the evil that has me captive. I surrender to you and to your divine and delivering power. Jesus, I confess that you have paid the price in full for me when you died on the cross. It is through the power of the Blood of the Lamb that I am set free this day. In Jesus Name, Amen.

## **THE OCCULT**

*“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”* Ephesians 6:12 (KJV)

Paul makes it clear that your battle is not against flesh and

blood but against spiritual forces. The occult makes this statement a reality. So, what is the occult?

In essence, it is any related practice that ultimately comes down to knowingly or unknowingly serving, worshiping, and giving glory to Satan. This can be through magic, witchcraft, false prophecy, and demonic worship practices. Sadly, most of these practices are done in secrecy, with the aim to destroy or harm God's plans and His children.

When it comes to the occult, it's like a family of clustered ice that is linked together underwater. You might see the tip of one iceberg above the water but underneath there is an alarming network of occult traps linked together, waiting to catch you out.

### ***How does God view occult practices?***

The occult is an abomination to God:

*“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire [as a sacrifice], one who uses divination and fortune-telling, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,<sup>11</sup> or one who casts a charm or spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or a necromancer [who seeks the dead]. For everyone who does these things is utterly repulsive to the Lord; and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God is driving them out before you.”*

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 (AMP)

Occult practices have been engrafted into society from early Biblical times. Individuals made blood sacrifices to idols; they sought fortune-tellers and mediums who relied on hearing from evil spirits to give them insight into the future.

Many of the kings had their own magicians and sorcerers (Daniel 2:2). King Manassah, who reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem, worshiped all the stars and built many places for foreign idols during his reign. He personally practiced witchcraft and magic and he even forced his own son to walk through fire as a sacrifice to Molech (2 Kings 21:1-7).

You need to understand that God is powerful and what you often see or experience, is a manifestation of His power on earth versus the manifestation of demonic power on earth.

In the Old Testament, you see a perfect example of the occult operating when God sends Moses back to Egypt, after he had been in Midian for 40 years. God sends Aaron his brother to assist him in rescuing God's people and in taking them out of Egypt to help free them from the horrible slavery and oppression forced by the Egyptians. When they had to address Pharaoh to tell him that God says, "Let my people go" God equipped Aaron with a rod so that he could use it to display God's divine power.

*"Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, <sup>9</sup> "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Work a miracle [to prove your authority],' then you say to Aaron, 'Take*



*your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, so that it may become a serpent.”<sup>10</sup> So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and did just as the Lord had commanded; Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.” Exodus 7: 9-10 (AMP)*

Naturally, Pharaoh wanted to match this with demonic power to prove that he was also powerful and could operate in a supernatural power. Let us read his response from verse 11 together:

*“Then Pharaoh called for the wise men [skilled in magic and omens] and the sorcerers [skilled in witchcraft], and they also, these magicians (soothsayer-priests) of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts and enchantments.<sup>12</sup> For every man threw down his staff and they turned into serpents; but Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs.”*

Exodus 7:11-12 (AMP)

Notice how even though demonic power was activated by pharaoh’s sorcerers and that they were literally able to mimic Aaron through this power, God still had the ultimate victory when Aaron’s staff swallowed up all of theirs. This is because all authority and all power belong to God. He had full authority over the wicked power of the enemy.

We, therefore, need to be aware that this is how the enemy operates in modern day society. Sure, there is power in the demonic and many of those trapped in the occult are enticed and motivated by this, but it can never overthrow God’s

power. Also, the end result of following those wicked ways is a life of eternity in hell.

### ***How do I know if this is an occult activity, practice, or object?***

There are a couple of key questions that you can always ask yourself:

- Where does it originate from? It is important to always investigate the root of something. For example, if it's a certain exercise routine, you can look at the history of it. Where did it develop and what was it originally for? Was it used in occult practices?
- Do I have peace with what I am witnessing or doing or is the Holy Spirit giving me a personal warning to steer clear?

### ***Examples of modern-day occult groups***

- Satanism, Paganism, Freemasonry, Illuminati, New Age and other secret sects and societies.

### ***Examples of occult practices***

- Worshipping of ancestors.
- Black Magic and White Magic.

- Fortune-telling through tarot card-reading, cup reading (tea leaves), bone-throwing and reading and crystal-ball reading (practicing this yourself).
- Visiting witchdoctors/sangomas/gypsies, and the like.
- Playing occult games like Ouija-board, glassy-glassy and book-book (even if you do this through a video game).
- Astral projection, hypnosis, any form of demonic ritual, practising yoga and other forms of eastern philosophies.

Some of the symptoms of someone who could be suffering from the ramifications of the occult include:

- Nightmares
- Insomnia and restlessness
- Fear
- Depression and mental illness
- Confusion
- Perversion
- Hearing voices
- Physical illnesses
- Struggling to concentrate
- Thoughts racing
- Lack of finances
- Suicidal thoughts

- Paranoia

God calls His sons and daughters to steer clear of any alliances with Satan and his practices, because Satan is God's direct adversary and thus your direct enemy.

You cannot serve both Satan and God. Once you step over the line into an occultic practice (even if it is just a "once off" bad decision) or into the occult itself, you step into the territory of the enemy. Thus, the enemy has the legal right to attack you.

### ***Prayer of repentance for being involved in the occult***

Father God, I confess that I wilfully or unknowingly chose the way of Satan. I repent of operating in the occult in anyway and I renounce every occultic practice, every occultic belief, every demonic ritual, and every vow and covenant that I made in the occult. I humbly ask for your mighty hand of deliverance. Please remove any demonic stronghold over my life and any legal rite that the enemy has over my life because of my involvement in the occult. Father, please will you fight on my behalf in this matter. I acknowledge that the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, the power of His blood, and the price He paid for me on the cross is more than enough to conquer over my situation. Holy Spirit, please journey with me and reveal to me anything else I need to repent of or renounce.

Father, I openly declare that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that I am your child and adopted into your wonderful family according to your Word. Glorify your Holy Name, in the Name of Jesus, Amen.

## **MEDIA**

The growth of technology has resulted in a surge of digital media. This surge has spread across the earth to every city and because of this spread, it has become easier for the enemy to influence the minds of those who use it. Although the growth in this area is instrumental to our progression as a human race, great care must be taken when using any form of technology or media.

### ***Technology:***

Let's start with the definition of technology. According to Merriam Webster, "Technology is the practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area, e.g. engineering, etc." In laymen's terms, you could say technology is the invention of useful things to solve problems or to make life easier.

Thus, according to the definition, technology has always existed and has evolved over time. Great technological advancements have been made in all fields, which has led to

the vast positive impacts on humankind. Technology has also been used to the detriment of humankind, as in the case where technology has been used in wars that has led and still leads to human death.

Examples of technology in the Bible include:

- Noah built the ark (Genesis 6),
- Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3),
- Paul was a tentmaker (Acts 18:3).

This means that each person created things with tools and materials.

It is then fair to say that there is nothing wrong with technology; however, the problem is that technology can take you away from what God is asking you to do.

*“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* 1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV)

Technology has infiltrated your daily life. Think for a moment of the things you do on a daily basis that do not involve the use of technology. There is probably very few things on your list.

The fast-growing cellular technology is a prime example of a technology that has captured the lives of so many people; so far-reaching, that most people cannot live without a smart

phone, as they are consumed by all of the apps that are at their disposal.

The youth are almost permanently on social media, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and WeChat. This does not even touch the tip of the iceberg, as there is still music, videos, movies, and the like.

However, it must be reiterated that there is nothing wrong with these apps. The problem lies in the craving that could end up consuming your life, which in turn takes your focus and attention away from God. The less time you spend with Him, the less likely you are to become like Him and glorify Him.

In the end, if you allow technology to consume your life, it means that technology becomes an idol in your life. An idol is any person, object, or activity you give a higher priority in your life than your relationship with God.

We're not even going to debate the negative impact technology could have on your social skills, concentration, and verbal communication. If this negative cycle is not broken, you could end up missing your God-ordained purpose on earth.

As with all problems, it can only be fixed once the problem is acknowledged. The dilemma is that most people would argue that they are not addicted to technology. So, how do you know whether technology has taken over your life?

Simply put, the addiction replaces the role God plays in your life and becomes an idol; something you worship. As a strategy, ask Jesus to show you if your use of technology is according to His will and whether the technology has become an idol in your life. The Holy Spirit will convict you if you are guilty.

It's all about balance. Knowing when to use technology and using time wisely, so that you don't ever wander far from God because technology is taking up all of your time. It might be a good idea to take technology sabbaticals like switching off the phone, the TV, the computer, and the like. In other words, switching off the noise in order to find God in the silence (1 Kings 19:12).

You'll probably agree that you cannot do without technology in whichever form, therefore ask God to help you maintain the balance in your life so that He remains number one in your life.

God allowed the advancements in technology for the betterment of humankind, so it is your responsibility to use it wisely for the advancement of His Kingdom (Matthew 6:33).

### ***Books, Music, Film, Shows, etc:***

Books, music, and film all fall into the entertainment category, which is meant to bring enjoyment and pleasure. Even though books and music have existed since the beginning of time, the film industry only came into existence



during the late 1800s. All of these forms of entertainment have evolved extensively due to technological advancements. Paperback novels have gone digital in the form of e-books and audio books; Music has gone from records and compact discs (CD) to digitally-downloadable songs which you can play on multiple devices; and film has evolved from being projected from a Cinematograph with its basic features to 4K movies with special effects that you can watch screening from the internet.

Even though the Bible contains plenty of examples of “books” (scrolls written by hand or even the ten commandments carved out of rock tablets), and music (the book of Psalms is written in musical form; remember David making music and singing to Saul, and one could even consider “shows” as part of music), the Bible does not explicitly speak against any of these forms of entertainment. In fact, it was created for your enjoyment.

So, how can these forms of entertainment cause or create a trap for people to sin or, even worse, cause others to sin?

Let’s start by stating that not everything is evil; this means that we shouldn’t always focus on looking for the evil side of things or even think that things are evil by nature. We should always remember that anything can be used for evil intentions. Keep in mind that God also uses entertainment to

extend His Kingdom, for example the Bible in both book and audio form and the well-known Jesus film.

Be careful though, you and I don't always know the motives of the creators of these forms of entertainment. Superficially, you might think that there is nothing wrong with the book you are reading or the movie you are watching. However, for example, if you are battling with hatred or lust in your life and read a book or watch a movie full of hatred or sexual content, then it might open the door to sin. The same goes for recommending entertainment to a friend and, after doing so, he or she falls into an old habit of sin. Another example might be listening to music that promotes the use of alcohol or drugs. You may only be listening to the attractive melody, but subconsciously those words are being engraved into your heart and mind without you even being aware or intentional about it.

There are a couple of biblical principles that you should use in order to avoid falling into this kind of trap:

- 1. Discernment** (Psalm 119:66 and James 1:5). Ask God for discernment the next time you want to go watch a movie. Take the time to read a review of the movie before you go. There are plenty of review sites out there that provide good insight into all forms of entertainment. If you do not have peace about going, then don't go.

**2. Pleasing to the Lord** (Colossians 3:17). Are these activities pleasing to the Lord? Would you invite Jesus to sit next to you when you watch a show that's full of sexual innuendos?

**3. Beneficial** (1 Corinthians 10:23). Not all things are beneficial to you. Do not open a door to sin, no matter how alluring it might look.

**4. Avoid creating idols** (1 John 5:21). You serve a jealous God and He wants to be number one in your life. He has given you eternal life through His Son, Jesus, in order to save you from your sin, so it would only be right to put God on the throne of your heart, Exodus 34:14. Do not allow fictional characters or Hollywood actors to become an idol in your life. This will ultimately result in spending less time with God and consequentially losing your connection with Him. God should be number one in your life and there should be no idol or god before Him (Matthew 6:33).

God has given you a free will. He has given you entertainment for your pleasure and edification, but it must be done responsibly and with balance. Satan will use entertainment to harm you, to make you fall into sin, and to lure you away from God.

## ***A prayer of repentance for defilement from media:***

Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. I truly repent of exposing myself to the perversion of the world, whether it be through reading material, or the public media in film, or through other mediums. Please will You cleanse my five senses and my mind from any unholy memories or associations. Please set me free from any strongholds or foreign altars, in Jesus Name. Amen.

## **MATTERS OF THE HEART**

God delights in His children having pure hearts, that is why the Word of God teaches us that we must guard our hearts at all times.

*“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.”*

*Proverbs 4:23-24 (NIV)*

You need to ensure that during your lifetime on earth your heart remains pure before God. There will be times when you may miss the mark, but the key is to come before the Lord and take responsibility for what you have done wrong. Ask God to forgive you and to clean your heart, then turn from those bad thoughts or actions.

God gives you an amazing promise when it comes to your heart, you can find this in the book of Matthew chapter five verse eight.

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8  
(NKJV)*

In order to maintain a pure heart you will need to:

- Guard your mind by maintaining pure thoughts.
- Allow God to be Lord over your relationships even if that means walking away from any destructive ones.
- Work with the Holy Spirit when He convicts, guides and brings healing to your heart.

### ***Thoughts***

God calls every one of His children to have a mind like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is amazing because He works with our minds and ministers to our hearts. Only you and God can know exactly what you are thinking. That means that your personal conversations with God in secret are safe and secure.

Satan wars against your heart and mind. If the enemy can have domination over your mind, he can manipulate your thoughts and actions according to his plans.

Satan influences your thoughts by planting seeds of doubt, confusion and even obsession. He has the ability to flood the human mind from the outside with specific thoughts. However, you have the ability to guard your mind. God gives the instruction that we need to protect our minds from all the attacks and debilitating thoughts of the enemy. You need to

be ready for all that the enemy attacks you with. He will flood your mind with thoughts of doubt, intimidation, malice, ill will towards yourself, dread, bitterness, pride, or any thought that leads to sinful behaviour.

Once you spend a considerable amount of time thinking about something, it forms a stronghold in your mind. This is particularly dangerous when this thought pattern is negative or destructive in nature and you start to develop negative feelings as a consequence.

Let's use the following example; a person is at a local coffee shop and someone manages to pickpocket their new cellular telephone off them. Depending on the scenario and their personal circumstances, feelings of anger and frustration may arise. Once this happens, a negative stronghold starts to form in their emotions.

Here are some examples of negative strongholds that could form in the mind and emotions:

- **Jealousy and envy:** Jealousy creates false expectations of others and leads to a lack of commitment to work together in the body of Christ.
- **Complacency:** This is a dangerous strategy of the enemy. It keeps God's people from operating in victory and in the fullness of their God given purpose.

- **Bitterness and unforgiveness:** In your lifetime, there may be times when you get offended by a situation or by what others say or do to you. How you react to this and recover from this makes all the difference. God calls His children to forgive and not to harbour resentment.
- **Fear and anxiety:** We are all born with a natural instinct to recognise danger or even dubious situations. Your flight or fight response will naturally respond to these instances. However, there may be times when you step into a trap of dread or worry when there is no actual threat. This may form a stronghold in the mind that can fester and grow over time and may result in extended dread and worry into other situations as well. The Bible explains that God has not given us a spirit of fear but rather one of power, of love and a sound mind (paraphrase of 2 Timothy 1:7).

## ***Relationships***

God calls you into a very special relationship with Himself. Unlike any human relationship, you are guaranteed that God will always love you and that He will never leave nor forsake you. You start this journey when you choose Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

*“Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love continues forever.” Psalm 136:26 (ICB)*

God wants you to walk in fellowship with Him and with others. God therefore allows you to have special relationships with fellow human beings. Each relationship will be unique. Some relationships will form part of your family network like that of parents, grandparents, or siblings. If you marry, there will be a very significant place for your spouse in your relationship network.

Other relationships involve friends, colleagues, and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. This may stem from church, school, or university bible study. Some relationships play more than one role. For instance, your brother could play the role of sibling, friend, and brother in Christ.

You need to understand that there are healthy and unhealthy relationships. There is safety in a healthy relationship. God truly wants you to strive to live in harmony and in love with the good relationships He has given you.

### ***Key Ingredients to a healthy relationship***

A healthy relationship usually has the following key ingredients:

- Trust
- Acceptance
- Love and care
- Boundaries



- A freedom to be yourself and to share your heart
- Mutual understanding
- Respect
- Self-sacrifice.

A toxic relationship is an unhealthy relationship. A relationship like this could be bad for you spiritually and emotionally, and at times, even physically.

### ***Symptoms of toxic relationships:***

- Lack of boundaries or overstepping key boundaries (like engaging sexually with a boyfriend or girlfriend).
- Control and manipulation
- Not feeling safe
- Unable to be yourself
- Abuse (emotional or physical)

You will form a soul-tie with every person you have a relationship with. If your relationship with that person is healthy and secure, then you will have a healthy soul-tie. However, if the relationship is corrupt, then you will have a corrupt soul-tie. That is why it is so important to trust the Lord when it comes to your relationships. He wants you to have healthy friendships and family relationships. If He warns you or disapproves of a relationship in your life its not to punish you but rather to protect you.

CHAPTER 4

***THE JOY OF  
BEING A  
BELIEVER***

**I**t is true that taking the decision to stand for Christ does not mean that circumstances in life will always be smooth sailing. In fact, throughout your lifetime you will have to make pivotal decisions, choosing the way of Jesus opposed to the way Satan would have you walk.

The wonderful news is that when you choose Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you are guaranteed immediate benefits. For one thing, a new indescribable peace comes into your life that only comes from God. If you felt empty or lost before, you will finally feel whole and have a new sense of purpose and direction.

Many Christians will also testify of a newfound joy in their hearts. The Word of God tells you that when you spend time in God's presence, you walk in the fullness of joy. Ultimately you also have the blessing of eternal life and will go to Heaven one day, saved from eternal damnation in hell.

*“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*

Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

God knows the plans He has for your life. Learning to trust in Him and His sovereign ways, will give you joy and peace beyond your comprehension.

*“For I know the plans and thoughts that I have for you,” says the Lord, ‘plans for peace and well-being and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’”* Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)