

SOUL PRESCRIPTION

**FEAR:
FROM DOUBT TO DREAD**

SIN FAMILY #2

MISTRUST ANXIETY
DREAD PANIC
FEAR
DISBELIEF WORRY

BILL BRIGHT & HENRY BRANDT

SOUL PRESCRIPTION

*Experience
True Healing and Freedom*

BILL Bright & Henry Brandt

Foreword by Tim LaHaye

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This book contains stories of people the authors met with over the years. In some cases, names and secondary details have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.

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ISBN 13: 978-1-4141-1223-7

ISBN 10: 1-4141-1223-8

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2008902641

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

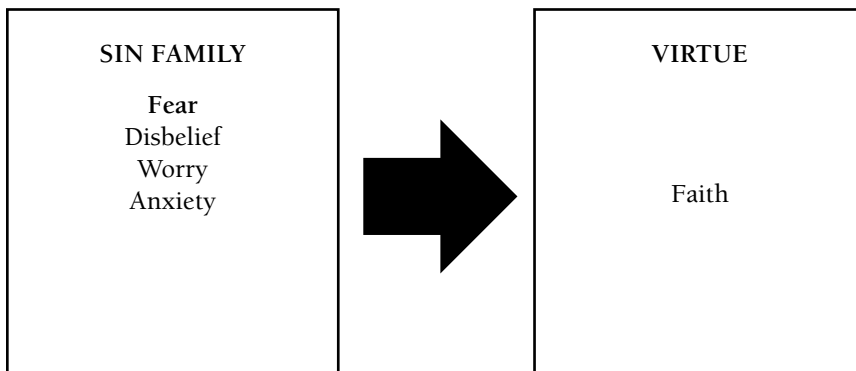
—Psalm 147:3 NIV

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FEAR: FROM DOUBT TO DREAD



Fuss and feverishness, anxiety, intensity, intolerance, instability, pessimism and wobble, and every kind of hurry and worry—these, even on the highest levels,” declared spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill, “are signs of the self-made and self-acting soul; the spiritual parvenu.”¹

A parvenu is someone who has been raised to a new position but has not yet acquired the manner of it. Becoming a child of God certainly qualifies as being given a high position. Are you acting like a parvenu child of God (whether or not you really are new to the faith) because you cannot warm the cold region of fear in your soul?

Certain Christians circle back again and again to the same place of fear or anxiety, whether it relates to their health, their family, their finances, or whatever else may be troubling them. Some fear may be natural and acceptable. But *living in* fear because you refuse to move on is another matter: it is sin. A person can have a sinful fear habit just as surely as an immorality habit or a drunkenness habit.

The problem, to use Underhill's terminology, is our "self-made and self-acting soul." If we are not trusting in God's care for us, we naturally react to our circumstances by trying to figure out how we can meet our own needs. It is a kind of homegrown providence, and it will never do. We know inside that we will never be capable of anticipating all the situations we may face. If we attempt to cut our way out of all the problems that may entangle us, we get stuck in a round of anxiety and dread.

We (Bill and Henry) have had our own times of fear and worry, and so we are empathetic to others who are fearful. However, we are not content merely to make people feel better by helping them cope with their worry. We would rather help them get past the anxiety or the fear altogether. And that means dealing with the sin that lies at the root. Where circumstances might naturally inspire worry, we want Christ's followers to renew their trust in God and move on in confidence of His care.

If you have a fear habit, letting go of your fear and trusting God completely might seem like an impossibility. So let us assure you with Scripture that it is possible to substitute faith for the anxiety and the worry you are presently feeling.

We want Christ's followers to renew their trust in God and move on in confidence of His care.

FEAR AND GOD

Susie outwardly seemed to be a well-poised young wife and mother with everything under control. She was active in her church and attended other Christian gatherings during the week. But secretly she was filled with fears from which psychologists and psychiatrists were unable to free her.

"What can I do?" she asked me (Bill) through her tears. "I have everything to live for and no real reason to be afraid, but I am

consumed with worry and dread. I anticipate all kinds of evil things happening to me, my husband, and my children.”

“Do you believe that God in heaven has the power to remove your fears, Susie?” I asked.

“Yes, I believe that,” she replied.

To reinforce her belief, I read Psalm 34:4 to her.

I prayed to the LORD, and He answered me,
He freed me from all my fears.

Then I asked her if she wanted to join with me in a prayer of faith to ask God to deliver her from her fears as He had delivered the psalmist. She agreed. So together we prayed. Though she experienced no immediate deliverance, with the passing of days, God set Susie free from fear.

Can you relate to Susie? What are your fears about? Be assured that others have had them before you.

Do you fear other people? So did ten of the twelve spies whom Moses sent into the Promised Land to scout out the opposition. This was their report to Moses: “The people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified.... We can’t go up against them! They are stronger than we are!” (Numbers 13:28, 31).

Are you afraid of something bad coming at you from what appears a cold and impersonal nature? The disciples felt the same way when a storm came up as they were sailing in a boat. They woke Jesus and cried out, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” (Matthew 8:25).

The timid spies and the frightened disciples both received criticism from God for their faithlessness. God complained to Moses, “How long will these people treat Me with contempt? Will they never believe Me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them?” (Numbers 14:11). Jesus said to His disciples, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” (Matthew 8:26).

Disbelief of God is a sin, and non-Christians are not the only ones who have a problem with this sin. Though we are saved, we Christians, too, may doubt God’s promises to care for us. Such disbelief lies at the root of our ungodly instances of fear.

Are You Fearful?

The following self-evaluation quiz will help you determine whether you have a tendency toward fear and worry.

- Are you scared of losing your health or wealth or of something bad happening to one you love?
- Do you have trouble sleeping because you are up at night imagining all the things that could go wrong?
- Do you tend to have anxious thoughts about the same thing over and over?
- Do others ever kid you about being a worrywart?
- Do you have a nervous habit like tapping your foot or drumming your fingers?
- Have you ever sought treatment for stress-related symptoms?
- Do you hesitate to make plans because you are worried that things will not turn out well?
- Are your thoughts of the future filled with fear instead of hope?

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.

It is a truism that most of what we fear never comes to pass. And even when bad things do happen (certainly people do face some serious problems sometimes), *God is still in control*. This is when we need the faith to believe that God is in control. There is no cause to give in to fear.

Well, that's not quite right. There is one kind of fear we *should* cultivate: the fear of God. Jesus warned, "Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). This sort of fear is a compound of awe and reverence.

Oswald Chambers said, "The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else." If you have too many of the wrong kinds of fear, maybe you need to get more of the right kind: fear of God. This godly fear comes from recognizing who God really is and deciding to trust in Him.

COURAGE TO WALK ON WATER

The Bible is full of encouragement for the fearful. These are just a few examples:

- The Lord said to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great" (Genesis 15:1).
- "Don't be afraid," he said, "for you are very precious to God. Peace! Be encouraged! Be strong!" (Daniel 10:19).
- The angel who came to Mary to preview the birth of the Lord said, "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!" (Luke 1:30).²

Does it seem reasonable to trust God because of who He is? Or does it seem crazy? George MacDonald wrote, "This is a wise, sane Christian faith: that a man commit himself, his life, and his hopes to God; that God undertakes the special protection of that man; that therefore that man ought not to be afraid of anything."

The apostle Peter had a chance to exhibit what MacDonald assures us is a "sane" faith. The disciples were in a boat, struggling

against a headwind to bring their boat to shore when the following happened:

About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. When the disciples saw Him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," He said. "Take courage. I am here!"

Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

"Yes, come," Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt Me?" When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped.

—Matthew 14:25–32

Peter represents any follower of Christ who has a problem with fear. We know we should trust God, and we even make efforts at acting courageously, but, then our faith falters, and we fear again. Are you ready to put one foot in front of the other and walk across the water to Jesus?

Neil Anderson wrote, "Fear is like a mirage in the desert. It seems so real until you move toward it, then it disappears into thin air. But as long as we back away from fear, it will haunt us and grow in size like a giant."³ Whatever your fear may be, move toward it—and toward Christ—in faith.

"God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7 NASB). We need not live with fear, nor must we give in to worry or anxiety.

AN ANXIOUS HEART

You might not describe your problem as fear. You might think *worry* or *anxiety* describes it better. Sometimes you might not even be sure what you are anxious about. Or, you might have feelings of apprehension that do not rise to the level of fear, though they are troublesome enough. Persistent worry or anxiety is another condition that Christians need not and should not live with.

Meredith tended to worry about what other people thought of her. Her anxiety was particularly intense at work as she constantly wondered how to present herself at meetings or second-guessed what she had said in a conversation. The problem got so intense that Meredith turned to counseling.

After doing a little probing, the counselor was surprised to learn that in fact Meredith was doing well at work and was one of the most popular employees in the office. She was in particular known for her tactfulness. So the truth was that Meredith had no good reason for her worries about her reputation. She was anxious for no good reason, and it stole from the peace God wanted her to have.

C. S. Lewis wrote, “Anxiety is not only a pain which we must ask God to assuage but also a weakness we must ask him to pardon—for he’s told us to take no care for the morrow.” Lewis was referring to a famous passage on worry from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Let’s take a look at it.

That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

“And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares

so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

—Matthew 6:25–34

Bible teacher Joyce Meyer says this passage means “we need to concentrate our full attention on today and stop being so intense and wrought up.”

Calm down and lighten up! Laugh more and worry less. Stop ruining today worrying about yesterday or tomorrow—neither of which we can do anything about. We need to stop wasting our precious “now,” because it will never come again.⁴

If you have a worry problem, we recommend you read Matthew 6:25–34 every day for a month and make it a springboard for prayer.

Life is a day-by-day affair. We do not know all that will happen in the future—*but we do not need to*. God will be with us in the future just as surely as He is with us in the present. Our part is to develop our trust in Him, leaving fear and anxiety behind in the process.

A SINGLE-MINDED APPROACH TO ENDING ANXIETY

The New Testament word for anxiety means “doubled-minded.” That’s the problem with people who have an anxiety habit. With

part of their mind, they are looking to God; but with another part of their mind, they are fretting about what might happen to them. God desires for them to have their mind wholly fixed on Him, for then they could know peace. As the prophet Isaiah confessed to God,

How do we get rid of our anxiety? Not by trying through an act of will to make our worries go away. Rather, by handing them over to God.

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You!

—Isaiah 26:3

But how do we become single-minded, fixing our thoughts entirely on God? How do we get rid of our anxiety? Not by trying through an act of will to make our worries go away. Rather, by handing them over to God. One psalmist wrote,

Please listen and answer me, for I am overwhelmed by my troubles.

—Psalm 55:22

Late in life, the apostle Peter (evidently having learned his lesson when his feet slipped into the waves!) echoed the psalmist in saying, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you” (1 Peter 5:7).

We give our cares to God through the miracle of prayer. That is why Paul advised, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.”

Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 4:6–7

Instead of trying the useless self-talk of worry, assuring ourselves that things will go wrong, we need to be talking to God about our concerns.

TRUST IN GOD

An old scenario goes this way: fear knocked at the door; faith answered; no one was there. In truth, the answer to worry and fear in all their forms is faith in God.

George Müller, director of a network of orphanages in nineteenth-century England, could have wasted much energy worrying about how he would provide for the two thousand orphaned children under his care. But instead he operated on the faith principle. He refused a salary and trusted that his material needs and those of his orphanages would be met entirely by seeking God in prayer. And do you know what? That is just what happened. Müller once said, “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith; and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.”

Fear knocked at the door; faith answered; no one was there.

Similarly, Neil Anderson defined courage as “making the choice to walk by faith and do what’s right even in the face of fear.” He added, “Being alive and free in Christ doesn’t mean that we will never feel fear. It means that such fears no longer have any power over us if we exercise our faith in God.”⁵

The Scriptures teach us that “perfect love expels all fear” (1 John 4:18). We acquire such love “as we live in God” (verse 17). This means exercising faith and growing in faith over time. In this way, we can even cease to be “slaves to the fear of dying” (Hebrews 2:15). Imagine that—no fear of death!

Faith is not the risk it seems. Our faith has a solid basis because the One whom we trust is all-powerful and cares about us. We can be free from anxiety and full of joy because, as Philippians 4:5 (NIV) says, “The Lord is near.”

John Edmund Haggai, author of *How to Win over Worry*, commented on that verse.

A literal translation of Philippians 4:5b shows that the verb is missing—“the Lord near.” No verb was needed. It is abrupt, staccato. It is a bolt of light. The awareness of His nearness gives great calm in the storm and stress of life.

Living in the awareness of that fact brings about a behavioral change that cannot be explained in human terms. It's often the only major difference between a defeated Christian and a victorious Christian. Fortune may have eluded you. Professional success, which you have sought so laboriously, may have slipped through your fingers. Love may have betrayed you. All these may be true. But the Lord is near! There is no mockery in that statement.⁶

Do you want more faith that the Lord is near to you for help? If so, you are not alone in that desire. A father who sought Jesus' healing power for his son said to Jesus, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). The disciples likewise one time appealed to Jesus, "Show us how to increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

The apostle John wrote, "We are confident that He hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases Him. And since we know He hears us when we make our requests, we also know that He will give us what we ask for" (1 John 5:14–15). Surely having faith is in line with God's will. So if we ask Him for it, He will give it. We've got His Word on that.

With the Spirit's supernatural enabling, you can be a person of greater faith and you can shed your fear habit for good. Let the healing in this area of your life begin now.

SOUL PRESCRIPTION FOR FEAR

Are you struggling with fear, worry, or a related sin habit? We have outlined a five-step process to help you repent and heal in this area of your life. Take all the time you need with each of the steps below.

Step 1: Adopt a Correct View of God

If you are worried, fearful, or despairing, chances are that you are failing to see just how capable and willing God is to keep all His promises to you. Consider these truths:

- God is faithful; He will always be there for you.

The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each morning.

—Lamentations 3:22–23

- God is all-powerful, and He uses that power for your good.

He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

—Isaiah 40:29

Make sure your ideas about God our protector match what He says about Himself in the Bible. Why worry about anything when the Creator of the universe is watching over you?

Step 2: Revise Your False Beliefs

How do ideas about people or life influence your worry-related habit? Your ideas may have gotten off track in a number of different ways, but think about these possibilities:

- Do you believe that you must pull yourself up by your own bootstraps?

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God.

—2 Corinthians 3:5

- Do you think of yourself as a born loser in the game of life?

I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

—Philippians 4:13

- Do you believe that your circumstances are beyond God's power to help?

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.

—Philippians 4:6

Scan the Bible for its messages about how unnecessary worry really is. Make a conscious decision to identify and abandon any concepts about yourself, others, or life in general that contribute to your worry. Believe God, and trust in His power to meet your every need.

Step 3: Repent of Your Sin

What type of worry-related habit do you have? Is it fear? Is it anxiety? Are you discouraged or nervous or impatient? Make sure you are clear about your specific problem.

If you are prepared to leave your sin behind, pray a prayer of confession and commitment. You may use the prayer below, or you may pray in your own words.

God, I have a problem in the area of _____, and I know it is sin. I know also that my failure to trust You has grieved You. I am sorry for that. Please forgive me for my sin. Cleanse me of it completely now—wash it away as if it had never existed. Give me now the ability to live my life in Your strength and not in mine. Lord, I believe; help me in my unbelief. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

If you have harmed others with your sin, apologize to them. Seek reconciliation and offer restitution where appropriate.

Step 4: Defend against Spiritual Attacks

The last place the enemies of your soul want to see you is at rest in the Lord's grace. You have put your trust in God; now you must keep it there.

- Watch out for the false values that the world system entices you to adopt. The world will say you have to take care of yourself, and this will naturally lead to worry. In God's value system, trust in Him takes the place of self-effort.
- Watch out for the way your flesh (that is, your sinful nature) attempts to have you return to that paradoxical feeling of control that comes from worrying about the unknown. When the feeling comes upon you, tell the flesh, "You're already dead! I don't have to do what you want." Rely on the Spirit's help to remain strong in your faith.
- Watch out for Satan's schemes to persuade you to worry about your circumstances again. You can resist him with the "shield of faith" that God gives as a part of our spiritual armor (see Ephesians 6:10–18).

Do not expect the temptation to be anxious, fearful, or discouraged to disappear any time soon. Remember that God is bigger than the world, the flesh, and the Devil. With Him on your side, you are a winner!

Step 5: Flee Temptation

In practical terms, certain situations can "give you an excuse" to worry. So take active steps to prevent returning to your bad habits of the past.

- Focus on your relationship with God.
In your personal devotional time, focus on God as your provider and sanctuary. Use the power of praise and thankfulness to bolster your faith in Him.
- Latch on to God's promises.
Many passages in Scripture speak of God's care for us. Search out ones that give you the most comfort and confidence, then commit them to memory. Here is one to memorize:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity,
but of power, love and self-discipline.

—2 Timothy 1:7

- Establish safeguards.
Take practical steps to cut off common sources of temptation. These should be strategies tailor-made for you, but here are some examples to get you started thinking:
 - If you begin to feel discouraged, rehearse in your mind the victories that God has given you in the past.
 - If you are feeling fearful about tasks you need to accomplish, break it down into small steps and take them one at a time.
 - If you are prone to nervousness, learn to meditate on God.
 - Ask a trusted Christian friend to hold you accountable for not worrying nor fearing so much.

- Expect victory.
God has promised to always take care of you, and He will. Believe that He will enable you to beat the worry habit and build a stronger faith.

Visit www.SoulPrescription.com for more insights and resources, and to download a free leader's guide for small group Bible studies.

Appendix A



HOW TO KNOW GOD PERSONALLY

Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so there are spiritual laws that govern your relationship with God.

Law 1: *God loves you and created you to know Him personally.*

God's Love

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

—John 3:16

God's Plan

This is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

—John 17:3

What prevents us from knowing God personally?

Law 2: *People are sinful and separated from God, so we cannot know Him personally or experience His love.*

Human Beings Are Sinful

All have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.

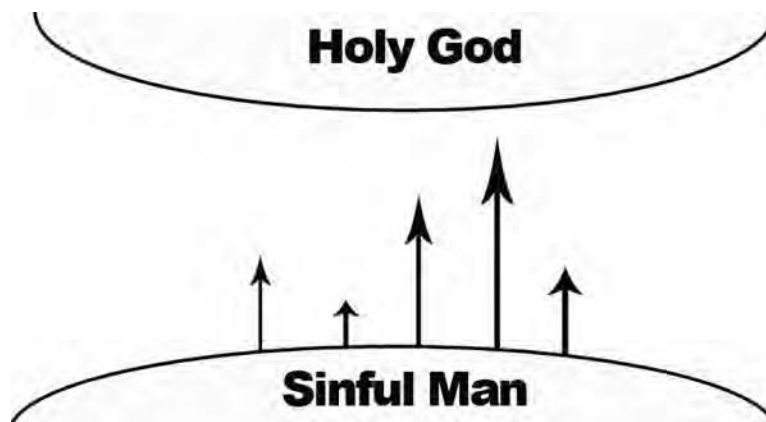
—Romans 3:23

The human race was created to have fellowship with God. But because of our own stubborn self-will, we chose to go our own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

Human Beings Are Separated

The wages of sin is death [spiritual separation from God].

—Romans 6:23



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and humanity is sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that people are continually trying to reach God and establish a personal relationship with Him through their own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion—but they inevitably fail.

The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf.

Law 3: *Jesus Christ is God's only provision for human sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience God's love.*

He Died in Our Place

God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

—Romans 5:8

He Rose from the Dead

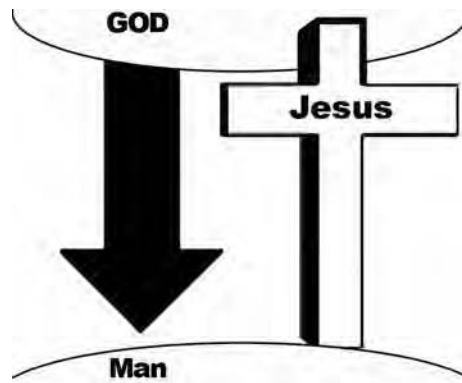
Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time.

—1 Corinthians 15:3–6

He Is the Only Way to God

Jesus told [Thomas], “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

—John 14:6



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place and pay the penalty for our sins.

It is not enough just to know these truths.

Law 4: *We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then we can know God personally and experience His love.*

We Must Receive Christ

To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

—John 1:12

We Receive Christ through Faith

God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

—Ephesians 2:8–9

When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth

After dark one evening, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to speak with Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are proof enough that God is with you."

Jesus replied, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

Jesus replied, "The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. So don't be surprised at my statement that you must be born again. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

—John 3:1–8

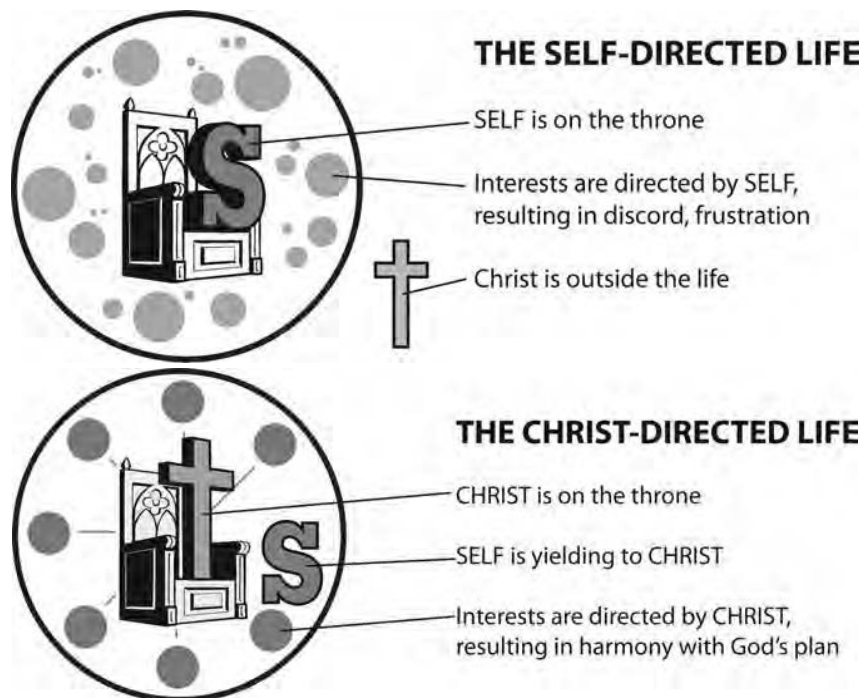
We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation

[Christ said,] "Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends."

—Revelation 3:20

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive us of our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of our will.

These two circles represent two kinds of lives.



Which circle best represents your life?

Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

You Can Receive Christ Right Now by Faith through Prayer

Prayer is talking with God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

How to Know That Christ Is in Your Life

Did you receive Christ into your life? According to His promise in Revelation 3:20, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said He would come into your life and be your friend so you can know Him personally. Would He mislead you? On what authority do you know that God has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word.)

The Bible Promises Eternal Life to All Who Receive Christ

“This is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. So whoever has God’s Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life. I write this to you who believe in the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.”

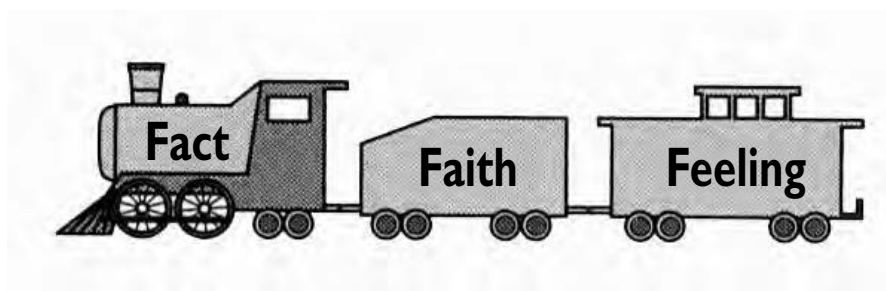
—1 John 5:11–13

Thank God often that Christ is in your life and that He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you and that you have eternal life from the very moment you invite Him in. He will not deceive you.

An important reminder...

Do Not Depend on Feelings

The promise of God’s Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This train diagram illustrates the relationship among fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience). (Read John 14:21.)



The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, we as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

Now That You Have Received Christ

The moment you received Christ by faith, as an act of your will, many things happened, including the following:

- Christ came into your life (Revelation 3:20; Colossians 1:27).
- Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14).
- You became a child of God (John 1:12).
- You received eternal life (John 5:24).
- You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Can you think of anything more wonderful that could happen to you than entering into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Would you like to thank God in prayer right now for what He has done for you? By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.

Suggestions for Christian Growth

Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. “The righteous man shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life and to practice the following:

- G** Go to God in prayer daily (John 15:7).
- R** Read God’s Word daily, beginning with the gospel of John (Acts 17:11).
- O** Obey God moment by moment (John 14:21).
- W** Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).
- T** Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).
- H** Holy Spirit—allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness (Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16–17).

Fellowship in a Good Church

God's Word admonishes us to "not neglect our meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25). Several logs burn brightly together, but put one aside on the cold hearth and the fire goes out. So it is with your relationship with other Christians. If you do not belong to a church, do not wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and His Word is preached. Start this week and make plans to attend regularly.

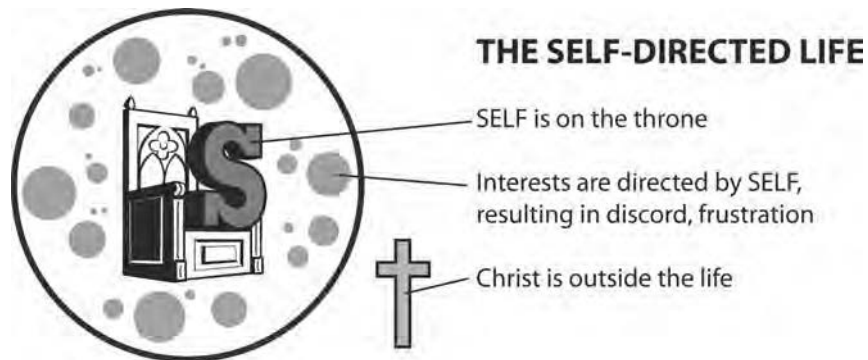
Appendix B



HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Every day can be an exciting adventure for the Christian who knows the reality of being filled with the Holy Spirit and who lives constantly, moment by moment, under His gracious direction.

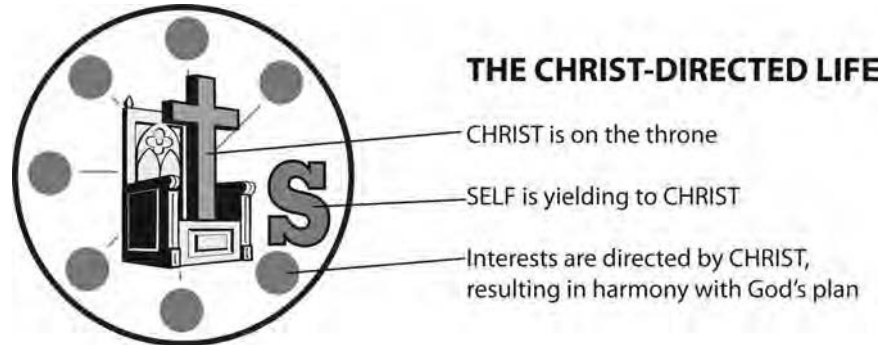
The Bible tells us there are three kinds of people:



1. The Natural Person: One who has not received Christ

People who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means.

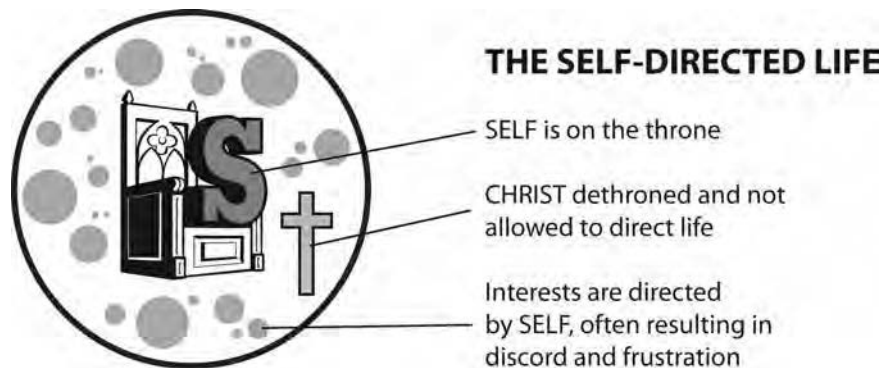
—1 Corinthians 2:14



2. **The Spiritual Person:** One who is directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit

We who have the Spirit understand these things.... We have the mind of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 2:15–16



3. **The Worldly (Carnal) Person:** One who has received Christ but who lives in defeat because the person is trying to live the Christian life in his or her own strength

Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to mature Christians. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life. I had to feed you with milk and not with solid food, because you couldn't handle anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, for you are still controlled by your own sinful desires. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your own desires? You are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord.

—1 Corinthians 3:1–3

The following are four principles for living the Spirit-filled life:

1. God has provided for us an abundant and fruitful Christian life.

[Jesus said,] “My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”

—John 10:10

[Jesus said,] “I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

—John 15:5

When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

—Galatians 5:22–23

When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

—Acts 1:8

The following are some personal traits of the spiritual person that result from trusting God:

Christ-centered
Empowered by the Holy Spirit
Introduces others to Christ
Effective prayer life
Understands God’s Word



Understands God’s Word
Trusts and obeys God
Experiences love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness,
faithfulness, gentleness,
goodness, and self-control

The degree to which these traits are manifested in the life depends on (1) the extent to which the Christian trusts the Lord with every detail of life and (2) his or her maturity in Christ. One who is only beginning to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit should not be discouraged if he or she is not as fruitful as more mature Christians who have known and experienced this truth for a longer period.

Why is it that most Christians are not experiencing the abundant life?

2. Worldly Christians cannot experience the abundant and fruitful Christian life.

Worldly (carnal) people trust in their own efforts to live the Christian life:

- They are either uninformed about, or have forgotten, God's love, forgiveness, and power (Acts 1:8; Romans 5:8–10; Hebrews 10:1–25; 2 Peter 1:9; 1 John 1; 2:1–3).
- They have an up-and-down spiritual experience.
- They cannot understand themselves—they want to do what is right but cannot.
- They fail to draw on the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life (Romans 7:15–24; 8:7; 1 Corinthians 3:1–3; Galatians 5:16–18).

Some or all of the following traits may characterize the worldly person—the Christian who does not fully trust God:

Unbelief

Disobedience

Poor prayer life

No desire for Bible study



Legalistic attitude or critical spirit

Impure thoughts, jealousy, guilt

Worry, discouragement

Loss of love for God and others

(Those who profess to be Christians but who continue to practice sin should realize that they may not be Christians at all, according to Ephesians 5:5 and 1 John 2:3; 3:6–9.)

The third truth gives us the only solution to this problem.

3. Jesus promised the abundant and fruitful life as the result of being filled (directed and empowered) by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit-filled life is the Christ-directed life by which Christ lives His life in and through us in the power of the Holy Spirit (John 15).

- One becomes a Christian through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, according to John 3:1–8. From the moment of spiritual birth, the Christian is indwelt by the

Holy Spirit at all times (John 1:12; 14:16–17; Colossians 2:9–10). (Though all Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, not all Christians are filled—that is, directed and empowered—by the Holy Spirit on an ongoing basis.)

- The Holy Spirit is the source of the overflowing life (John 7:37–39).
- The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ (John 16:1–15). When one is filled with the Holy Spirit, he or she is a true disciple of Christ.
- In His last command before His ascension, Christ promised the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to be witnesses for Him (Acts 1:1–9).

How, then, can one be filled with the Holy Spirit?

4. We are filled (directed and empowered) by the Holy Spirit by faith. Then we can experience the abundant and fruitful life that Christ promised.

You can appropriate the filling of the Holy Spirit right now if you:

- Sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 5:6; John 7:37–39).
- Confess your sins. By faith, thank God that He has forgiven all of your sins—past, present, and future—because Christ died for you (Colossians 2:13–15; Hebrews 10:1–17; 1 John 1; 2:1–3).
- Present every area of your life to God (Romans 12:1–2).
- By faith claim the fullness of the Holy Spirit, according to

His command: Be filled with the Spirit.

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you.

—Ephesians 5:18

His promise: He will always answer when we pray according to His will.

We can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure that he will give us what we ask for.

—1 John 5:14–15

Faith can be expressed through prayer.

How to Pray in Faith to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone. However, true prayer is one way of expressing our faith. The following is a suggested prayer:

Dear Father, I need You. I acknowledge that I have sinned against You by directing my own life. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus. As an expression of my faith, I now thank You for directing my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If so, bow in prayer and trust God to fill you with the Holy Spirit right now.

How to Walk in the Spirit

Faith (trust in God and His promises) is the only way a Christian can live the Spirit-directed life. As you continue to trust Christ moment by moment,

- Your life will demonstrate more and more of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) and will be more and more conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- Your prayer life and study of God's Word will become more meaningful.
- You will experience His power in witnessing (Acts 1:8).
- You will be prepared for spiritual conflict against the world (1 John 2:15–17), against the flesh (Galatians 5:16–17), and against Satan (1 Peter 5:7–9; Ephesians 6:10–13).
- You will experience His power to resist temptation and sin (Romans 6:1–16; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 1:19–23; Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 1:7).

Appendix C



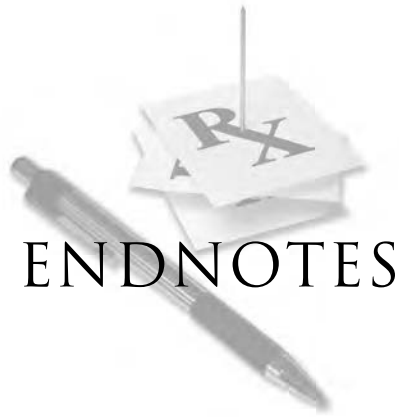
SPIRITUAL BREATHING

If you become aware of an area of your life (an attitude or an action) that is displeasing to the Lord, even though you are walking with Him and sincerely desiring to serve Him, simply thank God that He has forgiven your sins—past, present, and future—on the basis of Christ’s death on the cross. Claim His love and forgiveness by faith and continue to have fellowship with Him.

If you retake the throne of your life through sin—a definite act of disobedience—breathe spiritually. Spiritual breathing (exhaling the impure and inhaling the pure) is an exercise in faith that enables you to experience God’s love and forgiveness.

1. *Exhale*: Confess your sin—agree with God concerning your sin and thank Him for His forgiveness of it, according to 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:1–25. Confession involves repentance—a change in attitude and action.

2. *Inhale*: Surrender the control of your life to Christ, and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith. Trust that He now directs and empowers you, according to the command of Ephesians 5:18 and the promise of 1 John 5:14–15.



ENDNOTES

1. Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual Life* (New York: Harper & Row, n.d.), 103–104.
2. If you want to look at a few more Bible verses on courage, try Psalms 27:14; 46:1–2; 118:6; Proverbs 29:25; Isaiah 35:3–4; 51:12–13; John 14:27; 16:33; and 1 Corinthians 16:13.
3. Neil T. Anderson and Rich Miller, *Freedom from Fear: Overcoming Worry and Anxiety* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1999), 203.
4. Joyce Meyer, *Be Anxious for Nothing: The Art of Casting Your Cares and Resting in God* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1998), 27.
5. Anderson and Miller, *Freedom from Fear*, 100.
6. John Edmund Haggai, *How to Win over Worry: Positive Steps to Anxiety-Free Living* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2001), 46–47.



MORE RESOURCES

Free Discipleship Courses

Sign up for one of these weekly personal development courses at BiblicalCounselingInsights.com/courses/.

From Coping to Cure

Why are so many Christians unhappy? From Coping to Cure by Dr. Henry Brandt looks at the relief available through people helping people, through human efforts apart from God. Then, the lessons explore the many dimensions of Christ the Cure: God's healing love can transform the most miserable life into one of comfort, joy, and deep personal peace. Lessons are sent once per week.

Keys to Happy Family Living

Sent once per week, Keys to Happy Family Living by Dr. Henry Brandt is written for anyone who desires to be the best marriage partner and the best parent possible. Happy, successful parenthood is based upon a successful partnership, which in turn requires two individuals who themselves are happy, contented and competent.

I Want Happiness Now!

Are you dejected and desperately unhappy? Good news! You can find relief from your frustrated, hopeless condition resulting from your response to the circumstances and people in your world. In this weekly series, I Want Happiness Now!, Dr. Henry Brandt reveals how you can tap into the resources freely given to us by God so you will be a truly radiant, contented and joyful person.

The Struggle for Inner Peace

This weekly study addresses the problem that many Christians hold hatred, fear, resentment, jealousy, and malice toward others. As a result, fellowship with these persons and the Lord is broken, joy is lost, and God's peace is not enjoyed. Confessing and forsaking one's sinful ways in obedience to the Lord and His Word are necessary if the Christian is to enjoy God's peace. This series was written with the hope that many Christians will be helped in their "struggle" for inner peace, released from anxiety, and set free to experience the "fruit of the Spirit" which includes peace (Gal. 5:22).

More Free Resources

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SOUL PRESCRIPTION

WHEN WHAT YOU CHOOSE DESTROYS THE LIFE YOU WANT...

Does your life feel out of control? Are you struggling to free yourself from a web of destructive habits that are holding you in bondage? Are you engulfed in an endless cycle of trying to change but continually falling back into sin?

Soul Prescription offers the healing and hope you seek. With a unique, methodical, and biblically based approach to eliminating sin habits, this book will help you evaluate your behavior and attitudes in light of God's standards. As the authors gently lead you through the process of turning away from debilitating habits, you will be free to embrace Holy Spirit-empowered virtues.

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www.HenryBrandtFoundation.org.

Dr. Bill Bright was devoted to holy living and spent more than five decades building and leading Campus Crusade for Christ. Fueled by his passion to present the love and claims of Jesus Christ to every person on earth, he wrote the booklet The Four Spiritual Laws, which has been printed in 200 languages and distributed to more than 2.5 billion people. Find out about his 100 other books and pamphlets at:
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