

John 8 v 36: "So if the Son sets you free, then you are really and unquestionably free!"

Breaking the **BONDAGE** of ADDICTION



Pain Killers
SEX

Pornography
Work
Caffeine

Prescription Drugs
Food

Anti-depressants
Ecstasy
Smoking

Sleeping Pills
Alcoholism
Heroin

Cocaine
DRUGS
Tranquilizers

Gambling
Spending Binges

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Introduction:

You may have been going round and round the same mountain – many times you have probably tried to quit whatever it is you are addicted to, or tried to lose weight by going on the latest diet, but it only lasted for a short period of time and then you slipped right back into the bondage. The reason is that you tried to change the external without dealing with what initially caused the problem internally. If you want change to be permanent in your life, you have got to deal with the root issues involving the negative strongholds in your mind first. Then external change will naturally follow. I believe that the information in this book will help set in motion those things that will bring the conviction necessary to get you out of that bondage and into a place of freedom. It will also help you understand addictions in other people's lives. I hope that not only will this insight provide a foundation for you to be able to walk away from your addiction, whatever it is; but that in the future you will also be able to help others break free of their addiction.

Addictions are a growing problem worldwide and sadly it is as rampant in the church as it is in the world. Life can be filled with trouble, disappointment, curve balls and pain. If we don't know how to deal with these seasons, we can fall into the trap of addictions by attempting to comfort ourselves rather than resolve the source of pain and despair. There are spiritual and emotional battles in our thought life that can lead us into the trap of addictions.

Latest medical research is tracing 87 – 95% of diseases to “toxic mind-sets” upstream in our thought life. Addictions do not develop because you took a drug or because you drank alcohol or because you had a cigarette. You took the drug or drank the alcohol because you developed a toxic mind-set of the need to be loved unfulfilled, a low self-esteem and the insecurities that come from that. This toxic thinking pattern is behind every type of addiction without exception. The enemy knows how to control you with your needs if you allow him to. He knows that if he can get you into a place where you doubt that God loves you, you don't love yourself and you are not sure if you are loved and accepted by others, you're going to start looking for love in all the wrong places and that could be a chemical.

The need to be loved was built into each one of us by God – that is not a toxic mind-set. Each person was created to know and to receive God's perfect love. The need to give and receive love is a part of who we are as humans. But there is often a breakdown in this area because our families and our marriages can be so dysfunctional that sometimes even animals care for each other better than some of us care for our husband, wife or children. So now we have the rage of rejection, the hurt, the pain and the bitterness of not being loved and nurtured. When people have not received true, unconditional love as a foundation, they are always in search of getting a need fulfilled. The need to know the love of the Father can open us up to look for love in all the wrong places and that leaves us vulnerable to the deception of satan who seduces us into believing that the world has a better substitute.

The first two chapters of this book will help you to understand what an addiction is and why and how it developed. This is the first step to freedom because when you gain insight into the spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical dynamics that lead you into the trap of addictions; it will become obvious to you what you need to deal with in order to be set free! It is the prayer of my heart that this knowledge will encourage and inspire you that it is possible to break the bondage of addictions and be the victorious over comer that God created you to be!

Join me on a journey of healing, as each chapter in this book deals with each of the underlying issues behind addictions, and one step at a time will take you into greater and greater levels of freedom until you have complete victory!

Chapter 1:

Defining What an Addiction is

Anything that you cannot stop doing by simply using your will is an addiction. Anything that controls and rules you, is an addiction – that thing is your Lord. The word Lord means “*master or ruler of*”. God the Father is not your Lord and Master because the thing you have become addicted to is your master. There are obvious addictions such as alcoholism, smoking, drugs (both prescription and illegal drugs) and pornography. Then there are more subtle addictions such as food, gossip, ungodly relationships, television (especially soap operas!), going on spending binges and gambling. We can also make an addiction out of food and work. Addictions also run in family trees and can be inherited.

When it comes to substances such as alcohol, cigarettes and drugs, the medical field has certain criteria that define an addiction and help us as doctors to identify people who are addicts. This is important for us to be able to do because substances that people become addicted to cause many diseases and health complications. There is no point in trying to successfully treat for example a stomach ulcer or heart failure, if you don't know that the person is a smoker and an alcoholic. Prescribing medicines for the stomach ulcer or heart failure is not going to work if the person continues to abuse alcohol and smoke cigarettes, which are the cause of the problem in the first place. The CAGE Questionnaire below is a quick screening test to find out if somebody is an alcoholic but it can also be applied to any other substance or drug:

C: Have you ever felt that you need to cut down on your drinking?

A: Have you ever felt annoyed or angry at family or friends for commenting on or criticizing your drinking?

G: Have you ever felt guilty or bad about your drinking?

E: Have you ever had to have a drink as an eye opener in the morning to calm your nerves and give you a boost for the day?

Two positive answers indicate an 80 to 95% probability that the person is an alcoholic. If the answer is yes to all 4 questions, the person is an alcoholic until proven otherwise.

TOLERANCE and **WITHDRAWAL** also indicate that a person is dependant or addicted to a substance:

Tolerance is when a progressively greater and greater amount of the substance is required to produce the desired pleasurable effect.

Withdrawal is a characteristic pattern of symptoms that ensue when use of the substance is stopped and using the substance again leads to relief of the symptoms. For example, if an alcoholic does not have a drink for one to three days, the person will experience anxiety, anorexia (or loss of appetite), insomnia (can't sleep at night), confusion, delirium, tremors in hands, tongue or eyelids, palpitations (when you feel your heart beating very fast), sweating, agitation and/or high temperatures and sometimes even seizures.

Chapter 2:

Understanding How You Fell into the Trap of Addictions

In order to break free from the bondage of addictions, you need to first understand how you fell into this trap in the first place!

As mentioned in the introduction, the mind-set behind addictions is the need to be loved unfulfilled, a low self-esteem and the resultant insecurities that come from that. However, this way of thinking did not begin in your mind – it began in the spiritual realm: Addictions develop through something called: “The spirit-soul-body connection.” 1 Thessalonians 5 v 23 shows that as a human being you are made up of three parts: you have a spirit, you have a soul (which consists of your mind (which you use to think), your free will (which you use to make decisions) and emotions) and then you live in a body.

AN ACCUSING SPIRIT



SPIRIT - SOUL - BODY

Ephesians 6 v 12: “For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere.”

In Ephesians 6 v 12 Paul described an invisible kingdom that answers to Satan – he said we don’t wrestle with flesh and blood but against principalities, powers of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness...in other words evil spirits. In, 2 Timothy 1 v 7, God said, “**He has not given us a *spirit of fear*, but of power, love and a sound mind**”. That spirit of fear is a part of the invisible kingdom of Ephesians 6 v 12. In Revelations 12 v 10 the devil is described as the ‘accuser of the brethren’. Just as you get a spirit of fear, you get an unloving accusing spirit which accuses you to yourself and makes you feel bad about yourself. How it does this is by *giving you thoughts in the first person*...and here is the big deception of the devil! The Bible says not to be ignorant of satan’s devices or strategies. John 10 v 10 explains that the enemy is like a thief who wants to steal, kill and destroy your life. He does this by leading you into temptation and sin which involves a way of thinking that is opposite to the Word of God.

How he leads you into sin and temptation is by giving you thoughts in the first person – *so as to deceive you into thinking that those are your thoughts and feelings* – and you don’t even realize that it is the enemy speaking to you. For example, an unloving accusing spirit is not going to put a thought in your mind which says, “Hello this is the accusing spirit speaking to you! I come from the devil and he told me to tell you to hate yourself.” If it was that blatant, you would never listen to and believe his lies. So he cleverly gives you those thoughts in the first person, “I hate myself! I feel so guilty for all that I have done. I feel so bad about this and that etc.” Because those thoughts came in the first person, you think that they are your thoughts and feelings...and so you *follow that way of thinking as if it were you* – and you begin to feel bad about yourself, to come under condemnation and feel guilty, to have a low self-esteem and eventually to hate yourself.

An unloving accusing spirit has been accusing you to yourself for a long time and training you to think badly of yourself and you didn’t even realize it. You became one with those accusing thoughts *as if they were yours* -and now you’ve believed that lie all your life that you are no good.

(An in depth teaching of how thoughts initially come from the enemy in the spiritual realm into your mind in the first person is included on pages 84 – 95 in the 4th Edition of the book “*Healing Begins With Sanctification of the Heart*” as well as in session

A TOXIC MIND-SET OF A LOW SELF-ESTEEM

SPIRIT - SOUL - BODY

As you meditate on those thoughts coming from the accusing spirit, you develop a toxic mind-set or thinking habit of a low self-esteem, guilt, shame, condemnation, self-disapproval, self-rejection, self-bitterness and self-hatred. Notice we have now moved from the level of the spirit to the level of the soul (which is your mind, will and emotions).

**A TOXIC LONG TERM MEMORY OF
A LOW SELF-ESTEEM IN YOUR BRAIN**

SPIRIT - SOUL - BODY

As you meditate on those thoughts of guilt, shame, condemnation, self-disapproval, self-rejection, self-bitterness and self-hatred, you build a long term memory which stores all of this information in your brain. So now the low self-esteem, guilt and self-hatred has become a part of you physically and you have become one with the accusing spirit, in spirit, soul and body which by its fallen nature wants you to believe that God does not love you, you don't love yourself, and others don't love and accept you. The more you meditate on those thoughts, the stronger this memory becomes. This memory is toxic and it has the following effects on the body:

(An in depth teaching of how the brain works, how thoughts form and how they can become toxic leading to the building of toxic memories is included on pages 7 - 23 in the 4th Edition of the book “Healing Begins With Sanctification of the Heart” as well as in session 2 of the DVD series “No Disease Is Incurable” – see website www.eagleswings.co.zw for details as to where material is available)

1. THE HYPOTHALMUS LOWERS THE SEROTONIN LEVELS

The hypothalamus is the chemical factory of the brain. When you have a lack of self-esteem and your thought life is dominated by thoughts of self-disapproval, self-rejection, condemnation, guilt, shame or you are not feeling loved in an area, your hypothalamus senses these spiritual and emotional problems one of the first things that the hypothalamus does in response to this is to lower the levels of serotonin. Serotonin is the hormone in the brain that is called the “feel good” hormone because it makes you feel good about yourself. So whenever you have a deficiency of serotonin, you feel terrible about yourself. No matter what you do...you feel depressed. That is clinical depression by definition – a deficiency of serotonin. When those serotonin levels are low, you don't feel right or complete physically or spiritually... and if you don't be careful you'll fall prey to an addiction because you're going to start looking for a fix to make you feel complete again.

2. YOU BRING SOMETHING TO YOUR MOUTH BECAUSE THE MOUTH WAS DESIGNED AS THE CONTACT PLACE FOR LOVE AND SECURITY – THE LIPS ARE THE NUTURING POINT

When you don't feel good about yourself, you go into insecurity. The serotonin levels in your brain are low and you are feeling depressed, and naturally you want comfort. This leads you to bring something to your mouth because the mouth was designed as the contact place for love and security – the lips are the nurturing point. That's why children suck their thumb when they are

feeling insecure. People who smoke cigarettes have exchanged the thumb for something else! The reason cigarettes are smoked is not because of the nicotine. Science has told us that it is the nicotine of the cigarette that is causing the stress and anxiety. The person thinks they need to smoke to calm them down, when in fact it is just feeding their anxiety through stimulating the stress reaction in the body. So what is a cigarette emotionally and spiritually to a person? It has little to do with the nicotine – it is what hits the lips for nurturing. Nurturing is needed and this is driven by the need to be loved. The sucking reflex of eating or of something touching the lips has a nurturing effect. Not many people understand the depths of this need. People who have weight problems because of excessive eating have made an addiction out of food. This is a direct result of not feeling good about themselves, a lack of self-esteem and introspection where they look inside themselves and don't like what they see. Stuffing food into their mouths is an attempt to feed the need to be loved, to fill the void and to soothe or comfort themselves because they don't feel good about themselves. Did you know that many of the diet pills on the market have nothing to do with suppressing appetite? They work by increasing the serotonin levels, which then makes you feel good about yourself. It is an artificial way of increasing your self-esteem. Whenever you feel good about yourself, you don't put your thumb in your mouth i.e. you have no need to put food to your mouth. However these diet pills have many terrible and dangerous side effects and are in themselves addictive.

If you try to stop an addiction to something without dealing with the toxic mindset behind addictions, you get something called cross-addictions whereby you lay down one addiction and just get addicted to something else: For example When people stop smoking, they often put on a lot of weight. They start eating a lot because they need the satisfaction of putting something to their mouth. Alcoholics can develop a problem where they like sugar, carbohydrates and desserts because the body converts the sugars and carbohydrates into alcohol. So not only does the person get the satisfaction of putting something into their mouth but they also get an alcohol fix. Alcoholics often have a characteristic “beer belly”. This weight gain is not only because of over eating, but it is also because of a slowed metabolism. The hypothalamus also responds to thoughts of a low self-esteem, guilt, condemnation and self-hatred by lowering the body's metabolic rate. This predisposes you to putting on weight more easily because the body just does not burn the food that you eat.

The mouth – and whatever you put in it (whether it be food, cigarettes or alcohol) – is designed to bring you to emotional security. The lips are the nurturing point.

3. THE FEEL GOOD RUSH OF DOPAMINE

When people with an addiction bring the food, alcohol, cigarette or drug to their mouth, it triggers the release of dopamine which is the pleasure chemical. In order to compensate biologically for their spiritual deficiency, they need a dopamine rush! The rush of dopamine in the brain produces a “high” which brings temporary relief, comfort or fulfillment.

When a person gets the feel good rush of dopamine or the high from the alcohol, cigarette, drug, etc., what has happened is they have just gotten the chemical equivalent of what should come out of a spiritual and emotional relationship! The toxic mind-sets that cause disease come from a breakdown in relationship with God, yourself and others. So healing begins with restoring your relationship with God yourself and others...or put another way: loving God, loving yourself and loving others. Somebody once asked Jesus what the greatest commandment is and His said, “Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength. Then the second greatest commandment is like it – love your neighbour as you do yourself – upon this depends all the law and the prophets”. In other words Jesus said, “What it is all about is loving God, loving yourself and loving others!” This is true even in the area of health because when you love God, yourself and others, you won't have any of the toxic mind-sets that cause disease! When you have a strong wholesome love relationship with God, yourself and others your body releases dopamine and serotonin and all the chemicals and hormones that you need to keep you healthy and make you feel good. If you stand complete and satisfied in your love relationship with God the Father where receiving His love enables you to love yourself and extend that love to others, you'll have no need to go looking for love in all the wrong places.

But when you have a breakdown in relationship with God, yourself and others, whereby you have a lack of love in these three areas, you will have a deficiency of serotonin - and so you turn to a chemical to give you the feel good dopamine rush as a substitute for the dopamine rush you should have gotten from a love relationship with God yourself and others. This is all so that you can drown out your pain and hide from the fears and insecurities deep inside. Alcohol and drugs to the basal ganglia in the brain is a painkiller for emotional turmoil – it is a false comforter to remove the pain of the void of not being loved. This applies to excessive eating, cigarettes, drugs, pornography, gambling and any other addiction as well.

4. YOU SINK INTO A LOW AS THE DOPAMINE RUSH WEARS OFF

The problem with the dopamine rush is that it is short lasting and it soon wears off. You go back into real life and you bump into your old feelings of being unloved again! The feelings never went away; they were just drowned out by the chemical rush. You then sink into a “low” where you feel the pain and the despair and in that moment you are drawn to that memory of fulfillment that you had when you put the cigarette, alcohol or drug to your mouth...and so you reach for it again. This is how the negative cycle perpetuates.

Cocaine is a unique drug in that it is not actually addictive physically – it is psychologically and spiritually addictive. When a person takes cocaine for the first time, there is a massive amount of dopamine that is released which produces the effect in the body of a massive orgasm. During sexual intimacy between a husband and wife, dopamine is released in an orgasm which gives the emotional completeness of the spiritual and psychological union of love. In the normal human relationship of marriage, not all of the dopamine is released during an orgasm because it is regulated. However cocaine releases all of it in one massive explosion.

This massive release of dopamine can never be achieved for a second time because all the body’s stores of dopamine have been depleted and the person will never have the same rush ever again. When the person takes it for the second time the rush he was expecting doesn’t happen. So he thinks it was a bad dealer who cut it and he goes from one dealer to the next and from one hit, to the next hit to the next hit and then he goes onto other drugs like crack but he is never able to experience the rush that he got the first time. That is why people who take cocaine are tormented; they are continually searching for that massive rush that they will never have again. This is because in our creation God put checks and balances on our immorality in our body chemistry. The body manufactures all the other chemicals in the brain fairly quickly, except for dopamine. When dopamine is released completely in the body by cocaine, it takes two years for the body to restore the dopamine back to the normal levels providing that it is not released again in those two years. That is why flirting with the devil, even if it is just once, is a dangerous game.

5. THE VICIOUS CYCLE REPEATS ITSELF

After the dopamine rush wears off, the person often becomes filled with guilt, self-condemnation or self-hatred because of the alcohol/food binge they have just been on. In terms of weight gain, the more the person eats, the more person puts on weight. The more they put on weight, the more it assassinates the person’s self-esteem... and what does the hypothalamus do in response to these thoughts? Lower the serotonin levels! So this takes you right back to the beginning and the cycle repeats itself as the person goes into deeper and deeper levels of bondage. The enemy surely knows how to keep us in captivity!

There are other things we can become addicted to besides alcohol, drugs, cigarettes and food –such as gambling and even work. There are people who are driven to succeed because they are loved based on performance and their identity and sense of self-worth is based in their achievements. They are workaholics and this is an addiction just like the other addictions.

People who take the credit card and spend thousands of dollars on a spending binge are exhibiting the same behaviour as those who are binging on food. They are trying to increase the serotonin deficiency artificially and not only that; dopamine is also being secreted, which is the pleasure hormone because they need a rush to fill the void. In these addictions nothing is brought to the mouth but there is still the release of dopamine and the rest of the cycle is the same as I explained for the other addictions.

6. THE BONDAGE IS RE-INFORCED THROUGH PHYSICAL CHANGES IN THE BRAIN

Alcohol affects many cellular components in the brain, including an alteration in certain chemicals called neurotransmitters and receptors in the Basal Ganglia (These chemical neurotransmitters attach to receptors to stimulate a reaction. The Basal ganglia is a part of your brain just above your spinal cord). Besides stimulating the increase in the levels of the neurotransmitter, **dopamine** (which is the **pleasure chemical** in the human body that stimulates the reward system in the brain), alcoholics also have a new neurotransmitter that is formed in their brain called **THIQ** (tetrahydro-isoquinoline). This is formed by the reaction of alcohol with various other chemicals. There are also new receptors that develop in an alcoholic’s brain. When the neurotransmitter THIQ stimulates these receptors it produces a permanent craving for alcohol. That is why associations like Alcoholics Anonymous say “Once an alcoholic, Always an alcoholic.” A person who was previously an alcoholic cannot ever have a drop of alcohol again even

if they have not had a single alcoholic drink for 10 or 30 years. Even the small amount of alcohol in throat lozenges or in certain medicines such as cough syrup, can stimulate and reactivate the TH1Q neurotransmitters and receptors, sending the person on an alcohol binge and back into the bondage of alcoholism. During my medical training I spent time in a psychiatric hospital with alcoholics and attended AA meetings with them. One “recovering alcoholic” who had been sober for 30 years told me that he still has to make the choice every single day not to have a drink. That is not real freedom.

THE CYCLE OF ADDICTIONS CAN BE BROKEN— WHOM THE SON SETS FREE IS FREE INDEED!

I do not agree with the AA’s statement which says, “Once an alcoholic, Always an alcoholic.” Even in Christian AA groups they do not believe that you can be free from alcoholism. The term that they use is “recovering alcoholic”. I use the term “recovered”. One of the first things that the Lord showed me when I began learning about the spiritual roots of diseases is that no disease is incurable. He told me to get the word “incurable” out of my vocabulary because it is totally unscriptural. Absolutely nothing is impossible with God. He created the human body and the human brain, and He can restore it back to complete and perfect health and wholeness. Psalm 103 v 3 says that **“He forgives [every one] all of our iniquities, and He heals all [every one] of our diseases.”** It doesn’t say in Isaiah 53 v 5 that **“...By the stripes [wounds] of Jesus we are healed and made whole ...except for alcoholics.”**

Once the root issues behind alcoholism are dealt with, the Lord will deliver and heal an alcoholic or any other addict completely, because when the Son sets you free, you are free indeed! Once the spiritual roots driving the alcoholism are removed, the brain will naturally re-grow itself. New research on the brain shows that it has an incredible capacity to change, re-wire grow and heal. Our brain is truly incredible - it can be reshaped and reformed. Through thinking correctly you can change the whole neuro-chemical structure of your brain including the removal of the TH1Q neurotransmitters and their receptors. There are people who have been healed and delivered by God through the ministry who need no support groups and they are not drawn to alcohol ever again. Thank goodness in Christ there is a greater grace and complete freedom.

John 8 v 36: “So if the Son liberates you [makes you free men], then you are really and unquestionably free.”

Galatians 5 v 1: “In this freedom Christ has made us free [and completely liberated us]; stand fast then and do not be hampered and held ensnared and submit again to a yoke of slavery [which you have once put off].”

HOWEVER, DON’T FLIRT WITH THE DEVIL

Although I believe that alcoholics can be completely healed and delivered, I would still advise them never to have a drink again. This also applies to cigarettes, drugs and any other addictive substance.

Matthew 12 v 43 – 45: “But when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it roams through dry [arid] places in search of rest, but it does not find any. Then it says, I will go back to my house from which I came out. And when it arrives it finds the place unoccupied, swept, put in order, and decorated. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and make their home there. And the last condition of that man becomes worse than the first.”

Jesus told the story of a man who was delivered of an evil spirit and his house (heart, mind and body) was swept clean. However, the evil spirit was given the opportunity to return, and he went and called seven other evil spirits, and the mess in that man’s life was seven times worse than before. When you gain victory in an area, you need to maintain it. Maintaining your victory and freedom from an addiction means that you need to remove the things from your life that lead you into that bondage. Don’t flirt with the devil! **Ephesians 4 v 27 says, “Leave no room or foothold for the devil [give no opportunity to him].”**

ADDICTIONS CAN BE GENETICALLY INHERITED

Running closely with neuroscience (which is the study of the brain and how it affects the body) is a new science called epigenetic, which is showing how our long term mind-sets can even affect and change our genes. This means that when we have a toxic mind-set, it not only causes a disease in our body, but it also can lead to a gene defect that can be passed on to our children resulting in them also developing that disease. Some people are born with an inherited predisposition for alcoholism. These people have a gene defect that results in the formation of a defective chemical in their brain that is “not complete”. When this defective or incomplete chemical comes into contact with alcohol, there is a chemical reaction and a new chemical is formed – TH1Q which I mentioned above. That is the reason why it only takes one drink to get alcoholism moving in these people. Have you noticed that in an alcoholic family they think that it is a funny big deal to give a five year old a beer, “Here, have a beer kid!” In one clinic near

where I was at medical school, there was a full blown 6 year old alcoholic. The mother had fed the child shots of Vodka when she was a baby to stop the baby from crying. This child was then dragged by the mother from one night club to the next and the little girl was now stealing the adults' alcoholic drinks when they were not looking. Our patterns for adulthood are set up in childhood.

Furthermore did you know that alcoholics are actually allergic to alcohol? The reason is because they have a compromised immune system because of fear. The allergic reaction to alcohol is what produces the drunkenness. Alcoholism is considered an allergy in the medical field. That is why one person can drink ten glasses of beer and be sober and yet another person will get drunk on just one drink (although as the alcoholism progresses the person acquires a tolerance to it and is able to drink more alcohol before getting drunk). The person who cannot handle the alcohol has an inherited spirit of alcoholism. This has to do with the sin of alcoholism in previous generations and now it is running through the family tree. You can have inherited alcoholism from being conceived in drunkenness, being conceived out of wedlock because of alcohol or because of inherited alcoholic patterns in childhood.

(An in depth teaching of allergies and how it is rooted in fear due to a lack of love is explained in detail on pages 335 - 344 in the 4th Edition of the book *"Healing Begins With Sanctification of the Heart"* as well as in session 3 and 4 of the DVD series *"No Disease Is Incurable"*. Genetically inherited diseases are explained in terms of how and why they develop and how to deal with them on pages 151 – 161 of the book and session 14 of the DVD series. See website www.eagleswings.co.zw for details as to where the material is available)

SEXUAL ADDICTIONS

People who have addictions also have a tendency towards promiscuity. The need to be loved and affirmed can send people into fornication and adultery. A man can have the most perfect and beautiful wife in town and still turn to pornography. Why is that? The reason is because in masturbation there is an orgasm in which dopamine – the pleasure chemical is released. This is the same chemical that is released by alcohol and drugs. The person needs a dopamine rush to compensate for their lowered serotonin levels which is a result of feeling unloved. If a man has a low self-esteem and does not feel loved, even though he has the prettiest wife, when he is walking down the street, he is continually looking for a woman who will look him in the eye and smile at him. He needs the dopamine and adrenaline rush that somebody notices and desires him. So contrary to what most people believe, the root behind pornography is not lust, it is the need to be loved! Yes lust fuels the fire. Lust gives the pictures to create the drive for the dopamine and adrenalin rush - - but a person is addicted to pornography because he has a need to be loved, a low self-esteem and the insecurities that come from that, just the same as with other addictions. Pornography is adultery if you are married and fornication if you are not. Jesus said in **Matthew 5 v 28: "But I say to you that everyone who so much as looks at a woman with evil desire for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."**

However, when you understand that it is not just a sin problem but that there is a spiritual root behind it that produces the sin, you are able to be less judgmental and you are able to help people. We tend to ostracize people in sexual addictions like this because we do not understand the root problems that lie behind the sexual sin. The same thing that is behind addictions to alcohol, cigarettes and drugs is the same thing behind sexual addictions – the need to be loved unfulfilled.

Addictions tend to run in families and so does fornication and adultery along with it. The same thing that applies to pornography also applies to incest and molestation: These people have unfulfilled needs and there are no outlets. They have a need for a dopamine fix that is driven by the need to be loved. This is the root issue behind these abominable behaviours.

ADDICTIVE RELATIONSHIPS – AN UNGODLY SOUL TIE

People who are prone to addictions because they have the need to be loved, tend to be overly dependent on others. Often in the marriage where the man is for example an alcoholic, the husband-wife relationship is more like a mother and son. So far in this chapter I've been speaking mostly about chemical addictions but there are also addictions that are not chemical. Many people get involved in relationships, not necessarily because they want to enjoy a friendship, but because they have a need. This is the kind of relationship that becomes unhealthy because it is addictive and ungodly. You can get best friends who do not necessarily have a homosexual relationship but they are very close. Suddenly one of them begins to develop a friendship with somebody else and they start spending time with this other person. Anger, envy and jealousy develop and verbal and emotional abuse ensues. These people, particularly the one with the attitude, are addicted to each other. They have an unhealthy and ungodly soul tie, which is an ungodly bonding between members of the same sex. The roots behind this are the same as other addictions.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

As well as illegal drugs such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana, ecstasy and so forth, people also get addicted to prescription drugs. The number of people who are becoming addicted to prescription drugs world-wide is increasing at an alarming rate. This includes addictions to various forms of painkillers, sleeping tablets and tranquilizers. However the number one across the counter addictive drug in the world is antihistamines which people use for allergies. Withdrawal from anti-histamines is as strong as the withdrawal from any other drug. Anti-congestant drugs which are commonly used for nasal congestion and sinusitis are another example. These anti-congestants contain paracetamol which is a strong painkiller. Thus when you take the drug it does give you relief from the pain of the congestion. However there are other ingredients in these drugs that damage the cilia which line your sinus cavities. Cilia are finger-like structures that help keep the mucous flowing and help with the drainage of mucous. When these cilia are damaged, drainage of mucous is not good and you are predisposed to more sinus infections and more sinusitis... so you take the drug again... the cilia are damaged further... more sinus infections...do you see the pattern?

Another example of highly addictive drugs is the many antacids that are available over the counter that provide relief for the symptoms of stomach ulcers and reflux. Antacids neutralize your stomach acid which then causes symptomatic relief. However, many of the antacids contain calcium. Calcium stimulates the pump (called a proton pump) in your stomach wall that produces acid. An excessive amount of stomach acid will cause or exacerbate stomach ulcers. The long term use of antacids that contain calcium cause an increased production of stomach acid... this can lead to more ulcers... so you take more antacids... which leads to increased production of stomach acid...more ulcers... and before you know it you are permanently on antacids.

Another drug that people struggle to stop taking once they start are anti-depressants such as Prozac. These drugs are serotonin enhancers – they increase the levels of serotonin (remember I explained that depression is a deficiency of serotonin due to a low self-esteem and thoughts of guilt, shame, condemnation, self-hatred etc. in a person's thought life). You become addicted to the antidepressants which artificially restore the chemical imbalance and serves as a false comforter and false source of peace. Prozac is an amphetamine which is the chemical equivalent of the illegal drug Ecstasy.

There are many other prescription drugs that people become addicted to because their body pitches a fit when they try to stop them – for example anti-depressants, sleeping pills, tranquilizers and painkillers. New Research shows that the nerves of your spine can remember pain just like your brain (where memories are built)and your spine can generate pain when there is no reason for it. This happens if you have a predisposition or addiction to pain killers -your body will kick up pain just to get the drug.

NOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE SPIRITUAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL DYNAMICS THAT LEAD YOU INTO THE TRAP OF ADDICTIONS...

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP TOWARDS FREEDOM?

People who refuse to face reality and deal with their problems and who are in denial about them are very prone to developing addictions. In fact alcoholism is called the “disease of denial” because alcoholics often refuse to acknowledge that they have a problem, often until it is too late. God wants you to take responsibility and deal with every issue in your life. The first step towards freedom is to recognize that you have a problem and have the courage to admit it. The second step is to understand how and why you fell into the trap of addictions – which has been explained in this chapter.

The third step starts with a choice. God has given each one of us a free will and the right to choose. We have the right to make a quality decision for our life. God will not interfere with that and Satan cannot interfere with that. Did you know that God cannot heal and deliver you against your will? God cannot do anything more than what you allow Him to do in your life. Breaking free from addiction starts with you making a stand – you draw the line and you say, ‘Enough!’ Are you willing to take responsibility? Are you willing to repent, which means renewing your mind and changing your thinking? In spite of your body pitching a fit, are you prepared to do what it takes to make a change and break free? Let me tell you something about addictions – if you stop that drug you are not going to die, but if you don't stop – you will die prematurely. There are no quick fixes, it takes time (about 28 days) to break bad habits and develop new ones. It is going to take effort, determination and dedication on your part. If you are ready to make that quality decision to say, “Enough is enough!” then I am rejoicing because then I can help you. Then you are ready to move on to the next chapter and continue your journey towards freedom....

Chapter 3:

Filling the Void with Perfect Love: Part 1

There have been men and women who have given up an addiction out of sheer will power and determination. They counted the cost of something they did not want to lose and decided to stop abusing and being addicted. They had had enough of their spouse's threatening and ultimatums. However, when you give up an addiction in your own strength with just your will power, you are not really delivered or set free because you still have the same spiritual problems that caused the addiction in the first place. It would be very difficult for you to break free of an addiction while still feeling unloved. In this case you would be in danger of what is called "cross addiction" which is where you lay down one addiction but pick up another, for example you give up smoking but then start drinking alcohol or eating too much.

WHAT CAN FILL THE VOID OF THE NEED TO BE LOVED UNFULFILLED?

As explained in the previous chapter, part of the mind-set behind addictions is the need to be loved unfulfilled which causes the lowering of serotonin levels in the brain. This begins the sequence of physical reactions that leads to the development of an addiction. Changing the external i.e. trying to quit an addiction without dealing with the internal need to be loved will not lead to permanent change. So how do we fill this void?

Within every person is a void which God purposefully created – which a lady called Sarah Jubilee appropriately called a "love cup". We were created with a desire in our inner most being which only our Creator can meet and that is a thirst for love. Only His love can truly satisfy and fill this void so that we will never thirst again. Jesus said in **John 7 v 37**, "**If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink**" and in **John 4 v 14** He said, "**But whosoever drinks of this water that I shall give him shall never thirst; the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.**"

In the beginning Adam and Eve were put in front of two trees – and they had to choose from which tree they would eat from to satisfy their needs. In the same way, today we have the choice of two cups to drink from to satisfy our need and thirst for love: There is the cup of the world which offers temporary comfort, enjoyment, pleasure and fulfilment in many different ways – for example money and material possessions, food, wine and other alcoholic drinks, drugs, the love and acceptance of other people, sport, achievements, entertainment (Hollywood, music) etc. However the pleasure and fulfilment of the cup of the world only lasts for a short while...and you are still left thirsty and unfulfilled, and often in more torment and bondage (such as in addictions!). None of the things the world can offer can satisfy and fill this void because your love cup was created to be filled by only the love of God the Father through His Son Jesus! His love is like a fountain that never runs dry – it is pure, it comforts, it heals, it sets free and it satisfies you. When you bring your love cup to His fountain of overflowing abundant love, you will find the fulfilment you have been searching for and will be able to truly say, "**Your love is better than wine!**" (**Song of Solomon 1 v 2**).

1 John 5 v 21: Little children, keep yourselves from idols (false gods)—[from anything and everything that would occupy the place in your heart due to God, from any sort of substitute for Him that would take first place in your life].

Have a look at your love cup. What is it filled with? Anything that you try to fill it with as a substitute for Him is an idol in your life. Would you be willing to empty your love cup of all the worldly things you have been trying to fill it with and allow Him to meet your needs and fulfil you? Jesus died on the cross to set you free and as He did this, every drop of His love was poured out so that you could be filled with His love. Are you willing to empty yourself the way He was emptied so that in your submission and obedience, He can fulfil the deepest, innermost part of your being that He created just for Him?

The AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) was an organization that was developed in the 1930s to help alcoholics. Their 12 step program was originally based on Biblical principles. In order to become a member you had to be born again and you had to accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour because they knew that this was vital to obtaining freedom from the bondage of addiction. Today they have removed that entirely and the rest of the 12 steps hardly resemble the original program because it has been changed so much.

When the AA first started they had a success rate of over 80% but today, out of the two million people attending the AA worldwide, its success rate is down to 2%. The reason is because you cannot achieve anything worthwhile if you remove God.

John 15 v 4-5: “Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing.”

Apart from God we can do nothing. I do not know how to offer you complete deliverance from addictions (or any disease or sickness) apart from God. Even though Alcoholics Anonymous has removed accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour from their program, they still acknowledge that it is impossible to overcome an addiction in your own strength, and that you need to rely on the strength of a “Higher Power.” Well let’s get specific about that “Higher Power”... there is only One God. **Mark 12 v 32 “...There is one God; and there is none other but He.”** He is the God that sent His son, Jesus to die for you on the cross. Jesus literally gave His life to provide a way for you to be restored to the Father; because of His work at the cross you have forgiveness of your sins, healing and freedom from all forms of bondage and captivity available to you.

Isaiah 53 v 5 tells of the work that Jesus did on the cross for you: **“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the chastisement [needful to obtain] peace and well being for us was upon Him and with the stripes [that wounded] Him we are healed and made whole.”**

Jesus said in **Luke 4 v 18** and **Isaiah 61 v 1-3** **“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed and qualified me to preach the Gospel of good news to the meek, the poor and the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up and to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the [physical and spiritual] captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound... To grant [consolation and joy] to those who mourn, to give them a garment of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment [expressive] of praise instead of a heavy, burdened and failing spirit.”**

You cannot be completely delivered and set free from the bondage of your addiction without an intimate love relationship with the Father beyond the realms of empty religion. You have a God given void within you that only God can fill. Alcohol, cigarettes or whatever it is that you are addicted to, is a false comforter that will never satisfy you or fill that void. You have a deep spiritually rooted need to be loved and the prayer of my heart is that you would get to know the Father heart of God and His overwhelming love for you.

If you already know Jesus as Lord and Saviour, then you can move on to the next chapter. If you have never invited Him into your heart and life, allow me the privilege of introducing you to Him and sharing more about where it all began...and the incredible price that He paid to set you free...

1. A simple story line to give a glimpse of the heart of God the Father:

A young boy once made his own little sailboat. The little boy painted the sailboat in his favourite colours and would spend hours playing with it in the shallow waters of a huge lake near their home. One day as he played the wind came up and blew the boat out of the reach of the boy and as he stood there he could only watch with tear filled eyes as the boat blew further and further away until he could see it no longer.

Saddened by the loss of his sail boat he reluctantly returned home, but day after day he would return to the water’s edge in the hope of being reunited with his boat. One Saturday morning he went to town with his dad and as he walked down the street he looked into the window of a second hand shop and there in the centre of the display stood his boat. He could not believe his eyes and he ran in and very excitedly told the shopkeeper that he was the proud owner of that boat and that he would be much obliged if the shopkeeper would take it out of the display and hand it back to him. The shopkeeper said, “Well son, I am sorry to hear your story but if you want it, you will have to buy it.”

Once again the tears welled up but the young boy managed to say, "Please don't sell it, I'll be back, I want it back". That week the young boy worked hard to raise the money by doing chores, he even emptied his money box and the next Saturday he was back at the second hand shop. He proudly handed over his money and the shopkeeper handed him the sailboat.

As the young boy walked out of the shop, clutching the sailboat he said, "Now you are doubly mine! First I made you and now I bought you!"

This simple story gives us a glimpse of the Bible's story line and the heart of God the Father. In the same way He is saying to you, "You are doubly Mine! First I made you! And then I bought you!" Allow me to explain....

2. Who are we and why were we created?

1 John 4 v 8: "Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love."

Genesis 1 v 1: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Genesis 1 v 26 – 27: "²⁶And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. ²⁷So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created Him. And God blessed them...³¹And God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good."

Psalm 139 v 14 and 17 – 18: "¹⁴I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Your works and that my soul knows very well!...¹⁷How precious are Your thoughts to me, oh God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake I am still with You!"

Zephaniah 3 v 17: "For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a Mighty Savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With His love, He will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with singing."

Love is the essence of God's character and is Who He is! And being so filled, consumed and overwhelmed with love...He desired somebody to share it with – and that is why He made man, to enjoy an intimate love relationship with Him! Just as God walked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, He desires to walk closely with us and for us to know Him intimately. So we were created by God and we belong to Him. Just as the little boy took such delight in the boat he had made, so God takes such delight in us! He looks at us as His creation and declares that we are very good – we are fearfully and wonderfully made! These Scriptures show how He rejoices over us with singing and continually thinks about us! It is very clear that God enjoyed spending time with man.

John 10 v 10: "The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life and have it in abundance (to the full, until it overflows)."

When an engineer designs a smart expensive motorcar (for example a Mercedes), He will provide an Instruction Manual of how to maintain and look after the car in order to keep it in good condition. If you take this smart car and go driving on rough roads through the mountains, it will breakdown because it is being used in a way that it was not created for. In the same way, in the process of enjoying an intimate relationship with Him, God desired that we enjoy an abundant life in His blessing. So He gave a love letter – His Word (the Bible) which is His instruction manual of how to enjoy the abundant life He desired for us. Within this Instruction Manual – He shared His principles – for example 365 times He said, "Do not fear!" because being the Great and Intelligent Creator of the human body, He knows that it was not designed to live in fear. Medical research now understands that fear has caused over 100 major incurable diseases. Like driving a Mercedes on rough roads in the mountains, living in fear causes the human body to break down and be destroyed. So God gave us instructions in the Bible, not to give us a set of rules – but to give us wisdom in His great love for us so that we would not be robbed of the abundant life He desires for us – not only in our health, but in our relationships, marriages, family and all areas of life.

3. What went wrong?

Genesis 3 answers the question, “What went wrong?” The problem is that evil has entered the human race. There is an enemy called satan – who is the thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy mentioned in John 10 v 10. Starting with Adam, satan has led all of mankind into sin which is disobedience to the instructions and principles of God’s Word. Not only is God a God of love, but He is also a Holy God and sin separates us from Him.

Isaiah 59 v 2: “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

Romans 3 v 23: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

This verse confirms that the sinful act of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden has had an effect on all of mankind by separating us all from God. In the same way that the wind separated the boy and his sailboat, sin brought separation between God and man. God did not abandon us, we drifted away from relationship with Him. We are no longer living in the realm God intended for us.

4. As with the sailboat, sin comes with a price tag.

Not only has that sin separated us from God – but it has had terrible consequences because the Bible says that the price for sin is death.

“The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

Now you may feel that the sins you have committed are not that bad and that you are a good person at heart who deserves to go to heaven. So allow me to ask you a few questions which I hope will provoke deep thought within you:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. You shall have no other gods but Me.
2. You shall not worship any other image or false idol.
3. You shall not use the Lord’s Name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods.

Have you ever told a lie? You may answer, “Yes, one or two – but who hasn’t?” Do you realize that it is not how many times that you lie that makes you a liar, but just lying once? Have you ever stolen anything, big or small? Jesus said that to look at a woman with lust is the same as committing adultery (Matthew 5 v 27 – 28). Have you ever done that? The Bible says that to hate someone is the same in God’s eyes as murder. Have you ever lusted or hated? Have you ever sworn or used God’s Name in vain? Have you ever had things in your life that are more important to you than the God who created the heavens and the earth? Have you loved God with all your heart and soul and strength all your life? Have you ever been greedy or jealous of other people’s possessions and coveted them? Have you honored your parents not on the basis of whether they are worthy or not but on the basis that they were a channel of your existence? On the Day of Judgment when God judges you by His ten commandments, do you think He will find you innocent or guilty?

If God finds you guilty, do you think He will send you to heaven or to hell? There are some that would say, “Oh God will send me to heaven because He is such a jolly good God. If God is love, why would He send anybody to hell? I now want to ask you: How many laws in your country do you have to break before the police arrest you? Only one! You have broken God’s law over and over again. Let’s imagine that in this country you have murdered two women and three children. You sold heroin and stole from a bank. You were arrested and at your trial the evidence against you became so compelling that everyone knew you were guilty – the jury, the prosecutor, the judge and even your own lawyer. Finally the judge said to you, “Will the accused stand. Do you have anything

to say before I pass sentence on you?" You then say, "Yes your Honour, I realize that today I have been exposed of my sin but I believe that you're such a jolly good judge and that you'll just let me off." The judge will say to you, "You are right in one thing: I am a good judge and it is precisely because I am a good judge that I am going to sentence you to the most severe and full extent of the law!" You see, if a paedophile rapes an eight year old girl and he's arrested and brought before a judge and the judge is secretly into pornography, and practices paedophilia himself and out of unsanctified sympathy serves a lenient sentence – the result is that the child rapist is soon out of prison, but this time he rapes your daughter and cuts her throat. You will not say that is a loving judge, you will say he is an evil judge. The God Who created the heavens and the earth is a pure, loving and Holy Judge, and He will thoroughly punish the breaking of His law with wrath and justice. Sin against an infinite God, and it will have infinite consequences.

In John 16 v 8 the Bible says of the Holy Spirit: **"When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."** As you realize the reality of all of this, the Holy Spirit comes to deeply convict you of the enormity of your own sin and rebellion towards God. My intention is to wake you up to realize the real danger of judgment and the wrath of God that lies ahead of us for violating God's law (Romans chapter 2). You need to realize that every one of your sins has been recorded by God and right now there is a terrifying sentence stored up against you. What are you going to do on the Day of Judgment when you stand before God, when His law comes in terror and when the eyes of God burn their way into your guilty soul, when the great books shall be opened and all your sin and shame shall be punished? I hope that you now have your self-righteousness annihilated as you stand speechless before a holy God.

5. What do we do now?

As a matter of fact there is nothing we can do from our side to reconcile us to our creator because God is so holy and His standards are so high. We cannot get to Heaven or earn God's approval and acceptance by being a good person. Our most righteous acts are like filthy rags in God's sight. **Isaiah 64 v 6: "For we have all become like one who is unclean [like a leper] and all our righteousness (our best deeds of rightness and justice) are like filthy rags or a polluted garment; we all fade like a leaf and our iniquities like the wind take us away [far from God's favor, hurrying us towards destruction]."**

Much like the sailboat in the shop window we were left high and dry by the consequence of sin in our lives, that is separation from God and a death sentence.

6. What did God do?

This is where God stepped to the fore and drew salvation's plan on the canvas of life with a brush dipped in an immeasurable bucket of love. Everything that was required for us to be reconciled to God was done in and through Jesus Christ God's son.

7. God exhibits His Love - Jesus paid the price!

Hebrews 9 v 22: "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Romans 5 v 8: "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Galatians 3 v 13: "Christ purchased our freedom [redeeming us] from the curse (doom) of the Law [and its condemnation] by [Himself] becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in the Scriptures], cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (is crucified)."

God has set a standard for the forgiveness of sin which is the shedding of blood. Due to our inability to pay the price for sin that would appease God, Christ had to come as sinless, spotless Lamb of God and die in our place to pay the price that God demanded so that we could be reconciled to God.

John 3 v 16: “For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal lasting life.”

God (*the greatest Giver*) gave His Son (*the greatest Gift*) to whoever believes (*the greatest amount of people*) so that they can have eternal life. God’s plan to atone for our sin and restore us back into an intimate love relationship with Him – which has always been His desire from the beginning - was through His Son Jesus. This is how, like the little boy with the boat, He can say, “Now you are doubly Mine! First I made you...and then I bought you!”

John 14 v 6: “Jesus said I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me. If you know Me [have learned to recognize Me], You will also know My Father.”

God not only loves us with a love that will never cease, but He wants to bless our lives and make it full and complete. He offers us life filled with His goodness here and now as well as eternal life in His presence.

8. Salvation is a free gift:

Ephesians 2 v 8 – 9: “For it is by free grace (God’s unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God; Not because of works [not fulfilment of the Law’s demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]”

There is nothing a man can do to make God love him more. Neither is there anything man can do that will make God love him less. You cannot work for God’s amazing grace. It is a free gift and you have to simply receive it.

John 1 v 12: “But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become Children of God”

In order to be restored back into relationship with God the Father, we must receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. When we accept what Jesus has done for us by dying in our place on the cross, we become a child of God.

You can refuse to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour of your life – for whatever excuse you choose to use. One of the most common excuses is that “Christians are hypocrites!” Yes, I agree with you. Unfortunately there are people out there who call themselves Christians but lead a double life, giving God a bad name. I deeply apologize to you on their behalf. However, when you stand before the Judgment Throne of God, it is just going to be you and God. He’s not going to be interested in what you have to say about other people, He’s just going to ask you one question and that is, “What did you do with my Son? Did you accept Him or did you reject Him?” You see, you *are* going to bow before Jesus one day and acknowledge Him as Lord. The Bible says that one day every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Romans 14 v 11 and Isaiah 45 v 23). You are going to acknowledge that He is Lord, the only choice you have is to do it now or when you stand before Him at the Judgment Throne – this determines where you will spend all eternity – in Heaven or in Hell. It’s your choice.

Jesus said in **Revelation 3 v 20** “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me.” Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart right now, but you must remember that the doorknob is on your side. He is a gentleman; He will not force His way into your life. You must welcome Him in. God is eager to bring restoration, healing and wholeness to your life, but He will wait for your invitation. Are you ready to ask Him into your heart?

9. How can I be put right with a Holy God?

Romans 10 v 9: “If you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation.”

If you are ready to invite Jesus to be Lord of your life and give Him your heart, allow me to lead you in this prayer:

“Father, You loved the world so much that You gave Your only Son to die for our sins so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. I am a sinner - with heartfelt conviction I repent for my sins and ask You to forgive me. Your Word says that I am saved by grace through faith as a gift from You. There is nothing I can do to earn salvation and I humbly acknowledge my need for a Savior. I believe and confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe He died on the cross in my place to pay the price for my sin and that He rose victoriously from the dead and that He is alive today. By faith I receive Jesus Christ now as my Lord and Savior. I now invite you Jesus to come into my heart as I submit my whole life to you. Thank You for making me Your child. I believe that I am saved and will spend eternity with You! Thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross for me, and restoring me into a right relationship with the Father. From now on I will trust in You and live to love You.”

If you prayed this prayer, know that God received you with open, outstretched arms; Jesus now lives in your heart and all of Heaven is throwing a banquet to celebrate!! (Please read Luke 15 v 10 – 32). The Bible says that when one person who was lost is restored back into a relationship with God the Father, legions (which is an uncountable number) of angels celebrate! Not only have you taken a vitally important step towards freedom from addictions, but this has changed where you will spend eternity!

10. Where to from here?

Get to know God through spending time with Him daily:

Saying the prayer we just said together is not the beginning and end of it... it is only the beginning... it is only an introduction to a life-long personal, intimate, love relationship with a very real and awesome God. The next step is to get to **know** God. This should be the foremost desire and prayer of your heart:

Exodus 33 v 13: “Father show me Your ways, that I may know You [progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with You, perceiving and recognizing and understanding You more strongly and clearly].”

The only way you get to know somebody is to **spend time with them**. As you begin your walk and life with God – it is absolutely vital that you spend time with God on a daily basis. Getting to know God by spending time with Him involves finding a quiet place where it is just you and God, where you can sit at His feet and just enjoy fellowship with Him. I often get on my motorbike and go and sit in the bush on my farm. Angus Buchan (the man who wrote Faith like Potatoes) lies in his maize lands where he talks with God (he calls his maize lands his green cathedral). Most people just spend time with God in their bedrooms. Wherever you go, it doesn't matter, as long as you can get alone with God.

Speak to God – have conversations with Him in prayer:

Spending time with God involves talking to Him – that is what praying is. God is not interested in fancy religious, repetitive prayers- He's interested in the simple prayers that come directly from your heart. If a man stands and absentmindedly reads a love poem off a piece of paper to a woman that somebody else wrote, it does not mean much to her. However, if he stands and looks her directly in the eye and speaks from his heart, it will mean the world to her, even though his words are simple and not as eloquent and fancy as the words in the poem that was written by somebody else. It is no different for God. Empty religion involves reciting repetitive prayers. A genuine relationship with God involves just simply and plainly speaking to God from your heart.

Jesus said in **Matthew 6 v 5-7**: **“⁵Also when you pray, you must not do like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets that they may be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward in full already. ⁶But when you pray, go into your [most] private room, and, closing the door, pray to your Father, Who sees in secret, will reward you in the open. ⁷And when you pray, do not heap up phrases (multiply words, repeating the same ones over and over) as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their much speaking. ⁸Do not be like them for Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him”**

As you continue in your conversations with God, over time you will learn to hear His voice speaking back to you.

Spend time daily reading His Word:

You also get to know God and learn more about His character through reading His Word – that is the Bible. The more you get to know God, the more you will come to genuinely love Him. The more you love Him, the more you will desire to live for Him and fulfil His will in your life – out of this naturally flows a life of obedience to Him.

Don't Backslide – Stay on fire for God by living a life of obedience!

John 15 v 4 – 5 & 7: **“⁴Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in Him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing. ⁷If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.”**

The worst mistake you can make at this early stage in your walk and journey with God is not to spend time with Him on a daily basis. The reason this is such a big mistake is that it won't be long before you get caught up in the worries and business of life, and you will soon backslide or fall away back into your old life or a life that is lukewarm (mediocre) for God at best. Many people pray the prayer of salvation above and name Jesus as their Lord but there was no real conviction or deep repentance in their heart - they never bother to really get to know God or develop a genuine relationship with Him. As a result there is no real change in their hearts and lives and they continue in the same sin and iniquity as before. These people will try to get into the gates of heaven but will be thrust into the jaws of hell. Jesus said, **“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your Name and drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you; Away from me you evildoers!”** (Matthew 7 v 21 – 23).

These people learnt the principles of God and did great miracles, but never really got to know God. They never had a genuine relationship with Him and as a result they remained unchanged in their hearts and continued in their evil doing. They were never really saved. This is why I am taking great pains to emphasize that getting saved is not just a quick prayer and that's it. You see, merely going through the ritual of saying the prayer we said together which is sometimes referred to as “the sinner's prayer” doesn't mean anything if it hasn't lead to a change of heart, ultimately leading to a change in lifestyle, where we progressively get rid of sin in our lives!

1 John 2 v 3 – 4: **“And this is how we may discern [daily by experience] that we are coming to know Him [to perceive, recognize, understand, and become better acquainted with Him]; if we keep (bear in mind, observe, practice) His teachings (precepts, commandments). Whoever says, I know Him [I perceive, recognize, understand and am acquainted with Him] but fails to keep and obey His commandments (teachings) is a liar, and the Truth [of the Gospel] is not in him.”**

The Bible teaches that Jesus came to save us from the power of sin and its terrible consequences.

Titus 2 v 14 says that Jesus: **“Gave Himself on our behalf that He might redeem us (purchase our freedom) from all iniquity and purify for Himself a people [to be peculiarly His own, people who are] eager and enthusiastic about [living a life that is good and filled with] beneficial deeds.”**

Acts 3 v 26: **“It was to you first that God sent His Servant and Son Jesus, when He raised Him up [provided and gave Him for us], to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness and evil ways.”**

Therefore, whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord to be saved is obligated to leave their previous life of sin and iniquity. **2 Timothy 2 v 19: “But the firm foundation of (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription): The Lord knows those who are His, and Let everyone who names [himself by] the Name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it.”**

Unfortunately modern churches of all varieties and brands have preached a “new age Jesus” who came primarily to save us from discomfort, unhappiness and negative experiences, and who panders to and serves our whims and needs. This counterfeit gospel preaches how Almighty God is supposed to serve us and provide a “life enhancement” service to mankind. As a result we begin to treat God as our own “Royal Butler” rather than Almighty, Indescribable and Awesome God! In other words, sure – I’ll serve God as long as it doesn’t cost me anything too extravagant, and just saying so (lip service) will get me to heaven! But in return I expect my life will get better and more secure. When you come before God on the final day, He is not going to check whether or not you have said the sinner’s prayer – He’s going to see whether or not you lived according to His Word. Did you do what He commanded you to do?

Jesus said in **John 14 v 15: “If you [really] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commandments.”** You can repeat the sinner’s prayer as often as you like, and renew your commitment to God over and over again but you only truly believe as much as you do! Simply talking about God and our beliefs doesn’t make us Christians any more than discussing the latest new vehicles make us a car. Nor does going to church! Only when we drive like a car and perform like a car and go like a car can we be considered a car!

Get plugged in to a good church

As well as spending time with God and getting to know Him, it is also important for you to straight away get yourself into a church. You cannot go it alone – you need fellowship, friendship and support from other men and women of God. A coal that is in a furnace burns brightly, but when it is removed from the fire and put on the grass on its own, it soon fizzles out. Likewise, if you stay out of church for too long, your fire and passion for God will soon fizzle out, and you will find yourself backsliding and falling back into the ways of the world.

Hebrews 10 v 25 “Do not forsake or neglect to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.”

Be careful what church you settle into. Unfortunately there are a lot of churches out there that preach a counterfeit, diluted, compromised and distorted gospel:

2 Corinthians 11 v 2-4: “For I am zealous for you with a godly eagerness and a divine jealousy, for I have betrothed you to one Husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But [now] I am fearful, lest that even as the serpent beguiled Eve by his cunning, so your minds may be corrupted and seduced from wholehearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For [you seem willing to endure it] if a man comes and preaches another Jesus than the One we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the [Spirit] you [once] received or a different gospel from the one you [then] received and welcomed.”

Make sure that the pure, unaltered and uncompromised Word of God is preached in the church you choose to go to.

Chapter 4:

Filling the Void with Perfect Love: Part 2

Part of the mind-set behind addictions is the need to be loved unfulfilled which causes the lowering of serotonin levels in the brain. This begins the sequence of physical reactions that leads to the development of an addiction as explained in chapter 1. Changing the external i.e. trying to quit an addiction without dealing with the internal need to be loved will not lead to permanent change. In the previous chapter we learnt how the only way to fulfil this need to be loved is through an intimate, love relationship with God the Father through His Son Jesus. However, many times even Christians are not able to receive God's love or identify with Him as their Father because of the damage done by an absent, unloving, harsh or abusive earthly father.

The lack of love from our earthly father and subsequent inability to receive God the Father's love can many times become the need to be loved unfulfilled that leads us into the trap of addictions. Therefore the impact that our earthly Father has on our lives is an important area to understand and where necessary get healing, in the journey of breaking free from the bondage of addictions.

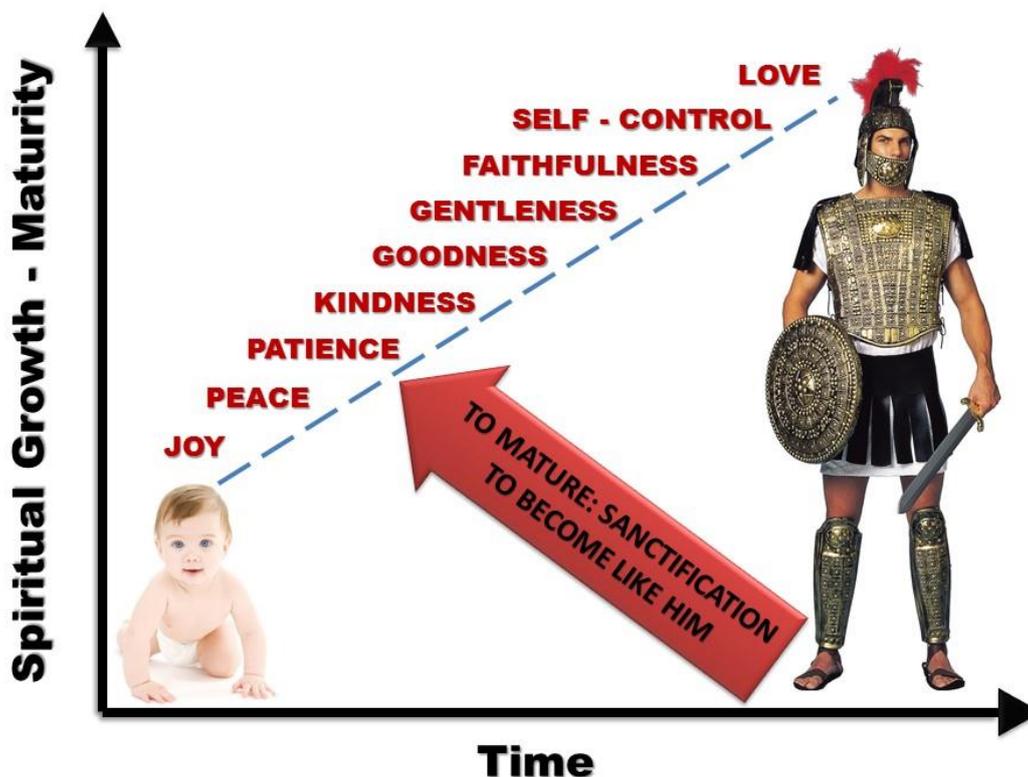
The top 3 purposes of the lives of every child of God is:

1. **Salvation:** To know Him and have an intimate love relationship with Him.
2. **Sanctification:** To become like Him – after salvation we need to go through the process of sanctification where we mature spiritually and from glory to glory are moulded into the image of Jesus.
3. **Make an impact:** God has a calling and destiny on our life where He has destined us to make an impact on the lives of others so that they may come to know Him too.

So in essence our purpose is to know Him, to become like Him and to make Him known.



When we are born as babies, we have immature behaviour: For example we are not able to feed or dress ourselves and our parents have to change our nappies etc. When we are small babies, it is ok for us to have this immature behaviour, but our parents' desire for us to grow! If they still have to feed, dress us and change our nappies when we are 40 years old then there is a problem! At salvation when we meet Jesus at the foot of the cross and accept Him as our Lord and saviour – we become born again .And we are like babies spiritually with immature behaviour for example we have fear, guilt, shame, self-hatred, unforgiveness, bitterness, etc.



After salvation, our Father's desire is that we grow spiritually and go through the process of sanctification where we become like Him. **2 Corinthians 3 v 16 – 18: "But whenever a person turns [in repentance] to the Lord, the veil is stripped off and taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty [emancipation from bondage, freedom]. And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transformed into His image from glory to glory; for this comes from the Lord Who is the Spirit."**

As you spend time with God in His Presence and in His Word, you'll find that He will begin to change you little by little – the Holy Spirit will take you on a journey of sanctification where He begins to mould you into the image of Jesus. This is where you begin to see a change in your character and life style. Instead of thinking, speaking and acting like the world, you begin to think, speak and act like God. Being moulded into the image of Jesus - means that the Holy Spirit, works out of us, our carnal, fleshly, sinful, worldly traits, and mind-sets, and works into us, the character and mind of Christ. As we become like Jesus, we start bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit which are the qualities of God's character in our character.

Galatians 5 v 22 – 23: "²²But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His Presence within accomplishes] is love, joy, peace patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control."

As we start developing the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our character, we start overcoming and walking in victory, and we become spiritually mature soldiers in His kingdom who start having an impact on other people's lives for Him. In other words we start helping others overcome fear, guilt, shame, a low self-esteem etc. and come into a close love relationship with Him.



One of the purposes of marriage is to produce Godly children. The children are the fruit of that marriage and that is proof that the husband and wife exist because the children would not be there if the husband and wife did not exist! In the same way, when we show the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, *it is the proof to the world that God exists* and that is what draws them to also want to know Him when they see the love, joy, peace and victorious life that we have – and so we start making real impact.

So our Father wants us to grow up spiritually through the process of sanctification so that we can be set free and so that we can set others free. As Jesus said to Peter: **“When you have recovered yourself, go strengthen the brethren...”** However, the enemy does not want us to have a great impact for God’s kingdom – he wants to destroy us before we have the chance to do this. Now thinking in terms of strategy, if you were the enemy – when would it be easier for you to destroy a person? When he is a helpless baby or a child or when he is a grown up, strong, mature soldier who is skilled in battle? Of course you would take him out when he is a baby! That is exactly what the enemy does and this is how he does it:

THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IS TO BRING IDENTITY AND DESTINY

As I mentioned, one of the purposes of a marriage is to raise Godly children – and the role of the father and mother in this process is different: The role of the mother is to love and to nurture, and she treats her sons and daughters the same – she hugs her children, loves them, kisses them etc. The father does not treat his sons and daughters the same because his role is to establish **identity and destiny**. So for example he will rough and tumble with his sons, take them fishing, hunting etc. and do manly things - establishing his sons’ identity as men, whilst his daughter he will put her on his lap, tell her she is his beautiful princess, and treat her like a lady - affirming her femininity. We see the father bringing identity in our cultures – for example we take on the name of our father and when a woman gets married she takes on the surname (identity) of the man. We even see this with Jesus – two of the three times that God’s audible voice is heard in the New Testament – God the Father said: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!” In other words the Father said, “This is My boy! (that is identity) and I am happy with where He is going (that’s destiny).”

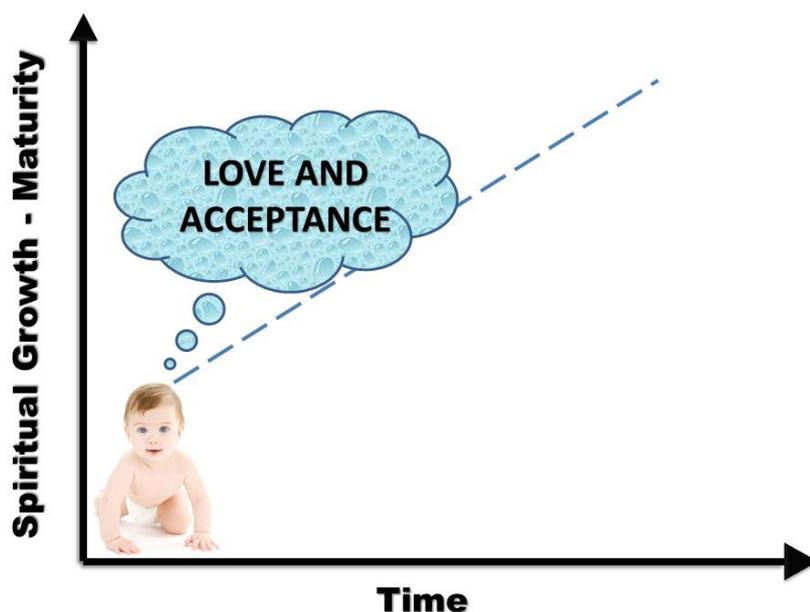
Then literally 3 verses after God the Father said this at Jesus’ baptism, Jesus is led into the desert to be tempted, and Satan says to Him: **“If you are the Son of God...turn these stones into bread.”** God the Father has just reaffirmed Jesus’ identity and three verses later, Satan came to attack His identity and try bringing doubt: “If you are the Son of God – **prove it by doing**

something – turn the stones into bread.” We have been falling for the same lie – Satan attacks our identity and says, if you are somebody of value and worth, prove it by **doing** something...and we are driven into performance as we try to achieve, to make money, get the latest car, a fancy house, a PhD degree, wear designer clothes, look like a model etc. in order that we can be somebody of significant value and worth and we fall into the deception of placing our identity in what **we do**, instead of who **we are**. Jesus resisted the devil’s attack on His identity by quoting Scripture, “Man shall not live by bread alone – but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” In other words, “I don’t have to prove anything! I am the Son of God because God’s Word says so!” In the same way, we do not have to prove our value and worth because our identity is in who we are in Christ as stated in the Word of God. Learning how to build a healthy self-esteem by firmly rooting your identity in who you are in Christ is what we will learn about in chapter 8.

In the customs of the Hebrew people of the Bible (and the Jewish people today) there were key times in a child’s life where the father would speak blessing over his children and reaffirm their identity and destiny. Let’s see how this played out in the families in the Bible compared to how it typically plays out in the world today:

PREGNANCY

When the father finds out the mother is pregnant, the father is delighted and places his hand on the mother’s belly and blesses the baby – and He says, “You are my beloved son (or daughter) in whom I am well pleased! You are a blessing! We can’t wait to meet you!” And so what does the baby feel? Even in the womb it feels love and acceptance.



In the world, the Father says, “You are what???Pregnant!!! Oh, my gosh, we are not even married! Get rid of it – we can’t let this ruin our lives!” And often the father is never to be seen again! He says “I want nothing to do with the baby!”So what does the baby feel in the womb? Rejection – fear, abandonment, guilt, shame.



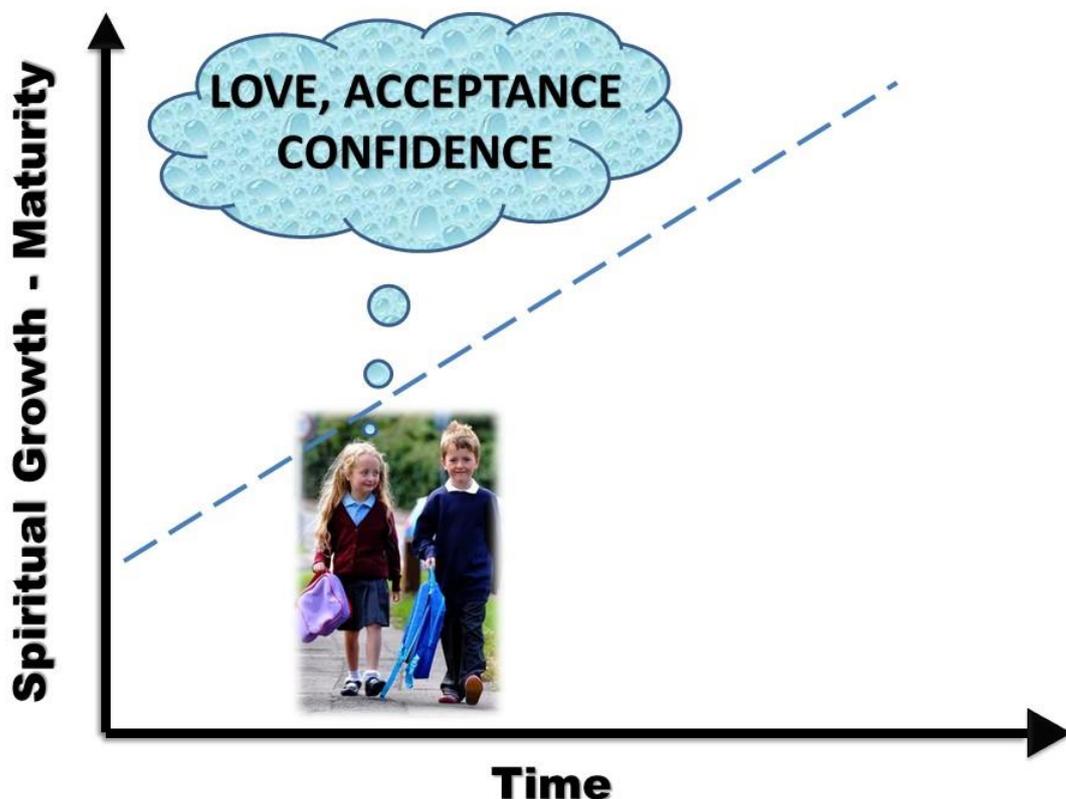
AT BIRTH

In the Jewish custom: The father is there to hold the baby as it comes out and he says, “You are my beloved son or you are my beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased!” He then speaks a blessing over his child. So once again, the baby feels loved and accepted – and begins its life in blessing.

One of the biggest mistakes we have made in medicine is to take the father out of the delivery room, as we have been robbed of the tremendous impact of a father being there when the baby is born to speak blessing over it. Furthermore, what often happens in the world is the father may for example say, “It’s a girl? Ahhh I wanted a boy!” The baby feels rejection and fear, guilt, shame *again*.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

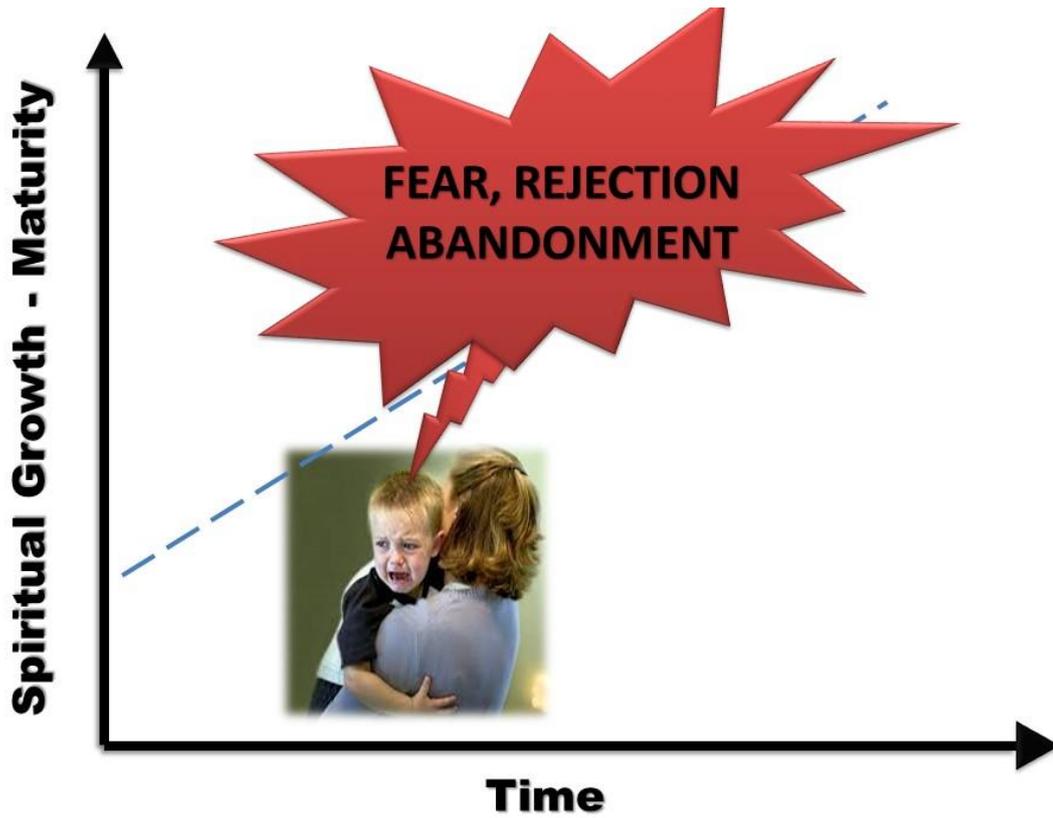
The next key time in a child’s life is the first day of school. In the Bible: the father puts his son or daughter on his knee and says, “Today is your first day at school. I want you to know that I am so proud of you and I love you! Even though we are taking you to school, we will be there to pick you up because this is your home and you belong with us!” The child feels loved and accepted, and goes to school with confidence and excels in everything he/she does.



I was blessed to have a loving mother and father and a stable childhood. I had a Greek grandfather who believed that there are two “rings” that you must put on your children’s fingers that nobody can ever take off – and that is the ring of education and the ring of confidence. They used to purposefully speak words of life into me on a regular basis, telling me how clever I am, that everything I do will prosper and be a success etc. And so on my first day of school, I walked off with confidence whilst my mother was crying!

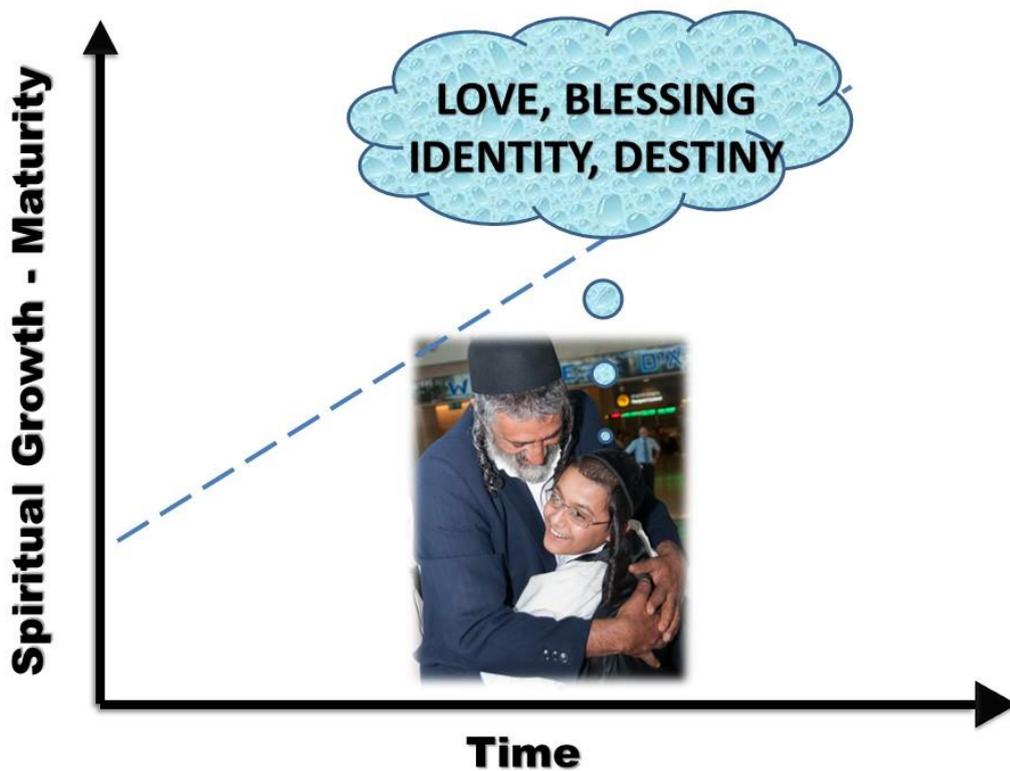
In the world the first day at school is a night mare! The kids scream and cry, hold onto their parent’s legs and literally drag along the ground in fear of letting them go because they already have so much fear and rejection, they think their parents are going to leave them behind. This has been the cause of many cases of asthma which is caused by the fear of abandonment. There are many children who were dropped at boarding school and when their parents drove off they never thought they

would see them again. And so we have had to help them get delivered from the fear of abandonment that came in at that time, and they were healed during ministry on that level.

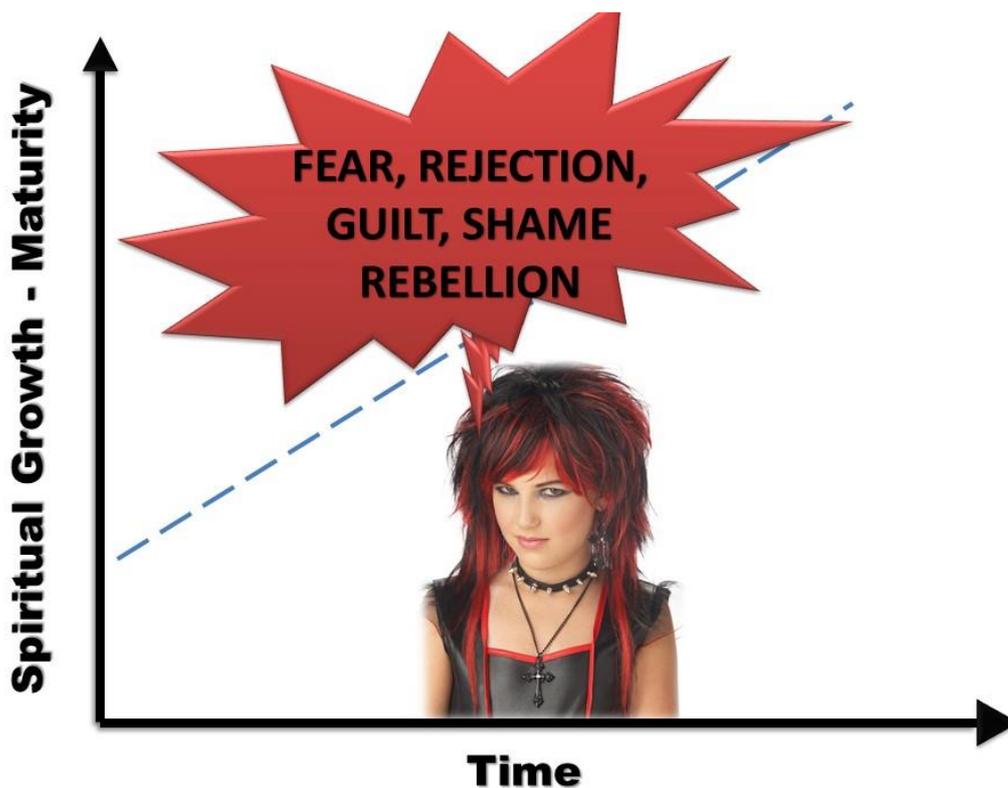


COMING OF AGE

The next key time for a child is coming of age at 13 years: in the Hebrew and Jewish culture, the father throws a celebration party and puts his son or daughter on his shoulders and again reaffirms blessing, identity and destiny.



In the world, the father is often not even there or has played a very little role in the child's life. So by the time they are teenagers, they have a lack of identity and destiny. They have a low self-esteem and are struggling with peer pressure as they try to find out who they are and they have no direction...only fear, rejection, guilt and shame – which has lead the child into rebellion and a search for love in all the wrong places.



And so instead of growing up in the spiritual maturity of love and the characteristics of God where in adulthood we are becoming mighty warriors that make an impact in His kingdom, we go into a deepening spiral of bondage of fear, guilt and shame.



1 John 4 v 18: "There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of the doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection]."

OUR IMAGE OF GOD THE FATHER IS AFFECTED BY OUR IMAGE OF OUR EARTHLY FATHER

Apart from bringing identity and destiny, another important role of the Father is to reflect the Father heart of God to his children. In other words God designed it such that as children we gain an understanding of the concept of how to have a relationship with God the Father, through the experience of a relationship with our earthly Father. A very true saying is: "A son cannot find a father is God, until He first finds God in his Father." So because of this, our image of God the Father is affected by our image of our earthly father. Therefore, if our earthly father was harsh and abusive, we will subconsciously develop a distorted image of God the Father, where we think He is a harsh and abusive and we will think that God is an angry, judgemental condemning God who is waiting for any opportunity to punish us and strike us with a lightning bolt as soon as we mess up. If we had to achieve in order to measure up and receive love and acceptance from our earthly father, we will also end up trying to earn the love and acceptance of God the Father through works and performance. For example: getting involved, in all sorts of activities in churches or charities, etc. to earn, "brownie points", with God. A true story: There was one man who was the son of a millionaire. As a teenager he was very irresponsible – he would go out drinking, and every time he smashed the latest BMW car that his father brought him, his father would just buy him another one. Then when he grew up he got saved, but his image of God the Father was the same i.e. it was affected by the experience and the image he had of his earthly father – he thought he could just be irresponsible and expected God to bail him out.

So for many people - because in their hurt God has that same "horrible name father", they think that He is like the other one... and so now God the Father is guilty by association. When Jesus taught us to pray, He began with: "Our Father..." and we get a block right there because we want nothing to do with "father"! "Father – ugh what father!!" And so people struggle to identify with God as Father - they can pray to and have a relationship with Jesus and with the Holy Spirit, and maybe even pray to "God"... but they cannot pray "Father". **They cannot identify with God as Father and therefore they are not able to receive His love.**

CHECK MATE IN ONE STRATEGIC MOVE

Not being able to receive God's love creates **a major problem**: latest medical research is tracing back 87 – 95% of diseases to various toxic mind-sets upstream in our thought life. The toxic mind-sets that lead to disease can be traced back to a breakdown in relationship on one of three levels:

- A breakdown in relationship with God
- A breakdown in relationship with ourselves
- A breakdown in relationship with others

The foundation of the kingdom of God is relationship. And so the foundation of satan's attack is to destroy our relationship with God, ourselves and others. So healing begins with restoring your relationship with God yourself and others...or put another way: loving God, loving yourself and loving others. Somebody once asked Jesus what the greatest commandment is and His said, "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength. Then the second greatest commandment is like it – love your neighbour as you do yourself – upon this depends all the law and the prophets". In other words Jesus said, "What it is all about is loving God, loving yourself and loving others!" This is true even in the area of health. The key to healing in one word is "love" because when you love God, yourself and others, you won't have any of the toxic mind-sets that cause disease! However you cannot love others if you don't love yourself: just as you cannot pour water into a glass from an empty jug, you cannot give out love to others if you don't have it in you. The problem with many marriages today is two people who don't know how to love themselves, are trying to love each other. You will have a very hard time getting along with anybody else if you don't get along with yourself – you may put on a happy, friendly, polite mask but that is a fabricated personality because you are hiding. And you won't be able to love yourself, without first receiving the love of the Father!

So when you end up with a breakdown in relationship with God where you can't receive His love because of the damage done by your earthly father –you will end up with a breakdown in relationship with yourself because now you can't love yourself, and then you will have a breakdown in relationship with others because you find it so hard to give and receive love without fear. And now that you have a breakdown in relationship with God, yourself and others the stage is set for all the toxic mind-sets that cause disease. So just like in a game of chess, **in one single strategic move** the devil got "check mate" – **just by attacking your relationship with your father.**

So now the top 3 purposes for your life cannot be fulfilled:

1. It is very difficult to know Him and have an intimate love relationship with Him – because you cannot receive His love or identify with Him as Father.
2. Instead of becoming like Him and being moulded into the image of Jesus through the process of sanctification where you mature spiritually –you are developing toxic mind-sets causing you to break down spiritually as you go deeper into the bondage of fear, guilt, shame etc.
3. And instead of making an impact on the lives of others so that they may come to know Him too – being in spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical bondage yourself, you cannot have much of an impact on the lives of others and you get sick before you can fulfil God’s calling and destiny on your life.

So this area of a breakdown in relationship with God the Father because of the breakdown in relationship with our earthly father is a critical area to address in disease and as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is many times the basis for the low self-esteem and need to be loved unfulfilled in addictions.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

There are so many people who are serving God who are not even sure that He loves them. It is head knowledge, but they can’t truly believe it as a revelation in their hearts. Often these are the people that had an earthly father who was harsh, abusive or unloving in some way. And they struggle to identify with God as Father because of the pain and rejection from their earthly father. Then when I start talking about God as Abba Father or Daddy or Pappa, if they have not been healed, there is something inside them that gets as irritated as it can be because they have never experienced that and it irritates them because they want it. Pastors and doctors who teach these principles hold conferences all over the world where they ask the audience this question, “How many of you growing up as children do not remember your earthly father saying to you these words, “I love you”? Would you raise your hands?” What has almost always been found over the past 30 years is that over 90% of people raise their hands because they never heard their earthly father say, “I love you.” I have also gotten the same result in every conference I have been to. In one audience, there were 26 different nations present and 95% of them raised their hands because they had never heard their earthly father say those words. This is in every church in the world. You can walk into any church and statistically over 90% will raise their hands. One Zimbabwean girl said to the pastor during ministry time, “In all my entire life, even as a Christian, you are the first human being to look me in the eye and say those words, “I Love you”. I’ve never heard those words in my entire life.” If you have a breakdown in your relationship with God because of the failure of your earthly father to represent Him, you may think that you are the only one. I want you to know that you are not alone in the void and the pain that runs so deep. You are not alone in the fear and rejection that has been there from your childhood. This is in epidemic proportions in our society.

In his book called “Bringing up Boys” James Dobson told the true story of a greeting card company who went into a prison. On mother’s day they decided to bring the men in prison cards to send out to their mothers. There was such a response from the men that they had to go back to the factory and get more cards just to keep up with the demand. Due to the success of this effort, on father’s day, they came back to the prison with cards for the inmates to send to their fathers. Not even one man came to get a father’s day card. Many of them had no idea who their fathers were. This is a tragedy.

As mentioned earlier, the voice of God the Father is only recorded three times in the New Testament and that is at the baptism of Jesus with John (Matthew 3 v 17), at the time when Jesus was praying to the Father about being re-glorified after the resurrection and the Father’s voice is heard, “I have glorified it and I will glorify it again” and at the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17 v 5). Two of three times where God the Father’s voice is heard audibly, here is what is recorded about Jesus: **“This is My Son, My Beloved, with Whom I am [and have always been delighted].”** Other translations say, **“This is my Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.”** Ladies, forget about the fact that you didn’t hear your father say “I love you”, if you had just heard your father say these words to you, “You are my beloved daughter in whom I am well pleased,” your heart would be singing forever. If the men had heard their father say to them, “You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased,” their hearts would be singing forever.

This one issue of an unloving earthly father accounts for well over 70 different incurable diseases. Type 1 diabetes, multiple sclerosis, leukaemia and Non-Hodgkins lymphoma are four examples. When there is verbal, emotional, physical or sexual abuse attached to it or performance, perfectionism, legalism, control and force involved, the diseases that manifest are even worse. This is what is behind most cases of a severe allergy disorder called multiple chemical sensitivity and environmental illness and certain

pain disorders such as fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome. Statistically from the secular medical community, 75% of people with irritable bowel syndrome are females who were physically or sexually abused by their fathers.

THE MANDATE OF A FATHER AND HUSBAND TO LOVE

The Bible says that pure and unblemished religion in the sight of God the Father is to take care of the widows and orphans and to keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the world (James 1 v 27). While we are talking about separation from God as the basis of many diseases, let's define who is fatherless and who is a widow. We always think of this as the father or husband having died. However, that is not everything that there is to the fatherless and a widow. You can have the father at home and he may as well be dead for all that he brings into the spiritual well being of that family. In that family, those children are fatherless. A woman can be married to a man and be a spiritual widow for all that he brings into that relationship. He doesn't represent the Lord as a husband. He is a roommate at best, if that. I haven't mentioned the verbal abuse and control that comes and then he commands her to submit sexually because he has an urge. There are many sicknesses that are over 80% female. The women are not doing too well and the problem is the husband and fathers on this planet are not representing God the Father to their families as they should.

The Bible says that the man was not created for the woman but the woman was created for the man. That is a horrible scripture in today's society because the men have not taken care of the women like God intended them to. When the Bible says that the woman was created for the man, it is not in the chauvinistic sense of legalism, control, damage and victimization. It means that the woman was created for the man as a helpmate. It doesn't mean that the men are greater than their wives or the wives are greater than the men. It means there is an order of government. The purpose of that government has been misunderstood. That government is protection, safety and love. That government is where the wife feels like she is the queen because the Bible says that the man who finds a wife, finds a good thing (Proverbs 18 v 22). The men have not treated the females like the treasure and prize that they really are.

There are many marriage books that have been written. However God gave two simple nuggets of wisdom. He told the wives to respect their husbands, because that is what a man needs most. And then He told the husbands to love their wives because that is what He created a woman to receive. Women were created by God to be nurtured, loved, covered, cared for, protected and made to feel safe so that she can be a helpmate and mother without fear. When the Bible says that the woman is the weaker vessel, it is not a derogatory statement that says that she is inferior. It simply means that there is something stronger than her to protect her namely a loving male and the men haven't always done a good job of that. Part of the problem in the home is that the man doesn't love himself. The Bible says that a man who loves his wife loves himself (Ephesians 5 v 28). That means that if the man is not loving his wife, *he doesn't love himself – he has self hatred.*

You see, many of the men weren't loved by their fathers either and so their identity and destiny was not reaffirmed. They didn't have fathers that were proper role models to show them what a man of God looks like. For most of you the dinner table on Sundays was guillotine night. You came to the table with "Sit down; shut up, it's time for judgment." No wonder you have gastrointestinal problems such as stomach ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome because you couldn't even sit down and have dinner in peace. The men learned to be hard from their earthly fathers. However, God can take the hardness of your heart and give you a soft one if you ask Him to and if you allow Him to (Ezekiel 36 v 26).

It is the men who hold the keys to this planet. When the men finally decide to represent God the father to their children and represent the Lord Jesus as husband to their wives, revival is about to begin. Until the men decide to be a mirror image of heaven, as a father and a husband, we are stuck in every generation with over 70 incurable diseases. Some of the husbands and fathers need to get onto their knees before their wives and children and repent for their ways – for having opened the door for the enemy to oppress their wives and children and for their hardness of heart. If you would just do that, you would get rid of many of the diseases in your family and you would be spending less of your hard earned money on doctors. When a father, repents to his children and when a husband, repents to his wife... the destiny of mankind is about to be changed.

If you are a man and you are reading this book, I'd like to take a moment to impart something to your life if you will allow me to. As a doctor, I'd like to give you a picture of how you can change and undo the damage and devastation of your generations. Before your wife is ever your wife, she is a daughter of God the Father. Therefore she is entitled to the honour that any daughter of God the Father deserves. If you don't treat her right, do you really want her Father on your case? You don't. Before she is ever your wife, she is the betrothed wife of Christ and she is entitled to all the respect that the betrothed wife of Christ deserves. If you

don't treat her right, do you want her Husband to be on your case? Before she is ever your wife, she should be your best friend and therefore you shouldn't need a night out with the boys. I know I am stepping into uncomfortable territory here but encourage you to think this way because the Father and the Son can see you and hear you.

1 Peter 3 v 7 commands husbands to **love** their wives – when a man treats his wife badly, his prayers are cut off from God and nothing really works out well for him in life.

1 Peter 3 v 7: “In the same way you married men should live considerably with [your wives], with an intelligent recognition [of the marriage relation], honouring the woman as [physically] the weaker, but [realizing that you] are joint heirs of the grace (God’s unmerited favour) of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off [Otherwise you cannot pray effectively.]

Right here we see a block to healing. If you are not treating your wife with love, don't waste your time praying for healing – because your prayers are cut off from God. This is “tough stuff” but it is vitally important.

You men are wives too you know – you are wives to Jesus. You can learn how to be a better wife to Jesus by being a better husband to your wives. Your homes need to be an oasis of peace and a safe haven for your wife and children. Your home should be your first church. Women were designed to follow a loving spiritual leader who demonstrates the Father heart of God to his family.

THE TRUE IMAGE AND CHARACTER OF GOD THE FATHER

This area of separation from God the Father, because of the failure of an earthly father to represent Him is big in disease. We have got to deal with it and move on and be vulnerable again without fear. We need to get our warped image of God the Father sorted out and get to know His character for Who He is as described in His Word.

Man-made religion paints the image of a condemning God who is a mean old man sitting on the edge of His throne waiting to teach us a lesson as soon as we step out of line. However, that is not the image and character of God that the Bible portrays. God is a loving God. He is full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness. His mercy is new every morning and His mercy endures forever. His faithfulness reaches to the skies! God is not sitting on the edge of His Throne waiting for an opportunity to punish you - *He is earnestly waiting for an opportunity to bless you and to be gracious to you.*

This is a word for those of you who are struggling with a breach in relationship between you and God the Father: **Isaiah 30 v 18: “And therefore the Lord [earnestly] waits [expecting, looking and longing] to be gracious to you; and therefore He lifts Himself up, that He may have mercy on you and show loving kindness to you. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) are all those who [earnestly] wait for Him, who expect and look and long for Him [for His victory, His favour, His love, His peace, His joy, and His matchless, unbroken companionship!]”**

What a wonderful Scripture! If you will take a moment to think about it, it will bring you tremendous hope. This scripture reveals a lot to you about the character of your God. For those of you who have difficulty in identifying with the Father, I hope that this will increase your faith and enable you to approach Him as your Daddy. God is literally sitting on the edge of His seat, looking for an opportunity to bless you, to be gracious to you, to show you mercy and loving kindness.

Psalm 36 v 5: “Your mercy and loving kindness O Lord, extend to the skies, and Your faithfulness to the clouds.”

Psalm 103 v 8 – 9: “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and loving-kindness. He will not always chide or be contending, neither will He keep His anger forever or hold a grudge”

Psalm 136 v 1: “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His mercy and loving kindness endures forever!” The rest of this Psalm goes on to say that “God’s mercy endures forever” 26 times. If God tells you that His mercy endures forever 26 times, are you going to finally get the message?

1 John 4 v 16 says that “God is love” and that is the very essence of His character! If you want to know more about God’s character, go and study Jesus in the Bible because Jesus said “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father” (John 12 v 45). Jesus said I’ve come to show you the Father. When Jesus died on the cross the veil was torn in two and now you can fearlessly and confidently and boldly approach the Father’s Throne!

Hebrews 4 v 16: “Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to His throne of grace (the throne of God’s unmerited favour to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].”

This is an important teaching for some of you because you have been avoiding the Father like the plague. And if you do ever speak to Him in prayer, you approach Him as though He is about to strike you with a lightning bolt. I want to reintroduce you to your Father. I want you to stop avoiding Him. I want you to come boldly before His Throne. Do you know what *boldly* is? You crash on in because He’s your Daddy and you want to talk to Him! Barge in! You are a son or daughter of God by faith and you can boldly approach His throne in time of need! He’s your Father – go bug Him! Talk to Him! All prayer is, is conversation with your heavenly Father. You don’t have to make it so super-spiritual...it’s time to just be real and just be you with your Daddy. When you approach your Pappa when you pray, you can say, “Hello Father, I know You – You are love, You are full of compassion, abounding in mercy and loving kindness. Your mercy is new every morning and Your mercy endures forever. You sent Your Son to die for My sins. I love you Daddy – You’re my Pappa...I want to ask You something...” And away you go!

Romans 8 v 15 - 16; “For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more into the bondage of fear, You have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing son-ship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit [assuring us] that we are children of God.”

LET HEALING BEGIN

The next important area to deal with in over-coming addictions is to deal with the low self-esteem, guilt, shame and self-hatred behind it. Developing a healthy self-image starts with knowing who we are in Christ and learning to see ourselves as God sees us. Therefore, it is necessary to get our image of God straightened out because how can you develop a good self-image if your image of God is that He is harsh, mean and condemning? Until this issue of the father is dealt with, it just sits there and simmers and keeps us breached from God the Father, it keeps us breached from ourselves and from others because we find it so difficult to give and receive love.

If, you are separated, from God, and unable, to identify with Him as your Father, because of a harsh and abusive earthly father, you need ministry – personally and individually in way which you cannot get just from reading a book. Therefore please contact us (contact details on website: www.eagleswings.co.zw) so that we can arrange for you to be ministered to and be set free in this area. At conferences where I teach this material, I deal with it in a way that I have learnt from Henry Wright. I get the pastors and elders in church (who are elderly men or father figures) to minister to each of the women and men at the conference individually who needed healing in this area. These men stand in the place of their earthly fathers and say to them these words:

“On behalf of your Father who did not, could not, would not or maybe did not know how to tell you that he loved you, will you forgive me? I am so sorry for the damage and the injury that would have broken your heart. I am so sorry for not being there for you when you needed a father so much – and for leaving you feeling rejected, stranded and afraid inside. So in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I release you from this fear, this confusion and this pain. This day you are going to hear these words from your Heavenly Father to heal your heart: I love you and I am so glad that you were born. You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. I approve of you and am so proud of you. Receive my love for the healing of your broken heart. Let that pain go in Jesus’ Name!”

After that the men hugged the person if he/she was comfortable with that and God did the rest as the fountains of the deep broke forth and the tears flowed as healing began. During ministry on this level, it is very moving and overwhelming to see how these people cry and sob in the grief and hurt because of the loss of the love of a father.

Ultimately healing in this area and breaking free from the bondage of addictions has to begin with learning to receive God the Father’s love. The Father’s love is the foundation to healing and freedom from your addiction. No man or woman can fill or satisfy that need inside of you to be loved. **Receive the Father’s love.** Your ability to defeat addictions comes from the love of God. You are His son. You are His daughter. You are loved! The Almighty, Indescribable God says that He loves you!

John 16 v 27: “For the Father Himself [tenderly] loves you because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from the Father.”

Stop buying into the lie that God does not love you, because He does! **1 John 4 v 15 – 19:** ¹⁵**Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God.** ¹⁶**And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him.** ¹⁷**Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.** ¹⁸**There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of the doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection].** ¹⁹**We love Him, because He first loved us.**"

The prayer of my heart for you is that your need to be loved would be filled through the revelation and experience of God the Father's love for you. I encourage you to take the time right now to pray this prayer below from **Ephesians 3 v 14 – 20:** ***"Father, I ask You to grant me out of the rich treasury of Your glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in my inner man by the Holy Spirit [Himself indwelling in my innermost being and personality]. May Christ through my faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in my heart! May I be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, that I may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love], what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; [That I may really come] to know [practically through experience for myself] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that I may be filled [through all my being] with all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]! Father, You by Your power that is at work within me are able to [carry out Your purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that I [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond my highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes or dreams]."***

Chapter 5:

Forgiveness: Preparing the Way for Victory

After drawing into a close relationship with God the Father and learning to receive His love in order to fill the void and satisfy the deep thirst within you for love, the next important step towards breaking the bondage of addictions is forgiveness. This is not only an essential step spiritually, but medical science has proven that it is vital for healing on a physical level.

In chapter 2, I explained how addictions develop. The sequence of physical reactions that leads a person into the trap of addictions begins with a toxic long term memory in the brain which was built from a toxic mind-set of the need to be loved unfulfilled and a low self-esteem. The good news is that the sequence of physical reactions can be broken through dealing with the mind-sets that cause addictions. When the need to be loved is filled with the love of God the Father and you build a healthy self-esteem (which will be explained in chapter 8), you will build new healthy long term memories in your brain which will replace the toxic memories. When the toxic memories are removed, there is nothing to stimulate the lowering of serotonin in the brain and the series of physical reactions that follow leading to an addiction. At the same time, those healthy memories are stimulated by an electromagnetic wave which is generated by the hypothalamus in the brain to produce serotonin. This corrects the serotonin deficiency and thus the cravings and cycle of addictions will be broken. However what they have proven in science is that you cannot build new healthy memories in your brain over a toxic memory of unforgiveness and bitterness. This blocks healing because the sequence of physical reactions that lead to the raising of serotonin and the breaking of the cycle of addictions has to begin with the building of a healthy memory in the brain (of love and a good self-esteem). That is why, even on a purely medical level, dealing with unforgiveness and bitterness is essential. In fact there are over 100 scientific studies that have proven the healing power of forgiveness! So in this chapter, let's deal with this vitally important area:

(An in depth teaching of how the brain works, how thoughts form and how they can become toxic leading to the building of toxic memories, as well as how toxic memories can be replaced by healthy memories in the brain is included on pages 7 - 23 in the 4th Edition of the book *"Healing Begins With Sanctification of the Heart"* as well as in session 2 of the DVD series *"No Disease Is Incurable"* – see website www.eagleswings.co.zw for details as to where the material is available from)

But we don't always have to be serious. Let's begin with two funny stories related to this subject because it's good to laugh! Disease flourishes in an atmosphere of sadness but the Bible says in Proverbs 17 v 22, "A happy heart is good medicine and a cheerful mind works healing." This scripture has an unbelievable amount of medical truth in it as many scientific studies show why laughter deserves to be known as the best medicine. Laughter causes the release of feel good hormones in your body such as endorphins, encephalon's, and dopamine which are all very healthy for you – they are natural de-stressing hormones, they are the body's natural pain killer and they have incredible healing properties. Laughter also causes the release of serotonin which as you know is important for the healing addictions! Laughing literally is good medicine that works healing and cures diseases because it rejuvenates the neuro-chemicals in your brain and it boosts your immune system. Laughter improves thinking skills and the flexibility of thought. So that means that you can increase your intelligence with a good old laugh! Want to become clever? Laugh! So let's have a good laugh:

Story 1: A man who was bitten by a dog went to the doctor because he started experiencing strange symptoms. After examining him, the doctor said to the man, "I'm sorry, it's too late – you already have rabies." The man nonchalantly replied, "I thought as much." He then pulled out a pen and paper and began furiously writing something. Curious, the doctor said to him, "Don't tell me you are writing out your will now? You should have done that long ago!" The man explained, "No I'm not writing out my will, I'm writing a list of the people that I want to bite before I die!"

Story 2: A lady went to a pharmacist and asked him for cyanide. He said, "What do you want that for?" She replied, "To murder my husband." Of course the pharmacist refused to give her any cyanide, so at that point she pulled out of her pocket a photograph of her husband having an affair with the pharmacist's wife! Then the pharmacist said, "Oh that's different, I didn't know you had a prescription!"

The people in both of these stories had bitterness and unforgiveness! As you read through this chapter, begin to think about whom it is that has hurt you, harmed you, abused you, humiliated you, falsely accused you, lied about you or made you feel unworthy. What happened in the past that still creates feelings of pain, anger, rage, resentment and bitterness when you remember it?

HEBREWS 12 V 15: “Exercise foresight and be on the watch to look [after one another], to see that no one falls back from and fails to secure God’s grace (His unmerited favour and spiritual blessings), in order that no root of resentment (rancor, bitterness, or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment, and the many become contaminated and defiled by it.”

Bitterness, like battery acid, corrodes and eats away at your soul. It poisons first your mind and then your body with disease. However just as a mind-set of a low self-esteem and self-hatred begins in the spiritual realm from the accusing spirit which gives you those thoughts in the first person and you follow that way of thinking as if it were you, so the toxic mind-set of bitterness comes from a *spirit of bitterness*. However, bitterness is a principality and under it and answering to it are seven spirits that reinforce bitterness:

1. UNFORGIVENESS

This is how bitterness first gets a foot hold. You begin to keep a record of wrongs and you carry un-forgiveness in your heart. You say to yourself, “I am not prepared to forgive you and I am going to remember what you did to me.” You think on all the wrong things that have been done to you and every time that person’s face comes to your mind, that high octane ping goes off inside of you. This un-forgiveness invites the next six spirits to become a part of your life:

2. RESENTMENT

Resentment develops as you continue to meditate on that record of wrongs and fume and steam internally over it. A toxic long term memory is beginning to grow in your brain and secrete chemicals that putting your body into a toxic state of dis-ease. Those chemicals are carrying negative emotion and that is why you have that bad feeling in your gut every time that person comes to your mind. Resentment keeps the un-forgiveness in place.

3. RETALIATION

After the resentment has been simmering for a while, the steam builds up and you start thinking of ways to get even with that person. They must pay for what they did.

4. ANGER

Un-forgiveness, resentment and retaliation has been building up and now you are very, very angry. The pressure cooker is really going and adding fuel to the fire. This anger is both seen and felt.

5. HATRED

Now that you are angry, hatred gets a foothold. You are saying, “I remember what you did to me. I have really been meditating on it and I really resent it. I’m going to get even with you and make you pay.” At this stage hatred begins to say, “You do not deserve to exist. There is no room on this earth for you and me to both be at the same place at the same time.” Hatred starts to go into the elimination mode:

6. VIOLENCE

Hatred fuels violence. Violence says, “Before I eliminate you, you are going to feel my pain.” Violence is anger and hatred in action. It can take the form of verbal, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

7. MURDER

Once violence erupts, the final fruit of bitterness is murder. This can be literal physical murder, premeditated murder which is murder of the heart or murder with the tongue which is gossip, slander or character trashing. When hatred, violence and murder are in a person’s life, they feel they are justified and that person is going to pay the price. Unfortunately the person does not

realize that by this stage the devil has managed to get in and alter his body chemistry, causing diseases that are resulting in death of his own body.

If any one of these seven areas that answer to bitterness are present, the preceding ones are usually also there, and if they are not dealt with, all the rest will surely come. For example, if the person has hatred in his heart, un-forgiveness, resentment, retaliation and anger will also be there. You will not be able to remove bitterness from your life until you deal with un-forgiveness, resentment, retaliation, anger, hatred, violence and murder behind it.

WHY IT BITTERNESS SIN?

Romans 12 v 19 – 21; “¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave the way open for [God’s] wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay (requite), says the Lord. ²⁰But if your enemy is hungry feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. ²¹Do not let yourself be overcome by evil, but overcome (master) evil with good.”

Isaiah 54 v 17: “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that rises up against you in judgment you shall show to be in the wrong. This [peace, righteousness, security and triumph over opposition] is the heritage of the servants of the Lord [those in whom the ideal Servant of the Lord is reproduced]; this is the righteousness or the vindication which they obtain from Me [this is that which I impart to them as their justification], says the Lord.”

Zechariah 2 v 8 says that he who touches you touches the apple of God’s eye. When somebody wrongs you, those two scriptures above are God’s promise to you so long as you keep your heart right with Him. When you choose to forgive and overcome evil with good, you open the way for God’s wrath and you allow Him to repay the evil that was done to you and to be your Vindicator. However when you put yourself in God’s shoes and become your own vindicator and the judge of others, you are in disobedience to Scripture and you will reap the consequences of that:

Matthew 7 v 1 – 3:“¹Do not judge and criticize and condemn others, so that you may not be judged and criticized and condemned yourselves. ²For just as you judge and criticize and condemn others, you will be judged and criticized and condemned, and in accordance with the measure you [use to] deal out to others; it will be dealt out against you. ³Why do you stare from without at the very small particle that is in your brother’s eye but do not become aware of and consider the beam of timber that is in your own eye?”

THERE IS JUST NO WAY AROUND FORGIVENESS

Mark 11 v 25-26: “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop (leave it, let it go), in order that your Father who is in heaven may also forgive you your [own] failings and shortcomings and let them drop. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your failings and shortcomings.”

Without mastering this issue of forgiveness, I am wasting my time trying to help you overcome addictions. Forgiveness is a big missing link in healing. I will tell you emphatically that forgiveness is a prerequisite to all healing. There’s just no way around it. The promise of healing and divine health is yours as a child of God (Isaiah 53 v 5). However, with every promise God has a condition. You can’t claim His promises without being prepared to meet His conditions. In my book *“Healing Begins with Sanctification of the Heart”* I explain in detail why the condition for healing is repentance.

(An in depth teaching of why repentance is the condition for healing is explained on pages 24 - 44 in the 4th Edition of the book *“Healing Begins with Sanctification of the Heart”* as well as in session 5 of the DVD series *“No Disease Is Incurable”*– see website www.eagleswings.co.zw for details as to where the material is available)

Repentance involves asking God to forgive you for the sin (toxic mind-set) that caused your disease. Even with addictions, in your journey of healing, you will need to come to the place of asking God to forgive you for the low self-esteem, guilt, shame and condemnation behind it. When you repent to God for serving the sin that caused addictions, do you think He will forgive you and heal you? The answer is – it depends. You see, God’s forgiveness for you **is conditional**. The Bible tells you very clearly that you

cannot ask God to forgive you, if you are not prepared to forgive **all** those who have hurt you and wronged you. Un-forgiveness is a major block to healing and it is one of the reasons why our churches are filled with disease.

GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR YOU IS CONDITIONAL TO YOU FORGIVING OTHERS

Jesus said in **Matthew 6 v 14-15**: “**For if you forgive people their trespasses [their wreck less and wilful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses [their wreck less and wilful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.**”

Imagine the condition your life would be in if God refused to forgive you? You would be cut off from a relationship with Him and everything in your life would be a miserable mess of poverty and disease – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, financially and physically. We like to think that we can stay angry with other people and yet go to God and receive forgiveness for our sins. But the Lord tells us in Matthew 6 v 14 – 15 that this is not so. *God's forgiveness for you is in direct relationship to how you forgive your brother.*

Jesus taught us how to pray in **Mathew 6 v 12**: “**Father forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven (left remitted and let go of the debts and have given up resentment against) our debtors.**” God is a God of mercy (Psalm 57 v 10; Psalm 86 v 15) and this issue of forgiveness is very important to Him. As a believer you will not get anything from Heaven that you are not prepared to give away to others. So if you want to have forgiveness, you are going to have to give it away also. God tells us repeatedly in His Word that if we want mercy, we have to give mercy.

Mathew 5 v 7: “**Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous – with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favour and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!**”

Mathew 18 v 21 – 22: “**Then Peter came up to Him and said, Lord, how many times may my brother sin against me and I forgive him and let it go? [As many as] up to, seven times? Jesus answered him. I tell you, not up to seven times, but seventy times seven!**”

I don't know about you but I am personally very glad that God does not put a limit on how many times He forgives me. How many times have you done the same wrong thing at least seventy times seven, and God still forgave you for it? We are often willing to keep receiving and receiving forgiveness from God, but it is amazing how little we want to extend forgiveness to others. We freely accept mercy, yet it is surprising how rigid, legalistic and merciless we can be toward others, especially if they have wronged or hurt us in some way. Yet the Bible says that the debt we owe God is much greater than any debt anyone may owe us.

Matthew 18 v 23 – 35: “²³Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a human king who wished to settle accounts with his attendants. ²⁴When he began the accounting, one was brought to him who owed him 10 000 talents (probably about \$10 000 000), ²⁵And because he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and everything that he possessed, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the attendant fell on his knees, begging him, Have patience with me and I will pay you everything. ²⁷And his master's heart was moved with compassion, and he released him and forgave him [cancelling] the debt. ²⁸But the same attendant, as he went out, found one of his fellow attendants who owed him a hundred denarii [about \$20 dollars]; and he caught him by the throat and said, Pay what you owe! ²⁹So his fellow attendant fell down and begged him earnestly, Give me time, and I will pay you all! ³⁰But he was unwilling, and he went out and had him put in prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow attendants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and told everything that had taken place to their master. ³²Then his master, called him and said, to him, “You contemptible, and wicked attendant! I forgave you and cancelled all that [great] debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³And should you not have had pity and mercy on your fellow attendant, as I had pity and mercy on you?” ³⁴And in wrath his master turned him over to the torturers (the jailers), till he should pay all that he owed. ³⁵So also My heavenly Father will deal with every one of you if you do not freely forgive your brother from your heart his offenses.”

It is sometimes very difficult to forgive someone, especially when they have abused, repeatedly or deeply hurt or offended us. If there is someone you are having a hard time forgiving, remember God's mercy, grace and forgiveness towards you. As you have received forgiveness, you are called to extend forgiveness. Un-forgiveness is a luxury of the flesh. It makes your flesh feel good at the time, but it will literally destroy you spiritually and physically. It is a luxury you cannot afford to have. If you want to hold onto

your offense, resentment and un-forgiveness – you must also be prepared to hold on to and live with your illness. Many people can't understand why their prayers for healing aren't answered...yet they have un-forgiveness in their heart. There are people who go up for prayer every Sunday after church, month after month, year after year and still can't get free of their bondage. They have fasted and prayed but the harder they try the more bondage they find themselves. Their prayers seem to be hitting a brick wall and the skies of heaven seem to be closed to their prayers.

YOUR HEALING HINGES ON YOUR FORGIVENESS

Many people have already made up their minds and have completely justified their feelings of un-forgiveness or resentment. They say things like, "I have every right to..." or "It was his fault, he is so in the wrong..." Was Jesus wronged? He was the only one who never sinned and never did any wrong to anyone. He was completely right! Yet He still said, "Father, forgive them" as He died on the cross. In Acts 7 v 50 – 60 we read about how Steven was stoned to death for witnessing about God:

Acts 7 v 55, 59 and 60: "55But he, full of the Holy Spirit and controlled by Him, gazed into heaven and saw the glory (the splendour and majesty) of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand;...59And while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, Lord Jesus, receive and accept and welcome my spirit! 60And falling on his knees, he cried out loudly, Lord, fix not this sin upon them [lay it not to their charge]! And when he said this, he fell asleep in death]."

Wow! Did they do Stephen wrong? Certainly they did! He was the only one in the crowd who was right, yet as they stoned him to death, Stephen cried out to God, "Forgive them!" Wow! What I pray the Holy Spirit will reveal to you is that it makes no difference who was right or wrong, that is totally irrelevant. What is important is that you are the forgiver. It is important that you get your own heart right with God. You don't have to prove that you are right, you have to prove that you are willing to forgive. Your flesh wants to hold onto that un-forgiveness because it wants justice... but the Bible says that it is God who vindicates us (Isaiah 54 v 17).

You don't have to carry someone else's sin inside you. That's their sin. God will be their judge. Your job is to release and forgive them. Your freedom, spiritually and physically does not depend on their resolution – it depends on your resolution between you and God.

To be able to receive complete healing of your illness, you are going to have to make peace in your heart with every person that you have ever known and have it resolved before God concerning them. You don't forgive people who have hurt you because you feel like it. You need to forgive them as an act of your will in obedience to God and His Word. Forgiveness is not a ritual performance: You don't need to do it from an intellectual standpoint or because it's a law – but do it from your heart: *Forgiveness is an attitude of your heart towards others in love.*

FORGIVENESS IS NOT A FEELING, IT IS A DECISION – AN ACT OF YOUR WILL

When you forgive others, you are not letting them off the hook, but you are giving them to God, still wriggling **on** the hook. **You** are now off the hook. When you forgive someone, you have got to **separate the person from their sin**, just as God separated you from your sin in His heart when He saved you. To forgive you don't have to condone their sin. You continue to hate the sin, **but you are commanded to love the person.**

It doesn't just stop at forgiveness, Jesus calls us much higher than that: **Luke 6 v 27 – 38: "27But I say to you who are listening now to Me: [in order to heed, make it a practice to] love your enemies, treat well (do good to, act nobly toward) those who detest you and pursue you with hatred, 28Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favour) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high handedly misuse you]. 29To the one who strikes you on the jaw or cheek, offer the other jaw or cheek also; and from him who takes away your outer garment, do not withhold your undergarment as well. 30Give away to everyone who begs of you [who is in want of necessities], and of him who takes away from you your goods, do not demand or require them back again, 31And as you would like and desire that men would do to you, do exactly so to them. 32If you [merely] love those who love you, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? For even the [very] sinners love their lovers (those who love them). 33And if you are kind and good and do favours to and benefit those who are kind and good and do favours to and benefit you, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? For even the pre-eminently simple do the same. 34And if you lend money at interest to those whom you would hope to receive, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? Even notorious sinners lend money at interest to sinners, so as to recover as**

much again. ³⁵But love your enemies and be kind and do good [doing favours so that someone derives benefit from them] and lend, expecting and hoping for nothing in return but considering nothing as lost and despairing of no one; and then your recompense (your reward) will be great (rich, strong, intense and abundant), and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind and charitable and good to the ungrateful and the selfish and the wicked. ³⁶So be merciful (sympathetic, tender, responsive, and compassionate) even as your Father is [all these]. ³⁷Judge not [neither pronouncing judgment nor subjecting to censure], and you will not be judged; do not condemn and pronounce guilty, and you will not be condemned and pronounced guilty; acquit and forgive and release (give up resentment, let it drop), and you will be acquitted and forgiven and released. ³⁸Give and [gifts] will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will they pour into [the pouch formed by] the bosom [of your robe and used as a bag]. For with the measure you deal out [with the measure you use when you confer benefits on others], it will be measured back to you.”

Something is missing when you say that you forgive those who have hurt and offended you and go no further. Joyce Meyer once asked the Lord, “Father, why is it that people come to our church services and pray for the ability to forgive, and yet in just a short time they are right back again still having the same problems with bitterness, anger, and hypersensitivity?” The Lord showed her that these types of people are not doing what He instructs in His Word. You see, God tells us in His Word to **forgive** others – but He does not stop there. He goes on to instruct you to **love** and **bless** them. In this context, the word “bless” means to “speak well of”. So one of our problems is though we pray and try to forgive those who offend us, we turn right around and curse them with our tongue or we rehash the offense again and again with others. Sorry, but this will not work! It is not enough to merely say that you forgive others; you must be careful not to curse them or speak evil of them even if you think they deserve it.

To work through the process of forgiveness and enjoy the peace and wholeness in health that you seek, you must do what God tells you to do, which is not only to forgive, but to go beyond that: Jesus challenged you to pray for them, bless them, speak well of them and love them. Why? Because by doing so, you bless not only them, but yourself too! Jesus said in Luke 6 v 35 that your reward for your obedience in this area will be great, rich, strong, intense and abundant, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over...this includes your physical health.

Hating those who hurt you is like drinking poison yourself, but hoping that your enemy will die. Obviously anyone who did that would only be destroying himself. Why spend your life angry at people who probably do not even know or care that you are angry? These people are going on enjoying their lives while you are thoroughly miserable. You don't have to allow somebody else's sin to ruin your life. Release them, forgive them, let the offense go, let it drop. Have the same attitude that Jesus had toward His enemies. By doing this, you will experience wonderful freedom, peace, good health and God will show Himself strong as your Vindicator.

When you have bitterness and un-forgiveness you have a toxic long term memory in your brain. This toxic memory secretes toxic chemicals that can cause other sickness such as cancer in your body. Remember I also explained at the beginning of this chapter that science has shown that you cannot build a new healthy memory over a toxic memory of bitterness and un-forgiveness. That is why you cannot recover from a disease, regardless of what disease it is, if you have bitterness. That is why un-forgiveness is a major block to healing. However when you choose to release that bitterness by truly forgiving the person from your heart, you grow a new healthy memory of forgiveness in your brain. This memory produces healthy chemicals that flow through those old toxic memories of bitterness and literally physically removes the part of the memory that releases toxic chemicals. The memory will still be there so you will still remember what the person did to you but it won't affect you. You're no longer carrying the burden of hurt, hate and bitterness in your life. That high-octane ping will be gone and it will not cause sickness in your body.

TAKE THIS NEXT IMPORTANT STEP TO FREEDOM

If through reading this book, the Holy Spirit reveals to you why you fell into the trap of addictions and what caused it, and in the next chapter you are in a place where you are ready to take responsibility and repent, I really want God to forgive you!

However it is conditional because you don't receive forgiveness from God if you don't give forgiveness to your brother. Therefore before you go to God to repent of the sin behind your disease, you need to do an exercise where you forgive **everybody** who has hurt or wronged you whether they are living or dead.

So take a moment now to be quiet and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you who it is that you need to forgive. He knows your heart better than you do, so listen and be sensitive to His promptings, as He brings the names of people to your mind. Who is it that

when you think of them, that high octane ping goes off inside you, your stomach turns and the hairs on your back stand up? Release them and let them go. All the verbal abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, legalism, control, rejection and betrayal that you have suffered... let it all go.

I encourage you to pray a prayer that goes something like this: *“Father, in the name of Jesus, I pray that Your Holy Spirit would minister into my life right now. Look into the depths of my heart and reveal to me where there is hardness, un-forgiveness, bitterness and resentment or anything against anybody. Please bring their names to my heart right now by the power of Your Holy Spirit. I repent to You Father for sometimes repaying evil with evil and feeling justified by it. I thought I was protecting myself when in fact I was behaving no different than the person that did evil to me. Father I repent for participating with the sin of bitterness and un-forgiveness. As an act of my will in obedience to you, I choose to forgive (name the person and what they did). I am trusting you to make my forgiveness heartfelt – to forgive completely just like You do, without looking back. Please take the hardness of my heart and soften it with Your love. Help me to understand what Jesus said on the cross, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” I pray that Your forgiveness would flow through me. Thank You for the work that You are doing in my heart right now. And now I take up my authority in Christ and I break the power the strongman of bitterness in my life! I also break the power of the spirits of un-forgiveness, resentment, retaliation, anger, hatred, violence, murder and cast them out of my life. And I command the principality of bitterness out of my life in Jesus’ Name!”*

You may need to forgive the church. In fact, 99% of the people in the church have been injured, damaged or hurt by some people in spiritual leadership since they were born again...forgive them and let it go. If you are discouraged with the Christian church, I'd like to say that God is not the Christian church. Those pastors and leaders who have hurt you are just men. Sometimes some Pastors don't understand what being a pastor is all about because they have their own personal agendas, they are full of selfish ambition, they want kingdoms and empires, they want to rule and you became expendable to their system. Well so what, that's their sin. God will confront them at the judgement seat of Christ, you just let it go. Don't be discouraged by humans or stumble over somebody else's failure. Get your eyes off people and those pastors who are weak and who have failed you. Get back up and get on with God! If you have deep hurt in this area, please write to us (contact details on website: www.eagleswings.co.zw) so that loving pastors we work with can minister to you and allow the Holy Spirit to set you free. Sometimes ministry on this level needs to be done personally.

GO AND RESTORE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Once you have spent time with God, in forgiveness towards those who have wronged you, if possible, go and restore your relationship with them. You may need to apologise and ask for their forgiveness in some areas as well. **Romans 12 v 18: “If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”** But if it is not possible to restore a relationship because the person is not willing to forgive or even talk to you, the person has died or you don't know where the person is, never mind – what is important is that you get your own heart right with God.

If you have something from your past and it is not possible for you to make right with the other person, you just need to make it right with God and it is dealt with because God judges it by the integrity of your heart. You don't have to carry the guilt any longer. If somebody is holding a sin against you it is their problem, not yours. They have to get right with God just as you do. Whether they do or don't doesn't have anything to do with you because you stand alone before God in the integrity of your heart. You don't have to have it resolved with that person in order to be free.

Note: You do not have to resolve a single issue with somebody that has victimized or abused you in order for God to heal you, so long as you have resolved that issue between you and God concerning them. You don't have to wait for resolution between that person and you before you get healed – that is just binding you to the tragedy and victimization.

FORGIVE YOURSELF

The next area where forgiveness may be needed is that you may need to forgive yourself. Bitterness is not always about others. We can get into condemnation, guilt and shame about ourselves – especially surrounding the fall-out effects that we have on ourselves, others, our job etc. as a result of an addiction. We often speak of forgiving others, but do you have un-forgiveness and resentment towards yourself? Are you holding yourself guilty about an issue from the past?

Remember I explained in chapter 2 that those feelings of guilt, self-hatred and un-forgiveness that you have towards yourself aren't even your thoughts and feelings. It is an accusing spirit (Relations 12 v 10) of self-hatred and self-rejection that accuses you to yourself with thoughts in the first person - you believed its lies and you've made it part of your thinking as if it was you. Remember your battle is not with flesh and blood (Ephesians 6 v 12) and therefore your battle is not with yourself. You have to forgive yourself – you don't have an option because there are other diseases that come from self-hatred and guilt lead to death and it is just not worth it to believe the devil's lies. There is no breaking free from addictions without taking this step. So I want you to say defeat this lying accusing spirit by saying this out loud, "I am not guilty!" Some people are so deep into guilt and self-hatred that the accusing spirit attached to them will not allow them to say it because the minute they get it out and say, "I am not guilty" that lying spirit is defeated. Even if you feel that resistance, you have a free will – say it! I encourage you to say this to yourself, *"I'm not guilty. I became one with sin as if it were me and have been blaming myself and have been bitter against myself all these years. I've felt guilty, unworthy and ashamed for everything as a result of this addiction. I have felt inferior and have compared myself to others. I repent Father for bitterness and un-forgiveness towards myself and this day I choose to forgive myself. I command the accusing spirit of self-hatred, self-rejection and guilt to be gone out of my life in the Name of Jesus."* It is as simple as that. You may need to have a renewing of the mind to apprehend that over the next month or more..

FORGIVE GOD

Are you angry with God? The amount of people who have un-forgiveness towards God the Father is incredible. Many people are harbouring resentment and bitterness toward God because they blame Him for a disappointment or tragic situation or for something that did not work out the way they expected. The devil wants you to blame God because He wants to create a rift and a separation in your relationship with Him. This will steal your joy, love and passion for Him, and it opens the door to the devil in your life. If you have anger, un-forgiveness and bitterness in your heart against God, give it up and let it go. He is not guilty, He is a good Father. God is your friend, not your enemy. Please do not turn away from the only One Who can help you and give you life, real peace and joy.

If you are angry or have been upset with God, I encourage you to pray this pray with me so that you can be released from the harsh results of un-forgiveness and bitterness that you may have mis-directed toward Him: *"God, I have held anger against You. I know that You have done nothing wrong, and I am in need of Your forgiveness. But I believe that my saying, "I forgive You" will help me to let go of un-forgiveness that I have misdirected towards You. I forgive You. My problems are not Your fault. You are my answer. I repent for my bitterness towards You and thank you for setting me free."*

FORGIVE FROM THE HEART

To make any further progress in breaking free from the bondage of addictions, you have got to come to the place where you forgive God, yourself and others. However, it is important to understand that these prayers given here are just a guide to help you. If you are just doing this to go through the motions because you want your healing for selfish reasons and you are using this as a system or mechanism, you are wasting your time. God is not interested in rote words – He's looking into your heart and that is where your repentance and forgiveness must come from.

Ephesians 6 v 6: "Not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." KJV

Matthew 18 v 35: "So also My heavenly Father will deal with every one of you if you do not freely forgive your brother from your heart his offences."

Chapter 6:

Repentance and Spiritual Freedom

The next important step in your journey to freedom is to recognize that the mind-sets that lead to addictions and as well as the addiction itself is sin. This is not to bring you under condemnation so that you feel even more, guilty, as that would lower the serotonin levels even further and lead you deeper into the addiction! It is important to recognize this sin so that you can take responsibility, repent and be set free!

WHY THE MIND-SETS BEHIND ADDICTIONS IS SIN

As explained in chapter 2, the toxic mind-sets that set in motion the series of physical reactions leading to an addiction is the need to be loved unfulfilled and a low self-esteem (which can include guilt, shame, condemnation, self-disapproval, self-rejection, self-bitterness and self-hatred).

In **Matthew 22 v 36 – 40** somebody asked Jesus what the greatest command was: ³⁶**Teacher, which kind of commandment is great and important (the principle kind) in the Law?...³⁷ And He replied to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect). ³⁸ This is the great (most important principle) and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as [you do] yourself. These two commandments sum up and upon them depend all the Law and the Prophets."**

The second most important commandment is to love others...**and yourself!** I don't mean that we must be puffed up with pride but we need to love ourselves in a balanced way where we have a healthy self-esteem that is firmly rooted in the knowledge of who we are in Christ.

You are extremely precious! You are of such great value and worth that the Son of God who is the King of Kings paid the price for you with His life! If you were the only one on earth, Jesus would have still died just for you. I know this because the Bible says that there is more value in the one sheep over the cliff than the 99 safe in the fold (See Matthew 18 v 11 – 13). The Bible says that nobody is expendable. Everybody has value.

John 3 v 16: "For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal lasting life."

God loves you, He said it and He proved it when He sent His only Son to die for you. Therefore when you disagree by not accepting yourself, and you hate yourself, you have called the God who created you and loved you from the foundation of the world a liar. You have declared that He made a mistake in saving you. If you have a poor self-image and you do not love yourself, you are in direct opposition to God and you open yourself up to the devil to agree with you. When you have a low self-esteem, you have a major crack in your foundation that the devil will use against you!"

The devil wants to rule your life. If you allow him, he will continue to fill your mind with unloving thoughts that will lead to a chemical imbalance in your brain which is the which is the lowering of your serotonin levels so that you start taking steps to enter into various arenas of counterfeit fulfillment. As long as you have these toxic thinking patterns where you feel unloved and you do not love yourself, the enemy knows that there is no way that you can increase your serotonin levels unless you take a drug. As long as you take the drug, you feel better about yourself, but you still have that unloving way of thinking as part of your nature. So even though you are on the drug, you still do not feel satisfied, just more tormented in the bondage of the addiction. The enemy alters your body chemistry through your thoughts when you buy into the lies that say God does not love you, you do not love yourself and others do not love you. Then he gives you chemicals to alter that chemical imbalance back into an artificial chemical peace. Firstly, chemically altered states in your brain violate creation because it is not of God. If God wanted you chemically altered, He would have created you in a different chemical state. If He wanted you smoked, He would have made you that way! Secondly the artificial short term peace that the chemical provides is a cheap substitute for the love of God, the peace

that Jesus gives and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. As explained in chapter 2 and 3, the deep void and thirst for love within each one of us can only be filled and satisfied with the love of God the Father. Anything else that you try to fill it with as a substitute for Him is an idol which will lead you into bondage.

1 John 5 v 21: Little children, keep yourselves from idols (false gods)—[from anything and everything that would occupy the place in your heart due to God, from any sort of substitute for Him that would take first place in your life].

WHY THE ADDICTION ITSELF IS SIN

Galatians 5 v 19 – 21: “Now the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious): they are immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you before hand, just as I did previously, that those who *do* such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The above scripture talks about the works of the flesh which are sin. The word *sorcery* in the above scripture is translated as *witchcraft* in other Bibles. The word *sorcery* or *witchcraft* that was used here is not the Hebrew word for witchcraft. That word ‘witchcraft’ is only used once in the New Testament and it is the Greek word *pharmakeia*, (Strong’s number 5331) which means medication (pharmacy, sorcery) and is taken from the Greek word *pharmakeus*, which means drug, a druggist (pharmacist or poisoner, that is, sorcerer). The word *witchcraft* in this scripture is referring to the use of legal or prescription drugs. The word *drunkenness* in this scripture represents illegal drugs (cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, alcohol abuse etc). The Greek word “do” in the above scripture means “they that habitually practice as a way of life” as opposed to “a single act”.

To put all of the above information in a sentence ***“The chronic or long term use of prescription drugs is sorcery or witchcraft and they that habitually practice this as a way of life will not inherit the kingdom of God.”***

Firstly it is important to understand what “not inheriting the kingdom of God means”. Many people misinterpret this as to mean they will lose their salvation. According to Strong’s Concordance the Greek word for “kingdom” in this verse is “*basileia*” (G932), which means royal power, kingship, dominion, and rule. It refers to the right or authority to rule over a kingdom and should not be confused with an actual kingdom i.e. it is not referring to Heaven. When Jesus died on the cross, He gained authority and victory over the devil and his kingdom. Then He gave that authority (*basileia*) to us and He gave us the victory to overcome sin. In Luke 10 v 19, Jesus said that He gave us power and authority over the enemy - He gave us victory over principalities and powers of darkness (the kingdom of Ephesians 6 v 12).

Luke 10 v 19: “Behold! I have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you.”

COLOSSIANS 2 v 15: “God disarmed principalities and powers that were raged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in the cross.”

COLOSSIANS 1 v 13: “The Father has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

So bottom line: Jesus has given us His authority so that we can be set free from the control and dominion of the devil and his kingdom. ...so that we are now able to conquer Satan and His kingdom.... so that we can be set free from the bondage of sin. However, when you choose to continue living in sin, your authority is compromised (although it does not mean you are no longer a child of God i.e. that you lose your salvation). A true story to demonstrate the principle: A pastor and his wife drank wine on a regular basis – but only behind closed doors so as not to offend anybody. One Sunday during their worship service a lady had a demonic manifestation. They took this lady to the back of the church and attempted deliverance – they commanded the demonic spirit to come out of her – but a male voice spoke out of this lady and said: “You think nobody sees you when the two of you are drinking in secret, but we see you and we don’t have to listen to you!” As born again Christians we have been given authority (*Basileia*) to command evil spirits to leave (Luke 10 v 17 – 20, Mark 16 v 17 – 18). However this pastor and his wife lost their authority over the devil in this woman because of their secret sin – this is an example of an area in their life where they had not inherited the kingdom of God! ***They did not lose their salvation – they lost their authority.*** They were not able to walk in the victory and authority over the devil that Jesus gave us.

When we choose to continue in unrepentant sin, instead of experiencing the abundant life that Jesus gave us, we open the door to the devil to come in and steal, kill and destroy (John 10 v 10).

GALATIANS 5 v 1: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

We need to exercise our full authority that Jesus gave us (over toxic sinful mind-sets and the evil spirits where those mind-sets come from) for healing and to enjoy good health and the abundant life of John 10 v 10 that He died on the cross to give us. If we sin (and continue in that sin as a way of life without repentance), we lose that authority and give that authority to the devil who now has the legal right to bring disease and bondage....and when we continue in that sickness without repentance we are taken into deeper bondage with having to be on life-long medication with the side-effects and chemical dependency (addictions) that they bring.

Galatians 5 v 19 – 21 paraphrased: “The chronic or long term use of prescription drugs is sorcery or witchcraft and they that habitually practice this as a way of life will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Now we understand what it means to “not inherit the kingdom of God”. The next important point to emphasize is that it is not wrong to take prescription drugs. Sometimes it is very necessary in an emergency to get you into a place of safety or to save your life. It is ok to take medication *in the short term* but the problem comes in when it is taken on a chronic basis as a way of life without the underlying problem being dealt with. God does not want you artificially maintained and manipulated by prescription drugs for the rest of your life. This is just another form of bondage. He wants to heal you and set you free completely.

JOHN 8 v 36: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”

God has designed your body so that when you love God, when you love yourself and when you love others, your body releases the proper hormones and chemicals that make you healthy *and* make you feel good. God has given you the chemical fix that you need from enjoying an intimate love relationship with Him as well as Godly relationships with others. That is why long term use of prescription drugs which is sorcery and drunkenness from illegal drugs are works of the flesh which is sin. They are substitutes for your relationship with God and the peace that comes from that relationship. The Bible says not to be drunk with wine but filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5 v 18: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but ever be filled and stimulated with the [Holy] Spirit.”

Proverbs 20 v 1: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a riotous brawler; and whoever errs or reels because of it is not wise.”

This scripture is saying that when alcohol is taken in a quantity that alters your consciousness, the drunkenness will produce a chemical imbalance in your body that is going to impair your ability to differentiate right from wrong – all so that you can drown out your pain.

OUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we smoke or abuse our body with alcohol, drugs, sexual promiscuity or any other form of addiction, we are in fact abusing the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6 v 19-20: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honour God with your body.”

Romans 12 v 1 – 2: “I appeal to you therefore, brethren, *and* beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your body [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service *and* spiritual worship.² Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire]

renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, *even* the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]."

Jesus not only wants to be our Saviour, He also wants to be our Lord. When we are enslaved to an addiction, that substance is our lord and master. Jesus wants to be Lord over our spirit, soul **and body**. Instead of abusing our body with the things of the world, we need to set it apart (that is what to be holy means) – holy, devoted and consecrated to Him as a form of worship. When Jesus is our Lord and Master we are set free. When another substance becomes our lord and master, the devil leads us into slavery and bondage.

John 8 v 36: "So if the Son liberates you [makes you free men], then you are really and unquestionably free."

Galatians 5 v 1: "In this freedom Christ has made us free [and completely liberated us]; stand fast then and do not be hampered and held ensnared and submit again to a yoke of slavery [which you have once put off]."

2 Timothy 2 v 21: "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."

TAKE THE NEXT STEP TO FREEDOM AND REPENT

If you have felt the gentle and loving conviction of the Holy Spirit and are in a place where you are ready to repent, I encourage you to pray this prayer with me:

*"Father I come to you in the Name of Jesus. I recognize that I have served the sin of self-hatred, self-rejection, self-disapproval and/or a low self-esteem in my life. I've allowed the accusing spirit to train me in my thinking to have this toxic sinful mind-set and as I fell into agreement with it, I became one with sin as if it were me. Father I confess my participation with this sin, I repent to You and I ask You to forgive me. I also repent for abusing my body, which is Your Temple and trying to use, (mention the substance you are addicted to) to fill the void of the need to be loved. Today I repent for this idol in my life and lay it down before You. I declare that You are my Lord and Master, and as my spiritual worship to You - with the help of Your Holy Spirit, I dedicate my body to You – that it would be holy, devoted, consecrated and set apart for You, so that I can be a vessel of honour ready for Your use. If these same sins were in the generations before me (i.e. if they also had addictions) I repent for self-hatred and addictions in the generations before me in order to break the power of this sin in my life generationally as well**. As I have forgiven every single person I know who has hurt, wronged or injured me, I thank You for forgiving me of my sin and for the blood of Jesus that has washed me of all my guilt and shame and cleansed me from all unrighteousness. Father in the Name of Jesus I ask You to break the curse of this iniquity so that the power of this sin of self-hatred and addictions is broken in my life and in the generations after me. Father I open my heart right now to receive Your perfect love and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ as a work of the Holy Spirit. Amen."*

1 John 1 v 9: "If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought and action]."

**** Addictions can be inherited. An in depth teaching on genetically inherited diseases and how to deal with them is explained in detail on pages 151 – 161 in the 4th Edition of the book "Healing Begins With Sanctification of the Heart" as well as in session 14 of the DVD series. See website www.eagleswings.co.zw for details as to where the material is available. However the prayer above is a guideline to help you break the curse generationally as well.**

THE PATHWAY TO WHOLENESS:

I explained in chapter 2 that the low self-esteem, guilt, shame, condemnation, self-disapproval, self-rejection, self-bitterness and self-hatred behind an addiction does not begin in your mind, it initially comes from the spiritual realm, from an accusing spirit.

Revelations 12 v 10 says that the devil is the accuser of the brethren. An accusing **spirit** gave you thoughts in your mind in the first person such as "I am unworthy, I am not loved, I am unwanted, I am no good, I hate myself, I feel so guilty and bad about this and that etc.". Because those thoughts came in the first person, you did not realize that it was not your thought, but that it came from the spiritual realm, from an accusing spirit...and so you followed that way of thinking as if it were you and developed a toxic mind-

set of a low self-esteem, guilt and self-hatred. As you meditated on those thoughts in your mind which is your **soul**, you built a toxic long term memory in your brain. So that guilt and self-hatred which was initially spiritual became a part of your soul through thinking and then a part of your **body** physically in the form of long term memory. You have become one with an accusing spirit in spirit, soul and body. That toxic long term memory of a low self-esteem, self-hatred and guilt released toxic chemicals that initiated a cascade of electrical, chemical and hormonal reactions that eventually lead to the development of addictions. In summary addictions develop through the **spirit-soul-body connection**. Healing from addictions occurs through the same pathway which is sanctification of the spirit, soul and body. Sanctification means cleansing or getting rid of filth - it is the process of getting rid of sin.

1 Thessalonians 5 v 23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sanctification of the spirit – means getting rid of the accusing spirit where the toxic mind-set that causes addictions came from.

Sanctification of the soul – means renewing your mind or changing your thinking to the way that God thinks. In the case of addictions it involves changing your thinking from a low self-esteem to a healthy self-esteem through learning about who you are in Christ (this will be dealt with in chapter 8).

Sanctification of the body – this is removal of disease and everything that destroys it. This naturally follows sanctification of the spirit and soul – because when you remove the toxic mind-set that causes a disease, and the spirit where that mind-set came from the sequence of physical reactions that cause that disease are broken and the body's healing mechanism kicks into gear. How the body heals from addictions will be explained in chapter 10.

FREEDOM SPIRITUALLY

2 Corinthians 7 v 1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." KJV.

Paul taught in 2 Corinthians 7 v 1, "Let us cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh *and the spirit*." Any spirit that is not of God is an unclean spirit by its fallen nature. That's why when Jesus cast out evil spirits when He was healing people, He would call them unclean spirits. If you have an addiction, you have become one with the accusing spirit in spirit, soul and body. That is not a clean spirit, which is an unclean spirit by its fallen nature, so you need to cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the spirit. In other words you need to be delivered from the accusing spirit and remove it from your life. You need to command it to leave in Jesus Name because it no longer has a legal right to your life if you have repented. That is sanctification of the spirit.

Jesus gave us authority over the devil and his kingdom. Jesus said in **Luke 10 v 18-20** "I saw Satan falling like a lightning [flash] from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold! I have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Mark 16 v 17: "And these signs will accompany those who believe: in My Name they will drive out demons. They will speak in new languages; they will pick up serpents; and [even] if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well"

The devil has already been defeated. Jesus is an expert in war and He is an expert in victory. He has spoiled principalities and powers of darkness and He has made a show of them openly (Colossians 2 v 15). He did it when He was here as Jesus, He did it when He was in hell and He wants you to do the same thing as believers because He gave you the power, He gave you the mandate, He gave you the sonship, He gave you the Holy Spirit and He gave you the authority!

I encourage you to say the following out loud with authority: "I take authority over the unclean, unloving, accusing spirits of self-hatred, self-rejection, self-bitterness and guilt that have been accusing me to myself as well as inherited iniquity of self-hatred and guilt in my family tree – you cannot rule my spirit and mind any longer. I break your power in the Name of Jesus. I command you to go and to be cast out of my life and the generations in my family in the power and authority of the Name of Jesus! Spirit of bondage and addictions, you have bound my body long enough with different types of addictions. Whether it was smoking, drinking, drugs, gambling, sex, pornography, gluttony or whatever form of addiction, it is finished now. I refuse to be bound any

longer as it is written that my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit – you heard me dedicate my body to God to be holy, devoted, consecrated and set apart for Him – so I refuse to allow you the right to defile my temple any longer. I don't want to do any of those things any longer and I now break your chains and holds on my thoughts, my body, my mouth, my taste-buds, my throat, my lungs and my intestines and I command you to leave me and my generations in Jesus' Name. I also take authority over the spirit of death and spirit of infirmity. In the Name of Jesus I break your power and I command you to go! Father Your Word says that whom the Son sets free is free indeed! So I thank you that I am really and unquestionably free today! (John 8 v 36). Now Father, I ask You to help me to begin to love myself this day. I ask You for the grace, power, strength and ability that I need to renew my mind as I begin to learn in the next chapter how to build a healthy self-esteem. Amen”

Note: You cannot just think these words above in your mind because evil spirits can't read your mind – you need to speak it out. Make it verbal so that the invisible kingdom can hear the declaration of your heart – the Word of God spoken out of your mouth is your weapon in spiritual warfare.

The reason that it is necessary to do sanctification of the spirit first (where you command the spirits behind an addiction to leave in Jesus' Name) is because you will not be able to renew your mind and build a healthy self-esteem until the accusing spirit has been removed.

Chapter 7:

Building a Healthy Self-Esteem: Seeing Yourself through the Father's Eyes

You now know that the toxic mind-set which led you into addictions is a low self-esteem, self-condemnation and guilt, self-rejection, self-disapproval, self-bitterness and/or self-hatred. If it is any comfort to know, you are not alone! This mind-set is in epidemic proportions world-wide....and the church is unfortunately no exception. People simply don't like themselves. There are two big areas that people deal with in which disease flourishes and that is "state of being" and "state of belonging". In other words "Who am I", "who do I belong to", "who cares". This is very, very big even in Christianity as people are struggling with who they are.

SANCTIFICATION OF YOUR SOUL

Even though the accusing spirit which initially taught you this toxic thinking habit of a low self-esteem, self-hatred and/or guilt has been removed, you still have a toxic long term memory of self-hatred/self-rejection/guilt in your brain. That toxic long term memory is able to initiate the chemical and hormonal reactions that lead to addictions, even without the accusing spirit being there. Therefore that long term memory has to be dealt with and removed through renewing of your mind. That is sanctification of the soul. You sanctify your soul through the washing of the water of the Word.

John 17 v 17: "Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the Truth; Your Word is Truth."

Ephesians 5 v 26: "So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word."

Sanctification of your soul through the washing of the water of the Word is a wonderful picture of cleansing your brain of all those filthy toxic mind-sets of self-hatred, guilt and shame. In the previous chapter, you set your healing in motion with your prayer of repentance where you asked God for forgiveness for your low self-esteem, self-disapproval, self-rejection or self-hatred that led you into the trap of addictions. However that prayer is not the beginning and end of it! That is just the beginning - you still have to go through the process of renewing your mind and that is where the effort on your part comes in. Repentance is more than just saying "Sorry God" with words. The original Greek word for repentance in the Bible means "changing your thinking". You need to renew your mind by changing your thinking to the way that God thinks. You find out how God thinks by meditating on His Word.

LET'S STUDY THE WORD TO FIND OUT HOW GOD THINKS...ABOUT YOU!

The New Testament says approximately 140 times that you are **in Christ!** One of the primary reasons for this wrong mind-set of self-hatred and self-rejection is not having a proper knowledge and understanding of who you are in Christ. In your ignorance you have received and believed satan's blatant lies and deceptions concerning who you are and your value and worth.

In order to gain complete deliverance from addictions, it is vital that you learn to place your identity in Christ, and develop a healthy self-esteem by **choosing to see yourself as God sees you**. In this chapter come on a journey with me through the Word to find out who you are in Christ, so that you can renew your mind and develop a Biblical self-image.

IT IS TIME TO DISCOVER YOUR FULLEST POTENTIAL AS A CHILD OF GOD

I would like to start by sharing an article which was written by a professional psychologist who analysed one of the characters in the Bible – see if you can guess who the article describes:

“He suffers from chronic low level depression. He’s moody, impulsive and becomes angry when he feels victimized. He struggles with low self-worth. Because of feeling intellectually inferior, he attempts to hide behind an exaggerated ego. He really trusts no one. And yet he relies on others more than necessary and becomes naïve in his relationships with them. He exhibits self-criticism and irritability. He believes in individualism and has trouble in interpersonal relationships. His lack of trust often leaves him feeling anxious around people. He has relative weaknesses in attention. He has trouble sleeping. His weight fluctuates. He’s not mentally ill; he doesn’t have a personality disorder, and yet he often feels humiliated, embarrassed and remorseful.”

Did you guess who this could be? Well first of all, outside of the Bible he or she could be anyone you might meet in town tomorrow and even in church – or any man or woman who wasn’t raised with a Biblical self image... including you. But the Bible character this best describes is a young man by the name of Gideon. Let’s look at his story because he is just like anyone else. If Gideon could believe what God said about him and develop a new self-image, so can you.

At the time, a tribe of people called the Midianites were oppressing Gideon’s land. His family were dealing with super high taxes and inflation. All around him was economic, cultural, religious and racial bondage. It was the worst of times for Israel – and Gideon was right in the middle of it. He was just trying to survive. He wasn’t thinking about being an over-comer or prosperous individual. When God called this young man of about 20 years old, he was hiding in a winepress, trying to thresh out some wheat. Threshing wheat in a winepress was a horrible, miserable job. The chaff, the dust – everything was unpleasant. In that day in the life of Gideon, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and his life was changed forever. He said, **“The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour!” (Judges 6 v 12).**

When you take the time to study what a **“man of valour”** is in the original Hebrew word, you will find that God called Gideon **“a champion overcoming warrior who possessed valour, dignity and honour!”** When the angel said that to Gideon he said, “Look, uh, Lord – would you please look around? Look at me. Come on, I’ve been a mess my whole life. I’ve been making minimum wage. I’ve just been trying to make it through life. I come from a family of dysfunctional people. We’re all just surviving – barely making it through. So are my friends. We are all trying to make a living. Everybody I know is sick, poor and in debt.” But God told this insecure young man, “All that is going to change son. You are not what you think you are. Listen, you are what I say you are! You are a mighty man of valour – a champion overcoming warrior who possesses dignity and honour!” And this fearful young man from the tribe of Benjamin changed the course of his nation. Gideon went to war, and God fought with him:

Judges 8 v 28: “Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for 40 years in the days of Gideon.”

God told Gideon who he was and the rest was up to him. This is how God talks to anyone with a low self-esteem who is living below their potential. God is saying to you:

“YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE, LISTEN, YOU ARE WHAT I SAY YOU ARE -YOU ARE A MIGHTY MAN (OR WOMAN) OF VALOR, A CHAMPION OVERCOMING WARRIOR WHO POSSESSES DIGNITY AND HONOR. COME ON, WE’VE GOT WORK TO DO!”

The next stop in our journey through the Bible to find out who we are in Christ is Jeremiah 1 v 5: You need to know that...

GOD ACCEPTS AND APPROVES OF YOU!

Jeremiah 1 v 5: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew [and] approved of you [as My chosen instrument], and before you were born I separated and set you apart, consecrating you...”

Before you were even formed in your mother’s womb, He knew and approved of you... do you know that God can approve of you but not approve of your behaviour? Before God formed you in the womb, He knew you... HE KNEW YOU! Psalm 139 v 4 says that before the words are even on your lips, God already knows what you are going to say. So if you are going to say something wrong and sinful tomorrow, God already knows about it. In fact, before you were even born, God already knew you...

He already knew all the wrong, sinful, dumb mistakes that you would make during your life... and knowing ahead of time all these things....HE STILL APPROVED OF YOU ANYWAY! WOW!

Actually you are no surprise to God. He knew what He was getting when He made you and He chose you. **Ephesians 1 v 4 says, "He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world."** He already knew every weakness and every flaw and He still said, "I want you." Ephesians 1 v 5 says that He predestined you to be adopted as His child.

Ephesians 1 v 6: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved."

In Ephesians chapter 6 where it talks about the armour of God, it says, "Put on the breastplate of righteousness." But the translation in the Living Bible says, "Put on the breastplate of God's approval." Part of your armour that God gave you to withstand the attacks of the enemy is to walk around knowing that the great God - your heavenly Father approves of you!

Say this out loud to yourself and mean it from your heart:

GOD ACCEPTS AND APPROVES OF ME, THEREFORE I ACCEPT AND APPROVE OF MYSELF!

You also need to believe in the same words that God spoke over Jesus – **"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3 v 17)**. You are His beloved son in whom He is well pleased! You are His beloved daughter in whom He is well pleased! God wants you to realize that you are pleasing to Him just the way you are. The devil tries to keep telling you that you are not, but God is telling you that you are. You are His beloved child who is well pleasing to Him. The devil tries to tell you that you cannot possibly be acceptable to God because you are not perfect, but God tells you that you are accepted in the Beloved because of what He has already done for you.

Now, say this out loud and believe and settle it in your heart:

"I AM GOD'S CHILD AND HE IS PLEASED WITH ME!"

YOU ARE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD:

God's love for you is not performance based. His love for you is not based on what you have done, but on what Jesus has done and His work on the cross. It is impossible for you to ever earn or deserve God's love, acceptance or approval because your most righteous acts are like filthy rags in God's sight...no amount of good works would ever be enough. **Isaiah 64 v 6: "For we have all become like one who is unclean [like a leper] and all our righteousness (our best deeds of rightness and justice) are like filthy rags or a polluted garment; we all fade like a leaf and our iniquities like the wind take us away [far from God's favour, hurrying us towards destruction]."**

However, when Jesus becomes Lord of your life and you meet Him at the cross, you are literally given His royal robes of righteousness. **Isaiah 61 v 10: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with jewels."**

What does righteousness mean to you and me in our practical everyday life? The definition is found in **2 Corinthians 5 v 21: "For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become... the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness]."**

So righteousness means acceptance, approval, right relationship and right standing with God. It is essential that you understand that you have been made right with God through your faith in Jesus Christ. Otherwise you are going to live on a performance treadmill trying to earn God's acceptance, love and approval. Trying to earn God's approval is like trying to get into a chair that you are already sitting in! Talk about frustration for nothing! You don't need to earn God's acceptance and approval... you've already got it!

THIS IS THE BASIS OF SELF ACCEPTANCE – KNOWING THAT GOD COMPLETELY ACCEPTS YOU THROUGH JESUS AND SEES YOU AS TOTALLY RIGHTEOUS.

This does not mean that you don't sin anymore or that when you do sin, you can just dismiss it like it's no big deal. It simply means that God loves you for who **you are** in Christ, not for what **you do**. For example, I know a couple who had a 3 year old son who used to scream and throw a fit when he didn't get his own way. Even though they disliked and disapproved of his behaviour, they still loved him tremendously. They didn't stop loving him or kick him out of the family because he does things wrong. They loved him and worked with him to develop the good character they knew he needed to succeed in life. The same is true with God, your Heavenly Father. He is not pleased with your wrong behaviour, but He certainly loves and adores you! Romans 5 v 8 says that He showed and proved His love for you in that while you were still a sinner, Jesus died for you. In other words He didn't wait until you were righteous to send Jesus – He sent Jesus because you would never be righteous without Him!

The next thing we need to learn about our Biblical self-image is:

YOU ARE CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR!

Look at how you are mentioned in Psalm 8, starting with verses 3 and 4: **“When I view and consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained and established, What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of [earthborn] man that you care for him?”** When I have spent time lying on the grass at night, looking at the stars and observing the greatness and magnificence of God's creation, I have often felt (just like David did) very small in comparison. Here David was saying, “Why in the world would you want to visit with us, Awesome and Mighty God? Why are we so important to You? When we look at the glory of the universe and realize that You want to be involved with us... WOW!” Verse 5: **“Yet You have made him but a little lower than God [or heavenly beings], and You have crowned him with glory and honour.”**

So you are the King of Kings kid and you are dressed up like it! Spiritually you are wearing Jesus' royal robe of righteousness and a crown of glory and honour on your head! Verses 6 to 8 of this powerful psalm of your God-given image go on to say how God has given you dominion and that all things are under your feet.

So when you wake up in the morning and get out of bed to face the day, you get up crowned with glory and honour, you have dominion and you walk into every circumstance knowing it's under your feet! Say this out loud with me:

I AM A ROYAL CHILD OF GOD. SPIRITUALLY I AM WEARING A ROYAL ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND A CROWN OF GLORY AND HONOUR!

When God looks at you, He doesn't see your failures and shortcomings, He sees Jesus' righteousness and He says, “Qualified! Accepted! Approved!” There is now no condemnation for you in Christ!

THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION FOR YOU IN CHRIST!

One of the devil's greatest tools to make us feel bad about ourselves is condemnation. Many people who love God and are serving Him, are tormented by negative thinking about themselves. They think that God must be so disappointed and angry with them for all their failures and shortcomings. How many “could have”, “would have”, “should have”, “if only” statements do you make in a day? These are guilt statements and thoughts that are full of condemnation, which are extremely toxic to your body. How many times have you replayed in your head a conversation or a situation that pained you or one that hasn't even occurred yet? When you think like this you waste precious time building up a toxic thought and putting your body into a toxic state of sickness which will inhibit the way in which you function.

How much time do you **waste** living under guilt and condemnation? I purposely said how much time is wasted because that is precisely what that kind of thinking is – a waste of time. As long as you have repented for the things you did wrong, forget the past because God has (Hebrews 10 v 17). Don't meditate on all that you've done to mess up – think about how you have been made the righteousness of God through Christ and therefore God accepts and approves of you. Remember that thoughts turn into actions. If you want your behaviour to change, your thinking has to change first. Keep meditating on how terrible you are and you will act worse.

Romans 8 v 33 – 34 “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect [when it is] God Who justifies [that is, Who puts us in right relation to Himself? Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God has chosen? Will God, Who acquits us? Who is there to condemn [us]? Will Christ Jesus (the Messiah), Who died, or rather Who was raised from the dead, Who is at the right hand of God actually pleading as He intercedes for us?”

In other words the above Scripture is saying: if God doesn't condemn you...And Jesus doesn't condemn you...Who is there to condemn you? *So why do you condemn yourself?*

Romans 8 v 1 “Therefore [there is] now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live [and] walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit.”

So every time the devil brings a condemning thought to your mind, quote Romans 8 v 1 to him and tell him to take his condemnation back to hell where it belongs and to “Hit the road Jack!”

In order to be free from guilt and condemnation, we not only need to receive forgiveness from God, **but we need to forgive ourselves**. We need to stop hitting ourselves over the head with something that God has forgiven and forgotten. This does not mean that we are perfect and will never mess up again, it just means that we can go on with our life without being weighed down with a constant burden of guilt and condemnation for what happened in the past. As long as we have repented from the heart and our hearts are right with God and we are doing the best that we can, we can stay out from under the burden of guilt. God is more interested in our heart than what we do. He knows that when our heart is right toward Him, our actions will eventually come in line with our heart.

Now say this out loud:

GOD DOES NOT CONDEMN ME, THEREFORE I DO NOT CONDEMN MYSELF!

The next important point we need to know in the process of renewing our minds and developing a Godly self-esteem is:

YOU ARE LOVED UNCONDITIONALLY BY GOD:

You are a woman or man of such tremendous value and worth that the King of Kings gave His life for you! I explained earlier that God's love for you is not performance based. When you mess up, it does not affect His love for you one little bit. A friend once said to me, “I've found something that is impossible for God to do!” I replied “That's rubbish! Nothing is impossible with God! In fact, God said that even I can do anything (Philippians 4 v 13 says I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me).” But she said, “No, God cannot love you anymore than He does right now!”

Romans 8 v 35, 38 & 39: “Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword?... For I am persuaded beyond doubt (am sure) that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Jesus said in **John 16 v 27:** “For the Father Himself [tenderly] loves you because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from the Father.”

How can you not love yourself if God loves you? The Awesome, Indescribable, Almighty, Holy God Who is the Greatest of all says He loves you!

God spared nothing for you in His love for you – even His only beloved Son! So under which Gospel do you have the audacity to not love yourself and think that you are worthless? I want to tell you that the Great God – your Father loves you so very much!

It is important that you are secure in the knowledge that you are loved by the Father so that you can overcome rejection. Accepting rejection is a sin because you are telling God that man's acceptance is more important to you than His. In your heart you are saying, "God, you lied when You said that I was worthy, accepted and approved. I would rather believe what other people think of me." Rejection can lead you on a desperate search where you strive for the love that would complete you. Many of us come from dysfunctional families where we have not known a Godly, loving environment. This hinders us from an early age in receiving the love we crave so much. However this love cannot be found in the acceptance and approval of other people, but only in the arms of the Father!

As a believer, you need to come to the place where you are so wholly satisfied and complete in the love of God and who you are in Christ that if anybody even smiles at you today, that is just a bonus. Say this out loud with me:

I AM LOVED!

The next point in our journey through the Bible to find out who we are as children of God is:

CHRIST IS YOUR SPIRITUAL HUSBAND:

The Bible says that the church is the bride of Christ (Revelations 19 v 7 and 22 v 17, Ephesians 5 v 26 – 27) and that includes you if you are a born again child of God.

Jeremiah 3 v 14: "Turn O black sliding children, says the Lord, for I am married to you!"

Isaiah 54 v 5: "For Your Maker is your Husband – the Lord of Hosts is His Name – and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; the Lord God of the whole earth He is called."

Song of Solomon 6 v 3: "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

Song of Solomon 2 v 4: "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me is love!"

When Jesus came the first time, He came in humility – He was born in a stable and He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. But when Jesus comes again, He's coming for His bride. Let's have a look at what He is going to look like when He comes back....

Revelations 1 v 13 – 16: "The Son of Man was clothed with a robe which reached to His feet and with a girdle of gold about His breast. His head and His hair were white like white wool, [as white] as snow, and His eyes [flashed] like a flame of fire. His feet glowed like burnished (bright) bronze as it is refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and from His mouth there came forth a sharp two edged sword, and His face was like the sun shining in full power at midday."

Revelations 19 v 11 – 16: "¹¹I saw heaven opened and behold, a white horse [appeared]! The One Who was riding it is called Faithful (Trustworthy, Loyal, Incorruptible, Steady) and True, and He passes judgment and wages war in righteousness (holiness, justice and uprightness. ¹²His eyes [blaze] like a flame of fire, and on His head are many kingly crowns (diadems); and He has a title (name) which He alone knows or can understand. ¹³He is dressed in a robe dyed by dripping blood, and the Title by which He is called is the Word of God. ¹⁴And the troops of heaven, clothed in fine linen, dazzling and clean, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵From His mouth goes forth a sharp sword with which He can smite (afflict, strike) the nations; and He will shepherd and control them with a staff (scepter, rod) of iron... He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath and indignation of God the All-Ruler (the Almighty, the Omnipotent). ¹⁶And on His garment (robe) and on His thigh He has a name (title) inscribed, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

That is a description of a very powerful Son of God, Who is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords ... and your Husband to be! Whoohooo! Wow! So when you're struggling with low self-esteem, self-hatred and an identity problem remember Who you are engaged to! Shout it out loud with me:

I AM ENGAGED TO THE KING OF KINGS!

It doesn't matter who has rejected you because God is your source and it's about time you stopped making them an idol. If somebody doesn't love you, that's their loss. God is your Father and Jesus is your Husband and they are all you've got 100 years from now so you may as well get used to it now. Let me tell you that you are loved! I release you from those insecurities and those fears that say you are not loved. I release you from your dependency on humans who will possibly never love you. I release you to the love of your Father and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ as a work of the Holy Spirit. I release you to a peace inside you that you have never known because you are wanted, and you are loved! God has saved you, He's made you a son and a daughter, He has chosen you, you are the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2 v 8), you are engraved in the palms of His hand (Isaiah 49 v 16), He's betrothed you to His Son as a wife, your names are written down in Heaven in the Lambs book of life...what more do you think He needs to do for you?

This next point is something that is especially important for the ladies. In renewing your mind and changing how you think about yourself, you need to think that you are beautiful...

YOU ARE FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE!

The way that you look is intentionally designed by God for a specific purpose. I spent a lot of years being self-conscious, thinking that I was ugly and not liking various parts of my body. I didn't like the way that I am big boned with a broad body frame. I wanted to be small, thin and petit. However I've now realized that God specifically made me that way, as part of His calling on my life is to be an Orthopaedic surgeon. Orthopaedic surgery requires a lot of physical strength: for example when fixing the broken femur (bone in your thigh) of a large muscular man. Had I been small and petit, I would not have the body strength to perform operations like that. However because of the structure of my broad body frame, I have tremendous physical strength, especially for a woman. God knows what He is doing! God designed your nose, eyes, ears, backside or whatever side it is that you don't like for a specific reason! So just **enjoy** the way God made you!

There are many woman who do not like their sexuality as a female and hate their femininity. Often it is because their father wanted a son but got a daughter instead. As a result that curse followed her and she struggled with her female identity because there is a spirit assigned to her to accuse her in her creation. However when God created you a female, He made no mistakes – you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Psalm 139 v 14 – 15: “I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are Your works; And that my soul knows very well! (KJV) My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and] intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colours] in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, and when as yet there was none of them. How precious and weighty also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” (Amplified Bible)

Ladies, go and look in the mirror and say this out loud, “Marvellous! I am beautiful!” The men can say this out loud, “I am a handsome hunk of dust!” That's Henry Wright's saying. Some of you felt a bit uncomfortable saying that you are beautiful didn't you? You need to change your thinking...God thinks you're beautiful and you need to see yourself as God sees you. Now say this out loud:

“I AM A MASTERPIECE OF GOD'S CREATION - I AM INTRICATELY, FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE!”

So far, you have learnt that: You are loved unconditionally by God. He accepts and approves of you. He is pleased with you. Spiritually Christ is your husband and His banner over you is love! You are righteous before God – you are wearing Jesus' royal robes of righteousness and a crown of glory and honour. There is now no condemnation for you in Christ. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. You are a mighty man (or woman) of valour – a champion over coming warrior who possesses dignity and honour. When Gideon renewed his mind and changed his thinking to see himself as God saw him, he rose from being a pitiful failure to a mighty warrior who shook a nation. Now I pray that as you continue to read, you will be blown away at the realization of who you really are in Christ... and what you are capable of in Him!

One man or woman who is willing to believe God, and rise up to who they really are in Christ has the potential to shake nations and make a difference in the outcome of this entire world. The question is will you be one of them? You most certainly can be!

Here's why:

AS JESUS IS, SO ARE YOU IN THIS WORLD!

John was the closest disciple of Jesus – he is the one who laid his head on Jesus' chest. John was with Jesus when he forgave the adulteress, healed and miraculously fed the masses, cast out demons, walked on water and calmed the storm, blessed the little children and when Jesus laid down His life – John was there at the foot of the cross. So John knew the God who'd called him to a life of ministry. His image of his God was one of compassion, miraculous power and uncompromising, steadfast, unconditional love. In **1 John 4 v 17** he writes, **"As He is, so are we in this world,"**

The description of Jesus in Revelations 1 v 13 – 16 and 19 v 11 – 16 quoted earlier give us an image of a very, very Mighty God! That is who Jesus is and that is the image that the Holy Spirit is moulding us into. You were made in the image of God (Genesis 1 v 27). That image is modelled for you by Jesus. As Jesus is so are you **now** – not when you get to heaven – no as He is **now**, so are you in this world.

Colossians 3 v 10 **"Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."** KJV.

In other words that scripture is saying get knowledge –renew your mind, change your thinking in the area of your self-image, and put on your new man which is your new self-image according to who you are in Christ. What are you seeing when you look in the mirror? If you're seeing anything less than the image of Jesus, you need to renew your mind in knowledge according to the image of Him, so that you can begin to enjoy the life of divine health that Jesus provided for you on the cross and fulfil His destiny that He planned for you before the foundation of the world. But it all starts and ends with how you interpret His image – and ultimately your image. As long as you see yourself as a useless nobody, you will be a useless nobody.

So declare this out loud:

AS JESUS IS, SO AM I IN THIS WORLD!

THE IMMEASURABLE AND UNLIMITED AND SURPASSING POWER OF GOD IS ON THE INSIDE OF YOU!

I'm sure that you have realized by now, especially after reading the description of Jesus in Revelations that you serve a very powerful God... but did you know that HIS POWER IS ON THE INSIDE OF YOU???! That's what it says in **Ephesians 1 v 19 – 20**: **"And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in heavenly [places]."**

Think about what this Scripture is saying for a moment and allow it to really sink in: Consider the magnificent huge expanse of the universe – the power of God created that. Consider the beauty of nature and the intricately complicated human body – the power of God created that. The power of God raised Jesus from the dead. **THAT SAME POWER IS ON THE INSIDE OF YOU!** As Jesus is so are you in this world and the immeasurable, unlimited and surpassing power of God is on the inside of you! If you would just get a grasp of that, I don't really need to tell you anything else about who you are in Christ because that in itself would change the way you see yourself and the way you face every trial and circumstance in life. It did for me. For example I was in a situation years ago when I was first trying to get into medical school. I had to compete with 300 other South African students (who were the top 300 from schools across South Africa) for 20 places. I was having a panic about it one day when the Lord said to me, "Do you believe my Word or not?" I replied "Yes, Lord, I believe your Word". Then He said, "Then act like it." Say this out loud and say it like you believe it:

THE IMMEASURABLE, UNLIMITED AND SURPASSING POWER OF GOD IS ON THE INSIDE OF ME!

When I first found out that the immeasurable, unlimited and surpassing power of God is on the inside of me, it absolutely blew my mind. It still blows my mind! With the immeasurable, unlimited and surpassing power of God on the inside of you...You have the ability to shake nations never mind overcome an addiction! Remember what I said earlier:

One man or woman who is willing to believe God, and rise up to who they really are in Christ has the potential to shake nations and make a difference in the outcome of this entire world.

Why don't you be one of them? God uses the so-called nobodies you know. Look at Joyce Meyer, she was an average housewife but she chose to believe God and now she has a world-wide ministry that is impacting nations for God's kingdom. Gideon was a coward, a pitiful failure and the least significant in his family and community but He chose to see himself as God sees him and he changed the course of His nation. And you're never too old! God used Moses at the age of 80 to lead the biggest church in history of 3 and a half million Israelites! So what's your excuse? I'm going to believe what God said about me and I'm excited to see what He's going to do through me. How about you?

Having the power of God on the inside of you, means that you have the ability on the inside of you to do the things that Jesus did, and in fact the Bible says that you will do even greater things than Jesus did.

1 John 14 v 12 – 14: "I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will even do greater things than these, because I go to the Father, And I will do [I myself will grant] whatever you ask in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], so that the Father may be glorified and extolled in (through) the Son. [Yes] I will grant [I Myself will do for you] whatever you shall ask in My Name]..."

Yet many of us still walk around believing and saying that they are weak, useless, pathetic individuals who will never amount to anything! Renew your mind and say this out loud with me:

I WILL DO THE THINGS THAT JESUS DID AND GREATER THINGS WILL I DO!

The last stop in our journey through the Bible to find out how God thinks of us, so that we can think like Him and develop a Biblical self-image is that:

YOU ARE MORE THAN A CONQUEROR!

Romans 8 v 37: "Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him who loved us." I would like to really drive the meaning of this scripture home by explaining it to you like my grandfather once explained it to me. I spent a lot of time with my grandparents in the school holidays whilst growing up. They used to live on a farm in Karoi in Zimbabwe, where the flies were an irritating problem in summer. I would often stand in the kitchen whilst my grandmother was cooking dinner, with a fly swatter. One day swatting and killing the darn things left, right and centre, my grandfather said, "Do you know what being *more than a conqueror* really means? When you hit that fly with the fly swatter – you killed it – you conquered it. But the Bible does not say that you are a conqueror, it says you are **MORE THAN** a conqueror. According to the meaning of the original Greek word that means when you kill that fly, you pick up a 3 tonne sledge hammer and not only smash the fly out of existence, but you also break the table and the concrete foundation of the kitchen in the process!" Now this is a silly story but I hope you get my point. Am I exaggerating? No! Not at all! This is the kind of surpassing victory that you have in every circumstance when you know who you are in Christ. So say it out loud:

I AM MORE THAN A CONQUEROR!

With all that said, I now have one very sincere question to ask you:

IF THIS IS WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST – HOW ON EARTH CAN WE HAVE A LOW SELF ESTEEM????!

If we only knew who we are in Christ, we would not be in such a mess. We would be living with victory upon victory instead of this pitiful state of defeat and sickness.

THINK LIKE THE NEW YOU!

I hope that by now that you have discovered the “real you” as a child of God – and just how much you have allowed the devil to rob you, by deceiving you into believing that you are unlovable, unworthy, guilty, defeated, useless, powerless and so on. If you truly want to overcome addictions, and enjoy the abundant life (John 10 v 10) that God has for you – you have no choice but to let go of your old toxic mind-sets of self-hatred/low self-esteem, and begin to see yourself as God sees you. Your value and sense of self-worth needs to be firmly rooted in the knowledge of who you are in Christ. ***Think like the new you!***

SPEAK LIKE THE NEW YOU!

Be careful what you say about yourself because you are today what you said about yourself yesterday! Your words shape your world because they have creative ability. What you confess over yourself is what you will become. What you confess over your life is what your life will become. You must never underestimate the power of your words.

Proverbs 18 v 21: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life].”

Your thoughts and ultimately your words are seeds which are containers of power - they will produce a harvest of either blessing and health or sickness and destruction. It starts with your mind (your thinking) and your thoughts become words.

Mathew 12 v 34: “Out of the fullness (the overflow, the superabundance) of the heart, the mouth speaks.”

If you permit thoughts of a low self-image and self-hatred to dwell in your heart, you will ultimately speak them with negative results in your life and health. Yes, your thoughts and your words are that powerful.

I want to encourage you to begin purposefully using your thoughts and your words for your good.

In Romans 4 v 17 it says that God calls things that are not, as though they were, and thus brings them into being. The Amplified Bible says, **“God gives life to the dead and speaks of non-existent things that [He foretold and promised] as if they [already] existed.”** Now the Bible calls us to be imitators of God – if He does that then we can do it too! He calls things that are not as though they are and so brings them into being. When He first called Gideon a mighty man of valour, a champion overcoming warrior who possessed dignity and honour, the physical reality at the time was that Gideon was a coward and a pitiful failure. But He spoke over Gideon’s life and that is what he became – a warrior who turned the course of a whole nation.

FAITH FILLED WORDS DRAW THINGS OUT OF THE SPIRITUAL REALM, WHERE THEY DO EXIST... INTO THE NATURAL REALM WHERE THEY DO NOT YET EXIST.

God began this kind of work all the way back at creation. He didn’t say, “Whoo it’s dark here!” He said “Let there be light” and it was so (Genesis 1 v 3). The description above of who you are in Christ may be the exact opposite of what you look like in reality right at this moment. But as you purposefully change your thinking and choose to see yourself as God sees you – also purposefully speak out what God says about you in His word... and that is what you will literally become in physical reality. One of your most powerful weapons to defeat the enemy is to ***speak out*** the Word of God. Joyce Meyer says, “You cannot defeat Goliath with your mouth shut.”

Hebrews 4 v 12 says that “the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing and effective]; it is sharper than any two edged sword.”

The Word of God is a powerful two edged sword that we can use in spiritual warfare to defeat the enemy in our life. However just as a sword left in its sheath is not effective in battle until you take it out and use it, the Bible on the shelf is not going to do anything for you. Its power is only released when you ***speak it*** in faith. Jesus was tempted three times by the devil when he was fasting in the dessert. Each time, Jesus simply resisted him by saying, ***“It is written...it is written...It is written...”*** (Matthew 4 v 4, 7, 10). That

is the way we need to respond to the devil when he tries to tempt us with self-hatred, condemnation, regret, guilt and any other negative thought that would make us feel bad about ourselves.

Personally, in dealing with spiritual roots and struggles in my own life, I have found it very helpful to write out what I call a “Faith Confession” with relevant scriptures, which I speak out on a daily basis until my mind is renewed and I have victory in that area. So to help you in the process of renewing your mind and developing a healthy self-image by seeing yourself as God sees you, I have put together a “Faith Confession” containing Scriptures that speak of who you are in Christ. I encourage you to speak this out on a daily basis until you have developed a new Godly mind-set concerning who you are in Christ. This is not meant to be carried out like a religious ritual, it is just a guide to help get you started. When you speak out this faith confession – think about what you are saying – don’t just absentmindedly say it out loud whilst your thoughts wonder elsewhere – say to yourself – this is who I am!

FAITH CONFESSION OF WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST

“I am a precious woman (or man) of great value and worth because Jesus, the King of kings, died and paid a great price for me. I am a royal daughter (or son) for I have a crown of glory and honour on my head, and I am wearing Jesus’ royal robes of righteousness (Isaiah 61v10; Psalm 8 v5). God accepts and approves of me (Jeremiah 1 v 5). I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139). There is now no condemnation for me in Christ (Romans 8 v1). Therefore I accept myself, and love who I am and the way I am made.

Father, I am who You say I am: I am called by God (2 Timothy 1 v 9). I was chosen by God before the foundations of the world to be set apart for Him (Ephesians 1 v 4; 1 Peter 2 v 9; 1 Thessalonians 1 v 4; John 15 v 16). I am God’s child (Romans 8 v 15 -16). I am born again of the Incorruptible seed of the living Word of God that endures forever. (1 Peter 1 v 23). I am forgiven of all my sins and the blood of Jesus has washed away my guilt and shame (Ephesians 1 v 4 & 7; 1 John 2 v 12; 1 John 1 v9; Colossians 1 v 14). I am a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5 v 17). I am holy and blameless in God’s sight, even above reproach, before Him in love (Ephesians 1 v 4). I am the righteousness of God, which means that I am approved, acceptable and in right relationship with Him (2Corinth.5:21. I have full access to the Father (Ephesians 2 v 18) and can fearlessly, confidently and boldly draw near to His throne (Hebrews 4 v 16). I am blessed and I am God’s favourite (Galatians 3 v 9). I am the apple of God’s eye and my name is inscribed on the palm of His hand (Zechariah 2 v 8; Psalm 17 v 8; Isaiah 49 v 16). I am stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1 v 13). I am established to the end (1 Corinthians 1 v 8). I am being changed into His image and He Who began this good work in me will bring it to completion. (2 Corinthians 3 v 18; Philippians 1 v 6) I am God’s workmanship, recreated in Christ for good works (Ephesians 2 v 10). I am an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5 v 20). I am complete in Him (Colossians 2 v 10). I am the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6 v 19). I have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2 v 16; Philippians 2 v 5).

I am a joint heir with Christ and He has qualified me to share in His inheritance (Romans 8 v 17; Colossians 1 v 12; Ephesians 1 v 11). I am redeemed from the curse of the law and Abraham’s blessings are mine (Galatians 3 v 13). I am redeemed from the futile way of life inherited from the tradition of my forefathers and am purchased with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1 v 18-19). I have been delivered from the control and dominion of the devil and have been translated into God’s kingdom of love (Colossians 1 v 13). I am set free (John 8 v 36; Galatians 5 v 1; John 8 v 31 – 34). I am dead to sin and alive with Christ (Romans 6 v 11; Ephesians 2 v 5). I am raised up with Christ and am seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2 v 6). Because I am born of God the evil one cannot touch me (1 John 5 v 18). I have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness and I am a partaker of His divine nature (2 Peter 1 v 3-4). I am blessed with every spiritual blessing that heaven has to offer (Ephesians 1 v 3). I am firmly rooted, built up and established in my faith (Colossians 2 v 7) and I have faith that can move mountains (Mathew 16 v 20).

Father, I can do what You say I can do: I am a victorious over-comer (1 John 5 v 4; Revelations 2 v 11), a mighty woman (or man) of valour a champion overcoming warrior, who possesses dignity and honour (Judges 6 v12). I am more than a conqueror (Romans 8 v 35). All circumstances are under my feet (Psalm 8 v 6). In all things I gain a surpassing victory (Rom 8 v 37) and in all things God leads me to triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2 v 14). Through my union with God, I am strong in the Lord and the power of His might (Ephesians 6 v 10). I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me. I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency (Philippians 4 v13). Everything I put my hand to prospers (Psalm 1 v 1 – 3). I am the head and not the tail, above only and not beneath (Deuteronomy 28 v 13). Greater is He that lives in me than he that is in the world (1 John 4 v 4). Because I believe in, lean on, trust and rely on God, I do the things that Jesus did, and greater things will I do, for His Spirit within me knows no limit. (John 14 v 12 – 14). Therefore I believe that all things are possible and limit not the Holy One within me (Philippians 4 v 13). I received power when the Holy Spirit came upon me, so every place I go and all I do, I do in the power of the Spirit: I have power to lay hands on the sick and see them recover (each and every one), and at my command, in the Name of Jesus all demonic

powers are cast out and all people are set free; I have authority over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt me (Mark 16 v 17 – 18). **As Jesus is, so am I in this world** (1 John 4 v 17) **and the immeasurable, unlimited and surpassing power of God is on the inside of me!** (Ephesians 1 v 19). **The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in me!** (Ephesians 1 v 20).

AGAIN I ASK: IF THIS IS WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST – HOW ON EARTH CAN WE HAVE A LOW SELF ESTEEM?!!!!

At the end of this chapter, I have done a lot of work for you in writing out all the scriptures I quoted in the above Faith Confession, which tell you who you are in Christ. However, you need to get into the Word for yourself and meditate on each one. Nobody else can do it for you, you have to take responsibility to renew your mind with the Word, and build a healthy self-image, by choosing to see yourself as God sees you.

KEEP COMPANY WITH THE NEW YOU!

Your friendships are important because you become the same as those with whom you keep company. Solomon said, “Don’t be deceived, bad company corrupts good character.” Daniel was a man of great integrity and excellence. He prospered and rose to the top in everything he put his hand to. However, did you notice that his friends were also excellent? Daniel would not compromise, but neither would Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. You need to be spending time with other people who share your vision for Godly change. You need to keep company with the new you! Build friendships with people who are going where you want to go or are already there! If you get on a bus with a group of people who are going to Namibia and you want to go to South Africa, and you say, “These people are all my old friends. We’ve been together since high school. We’ve been through so much together and we’re so close!” Guess what, you won’t make it to South Africa.

Proverbs 13 v 20: “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.”

When strife came between Abraham and Lot’s men, Abraham chose to separate from Lot. He said, **“Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.”** (Genesis 13 v 9).

You see, when strife comes, the anointing goes. As long as Lot was hanging around Abraham, God was limited to what He could do in Abraham’s life. The moment Lot left God showed up and furthered Abraham’s vision. Abraham had to get his social relationships right before God would lead him any further spiritually. “Yes but they’re my friends,” you may say. Well, you either have to give up your destiny and your destination in Christ or you have to give up those ungodly relationships. Which one is it going to be? I’m sorry to seem so harsh and insensitive, but that is just the way it is. “Well, can’t I do both?” OK, sure, just start fulfilling your call to share the gospel in their lives. They’ll either be saved or separate. Otherwise you’ll become what God calls an unstable, double minded person (James 1 v 8) because you refuse to make right choices. A double minded Christian will say, “I don’t want to leave my old friends but I want to go to a new destination. I don’t want to give up the world but I sure want all that God has for me. I don’t want to give up eating five doughnuts and drinking three cokes every day, but I would like to lose the extra kilograms.”

You have a dilemma here – it’s not going to work out well if you don’t learn to make the right choices. You need to choose to hang out with the new you. You may feel comfortable with your old ties, but you may never become the mighty man or woman that God intended you to be. You won’t be able to overcome an addiction to alcohol for example, whilst still hanging around your friends who drink. Many of us want to hang on to the long term relationships in spite of the fact that they aren’t beneficial and are actually detrimental. Are there people in your life with whom you need to dissociate? Has the Holy Spirit brought the names or pictures of people to your mind while you have been reading this? If you continue in these same old relationships, you will continue in the same old lifestyle and the same old negative mind-sets...and your same old health problems. If you want to take a hold of all God has for you and become the new you that God talks about in His Word, you have got to choose your friends wisely. Psalm 1 v 1 says not to sit inactive in the pathway of sinners. You will have to accept the fact that your desire to change will separate you from some old friends. All the old clichés are full of truth:

Birds of a feather flock together

If you sleep with dogs, you'll get fleas

If you hang out with chickens, you'll only stir up a little dirt

God isn't going to release you into His destiny and calling for your life, if you are hanging out with people who are sabotaging your destiny. So you have to decide, "Am I going to keep flapping with the chickens or am I going to fly with the eagles? Am I going to be a fryer or a flyer?" It's always your choice. What is more important to you – accommodating the past or moving forward into the future? Pleasing God or pleasing my worldly friends?

Jesus said, "Do not think I came to bring peace on the earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword." (Matthew 10 v 34). Now Jesus is the Prince of Peace and He does give us inner peace (Isaiah 9 v 6; John 14 v 27). However, what He was saying in Matthew 10 v 34 is, "Now look guys, I did not come to compromise and make everything smooth and easy. I've come with a sword because in some situations you are going to have to cut off some stuff." Are you going to follow somebody on the wrong bus going nowhere? When God's call on your life is sending you to South Africa and your friends are going to Namibia to serve themselves, where will you go? I am not saying that you must not love them and lead them to Jesus. Of course you must do that. But they will never help you become the new you until they know God. Be a light to everyone you know, but don't allow ungodly relationships to put your light out. Hang out with the new you!

SCRIPTURES FOR THE FAITH CONFESSION OF WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST:

(In order of appearance)

- 1. Isaiah 61 v 10: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with jewels."**
- 2. Psalm 8 v 4 – 6 "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of [earthborn] man that You care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet."**
- 3. Jeremiah 1 v 5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew [and] approved of you [as My chosen instrument], and before you were born I separated and set you apart, consecrating you..."**
- 4. Psalm 139 v 14 – 15: "I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvelous are Your works; And that my soul knows very well! (KJV) My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and] intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colors] in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, and when as yet there was none of them. How precious and weighty also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the some of them!" (Amplified Bible)**
- 5. Romans 8 v 1 "Therefore [there is] now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live [and] walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit."**
- 6. 2 Timothy 1 v 9: "God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began."**
- 7. Ephesians 1 v 4: "Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love."**

8. 1 Peter 2 v 9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, [God's] own purchased, special people, that you may set forth the wonderful deeds and display the virtues and perfections of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."
9. 1 Thessalonians 1 v 4: "[O] brethren beloved by God, we recognize and know that He has selected (chosen) you."
10. John 15 v 16: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you [I have planted you], that you might go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit may be lasting [that it may remain, abide], so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], He may give to you."
11. Romans 8 v 15 - 16; "...You have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing son-ship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit [assuring us] that we are children of God."
12. 1 Peter 1 v 23: "You are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever." KJV
13. Ephesians 1 v 7: "In Him we have redemption (deliverance and salvation) through His blood, the remission (forgiveness) of our offenses (shortcomings and trespasses), in accordance with the riches and the generosity of His gracious favor."
14. 1 John 2 v 12: "I am writing to you, little children, because for His Name's sake your sins are forgiven [pardoned through His Name and on account of confessing His Name]."
15. 1 John 1 v 9: "If we [freely admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action]."
16. Colossians 1 v 13 -14: "[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins."
17. 2 Corinthians 5 v 17: "Therefore if any person is [in-grafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away, Behold, the fresh and new has come!"
18. 2 Corinthians 5 v 21: "For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become... the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness]."
19. Ephesians 2 v 18: "For it is through Him that we both [whether far off or near] now have an introduction (access) by one [Holy] Spirit to the Father [so that we are able to approach Him]."
20. Hebrews 4 v 16: "Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favour to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it]."
21. Galatians 3 v 9: "So then, those who are people of faith are blessed and made happy and favoured by God [as partners in fellowship]..."
22. Zechariah 2 v 8: "For thus said the Lord of hosts...he who touches you touches the apple or pupil of His eye."
23. Psalm 17 v 8: "Keep and guard me as the pupil of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings."

24. Isaiah 49 v 16: "Behold, I have indelibly imprinted (tattooed a picture of) you on the palm of each of My hands."
25. Ephesians 1 v 13: "In Him, you also who have heard the Word of Truth, the glad tidings (Gospel) of your salvation, and have believed in and adhered to and relied on Him, were stamped with the seal of the long-promised Holy Spirit."
26. 1 Corinthians 1 v 8: "And He will establish you to the end [keep you steadfast, give you strength, and guarantee your vindication; He will be your warrant against all accusation or indictment so that you will be] guiltless and irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)."
27. 2 Corinthians 3 v 18: "And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendour and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit."
28. Philippians 1 v 6: "And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you."
29. Ephesians 2 v 10: "For we are God's [own handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live.]"
30. 2 Corinthians 5 v 20: "So we are Christ's ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us. We [as Christ's personal representatives] beg you for His sake to lay hold of the divine favour [now offered to you] and be reconciled to God."
31. Colossians 2 v 10: "And you are in Him, made full and having come to fullness of life [in Christ you too are filled with the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and reach full spiritual stature]."
32. 1 Corinthians 6 v 19 - 20: "Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own, You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, honour God and bring glory to Him in your body."
33. 1 Corinthians 2 v 16: "For who has known and understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? But we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah) and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart."
34. Romans 8 v 17: "And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory."
35. Colossians 1 v 12: "Giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified and made us fit to share the portion which is the inheritance of the saints (God's holy people) in the Light."
36. Ephesians 1 v 11: "In Him we were also made [God's] heritage (portion) and we obtained an inheritance; for we had been foreordained (chosen and appointed beforehand) in accordance with His purpose..."
37. Galatians 3 v 13: "Christ purchased our freedom [redeeming us] from the curse (doom) of the Law [and its condemnation] by [Himself] becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in the Scriptures], Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (is crucified)."
38. 1 Peter 1 v 18 – 19: "You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold. But [you were purchased] with the precious blood of Christ (the Messiah)..."

- 39.** John 8 v 36: “So if the Son liberates you [makes you free men], then you are really and unquestionably free.”
- 40.** Galatians 5 v 1: “In this freedom Christ has made us free [and completely liberated us]; stand fast then and do not be hampered and held ensnared and submit again to a yoke of slavery [which you have once put off].”
- 41.** Romans 6 v 11: “Even so consider yourselves also dead to sin and your relation to it broken, but alive to God [living in unbroken fellowship with Him] in Christ Jesus.”
- 42.** Ephesians 2 v 5-6: “Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ, [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself...] it is by grace (His favour and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation). And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One)”
- 43.** 1 John 5 v 18: “We know [absolutely] that anyone born of God does not [deliberately and knowingly] practice committing sin but the One Who was begotten of God (i.e. Jesus) carefully watches over and protects him [Christ’s divine presence within him preserves him against evil], and the wicked one does not lay hold (get a grip) on him or touch [him].”
- 44.** 2 Peter 1 v 3 -4: “According to His divine power, God has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us to glory and virtue: whereby He has given to us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature...”
- 45.** Ephesians 1 v 3: “May blessing ...be to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual (given by the Holy Spirit) blessing in the heavenly realm!”
- 46.** Colossians 2 v 6-7: “Therefore as you have received Jesus Christ the Lord, so walk in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”
- 47.** Mathew 16 v 20: “...For truly I say to you, if you have faith [that is living] like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, Move from here to yonder place, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”
- 48.** 1 John 5 v 4 – 5: “For whatever is born of God is victorious over the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, even our faith. Who is it that is victorious over [that conquers] the world but He who believes that Jesus is the Son of God [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on that fact]?”
- 49.** Revelations 12 v 11: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”
- 50.** Romans 8 v 37: “Yet amidst all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us.”
- 51.** 2 Corinthians 2 v 14: “But thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph [as trophies of Christ’s victory] and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere.”
- 52.** Ephesians 6 v 10: “In conclusion, be strong in the Lord [be empowered through your union with Him]; draw your strength from Him [that strength which His boundless might provides].”
- 53.** Deuteronomy 28 v 13: “And the Lord shall make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God and are watchful to do them.”
- 54.** 1 John 4 v 4: “Little children, you are of God [you belong to Him] and have [already] defeated and overcome them, because He Who lives in you is greater (mightier) than he who is in the world.”

- 55.** 1 John 14 v 12 – 14: “I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will even do greater things than these, because I go to the Father, And I will do [I myself will grant] whatever you ask in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], so that the Father may be glorified and extolled in (through) the Son. [Yes] I will grant [I Myself will do for you] whatever you shall ask in My Name..”
- 56.** Mark 16 v 17-18: “And these attesting signs will accompany those who believe: In My Name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; they will pick up serpents; and [even] if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well.”
- 57.** 1 John 4 v 17: “In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him], because as He is, so are we in this world.”
- 58.** Ephesians 1 v 19-20: “And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in heavenly [places]. ”

Chapter 8:

Practical Application: How to Renew Your Mind

The toxic mind-set that stimulates the series of physical reactions (described in chapter 2) that lead to addictions is a low self-esteem, guilt, shame, self-disapproval, self-rejection, self-bitterness and self-hatred. Therefore in order to overcome addictions this toxic mind-set that causes it needs to be dealt with through renewing the mind which means changing your thinking to the way that God thinks. The first step towards renewing your mind is to find out how God thinks through studying His Word – which is what we did in the previous chapter. This chapter deals further with how to practically renew your mind so that you can overcome a low self-esteem and ultimately overcome addictions.

1. SPEND TIME IN HIS PRESENCE – THIS IS WHERE THE CHANGE HAPPENS!

Galatians 5 v 22 – 23: “But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His Presence within accomplishes] is love, joy, peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].”

The Bible says that **the work that His Presence** will accomplish within you is the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The nine fruits of the Holy Spirit are characteristics of God’s incredible nature and as a work of the Holy Spirit it should become part of our nature and character! One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit/characteristics of God is self-control which is especially important in overcoming addictions! So we want to change and develop the fruits of the Spirit! But how? Well, Jesus said that the only way you are going to see the fruit of the Holy Spirit manifested in your life is by abiding in the Vine – that means spending time in His Presence in intimate fellowship with Him.

John 15 v 4 – 5 & 7: “Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in Him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing. If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.”

Spending time with the Lord in His Presence on a daily basis is a vital necessity to bringing about change and developing the fruits of the Holy Spirit. If you try to renew your mind and overcome addictions or bring about any positive change in your life without spending time in His Presence, you are doing it in your own strength and it won’t work – you will fail and just end up defeated, discouraged and frustrated.

The worst mistake you can make after reading this book is to see the truth in it, get excited about it and go off on a mission to change yourself... you cannot change yourself! The only One who can change you is the Lord through His Holy Spirit!

2 Corinthians 3 v 16 – 18: “¹⁶But whenever a person turns [in repentance] to the Lord, the veil is stripped off and taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (emancipation from bondage, freedom). ¹⁸And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transformed into His very own image in ever increasing splendour and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.”

Notice in 2 Corinthians 3 v 16 – 18, it says that the change that takes us from glory to glory “...comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

Philippians 2 v 12 – 13: “¹²...work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ). ¹³[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.”

Philippians 2 v 12 warns us to work out our own salvation (which means to go through the process of sanctification where from glory to glory we become more like Jesus) but then verse 13 says – not in your own strength! It is God who brings about the change! But...the change only happens in His presence! Galatians 5 v 22 says that **the work that His Presence will accomplish within you** is the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said the only way you will bear the fruit (including self-control) is by staying vitally united to the Vine!

So the correct way to respond to all this when you see the need for change in your life is to spend time with God because in His presence and His Word is where the change happens! The best way I can explain this is to compare it with a farmer who plants maize in his field. What he does is he plants the seed in the soil and then regularly irrigates the seed with water...and then a miracle happens whereby that seed grows into a plant and bears fruit! He doesn't go and perform micro-surgery on that seed everyday and try and change it and build it himself into a plant – it just happens as a miracle of God's creation! The same applies to our journey of sanctification, change and the process of overcoming. You cannot use your will power to change yourself, but you can use your will power to discipline yourself to spend time in God's presence (that is equivalent to putting the seed in the soil where change can happen) and then regularly watering the seed is equivalent to the washing of the water of the Word – in other words renewing your mind by meditating on the Word every day. And as you spend time in God's presence and in the Word, a miracle happens whereby you suddenly notice that your thinking and behaviour is changing!... you are becoming more like Him and you see the fruit of the Holy Spirit manifesting in your life...and as you start to develop self-control, love and the other gifts and characteristics of the Holy Spirit...the foundation of addictions is broken and victory is yours!

SO SPEND AS MUCH TIME IN HIS PRESENCE AS YOU CAN – GET TO KNOW THE FATHER MORE!

I suggest that the first thing you must do before attempting to give up the thing that you are addicted to (for example alcohol or cigarettes), is for the next couple of weeks (or months), just draw close to God. If you're really serious about wanting to be set free from your addiction – spend as much time with Him as you can and enjoy fellowship in His presence. ***You need to get to know the Father more.***

Exodus 33 v 13 - 14: “Father show me Your ways, that I may know You [progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with You, perceiving and recognizing and understanding You more strongly and clearly]. And the Lord said, My Presence shall go with you and I will give you rest.”

You may have been attending church for years... but you still may not **know** Him. The only way you are going to get to know Him is to **spend time with Him**. I'm not talking about five minutes here and there, I'm talking about getting serious. I'm talking about setting aside a decent amount of time every single day to just sit at the Father's feet and fellowship with Him...this involves talking to Him, listening for His voice speaking to you in your heart, getting to know Him through reading His Word, and worshipping Him in that quiet place where it is just you and Him. What is a decent amount of time? Well that's up to you. It depends how serious you are. You will get to know the Father as much as you want to know Him. John was the disciple who put his head on Jesus' chest – he was the closest to Jesus (not because Jesus favoured him above the other disciples) but because John wanted to be.

Exodus 33 v 14 **“And the Lord said, My Presence shall go with you and I will give you rest.”**

The only true Comforter is the Holy Spirit. **John 14 v 26** says that the Holy Spirit is **“the Comforter (Counsellor, Helper, Intercessor (i.e. He prays for you on your behalf), Advocate, Strengthener and Standby).”** It is too hard to give up an addiction independently in your own strength. **“Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord!” (Zechariah 4 v 6).** Only by the power of the Holy Spirit will you be able to overcome your addictions: He is your Helper, Strengthener and Standby. He will enable you to do what you cannot do – and I might add, with ease what is too difficult without Him. If you have never been filled with the Holy Spirit I encourage you to pray, **“Father I ask You please to fill me with the Holy Spirit!”**

Jesus said in **Luke 11 v 11 – 12: “What father among you, if his son asks for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone; or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts [gifts that are to their advantage] to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask and continue to ask Him!”**

As well as spending extra time with God, I recommend that you go on a fast. In your addiction your body and what you feel has become your Lord. Fasting is a wonderful way to subdue the flesh. The reason you fast is not to get something from God, it is to

meet with God. Fasting is about drawing away from the world and drawing close to God – this is where you separate yourself from everything else to develop a more intimate relationship with Him.

2. WHILST IN HIS PRESENCE – HAVE A THINKING TIME!

The first important step is to spend as much time with God as you can – this is where you set aside time just to invest in your relationship with Him in prayer, worship and fellowship with Him. But whilst spending time in His Presence, also have a “thinking time”. This means purposefully setting aside time where you sit and meditate on Scriptures relevant to the area that you need breakthrough and victory in (in this case Scriptures about who you are in Christ in the previous chapter). In your thinking time, close your eyes and purposefully and actively think about, meditate on and speak the Word of God to yourself until you think like God thinks – which is to see yourself as God sees you.

For example, **“I am a precious woman (or man) of great value and worth because Jesus, the King of kings, died and paid a great price for me. I am a royal daughter (or son) for I have a crown of glory and honour on my head, and I am wearing Jesus’ royal robes of righteousness** (Isaiah 61v10; Psalm 8 v5). **God accepts and approves of me** (Jeremiah 1 v 5).” As you meditate on these Scriptures you must think about how they are relevant to you and your everyday life – picture yourself wearing Jesus’ robe of righteousness and a crown of glory and honour on your head etc.

3. TAKE YOUR THOUGHTS CAPTIVE DURING THE REST OF THE DAY

2 Corinthians 10 v 4 – 5: “For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of the flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds. ⁵[In as much as we] refute arguments and theories and reasoning’s and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought away captive into the obedience of Christ.”

There is no point in having a thinking time where you purposefully meditate on Scriptures about Who you are in Christ and then spend the rest of the day in your old toxic mind-set of a low self-esteem and self-hatred, as you would be cancelling out the benefits of the effort you invested in your thinking time! So you also need to take your thoughts captive during the rest of the day!

How do you take your thoughts captive?

1. **Recognize the source of your thoughts:** When a thought comes into your mind with a guilt, shame, condemnation, self-hatred etc. in its content, you must recognize that those are not your thoughts even though they come in the first person, they come from the accusing spirit. If thoughts come into your mind such as, “I feel like a smoke or drink” ...recognize that that is not your thought – so don’t fall into agreement with it!
2. When you recognize thoughts that are from the enemy, with the help of the Holy Spirit, use your free will to stop yourself from meditating on them (i.e. take those thoughts captive) and instead **purposefully chuck them out.**
3. Then you **replace those thoughts (satan’s lie) with the Truth of God’s Word** i.e. the Scriptures about who you are in Christ that you were meditating on in your thinking time.

4. SPEAK OUT SCRIPTURE DURING YOUR THINKING TIMES

In the previous chapter I emphasized the importance of speaking like the new you. When you are having your thinking times – don’t just think about and meditate on those Scriptures – also purposefully speak them out!

Biblical reason why: Romans 10 v 17 says that faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God.

Medical reason why: By speaking out Scripture, science says that you will renew your mind three times quicker! When you speak out those Scriptures in your thinking time, you hear what you say and that information goes back into your brain through your ears and you build healthy long term memories three times faster, as well as reinforce them and make them stronger.

How: A practical way to do this is to make a Faith Confession which contains all the relevant Scriptures you need to renew your mind with – in the previous chapter I included a faith confession of who you are in Christ to help you renew your mind and build a healthy self-esteem. I encourage you to speak that faith confession out every day in your thinking times until you have victory in that area. Below is also a faith confession specifically for addictions, which I recommend you also speak out every day – not only in your thinking times, but also in those moments when you are in temptation or struggling with thoughts from the enemy. I recommend that you write this faith confession out for yourself and carry it with you everywhere you go, so that you have it on hand when you need it. The Scriptures used in this faith confession are listed at the end – think on these in your thinking times too!

FAITH CONFESSION FOR ADDICTIONS

I am finished with living with the dissatisfaction of living below my potential, the bondage of addictions and the effects that it has on my body, relationships, finances etc. and of allowing the devil to rob me of years through the lie of procrastination. With the help of the Holy Spirit I choose once and for all to lay this down and not pick it up again because I no longer want any part of it.

The cravings in my body are just a reminder to me of how much I need You and Your love – Father only You can fulfil and satisfy me. So I receive Your love today once again and I believe that You do love me because Your Word says so. John 16 v 27 says that the Father Himself tenderly loves me! I am so precious – and of such great value and worth to You – that You sent Your only Son to pay the price for me (John 3 v 16). I was worth the life of the King of Kings!

Father, I ask You to grant me out of the rich treasury of Your glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in my inner man by the Holy Spirit [Himself indwelling in my innermost being and personality]. May Christ through my faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in my heart! May I be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, that I may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love], what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it]; [That I may really come] to know [practically through experience for myself] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that I may be filled [through all my being] with all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]! Father, You by Your power that is at work within me are able to [carry out Your purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that I [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond my highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes or dreams]. (Ephesians 3 v 14 – 20)

The blood of Jesus has washed away my guilt and shame, and cleansed me of all unrighteousness (1 John 1 v 9) and there is now no condemnation for me in Christ Jesus because I now choose to walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh (Romans 8 v 1). I am now wearing His royal robe of righteousness and crown of glory and honour on my head (Isaiah 61 v10; Psalm 8 v5). God accepts and approves of me and I am in right relationship with Him (Jeremiah 1 v 5, 2 Corinthians 5 v 21). So I accept and approve of myself. I love who I am and the way that I am made (Psalm 139 v 14). I am no longer in bondage to and a slave to fear – for I am a child of God! (Romans 8 v 15 – 16). He is my Father, my King, my Lord and my Master! (Name the substance you were addicted to) is no longer my lord and my master and I lay down that idol at the feet of Jesus (1 John 5 v 21; Romans 6 v 12, 13 and 16)...not by might, not by power, but by Your Holy Spirit Who is my Comforter, Helper, Intercessor, Strengtheners and Standby (John 14 v 26; Zechariah 4 v 6).

Father, I dedicate my body to You as a living sacrifice as my spiritual worship. Father I totally surrender my WHOLE being to you – I will love You with my spirit, soul *and* BODY – come and reign in me. I declare that you are Lord over my body. I am not my own, I was brought with a price and purchased with a preciousness, paid for and made His own...so I honour God and bring Him glory in my body. I declare that my body is Your Temple (1 Corinthians 6 v 19 – 20) – it is holy and devoted to You, it is consecrated and set apart for You (Romans 12 v 1) – that I may be a vessel of honour, ready for Your use (2 Timothy 2 v 21). My health is developed to its maximum potential and I declare that I will live my full 120 years (Genesis 6 v 3) in divine health so that I will fulfil my God given destiny – I will do all that You have called me to do (Ephesians 2 v 10) and I will leave behind a legacy of Your love. I will be an example and inspiration and living testimony of God's best – I will glorify you in my eating, drinking and in my body (1 Corinthians 10 v 31).

Father I can do what You say I can do! I am a victorious over-comer (1 John 5 v 4; Revelations 2 v 11), a mighty man (or woman) of valour a champion overcoming warrior, who possesses dignity and honour (Judges 6 v12). I am more than a conqueror! (Romans 8

v 35). All circumstances are under my feet (Psalm 8 v 6). In all things I gain a surpassing victory (Rom 8 v 37) and in all things God leads me to triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2 v 14). Through my union with God, I am strong in the Lord and the power of His might (Ephesians 6 v 10). I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me. I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; Because I believe in, lean on, trust and rely on God, I do the things that Jesus did, and greater things will I do, for His Spirit within me knows no limit. (John 14 v 12 – 14). Therefore I believe that all things are possible and limit not the Holy One within me (Philippians 4 v 13). I received power when the Holy Spirit came upon me and now I have the anointing of discipline and self-control...and I would rather have the pain of discipline, than the pain of regret for missing out on all God has for me. Thank You Father that You are using this area of my life to teach me to sow to the Spirit and not to the flesh – to allow the fruit of discipline, self-control, faithfulness, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and gentleness to be developed in me which will then flow over into other areas of my life (Galatians 5 v 22 – 23); I have been delivered out of the control and dominion of darkness and have been transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1 v 13). I have authority over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10 v 19) so I no longer need to give into him because Jesus defeated the devil on the cross and made a public display and an embarrassment of the devil and his kingdom as He triumphed over him – and I will do the same with each right choice that I make because He gave me the authority and the victory to say no to temptation and to defeat and overcome the devil (Colossians 2 v 15). I am a child of God and I belong to Him and have already defeated and overcome this addiction because He Who lives in me is greater and mightier than he who is in the world (1 John 4 v 4). I am determined in Him – I will not give up or give in (Galatians 6 v 9) – I will be consistent and faithful in obedience day after day after day until I cross that finish line of this journey to freedom in victory. As Jesus is, so am I in this world (1 John 4 v 17) and the immeasurable, unlimited and surpassing power of God is on the inside of me! (Ephesians 1 v 19). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in me! (Ephesians 1 v 20). And with this same power I am set free from the bondage of addictions...and whom the Son sets free – is really and unquestionably free! (John 8 v 36)

SCRIPTURES FOR THE FAITH CONFESSION FOR ADDICTIONS:

(In order of appearance)

1. John 16 v 27: **“For the Father Himself [tenderly] loves you** because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from the Father.”
2. John 3 v 16: **“For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal lasting life.”**
3. 1 John 1 v 9: **“If we [freely admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action].”**
4. Romans 8 v 1 **“Therefore [there is] now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live [and] walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit.”**
5. Isaiah 61 v 10: **“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with jewels.”**
6. Psalm 8 v 4 – 6 **“What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of [earthborn] man that You care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honour. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”**
7. Jeremiah 1 v 5: **“Before I formed you in the womb I knew [and] approved of you [as My chosen instrument], and before you were born I separated and set you apart, consecrating you...”**
8. Psalm 139 v 14 – 15: **“I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are Your works; And that my soul knows very well! (KJV) My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and] intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colors] in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, and when as yet there was**

none of them. How precious and weighty also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the some of them!" (Amplified Bible)

9. Romans 8 v 15 - 16; "For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more into the bondage of fear, You have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing son-ship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit [assuring us] that we are children of God."
10. 1 John 5 v 21: Little children, keep yourselves from idols (false gods)—[from anything and everything that would occupy the place in your heart due to God, from any sort of substitute for Him that would take first place in your life].
11. Romans 6 v 12, 13 and 16: "¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. ¹³Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God...¹⁶Do you now know, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servant you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?"
12. Zechariah 4 v 6: "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord!"
13. John 14 v 26: "But the Comforter (Counsellor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthenener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you."
14. 1 Corinthians 6 v 19 - 20: "Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own, You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, honour God and bring glory to Him in your body."
15. Romans 12 v 1 - 2: "¹I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]." *Amplified Bible*
16. Romans 12 v 1 -2 from the Message Bible: "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing that you can do for Him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well formed maturity in you."
17. 2 Timothy 2 v 21: "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."
18. Ephesians 2 v 10: "For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live]."
19. 1 Corinthians 10 v 31: "So then, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you may do, do all for the honour and glory of God."
20. Galatians 6 v 9: "And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint."

21. 1 John 5 v 4 – 5: “For whatever is born of God is victorious over the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, even our faith. Who is it that is victorious over [that conquers] the world but He who believes that Jesus is the Son of God [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on that fact]?”
22. Revelations 12 v 11: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”
23. Romans 8 v 37: “Yet amidst all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us.”
24. 2 Corinthians 2 v 14: “But thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph [as trophies of Christ’s victory] and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere.”
25. Ephesians 6 v 10: “In conclusion, be strong in the Lord [be empowered through your union with Him]; draw your strength from Him [that strength which His boundless might provides].”
26. 1 John 14 v 12 – 14: “I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will even do greater things than these, because I go to the Father, And I will do [I myself will grant] whatever you ask in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], so that the Father may be glorified and extolled in (through) the Son. [Yes] I will grant [I Myself will do for you] whatever you shall ask in My Name..”
27. Philippians 4 v 13: “I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency].”
28. Galatians 5 v 22 – 23: “But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His Presence within accomplishes] is love, joy, peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].”
29. COLOSSIANS 1 v 13: “The Father has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”
30. Luke 10 v 19: “Behold! I have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you.”
31. COLOSSIANS 2 v 15: “God disarmed principalities and powers that were raged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in the cross.”
32. 1 John 4 v 4: “Little children, you are of God [you belong to Him] and have [already] defeated and overcome them, because He Who lives in you is greater (mightier) than he who is in the world.”
33. 1 John 4 v 17: “In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him], because as He is, so are we in this world.”
34. Ephesians 1 v 19-20: “And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in heavenly [places]. ”
35. John 8 v 36: “So if the Son liberates you [makes you free men], then you are really and unquestionably free.”

Chapter 9:

How the Bondage of Addiction is Broken Physically

In chapter 2, you learnt how addictions develop. Let's revise it briefly and then I'm going to explain how the series of reactions that lead to addictions will be broken through taking the steps I have guided you through in the previous chapters.

REMEMBER HOW THE BONDAGE DEVELOPED

Revelations 12 v 10 says that the devil is the accuser of the brethren. An accusing **spirit** gave you thoughts in your mind in the first person such as "I am unworthy, I am not loved, I am unwanted, I am no good, I hate myself, I feel so guilty and bad about this and that etc.". Because those thoughts came in the first person, you did not realize that they were not your thoughts, but that they came from the spiritual realm, from an accusing spirit...and so you followed that way of thinking as if it were you and developed a toxic mind-set of the need to be loved unfulfilled and a low self-esteem, guilt, shame, condemnation, self-disapproval, self-rejection, self-bitterness and self-hatred. As you meditated on those thoughts in your mind which is your **soul**, you built a toxic long term memory in your brain. So that guilt and self-hatred which was initially spiritual became a part of your soul through thinking and then a part of your **body** physically in the form of long term memory. You have become one with an accusing spirit in spirit, soul and body. That toxic long term memory of a low self-esteem, self-hatred and guilt caused the hypothalamus in the brain to lower the serotonin levels which is the feel good hormone.



A deficiency of serotonin results in you feeling bad about yourself and depressed.



Because you are feeling low, you want comfort and so you bring something (the substance you are addicted to e.g. cigarettes, alcohol, drugs etc.) to your mouth which is the contact place for love and security. The lips are the nurturing point.



Bringing the substance to your mouth stimulates the release of the pleasure hormone, dopamine in your brain, causing a temporary comforting, fulfilling, pleasurable sensation (which drowns out the serotonin deficiency and emotional pain)



The dopamine rush is short-lasting and when it wears off, you go back into real life and you bump into your old feelings of a low-self-esteem and being unloved. So you sink into a low and in that moment you are drawn to the memory of the fulfilment you felt when you brought that substance to your mouth and so you reach for it again...and the vicious cycle perpetuates.

Furthermore, after the food or alcohol binge you have just been on, you feel guilty and bad about yourself...and you develop self-loathing, self-disapproval and self-hatred for the effects the addiction is having on your body, your relationships, your finances/job and other areas of your life....and this takes you back to the beginning as in response to those thoughts the hypothalamus lowers the serotonin levels even more...leading to a deeper level of depression...which leads you deeper into the bondage of addictions.

HOW THE CHAINS OF THE BONDAGE ARE BROKEN

When you repented from your heart, you removed the legal right that the accusing spirit and spirit of addiction had to your life. Then when you commanded those spirits to leave in Jesus' Name – you removed the root where the problem began and you were set free to begin to renew your mind.

When the need to be loved is filled with the love of God the Father (as explained in chapter 4 and 5), when you have restored your relationships with others (as explained in chapter 6), when you renew your mind and build a healthy self-esteem (as explained in

chapter 8 and 9), when you spend time in His presence and meditate on His Word (i.e. Scriptures about you are in Christ) and speak it out (e.g. those faith confessions) – you grow healthy long term memories of love and a good self-esteem in your brain which will replace the old toxic memories of the need to be loved unfulfilled and a low self-esteem. When the toxic memories are removed, there is nothing to stimulate the lowering of serotonin in the brain and the series of physical reactions that follow leading to an addiction.

(An in depth teaching of how the brain works, how thoughts form and how they can become toxic leading to the building of toxic memories, as well as how toxic memories can be replaced by healthy memories in the brain is included on pages 7 - 23 in the 4th Edition of the book *“Healing Begins With Sanctification of the Heart”* as well as in session 2 of the DVD series *“No Disease Is Incurable”* – see website www.eagleswings.co.zw for details as to where the material is available)

The more you meditate on those Scriptures of who you are in Christ, the stronger and bigger those healthy memories become. At the same time, when you think on those good thoughts again (in a thinking time each day), the hypothalamus in your brain will sense your fulfilment and signal the brain to release chemicals which flow through those healthy memories you have built in your brain and it generates an electromagnetic wave which reactivates those healthy memories, causing them to squirt out healthy chemicals – for example endorphins and enkephalins which are your body’s natural de-stressing hormones, they are your body’s natural pain killers and they have incredible healing properties. Two other chemicals which are released (which is particularly important for addictions) are dopamine and serotonin!

Now that serotonin is being produced, it corrects the serotonin deficiency and your spirit, soul and body are in balance again. When the serotonin levels are raised and dopamine is being produced (through the experience of a wholesome love relationship with God, yourself and others), you no longer feel depressed and need comfort –therefore you will no longer have the urge to put the substance you have been addicted to (alcohol/food/cigarettes etc.) to your mouth and hence the cravings and cycle of addictions is broken. Eventually the point will come where you are about to smoke or pick up a drink, and you’ll say, “You know what, I don’t need this.” And you’ll put it down for good...and it’ll be done in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in your own strength. Now you are healed of depression and addictions and that is sanctification of the body – the removal of disease and everything that destroys it.

So now that you understand how the bondage of addictions is broken on a spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical level, I pray that you are encouraged, inspired and motivated with the knowledge that ***you can be set free!***

PRAY WITH ME:

“In the Name of Jesus I command my brain and my basal ganglia to be normalized, reformed and conformed to the way it was created from the foundation of the world. I command my genes and my DNA to be made whole and perfect as God originally created them. I command that defective chemistry and that THIQ chemical to be eradicated as a work of the Holy Spirit. I release that craving physiologically from my body – I command it to be gone in Jesus’ Name. I command my taste-buds, throat, lungs, intestines (and any other damaged body part) to be healed, restored and made whole in Jesus’ Name! Calling things that are not as though they were, using the gift of miracles, I speak a creative miracle and a new liver (name any other organ that has been damaged) into being in the Name of Jesus! Father, I have a covenant of divine healing with You (Isaiah 53 v 5). You forgive all my sins and heal all my diseases (Psalm 103 v 3). Therefore on the authority of Your Word and in the Name of Jesus, I claim and declare healing and complete wholeness in my spirit, soul (mind and emotions), brain and body. (Isaiah 61 v 1 – 3).”

Isaiah 61 v 1: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed and qualified me to preach the Gospel of good news to the meek, the poor and the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up and to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the [physical and spiritual] captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound.”

(An in depth teaching on how body parts and organs that are permanently damaged (for example liver cirrhosis in the case of alcoholism) can be re-created with the gift of miracles is explained on pages 122 - 125 in the 4th Edition of the book *“Healing Begins With Sanctification of the Heart”* as well as in session 20 of the DVD series *“No Disease Is Incurable”* – see website www.eagleswings.co.zw for details as to where the material is available)

Chapter 10:

Don't Give Up Until You Cross the Finish Line of the Journey in Victory!

As you come to the end of this book and begin your journey of overcoming and breaking free from the bondage of addictions, I'd like to encourage you with a story that Pastor Henry Wright shared in one of his conferences. It is told as a metaphor but it is also a true story: Henry Wright collects classic cars as a hobby. He had a beautiful convertible 1957 Chevy which had a black top, black leather seats, black plated interior and over-sized mag wheels. This car really purred and growled. People would hoot as they drove past and say, "Hey nice car!" However the truth was that the car was also a bucket of rust. When he would wax and polish it, he had to go softly over the rust bubbles so that they didn't pop. The car looked pretty good from the pew it: it was dressed right and it had all of its charismatic paint on. It was ready to ride. You might have taken it to the show but it would not have even made the first cut because the judges know what is right. So he'd drive this car and everybody would say, "Wow! Great car! What a good looking saint!" But Henry knew that it was just the opposite. Eventually he got tired of driving his hypocrite car and pretending it was all sinless so he took it to a car shop to try to have it repaired. He walked up to the man in the shop and said, "I need a little paint job on this thing, the rust is starting to show." The man in the shop looked at him and said, "You're crazy." Henry said, "You mean a little religious paint on it won't help?" The man said, "You can put a little religious paint on it and it will shine for about six months to a year. Then that rust will come right back and eat right through it all over again. I'd love to take your tithe and pretend that the rust won't come back but I've just got to be honest with you. I don't want to take your money and let you pretend that you are sinless."

Jesus said that you can't put new wine into old wine skins. In the medical field, science has proven that you can't build a new good memory over a toxic memory – you have to first remove the toxic memory by dealing with that toxic mind-set that is was built from! The church has been told to put on Jesus but they have not been told to take off the rust first and then put Jesus back on. If you try to put Jesus on top of the rust, the rust is going to come through. There is one thing about rust: It has a power in it that is unbelievable – there is not one type of paint that can defeat it if it is not eliminated first before you put the coating on. It is the same way with sin: it will eat through every bit of Jesus you coat yourself with until you get it out of your life.

Continuing with our story, the man said to Henry, "I need to take this car and do a restoration if you really want it to be the way it was originally created to be." Henry said, "OK, that sounds good." The man then said, "I'll need this car for two years." Henry exclaimed, "Two years!!! I thought it would just be a week maybe." He said, "No Sir, I'll need it for two years to strip it down to the frame and start over again."

I have had people come to me for help because they have this rust of life and they want a spray job. They want a quick fix or a light switch experience. They want God to supernaturally heal them in an instant. So when I say it may take a year or two to get them straightened out, they say "See you later!" and go look for a healing explosion elsewhere. They want to look good but they don't want to go back to the factory to get fixed because it's too much hard work.

Continuing with our story again, Henry then said to the man, "Well how much is this going to cost?" (This is back in the 1980s when minimum wage was about U.S. \$2,00). He said, "About U.S. \$13 000". Henry sold the car the next week. Today the restored car is worth close to U.S. \$75 000. **Henry didn't have that kind of vision to put the investment into something that would have been worth a fortune if he had just hung on to the concept.** He wishes he had that car today but he can't buy it back because it is too expensive. Well he could buy as rusty one and start over again but even the rusty ones that need a lot of work are U.S. \$25 000.

I share this story because God looks at you like a classic car. There are things from the devil's kingdom that have joined you in your life to give you rust. That rust is called sin (the toxic mind-sets and addictions that came with it) and it is not looking good on you. But God wants to take you back to the factory for a restoration so that He can remove those things that are not pleasing to Him because He has a higher value of you in eternity than you have of yourself for it is written:

1 Corinthians 2 v 9: "Eye has not seen and ear has not heard and has not entered into the heart of man [all that] God has prepared (made and keeps ready) for those who love Him..."

Don't sell your birth right for a plate of stew! Let God begin to take those rust pockets out of your life and let God remake you into what He saw before the foundation of the world and what He saw was not an Esau! What He saw was a son or a daughter of God. So would you hold out in your life for what God saw? Would you be prepared to put in the investment required for you to be restored in spirit, soul and body so that you can have and enjoy life and have it in abundance until it overflows!

Galatians 6 v 9: "And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint."

When you get discouraged and the battle seems endless, remember that you are reprogramming a very worldly, fleshly, carnal mind that has had plenty of practice at freely thinking wrong thoughts without any effort and just following the cravings and demands of your flesh whenever you feel like it. Your mind is like a computer that has had a life time of rubbish programmed into it. So reprogramming it to think like God thinks is not going to happen overnight, it's going to take time and effort. It is difficult but with God's grace it is not impossible. No matter what the condition of your mind and life is like at this moment – don't give up! Keep on keeping on! Little by little, with God's grace, you can take back every piece of ground that the devil has robbed from you. Don't be discouraged if your progress seems slow. Renewing of your mind will take place *little by little*.

Deuteronomy 7 v 22: "And the Lord your God will clear out those nations before you, little by little; you may not consume them quickly, lest the beasts of the field increase among you."

God told the Israelites when they were about to enter the Promised Land that He would defeat their enemies little by little so that the "beasts of the field" which is probably pride would not increase among them. It would be very easy for us to get puffed up with pride if we overcame our problems too easily and too quickly. We live in the microwave age where we like things to happen instantaneously. You didn't get into this mess overnight and sometimes you don't get out of it overnight. The Bible said, "In the same hour the evil spirit departed." It didn't say instantly. Everybody wants the light switch experience – that works about 5% of the time and the rest of it is an application of truth and persevering through the process of renewing your mind.

There have been times when to my surprise the person was instantly healed after simply repenting for the sin behind the disease. However, most people have had to apply the principles of renewing their minds for several weeks, or months as they gradually recovered until they were fully healed. For some people it has taken 30 days, for others it took 90 days and for some it even took one to two years of renewing their minds before they fully recovered from their diseases. I cannot predict God and tell you exactly when you are going to be fully set free from the bondage of addictions. He is Sovereign and His ways and thoughts are far above mine. He heals each person in a different and unique way, depending on the work He wants to do in your character.

So if after praying you don't see an immediate manifestation of your desire, do not be dismayed or go into doubt and unbelief because that means nothing – in the hours, days and months ahead God is performing that which you have set your heart upon. However it is going to be how He wants to do it and it is in His time. There are blocks to healing and one of those blocks is telling God how He is going to do it. You cannot expect God to heal you and set you free on your own terms according to how you think it should be done. As God begins dealing with your heart, work with Him and in time your cravings will disappear. If you are not healed within a reasonable time, don't go into guilt and into anger because that is going to slow you down for several years.

Joyce Meyer says that "Sometimes God takes His time in bringing about our full deliverance because He uses that difficult period of waiting to stretch our faith and let patience have her perfect work. (James 1 v 4)." My grandfather has a saying which I often quote, "God doesn't always pay on Fridays, but He pays on time." When we have to endure the slow progress of being set free from sin and wrong ways of thinking and the bondages that come with it, we learn that apart from God we can do nothing (John 15 v 5). We are kept humble as we learn through experience that we are totally dependent on Him and that we can accomplish nothing long lasting in our own strength. When we attempt to change ourselves in our own strength, fail and "suffer a little while," we realize that only God can deliver us. When the freedom finally comes, we deeply appreciate it because we know that God has done for us what we could not do ourselves.

1 Peter 5 v 10: "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace [Who imparts all blessing and favour], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen and settle you."

When you fail – and you will as you go through the process of changing your thinking and renewing your mind – it doesn't mean you are a failure. You only fail when you give up. Don't get discouraged when you mess up and have a bad day. Just pick yourself

up, wipe the dust off your face and keep on keeping on. As Joyce Meyer says, “When a baby is learning to walk, he falls many, many times before He enjoys the confidence of walking. However, one thing in a baby’s favour is the fact that, even though he may cry for a while after falling, he always gets right back up and tries again.” The Bible says that though the righteous fall seven times the Lord with His hand shall lift them up (Proverbs 24 v 16). Wow, what a promise! Another good saying is, “Three steps forward and two steps back is a good day.” But what happens when you haven’t yet learned how to overcome is that when you take those three steps forward and you lose those two, you just forget that you still got the one! That one step is the foundation for the next step. The Bible says from glory to glory (i.e. little by little) we are being changed into His image!

The devil will do his very best to hinder and discourage you in the process of changing your thinking and renewing your mind. The reason is because he knows that he will no longer control your life and health because he can no longer control your mind. He will no longer be able to keep you in the bondage of addictions once you have removed the mind-sets that cause it. So another way he will try to stop you is with condemnation when you mess up. When he brings those thoughts of condemnation to your mind, you quote Romans 8 v 1 to him. Tell him, “Take your condemnation and hit the road jack! There is now no condemnation for me in Christ because I walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh!” The issue with the devil is that he has already been defeated at the Cross and he is a sore loser. He’s in a panic because he knows that his days are numbered (Daniel 5 v 25 – 28) and he only has a short time left. He’s going to try to convince you that God has lost and he has won. So when the devil discourages you and condemns you with your past – just remind him of his future – he and all his angels are headed for eternal banishment in the lake of fire – that’s their destiny.

Revelations 12 v 12: “...for the devil has come down to you in fierce anger (fury), because he knows that he has [only] a short time [left]!”

Remember it all starts in your thoughts: if you choose to meditate on thoughts like “It’s too difficult, I just can’t do it. I’ll never overcome this; nothing seems to be changing so I may as well just give up. When I pray it’s like talking to a brick wall. God is probably disappointed because I keep failing and messing up, so that is why He is not listening to my prayers.” If you think on thoughts like these you are going to get discouraged and feel condemned. So purposefully choose to take those thoughts which are lies from the enemy captive under the obedience of Christ when they come and replace them with thoughts of encouragement. Joyce Meyer has a very good saying that may encourage you when progress seems slow: “I’m OK and I’m on my way, I’m not where I need to be, but thank God I’m not where I used to be!” Do you already feel uplifted and encouraged by this kind of positive thinking?

Some progress is better than no progress at all – at least you are in the right direction and you are on your way to freedom. Remember it is God Who is all the while at work within you – He is the One bringing about the change and He will be faithful to bring the good work He has started in you to full completion.

Philippians 2 v 13: “[Not in your own strength] for it is God who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.”

Philippians 1 v 6: “And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up until the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.”

So be determined not to give up until you cross the finish line of this journey in victory and experience the freedom that Jesus paid such a high price to give you!

OH AND BE CAREFUL NOT TO FALL INTO THE DEVIL’S CLEVER TRAP: THE LIE OF PROCRASTINATION – putting things off until tomorrow is another form of disobedience that the devil uses to rob us of years, one day at a time. Prayerfully set a date and stick to it!