

# SOUL PRESCRIPTION

**REBELLION:  
PLAYING AGAINST YOUR OWN TEAM**

**SIN FAMILY #9**

**INSOLENCE** **DISOBEDIENCE** **BETRAYAL**  
**REBELLION**  
**INSUBORDINATION**  
**DISRESPECT**

**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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He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

—Psalm 147:3 NIV



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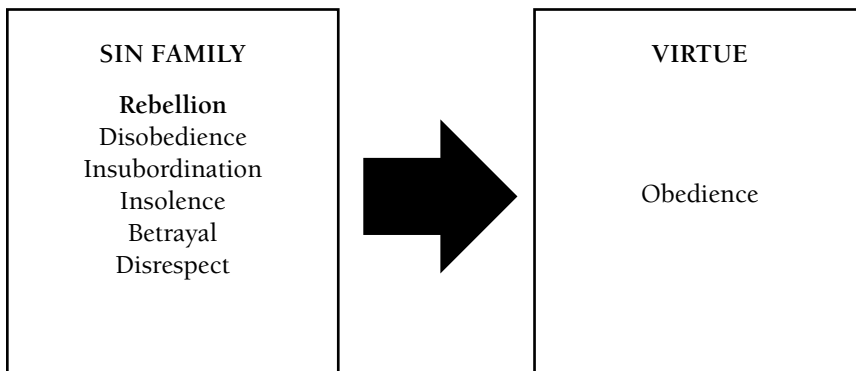
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# REBELLION: PLAYING AGAINST YOUR OWN TEAM



In 1967, the ministry that Vonette and I (Bill) had started years earlier, *Campus Crusade for Christ*, was running smoothly and expanding steadily. But trouble was brewing on the inside. A half dozen regional directors had become disappointed with me as the CEO, and one day in October, they asked for a meeting with me. I agreed to hear them out.

These men had no complaints about my character or ethics. But they did have criticism to offer about my leadership style and philosophy and even one or two points of my theology. Furthermore, they thought my skills were not adequate for the

challenges our ministry was then facing. In consequence, they asked me to resign.

I loved these men—I did then, and I do now. I had poured myself into them. I trusted them. So what they were saying was shocking to me. But it was as though God wrapped a protective shield around me. I did not feel as if I had to react out of anger, and I was able to listen to them patiently.

Finally I said, “Let’s talk about this. I’ve got blind spots just like anybody else, and I’m very sorry I’ve disappointed you.”

But then I added, “Gentlemen, there’s one thing you need to know: Vonette and I started this movement by ourselves with the Lord. By the end of the day, there may be only the two of us left, but we started *Campus Crusade for Christ* and we will continue to direct it. God gave me this vision, and I’m going to be faithful to that vision.”

When the meeting was over, I did not know what would happen. Perhaps my critics would be successful in pushing me out of my position. But what really happened was that over the next several months, the six disaffected regional directors all left *Campus Crusade* voluntarily.

Over the years since then, most of these former Crusade leaders have apologized to me. Meanwhile, I took steps to encourage constructive criticism within the organization’s leadership structure. I matured as a result of this experience, and so did *Campus Crusade*.

One thing I learned from this episode, though, was just how painful rebellion can be. By God’s choice, I was in charge of the ministry, and it was deeply hurtful to me when my subordinates would not accept my authority. I felt personally attacked and I was concerned that my position had been weakened.

The fact is that in life there are authority structures. In governments, in businesses, in churches, and in homes, some people are leaders over others. In different situations, indeed, each of us is a follower and a leader. Except in certain limited situations, to reject or undermine properly instituted authority is to rebel against the order God has established in human society.

Some people seem to be rebels and dissenters by nature. Using either passive or aggressive tactics (maybe both), they seek to

*To reject or undermine properly instituted authority is to rebel against the order God has established in human society.*

overthrow the authority that others have over them. Obeying rankles with them, and so they do it as little as possible.

If this describes your behavior, you have a sin habit requiring repentance before God. Consider the types of rebellion as we describe them, keeping in mind the question *Am I willing to begin the healing process for my sin habit of rebellion?*

### REBELLION AT HOME

Mary had rebelled against the preaching of her father, a godly pastor. This young woman lived with her boyfriend in open defiance of the biblical teaching she had received. She thought her new lifestyle would bring her happiness. Quickly, though, she became filled with hatred and resentment. When a mutual friend brought Mary to my office for counsel, I (Bill) had to explain that she was going through difficult times because she had rebelled against God and her father.

Mary and many others like her have violated the fifth commandment: “Honor your father and mother” (Exodus 20:12). This is one way rebellion can upset the natural order God has established in a family. It always produces harm, as in Mary’s case. Compliance with the commandment, on the other hand, results in blessing.

The apostle Paul said as much when he reaffirmed the fifth commandment for Christian families.

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

—Ephesians 6:1–3<sup>1</sup>

Even when we are grown up, we still have a responsibility to honor (though not necessarily obey) our parents. As adults, we can honor our parents by forgiving them when they have wronged us, respecting their God-given position, caring for their needs, and

#### Are You Rebellious?

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

- If your parents are still living, do they resent your attitude toward them?
- If you are a wife, does your husband feel that you work against him instead of with him?
- As a husband, do you expect compliance from your wife but resist those who have authority over you?
- Do you refuse to pursue the vision for your local church established by the church leaders?
- If you have a job, does your boss look upon you as an obstacle to getting the company where it is hoping to go?
- Do you set a poor example for your coworkers, bringing down morale?
- Do you disobey laws when you think you can get away with it?
- Do the people you know ever use words like *disloyal*, *disrespectful*, or *scornful* to describe your attitude toward people in authority?

loving them.<sup>2</sup> To refuse to do these things is to rebel against the order God has established between the generations of a family.

Another type of rebellion that can upset the family order is a lack of submission by a wife to her husband. We know this is a controversial subject these days. And most certainly we would not want wifely submission to be interpreted to mean that the wife becomes a doormat for her husband. But at the same time, we affirm the unequivocal teaching of Scripture.

For wives, this means submit your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of His body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

—Ephesians 5:22–24<sup>3</sup>

Though men and women are equal in importance, dignity, and ability, as well as in their relationship to God, He has granted to husbands the leadership in the home. As with all types of Christian leadership, however, the husband's leadership in the home is a servant leadership—he is to seek to understand his wife, meet her needs, and express love to her. Assuming she fulfills her duty of respecting her husband, their roles produce a complementary relationship between the two that ideally enables each to reach his or her full potential.

If there is discord between a husband and wife, the problem might be a failure in his leadership. But it also might be a failure in her followership. Some wives have fallen into a pattern of balking at their husbands' initiative, whittling away at their husbands' dignity, or openly scoffing at what the men suggest. This is rebellion within marriage, and it is wrong.

Paul used different words in his instructions to children and wives: children are to “obey” their parents, while wives are to “submit” to their husbands.<sup>4</sup> This difference reflects the fact that wives are equals with their husbands, whereas children are clearly subordinate to their parents.

Husbands and fathers also have a responsibility to model submission and obedience to God and other authorities in their life.

What example are they setting for their family? Do they demonstrate a desire to follow God wholeheartedly and live according to His ordained authority structure? If a man is living in rebellion, it is much more difficult for his wife to be submissive or his children to be obedient.

Rebellion can do much harm. Our families would not be in the sorry state they are in today if all of us would understand and fulfill our family roles better.

The same could be said for our churches.

### REBELLION AT CHURCH

Arguably, 2 Corinthians is the most painful book of the New Testament to read. In these pages we listen to the anguish of a faithful apostle who was forced to defend his God-given position of authority over the church he had founded in Corinth, a city of Greece.

Some teachers had arrived in Corinth and were criticizing Paul in his absence. We are not sure who they were or exactly what they were teaching, but by reading between the lines we can conclude that these other leaders were accusing Paul of having inadequate authority, not being trustworthy, embezzling offerings, and being a braggart in his letters but a coward in person. Sadly, many of the Corinthian believers who should have known better were nodding along with these charges.

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to defend himself. In it he said that he had been given a special call to be an apostle, as evidenced by how he had suffered for Christ. He had always taught the Corinthians the truth and acted in a selfless, aboveboard manner toward them. Given these truths, he deserved respect as their spiritual father. “We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over you,” said Paul, “for we were the first to travel all the way to Corinth with the Good News of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:14).

We do not know exactly how matters turned out within the congregation at Corinth, but since they preserved Paul’s letters, they presumably continued to hold him in some esteem.

*Our families would not be in the sorry state they are in today if all of us would understand and fulfill our family roles better.*

*The rule should be that all of us cooperate with those whom God has placed in positions of authority over us in the church.*

What about in our churches today? Can the leaders count on the cooperation of the rest of the members? Let's say an elder board senses that God wants to do new things through the congregation by refocusing their efforts. Will the members go along with the changes, or will they cling to outmoded programs they have grown too comfortable with? Or consider a case where Dale is selected as teacher of the adult Sunday school class instead of Marvin. Will Marvin be a supporter of Dale's efforts, or will he make it subtly known that he would have done a better job?

Certainly, if church leaders are teaching false doctrine, we must try to correct their error. Or if we think they are making a strategic mistake, we may choose to raise the issue in an appropriate forum. But those are exceptions. The rule should be that all of us cooperate with those whom God has placed in positions of authority over us in the church. This rule is consistently taught in Scripture.

"Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say," ordered the writer to the Hebrews. "Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit" (Hebrews 13:17).

Paul told the Thessalonians, "Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

The young pastor Titus had a heart filled with love when the Corinthians "obeyed him and welcomed him with such fear and deep respect" (2 Corinthians 7:15). Our church leaders will feel the same toward us as we honor them for their shepherding over us.

A cooperative spirit seems appropriate to many when it comes to the church. But what about in secular society, particularly in that sphere of life where many of us spend so much of our time: our jobs?

## REBELLION AT WORK

You have probably seen framed posters that feature beautiful nature images and inspirational slogans designed to motivate workers. But did you know that there is a line of products parodying these posters by inverting their messages? One company produces posters, notepads, and the like that feature beautiful pictures paired with cynical statements.

One poster features a tiger lying sleepily on a tree branch. The slogan says, “It takes 43 muscles to frown and 17 to smile, but it doesn’t take any to just sit there with a dumb look on your face.”

Another poster shows one hand passing a racer’s baton to another. The slogan here? “The secret to success is knowing who to blame for your failures.”

A third poster displays an eagle soaring above a mountain. “Leaders are like eagles. We don’t have either of them here.”<sup>5</sup>

We can laugh at such spoofs. And certainly these products expose some of the follies of the modern workplace. But imagine that you are a boss trying to do the best for your company, and then one day an employee of yours puts up a poster in his cubicle declaring, “Leaders are like eagles. We don’t have either of them here.” What would that do to *your* motivation?

Workplace insubordination comes in many forms. Sometimes it consists of flagrant backstabbing. Just as Judas betrayed Jesus to His enemies, so some employees will set their bosses up to take a fall. Perhaps they see it as a way of getting revenge or as aiding their own climb up the ladder.

Other times, insubordination is more subtle—but just as serious. Resisting change, criticizing the boss behind his back, dragging one’s heels, neglecting to comply with the details of a plan, sabotaging an unpopular project—these and more are forms of rebellion against authority in the workplace. And these are unacceptable behaviors for Christians.

The Golden Rule applies here as in all interpersonal relationships: treat others as you would want them to treat you. And in fact, one day you may be elevated to the position that your boss now holds. How will you want your employees to react to you



then? Set an example of cooperation with company leadership now.

The apostle Paul wrote on this subject to some early Christians who were slaves. While the slave/master relationship does not exactly parallel our modern employee/employer relationship, Paul's words are, nevertheless, instructive to those of us with jobs today.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

—Ephesians 6:5–8<sup>6</sup>

That's the opposite of demotivating, isn't it? If you have been insubordinate on the job, replace "slaves" with "employees" and "masters" with "bosses," then make Paul's words your motto to live by.

But there is still one more major realm of life in which we must consider the dangers of rebellion: our role as citizens of the land.

### REBELLION IN SOCIETY

During the period when Moses was leading the Hebrews in the Sinai desert, a tribal leader named Korah instigated a rebellion with 250 other Hebrew leaders. These men approached Moses and his brother, Aaron, and asked them, "What right do you have to act as though you are greater than the rest of the LORD's people?" (Numbers 16:3).

Here was the authentic voice of rebellion. It has been echoed down through the ages as individuals, with whatever mixture of selfish and altruistic motives, have sought to take away the power of those in authority over them in the community. Sometimes they

are successful; sometimes they are not. In the case of Korah versus Moses, God passed sentence by opening up the earth to swallow the conspirators. It seems God did not appreciate it when people tried to replace the leader He had picked.

But few of us would ever consider starting a coup. We are more likely to register our disappointment in our civil leaders by criticizing, whining, and complaining. That happened in ancient Israel too. “The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness” (Exodus 16:2 KJV). The King James version uses the word “murmur” that fits the noise we collectively make when we grumble about what is happening in government instead of taking constructive steps for change—or just holding our tongue.

We can learn an important lesson from the case of the “murmuring” Hebrews. As the apostle Paul wrote, “Don’t grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age” (1 Corinthians 10:10–11).<sup>7</sup>

The New Testament is quite definite on the point that Christians are to be obedient to civil authorities. The clearest exposition of this point occurs in the letter to the Romans, where Paul said, “Obey the government, for God is the one who put it there.”

Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. The authorities are God’s servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God’s servants sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.

Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.

—Romans 13:1–7<sup>8</sup>

*We must not wait for our government to be all that we wish before we will give it our proper obedience as citizens.*

Paul was writing about the government in Rome. The Roman Empire, while being an agent of civil order in many ways, had, nevertheless, forcibly occupied many of its neighboring lands, including the Holy Land. Israel had no more chance of being allowed its independence than an Eastern Bloc nation had of being set free by the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. Paul himself would eventually be executed by officers of the Roman government.

This shows us that we must not wait for our government to be all that we wish before we will give it our proper obedience as citizens. Even if our leaders are less than perfect (and who is not?), we should show respect to them. David offers us a beautiful example of this.

When David was a young man, the king of Israel, Saul, became jealous of David and wanted to kill him. Though David had done nothing wrong, he had to go on the run. At one point while Saul was searching the wilderness for David, the younger man had an opportunity to assassinate the king. But he did not do it. He even felt badly about his decision to cut off a piece of Saul's robe. "The LORD knows I shouldn't have done that to my lord the king," he said to his men. "The LORD forbid that I should do this to my lord the king and attack the LORD's anointed one, for the LORD Himself has chosen him" (1 Samuel 24:6). Even after Saul died in battle and David himself became king, David continued to honor his predecessor's memory.

Our first reaction to any requirement placed upon us by duly instituted authorities in our society should be to obey. As Jesus Himself said, we should "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar" (Matthew 22:21). Caesar was head of the much-hated Roman government.

Of course, Jesus also said, “Everything that belongs to God must be given to God.” What does that mean for us?

## REBELLION AGAINST GOD

Rebellion against human authority figures is always rebellion against God in an indirect sense because it means refusing to accept the order He has established. But there is also such a thing as direct rebellion against God. Some people refuse to obey His commands in Scripture or His individual leading in their lives.

The truth is, the most unhappy people in the world are not unbelievers, many of whom are ignorantly and blissfully happy in their sin, albeit temporarily; the most unhappy people in the world are Christians who resist the will of God for their lives. The Christian who refuses to do the will of God must be prepared to pay the price of disobedience. “You will always harvest what you plant” (Galatians 6:7).

A man in Sweden stubbornly resisted God’s call to ministry—even through the death of his wife and daughter. He went into business and prospered, only to be robbed by his own son. In his older years, he languished with cancer. He said, “I know that I am saved, but, oh, the loss, for I know that I soon will be ushered into His presence only to give an account of a whole life of disobedience.”

Did this man really know Christ? Consider the Bible’s words:

And we can be sure that we know Him if we obey His commandments. If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love Him. That is how we know we are living in Him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

—1 John 2:3–6

Whether the Swedish man was a true Christian or not, we can say we have never met a happy disobedient Christian or an unhappy obedient one.

R. A. Torrey, a famous educator and evangelist, told the story of a woman who came to him and said she did not believe in the Bible anymore. When he asked her why, she replied, “Because I have tried its promises and found them untrue. The Bible says, ‘Whatsoever ye ask believing, ye shall receive.’ Well, I fully expected to get things from God in prayer, but I did not receive them, so the promise failed.”

Dr. Torrey then turned her to 1 John 3:22: “We will receive from Him whatever we ask because we obey Him and do the things that please Him.” Then he said, “Were you keeping His commandments and doing those things pleasing in His sight?”

She confessed she was not.

Her trouble was not that the Bible’s promises were not true; it was her own disobedience that was the problem. May that never be the case with any of us. As the fifteenth-century religious writer Thomas à Kempis is said to have prayed every day, let us say to God, “As Thou wilt; what Thou wilt; when Thou wilt.”

This brings us to an interesting question. What do we do when our obedience to God would seem to conflict with our obedience to human authority figures? Is it ever acceptable to disobey earthly authority, whether that be of government, business, church, or home?

### DISOBEDIENCE—WHEN AND HOW

Certainly our normal response to authority should be obedience. But if a human leader is calling us to do something that would require us to disobey God, then we can and should refuse to obey the human leader. Actually, in such a case, we are still being obedient, only it is to the higher authority (God) when there is a conflict with a lesser authority (some human leader).

We see a clear example of this in the history of the early church. When Peter and the other apostles were hauled up before the Jewish high council, the Sanhedrin, for preaching about Jesus after they had been told not to, they boldly declared to the council members, “We must obey God rather than any human authority” (Acts 5:29). Complying with the Sanhedrin’s restriction would

have meant violating the Great Commission, given to them by Jesus not long before. That the disciples could not do.

Neither can we disobey God in order to obey someone else.

- If a parent urges his teenager to cheat on a test, the teen should say no.
- If a husband suggests that he and his wife watch a pornographic movie “to spice things up,” she should refuse.
- If a pastor preaches that faith in Jesus is not the only way to acceptance with God, a church member should object.
- If a boss tells an employee to do something unethical, the employee should not comply.
- If a government official seeks a bribe to do a favor, a citizen should blow the whistle.

These responses are not rebellion. They are not a refusal to accept authority per se, but rather they are a considered reaction to a specific injustice. Such a reaction is more akin to civil disobedience than to rebellion. One can remain the “loyal opposition” while disobeying on ethical grounds.

Of course, there are poor ways and better ways to disobey when the need arises. Here are a few guidelines to remember:

- Raise objections respectfully.
- Continue to love the other, making sure your objection does not turn into a personal attack.
- Choose the right time and place, working through proper channels to the extent that it is possible.
- State your reasons logically and do not let your emotions run away with you.
- Seek justice but at the same time be ready to forgive.

These legitimate responses to errors by those in authority are in keeping with a general pattern of obedience to authority. For those of us who have a habit of rebellion, obedience is a virtue to ask the Lord to build into our lives instead of sin.

## GET YOURSELF IN LINE

We want to be clear about one thing. In authority relationships, responsibility goes both ways. Possessing authority is never the same thing as having a license for tyranny. The misuse of power is as great a sin, perhaps greater, than rebellion.

The same New Testament passages that speak about children's submission to their parents, wives' submission to their husbands, and slaves' submission to their masters also speak about the responsibilities of those in authority. In fact, Christians are all to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). Leaders submit by serving righteously, while followers submit by cooperating willingly. In this way order and love may coexist.

As we said earlier, at different times and in different circumstances, all of us are both leaders and followers. For example, a woman may be a follower in relation to her boss at work and a leader to her child at home. When we are in positions of following, obedience should be our habitual practice.

The Greek word used for "submit" in Ephesians 5 came out of military experience. It referred to soldiers lining up in ranks under their officers. So when we are called to submit, we should get in line under the authority of our leaders. To do otherwise is to risk failure, even disaster, in the family or organization of which we are a part. For when the troops scatter, the war is lost.

If obedience is a virtue that does not come easily to you, you can learn it with God's help. Even though Jesus was God's Son, "He learned obedience from the things He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Seek the Holy Spirit for the ability to eliminate the ugliness of rebellion from your life and replace it with the beauty of obedience.

Begin now to heal the sin of rebellion in your life.

## SOUL PRESCRIPTION FOR REBELLION

Are you struggling with a form of rebellion against authority? We have outlined a five-step process to help you repent and heal in

*When the troops scatter, the war is lost.*

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 have a tendency toward rebellion, chances are good that your view of God has become skewed in some way. Perhaps you see God as a tyrant, selfishly wanting everything His own way. Your reaction to Him, then, could spill over to your relationships with other authority figures. Consider these points:

- God's commandments are fair and good.

He is the Rock; His deeds are perfect.  
Everything He does is just and fair.  
He is a faithful God who does no wrong;  
how just and upright He is!  
—Deuteronomy 32:4

- God will hold us accountable for our rebellion.

The LORD is slow to anger and filled with unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. But He does not excuse the guilty. He lays the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.  
—Numbers 14:18

Embark on a study of the justice and sovereignty of God as reflected in Scripture. Keep an open mind as you encounter biblical truth, asking God to change your view of Him to make it more nearly conformed to the truth.

### Step 2: Revise Your False Beliefs

If you have mistaken ideas about people and the world, you will rebel against authority figures and especially the greatest Authority Figure of them all—God. Evaluate your beliefs with the following questions:



- Do you believe you are not subject to properly instituted authorities?

Those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.

—Romans 13:1

- Do you believe you can defy authority without consequences?

You will say, “How I hated discipline! If only I had not ignored all the warnings!”

—Proverbs 5:12

- Do you believe God’s commandments and will are unreasonable?

I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to Your commandments.

—Psalm 119:45

Trace the theme of obedience through Scripture. In the process, test your beliefs about how families, businesses, churches, and society should operate. Choose to accept the principle of obedience to proper authority.

### Step 3: Repent of Your Sin

Where does your rebellion usually manifest itself? At home? In church? At work? In society at large? Toward God? Is your problem disobedience, insubordination, lawlessness, insolence, scoffing, or disrespect? Pinpoint your sin habit. Admit it to yourself. Own it.

When you are ready, pray the following prayer in faith, trusting that God will forgive your sin and empower your obedience.

God, You have established structures of authority to make things work better for Your children. Yet I have sometimes strived not to support but to break down

those structures. In particular, I am guilty of \_\_\_\_\_.  
It is a sin, and I am sorry for it. Please forgive me now.  
Cleanse me entirely of my sin of \_\_\_\_\_. Then fill  
me with Holy Spirit power to enable me to resist the  
temptation of rebellion from now on. In the name of  
Christ the King, 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**

Don't breathe too big a sigh of relief after repenting of rebellion. Attacks from the world, the flesh, and the Devil are all but inevitable now. These spiritual enemies want to draw you back into disobedience to God.

- The world system tells us, "The way to a good life is to have total freedom and do whatever you want." Would God agree? Of course not. He says, "True freedom comes from submitting to proper authorities, especially Mine." Overcome the world by rejecting its values and embracing God's.
- Your flesh, or sinful nature, has always enjoyed the sense of power and autonomy that comes from rebelling against authority. It craves to get that feeling back. What you need to do is remember that your flesh is already dead; you have no need to obey its dictates. Obey the Spirit and not the flesh.
- The Devil is hatching schemes to tempt you to rebel again, doing damage to you and others in the process. Among the other pieces of spiritual armor listed in Ephesians 6, put on the helmet of salvation to protect your mind from Satan's poisonous thoughts.

The attacks of the world, the flesh, and the Devil are formidable, but not impossible to defeat. With God acting in your life, you are more than able to repel each assault thrown at you.

## Step 5: Flee Temptation

Take practical steps to avoid sliding back into rebellion and to cement an attitude of obedience in your heart.

- Focus on your relationship with God.  
In your devotional and worship times, focus on God as King over all the universe. Learning to be obedient to this Sovereign will help you be obedient in all areas of life.
- Latch on to God's promises.  
Find helpful verses in Scripture and then commit them to memory to help you in your struggles against the temptation to rebel. One such verse for you may be the following:

The commandments of the LORD are right,  
bringing joy to the heart.  
The commands of the LORD are clear,  
giving insight for living.

—Psalm 19:8

- Establish safeguards.  
Think about the usual sources of temptation for you to rebel. Identify precautions you can take to protect yourself from those sources. Let the following examples spark your imagination:
  - If you tend to be insubordinate to your boss, start calling this person “sir” or “ma’am” as a reminder of the respect you owe.
  - If you are inclined to scoff at church leaders' direction, take the lowliest position of service in the church you can find—and fulfill it without complaint.
  - If you tend to be critical of government officials, send a card of thanks to your congressional representative the next time he or she does something honorable.
  - Ask a trusted Christian friend to hold you accountable in your commitment to not rebel against authority.

- Expect victory.  
Developing a submissive spirit is not easy, but you have the Holy Spirit living in you and producing in you a spirit of obedience. Be confident and rejoice in every sign of progress.

Visit [www.SoulPrescription.com](http://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

**J**ust 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.

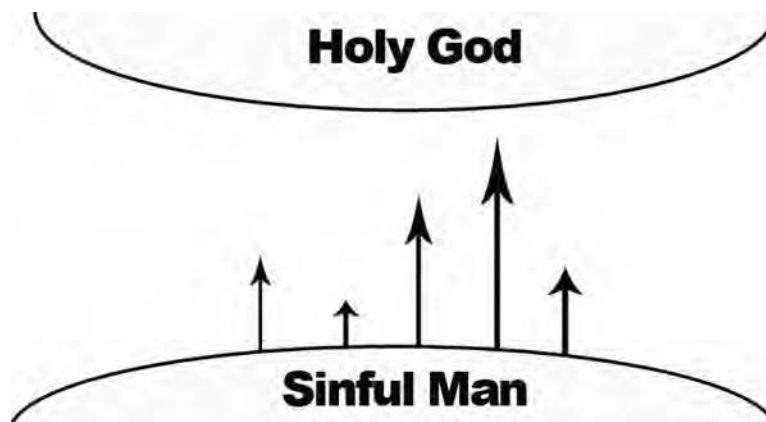
—Romans 3:23

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

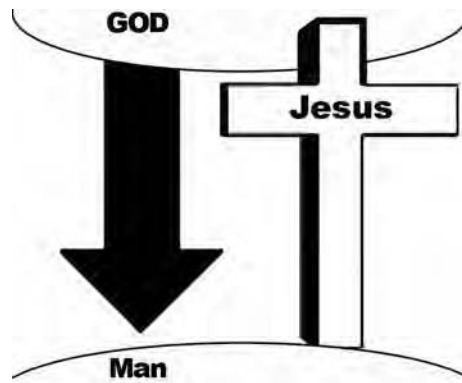
Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time.

—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

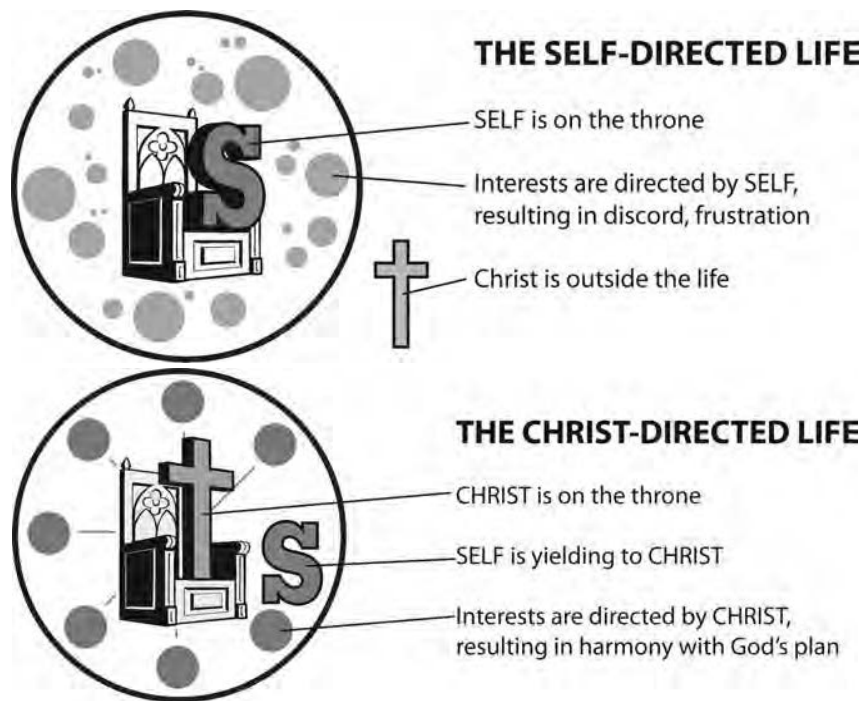
### **We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation**

[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.”

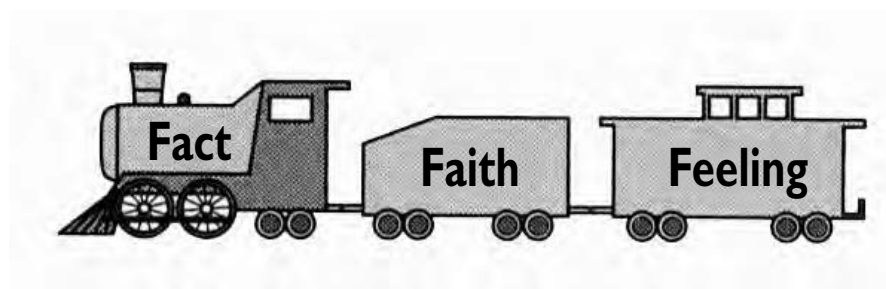
—1 John 5:11–13

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.

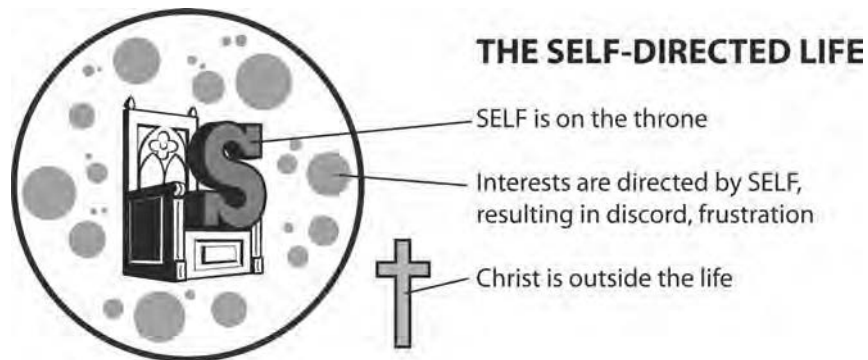
## Appendix B



# 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.

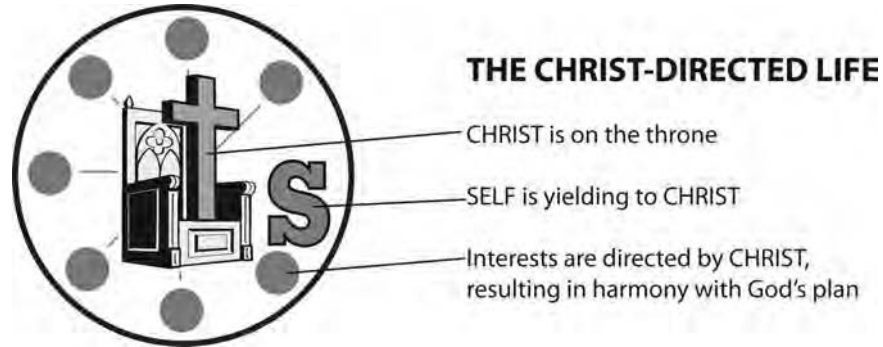
The Bible tells us there are three kinds of people:



### 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.

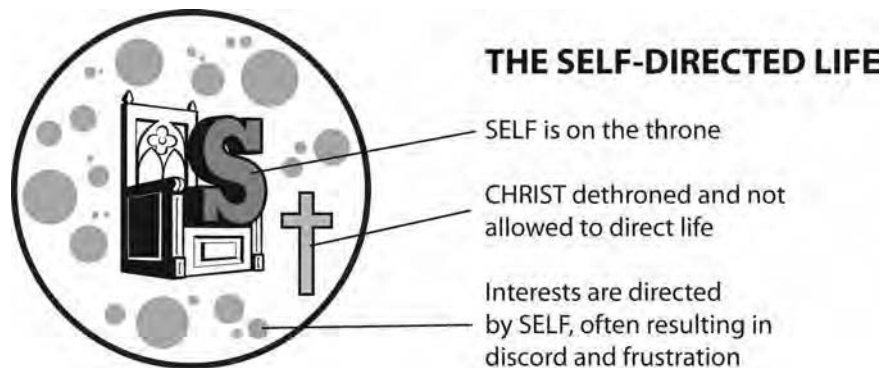
—1 Corinthians 2:14



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. For a similar statement by Paul, see Colossians 3:20.
2. For more on the fifth commandment, see Bill Bright, *Written by the Hand of God: Experience God's Love and Blessing through the Liberating Power of His Ten Commandments* (Orlando, FL: New Life, 2001), chap. 10.
3. For more about a wife's submission to her husband, see 1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18; and 1 Peter 3:1–6.
4. The word for “submit” is *hupotass*, meaning to make oneself subject to another. The word for “obey” is *hupakou*, meaning to listen and to obey.
5. See online at <http://www.despair.com>. The products are called “Demotivators.”
6. For more about slaves' duty to their masters, see Colossians 3:22–25; 1 Timothy 6:1–2; Titus 2:9–10; and 1 Peter 2:18–20.
7. For a description of the death that came to the “murmuring” Hebrews, see Numbers 14.
8. For more on obedience to civil authorities, see Titus 3:1 and 2 Peter 2:13–14, 17.





## MORE RESOURCES

### **Free Discipleship Courses**

Sign up for one of these weekly personal development courses at [BiblicalCounselingInsights.com/courses/](http://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**

Find more free personal growth options available through affiliated ministries at [JesusOnline.com/resources](http://JesusOnline.com/resources).

# 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.

God longs to see you living in the joy and freedom that He promises in His Word. You can live a victorious Christian life. Soul Prescription will show you how.

Dr. Henry Brandt is often called the "Father of Modern-Day Biblical Counseling." For decades he personally counseled individuals to evaluate their heart attitudes and behavior in the light of biblical teaching and guided them to a godly solution. His teaching continues to be a source of inspiration to people throughout the world through the Henry Brandt Foundation's resources and Web site:

[www.HenryBrandtFoundation.org](http://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:

[www.BrightMedia.org](http://www.BrightMedia.org).