

God's Tools

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BINDING and LOOSENING

Matthew 16:19 says, "And I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosened in Heaven."

A key is a symbolic delegation of power to open and close things. In particular, this Scripture is illustrating the opening and closing of the church. If we are to use this wonderful gift of a key to the Kingdom, we need to understand more deeply what it means. The following are definitions to the key words in this verse of Scripture.

Church: In all Scripture, the church is referring to "the called out ones," the believers in Jesus. It is, therefore, not a location, but rather a people.

Heaven: Heaven is the place where God dwells. It is a place of everlasting bliss. It is then an attitude or disposition of how we live, a spiritual realm.

Earth: A place where we physically live; the world in which we inhabit. It can also be a way we look at things on the surface. Scripture so often infers that it is us, we are the earth. We must conclude that is the quality that we have in living our lives, a flesh realm.

Binding: Is to restrain.

Loosen: Is to release.

There are two other Scriptures that speak to this same subject of binding and loosening. It will be helpful to look at them and their meanings. Matthew 18:18 says this binding and loosening comes in the context of dealing with another person whom you find fault with in your life. It pertains to your attitude, and your quality of life versus the other person's attitude, and their quality of life. The binding and loosening is to be done for you to live in harmony. John 20:23 says we are looking at sin in another person. Here, it is said as a believer, that whatever we hold this person to, will be held, and whatever we forgive this person, it will be forgiven. We are either to restrain or to release.

Summary: If we were to rewrite this Scripture, it would read, "In believing in Jesus as the Son of Man, I will give you the keys to be able to dwell with God in faith; these keys that you can use to restrain, in your flesh, those attitudes not of God, and then they will be restrained in the spirit. You can release, in your flesh, those qualities of God and then they will be released in the spirit." Remember, God is the spirit. To dwell

in God, you must dwell in the spirit. In other words, God has given us the power, if we believe in Jesus, to dwell with Him. We have a key that through Jesus we have the power to yoke our attitudes that are not of God. We also have the power through Jesus to redeem the quality of our lives so that we can live with God.

These are just a very few examples that might help the Holy Spirit trigger some things.

Examples:	<u>Bind</u>	<u>Loosen</u>
	Hate	Love
	Lonely	Loved
	Tired	Rested
	Blaming	Acceptance
	Fear	Freedom
	Resistant	Surrender
	Self-Centered	God-Centered
	Fighting	Peaceful
	Cold	Warm
	Stubborn	Tender
	Depressed	Joyful

These are just examples, but what a privilege we have as believers in Jesus to loosen and bind these things in our lives.

Spiritual Warfare - Familiar Spirits

Spiritual warfare is not an elective, it is a fact of life. Some Christians erroneously believe that the moment a person accepts Jesus, Satan does not harass you any more. If this were true, then why do we hear in scripture the opposite? Paul told Timothy, "fight the good fight of faith." Paul also says, "Put on the whole armor of God." Why? "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:11,12) True, Jesus won the battle over Satan, but we must "put the enemy under our feet." Not every problem in our spiritual life is caused by a demon. Many times the problem begins because we step out of line with God's plan. We were saved when Jesus died on the cross, arose, and ascended, but you are still supposed to "work out your own salvation." (Philippians 2:12)

There are a number of ways Satan can begin his attack to carry out his plan. His plan is shown in scripture. John 10:10 says "he comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy." According to scripture, the main way is with the familiar spirit. Exodus 20: 5 warns us of this. "Thou shalt not bow down to any graven images for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Generational sin from our family lineage is the single most difficult sin that we have to fight in the enemy. We are aware of the curse of the sin with Adam and Eve. We know we need the power of Jesus' death on the cross to release us from that sin. However, our family ancestors may have done things we are completely unaware of. And, if we have not released them to the blood of Jesus, they are still affecting us today. This is done with a familiar spirit. Isaiah 8:19

How does the familiar spirit work? The familiar spirit knows your particular family and how it handles your thoughts, feelings, and actions. It knows the specific sin or sins your family wishes to hide, or avoid facing. Leviticus 20:6

1. The familiar spirit wants to keep you in bondage and sin. Because of this, the familiar spirit will gather up any other spirit it needs to keep you believing in the sin of your family. Example: Your family handles problems by using the sin of worry. In order to hold that sin to the family, it will bring in the spirit of infirmities (illness) or the spirit of heaviness (depression), thus now you have something to worry about.
2. The familiar spirit, to keep this sin going, must get you to firmly believe the lies your family have formed. It does so by placing rules that bind the lies as actual truth. Example: To worry is the sin used to handle things. The rule to hold it in the family is a

no-talk rule, that is no one is allowed to talk openly and honestly about anything. If you are to fit in your family, you know that you must not break this rule. You actually believe there is no other way. The sin of worry stays.

3. The familiar spirit will connect or attach itself to any member of the family who is not covered by the blood of Jesus. That is why little children learn very quickly, if not born with it, how their own family does things. It can even go into an animal that belongs to the family, so it may be able to slip back in or influence the family members while off guard.

Remember, the plan of Satan is to steal, to kill, to destroy. The following are ways in which families handle their problems and circumstances in life without God. Ask yourself, using the following examples, what way do you get your needs met without God and is this something others in your family do? If you are a parent, look and see if your children are doing as you do. Children, look to your parents' patterns and see if the way you deal with problems is similar to theirs.

agreeing	intellectualizing
analyzing	joking
anger	judging
attacking/ aggression	justifying
being smug/ superior/ arrogant	macho
blaming/ accusing	maximizing/ dramatizing
complying	minimizing
crying	projecting
debating/ arguing	questioning/ interrogating
defiance	rationalizing
denying	shouting/ intimidating
dishonesty/ lying	silence
explaining	staring
evading/ dodging	switching subjects
frowning	threatening
generalizing	verbalizing/ talking
glaring	withdrawing
grinning/ smiling/ laughing	misleading
trying to control	deceiving
fabricating/ exaggerating	restraining/ restricting
sacrificing/ giving in	worrying/ fussing
combative	childish
obnoxious	quarrelsome
acting stupid	cruel/ mean
charming	cheerful

INNER HEALING

So far we have discovered that there are harassing spirits that must be restrained (bound) and God's spirit loosened. This is in order to get past the Root Sin of Illusions. (See separate book on Root Sins.) If any tool you are using in the power of Jesus does not set you free to release you to be all that God created you to be, go to the next tool. In this case, if binding and loosening does not give you contentment, then you need to look to the next spiritual tool that helps us on our way in our journey in God's will. This next tool is Inner Healing. This helps us battle the Root Sin of Spiritual Adultery. Everyone has inner hurts that need healing. It is the nature of man's sin. We were born sinners. We have made many choices that were not of God. Our sinful perception has perceived things that have caused hurts.

What is Inner Healing?

First we must establish and understand that we are a three part person. This is so we might see where and what needs healed.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 "may your spirit and soul and body be kept strong and blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes back again."

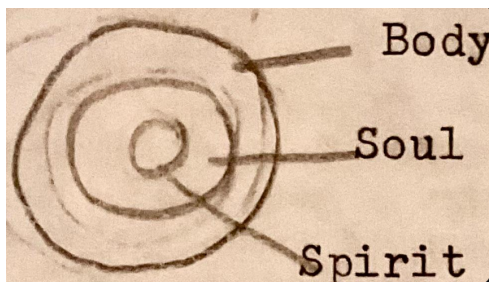
In Genesis we read of this three part person in a series of scriptures.

Genesis 1:27 "God created us in His image", which means we are a spiritual being.

Genesis 2:7 Later God breathed into our nostrils and we became a living soul.

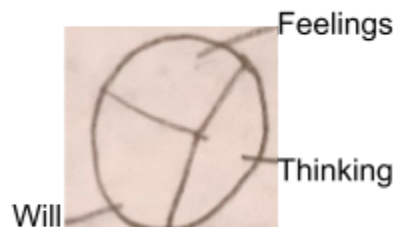
Genesis 3:21 After the fall we were given a tunic of skin and clothed, which is our body.

The parts then are spirit, soul and body.



The spirit is that part of you called the “image of God.” Being the image of God allows us to be like God. I believe when Adam and Eve turned away from God in what we call the fall, our spirits lost the ability to respond to God. When we receive Jesus, and the Holy Spirit comes in my spirit, once more we come alive to the things of God and to God Himself. So this inmost part of me is saved, restored, and put back in order. Jesus brought healing to this area. No more healing is needed here.

The soul is that part of me called my psyche. My soul contains my will, feelings, and thinking. This part of me is in the process of being made whole day by day in the work of my Salvation. (Philippians 2:12-13)



So we can see that the soul or psyche nature will need healing from hurts of the past. Everyone's been hurt in life. I say that because we are all born sinners and our sin nature produces hurts, so everyone's soul needs healing. Sometimes we do not need specific prayer to bring about inner healing. Just resting in Jesus for this inner healing will bring this about. Sometimes we need help in dealing with these hurts. They have become far deeper and need a stronger prayer.

Finally we come to the body. This is the physical organism through which we relate to the world around us. Our body houses the mind, emotions, and intellect. These are the areas which we will have difficulty with. The body can be very complex. Sometimes what may look like hurts in my body are really hurts in the soul. I am like an automobile. So if my body is defective it can come from the inside parts (soul) or it can be the outside parts (body). Also If I am caught speeding, it is not the fault of the body (automobile), but the fault of the driver inside the car (soul). I believe there is no inner healing needed in the body realm of our personhood. It is my belief that God's tool for dealing with the body is deliverance, which if we read Scripture, we find Jesus doing often when He walked the earth. Just in passing, sometimes the inner healing of the soul can open the way to the deliverance of the body. Sometimes soul healing allows the power of Jesus to deliver the body instantly. Other times it takes a specific step for deliverance, which we will deal with in our next chapter.

We can see by all of this that inner healing will be done within the soul realm. In fact the definition of inner healing is: healing in the soul realm of hurts caused by others; healing of the feelings, thinking, and the desires of the conscious and subconscious that affect your wholeness in Christ.

Who needs inner healing?

As I said, everyone has been hurt, so everyone needs healing. Still, there are specific things to ponder if you need individual prayer. One way to know if you need inner healing is to look at your walk with God. Have you been trying to grow in your Christian walk, but you can not make the headway you would like to? You can see what is wrong and what needs to be corrected in your life, but somehow you can not stop and correct it. This is because there is something hidden. The hurts in the soul are too hurtful to deal with or the driving forces in the body are hiding the things you need to deal with. This stops you from being all that God has created you to be. God needs you to release these things to Him so that He can deal with them. He can set you free, heal you, and set you going again in your walk. As we open to God, He can reveal all the hidden agendas so that they can be healed or delivered.

CAUTION: Some of these blockages are from our own sins, and the remedy is repentance. We will never do away with the cross. This always comes first. We always need the cleansing of our sins by God, always in the power of Jesus who died on the cross for these sins. Confession is always first. Acts we have knowingly and intentionally done require us to repent, change our ways, and receive God's forgiveness. If we are not already dealing with these to the best of our ability, we haven't really started on the Christian walk.

A test to tell if we are dealing with sin is whether we are getting condemnation or conviction. The scripture tells us that if we are believers, we will not have condemnation. (Romans 8:1) The difference between condemnation and conviction is: Condemnation pronounces guilt and inflicts a penalty for it. It declares that you are unfit for use. Conviction is to make us conscious of our guilt with redemption in Jesus. We have a deep sense that in spite of our guilt, we are loved. If condemnation is there, we are in some way involved with sin. Look to sin and repentance for the answer to this blockage.

With that said, if you have been hurt or damaged by another person, experience, or event outside your control, let the inner healing begin. The Holy Spirit will quicken you to those things that need inner healing. Ask Him to reveal them.

The following are questions that might help you hear if you need an inner healing.

1. Were you greatly embarrassed as a child or young adult?
2. Can you see a pattern of hurtful events beginning early in your life, each building upon the other?
3. Do you have difficulty recalling anything about your childhood? Is it a total blank?
4. Do you wish you were someone else? Do you dislike yourself? Have you been belittled? Do you wish you had never been born?
5. Do you dislike the opposite sex or your own sex?
6. Do you find it nearly impossible to admit making a mistake? Do you usually look for someone to blame for what goes wrong in your life? Have you been told over and over about your mistakes?
7. Do you have overwhelming feelings of guilt?
8. Do you have recurring memories of past hurts? Does it still trouble you to think about it?
9. Were you an adult before you felt loved by another person?
10. Do you often compare yourself with others and end up feeling inadequate and discouraged?
11. Do you have a hard time being consistent in your spiritual life?
12. Is it hard to believe God loves you or approves of you?
13. Do you find it difficult to give and receive love?

Inner Healing is done with prayer and by the leading of the Holy Spirit. Scripture shows that Jesus healed many people in many different ways.

1. Always with a touch
2. Always with a word
3. Always with a release to go in peace.

The disciples healed too. The book of Acts shows the same thing. Everything is done in the name of Jesus. We have one such passage in the Bible that says "I don't know you, but I know Jesus." (Acts 19:15) Every encounter with Jesus brought change, healing, deliverance, and freedom.

How do we go about getting inner healing?

In order to release hurts to inner healing, we first need to remember these are hurts done to you in circumstances or by individuals. Scripture tells us there are three things we need to do in order to have inner healing.

1. Want to be willing to forgive everyone and anyone who has wronged us. (2 Corinthians 2:10)
2. Everyone in Scripture who asked for healing received it, so asking and praying are how we go about getting inner healing. This can be done by yourself or with another. John 4:46-53 says that by believing it is done. James 5:13-15 calls for the elders for prayer.
3. Forgive again after the healing and see yourself whole again. (Ephesians 4:32) See yourself forgive the other person at the age it occurred. We must then grow up, get on with life, stop playing the victim, and stop allowing these hurts to stop our growth. (1 Corinthians 13:11)

What would stop us from getting healed?

1. Unforgiveness: Colossians 3:13 “As we forgive, so will we be forgiven.” If we want to hold on to these hurts, it will be an endless battle.
2. Not taking authority: Genesis 1:26 God has made man in control over all things. With the power of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, we once more can have that dominion. Inner healing and deliverance are all done in our authority in Christ.
3. Lack of belief or faith: Mark 11: 23 Without faith, nothing can happen. We must step out in that faith to see the miracles and healings that are already ours.

Over the years I have learned two very wonderful ways to bring release in inner healing. They are:

1. Reliving the scene with Jesus
2. The Creative Prayer

These are exercises I call “seeing by faith.” What we are doing is letting the Holy Spirit bring Jesus into our lives and circumstances and the situations in which we have been hurt, and we are believing that His power will heal and bring release. We see it done by faith.

Reliving the scene with Jesus

Let the Holy Spirit reveal to you those things in your memory that still hurt you. It may be something big or something seemingly small. It may be recent or a long time ago. Just in passing, sometimes the hurt, humiliation or harm is too big to deal with by yourself. You can do this with your pastor or a friend. In fact, doing it with another can make it more real and finally release the hurt.

The first thing you need to do is describe the hurtful event as clearly as possible. Get in touch with this memory, the emotions, and hurt. Talk it out completely. Are you angry, anxious, fearful? Try to know what it is you're feeling and thinking about it. Do this before you begin to pray. Sometimes this helps to get some of the emotions and pain out in the open. It also can help to get some of the details out so that they are not so uncomfortable. What you are trying to do is enter into the memory.

Then go to prayer. Remember as you go to prayer, that even before you bring Jesus into the memory, He is already there. This may be hard to understand intellectually, but God's unconditional love is always there.

As you go to prayer, begin this time to visualize the scene. See everything. What does the room or area where the hurt took place look like? What were you wearing? Were you sitting or standing, and so forth? It doesn't matter if some details are not expressed. It is getting into the memory that you want to do. Now once you are into the memory, visualize bringing Jesus into this picture. Let Him be there as you remember and let go of the hurt. Have Jesus do what you need Him to do. You can not re-write history. You can not change what happened. But Jesus can do anything that will bring comfort and healing into the scene. No matter what has happened, Jesus was always there and He wants the best for you.

You may cry and have difficulty in your emotions. Slow down and relax. Let Him hug you or talk with you about what you are remembering. Let Him take your hurt. You have all the time in the world. Don't rush. Some people need Him to hold them, or say words of comfort. You may need Jesus to stand between you and the one hurting you. Jesus may comfort you after the hurtful act. Whatever is needed, get Jesus to do it. Allow all the hurts to come out. The Holy Spirit will gently let the healing take place, for anywhere Jesus is, there is healing. Don't stop until you feel a sense of relief. Again don't rush. There will be a sense that things are coming to an end. A sign that healing is taking place is a letting go, forgiveness, or a lifting of heaviness. Sometimes you get relief and then it starts again. Sometimes it takes awhile, but it will come. That is alright. Get Jesus to do what you need to help you through all of it. The key is Jesus. He loves you and wants to walk you through all the hurts and pain until you can let go.

What you want to happen is that the next time you visit that memory of hurt, the sting will be gone. The feeling and emotions will be less and less as time goes by. You want Jesus to bring healing to you. Repeat this as much as you need to. Healing is yours. Accept it.

Creative Prayer

The Creative Prayer is allowing the Holy Spirit to do something new in your life. Here you allow God to create a new scene you would like God to have done or to do in your life. Remember that God is no respecter of time or place, so He can go to the past, present or the future.

Maybe there have been a number of hurtful incidents in your childhood, a way of living that was very painful. In prayer you can go in the past and have the Holy Spirit create a safe and loving place to play and be healed. I have heard of Jesus playing ball with a little boy, giving a child a piggyback ride, teaching a child geography, pushing a child in a swing, taking a walk on stilts, playing the piano with the child on His lap, climbing a tree, lying on His back watching the clouds, and sitting under a willow tree with a child and his dog. The possibilities are endless. It is prayer with imagination. Just allow Jesus to come into that age, time, or place that needs to be healed.

If you need, you can use the creative prayer for the future (or future events). I am not proposing that we are able to either foresee or change future events by this visualization, but it certainly may change the way we feel about things, and consequently, the response to that will give God an opportunity to be in charge of the future. This type of prayer can change all kinds of wounds into a positive outlook on life.

All inner healing is about prayer and an encounter with the resurrected Jesus. Through such encounters you will become more and more who God has created you to be. You will want to do what He wants you to do. You are no longer a part of the sickness of the world, but part of the cure. He overcomes all things. God's ways are deeper than our ways. He wants us to be whole and healthy. This is the resurrection life.

Healing from Brokenness

After hearing God's truth and knowing that brokenness is a hard process, I was looking for something to help us deal with it. I began to look in all my teachings for a story or scripture that gives us comfort but also to help us walk in the truth of God. The story I saw was about a commander in the army named Naaman who had leprosy, and about his healing process with Elisha. (2 Kings 5:1-16)

This is a story of how someone got healed of leprosy. Now we could talk about leprosy, as that is a thing in itself. But I want to talk about the healing process of this man. The story is about Naaman who was a commander of the army and he had leprosy. He was told by a maid that Elisha could heal him. And so he goes to Elisha with his horses, his chariots and all of his things. Now Naaman has leprosy but he still is trying to come as the captain of the army. Yet Elisha only recognizes him as someone who has leprosy.

Let's stop here and look at what is going on. How many times do we come for healing and help from God, yet we still come with strength and maybe even as someone special. We will not let go of all the work and effort we have put into our lives. What we do when we come like this is that we come as God's equal, not that we are weak and He is strong. We tell God of all the things we will do or things we have done, so He should heal me or help, because we are somehow special. We will never be equal to God, and we are not special, only in the eyes of what Jesus did for us.

Naaman wanted healing and was told that Elisha could heal him but Naaman did not recognize Elisha as who he was. If Elisha could heal him, then Elisha was not Naaman's equal. Elisha was greater than him, no matter that Naaman was captain of an army. How did Naaman ever hope to be healed?

If we continue to have only the idea of Jesus in our life and never recognize that it is He who does all things, and if we always bring with us what we think we can do in our eyes, we will always go away the same, for we have allowed ourselves to be above God.

But in this passage we hear that Elisha treated Naaman as a leper. He sends a messenger to him telling Naaman to go and dip seven times in the River Jordan. Once again Naaman is then telling Elisha what he wants. Verses 11-12 says "and this angered Naaman and he was in a rage."

How many times do we get angry when God doesn't do things the way we think it should be done? We say, just like Naaman, "surely God would not do such and such." We think we can always tell God how to do it better, do it our way, and then we get upset and we lose what we actually came for. We destroy what God wants to do because of either our anger or our disappointment.

The meaning of anger means a force and power responding to something we think is unjust or wrong. If we don't learn to control our anger and our disappointment, our Salvation can break down. And we know of people that this has happened too.

Next we see Naaman's servant talk him into doing what Elisha told him to, and he goes down to the river Jordan and dips down seven times. I believe that is what the Body of Christ is all about, to help talk people into doing the things that God has asked them to do, helping them grow, and to receive their healing and deliverance.

Just in passing, we know that the number seven is the number of completeness. And so it was that Elisha said dip seven times in the water, for we must come into completion if we are to be healed. God never, never will complete anything in our lives until we say yes to everything, not just part of our life, but all our spirit, all our soul and all our body. All our heart, all our strength and all our entire mind. Until we have gone completely into our River Jordan, whatever that means to us, we will not be broken and be healed. If we don't completely do what God is saying, we will not be healed, but more than that, we will keep our problems and our struggles.

It was a humbling thing for Naaman to go into that dirty water. He had to turn that anger around into humbleness and this is what we must do. We must choose to turn our anger, our disappointment, and our struggles into the humbleness of obedience. And it is our choice. Naaman could have left, but he chose to obey. If you think for one minute that you are what you are today because of what somebody made you or what you have done, you are wrong. It is not what we think we are, but what God thinks that we are. So many of God's people are just waiting around for God to do great things in their life. I am going to tell you something. It is going to happen when God says so and no matter what, you are going to do it is His way. God is going to make out of your life what He wants, in this life or the afterlife. So unless you choose to bathe in that River when He tells you to, you will never be healed. You will spend eternity working out your healing and your struggles.

Just in passing, if you keep refusing, you will be crushed and overwhelmed by your sorrows and your hurts and you will remain numb to God. Scripture says it is scary "to fall in the hands of God."

DELIVERANCE

The enemy always tries to steal, kill, and destroy us. The more different we become, the more Satan attacks us. He sees us turning to God and this throws him into a panic. Even now when I sit down to write this, I hear Satan's lies. "This is stupid. You don't know what you are talking about. How is this relevant?" I hear all this, yet I know that the truth from God is that this is an important message for all Christians. God is our deliverer. He will deliver me from the bondage of Satan's lies, and He will deliver me from the bondage of just simply being in the world. Just as any ruler over any nation, God will protect and save His people. It is His promise and His will.

When Jesus walked the earth, He performed many deliverances. In the book of Matthew we have over fifteen examples of Jesus casting out evil spirits from people. We may not think of addictions (see separate book on Root Sins) as evil spirits, yet addictions distort and intertwine in our eyes in such a way that we no longer live in freedom. They have become spirits that fight against the things of God. These addictions at the height of their oppression are not just outside harassing you, they are inside tormenting you.

God has always provided a way for His people to have victory. Certainly Salvation is a free gift to put us right on our journey in His Kingdom. Binding and loosening brings us power within the spiritual world to touch the Holy Spirit and move away from those spirits which can cause difficulty. Healing closes the gap within our soul for the Holy Spirit to be able to lead in a stronger way.

I believe that deliverance is the next tool God gave us to use in the releasing of addictions and evil spirits in our life.

In Matthew 10:8 Jesus said to His disciples "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons, freely you have received, freely give" so with the power of Jesus' ascension, we begin the breaking of the cycle of sin nature in our life. By delivering the addictions that so beset us and cause us to choose the wrong ways of living without God, we can live a life of victory in His glory.

Definition of deliverance: The removal of spirits that bring forth (produce) evil fruits (attributes); to set free or liberate; to rescue or save from evil. Examples of spirits to be delivered: jealousy, inadequacy, discontentment, control, scarcity, rejection, loneliness, insecurity, fear, lack of attention, unaffirmed, devalued, bad. These spirits that produce evil attributes are what cause us to stumble and fall in our Christian walk. If after we have a healing from inner hurts, we continue to not be released or feel the

freedom and joy of our Salvation, then we need to look to the bondage of a spirit that needs delivered. All of these spirits, plus the addictions themselves, can be liberated in Jesus name. If we are to allow Jesus to bring us to abundant living by His ascension, then we must allow Him to deliver those spirits that twist us and our thinking.

How do evil spirits come in our life?

Many evil spirits come into our life before we have had a born again experience, before we have the protection of the Holy Spirit, especially as young children. Your parents are arguing, you become frightened. You do something wrong and you lie about it. Not knowing the redemption of Jesus yet, you take on these spirits.

You can also be subjected to inheritances. Mother is a great worrier. Father is a hard worker, in fact a workaholic. There is a lot of physical illness in your home.

Someone in your family has a life threatening operation which is scary. Someone close to you has a car accident and dies. This can bring insecurity and panic.

These spirits we mention are typical things happening in our life. If perhaps there is physical abuse, sexual abuse, or you were raised in an environment of drugs and alcohol, there is even more chance that without the saving grace of God, you will choose a way of living that will bring bondage to your life.

Each of these incidents can become a catalyst for the possibility for us to choose a way to live without the comfort, help and guidance of God. This brings about the opening of a door within us for an evil spirit to take control. Once in control, we must at all cost find a way to live that gives us relief from these spirits.

Where are addictions and evil spirits located?

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us if we are born again we have a new spirit. Thus evil spirits or addictions are no longer in our spirit realm. An evil spirit and God's spirit can not dwell together. The enemy can not touch your spirit.

Romans 12:1-2 tells us to renew our mind and body, and many other scriptures speak of doing the same. The battlefield then is in the soul realm and the body realm.

Galatians 5:17 says that the flesh and spirit will war against each other. So we must see that those addictions or evil spirits remain in our soul and body even after our Born Again experience.

How do you know if you need deliverance?

Here is a check list to help you recognize if you need deliverance.

1. Are there habits (besetting sins) that control you?
2. Do you have unreasonable fears?
3. Are there people you can't forgive? Do you have trouble asking someone else to forgive you?
4. Do you have nearly continuous feelings of anger inside? Are you usually critical in your remarks or thoughts about others?
5. Do you go on compulsive overeating or drinking binges? Compulsive undereating binges?
6. Are you obsessed with sexual thoughts or fantasies?
7. Are you extremely restless, "on the go" constantly? Unable to sit and relax from time to time? (There's a difference between a healthy "drive" and being driven.)
8. Do you have physical or mental exhaustion from wrestling with inner problems? Do you have difficulty sleeping or do you want to sleep too much? (Check for physical causes too.)
9. Do you have a physical illness that has no known cause?
10. Do you have frequent nightmares or troubling recurring dreams?
11. Are you a workaholic? Do you feel guilty if you aren't doing something "productive"? Are you always striving for the approval of others?
12. Do you have a deep sense of inferiority? Do you feel unloved, unapproved of?

If you answered yes to less than half, but more than you feel comfortable with, there are probably things in which you need to seek God for understanding. Not everything is an evil spirit or addiction. Look at the other tools we have discussed and seek help with Christian friends in your Bible studies and fellowship.

If you answered yes to over half of these questions, it is certain that something deep seeded is troubling you. Seek out the Holy Spirit for guidance. Seek out strong, faith walking Christians to help you in praying for the leading to deliverance.

How do you go about deliverance?

1. All deliverance comes from God. Profess your belief in Jesus. It is done in the name of Jesus. Scripture says evil spirits know Jesus' power.
2. Because the evil spirit can try to trick your mind, it is helpful that you have someone with you, a wise and mature Christian who will stand with you in fighting this battle.

3. We must try to name the spirit that is oppressing you. Each time Jesus delivered someone, He called the spirit by name, or the spirits named themselves. Ask the question, "what is it that is causing me trouble?" Listen. Don't argue or try to figure it out. It may not make sense, but say it anyway. Obedience to what is being revealed is half the battle. Others that are standing with you may hear also.
4. All things are done in faith. So it is in faith that we "demand" this spirit to come out of you. In healing, we speak softly so as to not wound your soul. In deliverance, we demand in the power of Jesus for this/these spirits to come out.
5. Speak to the spirit as you would a person. Tell the spirit to not act up or cause trouble, just to leave now. As we said, the spirit might not want to come out. There does not need to be a struggle if you are truly wanting this deliverance.
6. The person being delivered will feel some type of actions such as breathing hard, a rapid heart beat, a heaviness. Push out the spirit with your faith. Pray for all of the spirit to come out.
7. Once the spirit has left, the person delivered will feel a lightness, as if a heavy weight has been lifted off them. Their legs or arms may tremble. A relief will take place.
8. Now fill the area with God's Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit might tell you something specific to fill the area with such as joy, wisdom, or strength. Fill with all the Godly spirits the Holy Spirit instructs.
9. Praise and thank God for this deliverance and filling. Let the spirit of gratefulness come into your being. Thank God for the release in your life.

Once this deliverance has taken place, mark the date, time, and place and the name of the spirit delivered, so when the enemy wants to harass you, you can tell him "NO, I was delivered..." It is your assurance and your blessing.

There are three dimensions in our lives to now strengthen in order to stay healthy.

1. Learn to nurture yourself. Nurturing is the ability to take care of yourself. Do things you like to do. Take time to read, rest and enjoy life. Let the Holy Spirit show you ways to self-care and self affirm. Let God take care of you. Let Him guide you and put your whole trust in Him. Talk a walk and relax in Him. Let God love you. Have some fun. It is all right to laugh and to enjoy things. He said He would "give us our hearts desire." Trust that fact.

2. Learn to know the world around you, the temperature, texture, colors, sounds, tastes, smells. You have played roles for so long, you are not aware of what is happening around you. Focus on the present, not the future or the past. Be present where you are. Good discernment will show you things that will keep you from listening to the wrong things and the wrong people. You want to be alive to all that God would have for you now.
3. Learn to know yourself. Get a sense of self. A sense of self is the capacity to know and express desires, wants, discomforts. Develop a self-knowledge. Know your ability and take responsibility for yourself. You are returning to a healthier self. You need to develop a new personality with self, others, and community. You have talents and gifts that are needed in the Body of Christ. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Paul said “now is the day of Salvation.” Let the Holy Spirit lead you and bring you to who God created you to be.

Once delivered, what next?

1. Make Jesus Lord of all.
2. Change your way of doing things, a new way.
3. Get into the Word, the Bible, ask Godly people.
4. Pray regularly for help.
5. Look at your friends and family. Can they help or not?
6. Stay in fellowship. Do not hide.
7. Listen to God with a new freedom.
8. Take domain over things around you. At home, clean it out. At work, clean it out.

Scriptures about deliverance:

Colossians 1:13 “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

2 Corinthians 1:10 “who delivered us from so great a death and does deliver us in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”

2 Timothy 3:11 “persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured and out of them all, the Lord delivered me.”

Why do we need delivered?

1. Sin (Micah 6:13)
2. Satanic possession: to be in control, have power over (Luke 13:16)
3. Satanic oppression: restrain, hold down, hold back (Acts 27:20)

What are we delivered from?

1. Fears (Psalms 34:4)
2. Troubles (Psalms 34:19)
3. Wickedness (Psalms 37:40)
4. Distress (Psalms 107:6)
5. Death, fears, stumbling (Psalms 116:8-9)

Who is our ultimate deliverer?

1. God (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)
2. Jesus (John 3:16-17)
3. Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)

Why has God planned for us to be delivered?

1. It is a promise. (Psalms 119:170)
2. We are His people and He is our God. (Leviticus 26:12)
3. So He will be in charge and we will turn to Him. (Romans 11:32)

The procedure God has given us to do battle: (Romans 3:12-14)

1. Cast off, put down, resist, put captive the works of darkness.
2. Fill the clean place with all of God.
3. Walk in faith with God.

James 4:7-9

1. Submit to God.
2. Resist the devil.
3. Draw near to God.
4. Get right with God.
5. Know the consequences of not getting delivered.

We have had deliverances, and we may have more as we grow. We have had healings, and we may have more as we grow. We have sinned and repented. We will continue to see our sin and be granted repentance as we grow.

Follow-Up Teaching After Deliverance:

The areas of the battle will be in the soul and body (mind). There are three sources of power.

1. God
2. Satan
3. Soul (flesh)

God's Attributes

Love
Joy
Peace
Kindness
Honesty
Grace
Mercy
Forgiveness

Soul's Attributes

Sovereign Will

Satan's Attributes

Anger
Fear
Frustration
Worry
Disappointment
Resentment
Hurt

The sovereign will can choose either set of attributes. The sovereign will does not have any attributes within itself.

How do we stop?

1. Unrealistic Reliance

Our attitude must change. (1 Corinthians 13:11) "When I was a child, I spoke as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things." "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." If a person does not love, neither spiritual gifts, nor good deeds, nor martyrdom is of any value to that person.

2. Unrealistic Expectation

Our conduct must change. (Hebrews 5:13-14) "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Reality is the name of the way to live. If we keep "expecting" something that is not real, not there, then we are living in foolishness. False reasoning comes from proud humans.

3. Unrealistic Submission

Our behavior must change. (Ephesians 5:18) “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” The certainty of being filled with the Spirit may be confirmed by the believer's faith and life. The spirit filled person will exhibit the Christ like character described in Galatians 5, the fruit of the Spirit. This is a command to be obeyed, not an option for the Christian.

New Nature

Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.”

The term “new nature” refers to the spiritual transformation that occurs within us. We become a “new man.” We are not just renovated or refreshed from the old, rather we are brand new with a new family, a new set of values, new motivations and new possessions.

The “old man” is still present in the new life and expresses himself in corrupting deeds such as lying. For the “new man” to be visible, he must be put on as one would put on a new suit of clothes. In other words the new nature must be cultivated or nurtured by spiritual decisiveness to grow in God. We must not revert to putting on the old suit of the former life. Rather we must continue to grow in this new life. This is what binding and loosening, healing, and deliverance is all about.

The message of the new nature is a message of supreme hope. The Spirit of God can accomplish a life-changing attitude, conduct, and behavior for all who will only believe in God.

Satan's Strategies

2 Corinthians 2:11 “Lest Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

If we are to maintain our growth, fullness, and abundance and serve Him, which is to the end what we are called to do, and if we keep our deliverance, receive our healings, and submit our sins, then there are things we need to know about how Satan will try to trick us and oppose the things of God.

1. Satan likes to urge you to believe that there is a better way than God's way in the immediate situation. (2 Timothy 4:10)
2. Satan likes to remind you how often you have failed in the past to keep you down. (James 4:4)
3. Satan likes to stimulate you in the pleasures of sin and how it will be. (2 Peter 1:4)
4. Satan promotes the merits of hatred, bitterness and revenge. (1 John 2:15-17)
5. Satan advocates power over love. (1 John 4:1)
6. Satan urges you to destroy your enemies instead of loving them. (2 John 7)

If any of these things are happening to you, then you need to confess your faith. This should also tell you that something took place and Satan is angry. He is losing you to the Life of God.

Promises of God

Titus 1:2 "In hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before time began."

We need to stand on the promises of God. Make them larger than life itself. Often the Christian will doubt his Salvation, his deliverance, his healings, simply because he doesn't feel it, not understanding that the basis for all these things are in the promises of God and not emotional feelings.

1. God's gift is "eternal life." This is possible because of the death of Jesus on Calvary's cross. Jesus actually took sin's penalty for every man, woman, and child who ever has lived or ever will live. As He hung upon the cross He cried "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" Jesus was separated from God the Father so that you and I do not have to be. This is the heart of the Atonement. The marvel of it all is that He did this while we were His enemies. (Colossians 1:21-22)

2. The basic concept underlying salvation is "deliverance." We are delivered from the penalty of sin and from the power of sin. Ultimately we will be delivered from the very presence of sin and will be delivered into the very presence of God. We receive new life by faith. Believing that Jesus arose from death and His payment for sin is fully acceptable in God's sight brings about that deliverance. (Acts 16:31)

3. Christians who struggle in their own strength to live the Christian life will fail. They must by faith appropriate daily the power of the Holy Spirit. Described practically, this means that believers trust the Spirit to "empower" them in specific instances such as in healing, resisting temptation, and so on. There is no secret formula that makes the Spirit's power available. It is simply a reliance on the Spirit to help. (Acts 1:16)

While it is true that one need not always feel spiritual to have new life in God, nevertheless, both Paul and John inform us that we can experience that inner witness of the Holy Spirit to our spirit. What does this mean? It means we can enjoy the quiet confidence given by the Spirit that we have indeed passed from death unto life. It means we can now approach the mighty Creator of the vast universe and call him our Father. We not only can approach the throne of grace with holy boldness, but we can also experience the blessing of knowing that the Father will hear and answer our prayers. (1John 3:24) The apostle Paul experienced this witness during a crisis in his life while preaching in Corinth. (Acts 18:9-10)

DECISIONS AND CHOICES

What is a decision? It is a determination to follow a certain way. Example: Do I go to college or to work?

What is a choice? It is to pick from a number of options. Example: Do I take a bath, shower, or just wash?

A choice affects a decision. A decision affects our life.

Everyday we make choices. Some are just minor choices, some are important. In our daily life, we are required to make decisions that affect us just for a limited time. Sometimes we must make decisions that will change how we live our life for a lifetime. As Christians, what does the Bible say about how we should make choices and decisions?

First, if we are Believers:

1. Psalms 37:23 "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."
2. Psalms 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go."
3. Psalms 111:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

We must see that God is in charge. This is a fundamental viewpoint and should be our foundation for all the choices and decisions we have to make.

If a decision is following a certain way, then how do we do it?

1. Go to God first and ask for the guidance you need. John 11:22 "But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Prayer is the beginning and the end. We need to pray. Sometimes we think that for those little choices we make daily, we don't need to pray about them. Instead, practice the presence of God with you always. This should help us make better choices, even in the small things. Say the Lord's Prayer, asking that God's will, rather than your own, be done. Put a favorite written scripture in your wallet, or something to touch to remind you to pray and that God is in charge. In doing so, you are creating an attitude of God first, and this will help you get to God fast when you must make the hard decisions.
2. Having prayed, believing that God will bring the matter out all right is half the battle of any choice or decision. Believe that He will show you the best decision. Use the tools He gave you, binding and loosening... That rest and trust will set you in the

right attitude to bring you to the right, best and correct choice or decision.

3. Get to know God's word. Read the Bible. Many choices and decisions are made just by knowing the Word.
4. Gather together all data and facts as correctly as possible. Be truthful about it. Write the problem or situation out in detail. This prevents mental confusion. By writing out things, you get a clearer view of them. No decisions have to be done quickly. Sometimes choices do, but still, sounding out is always helpful.
5. It is a must to seek wise counseling. Talk to God's people. Search for those who have shown you that they listen to the Holy Spirit. Learn how to address issues openly, honestly, frankly and directly with those around you.
6. Test the Holy Spirit within you. Let Him lead you. Try first one thing, then another, until you find the right solution. In considering the possible course or decision, ask yourself, what is the right thing? Nothing that is against God or wrong ever works out right. Remember all things will witness with your spirit.
7. Then make the decisions. Don't back away or look back. Accept it. Deal with it as being done. Let go of the outcome. It is in God's hands. Trust Him.
8. Once your problems or the decisions you had to make are done or solved, say thanks to God. Keep alive the flow of blessing of His Spirit by always knowing who is your source. Listen to God's assurance, confidence, and security. Remember the hindsights. Use them for strength to go on.

Scriptures:

1. Ephesians 4:30 "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."
2. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."
3. Isaiah 58:11 "The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your soul in drought and strengthen your bones."

God is for you not against you. If we find ourselves in trouble and making choices and decisions without this understanding, we will make life more difficult.

Warnings:

1. Refuse all pretense. Only know what is known. Be certain of the facts. If you need information, ask. See it for what it is.
2. Beware of what you are avoiding. Do not deny, overlook, distort, or justify. Remember nothing is insufficient.
3. Look at the consequences of what you are doing, the big picture. If you are cutting off half of your thinking or feelings, you are cutting off all of yourself.
4. Track down the old habits. Are you hearing them? Are you lonely, frustrated, sad or angry and making this decision?
5. Don't make blank check decisions or choices, which are that anything that seems right must be obeyed. You are an individual made in God's image. To do things unconsciously is not being a moral human being.
6. Be open and honest about your decisions and choices or what you are thinking or feeling. If you are concealing your ideas from others or not telling everything, then something is wrong. Initiate conversations of truth and unity. No hidden agendas. Learn to express yourself as an individual.
7. Realize that God may be wanting to show you a new way. Increase your trust and risk following God. He may want you to come up with new ideas, new ways of seeing something. What can be changed? What cannot be changed? Learn to trust that God will see you through any uncomfortable thing.
8. If you get off track or start to doubt or question, stop inside. Take a deep breath. Do it several times. Talk to yourself out loud. Look at the decision from another view. How would someone else see this decision?

Scriptures:

1. Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God to those who are called according to His purpose."
2. 2 Timothy 1:12 "I am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."
3. Romans 8:38-39 "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor power, nor things present, nor things to come, ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

Everything God does is good toward His people. To hold on to this established truth will help you stand with Him through thick and thin times.

These scriptures which tell us of God's ways should set the tone of all choices and decisions. Alleluia. All these principles to go along with them, can help us stand and walk out our life, and they come from the Word. Matthew 24:35 says "Heaven and earth will pass away but My word will by no means pass away." Holding on to that authority will place you in the position to walk in an upright way.

Finally: Learn to relax in God.

1. Relax with some music.
2. Take a walk by yourself or with someone.
3. Give yourself a foot or hand massage.
4. Call a friend.
5. Get a hobby, paint, write, do a jigsaw puzzle.
6. Plan an outing or a time out.
7. Do something for someone else.

Summary/Questions:

Romans 8:5 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

What does this scripture speak to in our lives about choices and decisions?

Psalms 111:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Is God real in the choices and decisions you make?

FASTING

Fasting according to the Bible involves abstaining from physical nourishment. It includes:

1. Fasting from all food, without water (very rare)
2. Fasting from food, with liquid
3. Fasting from certain foods like Daniel. He ate only vegetables and water.

The Bible is full of different people fasting. Moses fasted for 40 days, (Exodus 34:27-28), and he saw the backside of God. Because of this, Moses' face shone in such a manner that he had to cover it before the people. He also received the 10 Commandments. If that were the only recording of fasting, I know that it surely would get you interested in fasting, for we all long to come face to face with God.

When I looked up the word fasting, fast, fasted, etc, I found that the Old Testament has recorded 43 times someone fasted. The New Testament has even more, 48 times. This surprised me for I had been led by others into thinking that fasting was something Old Testament Prophets did. It was not something to do now.

I had read the passages in Luke 5:33 and Matthew 9:14 where Jesus says as long as I am with you, you do not need to fast. When I go away, then you will need to fast. This was always spoken to not make fasting important.

As I study fasting, it came alive to me that it was one of the many tools God gave to help us live with Him in a closer relationship. Any tool God gives us is to bring us to His perfectness in our life, so we need to see that there are certain attitudes to have in this.

If we are to see how important fasting is, then we need to examine the Bible and ask the questions: (1) Why would you fast? (2) What actually is fasting? (3) How do we fast? (4) What requirements or behavior should we know about before we fast?

In order to find the answers to these questions, let us look to Scripture. First some from the Old Testament, where it was a common voluntary or prescribed spiritual practice representing repentance or an intense seeking of God's guidance.

1. Zechariah 7:4-5 We see that we need to remember who we are doing it for. We fast for God.
2. Psalms 35:13 Speaks about being in the state of humbleness, "a heartfelt surrender to God," to humble yourself before God so that your prayer life is alive.

3. Nehemiah 9:1-3 says three things. (a) Separate yourself to God. This can be difficult in this day and time. Yet I think this means that we need to have a state of mind of being separated to God. (b) You need to get things straight with God. Maybe that is why you are even fasting, as you have the need to confess your sins. Psalms 69:10 speaks of fasting for forgiveness too, to get rid of the "reproach." No matter what, fasting is about confession. (c) Wait for God to speak to you. Read the Word. Get into the Scriptures. Listen to God.
4. Joel 2:12 expresses another quality that should be there. Here I think it speaks of a kind of stubbornness, "until the fellowship is restored." That is stubbornness.
5. Isaiah 58 is known to be the Chapter of Fasting. In this chapter, we read of how much our attitude can affect the outcome of our fasting. It states all of the things we have already seen. (a) doing it for God, (b) being humble, (c) making sure you are forgiven, and (d) separating yourself unto God and waiting upon Him.

We have, I think, answered how we should fast. Still the most important question is, why would you fast?

1. Exodus 34:27-28 This is Moses' 40 day fast where he was seeking more of God.
2. 2 Samuel 12:16 is the story of David who fasted 7 days. It tells of him fasting to get right before God from his sin.
3. 1 Samuel 1:7-8 is the story of Hannah and her desire to have a child, a need in her life.
4. Daniel 6:18 tells of Daniel and the lion, a fast for one day, fasting by the King to keep Daniel from danger.
5. Daniel 9:3-4 Daniel fasted for seven days for confession, repentance, and to know God's will.
6. Daniel 10:3 is the 21 day fast that Daniel undertook so that he might be able to tell the vision he was given by God.
7. Esther 4:16 Esther fasted three days for courage in a plea for survival for the people of Israel, that the king might not kill them or her.
8. Jonah 3:5-10 is a national day of fasting and repentance in Nineveh.
9. Judges 20:26 The Israelites as a Body fasted one day to ask for understanding.
10. Psalms 69:10 is a fast to forgive the reproach, shame, and dishonor.
11. Leviticus 23:7 and 16:29 command the Israelites to fast for the Passover Feast and the Day of Atonement.

As we read the New Testament Scriptures on fasting, we see one big difference, the coming of Jesus. Therefore, the reason for fasting is somewhat different.

1. Acts 10:30 is a 4 day fast by a man named Cornelius who was fasting to be used of God. Then he was used as the very instrument in bringing Peter and the whole church into letting go of earning Salvation by circumcising.
2. Acts 13:2-3 tells of fasting and praying for a day. This talks about laying hands on Paul and Barnabas commissioning them to preach Salvation and to win souls for the Kingdom. A soul winner needs many times to fast and pray for guidance.
3. Matthew 17:20-21 is Jesus speaking about unbelief. He says you will never be able to bring Salvation if you have unbelief. Two things in this passage: (a) Jesus is telling us that we need to have faith and not unbelief. To bring the message of Salvation, prayer and fasting is necessary. (b) We are ALL called to share the good news.
4. 2 Corinthians 6:1-5 speaks of fasting as just being a part of the walk as a Christian. It is one of the things we must do. 2 Corinthians 11:27 speaks about this too.
5. Luke 2:37 tells of Anna fasting as she wanted to see the Christ child.
6. Matthew 4:1-2 is of course Jesus' fast of 40 days as He begins His ministry and receives the ability to overcome temptation. This should speak to us of preparation for the things of God.

Now one of the last things we need to share in regards to fasting is, how long do you fast? As I studied the Scripture to find the answer, I could not find a 1, 2, 3 formula. Nevertheless, there were some patterns.

The longer the fast or the number of times a person abstained, the more it had to do with the plan of God in serving Him or the greater the need for a larger number of people. We hear that many prayed and fasted often, not for many days, but often and frequently. Some have fasted just one meal. Some have fasted a whole day. Some have fasted one day a week for a period of time.

Paul and the disciples Peter, James, and John fasted and prayed all the time. We must note that in fasting, it was always done with prayer. Prayer is always a part of fasting, no matter how long, or for whatever reason, New Testament or Old Testament. It is a day to spend time in prayer with God.

Besides Jesus, the only other 40-day fast was done by Moses and Elijah. The 40-day fast is often called the Prophet's fast. The need for strength, courage and wisdom was the reason for these fasts, as they served God in a mighty way.

I think without a doubt a 3-day fast is the most common. Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Nehemiah all did 3 days. Daniel fasted for 3 days, 7 days, and 21 days.

One last thing I see is that these fasts were called by God. If you have ever tried to fast, you will know that unless it is called by God, you cannot do it. It is that difficult. Maybe we are so satisfied just being at peace with ourselves, we do not want to fast. I am not suggesting we not be at peace or that we fight a fight or struggle just for the sake of struggling. Nevertheless, I do believe we should see that fasting brings us into a higher calling in Christ Jesus, a calling that I think God would want for us to have.

Finally, you need to take into account what Matthew 6:16-18 says. "Do it unto God and privately." It may be impossible for someone to not know. What I think it is saying to us is to not use this as a boast or full of pride. Let it be something between you and God. It is a prayerful time, a quiet time, grieving almost. All fasting is to bring us closer to God.

PRAYER

Prayer is as old as man. (Genesis 4:26)

Prayer is talking but also listening.

Prayer is a request (beseech) to God in the name of Jesus by the Spirit's help.

Prayer is the only way to God and it is a must. (Luke 18:1, Matthew 26:41-42, Mark 13:33, James 4:2)

Matthew 7:7-11 and John 16:24 give us the real definition of prayer. "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you." "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full." This is a progressive level, each more intense and demanding than the last.

Asking is a polite request. In asking you have to have a giver and a receiver. God is the giver. He is the source. You ask for things, something to receive. Asking means requesting, inquiring. Things happen because of the giver, not the receiver. It has nothing to do with how good the receiver is.

Seeking means to find, to discover. Seeking also means to demand. It is a hard level of communication with God. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added to you." When we are seeking, we want the truth. Seek is a diligent search. Example: We are married to the richest man in the world. We have what is His, but it is our desire to go deeper in the relationship. Many things in life do not come merely by asking. We must seek for it. In seeking, we make an effort. "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13) Seek what? Wisdom, peace, benefit.

Knocking is a rap on the door. What happens for the one who knocks? It shall open. Open what? The door to God's knowledge, wisdom, etc... Knocking speaks of admission into God's heavenly realm. Knocking is not a single knock but a series of raps. It is a request for admittance. Knocking means you enter into something, where it is no longer Christ in you, but you in Christ. God knocks at our door, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me." (Revelations 3:20) When we are knocking, we are asking to come into His nature, His will, and what He wants and would do in me.

The Bible is filled with prayer, all kinds, for victory, health, prosperity, protection, help, mercy, guidance, strength, healing, revival, joy, deliverance, wisdom, power, to be saved, and so on.

Jesus prayed all the time and alone, in the desert and in the mountains. Jesus knew the Father as one, yet He felt the need to pray. (Luke 3:21-22)

Jesus Himself prayed lots of prayers. The Lord's Prayer is a model only. It should be able to grow into your own words. But the model does tell us what the basics are.

1. Pray to the Father through the Son.
2. To have His will be done
3. For His kingdom to come
4. For our daily necessities
5. For forgiveness for ourself and for others
6. To lead us and deliver us
7. To stand firm in the fact of God!

The only complete prayer besides the Lord's Prayer recorded by the Holy Spirit is the prayer in John 17. It is like the model of the perfectness of prayers. If Jesus prayed it, let's see what and how He prayed. It tells us much. In verses 1-5, Jesus prayed for His work, His ministries, and what He was called to do. In verses 6-19, Jesus prayed for His disciples, those close around Him, His family. In verses 20-24, He prayed for all believers, for all who would be believers or should be believers.

When we pray, no matter what our attitude is, what counts is that our hearts are what God looks on. We are sons of God. We can never be worthy enough to have this relationship. It is a privilege to pray because it brings you into closeness with God. We must always trust, rest, and believe in all of His promises.

The bottom line is that God is the source. In praying you admit your need and your dependence upon God. All things happen according to His perfect will, not according to our wishes. Learning about prayer is only to help. It should never complicate things. Because prayer is as old as man, we must then realize that it is and has been God's desire for us to do this and to fellowship with Him. It can mean nothing if you don't know HIM!

Five types of prayer:

1. Supplication (1 Timothy 2:1-3)
2. Intercession (James 5:15)
3. Thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
4. Adoration (Daniel 4:34)
5. Confession (1 John 1:9)

The Bible says to pray:

1. Everywhere (1 Timothy 2:8)
2. Unceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
3. Always (Acts 1:13-14)

Things that stop prayer:

1. Unharmonious (1 Peter 3:7)
2. Selfishness (James 4:3)
3. Unforgiving (Matthew 5:22-24)
4. Unbelief (Hebrews 11:6, James 1:6-7)
5. Sin (Psalms 66:18)

How does God answer prayer?

1. Immediately (Matthew 14:22-31)
2. Delayed (John Ch. 11 - Lazarus)
3. Says no, but peace comes (Philippians 4:6-7)
4. Says no, but grace comes (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
5. Differently (Romans 5:3-4)

Where to pray:

1. In secret (Matthew 6:6)
2. Alone (Luke 5:15-16)
3. Where 2 or more are gathered (Matthew 18:20)
4. With your family (Acts 10:2, 30)
5. In a group (Acts 12:12, Acts 2:42-47)

Conditions for prayer:

1. With faith and believing (Matthew 21:22)
2. In Jesus' name (John 14:13)
3. According to God's will (1 John 5:14)
4. Confidently, expecting (Mark 11:24)
5. Humility (Luke 18:10-14)

FOOT WASHING

In Scripture there are two things said about the foot. One is that in Moses' Tabernacle, the laver bowl was built on four footers. The laver bowl is the bowl that the priests washed their hands and feet in before entering the Tabernacle and the presence of God. The footers held up this laver bowl. They are an important part of the building of the Tabernacle. If we look at this, then we must recognize that our feet hold us up, that they are, so to speak, our foundation.

Our feet are important. Jesus made these feet even more important by washing them with the disciples, saying "that in washing these feet I wash the whole body." Jesus washed the disciples' feet to humble himself before them and to be joined together with them. The disciples allowed Him this to submit to His ministry and to be joined as one with Him. Also, feet in Scripture are symbolic of the way we walk, what we believe, and what is our faith. So to wash them is again to say we wash the whole person.

Just in passing, the foot is the member of our body which has the most contact with the ground, the earth. It is the lowest member of our body. I think by washing our feet, we say that there is no member of the body less than any other, that without our feet, we can not walk, both symbolically and in reality. I think that was also something Jesus was saying when He washed the feet of the disciples.

Why do we do foot washing?

In allowing another to wash our feet, there are two basic emotions for doing it.

1) We are allowing God to use another human being as a tool of God to help us turn from our self-centered ways and to yield to God to clean us up. Depending on the person, this can be a strong way to submit to God's way, rather than just being between you and God. It is a humbling of our flesh to God, not to the other person. We may ask someone to do this so we can receive this yielding in our life.

2) We allow this person washing our feet the right to minister into our life, letting God join us together in His life. It is receiving them as who they are in Christ, no matter what.

Both of these ways are humbling our flesh to God, not the other person, recognizing that He is the one who has the power to join and cleanse, not the person.

In wanting to wash another's feet, there are also two basic emotions for doing it.

1) To feel the need to humble yourself to another human being and to serve them just for who they are. To have your self-righteousness dealt with as you wash their feet and accept them in your life.

2) To want to bless a person for ministering into your life. To recognize the blessing and give back the honor and blessing to them.

In washing our own feet, we seek to come into the presence of God and to ask Him to hear our hearts, to break our sinful ways, and to humble us and to minister to our hearts. We seek to hear His ways and to pledge our life to Him. By washing our feet, we give to Him our whole self that we might do His will and that it may be made perfect in us.

CASTING LOTS

Casting lots is an ancient method of random selection, like drawing straws, flipping a coin, or rolling dice. It is used to make an impartial decision or give a divine direction. Often it is used in determining an outcome of say an assignment, duties to be done, or a choice to be made. The whole matter must be that God is the center of the decision. If you cast lots, it must be done believing that the outcome is from God. If not, it is of no worth.

Old Testament Scriptures of Casting Lots:

Numbers 26:55

Joshua 18:6

Jonah 1:7

New Testament Scripture of Casting Lots:

Acts 1:26 This was selecting Matthias as the next disciple after Judas.

The Bible wants you to expect that the decision that comes from casting lots is from God. (Proverbs 16:33)

The intent and purpose behind casting lots was to remove partiality from the decision. I have done this by having two groups of twelve slips of paper to represent the 12 Tribes of Israel, with the two groups being opposite of each other, like one group of "Yes" and the other group "No." I then believe that what I choose is my answer. It always works.